

## What is Central Europe? An Exchange on HABSBURG

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From: Victor Hugo Lane <[hlane@duke.poly.edu](mailto:hlane@duke.poly.edu)>  
Subject: Review: Bucur & Wingfield, eds., *Staging the Past*  
To: HABSBURG@H-NET.MSU.EDU

HABSBURG Reviews 2002/9

March 13, 2002

### Framing the Past and the Instrumentality of Culture

Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield, eds. *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2001. xii + 337 pp. Ill., maps, notes, bibliography, and index. \$24.95 (paper), ISBN 1-55758-161-7.

Reviewed for HABSBURG by John Czaplicka <[Czaplicka@worldnet.att.net](mailto:Czaplicka@worldnet.att.net)>, Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies and Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard

There is much to recommend in this new collection of essays on the politics of commemoration and cultural representation in the Habsburg Empire and its successor states. As the word 'staging' in the title implies, each contribution to this volume treats the public "performance" of a projected or selectively "constructed past" or conception of state through collectively designed and articulated cultural markers such as monuments, cemeteries, festivals, and holidays. "Staging" also reflects the emphasis given to the formation of local, ethnic, and national groups through cultural-political processes. The state or a cultural grouping performs the past to express and instantiate shared understandings of common tradition, shared heritage, the recognition of origins and genealogies, and about the history of a local, state, or national entity. The ritualistic forms of public presentation analyzed in this book serve to legitimate rule, to help groups publicly assert shared values, and thereby serve both the constitution and maintenance of social, political, and cultural groupings. The movement from a local social and political formation to an ethnic and national one is one of the sub-themes in this book and is rightly emphasized in the introduction. As most of the essays suggest, the repeated activation of monuments and memorials in public contexts and the celebration of festivals contributed to the delineation and consolidation of distinct local, ethnic, and national identities in an Empire that was plural and mixed in its languages, cultural traditions, religions, and shared values.

The book holds up commemoration and the public display of history as a mirror to the dissolution of Habsburg state into distinct multi-ethnic and multi-national entities and to the further nationalization of the successor states as well as to their ethnic homogenization. This reviewer, whose work has recently centered on commemorative practices in the central and eastern regions of Europe and especially in Germany, post-Habsburg Austria, and in a number of cities not considered in the collection, cannot claim to be able to question the details in each study, though it is in the impressive marshalling of these historical details that most of the authors have substantiated their theses. My limitations in reviewing this volume derive from my own formation as an art and architectural historian with a strong dosage of cultural history in a German university context. With a full appreciation for the historical richness of the volume, I will approach some of the larger issues familiar to an historian of art and culture. I must leave it to other historians to discuss the transformations in social, ethnic, national, and state consciousness related to the uses of culture.

Before engaging the individual essays I will begin by answering a few questions typically posed to a reviewer by a publishing house. Will the book make a valuable contribution to scholarly literature, and if so, in which fields? Who will or should be its readers? Would you use this book in a course on a related topic?

All the essays make contributions to the fields of nationality and ethnicity studies, Habsburg studies, European Studies, and a few to the study of commemorative practices. Yet not one of them makes any substantive contribution to the field of material culture or the social and political history of art. There is little reflection on the vast literature concerning museums, monumental-representative sculpture, or festival culture in art and cultural history; the lack and very poor quality of the illustrations is a symptom of this. The book does not even have a list of illustrations and figures. Only a nod to the standardization of sculpture and use of allegory in Nancy Wingfield's contribution and the comparison of narratives and emphases in museum exhibitions in the essay by Maria Bucur show any sustained attempt at describing or analyzing the "stagings." Still, the historical research assembled here largely in case studies will aid those engaged in a more object-oriented study of "staging history," for most of the essays in this book of history are grounded in new primary research, and several are related closely to dissertations.

The essay by Jeremy King on the "The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond" stands out in that it offers historians a compelling revisionist perspective on the prevalent national and ethnic paradigms in the discipline of history. Several essays -- most notably the ones by Cynthia J. Paces, which considers the commemorations of Jan Hus and St. Wenceslas in connection with the commemorative practices instituted by the first Czechoslovak President, Tomas Masaryk, and the study of the Hungarian Cult of March 15 by Alice Freifeld provide students with models for the method and writing of history. In the diversity of their methods the essays composing this collection could be used to provide a more general overview of approaches to the politics of commemoration.

With emendations as well as a slight expansion, *Staging the Past* has the potential to become a set piece in Habsburg studies, especially because of its willingness to enter into the gray areas of national, state, ethnic studies. It raises new questions about the cultural definition of identity along local, class, state, national, and ethnic lines. Furthermore, the book will certainly prove useful in courses grappling with the contingencies of state, nation, and ethnic formation within the borders of that empire subject to the mixing and un-mixing of cultures concomitant

with the constitution of ethnic, state, and national consciousness. The book has already found a place in courses at Harvard.

*Staging the Past* is ably edited and organized clearly and logically into three sections dealing with 1) imperial representative practice; 2) countervailing commemorative practices in the localities and regions of the Empire; and 3) the legacies of commemorative practice in the successor states. Given the diversity of chronology, method, and scope in the studies, it might have been more appropriately entitled *Staging Pasts*, since it considers the multiple and sharply varying uses of histories constructed by selected supra-national, nationalizing, and sub-national groupings. The chronological, social, and geographical range is both broad and diverse, and, as noted by David Blackbourn in his commentary to the collection printed on its back cover, the collection is "richly textured". That said there is much room for constructive criticism of this attempt to provide a broad and incisive view of commemorative practices related to a particular constellation of "emergent nation-states."

The subtitle "The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present" misleads, for the bulk of the book, except for last sections of essays by Alice Freifeld and Maria Bucur (on Romanian national celebrations), and the preface by Charles W. Ingrao, present "stagings" before WWII. Though it provides a solid basis for understanding the Serbian consciousness of nation in the present, it is a pity that an essay by Melissa Bokovoy concerning commemorations of Serbia's Wars of National Liberation, 1912-1918 did not offer a more sustained perspective on the present. The book avoids the commemorative practices related to the memory of WWII, and to its accompanying deportations, mass murders, and realignment of borders. This merits an explanation as does the limited reference to post-Communist patterns of commemoration. This reviewer can imagine several reasons for the exclusion, but a reader is left to ponder the fact that the bulk of contemporary discourse about commemoration in the region has been ignored. This absence might be easily remedied by stressing the aspect of continuities from the Habsburg period to the present. One also has to wonder why the whole history of commemoration associated with that state that would call itself Austria after WWI has been left out of the volume. In effect the successor state at the center of the Empire has been ignored. Why is this?

With their very condensed introduction, the editors of the volume have lost a great opportunity to make the texts more accessible and to establish relevant ties to other historical research in the field of commemorative studies. They do distinguish the texts presented in the volume from other such collections, noting the collection represents the first volume to concentrate on commemorative practices in "Habsburg Central Europe" and that the region is a "fruitful site" for such a study and "ideally suited" because of the regions "rich cultural legacy of multinational exchange." More should be said about the specific character of the Habsburg Empire and the cultural-political parameters of its demise.

This compilation of texts exhibits very different methodologies, scopes, contexts, and chronologies. This begs for an introduction that would make comparisons from context to context within the volume and beyond. Such a comparative approach in the introduction would have woven particular contributions together and established leitmotifs or central questions that could be read across the collected texts. A much more specific referencing of other texts is also needed in the introduction to open these texts to similar discussions of commemorative practices focused on other regions in Europe.

This unwritten introduction or an afterward could, for instance, have made the obvious connections between the various cults of person and personality introduced by diverse essays. Cynthia Paces shows how Masaryk allied himself with Czech nationalist mythology represented by Hus and St. Wenceslas. How does this compare to the public alignment of Franz Joseph with Catholic ritual (Daniel Unowsky), to the imperial Jubilee, which is a celebration of the person of the sovereign (Steven Beller's essay), and to the instrumentalization of the Emperor Joseph II as the defender of German privilege delineated so clearly by Nancy Wingfield? Linking these articulations of historic and contemporary personages would allow the essays to speak with one another. For example, Maria Bucur shows how Ceausescu's personality cult instrumentalized national celebrations and emptied them of content.

Such typological pointers would help these texts emerge from the delimited world of Habsburg studies and make them much more useful to students and colleagues teaching in various disciplines and fields. After reading the essays mentioned, I wanted to re-read Thomas Carlyle's essay on heroes and hero-worship.[1] I returned to my notes from the context largely ignored in this volume, art history, and revisited the many lectures and readings on the body of king or representations of power through both secular and sacred (divine-right) associations. Just a little cross-referencing in the introduction or in very short introductions to each segment of the book would have improved its didactic merit immensely. It is a book that belongs in the classroom.

In the same vein but more with an eye to academic readers, another type of cross referencing would improve this work. In his focused text tracing the critical reception of Imperial Jubilee in the contemporary press, Steven Beller comments on the unwanted imperial guests and interlopers from the German Empire, who can only remind Franz Joseph of the failures of his regime. There is a vast literature concerning commemoration in that significantly "other" Empire to the north.

Why is the entire literature on nation, memory, history, and commemorative practice dealing with Imperial and post-Imperial Germany largely ignored? Why isn't there some reflection on the different time frames in the gestation of literature about commemorative practice in the fields of German history and Habsburg history?

This "other" literature is unwisely ignored, especially given the methodological and theoretical impulses it offers. I am surprised that Thomas Nipperdey, Peter Reichel, Rainer Koselleck, Jan Assmann, Dieter Düring, Wolfgang Kaschuba, Ekkehard Mai, and Wilfried Lipp are not mentioned even in the footnotes. The scholastic pro forma citing of Anderson and Nora, and of imagination and invention, seems less important than referencing a literature that deals quite specifically with the construction and propagation of imperial and national pasts, with the assertion of identities through the erection of monuments, the establishment of commemorative sites, with public festivals and holidays, and with the coordination of different pasts into a larger national-imperial framework. In both empires, one can trace the growing identification of an emergent, modern, and urban bourgeoisie and educated elites with particular formulations of "national past" that pose a tense relationship between a bourgeois and a dynastic tradition. The comparison between an emerging "national" empire and a disintegrating multi-national one might at least have been broached.

