

Guardians of the Empire

Nationalism and the Habsburg Army

Benjamin James Manuatu
Victoria University of Wellington

Abstract

Released by the conquests of Napoleon and stoked by the fires of the 1848 Revolutions, the age of nationalism took Europe by storm in the nineteenth century and lasted well into the twentieth century. For those states that enjoyed a more homogenous population, such as the emerging German Empire, nationalism would prove to be a useful tool in mobilizing their citizens and increasing their capabilities for warfare. For the Austrian Empire, which represented more a polyethnic and multilingual conglomerate than a unified state, nationalism would present itself as an existential threat from which the polity could not recover. This article analyzes the Habsburg army and the role it played in maintaining the Austrian Monarchy in the face of nationalist aggression from the 1848 Revolutions to its ultimate end at the climax of the First World War. The army served not only as a physical shield for the Empire but also as a symbol for the unity of all ethnic groups under the command of the Habsburg emperor and held the potential to be a tool of integration and unity for the multiple ethnic groups. Using military and nationalism theories, this article examines the challenges the army was forced to contend with in order to maintain the monarchy and how the language issue plagued combat effectiveness and also served as a hotbed of grievances for the multiple ethnic groups of the Empire.

Article

In the difficult times which face the Monarchy, one must ask, who and what supports the Throne and the Dynasty? To this question there is only one answer—the army. The Army does not serve only to defend the fatherland against foreign foes; its chief role is the defense and maintenance of the throne and the struggle against the enemies within.

— Edmund Glaise von Horstenau¹

The military institution of the Habsburg Monarchy during the nineteenth century served as a mirror that reflected the volatile state of the Austrian Empire in its twilight century as the wave of nationalism threatened to tear it apart. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, the Habsburg state had dramatically changed its

¹ Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, *Franz Josephs Weggefahrte* (Vienna: Amalthea-Verlag, 1930), 474, cited in Lohr Eugene Miller, “Politics, the Nationality Problem, and the Habsburg Army, 1848-1914 (Volumes I and II)” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1992), 328.

boundaries, system of governance, name, and place on the world stage. In 1848, the Austrian Empire's military apparatus was simply referred to as the *kaiserlich-königlich Armee*, Imperial-Royal Army.² Next to the dynasty itself, the Habsburg army is often seen as the key bulwark of the state, the common army being the chief guarantor of physical safety and unity of the Habsburg state.³ As an institution, the army was one of the most important tools in the Habsburg administration for promoting loyalty to the emperor as well as being used as the model for Emperor Franz Joseph's idealized multinational yet ordered and obedient empire.⁴ As reflected in the opening quote by Austrian military officer Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, the army played a pivotal role in maintaining the state during the nineteenth century, guarding against not only external threats but also internal ones, namely the forces of nationalism.⁵

Topics and terms discussed in this article—including nation, nationalism, nationality, ethnicity, empire, and monarchy—often have multiple, and sometimes contradictory, definitions and could themselves be the subject of a lengthy essay. For the purposes of this article, I use the term Monarchy to represent the ruling Habsburg government as an entity and not limited to the sitting emperor or empress. Similarly, the Empire, used alone, refers to the lands directly administrated by the Habsburg Monarchy. My working definitions of the terms nation, nationalism, and nationality build upon the works of several prominent nationalism theorists. For instance, Rupert Emerson described the nation as “that of a body of people who feel that they are a nation.”⁶ Ernest Gellner defined nationalism, simply, as a shared culture.⁷ Ernest Renan acknowledged that a nation could not be defined as simply an ethnographic or linguistic group but is rather based on two things: first, it must have a sense of common history and, second, that people concerned must have a will to live together.⁸ Using these comments we can identify the term nation, and by extension nationality, as that of a group of people who share common characteristics, culture, and who wish to live together. The term nationalism refers to the political and sociological movement to achieve the purported goals of the nation and, ultimately, to unify the nation with the state. A nationalist is an individual who is in pursuit of those goals. Ethnicity,

² Lohr Eugene Miller, “Politics, the Nationality Problem, and the Habsburg Army, 1848-1914 (Volumes I and II)” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1992), 1.

³ Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky, “Introduction: Imperial Loyalty and Popular Allegiances in the Late Habsburg Monarchy,” in *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, eds. Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 5.

⁴ John E. Fahey, “Bulwark of Empire: Imperial and Local Government in Prezmyśl, Galacia (1867-1939)” (PhD diss., Purdue University, May 2017), 62.

⁵ Edmund Glaise von Horstenau was a member of the Austro-Hungarian Army's General Staff and the head of the press department of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces during the First World War. He became a Nazi politician and the last Vice-Chancellor of Austria before the Anschluss in 1938. During the Second World War, he served a general in the Wehrmacht.

⁶ Rupert Emerson, *Empire to Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 102.

⁷ Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 4.

⁸ Eugene Kamenka, “Political Nationalism—The Evolution of the Idea,” in *Nationalism: The nature and evolution of an idea*, ed. Eugene Kamenka (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973), 12.

although often confused as a synonym for nationality, is a group of people with a shared cultural identity and often a shared spoken language.⁹

Unlike most of the European states during the nineteenth century, the Austrian Empire was unique in that it was an imperial organization and not a country. As noted historian A.J.P. Taylor observes: “to be Austrian was to be free of national feelings—not to possess a nationality.”¹⁰ The political entity of the Monarchy was simply the unitary state composed of the lands that owed allegiance to the Habsburg family.¹¹ Distinctively, the Austrian state was absent of a single ethnic identity, which on the one hand served to the benefit of their subjects, since it could claim to exist above national or ethnic allegiance, but on the other hand simultaneously failed to evoke strong feelings of unity. Many citizens, especially following the *Ausgleich* (Compromise) of 1867, often first identified themselves as part of their “nation” and only secondarily as members of the Monarchy.¹² It was this motley entity, the Austrian state, which the army was charged with defending. With the establishment of a standing army by imperial decree, the role of the Habsburg Monarchy was militarized in formal terms, placing the ruling monarch as the supreme commander.¹³ In an empire of multiple nationalities, five major religions, and no common political institutions, the army and the imperial bureaucracy served as the only visible bond between the Monarchy and its subjects, remaining the sole apparatus to which they could all offer the emperor loyalty in unity.¹⁴ The military arm of the Habsburgs would undergo a multitude of changes throughout its existence. However its link to the Monarchy and its role as the foremost representation of loyalty and unity in the Empire never wavered.

The view that the institutions of the military are effective instruments for ethnic integration was a prevalent notion in modernization theory during the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁵ The army as an institution was often seen not as a separate body of the society but as an extension of it. Thus an army reflects the social structure, the technological capabilities, and vigor of the state.¹⁶ Political scholar Lucian W. Pye observes that the military provides some form of training in citizenship, as “recruits with traditional backgrounds must learn about a new world in which they are identified with a larger political self.”¹⁷ Sven Simonsen identifies several traits of facilitating integration and homogeneity, which includes a strict adherence to hierarchy, emphasis on rationality, opportunities for social mobility, and

⁹ Adrian Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3.

