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Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie by Ernst Bruckmüller; Ulrike Döcker; Hannes Stekl;
Peter Urbanitsch

Review by: Pieter M. Judson

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issues of German history in the decades before 1914—an opinion with which the author would certainly disagree—cannot be imputed to him but lies in the limitations of his subject.

PETER PARET

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Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie. Edited by *Ernst Bruckmüller, Ulrike Döcker, Hannes Stekl, and Peter Urbanitsch.*
Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1990. Pp. 317. DM 67.

The study of the *Bürgertum* in those areas once governed by the Habsburgs has been conspicuously absent from twentieth-century historiography in Central and Eastern Europe. This interesting collection, based on the proceedings of an international conference held in 1988, takes a significant step toward addressing this glaring omission.

Heavily influenced by the example of the so-called Bielefeld School of the 1980s, which examined the history of the *Bürgertum* in Imperial Germany, the nineteen essays presented here report preliminary results from a variety of ongoing *Bürgertum* projects. They are organized around three general themes: the social recruitment of the *Bürgertum*, the creation and uses of particularly middle-class cultural norms, and the rise of a *bürgerlich* political culture in the Monarchy. In four additional essays, the editors provide an interpretive context for the whole and also attempt to set forth a research agenda for the next decade.

The editors approach their subject as broadly as possible, preferring, for example, to sidestep the thorny question of just who constituted the *Bürgertum* at any given historical moment. They and their contributors offer nuanced, regional- and period-specific portraits of *bürgerlich* society, culture, and politics. The preliminary nature of the research presented here demands just such a broad approach, as does the remarkable regional diversity of the economic, social, and cultural forces which shaped this *Bürgertum*.

In this review I can only mention briefly some of the better essays and make some general comments about the project as a whole. Two essays in the first section on origins and self-identification of *bürgerlich* groups deserve special mention. In one, Mirjana Gross examines structural issues surrounding the recruitment of a small town *Bürgertum* from diverse agrarian roots in nineteenth-century Croatia. In the other, Pavla Horská analyzes the rural origins of Czech and German *bürgerlich* groups and their changing fortunes in Bohemia.

In his excellent introduction to the section on politics, Peter Urbanitsch sketches the important links between the early development of *bürgerlich* social organization and the later creation of *bürgerlich* political culture. The new public spaces (the voluntary associations) and the new public behaviors associated with them, served first as models, later as vehicles for *bürgerlich* forms of political activism at communal and state levels. The voluntary association also brought together people of highly diverse social backgrounds to form a shared public culture and class identity.

Otto Hwaletz's excellent essay shows how occupationally diverse producers gained an understanding of their shared economic and social interests through their experience within industrial associations before 1848. This notion of a commonality of interests forged universal *bürgerlich* values and an implicitly political program of demands made against the state. Otto Urban relates this process of class building among the

Czech-speaking *Bürger* groups in Bohemia of the *Vormärz* to the construction of nationalist political identities. For the Czech groups he examines, national identity developed simultaneously with class identity. Hanns Haas also contributes an excellent article to this section which explores the social underpinnings of rural Liberal politics in provincial Salzburg after 1861.

In the section on culture, Ulrike Döcker addresses from a different angle the creation of a common *bürgerlich* identity and politics, by examining the history of bourgeois systems of manners. Döcker sees the *bürgerlich* codes of manners developed in the late eighteenth century as alternative forms of social interaction, designed to challenge traditional aristocratic values. Gradually, the adoption of these systems of manners offered a route by which different groups could achieve higher social status. By the mid-nineteenth century, *bürgerlich* manners had shed their revolutionary character altogether and had assumed a regulatory function which helped buttress the social hegemony of the local *Bürgertum*.

As the nineteenth century wore on, an increasingly detailed differentiation of manners mirrored a growing social differentiation within the *Bürgertum*. According to Döcker, allocation of prestige and status came to depend on increasingly smaller differences in education, occupation, wealth, and professional achievement. Of course, this system never functioned as successfully in reality as it did in theory, largely because bourgeois society continued to coexist uncomfortably with the surviving world of traditional aristocratic norms. In his essay on post-1867 Hungarian cabinet ministers and high officials, for example, Gábor Benedek demonstrates the limits of bourgeois social and professional achievement. In this case, *bürgerlich* expectations concerning the allocation of social prestige and position clashed with the upper nobility's tenacious hold on the highest bureaucratic positions.

