

**Staat, Loyalität und Minderheiten in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa 1918-1941.** Hrsg. von Peter Haslinger und Joachim von Puttkamer. Oldenbourg Verlag. München 2007. 262 S. ISBN 978-3-486-58548. (€ 29,80.)

**The Limits of Loyalty.** Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy. Hrsg. von Laurence Cole und Daniel Unowsky. (Austrian Studies, Bd. 9.) Berghahn Press. New York 2007. 246 S. ISBN 978-1-84545-202-5. (£ 45,-.)

The two volumes under review here offer different approaches to questions of loyalty, patriotism and nationalism in East-Central Europe. In their geographic and chronological coverage, the essays in the Cole/Unowsky collection examine Austro-Hungarian society between 1870 and 1918, while those in the Haslinger/Puttkamer volume investigate East-Central and Balkan Europe in the interwar period (1918-1941). Given the specific themes each book seeks to address, loyalty to the multinational state on the one hand and minority politics in nation states on the other, these distinct periodizations make good sense. In another way, however, the periodization is unfortunate because it unintentionally exaggerates the degree to which mental maps may have changed in 1918, and thus reinforces the traditional nationalist teleology that saw in 1918 a kind of *Stunde Null*. In fact, essays in both volumes demonstrate the ways in which the mentalities of the interwar period were rooted in the experiences of an earlier period, and that strategies and practices of the earlier period shaped post-1918 understandings of loyalty, nationhood, and patriotism to a high degree.

In their introductions, each pair of editors lays out a series of historical questions that the essays in the volumes seek to answer. Cole and Unowsky focus on general problems in the existing historiography of the Monarchy, and are less concerned with developing a specific theoretical approach to the questions of dynastic loyalty that their collection addresses. On the other hand, Haslinger and von Puttkamer offer a far more theorized schema for examining complex questions of loyalty especially as they concern minority groups in post-war Eastern Europe's nation states. Cole and Unowsky ask us to re-think the more traditional approaches that have dominated histories of the late Habsburg Monarchy, approaches that have viewed questions of loyalty in terms of stark dichotomies. They hope to achieve a greater balance in their assessment of the relative strengths or weaknesses of the Monarchy, and to avoid the traditional nationalist teleologies that interpreted Austria-Hungary's history solely in terms of a fatal decline. This intention is laudable at the level of theoretical approach, and also highly productive at the level of evidence. Some of the better essays in this volume, among them those by Cole and Unowsky, clearly demonstrate just how patriotism and nationalism often helped to reinforce each other and depended on each other for their coherence.

Even though Cole and Unowsky offer us something new, their introduction occasionally and unintentionally falls back on the very binary arguments they seek to avoid (p. 2). In their concern for redressing the imbalance in the historiography that has long favored "pessimist" (and nationalist) accounts, they implicitly reiterate the classic nationalist teleology that saw the very existence of the Monarchy as problematic by definition. This search for a kind of balance reinforces the legitimacy of the two options (survival and collapse), placing the burden of proof once again on those who recognize the Monarchy's normalcy or its institutional strengths, and preventing us from imagining some other less teleological forms of development. This tendency also contradicts their highly insightful suggestion that "the growth of national consciousness and the development of a dynastic-based patriotism was not necessarily a zero-sum game." (p. 7)

Some of the authors in this volume examine institutional mechanisms through which the state sought actively to inspire popular loyalty, while others examine the ways in which both state and nationalists attempted to attach popular significance to symbols and historic figures. Ernst Bruckmüller surveys both the patriotic and nationalist myths that appeared in grade-school readers in several regions of the Monarchy, analyzing their content

while simultaneously explaining the process by which school boards chose textbooks and authors produced them. Laurence Cole analyzes popular patriotism among Austrian military veterans in the Trentino region of Tyrol, revealing the effective ideological links between the state and a social movement that mobilized thousands of men for charitable, social, and patriotic purposes. Alice Freifeld perceptively explores how Empress Elizabeth consciously shaped her self-presentation as Queen of Hungary. Unowsky's essay on Franz-Josef's state visit to Galicia in 1880 analyzes a tug-of-war over symbols common to both the regime and the nationalist movements. He shows how nationalist movements and the imperial court used and exploited the figure of the Emperor to build popularity for their causes. Sarah Kent's essay examines a state visit by Hungarian King Franz-Josef to the Croatian capital Zagreb in 1895, during which law students protested against the "tyranny" of the Magyars while celebrating the "Croatian King." Alon Rachamimov's excellent essay examines legendary Jewish loyalty to the state using the example of writer Avigdor Hameiri. Going well beyond traditional tropes about the loyalty of Habsburg Jews, R. interrogates the changing character and quality of that loyalty over time, making loyalty into a highly situational attribute.

The essays in this volume offer scholars several alternative narratives about Austro-Hungarian society. Nevertheless, some questions about the concept of loyalty remain unaddressed or at least implicit in the volume. To what degree, for example, did loyalty to the dynasty and loyalty to the state coincide in the late nineteenth century? Was loyalty to the dynasty transferrable to the state?