¹⁰ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary*, (Bristol: Western Printing Services LTD., 1952), 22.

¹¹ Kelly McFall, “Ethnicity as a Problem for Grand Strategy: Conrad von Hoetzendorf, Nationalism, and the Habsburg Imperial Army at War, 1914-1916” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1998), 28-29.

¹² McFall, “Ethnicity as a Problem for Grand Strategy,” 30.

¹³ Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 23.

¹⁴ John Keegan, *World Armies*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1983), 30.

¹⁵ Sven Gunnar Simonsen, “Building ‘National’ Armies—Building Nations?: Determinations of Success for Postintervention Integration Efforts,” *Armed Forces & Society* 33, no. 4, (July 2007): 573.

¹⁶ Correlli Barnett, *The Desert Generals* (London: Pan Books edn., 1962), 105.

¹⁷ Lucian W. Pye, “Armies in the Process of Political Modernization,” in *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, ed. John J. Johnson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 69-68.

services centered on achieving national aims.¹⁸ An officer of the Habsburg forces in 1911 attested to the perceived primary function of the military's training regime:

Every year in October we conscript men who have, as often as not, undergone a preliminary training in nationalist, anti-Austrian atmospheres and have been educated as irredentists or anti-militarists, or who, being illiterate, know less than nothing of the world; and out of such material we have to fashion intelligent responsible individuals and enthusiastic patriotic citizens.¹⁹

As reflected in this quote, the primary function of the Habsburg army's training regime was to change potential dissident nationalists who adhered to the needs of their respective nations into citizens who were "patriotic" to their shared monarch.

The military can be viewed as one of the—if not the—important factors of integration and homogeneity in a state. For the polyethnic Habsburg Monarchy, the military had the potential to achieve this aim. As historian N. F. Dreisziger notes, the "polyethnic" army could have utilized its ethnic factor in the armed forces to appease certain ethnic groups and promote ethnic integration and unity.²⁰ Unfortunately, as we will come to observe, the Austrian military was ill-suited to address a task of such gargantuan size.

The great force of nationalism that was released in the wake of the devastating Napoleonic Wars swept the European stage and enveloped it almost entirely by the mid-nineteenth century.²¹ The Austrian Monarchy was no exception and became home to a multitude of emerging national movements during this period.²² The national question in Austria exploded onto the scene in a violent fashion during the Revolutions of 1848, which presented the various nationalist groups in the Monarchy the task of condensing their national claims into a political program for the first time.²³ The situation for the ethnic Germans of Austria, however, was unique among the contesting nationalities of the Monarchy as they enjoyed a seat of privilege and hegemony. Thanks to the efforts of Joseph I, building upon the foundations laid by his mother Maria Theresa, German was the official language of the Austrian administration, *Universalsprache meines Reiches*, giving the German subjects a distinct social advantage.²⁴ Furthermore, the royal family thought of

¹⁸ Simonsen, "Building "National" Armies—Building Nations?," 573.

¹⁹ Brosch von Arenau, "Am Vorabend der sweijährigen Dienstzeit," *Danzers Arneezetuna*, 12 January 1911.

²⁰ N. F. Dreisziger, "Polyethnicity and Armed Forces: An Introduction," in *Ethnic Armies: Polyethnic Armed Forces from the Time of the Habsburgs to the Age of the Superpowers*, ed. N. F. Dreisziger (Ontario: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 1990), 3.

²¹ E.H. Buschbeck, *Austria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 92.

²² John Deak, *Forging a Multinational State: State Making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 4.

²³ Otto Bauer, *The Questions of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, trans. Joseph O'Donnell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 219.

²⁴ John W. Mason, *The Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire 1867-1918* (Hong Kong: Longman Group Limited, 1985), 10. R. J. W. Evans, "Language and State Building: The Case of the Habsburg Monarchy," *Austrian History Yearbook* 35 (2004): 7.

themselves as German, and Metternich regarded the monarchy as a German state.²⁵ Even the language required for one to enter the Diet of Hungary was German.²⁶ Thus, while the Austrian Empire was a cauldron of various ethnic groups and languages, its government was consistently German in character. As such, Austrian German nationalism held different goals compared to other nationalist groups of the Habsburg lands. Rather than a call for national liberation, German nationalism was a reaction against the growing nations in the Empire's multiethnic layout that threatened their privileged position. As historian Hans Kohn wrote, "nationalism centers the supreme loyalty of the overwhelming majority of the people upon the nation-state, either existing or desired."²⁷ The dilemma presented to the Austrian Germans was that, although the royal family was considered German and the official language of the Empire was conducted in German, the ethnic Austrian Germans did not make up the majority of the Habsburg Empire, despite being the largest ethnic group.²⁸ The ethnic divide was further exacerbated as the Habsburg hereditary lands acquired new territories and subjects; the proportion of privileged German Austrians to non-Germans dwindled, creating minority elites.²⁹

In many cases, the age of nationalism provided an effective tool for the rulers of Europe to ignite a new fervor of loyalty and increase the military power of their respective states;³⁰ the same could not be said for Austria. As a polity of different nations, many of whom identified themselves more with their own lands and their monarch than the whole state, nationalism was antithetical to their very existence.³¹ As political theorist John Plamenatz explains, "nationalism is a reaction of peoples who feel culturally at a disadvantage."³² For many ethnic groups in the Empire, nationalism presented a useful tool to voice their grievances and, for some, to seek their own "liberation" from a foreign master.

Language, Literacy, and Technology

Ernest Gellner argues that nationalism emerged from the combination of state and culture. His much quoted phrase—"every man is a clerk"—referred to the spread of education in local languages and economic development during the industrial age, which in turn allowed mass participation in these new nations.³³ As Gellner observes, "A modern industrial state

²⁵ Alan Sked, "The Nationality Problem in the Habsburg Monarchy and the Revolutions of 1848: A Reassessment," in *The 1848 Revolutions and European Political Thought*, eds. Douglas Moggach and Gareth Stedman Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 336.

²⁶ C. A. Macartney, *The House of Austria: The Later Phase 1790-1918* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1978), 14.

²⁷ Hans Kohn, "Nationalism," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 11, ed. David L. Sills (New York: Macmillan Free Press, 1968), 63.

²⁸ Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1918: Volume II* (New York: Octagon Books Inc., 1964), 305.

²⁹ John Knickerbocker, "Österreich und Anschluss: Ponderous Dilemma of Austrian Identity (1848-1948)" (MA Thesis, University of Albany, 2014), i.

³⁰ Burak Kadercan, "Military Competition and the Emergence of Nationalism: Putting Logic of Political Survival into Historical Context," *International Studies* 14 (2012): 402.

³¹ Miroslav Sedivy, "The Austrian Empire, German Nationalism, and the Rhine Crisis of 1840," *Austrian Yearbook* 47 (2016): 32- 33.

³² John Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism," in *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, ed. Eugene Kamenka (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973), 27.

