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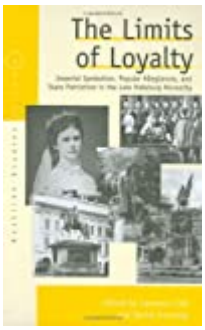

Laurence Cole, Daniel Unowsky, eds. *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy.* Austrian and Habsburg Studies. New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. viii + 246 pp. $90.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-84545-202-5.

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The Case for Inertia?

One of the more welcome aspects of reviewing online is the freedom to devote appropriate space to an edited collection such as this. All too often the variety of the research on offer, and the genuine sense of a colloquium going on in what is frequently the record of an academic conference, get lost sight of in the need to summarize it all in a mere five hundred words or so. This seems particularly true of the present volume. Its nine contributions, together with the characteristically insightful afterword by R. J. W. Evans, are all excellent, thought-provoking reflections on the extent to which the Habsburg monarchy in its last half-century of existence, in particular during the reign of its last monarch but one, Francis Joseph, was capable of eliciting loyalty from its subjects. As the editors and several contributors point out, discussions of this question, and of the monarchy's general viability as a state, have been dominated ever since its 1918 collapse by the famous distinction drawn by Hungarian Ã©migrÃ© political scientist Oscar JÃ¡szi, in *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (1929), between "centrifugal" and "centripetal" forces. In an age of rising and increasingly irreconcilable nationalisms, JÃ¡szi argued, the traditionally centripetal elements of dynasty, church, bureaucracy, and army proved too weak to counter these centrifugal tendencies. Although JÃ¡szi was too acute a student of the monarchy to ignore the crucial importance of the First World War in facilitating the triumph of the centrifugal forces, the tendency ever since has been to see the monarchy as an institution living on borrowed time, beset by near-terminal challenges both within and without.

Of late, however, a countervailing tendency in historical scholarship has focused on the centripetal forces and highlighted how much staying power and real cohesion the monarchy had. This tendency is not so much a misplaced nostalgia for the monarchy as a more rational, humane alternative to the squabbling, internally riven successor states, let alone a sentimentalization centered on the "venerable" Francis Joseph of the sort still visible in the tackier tourist boutiques of present-day Vienna, but rather a commendable reaction to the implicit, if usually unstated, determinism in the original JÃ¡szi premise. In

the hands of popularizers and, it has to be said, one's own undergraduates, JÃ¡szi's distinction between forces of dissolution and forces of cohesion tends to degenerate into an inevitabilist scenario: *because* the monarchy was a dynastic state, and absolutist in aspiration if not always in practice, it was *bound* to founder on the rocks of popular sovereignty and mass politics; *because* it was a multinational state, it was *bound* to fall apart. This travesty of historical reality, it should be stressed, was never the interpretation of the monarchy's earliest analysts and critics, such as JÃ¡szi or, before him, R. W. Seton-Watson and Henry Wickham Steed. Such pioneers of critical Habsburg studies, many of whom began their work while the monarchy was still alive and kicking, started from a position of wishing the monarchy well, and hoped that it would set its house in order for the sake of international stability as well as natural justice. The fall of the monarchy was always, to its more discerning critics and subsequent historians, contingent upon the mistakes of its leaders, the determination of its enemies, the catastrophe of the First World War, and the unprecedented strains placed upon the state by the duration and nature of that war. Yet Habsburg studies ever since, as Cole and Unowsky complain, have nevertheless been focused mainly on why the monarchy collapsed, rather than "what held it together for so long" (p. 2).

The particular focus of the present volume is the dynasty itself. How did Francis Joseph's kaleidoscopically different subjects see him and the institution he represented? How, if at all, did the monarchy project itself into the hearts and minds of individuals, from the Bukovina to Trentino, and with what results? In particular, is it possible to talk of what the late PÃ©ter HanÃ¡k called "parallel realities," of a monarchy where individuals acknowledged some sort of loyalty to the dynasty and the idea of the *Gesamtmonarchie*, while at the same time demonstrating their allegiance to the "imagined community" of their own nationality?

After a useful introduction by the editors, which highlights the relative paucity of scholarly work on centripetal factors, the nine main contributions do not manage to cover all geographical or national areas of the late monarchy in addressing this question, but then that was clearly never the intention. Instead, each focuses on a particular aspect of how, or whether, dynastic loyalty was generated, among a particular stratum of the population. The results represent a fascinating cross-section of opinion on the monarchy across the state.

