

of the Balkans. For modern youth poet Vladimir Čerina, Serbia's conquests in those wars "were a *miracle* for the whole world. An entire unseen and unheard of people was suddenly seen and heard, like some awesome announcement from heaven" (158). The chapter that follows, Chapter 5, provocatively entitled "Another Problem," looks at Muslim identity formation with a particular focus on Benjamin von Kállay, Imperial Minister of Finance and Chief Secretary for Bosnia from 1882 until his death in 1903.

A real achievement of the book is its linking the pre- and post-Ottoman periods almost seamlessly. In this respect, the author's concentration on textual analyses really works well. One small curiosity for those interested in the events of the First World War is the fact that the main narrative of the book ends in 1914, when Habsburg rule itself only ended in 1918. Surely, the last four years were crucial and particularly damaging to the South Slav identity and national projects? This is a small quibble over what is undoubtedly a magnificent achievement. Hajdarpašić reintroduces familiar intellectuals and activists such as Ivo Andrić while moving easily to less well-known Habsburg, Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian Muslim sources. He has resurrected voices that reflect the ardor, enthusiasms, and fluid identities of the era.

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The Habsburg Empire: A New History. By Pieter M. Judson Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2016. xiv, 567 pp. Notes. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Maps. \$35.00, hard bound.
doi: 10.1017/slr.2017.188

Pieter Judson's new history of the Habsburg Empire offers a masterful synthesis of the newest and most persuasive scholarship in the field, while advancing its own consistent thesis that attention to the empire itself, its institutions and administrative practices, upends the traditional story of it as an anachronistic "prison of the peoples," riven by ethnolinguistic division and doomed to fail. The text explores the mutually constitutive ways that imperial policies and nationalist politics shaped and enabled each other, generally giving credit to the empire—as part of its effort to make loyal citizens by empowering them against local elites and alternate power sources, such as the church—for creating the context in which language and culture could become markers for nationalist activists to deploy in battles for power. In making this argument, Judson reifies the dominant perspective among professional historians of the last decade, as advanced in various monographs on aspects of central and east European history, that nationalism should be seen as situational and less ubiquitous than formerly thought. But to my knowledge, no book has made this case for the *empire as a whole* as eloquently and consistently, and no other text makes so clear the relationship between imperial practices and institutions in creating the conditions in which particular instances of nationalism could arise. Judson directly disputes the argument that linguistic and religious diversity prefigured conflict or division, while endorsing the argument that the First World War was "not the proverbial straw that broke a

failing empire's back," an accelerant to an already "inevitable collapse," but rather the root cause itself, reminding us that other states also failed to meet the challenges of the war (387). Finally, he asserts that the resultant "nation states" that succeeded the empire were actually "little empires" that often adapted Habsburg strategies and legal systems, and were hardly a triumph of democracy and national self-determination as their apologists would have us believe (388).

In writing the book, Judson clearly benefitted from his own ground-breaking contribution to the concepts of nationalist activism and indifference to nationalism in the Austrian Monarchy (most notably in his *Guardians of the Nation* [Harvard, 2006]), as well as from his former position as editor of the *Austrian History Yearbook*. The book moves chronologically from Maria Theresa's accession to power to the creation of new states after the collapse of the empire at the end of the First World War. Judson deliberately focuses on the internal affairs of the empire, and as such, gives scant attention to diplomacy and war, arguably the major causes of its demise. He writes engagingly about the military as an institution, but has little to say about particular conflicts themselves, such as the Battle of Sadowa, which helped trigger the *Ausgleich* of 1867, or the actual fighting on the front in World War One. Throughout, Judson names scholars whose arguments or words he cites in the text, expertly positioning their findings with the work of others or his own interpretations, while furthering his overall thesis. He cites the relevant scholarship in English, German, Czech, French, and Italian while benefitting from scholars writing in those languages who use the other languages of the empire in their research. Judson enlivens his synthesis with analyses of primary sources, such as paintings or cultural geographies from the period, which help readers grasp the story from the perspective of contemporaries. Occasionally, as when he interprets a painting or makes a significant original argument, Judson uses the first person, underscoring his authorial intervention.

Judson begins his first chapter with a house numbering project commissioned by Empress Maria Theresa as a means to count population, so subjects could be taxed and conscripted more efficiently. As military officials interacted with the populace in an effort to gather information, peasants used the opportunity to complain about local abuses of power. Judson shows how the state thus challenged local hierarchies of power, while generating "new loyalties that tied individuals to the central state" (17). Interventions such as the institution of mandatory, vernacular-language schooling for children of both sexes in 1774, which placed the Habsburgs at the forefront of European states at the time, and the expropriation of property from non-charitable contemplative orders for welfare and educational purposes, helped peasants and burghers to see the state as a source of leverage against the church and local elites. In this chapter, as in each successive one, Judson also explores the multiple evolving understandings of the nation during the period. He stresses the way that the concept of nationhood as a geographically-bounded community arose in large part due to centralizing imperial projects, which tended to treat citizens as interchangeable units.