³³ Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld Nicolson, 1964), 159.

can only function with a mobile, literate, culturally standardized, interchangeable population.”³⁴ Literacy, the ability to read and write and therefore communicate effectively, facilitated the process of homogenization. Eric Hobsbawm also postulates the growth of educational institutions, such as schools and universities, mirrors the progress of nationalism.³⁵ With regards to education in Austria, the Habsburg Empire was among the first European states to tackle the literacy question, with Empress Maria Theresa’s policies of encouraging German education during her reign.³⁶ In 1869 the Habsburg government made further steps in combating literacy by placing schools under state jurisdiction and mandating eight years of primary school.³⁷ Consequentially, the literacy rates climbed from 51 percent in 1870 to 78 percent in 1890.³⁸ As more subjects became educated, the issue of language in a multilingual state became more significant.

The general growth in literacy and industry created powerful new impulses and yearnings for linguistic unification.³⁹ Language, as Peter Burke notes, became an instrument for the proverbial “cult of nation.”⁴⁰ Using the foundations laid by his mother Maria Theresa, Joseph centralized the Monarchy’s bureaucracy, staffed by the most educated subjects and, in terms of nationality, primarily by those who spoke German.⁴¹ The German language consequently became the vehicle for social mobility, in essence promoting the Germanization of Gellner’s aphorism, “every man is a clerk.”⁴² The German language’s privileged status simultaneously encouraged resistance of the non-German nationalities and caused other Habsburg ethnicities to chaff further under the stewardship of the German-speaking government. The German language became the de facto language of privilege, making German-speaking Austrians essentially the leaders in the Habsburg Monarchy.

Gellner notes that the industrial age created mass mobility and the uprooting of rural people, which resulted in a new cultural “freak,” the replaceable modular man.⁴³ With the capacity to perform a variety of tasks and duties by obeying the same set of rules and sharing a common idiom with his peers, the modular man can be seen as the end product of

³⁴ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publisher Limited, 1983), 46.

³⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolutions: 1789-1848* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), 166.

³⁶ Anthony Bushell, *Polemical Austria: The Rhetorics of National Identity from Empire to the Second Republic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), 69.

³⁷ Branko Sustar, “The historical development of the formation of the elite in the south of the Habsburg Empire. Slovens and the schooling of the intellectual class in the late 1800s and early 1900s,” *History of Education & Children’s Literature* X, no. 1 (2015): 508.

³⁸ Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 296.

³⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 77-78.

⁴⁰ Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 160.

⁴¹ Edward Crankshaw, *The Fall of the House of Habsburg* (London: Jarrold & Sons Ltd., 1963), 10.

⁴² Andrea Komlosy, “Imperial Cohesion, Nation-Building, and Regional Integration in the Habsburg Monarchy,” in *Nationalizing Empires*, eds. Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (New York: Central European University Press, 2015), 420.

⁴³ Ernest Gellner, “The Importance of Being Modular,” in *Civil Society: Theory, History, and Comparison*, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 42-43.

Gellner's industrialization process, facilitating cultural homogeneity.⁴⁴ This perspective of industrialization could explain the centralized German character of the Austrian administration and bureaucracy, as the bureaucrats, often by origin and always by employment, were urban dwellers, and the urban centers of the Austrian Empire were all German in character and substance.⁴⁵ According to K. G. Hugelmann's *Das Nationalitätenrecht des alten Österreich* (The Nationality Law of Old German), in January 1914, 76 percent of all officials of the Empire's central bureaucracy identified as Germans.⁴⁶ Although the imperial government made attempts within the confines of a non-national state to recognize certain national and linguistic equalities, such as trials being held in ten different languages, the expansion of the bureaucracy meant that more German was heard.⁴⁷ The Germanization of Austrian bureaucracy and the consequent elevation of the German people in the Habsburg Monarchy could be seen as the unintended byproduct of centralization.

Gellner's theory of nationalism is concerned with industrialization, but several scholars have noted that Gellner does not adequately address the importance of the military in this process. One vocal critic, Daniele Conversi, argues that Gellner failed to relate the homogenization "separatism dynamics" with the rise of the mass army independent of industrialism.⁴⁸ Barry Posen contends that any economic argument for the function of literacy and a shared culture, the arbiters of nationalism, can equally be made into a military one.⁴⁹ Gellner draws attention to the importance of technology in the economy, but the conduct and nature of warfare also depended critically upon technology. Armies evolved with the changes of technology, communications, and transportation. For instance, the invention of the railroad in particular ushered in the age of mass warfare.⁵⁰ Alongside the evolution of military technology, the utility of a soldier who could read and write became more valuable in ensuring victory.⁵¹ States now had a military incentive to promote mass literacy, and the subsequent spread of literacy, in turn, increased the state's capabilities to train larger armies. Brendan O'Leary argues that education and cultural standardization of European conscripts preceded that of the general citizenry and that the military elites used protonationalism for military goals exclusive of industrial society.⁵² In the case of Austria, Steven Beller directly links Maria Theresa's modernized bureaucracy to dramatic increases of state revenue, providing the resources to support the expanding

⁴⁴ Daniele Conversi, "Homogenisation, nationalism and war: should we still read Ernest Gellner?," *Nations and Nationalism* 13, no. 3, (2007): 381.

⁴⁵ Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918*, 24.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Robert A. Kann, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy 1848-1918: Volume II* (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1964), 313.

⁴⁷ Miller, "Politics, the Nationality Problem, and the Habsburg Army, 1848-1914 (Volumes I and II)," 71.

⁴⁸ Conversi, "Homogenisation, nationalism and war: should we still read Ernest Gellner?," 373-374.

⁴⁹ Barry R. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," in *Perspectives on Nationalism and War*, eds. John L. Comaroff and Paul C. Stern (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers SA, 1995), 139.

⁵⁰ Massimiliano Gaetano Onorato, Kenneth Scheve, and David Stasavage, "Technology and the Era of the Mass Army," *The Journal of Economic History* 74, no. 2 (June 2014): 450.

⁵¹ Onorato, Scheve, and Stasavage, "Technology and the Era of the Mass Army," 167.