The very good and excellent individual studies presented in *Staging the Past* have much in common with the localized studies of commemorative practices in Germany, whose touchstone is Thomas Nipperdey's essay on "Nationalidee und Nationaldenkmal in Deutschland in 19. Jahrhundert"- an essay which appeared in its first version in the *Historische Zeitschrift* in 1968![2] The chance for at least a glancing comparison is doubly missed in that *Staging the Past* does something that much of the German literature does not: it begins to question many assumptions about "national" and "ethnic" traditions shared by historians for years. Perhaps, this reviewer is asking too much when he suggests a short historiography should be included in the introduction, naming a few major studies in the larger Germanic context, would have been helpful. Should we suppose a footnote with "see for example Rudy Koshar" indicating an overview text by that author takes care of this well enough?

But even if that exterior point of reference were to remain in a footnote, what happened to the theory on commemorative practice developed at the heart of the empire? As an art historian, I looked for references to various authors, among them Julius Schlosser and Hans Tietze.[3] But above all I missed some reference to that indigenous theorist of historic memory and monuments, Alois Riegl, whose work on the "Cult of Monuments" is central to historic preservation and a cultivation of the past within the Austrian context and indeed within the whole Central European context including Germany. Riegl's writings on monuments, especially his discussion of *Erinnerungswert*, *historische Werte*, and *Gebrauchswert* as well as the codification of many of his ideas into the laws on historic preservation and the state recognition of monuments, make him relevant to any study of "staging the past" in Habsburg Central Europe. Riegl's relevance to this collection lies not so much in how he defined his categories of historical values, memory values, use values, and aesthetic values, but rather in that he produced cogent categories with which to articulate and analyze the uses of the past.[4]

Categories of commemorative practice and the terms used to describe them sometimes lack precision in this collection. Set against a wonderfully refreshing questioning of nationalism, nation, nationality and ethnicity in the individual essays, and a veritable production of intersections in meanings that Jeremy King calls "crossed wires", there is an unquestioned use of terms such as "collective memory." The fivefold usage of this term on the first page of the introduction alone without a considered definition, confuses. Is the memory of the collective a mode of remembering or is it fixed and how so? Can it be "institutionalized" if it is so subject to change as many of the essays suggest? Exactly how is it linked to "performative aspects of remembering"?[5]

Besides this easily remedied vagueness of central terminology, a certain confusion of political categories becomes evident on page 5 of the introduction. The editors write the following in regard to the essays by Daniel Unowsky ("Reasserting Empire") and by Steven Beller ("State Consciousness Raising in the 1908 Jubilee Parade"): "As both authors show, the sharing in symbolic ritual or public spectacle was an essential component of the attempts to create a unified collective national (my emphasis) memory." Were the Habsburgs interested in creating a unified national memory when they were "reasserting empire" and trying to create a "consciousness of the state" by parading a multiplicity of national types before the emperor? This particular confusion of categories may flow from the editors' insistence on emphasizing "collective memory." In each of the instances of state representation carefully described by Unowsky and Beller, it is not memory but rather the political legitimation of sovereignty that is at stake. Moreover, the sovereign is defined in dynastic and not national terms. Beller draws on the contemporary usage *Staatsbewusstsein*, which I would translate as both "consciousness and recognition of the state."

This state is imperial and not national. Unowsky describes rituals of imperial incorporation that are aimed at establishing an identity between ruler and subject.

The texts in *\_Staging the Past\_* all treat forms of cultural production and reproduction related to the consolidation of state power and/or to the constitution of ethnic and national identities. The book is thus about cultural practices and the instrumentality of those practices in conveying common meaning and a sense of belonging, in defining parameters of social and political inclusion and exclusion as each ethnic and national group formed. The instrumentality of culture can be reinforcing, incidental to, creative of, or destructive to social and political formations along local, ethnic, state, or national lines. Sometimes cultural representation seems only to give ex post facto expression to such formations. Each study contained in this volume approaches the question of instrumentality differently and draws different conclusions from it; those most successful in dealing with this issue are able to recreate contemporary discursive fields, which both define and are defined by cultural representations. This involves a rendering of relevant historical processes and defining the position of groups within these processes at any given point in time.

For example, Keely Stauter-Halsted's important attempt to trace the incorporation of the Polish peasant into the myth of the Polish nation identifies the process correctly and offers a vivid rendering of how the "peasants" almost insinuate themselves into national celebrations. But even on a second reading of the text, the definition and relationship between the social groups eludes me -- perhaps because she calls the peasants alternately lower classes, smallholders, and peasants. The roles of the Polish magnates and the impoverished aristocracy are not distinguished clearly; indeed the social division that is being transformed is perhaps more complicated. Did the gentry really still have a monopoly on national memory in the late decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century after the establishment of large bureaucratic and professional populations in cities such as Lwów and Cracow? Does the peasant participation in the national festivals coincide with their representation in history books as actors? Are they enfranchised as they represent the nation by wearing local costumes in national celebrations? Or did they just provide "local color" necessary for myth of national origination and consistency in people and land, while disturbing the arbiters of national history with local smells and sounds? The exacting answers to such questions about the social-political historical context will strengthen or weaken any thesis involving the instrumentality of culture. The questions posed do not challenge Stauter-Halsted's thesis in as far as that thesis about myth is made merely on the token level of representation in ephemeral celebrations and not on the level of the distribution of political representation within the polity of a nation.

So, besides the contextualization variously provided by the essays in this collection, there is a need to establish levels and categories of cultural representation. When one begins to distinguish between such levels of representation, it is much easier to ascribe significance to a statue of Joseph II or a museum exhibit in Transylvania that provides an alternative reading of Romanian history. A suggestion in this regard by Maria Bucur, to examine different venues of cultural representation - mass media, exhibitions, religious rituals, public festivals, etc. - to consider constellations of signifiers within a given historical context associated with a single or set of issues is well taken. The institutionalization (a very ugly word) of cultural meanings takes place at different times in different areas of communicative culture. The book as a whole conveys this understanding.

But, because these essays are focused case studies, they delineate well the shifting interpretations of the cultural "vehicles" and markers over a period of time and by different groups constituting their ethnic or national identities. One sees how certain cultural-political representations accrue or lose significance. They are embodied in the historical personage of Joseph II and Andreas Hofer (in the essays by Wingfield and Cole) or in certain dates of a national calendar, such as March 15 in the Hungarian calendar or December 1 in the Romanian (essays by Freifeld and Bucur).

The multiple identities of and multiple claims on the historical personages becomes evident in Jeremy King's subtle and expansive analysis of the Imperial Royal Shipmaster Adalbert in Budejovice/Budweis and in Cynthia Paces' interpretation of the shifting fortunes of Jan Hus as a hero for the Czechoslovak state. A shorthand for the complex reasonings by King and Paces might read like this. Located on a local and supra-national level, Adalbert's historic personage proved resistant to nationalization and so his effigy in bronze survived the vicissitudes of the Czech/German national conflict. On a national level Hus, the Protestant rebel against the Habsburg state, became a divisive figure, in a new state composed largely of Catholics. What they demonstrate is that these vehicles of culture transport meaning according to the prevailing social and political, public discourse, and according to their usefulness in projecting the heritage and identity of a particular ethnic group or a particular state.

Such demonstration of contingency in *Staging the Past* draws attention to the success and failure of cultural tactics and strategies in the Habsburg realm and its successor states. Here again one can draw on the richness of this volume to begin to understand which elements of culture proved effective in which circumstances for the constitution of a group identity. The contradictions of the Empire come into view.

One can exemplify this by referring to the role of religion. Daniel Unowsky describes the institutionalization of Catholic ritual as part of imperial representation. Franz Josef characterizes himself as pious through the ceremony of the "washing of the feet" and through his "humble" participation in religious processions. The effectiveness of this is diminished greatly by the forces of modernization that the emperor himself supports. Laurence Cole suggests in his analysis of the role of religion in Tyrolean cultural practices that the patriotic celebration for "*God, Emperor, and the Fatherland*", a very Catholic affair, turns against the center of the Empire, because of the religious tolerance it propagates while at the same time associating itself with peculiarly Catholic ritual. More direct in contradicting such political renderings of religious usages was the liberal tradition incorporated into the Hungarian tradition of national celebration, the "cult" of March 15 whose successive redefinitions presented by Alice Freifeld do maintain a core immutability of secular and liberal tradition. The title of Paces' essay, "*Religious Heroes for a Secular State*," underlines the contradiction between religious legitimization and modern state building. Melissa Bokovoy, had she taken more note of the role of the Orthodox Church in Serbian society, could have offered a parallel instance of such religious-secular contradiction by referring to the composition of the Yugoslav state, with the Serbs as the first among equals.

The strength of this volume lies in the way it unearths such contradictions in the cultural practices of an Empire and its successor states. At their best some of the essays make us aware of the role culture plays in social and political conflict and transformation, and provide wonderfully variegated scenarios and well-narrated plots for the role of culture. At their very best a few of these essays offer historians and those in cultural studies reasons to begin to question certain

assumptions about the formation of ethnic and national groups. The volume engages intellectually.

Notes:

1. The earliest editions of his "Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History" are published in the 1840s it is republished many times including translated editions in German. Edgar Zilsel's *Geniereligion* (Wien: Braumüller, 1918) provides another relevant reading in connection with personality cults.
2. Thomas Nipperdey, "Nationalidee und Nationaldenkmal in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert," *Historische Zeitschrift* 206, 1968, pp. 529-85.
3. E.g. Julius Schlosser, "Vom modernen Denkmalkultus," *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg, 1926-27*, ed. Fritz Saxl (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1927), pp. 1-21. Hans Tietze's work as a historical preservationist in the central areas of Austria (he produced art topographies on Krems, Melk, Waidhofen, etc.) is important as a point of consolidation for a conception of "Austria" after WWI. His work represents the centering of German culture and its territorial inscription in the Habsburg Empire in historic "art topographies."
4. See Ernst Bacher, *Kunstwerk oder Denkmal? Alois Riegls Schriften zur Denkmalpflege* (Wien: Boehlau, 1995).
5. Perhaps after having read Halbwachs on the social constitution of memory, Warburg on the "social memory" communicated in visual imageries, and having translated Jan Assmann on the cultural constitution and institutionalization of a "cultural memory", I am being too sensitive to the modification and even transformation of such terms in different studies of commemorative practices. Still after the inflationary use of terms indicating collective identities (noted by Rogers Brubaker among others), one needs to be more than suggestive when propagating the term "collective memory."

