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## REVIEWS

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Tamara Scheer, *Die Sprachenvielfalt in der österreichisch-ungarischen Armee (1867–1918)*, Wien: Heeresgeschichtliches Museum/Militärhistorische Institut, 2022, 431 pages.

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The Austro-Hungarian army was a significant presence in social and political life in the monarchy. In the eyes of Emperor Franz Joseph, it remained one of the cohesive factors and pillars of the state itself. During the interwar period and after World War II, many of the national historiographies of Balkan and Central European countries portrayed it as a great power that had compromised the safety and very existence of Serbs, Croats, Romanians, and others. A significant number of historians have focused on the army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (Deák, Rothenberg), but this book by Dr. Tamara Scheer undeniably deserves special attention when considering one of the most complex aspects of the monarchy's history—its army.

Dr. Scheer's monograph raises numerous important questions related to how the Austro-Hungarian army was organized, particularly regarding the chain of command and the way soldiers were addressed in everyday language and commands, all of which are relevant for an understanding of everyday life. Scheer focuses specifically on the structure of the army itself and the relations among those within it during the period following the settlement (*Ausgleich*) of 1867, which is the basis for understanding every issue that arose following it. As Scheer undeniably demonstrates, political relations between key players in both Vienna and Budapest were frequently fraught with conflicts over this important issue.

It is particularly important to stress just how complicated issues were around language within the context of the political events that unfolded after the settlement. For instance, the matter of

language was perceived by Serbs, Slovaks, and Ruthenians as a part of Magyarization. Similarly, language was intrinsically related to the question of ethnicity and how they should be resolved. Scheer analyzes this by drawing from the latest findings in historiography (from Judson, Cornwall, Deák, and Becker) related to everyday life, language, communication, and politics within the wider European context of nineteenth century bureaucracy. At this time, due to the nature of their employment in the military, administration, or bureaucracy, many people were expected to read and speak more than one language, which creates additional challenges for researchers. I believe Dr. Scheer has very much succeeded in overcoming them.

When analyzing the developments within the military after the settlement—changes in laws and regulations and the issues facing the officers' corps that were caused by them—which Scheer focuses most of her attention on, it becomes even clearer how complex and multifaceted this topic is. Personnel changes in the War Ministry were frequent, and the division into commands came with serious problems related to language related to both the language in which orders were given and relations with local populations. The education of future officers was complicated by the issue of language and how languages were taught (for example, Serbian and Croatian), and by issues regarding units of soldiers from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Vienna and Graz. One of the more interesting topics Scheer tackles is that of language tutors in military schools in 1872, which may seem less significant but proved to be an important one in practice. In a command system as complex as this one, such problems were part of a much broader mosaic, one that Scheer touches on when analyzing critical situations. An entire segment of a chapter is given to a detailed statistical analysis of the in which commands were exchanged between officers and soldiers. Scheer demonstrates that this statistical data is

just one aspect, whereas the reality depicted in historical sources paints a very different picture.

The chapter “Das Sprachensystem der k.u.k. Armee (Die Reglementierung der Sprachenvielfalt in der österreichisch-ungarischen Armee)” provides an in-depth analysis by presenting numerous archival documents and newspaper excerpts illustrating how difficult it was to manage the army and organize it as an efficient defense system crucial to the monarchy’s integration and integrity. With the 1876 reforms and regulations (and the 1910 regulations in Hungary), it becomes clearer how frequent complicated events unfolding within the military corps generated numerous issues and even national crises. This chapter presents a large amount of information to help further explain political developments within the monarchy, which will be of significant value for future scholars. Scheer then dives into a detailed analysis of individual regiments and the languages used in them by providing additional explanations related to every milieu within the regiments and the overarching military, and she focuses in particular on the problems that arose among officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers. She also addresses the choice of prayer books and liturgy for religious services within the Austro-Hungarian army. Scheer uses numerous examples to successfully illustrate the complexities of communication and the everyday practice of common prayers.