⁵² Brendan O'Leary, "Ernest Gellner's diagnoses of nationalism: a critical overview, or, what is living and what is dead in Ernest Gellner's philosophy of nationalism," in *State of the Nation*, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 66.

standing army.⁵³ In response to Gellner's theory, Nicos Mouzelis observes that, "it is military rather than economic technologies that primarily explain the spectacular development of state bureaucracies and their unprecedented penetration of the societal periphery."⁵⁴

Both the army and the bureaucracy of the state pursued the goal of homogenization in order to control both the "clerk" and the "conscript." In regards to the army of Austria, there were attempts to educate the common rank and file and establish basic literacy; according to Austrian officer Fenner von Fenneberg, "there [were] scarcely two out of every hundred [men] who could not read or write and answer questions correctly concerning service regulations."⁵⁵ As the bellicist, war-centered, approach to state building claims, wars are a great stimulus to centralizing state power and building institutional capacity.⁵⁶ State-led cultural homogenization, as argued by Conversi, ushered in by technological advances, consisted of a "single, distilled purified culture...It did not materialise as a spontaneous and inevitable outgrowth of modernity."⁵⁷

Military, Cohesion, and Nationalism

Nationalism can increase the intensity of the state's warfare capabilities as well its utility for mass mobilization. As Posen notes, in the age of the large-scale armies, states acted purposefully to produce nationalism.⁵⁸ In a homogeneous state, nationalism can be used effectively to facilitate military cohesion on the primary and secondary level. On the primary level, nationalism can be used to develop an ingrained kinship between fellow soldiers. On the secondary level, nationalism can facilitate trust and kinship in groups bigger than oneself with goals and aspirations of the larger group used as the goals and aspirations of the individual. Carlton Hayes suggests that "[m]ilitarism exists primarily for the sake of national honor, national rights, and national interests."⁵⁹ However, Posen's and Hayes's observations cannot be applied to the Habsburg Monarchy; on the contrary, nationalism was entirely detrimental to the existence of the state and to maintaining a cohesive army. Instead, Emperor Franz Joseph opted to present the army as the highest form of state unity.⁶⁰ Though states such as the emerging Prussian-led Germany would find nationalism a powerful motive to increase their military effectiveness, the Habsburg military needed to be an institution that united the state absent of national identity. To embrace nationalism highlighted the differences of the multiple ethnic groups and gave

⁵³ Steven Beller, *Francis Joseph: Profiles in Power* (London: Longman, 1996), 20.

⁵⁴ Nicos Mouzelis, "Ernest Gellner's Theory of Nationalism: Some Definitional and Methodological Issues," in *State of the Nation*, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 159.

⁵⁵ Fenner von Fenneberg, *Oesterreich und seine Armee* (Leipzig: Keil, 1847), 142-143, in Alan Sked, *The Survival of the Habsburg Empire: Redetzky, the Imperial Army, and the Class War, 1848* (London: Longman, 1979), 37.

⁵⁶ Cameron Thies, "War, Rivalry and State Building in Latin America," *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3 (2005): 451.

⁵⁷ Conversi, "Homogoneisation, nationalism and war: should we still read Ernest Gellner?*", 382.

⁵⁸ Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," 136, 139.

⁵⁹ Carlton J. H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), 159.

⁶⁰ Alfred J. Reiber, "Nationalizing Imperial Armies: A Comparative and Transnational Study of Three Empires," in *Nationalizing Empires*, eds. Stefan Berger and Alexei Miller (New York: Central European University Press, 2015), 611.

legitimacy to minority grievances. As Field Marshall Conrad von Hotzendorf wrote in 1908, “There may be no ruling nation in the army,” for “[o]nly in an army in which each of the nationalities can come to accept that they are viewed as completely equal will a unified spirit and attachment to the greater whole [be able to] endure.”⁶¹

Commanding the loyalty of a multiethnic army, whilst simultaneously maintaining military cohesion and the quality of the units, was a problem endemic of polyethnic states. Imperial policy required an army loyal only to the ruling dynasty; nationalist sentiment was treated with suspicion if not outright as sedition.⁶² The Habsburg army had to contend with nationalist issues that threatened military cohesion more so than any other professional mass army that enjoyed a homogenous state, with the possible exceptions of the concurrent Ottoman and British Empires. The solution to any polyethnic force was to make the army supranational. The language issue in itself presented a nightmare for the Austrian military high command, not only in maintaining the loyalty of multiple ethnic units but, more practically, in the day-to-day operations and military cohesion. Cohesion stands at the universal core of all armed groups and to the creation of force.⁶³ Success on the battlefield is found in clear communication and bonding within military groups in order to execute orders and tasks vital to victory. Effective cohesion between officers and their soldiers generates the trust necessary for teamwork, which in turn leads to a greater group cohesion and identification with the army, producing the professional serviceman.⁶⁴ The vast majority of officers serving in the Habsburg military—78 percent of professional officers and 60.2 percent of reserve officers—were ethnically German.⁶⁵ The largely German-speaking officer corps was not representative of the units they commanded, which were drawn from the vast ethnically diverse reaches of the Empire.⁶⁶ Officially, the Habsburg army gave recognition to about ten or eleven languages in their rank and file.⁶⁷ The average Austrian regiment was a proverbial melting pot of different ethnicities, facilitated by a system introduced in 1849, which instituted soldiers of varying ethnic groups in each regiment, lasting up until the *Ausgleich* in 1867.⁶⁸ This was done with the explicit intention of combatting nationalist influences as the administration distributed troops outside of their ethnic area, and regiments were transferred routinely.⁶⁹ The

⁶¹ Conrad von Hotzendorf, *Aus Meiner Dienstzeit*, 1.503, 560, (Memorandum dated 19 February 1908), in Kelly McFall, “Ethnicity as a Problem for Grand Strategy: Conrad von Hoetzendorf, Nationalism, and the Habsburg Imperial Army at War, 1914-1916” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1998), 62-63.

⁶² Rok Stergar, “National Indifference in the Heyday of Nationalist Mobilization? Ljubljana Military Veterans and the Language of Command,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (2012): 52.

⁶³ Ilmari Kaihko, “Broadening the Perspective on Military Cohesions,” *Armed Forces & Society* 44, no. 4 (2018): 572-573.

⁶⁴ Guy L. Siebold, “The Essence of Military Group Cohesion,” *Armed Forces & Society* 33, no. 2 (January 2007): 287-288.

⁶⁵ *Militar-stat. Jahrbuch*, for 1910, 145, in Norman Stone, “Army and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1900-1914,” *Past & Present* 33 (April 1966): 99.

⁶⁶ Alexander Watson, “Managing an ‘Army of Peoples’: Identity, Command and Performance in the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1914-1918,” *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 2 (2016): 234.

⁶⁷ Istvan Deak, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 99.

⁶⁸ Joseph Redlich, *Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 197; Miller, “Politics, the Nationality Problem, and the Habsburg Army, 1848-1914,” 82.