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From: Victor Hugo Lane <hlane@duke.poly.edu>  
Subject: Review: Bucur & Wingfield, eds. *Staging the Past* (Response)  
To: HABSBUrg@H-NET.MSU.EDU

As co-editors and individual authors of the volume *Staging the Past*, we have decided to respond in a joint message to the reviews of T. Mills Kelly and John Czaplicka. We hope the other authors in the volume will join us in this discussion. The points the reviewers have raised are very important and provide us with excellent ideas for moving into new directions as we pursue the study of commemorations and nationalism in a possible second edition of this book, as well as in our current individual projects.

Issues, such as the order of the essays, a list of illustrations, the expansion of the select bibliography to include foreign language entries, and the addition of an afterword, are certainly worth considering for another edition of this book. Others, such as the technical quality of the illustrations, are incumbent upon the press.



The reviewers made a variety of intriguing suggestions, some of which we would like to address, in the hope of generating a dialogue on Habsburg about issues of culture, nationalism/ethnicity, and collective memory. Our main scholarship and the audience we hoped to reach with this volume comprises students and scholars who consider nationalism and ethnicity from a political and cultural perspective, as the subtitle of our volume indicates. The issue of enriching the kind of analyses presented in the volume from the perspective of art history and material culture is, however, an important one and merits further discussion.

In our volume, we chose to concentrate to post-1918 events that were linked in some way directly to the Habsburg Monarchy, even if only to its demise. We do not claim to present an exhaustive picture of these developments, but rather a series of parallel, sometimes, competing developments that simply span this period, not least because we simply had to stop somewhere in terms of the size of the volume. A discussion of interwar Austrian commemorative practices, which one reviewer suggested, is then left to someone else.

We are eager to hear more on how the "literature on nation, memory, history, and commemorative practice dealing with Imperial and post-Imperial Germany" would significantly change the claims and arguments presented in this volume. This literature certainly presents an interesting comparative case, but is it essential for enabling the readers to grasp the significance of commemorations for the building and contestations of nationalism in the Habsburg Monarchy? Along the same lines, the suggestion to consider Alois Riegl is an excellent one and we are grateful for it.

The comments regarding the use of the term "collective memory" are well taken. We are ourselves trying to refine the relationship between the terms "cultural" and "collective" memory in our current projects. But for the moment, we propose clarifying "collective memory" to mean a set of artifacts/symbols/narratives that individuals in a group (defined in various ways, from region to gender to class to nation) recognize and employ to represent the historical past of their group. One draws upon the interpretive framework of representing the past provided by the symbols of collective memory to construct identity, but also helps reinscribe these symbols with new meaning.

To address the query "Can [collective memory] be institutionalized" if it is subject to change as many of the essays suggest?": Modern states have tried to institutionalize collective memory through various official avenues, such as education and museums. But that is certainly also a changing discourse, as both the national narratives presented through such avenues and the public itself have not remained the same over time. To institutionalize is to try and control, to stabilize the representation of the past. In some extreme cases, such as Ceausescu's Romania, the attempt was to even arrest any change over time. But in most other cases, official producers of culture have simply tried to control the changes in representations of the past, in keeping with various external changes-political, social, and cultural.

Finally, we are delighted that both reviewers noted the variety in the case studies presented, which we also considered the most important strength of this volume. We did not wish, however, to present an exhaustive interpretive roadmap for comparing these case studies. We preferred to allow readers to make some of the connections noted by the reviewers themselves. For us, this is one of the important advantages of this volume from a pedagogical stand-point.

Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield

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From: Victor Hugo Lane <hlane@duke.poly.edu>  
Subject: What does one call Habsburg Germans?  
To: HABSBUrg@H-NET.MSU.EDU

Date: Thu, 14 Mar 2002 09:48:47 +0100  
From: Franz Adlgasser <Franz.Adlgasser@oeaw.ac.at>  
Subject: What does one call Habsburg Germans?

Germans in the Habsburg lands were until 1918 just this - plain and simple Germans. All political and cultural organisations called themselves German (not German-Austrian or Austrian-German), both to identify with the greater German nation (in the sense of the Kulturnation and in the late years of the monarchy also partly in the sense of modern nationalism) and to separate themselves from the other ethnic groups - Nationalitaeten - of the monarchy. What they struggled with was their place within this German nation, which was exaggerated after 1866/1871 with the definite end of the old German empire and the creation of the Bismarck Reich under Prussian leadership. It did not make things easier that this new Reich usurped the term German and used it almost as a synonym for Prussian.

The term German-Austrians (and the term Sudeten-Germans too, I might add) was basically not used until the First World War, when the "Austrian question" was solved by force - through the dissolution of the empire. Until then, the German population distinguished itself against the other ethnic groups within a province - crownland the exact term - by calling themselves German-Tyrolean (Deutsch-Tiroler), German-Bohemians (Deutschboehmer), German-Moravians (Deutschmaehrer) etc., stressing the strong regional identities within these historic entities.

But even the new term German-Austrian was not meant to separate from Germany but to define the new role within the German nation. The idea of a separate Austrian nation was almost non-existent, it was propagated only by very few and in their time exotic intellectuals.

Only after 1945 - and in a longer process - the people living in Austria became Austrians, and no longer German-Austrians or Austrian Germans. Today the German question is solved through the power of the facts: The idea that Austria is part of a greater German nation seems absurd to almost all having grown up after World War II, and this is the vast majority of today's Austrians (with the exception of some mostly on the far right wing of the political spectrum). Asking young Austrians today about their German identity is like asking Irish if they are Irish-English, English-Irish or Irish just because they use the same language. This does not mean that the Austrian identity is very inclusive for non-German speaking people and ethnicities. A law will be passed soon requiring immigrants to take German courses for example. But Austria as such is a nation by definition and in the hearts and minds of her people, and not a German province with a strong regional identity like Bavaria or Saxonia.

yours

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Date: Thu, 14 Mar 2002 09:09:54 -0600  
From: Nancy Wingfield <td0nmw1@wpo.cso.niu.edu>  
Subject: Re: What does one call Habsburg Germans?

Franz Adlgasser's comments on what to call the Habsburg Germans are very useful. I would like, however, to expand on them as regards the term, "Sudeten German." Some Germans in the Bohemian Lands began employing the term, Sudeten German, for self designation around the turn of the century, at least a decade before the outbreak of the First World War.

Regarding the original query, I think that "Habsburg Monarchy" or "Austria-Hungary" are perhaps more accurate designations for this region after 1867 than "Habsburg Empire." The Monarchy was, indeed, an empire, but the "Empire" only in Cisleithania.

Yours,

Nancy Wingfield  
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Date: Thu, 14 Mar 2002 22:23:07 -0500 (EST)  
From: Jeremy King <jking@MtHolyoke.edu>  
Subject: Re: What does one call Habsburg Germans?

As a contributor to the Wingfield and Bucur volume just reviewed twice on HABSBUrg, I was invited by HABSBUrg's editors to respond. I prefer to thank Drs. Kelly and Czaplicka for their thought-provoking reviews -- and to respond to the recent posting of Mr. Abbott about ways of naming "Habsburg Germans," the meaning of "Austrian," etc.

Mr. Abbott, who is not a specialist in Habsburg history, asks questions that touch on the very foundations of Habsburg historiography. The nature of those questions, though, invites the Habsburg specialist to begin answering them by questioning Mr. Abbott's own terminology. He refers to Nigeria as a "nation." But I would call it a "state," in part because that practice leaves the term "nation" available for other uses -- including what Mr. Abbott now refers to as "ethnic groups." Of course, every terminology has its problems and poisons. What matters is that each scholar should define his or her terms and try to be consistent. But I have at least 3 reasons for considering my poison preferable.

First, the term "ethnic group" had its origins in an American domestic context, and continues to be used by many scholars of the United States with reference to SUB-national "identities." When the term "ethnic group" became airborne during the 1970s and '80s, in the sense of spreading to the study of areas overseas, that was arguably at serious and enduring

expense to analytical precision. An "ethnic group" in the U.S. is often not at all the same as an "ethnic group" elsewhere. But many scholars and students don't see the distinction. Second, the noun "group" points to what Rogers Brubaker has called a substantialist, realist, or groupist understanding of nationhood. I think that Brubaker demonstrates convincingly in his book "Nationalism Reframed" (1996) and in subsequent articles that such understandings contain significant analytical flaws -- such as to reproduce nationalism, rather than help to understand it. Third, Mr. Abbott concludes his first paragraph with the phrase "ethnic (national) identity." That equating of the ethnic with the national (or what I would call nation and state) is inconsistent, or at the very least confusing.

For that matter, national states and multi-national states do not exhaust the pool of possibilities, although that is what Mr. Abbott's first paragraph implies. The Habsburg Monarchy was becoming a multi-national state by the beginning of the 20th century -- in fascinating ways that can be tracked through constitutional law (as Gerald Stourzh, in Austria, has done). But until then, the Monarchy was a NON-national, dynastic state. As for the German national movement within that state, Pieter Judson, a foremost scholar of the topic ("Exclusive Revolutionaries," 1996), has shown that German nationalism gradually became quite ethnic (i.e., centered in large part on language), but started out as NON-ethnic (i.e., centered on historical territories, historical elites, and/or on citizenship). The Habsburg state was not always multi-national, and the national movements within it were not always predominantly ethnic.

Long dominant interpretations by historians of the Habsburg Monarchy, though, imply otherwise. When Mr. Abbott and other interested outsiders try to pursue questions of nation, state, and ethnicity in the Monarchy, the standard histories offer less enlightenment than confusion. Mr. Abbott asks what to call "Habsburg Germans," by which he means "all those people who spoke German as their mother tongue and/or self-identified as German...." The difference between those 2 definitions is not trivial. Indeed, it is highly significant, and huge. Yet the historical literature concerning the Habsburg Monarchy has long conflated them. In other words, historians have tended to be ethnic nationalists, or at least to adopt ethnically nationalist interpretations. Germans and German-speakers, supposedly, are almost the same thing.

Back in the old days, inhabitants of Habsburg Central Europe had as many words for German-speakers as Eskimos are claimed to have for snow. In September 1945, a Czech newspaper explained that at the moment, the Bohemian town of Ceske Budejovice contained Reich Germans, Austrian Germans (here in the sense of people from the Habsburg successor state of the Republic of Austria), Sudeten Germans, Protectorate Germans, "Germans who remembered their origins only with the coming of Nazism," and so on. For other parts of the former Habsburg Monarchy, one can add Swabians, Zipsers, Saxons, Heanzen, Gottscheers, Volksdeutsche, and many additional terms. In certain contexts, it can be analytically useful to lump all those categories together under "Austrian Germans" or "German Austrians." But one should always keep in mind that one is discussing speakers of German, not necessarily Germans.

