**Habsburg Civil Servants: Beyond the State Apparatus**

Online Conference / Edited Volume

January 28th-29th 2022

During the long 19th century, the Habsburg civil service grew steadily. The swelling ranks of clerks, inspectors, tax collectors, military recruiters, census-takers, policemen, judges, cartographers, sanitation officials, telegraph operators, and other minor officials did not form an entirely homogenous social group, differentiated as they were by educational attainment, region, rank, and status. They nevertheless formed an important social collective, characterized above all by literacy, but also by novel habits, values, cultural practices, and novel social circumstances.

The administrative apparatus helped bring all imperial citizens together in a common society. Their role in embodying and personifying the state at the local level proved especially crucial on various imperial peripheries, where civil servants formed the main link between villages or small towns with the imperial centre. Civil servants also represented progress, introducing into relatively isolated rural communities secular morality, hygiene, science, and myriad other social and cultural transformations sometimes collectively denoted as “modernity.” Like other middle-class professionals, they formed and joined associations, societies and social clubs, promoting charitable causes, local development, and other various causes imagined as conductive to the public good. As lobbyists for local causes, furthermore, they encouraged local particularism, spread patriotic sentiment, thus contributing to centrifugal political movements. Thus even as civil servants symbolized imperial loyalty, renouncing personal interests to support the state, they proved indispensable to the establishment of civil society, a force which successfully contested imperial absolutism, and contributed to the ultimate downfall of the monarchy.

Their complex role thus raises interesting questions that call for further investigation. Where did their loyalties actually lie: with the emperor, with the state, with their church, with their social class, with their particular Crownland, or with their imagined national community? To what extent did they obey the government’s directives, and alternatively to what extent did they attempt to modify, resist, evade, or subvert their instructions? Did they contribute, intentionally or unintentionally, to the spread of nationalism, or to alternate loyalties? What roles did they play in the monarchy’s social dramas, both in their working hours and when off duty? What were the cultural consequences of their unique role? How were they presented in journalism, belles-lettres, theatre, or other literary genres?

To explore such issues, we are planning first an online conference on 28-29 January. We invite scholars of any relevant disciplinary background to submit proposals on these or similar themes. There will be no conference fee. We will do our best to accommodate speakers from different time zones.

We also have plans to publish. Howard Louthan, editor of the Berghan series of Austrian and Habsburg Studies, has expressed a provisional interest in publishing an edited volume on the conference theme. Participation in the conference does not guarantee publication: written submissions will undergo a review process. It is possible to submit to the edited volume without participating in the conference, and vice-versa. Unless told otherwise, however, we will assume contributors are interested in both the conference and the publication. NB: the eventual book will use Chicago-style footnotes.

**Draft list of participants**

**Daša Ličen** (Institute of Ethnology, Ljubljana)

“State Administrators as the Essence of Change? The Case of Late Habsburg Trieste.”

**Alexander Maxwell** (Victoria University of Wellington)

“Linguistic Panslavism in the Habsburg State Apparatus”

**Lucija Balikić** (Central European University)

“Serving the Slavdom”: Southern Slavic Sokol members in the public office and the politics of dualism in late Austria-Hungary

**Sacha Davis** (University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia)

“Mining Bureaucrats as Enlightened Reformers: Ignaz von Born and Belsazar de la Motte Hacquet”

**Mátyás Erdélyi** (CEFRES Prag), **Thomas Rohringer** (LMU Munich)

“Discovering Dualism in Debate: Administrative Reform Debates in Austria and Hungary 1890-1914”

**Hugo Lane** (York College of the City University of New York)

“Austrian Officials and the Invention of the Ruthenian Nation in Galicia, 1832-1848”

**Oliver Zajac** (Slovak Academy of Sciences Institute of History, Bratislava)

“The Habsburg bureaucracy as a revolutionary ally? Czartoryski, Galicia, and plans for a future Polish uprising”

**Possible participants (have not yet sent an abstract)**

**Iva Lučić** (Uppsala University)

“Managing Forests, ‘Civilizing Society’: Habsburg Forest Officers and the Social and Ecological Transformations in Habsburg Bosnia-Herzegovina 1878-1918”