Complex relations between officers, as much as their ethnic background and that of their families, affected how officers perceived each other and what their position in society was. Most officers spoke German fluently, but they were also expected to also speak at least Hungarian or Czech. More often than not, they were not able to, or at least not well enough. Scheer substantiates this by drawing on excellent historical sources originating from analyses of the officers’ geographic origins from across the monarchy, ranging from Galicia to Croatia and Slavonia. The situation within individual regiments was somewhat different because there were not many officers who could speak other languages or were willing to learn them. It is clear that the general

staff and the War Ministry were slow and not overly persistent in addressing this, which became a reason for much criticism later on.

Scheer also touches on other important issues, such as the quality of textbooks officers used for learning languages, the time allocated for language lessons, and the ideas propagated by the War Ministry regarding the necessity of learning languages spoken by the peoples surrounding the monarchy. With detailed insight into *Qualifikationsliste*, Scheer analyzed information on the languages spoken by officers, including the languages they spoke before joining the corps. By providing personal examples from archives, along with autobiographies and journals kept by officers, she vividly illustrates the various tactics officers employed to avoid learning foreign languages and changing regiments. In addition, several memorable stories help illustrate the positions Emperor Franz Joseph and Archduke Franz Ferdinand took regarding these issues.

Reserve officers, how they were educated, and the problems they faced when communicating with high-ranking officers are also analyzed in detail. Once again, the discrepancies between languages spoken by officers and those used to communicate within individual regiments appear to have been ongoing. An analysis of the civilian staff employed by the army and attached to regiments, including physicians, pharmacists, and priests, was particularly interesting because they included reserve officers. In her distinct style, Scheer once again uses a sequence of personal stories to illustrate the extent to which the system lacked harmony and alignment between various parts of the monarchy, which created difficulties for the army and the general staff. The section on priests and their education, training, and work methods is particularly dynamic and pivotal to the entire chapter.

The chapter “Die Sprachenvielfalt im öffentlichen Raum” is one of most interesting for scholars. At the very beginning Scheer compares the lives of soldiers stationed at different garrisons in various parts of the monarchy, where they inevitably integrated into civilian society, and the political debates engaged in by parties in the press and in parliament. The author describes

everyday life in garrisons in a dynamic and interesting way, almost as if she were a narrator. Whether it was regular military duties or maneuvers and parades, there were countless occasions when locals came into contact with soldiers, which often led to situations that needed to be managed, which she recounts through anecdotes. Overcoming these often required the services of interpreters. Specifically, the use of the German became an issue beyond everyday operations for the army, and it eventually became a political issue discussed and written about in the press in many corners of the monarchy. Scheer dedicates a separate segment to analyzing the effect the political system had on the issue of language in the monarchy and its army. Numerous examples are provided in this chapter to substantiate her contention that there was a strong correlation between finding a solution for the national question and the use of languages in the army. Scheer pays particular attention to the crisis caused by Count Badeni and the ensuing Hungarian Debate, which eventually resulted in Hungarian being recognized as the official language of Honvéd. The issues arising from the use of Hungarian took more than three decades between 1868 to 1904/1905 to resolve. This often affected political relations between the two halves of the Dual Monarchy and further fueled discontent among the officers and soldiers who were not allowed to decide for themselves what languages the army used.

Another particularly important issue Scheer tackles in detail in “Die Sprachenvielfalt im Ersten Weltkrieg” is day-to-day interactions between officers. Everyday life for soldiers has often been neglected in the historiography, but here Scheer provides a fresh outlook by producing a substantial number of sources such as archival documents, memoirs, and journals, and compiles them into a separate chapter illustrating all sorts of drama, dynamics, fears, and emotions. When soldiers are viewed through this new lens, the motifs, desires and hopes that drove them throughout their years of service become all the more vivid.