As for "Austrian" on its own, about which Mr. Abbott asks, it did not necessarily imply anything before the 1920s about the language spoken. And I agree with Dr. Adlgasser that, until after the First World War at the very least, the word did not usually have national connotations. In a territorial sense, the word had and has multiple meanings: after all, there are the duchies of

Upper and Lower Austria, the modern Republic of Austria, the Austrian half to Austria-Hungary, and then Austria in the sense of the entire Habsburg Monarchy. Useful here is Robert Kann's chapter on the name of the Habsburg state in his 2-volume study, "The Multinational Empire" (1970) (please note the typical title).

When Mr. Abbott writes of "nationalities which are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive," his vocabulary calls to mind Brubaker's 1992 volume, "Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany." But Brubaker uses such vocabulary to refer to states, not to nations. And a comparison of that volume with his 1996 volume mentioned above reveals that he draws an important distinction between the two. States, his 1992 book argues, can be understood not only as organizations that assert a monopoly of legitimate force over a given territory but also as membership organizations -- with that membership being of the mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive sort. Nations, though, can (and from an analytical perspective, as opposed to a national-practical one, SHOULD) be understood as imagined communities, to borrow Benedict Anderson's famous phrase.

Nationalists tend to understand nations as mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive groups of people, but the reality is usually different. At root, nations are not groups but forms of legitimacy. Thus the importance of the distinction between people who feel German and people who simply speak German -- but on the basis of that language have a "membership" in the imagined community of Germans attributed to them by nationalists. (In other words, ethnic nationalists use mother tongues as the basis for allocating people to nations: every human being supposedly has one native language, and only one. It supposedly reflects and/or determines every person's national affiliation.)

Mr. Abbott asks about scholarly work that undertakes explicit comparison of the Habsburg Monarchy with European overseas empires. I cannot think of anything in particular. But I do know that good work has been done by African historians on the invention of ethnicity. Habsburg historians generally seem unaware of that work -- and often continue to understand ethnicity in primordialist terms. My contribution to the Wingfield and Bucur volume amounts to a critique of that practice.

Most Habsburg historians probably understand Mr. Abbott all too well when he writes that he finds it difficult to explain himself to audiences, because many people today think that Germans live in Germany, Austrians in Austria, and so on -- not only now, but in the past as well. My point, though, is this. If we think of the Habsburg Monarchy as having been inhabited less by Germans, Hungarians, Czechs, etc. (or worse yet, by THE Germans, THE Hungarians, THE Czechs, etc.) than by German-speakers, Hungarian-speakers, Czech-speakers, and so forth, we impose today's national categories on the past in only slightly less crude fashion. Still lost from view are the categories of political loyalty that long underpinned the Habsburg Monarchy. (Cf. Gellner's title, "A Non-nationalist Pole." Joseph Roth, in his fiction, found better ways of categorizing Habsburg subjects.) Nations in Central Europe did not emerge from dormant ethnic groups that "woke up" and became conscious, because that would mean that before national politics, there was no politics, just snoring.

But in fact there was politics, of a non-national sort. In the last 2 decades, excellent studies have appeared that have lifted the veil from non-national dimensions to politics in the Habsburg Monarchy, and have begun to explore the complex relationship of those dimensions to

national ones (Stourzh; Judson; Gary Cohen's "The Politics of Ethnic Survival;" Andrew Janos's "Politics of Backwardness in Hungary;" Katherine Verdery's "Transylvanian Villagers;" Istvan Deak's "Beyond Nationalism;" etc.) Many of the articles in the volume edited by Wingfield and Bucur deserve mention in this context. And more such work is on the way. As for "German," it is not a timeless category, but rather a quintessentially historical one -- and thus not subject to easy explanation.

Jeremy King  
Mount Holyoke College

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Date: Sat, 16 Mar 2002 08:11:58 -0700 (MST)  
From: John-Paul Himka <john-paul.himka@ualberta.ca>  
Subject: Re: Query: what's in a region?

I use the term Eastern Europe unabashedly in my classes. I spend the first lecture trashing East Central Europe, and especially the new "Central Europe," and the Balkans as categories. Why such an unreconstructed troglodyte?

Coming from Ukrainian history, I find the new "Central Europe" exclusivist. Now that the Czechs and Slovaks are in that club, the Austrians and Germans want out. Ukrainians want in. Those nasty old knives-sticking-from-the-forehead Balkans have no chance.

What's the new geography? Western Europe, Central Europe and... Eurasia. Europe has a West, it has a Center, but holy cow! it has no East. Foucault would have loved this geographical gaping wound.

How occidentocentric can one get! In the non-Central European cultures of the Orthodox Slavs the east was sacred: every church was built to face east, one prayed to the east and the bodies of the departed were buried so that at resurrection they would rise facing east.

Among Galician Ukrainians there is an often glorified myth of the region's Central Europeanness (as opposed to the dark East of Donetsk and even Kyiv). This Central Europeanness is meant to evoke the smell of good coffee and the comforting portrait of Old Whiskers himself, Franz Joseph. It means plurality and multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. Yet where is that old plurality? What happened to the Germans here in Galicia? to the Poles? to the Jews? Ooops. Something intervened between the coffee houses of the 1890s and 1990s. Something very intolerant. Something very Central European.

Sorry, I'm not in the market for Central Europe today.

John-Paul Himka

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Date: Tue, 19 Mar 2002 15:20:25 -0700  
From: Franz Szabo <Franz.Szabo@ualberta.ca>  
Subject: Re: Query: what's in a region?

In reply to John-Paul Himka's "Query: what's in a region?"

I am very sorry to read that my good friend and colleague, John-Paul Himka, seems to have so much trouble with the concept of "Central Europe." Of course it has become a much abused and politicized term, and, yes, in the hands of some it has become an "exclusivist" tool. But that is a long way from saying it has no validity at all.

Himka asks "What's the new geography?" He laments that "Europe has a West, it has a Center, but holy cow! it has no East." Who says it has no east? And if we must begin with geography, let's begin with the crudest geography: we define the European continent as the landmass that reaches from the Atlantic coast of Portugal to the Ural Mountains (and from the North Pole to the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the Caucasus). In terms of east-west this covers roughly 60 degrees of longitude. From a purely geographic point of view it would therefore seem to be entirely unproblematic to divide this 60 degree distance into three regions (west, centre, east) of roughly 20 degrees each. (We could do the same for the north-south directions with roughly equal 10 degrees of latitude: c. 35 - 45 degrees latitude for the south; roughly 45-55 degrees latitude for the centre and roughly 55-65 degrees latitude for the north). Well, guess what?! The regions of Europe that now claim to be "central Europe" really are in the geographic centre! There's no "new geography" here.

What is more, just because most of eastern Europe is taken up by Russia doesn't mean there is no east. But this reality does remind us of a geopolitical dimension that certainly dictated the fate of Central Europe in the 20th century -- viz., a large and powerful Germany on one side and a large and powerful Russia on the other, and lots of "lands in between" (in short, in the "middle" or the "centre" in more senses than merely the geographic!).

"Culture," of course, is another dimension, though in these days when the very word is so contested, we would be here for many paragraphs playing with definitions before we could draw any conclusions. Most, however, would not leave religion out of the equation, and I do hope Himka is not urging us to do so. I'm not sure whether this would be the place to explore the respective legacies of Western and Eastern Christianity in helping to define the border-line between east and centre (including the grey zone of Uniates), though I think this is a dimension that we ignore to our peril. Does Himka himself not speak of the eastern world of the Orthodox Slavs as distinctive? Well, if this is true, where are its geographic boundaries.

A word also about the contention "Now that the Czechs and Slovaks are in that club, the Austrians and Germans want out." Germans used to insist that they were the very heart of "Mitteleuropa." But then that was a Germany that had substantial territories east of the Oder and Neisse. 20th century politics have also left the term *Mitteleuropa* "belasted" to say the least! Is it therefore really that surprising that the post-Stunde-Null new Germany has largely evolved its identity in former West Germany, into which the "ossies" have been dragged --whether happily or unhappily -- and that that West Germany reinvented and re-defined itself above all by its shot-gun marriage to France (and thereby to western Europe)?

As to Austria, it would be unfair to say that there are not some Austrians who would prefer to flee to the West and re-erect a new iron curtain, but most would not. Not only is it impossible to flee from the gene pool of such good Austrian families as Vranitzky, Klima and Sinowatz; it is

even more difficult to flee from the iron grip of the culinary empire of the stomach (always a final proof of how Austria and Germany are separated by a common language). This is not just empty Habsburg nostalgia, it is political reality. As Himka no doubt knows, last spring and summer Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia (to name them in alphabetical order) signed a series of agreements establishing a so-called "Regional Partnership" whose ultimate objective is to form a cultural and political Central European block within the European Union once the five candidate countries among them have joined (likely on 1 January 2004). The upcoming meeting of the members of the Regional Partnership this summer in Bratislava is likely to strengthen these ties even more.

Himka doesn't like the term "Central Europe" because it seems to be so loaded. Well, the old definition of "Eastern Europe" is equally loaded - and for most of the countries involved it means the Soviet Empire (a nightmare from which all are understandably anxious to distance themselves in every conceivable way, including terminologically). Has our "unreconstructed troglodyte" perchance got mired down in Soviet nostalgia?

And, please, what exactly was the purpose of enlisting Foucault in his philippic? Of course good old Foucault "would have loved [a] geographical gaping wound," as he would no doubt have loved a gaping anything. Does dropping Foucault's name into the argument automatically legitimize the conclusion, or does it merely, as I fear, confirm Himka's self-proclaimed troglodyte status?

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Date: Thu, 21 Mar 2002 10:03:14 -0500  
From: "Wozniak, Peter" <pwozniak@mph.net>  
Subject: QUERY: What's in a region?