In her introduction, Döcker also addresses the general role of culture in creating and defining a *bürgerlich* identity, a theme taken up in two admirable local studies: Jiří Pokorný on the book collections of Prague *Bürger* between 1700 and 1848 and Zoltán Tóth on the life choices and economic decline of urban *Kleinbürger* in late nineteenth-century Buda.

Not surprisingly with such a large number of authors, the quality of the essays presented here varies considerably. More generally problematic, however, is the often narrow and limiting conceptualization of politics which some of the authors bring to bear on their topics. Furthermore, with few exceptions (notably Döcker and Tóth) the contributors analyze an overwhelmingly male *Bürgertum*. This is regrettable, given the excellent works on comparable social groups elsewhere in Europe which have demonstrated the relevance of women's contribution to the work of class and identity formation.

Also troublesome, and equally indicative of a narrow focus, is the astonishing absence from this volume of relevant American and British work. Despite the generally high quality of the research presented here, and despite its clear theoretical orientation toward contemporary German scholarship, this collection betrays a provincial orientation. Not one of the twenty-three essays, for example, cites the outstanding research on this topic by the American scholar Gary B. Cohen. Cohen's 1981 book on the Germans in Prague deftly explores the same issues raised here of bourgeois social recruitment, culture, and politics, but with a methodological sophistication and theoretical refinement well beyond the level achieved by most of the essays in this collection.¹

¹ Gary B. Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861–1914* (Princeton, N.J., 1981).

One hopes that future volumes on the *Bürgertum* will also include the relevant work of many Central Europeans who did not make it into this volume. For example, Waltraud Heindl's studies of the Austrian bureaucracy and its culture directly address the important question of *Verbürgerlichung*. One also hopes that future editors will provide more information about each contributor. Yet despite these important omissions, this volume creates an agenda for further study and should promote scholarly exchange, which together represent a promising beginning.

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Die wilhelminische Flottenrüstung, 1908–1914: Weltmachtstreben, industrieller Fortschritt, soziale Integration. By *Michael Epkenhans*. Beiträge zur Militärgeschichte, volume 32.
Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1991. Pp. xi + 488. DM 88.

This book is a slightly revised, prizewinning dissertation completed at the University of Münster in 1989. It is designed to complete the history of Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz's naval program launched two decades ago by Volker R. Berghahn in his pioneering analysis of *Der Tirpitz Plan: Genesis und Verfall einer innenpolitischen Krisenstrategie unter Wilhelm II.* (Düsseldorf, 1971). Epkenhans's work rests on an impressive archival basis. In addition to the federal archives at Freiburg and Koblenz as well as the records of the Foreign Office at Bonn, he has worked through state archives at Hamburg, Karlsruhe, Merseburg, Munich, Potsdam, and Stuttgart and the corporate files of Gutehoffnungshütte, Krupp, Mannesman, M.A.N., Siemens, and Thyssen, among others.

Epkenhans has divided his work into three major sections. The first, covering the years 1908–12, analyzes why Tirpitz was able to pursue his ambitious naval blueprint at a time of flagging interest in the fleet and increasing demands for enhanced spending on land forces. The second part, which is really the heart of the investigation, details the navy's oftentimes turbulent and troubled relationship with the iron and steel industry as well as the major private shipyards. The last section of the book offers comments on the "final collapse" of the Tirpitz plan during the period 1912–14, in terms of both its political and technological parameters.

The author's stated aim is to analyze Imperial Germany's "military-industrial complex" under Tirpitz and to relate it to the critical relationship between domestic and foreign policy with an eye toward Anglo-German relations. Like Michael Geyer, Epkenhans argues that armaments must be seen not as the product of impersonal structural forces but, rather, as made "by people for people." Choices abound at all times. Human beings opt for one course or another on the basis of their conception of what is best. Additionally, the author argues that the notion of a monolithic group of so-called merchants of death is in need of revision.

In the summer of 1917, Army Group Commander Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria wrote that Germany's entire foreign policy for the last twenty years had stood in the service of big business, driven by profit motives rather than national self-interest. This view has largely been endorsed by a host of historians, both Marxist and non-Marxist. Epkenhans disagrees. He argues instead that fleet building was never the *El Dorado* depicted by these scholars. To be sure, Friedrich Krupp profited greatly on account of the firm's virtual monopoly in armor plate production and naval artillery manufacture. Even Tirpitz conceded that Krupp probably pocketed 1,600 marks per ton of armor plate sold to the navy at 2,300 marks. The giant electrical firm Siemens