Ernst BruckmÃ¼ller goes straight to the heart of how loyalty might literally be inculcated, by looking at the teaching of history and geography in the monarchy's school system. Following the example of Charles Jelavich, whose *South Slav Nationalisms* (1992) charted the same subjects for both the monarchy and Serbia in the couple of generations before 1914, BruckmÃ¼ller concentrates on primary school textbooks, while comparing them with the teaching of history at secondary level. This comparison exposes the fundamental paradox of education present in this multinational state ever since Maria Theresa's ordinances of the 1770s: in order to achieve a minimum standard of literacy, primary schooling, at least, *had* to start in the native language of the subject–whatever that language was. The surprising thing about BruckmÃ¼ller's findings is that, especially after the advent of constitutional rule in 1867, primary school textbooks managed to accommodate material that not only stressed the history of the dynastic state and the subject's obligation of loyalty to it, but also the national myths and history of particular peoples as well. In some cases, certain periods and topics were glossed over or entirely omitted. For instance, most of the seventeenth century was absent from Czech-language primers, and much of the nineteenth century from Italian ones. On the whole, however, "national culture and state patriotism could be simultaneously inculcated in schoolchildren" at this level (p. 21). The teaching of history in secondary textbooks, by contrast, was a thornier matter, clearly seen as more liable to politicization. The content of textbooks was more rigorously censored, and the material on offer was more consciously aimed at stressing loyalty to the state, while downplaying national and cultural consciousness.

Laurence Cole investigates the growth and role of veterans' organizations in Cisleithania after 1870. As one of the pillars of the dynastic state, the army was an ideal vehicle for teaching loyalty, even more so after the introduction of universal conscription in 1868. The army's role as an integrative institution, as Cole is at pains to stress, can still be argued, especially given the potential for controversy over the language of command; nevertheless, the military service to which the majority of the monarchy's male subjects were exposed probably did more to create a sense of commonality as subjects than any other factor. The interesting thing about veterans' organizations, however, is that they were entirely voluntary, even if the state undoubtedly encouraged their formation and monitored their activities. And as more and more men passed out of their three-year service and entered the reserves, the increasing number of such associations (some 2,250 by 1912) testified to the genuine

popularity of this form of social activity. The original and abiding purpose of the associations was one of mutual insurance, to provide help for indigent or ill veterans, and to cover the cost of funerals. The associations rapidly took on a social function, however, following which veterans could don uniforms, march in parades and religious processions, and provide visible symbols of loyalty to the state on official occasions. Cole provides a striking case study of how this process worked in the largely Italian-populated Trentino, among subjects whose shared nationality with Italy, it might be thought, would make participation in veterans' associations less likely. Not a bit of it. Italian-speaking veterans, perhaps encouraged by the loyalism of the Catholic Church, proved just as capable as other Habsburg subjects of exhibiting an Austrian patriotism. Cole suggests that this might have been a class issue: the majority of veterans, after all, came from a relatively humble social stratum, whereas it was the urban middle classes of the Trentino that were most responsive to Italian nationalism and irredentism.

Nancy M. Wingfield's contribution focuses on the "after-life" of Emperor Joseph II, and the differing adaptations of his memory by various groups of the monarchy's subjects. As the symbol of would-be enlightened absolutism, and in particular the modernized, centralized, and bureaucratic state, Joseph was revered in his own time and ever after by the peasantry, who identified him as their "liberator" and well-wisher, and by Jews, who remembered his toleration edicts. In the nineteenth century this image of the "imperial humanitarian" (p. 66) was gradually (mis)appropriated, for instance in March 1848, when revolutionaries rallied around the equestrian statue of Joseph in the Hofburg in their demand for the lifting of censorship. Later that year, Joseph's will was cited as justification for completing peasant emancipation, and the young Archduke Francis adopted the title of Francis Joseph on becoming emperor in December, in a conscious attempt to portray himself as a "reforming" monarch. As Wingfield astutely comments, the neo-absolutist regime's most "Josephist" trait was its centralizing authoritarianism. Later still, in the constitutional period, Austrian German liberals appealed to the enlightened Josephist tradition in their defense of education, but they also increasingly stressed the Germanizing tendencies of Joseph's reign in their own struggles with the Czechs and other non-German nationalities. After the Liberals' fall from power in 1879, they increasingly exalted Joseph as the mascot of German culture and dominance, while clerical conservatives of all nationalities saw him as the epitome of godless secularism. By the turn of the century Joseph had become the poster child of German nationalists, who bizarrely "were able to turn an imperial figure against the dynasty" (p. 81).