If under Maria Theresa and Joseph II bureaucrats saw themselves as agents of change, in the half century that followed, Judson argues, the bureaucracy

became more focused on maintaining the status quo. He asserts that the state's centralizing desires in policing and censorship far outstripped its resources, and, despite Klemens von Metternich's repressive measures, museums, libraries, newspapers, clubs, and cafés took root. Thanks to the growth of civil society, visions for the empire's future "became articulated more fully in society and less and less by the state itself" (154). Peasants in Galicia saw the state as a weapon against the landed gentry, the middle classes viewed it as a fatherland and a source of social mobility, while noble nationalists in Hungary "took advantage of the state's partial retreat to legitimate their cause among the people" (154). When revolutionary violence broke out in 1846 and 1848, it largely conformed to those three categories: violent revolution in the countryside to sweep "away vestiges of agrarian feudalism"; urban, liberal demands for constitutional rule; and noble efforts for autonomy or independence (156). The question of the empire's role "lay at the heart" of all three. This explains why so many revolutionaries couched themselves as true Habsburgs seeking "a return to an imperial legality that they claimed had been abandoned in the recent past" (156). Nationalist loyalties, Judson points out, "could be found only among a relatively narrow, and usually literate and urban public" (212). He cites a gymnasium student from Carniola who observed, "the year 1848 was in a nationalist sense completely meaningless to the great mass of people" (213).

Judson's treatment of the post-revolutionary era stresses the apparently ironic results of Emperor Francis Joseph's assertion of control. Contrary to traditional accounts of "the return to absolutism," Judson's interpretation of this period stresses that, after annulling the 1849 constitution, "Austria's new ruler embarked on an ambitious and in many ways forward-thinking program of economic, social, and cultural renewal," even if it was enforced by a police state (218). Later "historians interpreted this period largely in terms of that control. . . . [and] it may seem counterintuitive to refer to a police state as a liberal empire," yet it ended feudalism, it dissolved the exceptional privileges of the guilds, "it confirmed freedom of property ownership, of movement, and of profession, and it asserted equality under a unified legal system for all citizens" (219).

Once defeat at Sadowa challenged the implementation of these policies, the Settlement (Judson's translation for *Ausgleich*) created a situation in which nationalist politics arose, though in very different contexts in Austria, which tried to be a multilingual and multiconfessional state, and Hungary, which sought increasingly to assimilate non-Hungarian speakers into the Hungarian nation. Chapter 5 addresses the problem of nationalist politics most directly. Judson articulates three postulates: 1) Nationalist conflict was a political problem couched as a cultural one; 2) Nation-building was not natural or unilateral, but situational; and 3) Empire mattered. "Imperial institutions, laws, and administrative practices played crucial roles in giving shape to the more successful forms of nationalism" (274). The state's effort to "achieve legal equality of *language use*," for example, meant that language became an increasingly meaningful political category (293). But nationalist conflict over language use, which reached its apogee in the Badeni Crisis of 1897, was hardly the only story of the period. Judson also explores Austrian

imperialism, and in the next chapter, modernization and urbanization as developments that likely proved much more meaningful on a daily basis for citizens. He emphasizes municipal autonomy, universal schooling, universal conscription, and universal manhood suffrage as “the focus of political activity and emotional loyalties” in this period (382).

Judson’s discussion of the war also focuses on his theme of institutions, noting the harsh military dictatorship of the first two years of the war and the creation of new imperial programs, including rationing, surveillance, new welfare benefits, and refugee camps. Judson’s discussion of the military dictatorship, which included censorship, summary justice, and the suspension of Parliament and the diets, invites an intriguing thought: the military that had held the Empire together—one of Oscar Jaszi’s famous centripetal forces in his 1929 book *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*—was also a principal cause of its downfall. Of course we had known this already, but Judson’s point of emphasis here about the anti-democratic nature of the military dictatorship of the first two years of the war makes this explicit. Judson concludes by observing that the war had eroded “mutual obligation between people and state, [thus eliminating its] very *raison d’être*” (421). The states that replaced it, rather than ushering in democracy and national self-determination, actually marked the proliferation of problems that had beset the empire. “Brutal nationalist dictatorship in most cases became the only means to square the circle of populist democracy and ethnic nationhood” (451).

Some readers, particularly non-specialists, might conclude that Judson is an apologist for empire, a historian who sees in the Habsburg Empire a proto European Union that, however bumbling it may have been in its effort to create a centralized state of linguistically and confessionally diverse people, was definitely preferable to the political systems that followed. While there may be an element of truth to this counterfactual assertion, I think this reading would be a mistake. Judson’s central argument seeks not to exonerate or lionize the Habsburg Empire, but rather to show how its very effort to maintain power by creating a base of loyal citizens largely worked, while also creating the vocabulary and political systems that, in the context of a war that it helped to precipitate, brought about its demise. This argument warrants our close consideration, and *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* deserves attention from specialists, who will find splendid insights in its synthesis, and non-specialists, who likely will find their presumptions about nation and empire upset.

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