Haslinger and Puttkamer argue that the category of loyalty is far more useful than the category of identity for understanding popular attitudes and behaviors in the interwar years. The primary context for examining loyalty in this period is obviously in the relationships that obtained between the successor states and their national minorities in the 1920s and 1930s. In the beginning, a loyalty relationship is founded on an agreement about expectations of behavior on two sides. The loyalty exhibited by one side guarantees the predictable behavior of the other side. Thinking in terms of a rational "loyalty" to the state could also de-escalate potential crises that pitted national minorities against the nationalizing states in which they found themselves after 1918. Later, however, loyalty could also become an increasingly explicit standard of behavior against which people's daily behaviors could be measured and found wanting, thus legitimating a retraction of the original concessions to a minority. Haslinger and Puttkamer outline three typical discursive uses of loyalty in the interwar years that illustrate how this progression could happen.

The first of these approaches, which was common in the immediate post-war years, treated state loyalty as a useful form of mediation between the "natural feeling" for one's nation, and a pragmatic respect for an alien rule that nevertheless respected the rights of the minority. The second usage of loyalty also sought to integrate a national minority, but did so in a far more disciplinary fashion. In this case an external power enforced the integration of a local minority group by constantly evaluating people's quotidian behaviors for the degree of loyalty they allegedly demonstrated. Here, as Elena Mannova's work on Southern Slovakia demonstrates, the demands made on a local minority (in this case the Magyars) were not simply about integrating that minority into national society, but often about disciplining local Slovaks who remained stubbornly indifferent to their new nation state. Finally, the editors note yet a third and different kind of loyalty, one that bypassed the state altogether: demands for increased solidarity within one's national group (*Volk*) that became increasingly common in the 1930s and may even have encouraged active disloyalty toward a state as a way to demonstrate that loyalty.

Several essays combine elements of each of the three above approaches to loyalty in their analyses of local society as we see, for example, in Ingo Eser's examination of German speakers in the new Polish Republic. He sees the loyalty demanded of this minority as both an integrative factor, but also (over time) as an increasingly disciplinary one. Mannova's highly insightful examination of society in southern Slovakia demonstrates the

ways in which outward professions and displays of loyalty in daily life became a means through which local elites and the region's new rulers could discipline both local Magyar-speakers and local Slovak speakers. Martin Zückert examines the attitudes of Sudeten Germans toward the Czechoslovak military, and the attitudes of Czech nationalists to the perceived apathy of the Sudeten Germans toward the new state. Zückert invokes the importance of situational elements to show that while many observers consistently read nationalist intent into uncooperative actions of German-speaking recruits, several other kinds of explanations for their behaviors are possible. Gerhard Seewann examines loyalties among the *Ungarndeutschen*, a group that barely existed in popular terms before the 1930s. In this case, local groups developed a kind of double-identity after 1918 that privileged their loyalty to the Hungarian state while at the same time emphasizing their particular historic status in Hungary. Bernhard Böttcher examines yet another case of double identity, but one with a longer consciousness in its history, that of the Saxon Germans in Transylvania. Here, community identity depended largely on the maintenance of the community in its *Heimat* rather than on loyalty to the particular state (Hungary or Romania) that surrounded the *Heimat*. Holm Sundhussen examines the failures of Yugoslavism in relation to Bosnian and Croatian Muslims who did not make nationalist claims on the interwar state.

A few of the authors in this volume presume the real and ongoing existence of the national minority groups whose behavior they analyze, and thus run into some trouble. It is easy to see why they do so. Media, activists, and governments reported events in this way, administrative practice – with some rare exceptions – reinforced this presumption, and laws and institutions also acted from this presumption. Indeed, the existence of many national groups were defined and anchored in law. But this a-priori presumption of the existence of the group undermines many of the historians' best insights. If identity is not fixed but rather a product of changing situations, then how or why should we speak about these groups as if they were real? The analyses would be even more effective, I think, if we historians would also consider normalizing nationally indifferent behaviors, rather than viewing them as exceptional or as signifying nationalist disloyalty. Historians and nationalists alike tend to impute disloyalty where closer attention to context and situation might reveal different motivations altogether.

Both these volumes provide valuable studies of issues that can largely be understood only with reference to the local. Concepts like nation, nationalism, identity, minority, ethnicity, are almost meaningless without reference to context and situation. Several of the essays in both of these volumes demonstrate considerable and nuanced insight into the discursive meanings of these concepts and the ways in which they mobilized or failed to mobilize people in Habsburg Central Europe, both before and after the First World War. In some cases, however, the authors' conceptual apparatus has yet to catch up to the insights of their analysis. We interrogate concepts such as "minorities" and we analyze their construction, but why do we still treat them as legitimate categories for social analysis rather than as categories of practice? Historians' work often demonstrates in clear terms the contingency, mutability and often the irrelevance of these terms for the very people to whom they are applied. Even when we recognize the problems associated with these terms, we often fall back on them as a way to explain behaviors and events. If we are truly to learn from the local – and I believe these issues must be understood in that way – then should we not build a theory from the bottom up that does not start with "minority" or "nationhood" but perhaps ends with them?

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