Nevertheless, it is equally interesting to also gain insight into soldiers’ lives in times of peace through their jokes, problems, misunderstandings,

solidarity among officers, and the everyday anecdotes that make up the essence of daily life. However, the difficulties related to compiling this segment focusing on the everyday life of ordinary soldiers in times of war and peace must also be considered. Scheer nevertheless succeeds in presenting this segment to her readers in a very skillful and balanced manner. It is precisely this style of presentation, grounded in methodologically transparent segmentation and integration of archival sources and the important literature, that enables her to create an image of the entire military corps through the lens of language. Complicated and difficult ways of operating, endless regulations and legal provisions, problems facing the general staff and officer corps—all of these perspectives are shown to be being integral to a soldier’s daily life. It was a challenging one, even in everyday conflicts that would all come to a head with the outbreak of and during World War I.

The Great War came with a number of complex tasks and difficulties for the Austro-Hungarian army. Campaign plans that encompassed multiple strategic directions—Galicia, the Balkans, and Italy after the spring of 1915—resulted in numerous operational problems that were additionally complicated by the issue of language. The manner and speed of commands, the official language of communication, and multinational units instead of ethnically homogeneous armies (as in the Balkans), were objective problems for the Austro-Hungarian army. Starting with the first days of mobilization, Scheer taps into a narrative of the officers’ need to speak their regiments’ languages due to numerous difficulties related to coordination, especially with events developing rapidly on all fronts in 1914 and 1915. The losses suffered by the army were not easy to compensate, and it became necessary to deploy reserve officers. The issue of Jewish soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian units is also given considerable attention. With equal meticulousness, in a dynamic manner, and substantiated with ample sources, Scheer addresses physicians and priests and the problems involved in recruiting them as part of her effort to illustrate how they cared for the soldiers’ physical and spiritual well-being. The

sense of isolation experienced by soldiers and the roads taken by prisoners of war taken by the Austro-Hungarian army that Scheer describes also add an important element to this mosaic. Disloyalty and suspicions of treason—both related to issues around ethnicity—undoubtedly affected how the army operated during the Great War, which Scheer very competently analyzes. Archival sources provide the basis for a nuanced picture of the complex problems faced by the Austro-Hungarian soldiers fighting in World War I.

Dr. Tamara Scheer's monograph represents a major milestone for research into the Austro-Hungarian army. Her analyses and conclusions are as original as they are well-substantiated by sound historical sources. *Die Sprachenvielfalt in der österreichisch-ungarischen Armee (1867–1918)* is highly recommended reading and an abundant source of inspiration for further exploration into the topics it addresses. Dr. Scheer's conclusions have come as a result of years of research and analysis and place her among the leading scholars of the history of the Habsburg Monarchy.

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Danijel Radović, *Jovan Ristić (1829–1899): A Biography of Serbian Statesman*, Novi Sad: Prometej, 2023, 721 pages.

(Danijel Radović, *Jovan Rajić (1829–1899). Biografija srpskog državnika*, Novi Sad: Prometej, 2023, 721 str.)

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It is difficult even to enumerate all the roles played by Jovan Ristić, who was without question one of the most prominent political figures in nineteenth century Serbia. His presence in Serbian political life began with Serbian Uprising of 1848 as a student and revolutionary. Ristić later served as the Serbian envoy to Constantinople and twice as regent, helped draft a new constitution, served as prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, was the head of the

Liberal Party and the Serbian Royal Academy, among others. He was a rarity among his contemporaries - a *homo plurae tempi* - one of the rare personalities who found himself at the pinnacle of the Serbian political establishment at different and consequential times. Unlike other figures with similar qualities, for instance Nikola Hristić - the Summary criminal courts man - Ristić was able to maintain his position by taking a balanced approach toward the crown, which meant being neither too humble nor too defiant in his dealings with the head of state.

Considering all this, it is no wonder that parts of Ristić's life and work have been the subject of a vast number of scholarly works. However, despite the tremendous amount of existing literature, there are regrettably very few comprehensive biographies of this distinguished statesman. This leaves open an opportunity to fill this existing vacuum, but it also leaves scholars vulnerable to criticisms of conducting insufficient research.