An educated outsider who has followed the discussion could probably tell you that the gist of the problem of terminology seems to be rooted in the particular approaches of various disciplines to the region. Thus, "Eastern Europe" has been and continues to be of exceptional value to the political scientists, albeit less so to historians. Most especially, historians who focus on "culture", material or otherwise, have good reason to search for other labels. Mitteleuropa presents itself and is quite useful. Even political historians cringe from "eastern Europe", for all the valid reasons noted by Szabo and Czaplicki. The terms "western Europe" and "eastern Europe" have been with us a long time, and they continue to serve a purpose. But having taught at both the university and high school level - in both the US and in Europe - I find it interesting how teachers continue to use these terms, and then spend a great deal of teaching time clarifying how and why they are inadequate, or at least filled with contradictions and inconsistencies.

Allow me to make two, not particularly original, contributions. I think that Czaplicki is right on the mark in talking about regions. No western European historian worth his/her salt talks about



France, let alone Germany and Italy, as homogeneous wholes. Lombardy is culturally far removed from Sicily; the Pfalz is certainly not Ostpreussen. Alsace and Lorraine are the middle ground. One understands this very basic point. Regions certainly existed in the recent historical past, and they continue to exert both a nostalgic and perhaps an even more concrete appeal to contemporary folks. We are, for example, witnessing an upsurge in interest in Galicia and in Prussia, and no one is exactly sure what implications this has for the current states of Germany and Poland. Perhaps none. Perhaps.....

Secondly, I would take up Szabo's suggestion - and put it more forcefully - that this is indeed the place to talk about religious differences and the cultural attitudes that they engender. It seems to me that one cannot avoid talking about a fault-line that runs along religious lines - Orthodox, Catholic, and Eastern (Greek) Catholic (one ought not use the term Uniate if one does not want to be accused - justly - of western religious imperialism). These "worlds" are deeply rooted, and while they may indeed be breaking down a bit today, have tremendous historical resonance.

Blending the two thoughts together, one comes up with the idea that a transitional region exists between East and West. This region encompasses eastern Galicia and western Ukraine, running down through Subcarpathian Rus into Rumania, Bessarabia and the northern Dobrudja. (Where does one "locate" the Gagauz?) Is this properly called Central Europe? Is it Eastern? Or is it best understood as a bridge of sorts between the two? My vote is for the latter. In short, there is more to Europe - much more - than a west, center, and east. Any attempt to split the continent in a tripartite fashion is overly simplistic and smacks of nothing more than knee-jerk reactions to the latest, and granted, quite momentous, changes in the political and diplomatic landscape.

In conclusion, the labels that each of us choose to use will probably say more about our individual approaches to studying the societies of these regions than anything else. It seems to me that there is room for a number of frameworks here, rather than any sort of "covering model".

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Subject: Himka, "What's in a Region? (Notes on "Central Europe")", Pt. I  
To: HABSBUrg@H-NET.MSU.EDU

What's in a Region? (Notes on "Central Europe")

John-Paul Himka

This inquiry into the content of the category "Central Europe" has been stimulated by a discussion held on HABSBUrg back in March 2002 (also under the title "What's in a Region?"). At that time I was moved to send out a brief message to the list intended to register dissent from what I perceived to be a general enthusiasm for renaming as "Central Europe" what we used to call "Eastern Europe," or at least much (how much?) of what we used to call "Eastern Europe."

THE ORIGINAL OUTBURST

My original message, written in a feisty mood on Saturday morning, 16 March, ran like this:

"I use the term Eastern Europe unabashedly in my classes. I spend the first lecture trashing East Central Europe and especially the new 'Central Europe,' and the Balkans as categories. Why such an unreconstructed troglodyte?

"Coming from Ukrainian history, I find the new 'Central Europe' exclusivist. Now that the Czechs and Slovaks are in that club, the Austrians and Germans want out. Ukrainians want in. Those nasty old knives-sticking-from-the-forehead Balkans have no chance.

"What's the new geography? Western Europe, Central Europe and...Eurasia.

"Europe has a West, it has a Center, but holy cow! it has no East. Foucault would have loved this geographical gaping wound.

"How occidentocentric can one get! In the non-Central European cultures of the Orthodox Slavs the east was sacred: every church was built to face east, one prayed to the east and the bodies of the departed were buried so that at resurrection they would rise facing east.

"Among Galician Ukrainians there is an often glorified myth of the region's Central Europeanness (as opposed to the dark East of Donetsk and even Kyiv). This Central Europeanness is meant to evoke the smell of good coffee and the comforting portrait of Old Whiskers himself, Franz Joseph. It means plurality and multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. Yet where is that old plurality? What happened to the Germans here in Galicia? to the Poles? to the Jews. Ooops. Something intervened between the coffee houses of the 1890s and 1990s. Something very intolerant. Something very Central European.

"Sorry I'm not in the market for Central Europe today."

## RESPONSE

Having delivered myself of this heresy, I anticipated attack from all sides. Instead, however, I received many private messages of support and only a few, very thoughtful responses on the list itself. The most critical of these responses came from a close friend, Franz Szabo, who answered on 19 March with his wonted verve and wit. But really we are not so far apart. Before setting off his polemical fireworks, Franz prefaced his comments by agreeing that Central Europe "has become a much abused and politicized term, and, yes, in the hands of some it has become an 'exclusivist' tool." And he added: "But that is a long way from saying it has no validity at all." Since I didn't say that, and don't think it, I have no need to defend that position, the main objective of Franz's attack.

I consider it important, however, to examine the content of concepts, and in this case, the concept of Central Europe. I also believe there are points still to be made about the way we conceptualize and name the terrain we study.

## RELIGION AND REGION

Both Franz Szabo and Peter Wozniak, another contributor to the HABSBURG discussion, raise the question of religion as an organizing principle. In a private communication Peter wondered whether religion should be "the fault line." My answer is this: it is certainly a fault line (as Peter put

it in his posting of 21 March), but not \_the\_ fault line. There are many fault lines, there are many overlapping regions and borders beneath borders in our territory.

Using religion as an organizing framework makes sense when examining religious and some cultural questions. For example, the concept of Slavia Ortodossa developed by Ricardo Picchio has proven useful for understanding cultures that employed Old Church Slavonic as a writing vehicle. This is more properly a distinction based on a linguistic practice influenced by religion rather than on a religious division as such. It is analogous in some ways to the concept of Arab culture.

Pure religious categories may have some utility to our region, providing we are generous in the definition of what constitutes that region. We might be able to study the reformation regionally, for example, if we include all the German-speaking territories in our region. We can study Orthodox Christendom (icons, religious movements) as a whole, but must be mindful of the Greeks, even when they live in islands and in Asia Minor, and of course the Russians, even when they live east of the Urals.

Once we move into purely cultural questions, the religious boundaries within the region can become too confining. For the most part, the renaissance did not affect the Orthodox world. But does it make intellectual sense to study the renaissance in the "Central European" territories of our region, in isolation from developments in other parts of Western Christendom? This could be an interesting ideological project, to be sure, and a stimulating corrective to a narrowly West European perspective, but the problems with it are, I expect, immediately apparent.

I also expect that it requires no elaborate demonstration to assert that as time passes, even in our region, the role of specifically religious issues in the historical process decreases and so does the usefulness of religion as an organizing tool.

What seems really to be at issue for my respondents is the dividing line between Western and Eastern Christendom. Is this a critical fault line in our part of Europe? On the one hand: yes, obviously. It is the difference between Croats and Serbs, between Poles and Ukrainians, between Slovaks and Rusyns (although in each of these cases, and others I could mention, there are exceptions). The only nation in Europe that has included both Western and Eastern Christians in significant numbers was the Albanians, who are now overwhelmingly Muslim.

On the other hand, granting the important cultural differences between nations formed in the two Christian traditions, the crucial question is: what can legitimately be made of these differences?

Let me take a relatively harmless and apparently reasonable example of what one might be tempted to ascribe to these differences. One might argue, taking a cue from Max Weber, that the Russians, Ukrainians and Serbs are less entrepreneurial than the Poles, Czechs and Slovenes and that this difference has its roots in a deepseated difference in the outlooks of Western and Eastern Christendom. At first glance this might seem reasonable, but then all sorts of counter-arguments could be advanced: disproportionate role of Jews, Armenians and Germans in entrepreneurial activities on Polish lands; other evident explanations for economic development in Silesia, Bohemia and Slovene lands aside from religious tradition; importance of Russian merchants in the Russian empire; entrepreneurial success of the Greeks, phanariot and other. One could then oppose these objections by a fresh load of counter-arguments, but the argument is framed in

terms that do not allow of its settlement. It would have to be abandoned as fruitless, as the whole debate over the Weber thesis proved to be in the historiography of Europe farther west.

Ascribing characteristics so deeply formative, so "essential," to religious differences, particularly after the attachment to the religion has long disappeared, is not intellectually helpful. It opens itself to ideological projects with almost metaphysical underpinnings.

Moreover, these religions are never so monolithic in historical reality as they can appear in theory. Jews and Muslims also dotted the region. Western Christian populations included Lutherans, Calvinists and Unitarians. Historically there have been Roman Catholics on territories that today are Greece, Bulgaria and Belarus, and Orthodox on territories that today are Poland, Hungary and Croatia. For most of their existence the great empires of the region -- the Habsburg monarchy, the Ottoman empire, the Russian empire -- had both Catholics and Orthodox among their populations, and they were not cordoned off from one another by unscalable fences.

Peter Wozniak in particular noted the element of fuzziness introduced by the Uniates. He refers to the territory that they inhabit as a "transitional region"; Franz Szabo calls it a "grey zone." Yes, it is an interesting region that blurs distinctions, but it's hard even to say exactly where this zone is located, since its boundaries shifted. The territory of the Union was quite different in 1600 than it was in 1650, and again quite different in 1700 and again in 1850. In fact, by 1875 the Union no longer existed in the same eparchies where it had been promulgated in 1596, but instead survived to the south and west of them. However one defines its borders, this is a territory where there was indeed a creative interpenetration of Western and Eastern Christendom. It should serve as a warning against absolutizing religious differences in our region.

## MATERIAL CULTURE

John Czaplicka, in his message of 19 March, emphasized material culture, particularly architecture, as the distinguishing characteristic of Central Europe. Franz Szabo also stressed material culture in its most delectable form, "the culinary empire of the stomach." And in my original posting I also used the extent of coffee-drinking culture as a shorthand.

