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Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918

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of the book. The maps are uniformly poor, but particularly so for this article.

Another annoyance is the lack of an index, which will certainly limit the value of the book for many readers. There are too many typographical errors and a few surprising errors of substance which should have been corrected by editing. The one that particularly drew the attention of this Burma veteran was Alvin Coox's attributing the capture of Mandalay in 1945 to Chinese troops. (Field Marshal Slim must have turned over in his gravel!)

Despite these shortcomings, the book is generally interesting, and in some instances sheds new light on old and well-known historical examples. An example is the decisive role of Ultra in Rommel's defeat in the Western Desert, as shown by Ralph Bennett in the excellent concluding article.

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Ketchum, Richard M. *The Borrowed Years, 1938-1941: America on the Way to War*. New York: Random House, 1989. 896pp. \$29.95

The Borrowed Years is a popular history of the United States immediately prior to American entry into World War II.

The book is entirely derivative, based on other published works, and so offers nothing new to the knowledgeable reader. It is essentially a simplistic narration of familiar events told in a conventional way, from the Martian invasion panic of

1938 to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The book is smoothly written and fast-paced, but the latter virtue is partly the product of a defect: it moves fast because it lacks depth. It is balanced and up-to-date in its judgments and generally free of error. (I noticed only two minor errors in this very large work: FDR is once referred to as a former secretary of the navy, rather than assistant secretary; also, the Japanese most assuredly did not land on Bataan when they invaded the Philippines in 1941.)

Save for conventional warnings of the perils of appeasement, there is little of substance in this account. Yet if the book lacks value for the serious student of the era, perhaps its true utility is for the college student who has no knowledge of the prewar years either through memory or scholarship and for whom the stories in the book and the morals to be gleaned from them are unfamiliar.

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Deák, István. *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990. 273pp. \$39.95

István Deák, professor of history at Columbia University, has produced a marvelous social history of the Habsburg officer corps under the reign of Francis Joseph I. Deák studied a thousand officers at the Vienna War Archive, randomly selecting every

tenth member of two Joint Army cohorts of career lieutenants, 1870 and 1900; at the Budapest War Archive, he likewise studied two hundred career lieutenants randomly selected from the National Guard (*honvéd*) cohorts of 1880 and 1900. Deák concludes that the Joint Army was “ethnically blind” in recruiting, and that the key to promotion lay not with nationality or religion but rather with education and postgraduate training.

With regard to national origin, Deák found that the officers fairly represented the major populations at large: 23% German, 20% Magyar, and 45% Slav. The tragedy of the army was that while the general population increased by 49% between 1870 and 1914, the military budget rose a paltry 14%. And whereas Austria-Hungary in 1906 conscripted 0.29% of the populace, France in comparison took in a hefty 0.75%. In short, the author presents a classic case of under-spending on national defense. The Dual Monarchy paid the price for this neglect between 1914 and 1918 when, according to one estimate, officer casualties (killed, captured, or missing) amounted to a staggering 100,000 men.

Deák deals expertly with the *mentalité* of the officer corps. Various chapters detail the process of selecting and educating the prospective officers; their social origins and attitudes; pay and promotion procedures; the role of honor and the duel within the corps; the problem of homoeroticism among the cadets and homosexuality in the corps (the case of Colonel Redl in 1913 leaps to mind); and even the

suicide rate among officers (the highest in Europe). The Dual Monarchy’s liberal attitude toward the presence of Jews within both the active and reserve officer corps is analyzed in great detail.

Throughout, the author displays objectivity and maturity of judgment. He balances the numerous points of contention, measures the claims of the various ethnic contingents objectively, and at all times strives to present a fair assessment. Deák is aware of the limitations of his statistical data, makes no claims beyond his evidence, and nowhere allows tables to dominate. He constantly reminds the reader that for every conclusion and generalization there exist a hundred exceptions. He is careful at all times to offer personal anecdotes and reminiscences to give flesh and blood to this highly diverse officer corps.

Given the author’s cultural and linguistic talents, it is not surprising that he chose to key in on the German and Magyar elements of the Joint Army—at times at the expense especially of the Slav units. Also, a single page offering a few random comments on the naval officer corps hardly does justice to that service. Yet overall, this is magnificent history, and Deák is to be commended for compressing a wealth of analysis and detail into such a short work. It is a most welcome companion to Gunther E. Rothenberg’s *The Army of Francis Joseph* (1976).

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