**Chris Wendt** (European University Institute)

“From a Pillar of Empire to the ‘Scapegoat of Interest Politics’? Charting Civil Servants’ Struggles to Resuscitate the State in Post-Habsburg North Tyrol”

**Richard Millington** (Victoria University of Wellington)

“The Lemberg Police in the fiction of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch”

**Abstracts**

**Daša Ličen** (Institute of Ethnology, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Art)

**“State Administrators as the Essence of Change?**

**The Case of Late Habsburg Trieste”**

Members of the Habsburg administrative apparatus accumulated enough cultural and social capital to become ordinary members of the bourgeoise that strove to modernize, teach, civilize, and liberate the general population, often referred to as the “masses”, during the 19th century. Building from the case of two bourgeois voluntary associations from late Habsburg Trieste, Società Zoofila and Società triestina d'igiene, I attempt to show administrators as proactive members of the local bourgeoisie, who as such initiated new movements and spread new ideas from within and outside their offices. More concretely, the person who established an animal protection association, accepted its regulations, publicly argued for new animal welfare acts, could also officially punish the “torturers.” State administrators thus commonly played a double role as prime movers in supporting new social values and as diligent administrators and supervisors of new norms.

**Alexander Maxwell** (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)

**“Linguistic Panslavism in the Habsburg State Apparatus”**

During the nineteenth century, Slavic savants in the Habsburg Empire, most notably the pioneering Slavist Pavel Josef Šafařík, routinely posited a single Slavic “language,” implicitly or explicitly downgrading provincial varieties of Slavic to mere “dialects.” This linguistic pan-Slavism, as its advocates described it, inspired nationalist activism and language planning on behalf of individual “dialects.” Several Habsburg officials also shared this basic assumption of a single Slavic language with different written dialects. This paper documents linguistic pan-Slavism among officials in various branches of the Habsburg state apparatus. It contextualizes the belief in a single “Slavic language” as compared to belief in multiple particularist Slavic languages. It also estimates the strength of linguistic pan-Slavism in different crownlands, finding that the particularist Polish and Czech languages enjoyed more widespread recognition than Slovak and Slovene.

**Lucija Balikić** (Central European University)

**“Serving the Slavdom”: Southern Slavic Sokol members in the public office and the politics of dualism in late Austria-Hungary**

From the turn of century towards the outbreak of the First World War in various parts of the Dual Monarchy, an increasing number of civil servants began to engage with voluntary associations which could further their political agenda in a way that the existing institutional framework and the slowly democratizing party politics of the state could not. Through conquering the public space by organizing mass gymnastics events as part of the Sokol nationalist movement, the discontented civil servants could use the bodies of their political subjects to showcase the desired political community, both in form and content. This presentation will thus explore not only the dynamics of changing of and expressing loyalty to alternative political elites, but also the changing symbolic geographies in their discourse and the process of ascribing ideological meaning to the body politic in question. Lastly, special attention will be paid to the differences between Cislaethania and Transleithania in this context, both in regard to practices of civil servants’ participation in Sokol, but also in the state’s respective reaction to Sokol's activities and the ideological output thereby produced.

**Sacha E Davis** (University of Newcastle, NSW)

**“Mining Bureaucrats as Enlightened Reformers:**

**Ignaz von Born and Belsazar de la Motte Hacquet”**

The Enlightenment scholars Ignaz von Born and Belsazar de la Motte Hacquet were both beneficiaries of the increasing bureaucratisation of the Habsburg Empire in the eighteenth century, as Habsburg Monarchs sought to better regulate their domains in line with cameralist principles, to improve the overall “happiness” of – and draw revenue from – the population. Such reforms did not treat populations equally, imposing a civilisational hierarchy between the “advanced” western provinces (in which manufacturing was to be encouraged) and the “primitive” Eastern provinces (which were to remain raw agricultural producers). The mining industry with which von Born and Hacquet were concerned, however, was to be encouraged everywhere as a key revenue source, driving rapid growth in the mining bureaucracy, mining schools, and mineralogy institutions; von Born and Hacquet held offices in all three. Both were driven to write lengthy treatises, driven by both the desire to improve productivity and the great intellectual curiosity of the Enlightenment, which extended far beyond mineralogy and geology, entering the new intellectual domain of Statistik to address the populations of the empire engaged in the mining industry. This paper examines the efforts of von Born and Hacquet, through their writings, to they presented ideas for improving the population – and the laws that governed them.