Hugh LeCaine Agnew, in one of the best articles in the book, traces the problematic relationship between Francis Joseph and his Czech subjects who, throughout the emperor's reign, made repeated protestations of loyalty, but always without the desired result of some form of autonomy for the Bohemian crownlands comparable to that of Hungary's after the *Ausgleich*. Despite several tantalizing affirmations of his readiness to recognize Bohemian state rights by being formally crowned king of Bohemia, and despite his willingness to govern with Czech support in the Reichsrath after 1879, Francis Joseph never in the end abandoned the basic deal made with the Hungarians. The result was that Czech loyalism, as opposed to passive acceptance of the status quo, became increasingly perfunctory in the last decades of the reign, even if this fell a long way short of active disloyalty. Instead of the monarch himself, Agnew observes, the Crown of St. Wenceslas became the public symbol of Czech loyalty, and was thereby transformed into a *national* symbol.

Daniel L. Unowsky conducts the bold experiment of comparing Polish with Ruthenian reactions to imperial visits to Galicia between 1851 and 1880. Polish attitudes towards the monarchy were split into two, if not three, factions. The conservative noble elite appreciated that Poles in Austria's share of the partitions had a considerably better lot than their compatriots under Russian and Prussian rule, especially after the ad hoc arrangement after 1867, according to which Poles enjoyed something like autonomy, and hence dominance, within Galicia, in return for their acceptance of Habsburg rule. Polish nobles who had sympathized with and even participated in previous revolts against Russian rule and the emergent middle-class democrats of Galicia tended to evince more overtly nationalist sympathies. These factions clashed in 1880 over how enthusiastically to greet Francis Joseph on his visit, as well as whether, if at all, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the uprising of 1830. In the same year (1880), Galicia's Ruthenian community, by contrast, was firmly shut out of the centenary commemoration of Joseph II's emancipation edicts by the Polish conservatives in charge of organizing the official ceremonies. Not daunted in the least, Ruthenes held their own celebrations, and indeed made common cause with their allies in the Austrian Reichsrath, the German Liberals, in ostentatiously honoring the emperor's memory. Public events and anniversaries, in short, could demonstrate division

and friction as well as loyalty.

Alice Freifeld provides a study of the empress Elisabeth's image in Hungary, in what she terms an early example of "celebrity monarchism" (p. 138). This article is in some respects the least impressive of the collection, not because of any lack of scholarship or erudition, but because of the rather strained interpretation placed upon the sources. Certainly Freifeld makes a convincing case for Elisabeth's genuine popularity among Hungarians, as a result of her perceived humanizing influence on Francis Joseph and her explicit identification with the Hungarian noble elite and Hungarian language and culture. She is on much shakier ground, however, in claiming Elisabeth's supposedly crucial intervention in the forging of the *Ausgleich* of 1867, an interpretation for which Freifeld adduces no further evidence than a generalized quote from Oscar JÃ¡szi. The article is not helped by its hyperbolic language, of which the description of Elisabeth as "the *mater dolorosa* of liberal monarchism" (p. 153) is among the more restrained examples; and given Elisabeth's palpable indifference to public life in her later years, including the Hungarian side of it, identifying her as an icon of Hungary's own "martyrdom" in the twentieth century seems fanciful in the extreme.

Sarah A. Kent utilizes a single royal visit to Zagreb, in 1895, to draw out some of the ambiguities and cross-currents attendant upon loyalism in Croatia. Francis Joseph's presence in Zagreb became the occasion for a demonstration by Croatian nationalist students, among them the later Peasant Party leader, Stjepan RadiÄ, against Hungarian domination, in the course of which the Hungarian flag was set alight. Although the perpetrators of this minor outrage were duly sentenced to short prison terms, their demonstration was explicitly loyalist in tone. The students marched in their uniforms as a "corporative" body to the main square, cried out "Long live the Croatian King"–that is, *Francis Joseph*–and evoked the name of Ban Josip JelaÄiÄ, famous for his loyalty to the Habsburgs, instead of Hungary, in 1848-49. Their protest, in their eyes, was a legalistic one against the use of the Hungarian flag on Croatian soil during the royal visit, but more generally against the inadequate autonomy granted Croatia by Hungary in the *Nagodba* of 1868. According to Kent, much of the Croatian public made clear that it shared these views, and the unstated implication, for the dynasty, was that Croatians' loyalty to the dynasty, in these circumstances, "had its limits" (p. 173).