⁶⁹ Gunther Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1968), 19.

linguistic maze, of which the army had to consistently navigate, is an often cited reason for poor performance on the battlefield.⁷⁰ At first the language issue was treated by military leaders as exclusively a matter of efficiency rather than a political problem; however this would later evolve to become a hotbed for nationalist grievances.⁷¹

Here, the military apparatus deals with the first and major issue of having a polylinguistic army and that is the challenge of maintain effective communication. To protect the primary group cohesion and to combat the multilingual issues that threatened to break down communication and compromise the chain of command, the Habsburg military utilized a complicated language system, designating three linguistic levels. The *Kommandosprache* (the language of command) was the basic vocabulary between troop units; *Dienstsprache* (the language of service) was the basic intercourse for the officers; and the *Regimentssprache* was the language spoken by the soldiers of the regiment.⁷² If at least 20 percent of a regiment's soldiers spoke a native non-German languages, then officers were obligated to speak it.⁷³ This left the members of the army, especially those of higher rank, with the herculean challenge of mastering all three registers in order to deliver effective communication. In order to standardize communication and military cohesion and to promote the fusion of the multiple nationalities, German was to be used as the language of service and the language of command, with the exception of the Honvéd (Hungarian army), which used Hungarian as their language of service.⁷⁴ For all other regiments in Habsburg forces, only around eighty major commands were given in German, such as "halt," "at ease," "left," "right," and "fire," with the rest given in the *Regimentssprache*.⁷⁵ Standardizing German as the universal language also had the added benefits of having effective correspondence with the civilian state bureaucracy. German, as the single administrative and command language, was perceived as a symbol of unity by the emperor and the army high command.⁷⁶ As a commentator in 1862 described, the German language was "a powerful means of uniting the various elements," insisting that they "are not a German army alone but the great Austrian Army."⁷⁷

By 1914, only 142 regiments were considered to be monolingual, 162 regiments had two languages spoken by their rank and file, 24 were trilingual, and even a handful were

⁷⁰ John Anthony Dredger, "Offensive Spending: Tactics and Procurement in the Habsburg Military, 1866-1918" (PhD diss., Kansas State University, 2013), xi.

⁷¹ Scheer, "Habsburg Languages at War," 64.

⁷² Irina Marin, "K.u.K Generals of Romanian Nationality and Their Views on the Language Question," *Language Diversity in the Late Habsburg Empire*, eds. Markian Prokopvych, Carl Bethke, and Tamara Scheer, vol. 9 of *Central and Eastern Europe* (Boston: Brill, 2020), 119.

⁷³ Reiber, "Nationalizing Imperial Armies," 611.

⁷⁴ William Harrison Ainsworth, "The Austrian Army," *The New Monthly Magazine* 14, no. 414 (Jan 1853 – Dec. 1881): 128. Richard Bassett, *For God and Kaiser: The Imperial Austrian Army, 1616-1918* (London: Yale University Press, 2015), 367.

⁷⁵ Deak, *Beyond Nationalism*, 99.

⁷⁶ Rok Stergar, "The Evolutions of Linguistic Policies and Practices of the Austro-Hungarian Armed Forces in the Era of Ethnic Nationalisms: The Case of Ljubljana-Laibach," *Language Diversity in the Late Habsburg Empire*, eds. Markian Prokopvych, Carl Bethke, and Tamara Scheer, vol. 9 of *Central and Eastern Europe* (Boston: Brill, 2020), 60.

⁷⁷ D. N., "Über die Truppsprache unserer Armee," *Neue Militärische Zeitschrift* 3, no. 2 (1862): 366-368.

complex quadrilingual regiments.⁷⁸ As a consequence, more than 90 percent of the officers were obligated to communicate in one other language than German.⁷⁹ Regarding the language of service and the regimental language, an officer would shout his first order in German and then repeat it in one, two, or three other languages.⁸⁰ The army mandated its officer cadets to become bilingual in order to maintain unit cohesion.⁸¹ Military handbooks published the “minority” languages, such as Czech, Croatian, Polish, and Slovak, were delivered so that officers were able to more effectively communicate with their troops.⁸² For the *Qualifikations-Listen* (qualifications list), officers had to demonstrate familiarity with the regimental language, or languages, adequate for the needs of service before a commission, before a committee which met within three years after an officer’s entry into his unit.⁸³ If the officer failed, he would be given a second chance a couple years later, upon which if he failed again, his promotion would be set back. Typically, after their second failed attempt, officers would either try to obtain a transfer to another regiment that spoke their language or resign from their commission.⁸⁴ Despite the numerous obstacles to communication that confronted the Habsburg army, the willingness of the participants and the devotion of military schools to the study of languages yielded moderate results.⁸⁵ The table below, which displays the percentages of officers’ familiarity with another language besides German, shows that Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Serbo-Croatian remained the dominant minority languages.

| 1870 | | 1904 | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <u>Language</u> | <u>Percentage</u> | <u>Language</u> | <u>Percentage</u> |
| Italian | 32.76 | Italian | 8.5 |
| Czech | 30.18 | Czech | 47.0 |
| Hungarian | 19.77 | Hungarian | 33.6 |
| Polish | 17.62 | Polish | 19.3 |
| Serbo-Croatian | 17.36* | Serbo-Croatian | 15.3 |
| Romanian | 8.95 | Romanian | 8.8 |
| Ruthene | 5.14 | Ruthene | 7.8 |
| Slovene | 5.11 | Slovene | 7.3 |
| Slovak | -* | Slovak | 6.9 |

⁷⁸ Michael Wolf, *The Habsburg Monarchy’s Many-Languaged Soul: Translating and Interpreting, 1848-1918*, trans. Kate Sturge (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015), 60.

⁷⁹ Deak, *Beyond Nationalism*, 99.

⁸⁰ Wolf, *The Habsburg Monarchy’s Many-Languaged Soul*, 60.

⁸¹ Istvan Deak, “The Ethnic Question in the Multinational Habsburg Army, 1848-1918,” in *Ethnic Armies: Polyethnic Armed Forces from the Time of the Habsburgs to the Age of the Superpowers*, ed. N. F. Dreisziger (Ontario: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 1990), 24.

⁸² Livia Kardum and Bruno Korea Gajski, “Languages as Political Issue: The Case of Language of command in the Austro-Hungarian Army,” *Jezikoslovlje*, 13, no. 2 (2012): 359.

⁸³ Deak, *Beyond Nationalism*, 99.

⁸⁴ Scott Warren Lackey, “General Friedrich Beck and the rise of the Austro-Hungarian general staff: Civil-military relations and the making of a modern military state” (PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 155.

⁸⁵ Lackey, “General Friedrich Beck and the rise of the Austro-Hungarian general staff,” 102.

Table 1: Percentage of Officers Familiar with Languages besides German⁸⁶

*In 1870, Serbian and Croatian were still listed separately, on the other hand, Slovak was not yet a recognized national language.

Despite these measures, some of the officers' inability to grasp the languages of the soldiers who served under them threatened the ability to gain their confidence, an issue which reflected the Empire's educational policies.⁸⁷ Though bilingualism was encouraged and promoted among the various national languages, with the exception of military schools, these policies were not implemented among the civilian Austro-Germans and Hungarians whose secondary educational institutions stuck to an almost unilingual practice.⁸⁸ The lack of bilingualism among the Austro-Germans weakened their political influence in the empire and proved disastrous for the military apparatus. Military cohesion could not be accomplished without clear and precise communication, which in a battlefield situation was vital in achieving war aims.