Again, here it is a matter, as Peter Wozniak wrote in his message, of "a number of frameworks," not a "covering model." I'll follow a bit further down the road Czaplicka's point that architecturally Lviv is Europe. If one were to draw a map showing towns with romanesque and renaissance structures, Lviv would be on it. This is one circle, architectural Europe, into which Lviv falls. But there are other circles encompassing it as well. Some are smaller circles within the European circle, e.g., the architecture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, of the Habsburg monarchy (the striking classical and secession structures, the opera house, the railway station) and even of Austrian Poland. Both Kraków and Lviv would be captured by these circles. But Lviv also falls into circles from which Kraków is excluded: post-Byzantine, Ruthenian/Ukrainian, Armenian diaspora. Lviv's position within several frameworks is not so unusual for the region, even if few other cities can quite match its architectural diversity.

As to the kingdom of the stomach, we have again the overlapping of circles. Today's Lviv belongs to the beer culture that extends westward into Belgium, but also to the vodka culture

that reaches into Vladivostok. It favors what we in Western Canada call perogies, which Poles also eat, over the kind of dumplings that Czechs and Viennese like.

One must remember, though, that history changes material culture, sometimes with the force of the sea. Food provides an excellent example of this. Potatoes came into our region only in the later eighteenth century. Paprika came to prominence in Hungarian cooking only in the nineteenth. Only at the end of the nineteenth did Poles and Ukrainians begin to wrap cabbage around rice. Today in Lviv a young housewife is likely to serve the same kind of appetizers that one also finds in Kyiv and, alas, she probably no longer knows how to make sorrel soup. Today there are three McDonald's restaurants in Lviv. Small Chinese fast-food establishments are ubiquitous now in Warsaw.

Food brings out better than old buildings do that material-cultural circles are historically conditioned and caught in a process of continual flux. To attempt to fix boundaries here is to engage in fabrication.

#### SO WHAT'S REALLY IN A REGION?

In many ways identifying a region is like identifying a period. On the one hand, it is a mere convenience: a way to divide one book from another, one chapter within a book from another chapter, one lecture from another. On the other hand, it implies something about the story to be told. This is clear even for periodization. It matters whether you begin the history of Ukraine in prehistoric times or in roughly 860 with the emergence of Kyivan Rus' or in the fourteenth century with the division of Rus' lands or in 1798 with the start of the Ukrainian literary movement or in 1917 with the formation of the Ukrainian National Republic or in 1920 with the establishment of the Ukrainian soviet republic or in 1991 with the proclamation of the independence of that republic from the Soviet Union. The chronological parameters into which one places the Serb-Croat or Polish-Ukrainian conflict also matter.

The division into regions is also not a value- or narrative-neutral act. Given the multiplicity of possible regional divisions, why does one choose one over the other?

Franz Szabo avers that the region he would like to call "Central Europe" just happens to be in the center of Europe as a matter of pure geography. I would give more weight to this argument if I thought Europe were a matter of pure geographical structure. Norman Davies dates the concept of "Europe" as we now understand it to about 1700 and he understands it as a cultural construct. Surely we are not expected to imagine that the Ural Mountains are as natural a continental border as those which divide North from South America, Africa from Asia, Australasia from the rest. In fact, as we know, the placement of that intellectual border at the Urals was a pure convention, also dating from about 1700. Even if Europe were a matter of pure geography, the division into West, Center and East is completely arbitrary. What if we did something equally warranted, and just divided Europe into East and West? That would place Poland and Hungary firmly into Western Europe! (Also Albania and Serbia. I hope that's not a problem.) Franz was joking about this (it's "the crudest geography," he said) and therefore I will not make much of it. "Central Europe" is indeed a matter of geography, but of constructed, human, cultural geography.

In a private communication, Franz showed me a paragraph he omitted from his posted remarks, in which he revealed that I myself use the concept of Central Europe. In fact, just a few

months ago, as he noted, I had the university delete my courses on nineteenth and twentieth Eastern Europe and replace them with two other courses, one of which was on modern Central Europe. It's true. It's also true that I insisted on having "Central Europe" in quotation marks, because, obviously, I have some problems with the category.

But I do use the term "Central Europe," without serious reservations, when I find that it aids understanding in pedagogical situations. When I teach the nineteenth century, I usually make a heuristic division into Western, Central and Eastern Europe. Although it is an oversimplification, one might look at it this way: in Western Europe there was a process of making the nation correspond to state -- the national question was one of integration; in Central Europe (where the Italians and Germans lived) each nation was divided into many states, and the main narrative of these nations' history in the nineteenth century revolved around the process of national unification; and in Eastern Europe many different nations lived within each of several immense, multinational empires (the Habsburg monarchy, the Ottoman empire, Tsarist Russia) and struggled to assert themselves culturally and politically. If the tendency in Central Europe was to coalesce, in Eastern Europe it was to break apart. I find this concept of Central Europe helpful and sensible, but it's not much like other peoples' Central Europe. This is a Central Europe without much political meaning since the end of World War II.

Political meaning is what these regionalizations are about. When Franz Szabo asked why I "enlisted Foucault" in my original posting, it was neither, as he suggests, to "automatically legitimize the conclusion" nor to confirm my "self-proclaimed troglodyte status." Rather I brought up Foucault both because he would have loved to analyse the monstrosity which the new mental division of Europe has created but also because he showed us how important it is to examine the organization of the accumulation of discourses we consider to be knowledge and to determine the power relations that constitute that organization.

Let me put it another way, this time enlisting Edward Said. Said recently gave the Jan Patočka Memorial Lecture at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna. Let me quote him at some length, even though he does not specifically mention "Central Europe": "In this day, and almost universally, phrases such as 'the free market,' 'privatization,' 'less government' and others like them have become the orthodoxy of globalization, its counterfeit universals. They are staples of the dominant discourse, designed to create consent and tacit approval. From that nexus emanate such ideological confections as 'the West,' the 'clash of civilizations,' 'traditional values' and 'identity'....All these are deployed not as they sometimes seem to be -- as instigations for debate --but quite the opposite, to stifle, pre-empt and crush dissent whenever the false universals face resistance or questioning." I believe that "Central Europe" as we use it today in our field is largely just such an ideological confection.

Concepts are historically situated and they have a different charge in different historical situations. It is hard to find intellectual objections to a region termed "the lands of partitioned Poland" as such. In 1974, when Piotr Wandycz published a book under that title, one could not imagine serious Polish pretensions to territories then located in the Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian soviet republics. Moreover, the book modestly covered the period 1795-1918, before the restoration of a Polish state. Appearing at this juncture, and limited to this period, the book did not have much of a political charge. Had a similar book appeared in the interwar period, when Vilnius was bitterly contested by independent Lithuania and the Ukrainian minority in restored

Poland was seeking independence, it would have had a completely different charge. It would have been an intervention in conflictual situations.

The idea of Central Europe generates too much heat and enthusiasm for it to be a neutral category of analysis. I remember the AAASS convention in St. Louis in November 1999. Paul R. Magocsi announced that he would prepare a new edition of his historical atlas of East Central Europe, but that he would now just call it Central Europe, without any East. The audience broke into the kind of applause that used to enliven the old East European party congresses. I was bewildered. Obviously, something was behind this that I had hitherto missed.

It was not just Professor Magocsi and the AAASS attendees, however, who were changing the way we perceive and name the divisions of Europe. In 1994 the US State Department banished "Eastern Europe" from the lexicon of the department's Europe bureau. The region would now be "Central Europe." Undoubtedly the State Department was merely responding to the latest scientific findings. (No. I am not saying "Da liegt der Hund begraben." The State Department's move is only one of many moves in a repositioning and reconfiguration of power relations in the wake of the collapse of the USSR.)

In my original message I had written about "Central Europe" that now that the Czechs and Slovaks are included, the Austrians and Germans want to leave it. Franz Szabo, who I know doesn't like to see Austrians and Germans lumped together, made a point in his response of saying that the Austrians are more favorably inclined to view themselves as part of a Central Europe that includes Czechs and Hungarians than the Germans are. Two points in response. First: there are powerful men in Austria who think otherwise. I heard Erhard Busek speak on "Central Europe and the European Union" in Kraków this past July. He made no bones about it: Austria was linked by a thousand threads with "Central Europe," but Austria is not Central Europe, it is Western Europe. Second: Austria aspires to a leadership role in a Central European block that does not include Germany. This is not the "Central Europe" of Lonnie Johnson's interesting historical interpretation, which doesn't let the Germans out, but it is instead a specific, concrete project.

"Central Europe" is a good project for Austria, and it may even be good for "Central Europe," but this reconfiguration of region is going on within a larger context. The other side of the creation of "Central Europe" is the lopping off from the old Eastern Europe of its eastern portions, now included in "The Former Soviet Union" or "Eurasia," and of its southern portions, now "Southeastern Europe" or, more frequently, "The Balkans." "Central Europe" is also a category of exclusion.

The way "Central Europe" functions in Lviv is symptomatic of its usage as a concept of realignment and exclusion. As Andriy Zayarnyuk has shown, disappointment in the realities of Ukrainian independence has led some intellectuals in Lviv to argue that Galicia is part of Central Europe and should be integrated in it, but that the rest of Ukraine is not.

Finally, let me return to the image of the scholars cheering when they have learned that the word "East" has been removed from their historical atlas. What's wrong with the word "East"? Is it "Asia"? Is it "Orient"? Are these categories returning? Are "Europe" and "the West" forming a tight phalanx? drawing lines between civilizations? choosing who's "in" and who's "out"? Is this perhaps what "Central Europe" is really about?

[Pt. II will follow.]

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What's in a Region? (Notes on "Central Europe"), Pt. II

John-Paul Himka

#### CENTRAL EUROPE: LIGHT AND DARKNESS

As many others, I suppose, I was first attracted to "Central Europe" by Milan Kundera's famous article of 1984, which I reread many times, assigned to many classes and even arranged to have translated and published in Ukrainian. Kundera painted a picture of a place I knew at the heart of Europe that was more European than the rest of Europe, preserved pure, unbesmirched by Americanization, a place where books (crammed double on the shelves) and ideas and culture mattered, where people *mirabile dictu!* still read poetry and peppered their speech with Latin phrases, but that suffered under the yoke of an oppressive state system. In my enthusiasm I didn't even pay much attention to the spatialization. I knew the same kind of intellectuals and the same explosive force of books and ideas in Moscow and Kyiv as in Kraków and Prague. I enlisted, eventually becoming a contributor to *Cross Currents: A Yearbook of Central European Culture*. In Kundera's first formulation Central Europe seemed such a liberating project.