Danijel Radović, a research associate at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade has authored a 721 page monograph on Jovan Ristić's life and work entitled *Jovan Ristić (1829–1899): biografija srpskog državnika*, published in Novi Sad in 2023 by Prometej, which has successfully filled this intolerable vacuum in Serbian historiography with extensive research that leaves almost no room for potential criticism.

Despite the Radović's modest statement that "one should not hold the belief that a few hundred pages will reveal everything about Ristić" (p. 20), his book covers every significant part of Ristić's public and private life, starting with convincing evidence of 1829 as the year of his birth rather than 1831, which has even been carved on his tombstone (p. 29).

The book comprises seventeen chapters organized chronologically, and except for the introduction (*Uvod: povesnik i biografija*) and conclusion (*Zaključak: srećna zvezda državnika*), each is divided into subsections. The titles of the chapters and subsections explain their content very concisely (for instance, "Ustav 'od korica do korica'" [The Constitution from Cover to Cover], an extract from King Milan's statement at the beginning of the constitutional convention in 1888

explaining how this new supreme legal act should be adopted). Radović's monograph is on sound footing drawn from all relevant published and unpublished sources, literature, and the press. There are several groups of sources the author drew from to illustrate Ristić's life and work in its totality that are of particular significance. Examples of these are archivalia from Heidelberg University, which contain Ristić's autobiography (see, for example, the subsection "Srpski sokak na Neckaru" [A Serbian *sokak* on the Neckar], documents kept in the Prussian Secret State Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation referenced in the subsection "Spectemur agendo," and the Political Archives of Foreign Service referenced in the subsection subchapter "Promisao Božja i ljudski razum" [God's Providence and Human Reason], both in Berlin, and Ristić's legacy preserved in the private belongings of his descendants referenced in the subsection "Iza zatvorenih vrata - portret i porodica" [Behind Closed Doors - A Portrait and A Family]).

Radović has also successfully avoided the potential pitfall of writing a monograph solely of interest to a narrow circle of historians by ending his work with interesting anecdotes about Ristić's private life. A careful reader will notice that Ristić's wife Sofija was "authorized" by her husband to expel their sons Mihailo and Milan from the family home if they did not properly respect her mother or fell into a disappointing or disorderly life (p. 638). The statesman was also a disciplined walker and maintained a healthy exercise habit (even twice a day) into his old age (p. 644).

The depiction of Ristić's personality Radović shares with his readers suggests Ristić as a private individual should be judged in the same way as his political and public persona - as someone who avoided extremes. Radović states that Ristić's chief historiographic works - *Spoljašnji odnošaji Srbije novijega vremena* (Serbian Foreign Relations in more Recent Times) and *Diplomska istorija Srbije za vreme srpskih ratova za oslobođenje i nezavisnost 1875–1878* (A Diplomatic History of Serbia During the Serbian Wars for Liberation and Independence, 1875–1878 ) met all the scholarly standards of their time (p. 16). Radović also emphasizes

Ristić's steadfastness at critical moments such as when Serbia stood at a precipice during the Serbian-Turkish wars and the somewhat disappointing outcome of the Congress of Berlin (p. 416). Nevertheless, Radović does not shy away from corroborating Ristić's adversaries' oft repeated accusation that, as regent, he altered records of interrogations of suspected accomplices to Prince Mihailo's assassination (p. 186).

The author's stylistic expression is an ideal balance between scholarly writing and colorful literary prose. This juxtaposition is also evident in some of the titles of chapters and sections such as "Namesnik" (The Regent) alongside "Jabuka razdora" (The Apple of Discord), "Obrana i poslednji dani" (The Defense and the Last Days), "Poniženi i uvređeni" (Humiliated and Insulted). Relatively short sentences of such quality make Radović's monograph easily readable for the general public.

Taking all of this into consideration, the monograph *Jovan Ristić (1829–1899): biografija srpskog državnika* should be viewed as a superb contribution to Serbian historiography and among the most highly recommended works.

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