Although the Monarchy and the military were the pillars that kept the Austrian Empire aloft, the 1848 Revolutions made them inseparable to the unity of the polity. On the verge of being overwhelmed by nationalist fervor, the Austrian military rescued the Empire from the brink of dissolution, leading one captain—and future Lieutenant Field Marshal—Hugo von Weckbecker to comment, “now we really say our bayonets are the firmest support of the throne, with our life blood we have cemented the monarchy,” a notion that the young Emperor Franz Joseph never forgot.⁸⁹ In April of 1849, Franz Joseph publicly announced his intention to personally oversee the military affairs of the Monarchy, elevating the institution to greater heights.⁹⁰ Since the tumultuous uprisings through the 1867 Ausgleich and up until his death in 1916, Franz Joseph chose to elevate the military and the army in order to represent unity of the Empire to the exclusion of nationalist sentiments. The Emperor constantly displayed the visage of a martial leader, bringing military advisors into his inner circle, insisting on military inspired ceremonies, and adhering to a militaristic discipline in his public life.⁹¹ In this regard, the Emperor went as far as evaluating his inner entourage on the basis of their “soldierliness” qualities.⁹² Rarely was he seen out of military uniform, even after the turn of the century; according to Miklos Horthy, who had served as his aide-de-camp, the Emperor still prided himself in, “a General's uniform.”⁹³ The success to Franz Joseph's efforts to elevate the prestige of the army was made evident by the

⁸⁶ *Militar-Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Jahr 1870*, Part 1 (Vienna, 1872), 222. *Militar-Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Jahr 1904* (Vienna, 1905), 145.

⁸⁷ Scheer, “Habsburg Languages at War,” 72.

⁸⁸ Peiter H. van der Plank, “Effects of Habsburg educational policies measured by census statistics,” *Jezikoslovlje* 13, no. 2 (2012): 373.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Anatol Mura, *Franz Joseph I of Austria and His Empire* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1968), 66. Gunther E. Rothenberg, “Toward a National Hungarian Army: The Military Compromise of 1868 and Its Consequences,” *Slavic Review* 31, no. 4 (December 1972): 806.

⁹⁰ Lackey, “General Friedrich Beck and the rise of the Austro-Hungarian general staff,” 31.

⁹¹ Daniel Unowsky, “Stating Habsburg Patriotism: Dynastic Loyalty and the 1898 Imperial Jubilee,” in *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*, eds. Pieter M. Judson and Marsha L. Rosenblit (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009), 147.

⁹² Anatol Mura, *Franz Joseph I of Austria and His Empire* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1968), 64.

⁹³ Admiral Miklos Horthy, Regent of Hungary, *Memoirs* (Westport: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1979), 44.

observers at the time. The Austrian writer Otto Friedlander described the social status and prestige of the Austrian military in 1900 as such: “the military is the first estate in the state. It takes precedence at all parades and festivities. The youngest lieutenant goes ahead of the highest civil servant.”⁹⁴ Austrian society absorbed the military culture and integrated it within its daily life. It is a testament to how much importance was placed upon the Austro-Hungarian military by the Habsburg government that the German ambassador in 1913 made the following critical observation: “I believe it [the army] to be thoroughly healthy—at the moment it is the only healthy element in the monarchy.”⁹⁵

The Emperor’s love of the military, shown through his public visage and the parades, was an expression of the Monarchy’s reliance on the army for its continual existence. Franz Joseph owed his reign to the army, saving it from the brink of collapse in 1848 and continuing to safeguard him and his throne to his dying day. After the Revolutions, while other armies were primarily charged with the defense of a state against external threats, the primary role of the army of Austria was to maintain the delicate internal security of the empire. The Austrian army had to serve the dual purpose of integrating the various nationalities and ethnicities, unifying them under one proverbial banner, and remain militarily efficient. To achieve this aim, Franz Joseph made every attempt to ensure that the army’s loyalty was to no nation, no state, no single ethnicity, but to the Emperor. According to the final terms of the *Ausgleich*, “Matters pertaining to the command, command-system, and internal organization of the Common Army form exclusive rights of His Majesty.”⁹⁶ This, in short, cemented the importance that the army should remain above nationalism, a notion that both competing halves of the Empire recognized as essential to their mutual safety.⁹⁷ The Monarchy existed above any national, ethnic, or familial allegiances, so too must the army. This sentiment can be seen repeated in Franz Joseph’s army order issued on September 16, 1903 following the divisive debates over the Army Bill of 1902:

my Army, whose stout bonds of union are threatened by one-sided aspirations proceeding from misapprehension of the exalted mission the army has to fulfil for the weal of both states of the monarchy. Joint and unitary as it shall my army remain, the strong power to defend the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy against every foe. True to its oath, my whole Defensive Force will continue to tread the path of earnest fulfilment of duty, permeated by that spirit of union and harmony which respects every national characteristic and solve all antagonisms by utilizing the special qualities of each race for the welfare of the great whole.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ O. Friedlander, *Letzter Glanz der Marchenstadt. Wien um 1900* (1948; repr. Vienna: Moden, 2002), 77.

⁹⁵ *Die Grosse Politik der Europasichen Kabinette 187101914*, xxxvm nr. 13370.

⁹⁶ Austrian Law 21 December 1867, Art V, cited in Lohr Eugene Miller, “Politics, the nationality Problem, and the Habsburg Army, 1848-1914 (Volumes I and II)” (PhD diss., Louisiana State University, 1992), 115.

⁹⁷ Norman Stone, “Army and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1900-1914,” *Past & Present* 33 (April 1966): 97.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Henry Wickham Steed, *The Habsburg Monarchy* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1919), 66-67.

Franz Joseph had always regarded the armed forces as his personal possession.⁹⁹ This can be found distinctly in his speeches, constantly referring to the army not as the Austro-Hungarian army or the Imperial Royal Soldiers, but as “my Army” or “my soldiers,” as seen in his order. This opinion was shared by other leading figures in the Austrian Empire. Franz Joseph’s nephew and heir, Franz Ferdinand, saw an army that is trustworthy and loyal only to the Emperor and blind to nationality as a basic necessity of the Empire.¹⁰⁰ Archduke Albrecht, the chief military advisor to Franz Joseph, shared similar views, proclaiming after the Ausgleich: “one oath alone is binding to us all.”¹⁰¹ The common army must remain the bastion of imperial loyalty, its officer corps, and rank and file remaining staunch in the Emperor’s favor.

World War and Dissolution

In no other country is unity, uniformity, and dynastic soldierly spirit as all important...because only the dynasty and the army can hold this monarchy together.
—Archduke Albrecht¹⁰²

It was clear throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the language issue was not the only threat to military cohesion and, therefore by extension, the Habsburg Monarchy. The nationalist problem was an ever-constant headache that plagued Emperor Franz Joseph and the army command, from the very start of his reign to his dying days. The Emperor took great effort to mitigate any fracturing element that emerged, but even some of the measures he took to unify his multiethnic subjects ultimately doomed him. As John Breuilly postulates, nationalism is a form of politics that arises out of strained relationships with the modern state.¹⁰³ In the case of the Austrian Empire, the state was German in character and German in communication. As a demographic, the ethnic Germans, much like their position in the monarchy, was perceived by others to enjoy a position of privilege. In the army, Germans only consisted of around 25 percent of the rank and file but made up the majority (70 percent) of the officer corps, and they enjoyed the advantage of having their language as the *Dientsprache*, the *Kommandosprache*, and the *universalsprache meines Rieches*.¹⁰⁴ All other ethnic groups were underrepresented in the military hierarchy, especially the minor ethnic groups, like the Slovaks, Ruthenes, and Romanians, who collectively consisted of 18.2 percent of the common army but made up only 1.1 percent of the officer corps.¹⁰⁵ Of all the ethnic groups under the Habsburg dynasty, it was only the Germans who had always identified with the entire state and thus

⁹⁹ Valdis Baidins, “Franz Joseph, Kaisertreue and Loyalty in the Late Habsburg Empire” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1999), 63.