There is much more that should be said about this: about its relation to the last phases of the Cold War, about its anti-Russian edge, about the actual modesty of the cultural production unleashed in 1989 and about the paternity of Kundera's Central Europe to the one that I am discussing in these notes. But all these topics would take us too far afield, and here these problems can only be acknowledged.

Why "Central Europe" seemed so liberating back then, though, was because it affirmed artistic and intellectual freedom in the face of powerful states that regimented culture and thought. It was a concept meant to destabilize power.

Even once that power collapsed, even today, "Central Europe" retains a liberating component. John Czaplicka put it to us that the Ukrainians of Lviv should emphasize their Central European cosmopolitanism. I agree. In so far as the concept of Central Europe helps people in the region to aspire to be more tolerant of diversity, more appreciative of their neighbors and their neighbors' cultures, politer and more cultured, then I say, More power to it!

On another level entirely, I also find it much more pleasant when Lviv thinks of itself as Central European. It means sidewalk cafes and a certain gentility that was impossible twenty years ago.

But there is another side to all this Central Europe. The fact is, the Central European legend of tolerance, Central Europe as a place where Pole and Jew and German and Ukrainian lived together in relative peace, stirring as it may be, is only legend. The place was drenched in national



intolerance for most of the previous century. We know what happened to the Jews and to the Germans throughout the region. We know that the Ukrainians were cleared out of their ancestral homelands in the part of the Carpathians that fell to Poland. We know that the Ukrainian Insurgent Army killed tens of thousands of Polish civilians in 1943-44. We know that the Soviet authorities expelled Poles eastward and westward and into the next world.

And the problem is that it is not just past history. The events of the twentieth century left a profound impact on minds. You will find many people in Lviv today who are just as anti-Semitic as Central Europeans were back in the 1930s. You will have great difficulty finding anyone there who believes that the Ukrainian Insurgent Army was guilty of atrocities against Poles. You will find many people who hate Russians. You will not hear a good word about the Roma. It is not a very tolerant place. But these attitudes are quite Central European. They flourished in Vienna and in Munich, in Prague and in Warsaw too. John Czaplicka in his posting wrote that from Lviv "there are multiple lines of cultural communication leading to Cracow, Warsaw, Vienna, and even Berlin." The same was true in the 1930s. Central Europe is not just Franz Joseph and Chopin, Havel and Michnik. It is also Horthy and Dmowski and, indeed, Hitler. Central Europe was by no means the only site of national conflict in the twentieth century, but it was an important site, one of stunning violence.

I spoke to Ladislav Matejka, the editor of Cross Currents, shortly before he closed the journal down. He was, he said, disappointed in Central Europe. He had expected so much from the region after its liberation from Communism, so many cultural boons. Instead, he found himself disgusted by the recrudescence of nationalism. It was a troubled time when we had that conversation. His native Czechoslovakia was splitting apart and so was Yugoslavia. People back then were not so sure that Yugoslavia wasn't Central Europe.

Central Europe is a region of light and darkness. It is an error to imagine it otherwise.

#### SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE aka THE BALKANS

What there is to say about the way the Balkans is currently constructed is so obvious and painful that I do not want to belabor the point. It has become the dark side of the old Eastern Europe. Look, say Central Europe and its promoters: it's over there that they have the primordial hatreds, ethnic nationalisms and other savageries. If I'm not mistaken, it's the only part of the European continent that the United States bombed in the second half of the twentieth century. Were there non-Europeans living there perhaps? Orientals?

Incidentally, the histories of the Balkans go far to distance the region and its peoples from the Orient. Although for centuries the Balkans were part of the same space as North Africa and the Near East, organized first as the Byzantine and again later as the Ottoman empire, this particular historical framework is rarely invoked. The logical unity is vitiated by political undesirability.

Have you ever noticed that the heritage of Greece passed to Rome and from there to Oxford? When I say "Pericles and Plato," why don't you think "Balkans"? That would work if geography was something neutral. Have I confused time frames? Perhaps Europe only begins in 800 with Charlemagne, so regional European categories such as "Balkans" make sense only after

that date. But then why, I ask, does the Romano-Germanic part of the continent determine the periodization?

When did the Roman empire collapse? At the end of the fourth century when the barbarians overran Italy? Or the middle of the fifteenth century when the Turks took Constantinople?

Let me be less cryptic: the way "Europe" itself is mentally organized is arbitrary and works to the profound disadvantage of "Balkans." The new "Central Europe" only further devalues "the Balkans."

#### THE USEFULNESS OF EASTERN EUROPE

In his contribution Franz Szabo wondered why I still use the term Eastern Europe and even asked whether perchance I "got mired down in Soviet nostalgia." One needn't be in thrall to nostalgia to notice that the decades of Communist rule left their mark on the economics, political culture and institutions of the region as a whole; I do not see what we gain by pretending it never happened.

Nonetheless, I don't see Eastern Europe as synonymous in connotation with such terms as the Soviet empire, Communist Eastern Europe and the satellite countries. The phrase was used before the establishment of Soviet dominance in the region. Witness Hugh Seton-Watson's classic *Eastern Europe between the Wars, 1918-1941*, which was written as World War II was unfolding.

When I use the term "Eastern Europe" in contrast to "Central Europe," all I mean is a region more broadly understood, encompassing more territory, more flexible in its borders, a convenience.

It is true that the imposition of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe gave it the most unity that it had ever had in the entire course of history, and it is also true that the political circumstances of the Cold War generated the resources that cultivated the study of the region in North American and West European academic and government institutions.

But the idea of Eastern Europe was already fully crystallized in the interwar era when a whole series of new states appeared on the map as a result of the collapse of the great European empires during World War I. Countries like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia had hardly been conceived of before, while others revived after a long absence from the map, such as Poland and Lithuania. These newcomers, together with the Balkan states which arose in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, formed the region of "independent Eastern Europe" (or *Neuropa*, as some dubbed it). Certain political, geopolitical and economic problems were endemic to all (or almost all) of these states and seemed to give the region a kind of unity. This was strikingly so, because these were places where the exotic populations spoke unfamiliar languages. New, alien neighbors had moved into Europe.

There was also a certain unity, or rather distinctiveness from the rest of Europe, evident in the region even prior to World War I, ever since the era of national awakenings began in the late eighteenth century. It was in this period, and as a result of the perception of a similarity of political dynamic within the non-German, non-Russian and non-Turkish populations of Europe's great

empires, that the concept of Eastern Europe first appeared. As is now common knowledge, prior to the end of the eighteenth century, Europe was not conceived of as being divided into east and west, but rather into north and south.

Yet the concept of an Eastern Europe even before the age of nationalism is not entirely without justification. There are crucial differences between this part of Europe and the more westerly parts of the continent that derive from the medieval and early modern period and perhaps are clues to the formation of that later history of the region which is more clearly distinctive.

There is a quite striking parting of the ways between Western and Eastern Europe that can be dated to about 1500 with certainty, although some scholars would date it back another two centuries yet. At a crossroads in economic development, Western Europe took one road, Eastern Europe another: in Western Europe serfdom underwent disintegration and the economy evolved in the direction of a free market, i.e., toward capitalism, while in Eastern Europe serfdom was reinvigorated and became the determining force of the region's society and economy. In the northern, non-Balkan tier of the region, it was not abolished until the middle of the nineteenth century. Also, like that other Central Europe (the one composed of Germans and Italians), it did not participate in the rapacity of the "discoveries" and reap its many benefits. Some scholars on the left, notably the historian Leften S. Stavrianos and the historical sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein, even see Eastern Europe as the first of the structurally undeveloped regions in the global capitalist economy. This peculiar economic development bore some relation both to the preservation of strong ethnicities into the nineteenth century and perhaps even to the subsequent incorporation of the region almost in toto into the socialist bloc.

For these reasons it is sensible, it is intellectually convenient, to present the region to students and to readers as a whole.

#### THE LANDS LEFT OUT

A classic textbook of "East-Central Europe" was entitled "The Lands Between." An even better title, I believe, would have been "The Lands Left Out."

I teach a course in East European history before 1800. I tell my students that if today we undertake a history of Eastern Europe prior to the nineteenth century, this is done mainly because of the salience of the concept afterwards, particularly in the twentieth century. We plot the history of the region backward over time in order to acquire the necessary background knowledge for an understanding of more recent history. This is not the optimal method of historical conceptualization, but it still has its uses. As long as this "Other Europe," as Philip Roth called it, is omitted from or inadequately treated within the general narrative of European history, there will be a need for a corrective in the form of a specific history of "Eastern Europe." This is its most compelling convenience.

At its inception, the history of Europe excluded the Hungarians and the contiguous Slavonic nations who "receive, so to speak, only the ebb of the tide of the general movements." Notoriously, these were people of whom West Europeans professed to know nothing as late as 1938. In fact, it has only been within the past decade that a survey of European history, Norman Davies' Europe, attempted to integrate Eastern Europe into the overall narrative, something which

I think proved impossible, at least at this stage, to accomplish with success, although the gesture was significant.

What "Central Europe" is trying to do is to get part of the region into the European narrative, leaving the rest of it still out. Sauve qui peut!

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Date: Mon, 13 May 2002 13:43:17 +0200  
From: Lonnie Johnson <LJohnson@fulbright.at>  
Subject: Central Europe and HABSBURG

In reading John-Paul Himka's recent postings about the concept of Central Europe and its implications, I was uncertain about the circumstances under which one might meaningfully use the term, on the one hand, or if one would be well advised to refrain from doing so in the future, on the other.

I am convinced that "Central Europe" can be a valuable analytical tool for studying the region of Eastern Europe and its fluctuating western frontiers - or the region of Western Europe and its eastern frontiers - as long as we attempt to be explicit about which (or whose) criteria we employ. Contingent upon the historical periods to which we refer, the methodological tools we chose to adopt, and the manner in which we wish to engage individual national historiographical traditions and assumptions, we will come up with different definitions for "Central Europe." [1]

"Central Europe" means different things to different people, and one might be tempted to dismiss the concept altogether because it is vague and contentious. However, one thing the various protagonists of the concept of Central Europe have in common is that they position themselves in terms of two grand European narratives. The relationship of the European East to the European West (read imperial Russia and the Balkans here, which appeared to me to be John-Paul Himka's major concern) and the relationship of the European West to the European East (which has a lot to do with the relationship of the German-speaking world and its empires to its eastern neighbors, in my opinion).