**Mátyás Erdélyi (CEFRES Prag), Thomas Rohringer (LMU Munich)**

**“Discovering Dualism in Debate: Administrative Reform Debates in Austria and Hungary 1890-1914”**

The analysis of debates on administrative reform in Austria-Hungary highlights a peculiar ‘mediated entanglement’ (rather than bifurcation) as Imperial Austrian and Hungarian scholars looked at similar international examples while only Hungarian ‘reformers’ engaged with the debates in the Austrian ‘half’. Scholars from both Imperial Austria and Hungary shared problematizations of the administrative structures of the respective ‘halves’ of the empire and, more importantly, developed similar solutions for the problems they had identified. In other words, seemingly different political motifs resulted in commonalities concerning administrative reform as a means of political rule in both parts of the Monarchy. This calls into question the narrative that Imperial Austria and Hungary had developed different logics of how to deal with their populations. The present paper investigates administrative reforms in theory and practice based on three issues that the two states had to tackle between 1867 and 1918: the question of nationalization versus self-administration in local administration; the question of electing or appointing officials; and the reform concerning the territorial structure of the two composite states.

**Hugo Lane (York College of the City University of New York)**

**“Austrian Officials and the Invention of the Ruthenian Nation**

**in Galicia, 1832-1848”**

This essay offers a novel interpretation of Austrian officials' attitudes towards the Ruthenians during the 1830s and 1840s that emphasizes the officials' role in opening the way for Ruthenians to declare themselves a separate and distinct nation in 1848. For far too long, the official exchanges that resulted from the submission of a number of manuscripts either written in Ruthenian or about Ruthenians written in Polish have been interpreted in a naive manner that assumed that Austrian officials were surprised by these efforts. This paper shows that the official deliberation about what to do with these manuscripts was in carefully orchestrated as part of a conscious effort by a few Austrian officials based in Galicia to present the Ruthenians as potential allies against Galician Poles. This campaign bore fruit after the ill-fated 1846 Uprising, when no less than Metternich approved the idea of dividing Galicia into two separate crownlands as a way to manage the Poles in 1847. A year later, the Greek Catholic hierarchy gave its blessing to dividing Galicians according to ethnically defined nationality when a delegation led by the Greek Catholic Suffragan bishop presented the Galician Governor Count Franz Stadion with a petition declaring Ruthenians' loyalty to the Austrian Emperor.

**Oliver Zajac (Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava)**

**“The Habsburg bureaucracy as a revolutionary ally? Czartoryski, Galicia, and plans for a future Polish uprising”**

Stereotypically, the Habsburg bureaucracy has been viewed as an anti-nationalist force that loyally served the unitarian and centralistic policy of the Viennese court. Consequently, the politically active members of Central European national movements have been its main enemy. However, the case of Galician bureaucracy and its reflection by the aristocratic Polish emigrational fraction Hotel Lambert tells the opposite story. Josephinian project to transform Galicia into a role-model province was turned upside down during the first half of the 19th century. Instead of promoting Germanisation, Austrian bureaucrats smoothly became a target of Polonisation. The leaders of Hotel Lambert have closely observed this process since they considered Galicia to be one of the critical elements in their plan to restore the independent Polish state. Therefore, while Czartoryski and his collaborators have approached Austrian bureaucracy as an enemy for a long time, during the late 30s and 40s of the 19th century, they radically change their tone. The (Polonised) Austrian bureaucrats have suddenly become the example that ought to be used in favour of the Polish cause. Not only that, but they should also be publicly praised and honoured! The proposed paper deals with this exciting phenomenon of radical change within the Hotel Lambert discourse about Austrian bureaucracy and analyses the strategies its leaders wanted to apply to use the pro-Polish transformation within Galician bureaucracy.

**Email Contacts**

**(organizers)**

alexander.maxwell@vuw.ac.nz

dasa.licen@gmail.com

**(participants)**

sacha.davis@newcastle.edu.au

iva.lucic@edu.uu.se

richard.millington@vuw.ac.nz

zajac.oliver@gmail.com

christopher.wendt@eui.eu

balikic\_lucija@phd.ceu.edu

hugolane@gmail.com

thomas.rohringer@lrz.uni-muenchen.de