¹⁰⁰ Leopold von Chlumecky, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand Wirken und Wollen* (Berlin: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1929), 359.

¹⁰¹ Stone, “Army and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1900-1914,” 97.

¹⁰² Rothenberg, “Toward a National Hungarian Army,” 806.

¹⁰³ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 366.

¹⁰⁴ *Militar-Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Jahr 1911* (Vienna, 1912), 146-147, 196-197.

¹⁰⁵ Jason Lyall, *Divided Armies: Inequality and Battlefield Performance in Modern War* (Boston: Princeton University Press, 2020), 264-265.

were the only ones who never called for “national liberation.”¹⁰⁶ The same could not be said for the other prevalent national movements, and the resulting friction led to an overall ethnic mistrust and the suspect of loyalties.

The effectiveness of the Habsburg army historically had been often regarded by military experts as below the standard of their contemporaries.¹⁰⁷ Some commentators at the time found praise-worthy elements of the Austrian army. For instance, George Brinton McClellan, a United States officer who was attached to the Austrian army as a military observer in the 1850s, commented that the Austrian system of executing written tactics and adapting them to the battle-ground situation, which required effective and quick communication, was worthy of study and “to, some extent, of imitation.”¹⁰⁸ While some commended the Austro-Hungarian army command for the “military miracle” of having an efficient organization in contention with the maze of multiple languages, the language problem proved to be a multilayered pragmatic disaster for battlefield conditions and army operations via nationalist grievances, especially in the lead up and duration of the First World War.¹⁰⁹ As Posen has confidently asserted, the army “was nearly the least successful army of the first World War” in stark comparison to the more homogenous armies found on either side of the conflict.¹¹⁰

During the later stages of Franz Joseph’s reign, nationalist grievances had swelled to the point that the *Armeoberkommando* (Army High Command, AOK) did not even trust a great portion of their own army. In 1906, General Franz Conrad von Hotzendorf had warned of “corrosive nationalist elements” threatening the cohesion of the Austro-Hungarian military in certain potential theaters of war.¹¹¹ As one British journalist noted at the time, this was due to the fact that “[t]here is not one potential enemy of Austria today, whether it be Russia, or Italy, or the Allied Balkan states, that would command the sympathy and active support of some section of this enormous polyglot host.”¹¹² This distrust eventually bled into the officer corps creating a hotbed of contention, leading to the breakdown of the army’s policy of national indifference. The German language, as the official language of command and service, was seen as the language of authority and, by extension, the language of the Monarchy. Officers equated German with Austrian patriotism, and as nationalist tensions became more transparent, the officer corps began to see the use of other languages as an indisputable sign of disloyalty, such as equating Slovene with Russophilia and favoring German-speaking soldiers over other ethnic groups.¹¹³ Frank Prosek, a Czech soldier of the Imperial and Royal Army, wrote, “As a Czech, I am subject to

¹⁰⁶ Fritz Fellner, “Introduction: The Genesis of the Austrian Republic,” in *Modern Austria*, ed. Kurt Steiner (Palo Alto: The Society for the Promotion of Science and Scholarship Inc., 1981), 1-2.

¹⁰⁷ “The Efficient Army of Austria,” *The Washington Post*, Sep 3, 1915, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Maj. Gen. George Brinton McClellan, *The Armies of Europe: Comprising Descriptions in Detail of the Military Systems of England, France, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Sardinia* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1861), 64.

¹⁰⁹ Henry Wickham Steed, *The Habsburg Monarchy* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1919), 65.

¹¹⁰ Posen, “Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power,” 139.

¹¹¹ Lyall, *Divided Armies*, 290.

¹¹² O.T.C., “The Austrian Army,” *The Westminster Review*, Jan. 1852-Jan. 1914, no. 2 (February 1, 1913), 124.

¹¹³ Stergar, “The Evolution of Linguistic Policies and Practices of the Austro-Hungarian Armed Forces in the Era of Ethnic Nationalisms,” 69.

discrimination and ill treatment. Promotions only go to Austrians. What chance did I have in this army; my race damns me in the eyes of my superiors.”¹¹⁴ The most significant blow to the army’s ideology was the formation of the National Guards, Honvéd and Landwehr, following the 1867 Ausgleich, which ironically was viewed as a solution to placate national grievances.¹¹⁵ The fall out of the Ausgleich, as perceived by some officers, would lead to other nationalities seeking connections with foreign Slavic powers, sowing more seeds of distrust and disunity.¹¹⁶

In the years before 1914, those loyal to the Monarchy came increasingly to feel that the political instability could be cured only through foreign policy rather than internal reform.¹¹⁷ The nationality problem had become too complex, with every attempt to mitigate the issue resulting in the creation of more tears in the delicate fabric which held the army together. While other European statesmen believed that civil war in Austria-Hungary would inevitably set off a greater conflict in the continent, officials in Vienna believed that a great conflict in Europe was their only alternative to civil war, preventing the “internal fighting which would inevitably result in the disintegration of the polyglot Monarchy.”¹¹⁸ A simple solution to a complex problem. However, the subversive and continuous undercurrent of mistrust damaged the army in more ways than one. The systematic suspicion of ethnic minorities crippled Habsburg training. Wary over the reliability of their own soldiers, the AOK curtailed prewar training drastically.¹¹⁹ Naturally, an army that had no trust in half its own soldiers had little interest in training them to use initiative or utilize independence.¹²⁰

Certain ethnic groups—notably the Czechs, Ruthenians, Serbs, Romanians, and Poles—were singled out and restrictions were placed on their military service and training.¹²¹ The watered-down training that did take place was more focused on instilling obedience and creating loyal citizen and less on actual combat training. “Don’t bother teaching them to fight,” instructed one Habsburg general, “they learn that in battle; teach them to obey.”¹²² The resulting defective training produced unskilled soldiers and vastly depreciated the army’s ability to wage effective warfare. The dilemma faced by the AOK was a paradoxical one: to solve the problem of internal threat, an external threat is necessary; however, the army could not hope to succeed without resolving their internal situation, and preparing

¹¹⁴ Cited in Kevin McNamara, *Dreams of a Small Great Nation: The Mutinous Army that Threatened a Revolution, Destroyed an Empire, founded a Republic, and Remade the Map of Europe* (New York: Public Affairs, 2016), 52.