In one of the most interesting pieces included, Alon Rachamimov examines the writings of the hitherto unknown (to me, at least) Hebrew writer Avigdor Hameiri (1890-1970), born Avigdor Feuerstein in the Carpatho-Rus area of Royal Hungary. Hameiri was not only one of the pioneers of modern Hebrew as a literary language, and a well-regarded journalist and poet (in Hebrew and Hungarian) of the avant-garde in pre-1914 Budapest, but the author of two autobiographical novels and a whole raft of short stories and poetry chronicling his experiences as a soldier in the First World War. The novels in particular, *Ha-Shigaon ha-gadol* (*The Great Madness*; 1929) and *Be-Gehenom shel mata* (*Hell on Earth*; 1932), sound as if they deserve a wider audience, not least because they illustrate the conflicting loyalties and dilemmas of identity so acutely. Clearly, Rachamimov concludes, Jews in the Habsburg monarchy deserved their reputation for being among its most loyal subjects, since they owed their emancipation and favorable position to the relative liberalism of the late Habsburg state. Yet Jews like Hameiri were also, despite demonstrable bravery and sacrifices at the front, deemed incapable of true patriotism, or identification with any particular nation, by their fellow subjects. The whole piece demonstrates neatly the difficulty not only of assigning a clear "identity" to someone whose experience was so varied, but also of the distinction Rachamimov seeks to make between "loyalty to the state" and the much more contingent "identification with the state" (p. 180).

In the penultimate essay, Christiane Wolf undertakes a useful comparison of the Habsburg monarchy with Britain and Germany in this period, in particular of the way in which the institution of monarchy, once subject to constitutional restraints, acted as an integrative factor. In the cases of Britain and Germany, if for very different reasons, the person of the monarch became something like a national symbol. Queen Victoria and her successors, while evolving into politically neutral figures, acquired iconic status as emblems of both the "nation" (however that was conceived in the United Kingdom of the time) and the larger empire. William II, by contrast, though retaining far greater powers constitutionally, and despite his divisive attitude towards large numbers of his subjects, such as Poles, Social Democrats, Catholics, and Jews, also became intimately associated with the national idea, through his vocal advocacy of a German navy and German *Weltpolitik*. For Francis Joseph, of course, this identification with any one national idea was an impossibility. Paradoxically, in Wolf's view, the concession of constitutional rule in 1867 made it easier for the emperor-king to pose as above the fray, and although this "depoliticization of the emperor" (p. 200) did not ultimately

alleviate the monarchy's chronic nationality conflicts, it did, in Wolf's opinion, make the monarch "a focal point for an emotional connection to the state" (p. 201).

Finally, the afterword by Evans is not only a deft round-up of the arguments summarized above, but also an engaging piece of devil's advocacy, in that it reminds us literally of the limits of loyalty in this peculiar institution. As Evans puts it, there can be no doubt that, in much of the literature until recently, "royalism ... has been underestimated" (p. 225). The majority of virtually all the monarchy's peoples, no matter their social stratum, were not only capable of loyalty to the monarch and the idea of the monarchy, but positively displayed it, not least by dying in hundreds of thousands during the final cataclysm. Only the hammer blows of war made the previously inconceivable conceivable. So, it is certainly time that the balance between the study of centrifugal forces and that of centripetal ones was redressed in favor of the latter. On the other hand, each of the contributions to this volume shows how subjects' loyalty was often conditional as well as limited. Czechs, Poles, South Slavs, Magyars, even Germans, repeatedly made clear that they expected the dynasty to come down on their particular side of this or that dispute; without that backing, alienation and even disaffection were all the more likely. In this context, as Evans gently points out, the pretence that the monarch was somehow above the fray, belonging to no one cause, was just that–a fiction. In reality Francis Joseph was, by definition, intimately involved in the management of his empire, not just in the traditional realms of foreign policy and the armed forces, but in the affairs of every province. It could not be otherwise, since for the Habsburgs "their continued involvement in government was essential for the running of the Monarchy" (p. 228). Involvement meant taking sides, or at the very least disappointing one side or the other, so that the further the politicization and nationalization of the monarchy's peoples went, the more the monarchy was bound to disappoint everybody. To be perfectly sure of alienating no one, and committing no foreign policy disasters, the monarchy would have been better advised to have divested itself of all effective power, as in Britain, and to have opted for a policy of *quieta non movere*. That way, possibly, the residual inertia governing the lives of its people might have kept them "loyal," at least after a fashion.

This volume is a splendid addition to the invaluable Austrian and Habsburg Studies series. Each of its contributors has approached his or her subject in a novel way, and the result is a collection that obliges the reader to look at things with a fresh eye.

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