

Osterkamp, Jana (Hrsg.): *Kooperatives Imperium. Politische Zusammenarbeit in der späten Habsburgermonarchie*. Göttingen: (O) 2018. ISBN: 978-3-525-37069-8; 328 S.

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This well-edited volume marks a milestone in the development over the last thirty-five years of a new, revisionist historiography of the Habsburg Monarchy during its last half-century. The previous master narrative depicted an antiquated and crisis-ridden dynastic state that was challenged by a modernizing society, nationality conflicts, and rising mass politics, which its absolutist bureaucratic traditions and rigid post-1867 constitutional structure could not accommodate. In recent decades a different view has emerged which posits a dynamic, developing polity, even if still conflict-laden, in which government and a vibrant civil society evolved in a symbiotic relationship. Much of the impetus for the new outlook came initially from North American scholars, who were joined by others in the United Kingdom. At first, many continental European historians hesitated to take up the anglophone colleagues' use of social history methodology, their pursuit of intensive local studies of political mobilization, and their constructivist views of national identification. Over the last fifteen years, however, a growing number of historians in Western, Central, and East-Central Europe have joined in developing dynamic views of government-society relations in the late Habsburg Monarchy. This volume offers a showcase for the insightful work of continental European historians who are charting the complex give and take among a greater range of governmental agencies, representative bodies, parties, interest groups, and elements of Habsburg society at large than were ever considered before. It is telling that North American scholars authored only two of the seventeen chapters in this collection.

The Collegium Carolinum in Munich and the Masaryk Institute and Archive of the Czech Academy of Sciences jointly sponsored the November 2016 conference which served

as the basis for this volume. The historian Jana Osterkamp led the organizational efforts, and she completed the subsequent editorial work so rapidly that this volume was published less than eighteen months later. Her lucid introduction deftly sets the stage. She positions the volume in the broader field of comparative history of empires which has moved away from the simpler old tropes of decline and fall. Osterkamp points to the ability of the nineteenth-century Habsburg state – or the dual Austrian and Hungarian states after 1867 – to develop dynamically in relationship with a changing social and economic landscape. In her view the diversity of languages, social structures, and economic conditions in the different regions of the realm together with the multi-layered governmental administration required a cooperative system, in which a multiplicity of institutions and actors from government and civil society worked to shape public policy and develop an array of new public services.

The essays in the body of the volume demonstrate that such cooperation was inescapable during the late nineteenth century but also that it did not entail harmony among all the engaged agencies and interests. State authority was constitutionally and legally centralized in the hands of the emperor/king and the central ministries in the Austrian and Hungarian halves of the monarchy, but in practice governmental functions were distributed among the layers of ministerial offices, the Austrian crown land diets and their agencies, the district administrative agencies (*Bezirkshauptmannschaften*) in the Austrian lands and the counties in Hungary, and cities and communes. From a range of perspectives, chapters in this volume demonstrate how important for everyday governance and the development of the whole polity were the activities of administrators at various local and regional levels and of individuals and groups representing local society. All of the contributions are carefully researched and soundly argued.

Changing social and economic conditions during the late nineteenth century generated growing demands for new administrative and social services, and this required new modes of cooperation among governmental agencies

and societal actors. Some of the most original and revealing contributions in this volume address such developments. Chapters by Franz Adlgasser and Uwe Müller map how business and industrial leaders took up seats in the representative bodies alongside local party politicians. Social science conceptualizations appear rarely in the volume, but the historian Peter Becker draws usefully on the sociologist Michael Mann's notions of „interpenetration“ and „infrastructural power“ to analyze the interaction of state and non-state actors, the engagement of various government agencies and interest groups, and the stumbling blocks along the way in the Austrian government's development of accident and health insurance. The contribution by Peter Urbanitsch on education in the Austrian crown lands reminds us that while ministerial authorities retained broad powers throughout the constitutional era to regulate public education and determine funding for the state Gymnasien, universities, and technical colleges, the crown land diets, their school boards, and communal governments also played important roles. Moreover, governmental agencies and representative bodies had to respond to pressures from political parties, interest groups, clergy, and individual citizens regarding education. In Hungary the central government used its considerable powers after the late 1870s to assure that most education beyond the initial primary school classes was conducted in Magyar, but John Swanson's chapter shows how Swabian Germans in a number of central Hungarian villages willingly embraced the adoption of Magyar instruction in their local schools.

Several chapters in this book depict how cooperation between societal actors and governmental agencies at different levels often provided the only effective means for responding to new challenges and opportunities. Government offices, for instance, often lacked the resources and mechanisms needed to deal with economic crises and natural disasters. Ségolène Plyer's revealing examination of how government agencies reacted to the threat of mass starvation in 1877 in the Bohemian Erzgebirge/Krušné hory and Riesengebirge/Krkonoše and to flooding in 1897 in the upper Elbe valley shows how the author-

ities, particularly in the district administrative agencies, had to improvise cooperation among their offices, the Bohemian governor's office, military units, the Bohemian Diet's executive committee, and communal authorities along with local estate owners and philanthropists. Her chapter demonstrates how much can be learned about relations between government and society by examining the work of the district administrative agencies, which have received little close attention from historians heretofore.

Some major transportation projects, such as new railroad lines, might so far exceed the governmental agencies' means to act that it was up to business and financial leaders and local politicians to take the initiative. In a perceptive discussion of efforts to construct new rail lines in Transylvania, Judit Pál and Vlad Popovici describe how key local actors or „power brokers,“ as they term them, had to secure the cooperation of multiple local and ministerial officials, landowners, and private financial interests to achieve their goals. Here it must be said that one of the few notable weaknesses of this volume is that only the contributions of Swanson and Pál and Popovici address developments in the Hungarian half of the monarchy.

Several chapters in the volume examine cases in which elements of civil society built coalitions without engaging governmental agencies to address political and social issues of the day. Martina Niedhammer analyzes how Jewish religious communities, charities, and other organizations banded together in the Austrian crown lands to assist poor Jewish migrants from Tsarist Russia and Galicia, who could not draw on normal poor relief, which required local legal residence (*Heimatrecht*). Similarly, the women's rights movement was obliged to develop coalitions of support independent of governmental bodies, but Judith Brehmer's chapter analyzes how the commitment of Czech women's rights activists to national loyalty and national emancipation obliged them to act apart from their Austrian German counterparts as well as from the state. Altogether, the riches offered by this volume make it much more rewarding reading than many other collections of revised conference papers.

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