¹¹⁵ Deak, “The Ethnic Question in the Multinational Habsburg Army, 1848-1918,” 45-46.

¹¹⁶ John Anthony Dredger, “Offensive Spending: Tactics and Procurement in the Habsburg Military, 1866-1918” (PhD diss., Kansas State University, 2013), 68.

¹¹⁷ Norman Stone, “Hungary and the Crisis of July 1914,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 1, no.3 (July 1966): 153.

¹¹⁸ Stone, “Hungary and the Crisis of July 1914,” 153. Lyall, *Divided Armies*, 289-290.

¹¹⁹ Lyall, *Divided Armies*, 292.

¹²⁰ Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front: 1914-1917* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975), 308.

¹²¹ Lyall, *Divided Armies*, 299.

¹²² Geoffrey Wawaro, *A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Habsburg Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 354.

for a foreign war was useless.¹²³ So concerned was the AOK with resolving the monarchy's internal problem, that it even retained detailed plans to invade Hungary in an effort to reunify the Dual Monarchy, as late as 1914.¹²⁴ As the Minister-President of Austria, Kasimir Badeni, commented: "A country of nationalities cannot wage war without danger to itself."¹²⁵

Concerns over the reliability of national minorities were intimately bound in the tactics of the AOK during the First World War, coupled with the varying qualities of training and the apparent misgivings of certain groups. The AOK believed that at least one quarter of its army that went to war in 1914 were politically unwilling to "do their duty to the emperor."¹²⁶ The Dual Monarchy's army was a haphazard institution yielding mixed battlefield results. Due to the crippled training program, many Habsburg soldiers could barely fire their weapons, let alone follow instructions to execute complex maneuvers.¹²⁷ As the war went on, second-rate training also led to an epidemic of indiscipline, especially among the groups that were the targets of official suspicion. In general, only the German, Hungarian, and Bosnian regiments could be reliably committed to combat on all fronts, and the effectiveness of the other nationalities varied greatly.¹²⁸ Mass desertion was common among the Ruthenian-, Serb-, and Czech-dominated regiments, beginning as early as August 1914.¹²⁹ The Austro-Hungarian army suffered particular high rates of desertion during the war, forcing the AOK to create a number of ad hoc measures including summary executions for even encouraging desertion.¹³⁰ So strained had interethnic relations gotten that during the First World War, regiments where officers did not speak the regimental language(s) became fertile grounds for indiscipline and mutinous behavior. Even an officer mispronouncing a soldier's name was enough to generate grievances.¹³¹ By the end of the war, nearly 125,000 soldiers—consisting of Czechs, Poles, Serbs, Ruthenians, and Romanians—defected and took up arms against the Habsburgs.¹³² The First World War proved to be not only a physically devastating conflict but an existential battle for the Habsburg army. In a strictly practical sense, the language issue was a proverbial administrative nightmare and pragmatically awkward in battle, but it was not the undoing of the army. Interestingly, almost no officer after the war pointed to the language issues as being responsible for the Empire losing the war or even any particular operations on the

¹²³ Gunther E. Rothenberg, "The Habsburg Army in the First World: 1914-1918," in *The Habsburg Empire in World War I: Essays on Intellectual, Military, Political and Economic Aspects of the Habsburg War Effort*, eds. Robert A. Kann, Bela K. Kiraly, and Paula S. Fichtner (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 75.

¹²⁴ Cathal Nolan, *The Allure of Battle: A History of How Wars Have Been Won and Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 333.

¹²⁵ Lyall, *Divided Armies*, 253.

¹²⁶ Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 31.

¹²⁷ Lyall, *Divided Armies*, 292.

¹²⁸ Rothenberg, "The Habsburg Army in the First World War," 75.

¹²⁹ Lyall, *Divided Armies*, 300.

¹³⁰ Hieke Nibergarll-Lackner, *Status and Treatment of Deserters in International Armed Conflicts* (Boston: Brill, 2016), 24-25.

¹³¹ Lyall, *Divided Armies*, 301.

¹³² Lyall, *Divided Armies*, 302.

front.¹³³ Ideologically however, it was an entirely different matter. The grievances of the polyethnic empire and the ambitions of the nationalist movements proved too great a task for the army to handle, leading to a crippled military going into one of the most devastating conflicts in history. The results of which were not surprising.

Though showing, at best, mixed results in actual combat, the Habsburg army was an important symbol of diverse unity and was essential to the creation of dynastic loyalty. With nationalism an ever-present danger to that unity, the monarch alone held the potential to unite the army as a symbol of unity. In the case of Franz Joseph, that relationship was symbiotic. Although the army could not prevent the ultimate demise of the Monarchy, the collapse would have come a lot sooner if not for the intervention of the loyal Habsburg forces during the 1848 Revolutions. Franz Joseph had the army to credit for the longevity of his reign and recognized its significance in keeping him on the throne, as well as its role in maintaining the strained bonds of the interethnic groups. After the Revolutions, Franz Joseph, issued the maxim *Virbus Unitis*, "With United Forces," as the official motto of a renovated Austrian army and as his personal mantra, bringing to attention the army's policy of ethnic unity.¹³⁴ The Emperor furthermore took painstaking measures to connect himself to the official army visage as much as possible, considering himself "first soldier of the Empire."¹³⁵ He and the army, much like the throne and the army, would be inseparable entities. If the Emperor counted himself part of the armed forces, referring to the army as "his army," what did the army think of Franz Joseph? It would appear the relationship was mutual, as the newspaper, the *Pester Lloyd*, stated, "Franz Joseph is not only the leader of the Army in Law, but also in fact. He is popular with the Army because he is always in uniform, and many regard him as the oldest soldier."¹³⁶ The phrases *dynastische loyalität* (dynastic loyalty) and *Schwarz-Gelb Patriotismus* (black-and-yellow patriotism, referring to the royal colors of the old Imperial flag) were also widely used in expressing feelings of the armed forces.¹³⁷ The phrases are indicative of the strong ties between the military and the dynasty without referring to any state patriotism, only stressing the loyalty to the dynasty and its symbols. As the nineteenth century progressed, however, the lexicographic revolution created a fierce conviction in Europe that languages were the personal property of specific groups, and a particular language was the nucleus to which a nationalist movement formed their group and communities around.¹³⁸ The dominance of German in the Habsburg Monarchy, especially in the army, alienated certain groups, and particular questions over the simple means of communication became hotly contested ideological battle grounds. Despite all the measures to which Franz Joseph and the Austrian military command took to combat nationalist tendencies, the language issue remained unresolved.

¹³³ Scheer, "Habsburg Languages at War," 75.

¹³⁴ Ainsworth, "The Austrian Army," 138.

¹³⁵ Laurence Cole, "Military Veterans and Popular Patriotism in Imperial Austria, 1870-1914," in *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, eds. Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 37.

¹³⁶ *Pester Lloyd*, 31 May 1908, 3.

¹³⁷ Baidins, "Franz Joseph, Kaisertreue and Loyalty in the Late Habsburg Empire," 71.

¹³⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 84.