Let us visualize the region, border, frontier, divide, or fault line that is commonly used to divide Europe into Central (or East Central), Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, because this appears to be the primary point of contention. It runs from the north between Finland and Russia and the Baltic States and Russia, south through Belarus and western Ukraine, down into Romania (Transylvania) and then moves west to the Adriatic, bisecting former Yugoslavia in the process. This line is the "fuzzy" area or "grey zone" between Roman Catholic Europe and Orthodox Europe, characterized by a high degree of religious heterodoxy as well as ethnic diversity. (Incidentally, when I first met John-Paul Himka at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna in the early 1990s, he convinced me that Chernivtsi (Czernowitz) had been one of the most diverse cities in Europe.)

This Roman Catholic-Orthodox divide also corresponds in an equally fuzzy manner to the frontiers eastern frontiers of Piast (and interwar) Poland in the north and in a more precise manner

to the historical frontiers of the Kingdom of Hungary (or the Habsburg Empire) in the south. The original imperial players west of this line initially were Hungary and Poland, two "small power imperialisms" (Hugh Seton-Watson) that were followed by and for the most part absorbed by imperial Habsburg Austria and imperial Germany, with the exception of the Russian portion of the Polish partition. Given this tripartition, Russia is in eastern Europe, and the Ottoman Empire established itself in southeastern Europe, where Islam added a new religious dimension to the old Roman Catholic-Orthodox divide in this part of the world.

A third defining fault line, which Gale Stokes mentions in this context in addition to the preceding two, concerns "economic differentiation [and] runs approximately along the Elbe River south and west to Trieste." [2] Stokes ascertains that, starting in the Middle Ages, the demographic and economic development of regions west of this line was more dynamic than east of this line and that performance tended to drop to the east and the southeast.

Hence, we have listed three different, broad, and generally recognized criteria for defining subregions in Eastern Europe. The first, religion, has to do with patterns of cultural orientation that were established in the early Middle Ages and proved to be enduring, and Roman Catholicism is a historical criterion for distinguishing between western and the eastern Orthodox Europe. It is related to the second criterion, empires, insofar as religion played an important role in articulating the fundamental relationships between the sovereigns and their subjects in each of these empires and played a central role in imperial legitimation. There also appear to be a variety of important relationships between the second and third criteria, different imperial policies and different patterns of economic and political modernization, that explain the varying trajectories of the Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman empires west, east, and southeast of the dividing line.

One may choose any number of examples to illustrate these points, but I think we can dispense with comparing, for example, the quality of public administration in the Habsburg and the Ottoman empires in the 19th century or the quantitative economic development of Bohemia in the west and Ukraine in the east. The differences are real and obvious enough. There are a variety of criteria that allow us to make meaningful distinctions between patterns of development in central or east central Europe and southeastern and eastern Europe.

However, this does not appear to me to be a point of contention for John-Paul Himka. He emphasizes that regionalization is not a "value or narrative-neutral act" and notes that "political meaning is what these regionalizations are about." Invoking Edward Said's most recent Patocka Memorial Lecture in Vienna, he suggests that "'Central Europe' as we use it today in our field is largely [just such] an ideological confection" and refers to it elsewhere as "a category of exclusion."

Something seems to have happened to "Central Europe" or the concept of "Central Europe" since 1989. Himka critically cites Milan Kundera's famous article on "The Tragedy of Central Europe" (1984) and notes both its exaggerated estimation of the tolerance inherent in the region as well as its anti-Russian edge. What has changed since those days in which "Central Europe" was an emancipatory and inclusive concept?

I would like to preface my remarks with a few observations about the history of the concept of central Europe and note the importance of the work of the Polish-American scholar Oskar Halecki in the 1950s and 60s - such as *The Borderlands of Western Civilization* - and Jeno

Szucs' seminal essay on "The Three Historical Regions of Europe" some twenty years later: two scholars who were methodologically in favor of a tripartition of Europe.[3]

What I would like to call the first premise of a grand Central European narrative is based on the concept that the peoples of the region belong to the west by virtue of patterns of westward cultural orientation or borrowing that began with their conversion to Roman Catholicism in the early Middle Ages. The second premise of the grand Central European narrative entails the secularisation of these patterns of orientation and borrowing displacing religion (western Christianity) with western European models of secular enlightenment, political liberalism, and economic modernization (or substituting Paris and London for Rome). Ultimately the tripartition of Europe appears to be based on the assertion that central Europe participated in and aspired to the accomplishments of western Europe - cultural, economic, and political - to a greater extent than eastern or southeastern Europe. Conversely, the East was defined in predominantly negative, dismissive, chauvinistic, or exclusionary terms, with which we are all too familiar, including Asiatic, Oriental, Balkan, barbarian, infidel, lagging, lacking, backward, and primitive. A third aspect of the grand central European narrative could be defined as the "inclusion for us and exclusion of the others" argument.

One of the functions of the idea of Central Europe before 1989 - and Kundera's essay was a good example of this - was to remind people in the West that there was part of Europe that considered itself Western but had the misfortune of ending up in the Soviet version of Eastern Europe after World War II. The Kunderian diagnosis of the West was that it suffered from a combination of ignorance and amnesia. Either people in the West did not know that Central Europe was part of Western Europe or they had conveniently forgotten it. Furthermore, "Central Europe" was part of an explicitly anticommunist agenda that questioned the historical and cultural legitimacy of the Soviet version of Eastern Europe. It was an inclusive concept, insofar as there was a solidarity of discontent and community of suffering among dissident artists and intellectuals and scholars throughout the region, who desired change yet saw no realistic immediate political prospects thereof and hence were condemned to anti-political irony or heroic resignation.

In this respect, "Central Europe" was an idea, not a "real region" or a set of policy options. There was room for everybody in what Timothy Garton Ash referred to as "a kingdom of spirit" in his famous 1986 article "Does Central Europe Exist?" 1989 changed all that.

John-Paul Himka appears to me to share many of Maria Todorova's concerns, and she has been particularly critical of the evolution of "Central Europe" from "an idea" in the 1980s into what she considers a dubious "political program" in the 1990s. According to Todorova, after 1989 the "ideal of intellectual solidarity in the region [of the former Soviet bloc] all but disappeared...." It was replaced by "Central European" divisiveness which evoked the Balkans as "the constituting other to Central Europe along side Russia,"[4] and in *Imagining the Balkans* Todorova argues that there is a relationship between the terminology of regional differentiation, scholarly precedents, and the political intent of central European states (the Visegrad group) to articulate a political program to exclude "the Balkans." [5]

It is also worth noting that Samuel Huntington invokes the Roman-Catholic Orthodox divide in his *The Clash of Civilizations* [6] in a completely different context and in doing so appropriates the idea of the "limits of Western Europe" or "Central Europe" for his own purposes. If this is John-Paul Himka's concern - a combination of exclusionary rhetoric and cultural determinism that

Timothy Garton Ash with his accustomed accuracy has called "vulgar Huntingtonism"[7] - I share it.

At the same time, we must recognize that processes of differentiation that have taken place in Eastern Europe since 1989 are leading to the formation of new regions, and some of the intraregional frontiers that are in the process of being established coincide with the West-East/Southeast, Catholic-Orthodox divide. Since 1989, most (east) central European states have been more successful in mastering the multiple transitions to national sovereignty, to democracy, and to market economies than the states of southeastern and eastern Europe, and as historians or social scientists we have to try and explain why things have played out this way. The problems and the points of departure for the individual countries in Eastern Europe were different in 1989, and the decisions that the peoples and the politicians of individual countries have made in the course of the past decade or so have produced a wide variety of results, ranging from authoritarian nationalism and civil war to fledgling democracy and prosperity.

In conclusion, let us take a look at the following scenario: If Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia, accompanied perhaps by the Baltic states, make in into the European Union collectively in the near future, and if NATO expands beyond Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in a roughly coextensive manner, the eastern frontier of the European Union plus NATO, or "the West," will more or less correspond to the Roman Catholic-Orthodox divide (or Huntington's "civilizational" line) -- with the obvious exceptions of Croatia, Vojvodina in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Romanian Transylvania. If this scenario is realized in the coming years, which is probable, then "Western Europe" will have absorbed those self-proclaimed "Central European" nations that managed to get out of "Eastern Europe" after 1989, and there undoubtedly will be arguments coming out of western Europe and central Europe that the western European project has reached either its limits, culmination, or its logical conclusion.

Is "Central Europe" an endorsement of this scenario: a tacit or explicit recommendation to participate in the marginalization of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula and Eastern Europe? I hope not. And I still can imagine certain circumstances under which I would like to use the concept because I find it to be an interesting and useful analytical tool. May I do so without becoming a willful or an unwitting agent of exclusion?

## NOTES

[1]. Elsewhere I have tried to distinguish between at least 9 or 10 different "definitions" of "Central Europe" which frequently are capable of being subdivided into additional subcategories: East Central Europe in the Halecki-Szucs tradition of tripartition of Europe; the Soviet version of Eastern Europe after 1945 as the "Central Europe" of Eastern European dissidents and intellectuals (e.g. Milosz, Kundera, Konrad); the Central Europe of small (non-Germanic) nations (the Palacky-Masaryk-Havel confederate model or the Polish Jagiellonian-Pilsudski confederative model); the nostalgic, k.u.k or Austro-Hungarian version of Mitteleuropa, (without imperial Germans) which is related to the Austro-Hungarian version of Mitteleuropa in the 1970s and 1980s (Kreisky-Kadar-Busek); Mitteleuropa in the German imperial sense: Wilhelmine, Nazi, or both, the "lost world" of Jewish and German-Jewish Central Europe; the Mitteleuropa of the West German left and peace movement in the 1980s; and finally the "Central and Eastern Europe" of the European Union.

[2]. See Gale Stokes, "Eastern Europe's Defining Fault Lines," in his *Three Eras of Political Change in Eastern Europe* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 13.

[3]. Halecki's *The Borderlands of Western Civilization* was reprinted in 2001. Szucs's essay appeared in the *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungarica* 29 (1983) 2-3, pp. 131-84. Piotr Wandycz notes the importance of Halecki and Szucs in the introduction to his *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*, (London: Routledge, 1992), and Maria Todorova criticizes their suppositions in her *Imagining the Balkans*, (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[4]. M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, pp. 155-56.

[5]. For a different take on the brief rise and fall of Central European cooperation see Valerie Bunce, "The Visegrad Group: Regional Cooperation and European Integration in Post-Communist Europe" in Peter Katzenstein, ed., *Mitteleuropa: Between Europe and Germany*, (Providence & Oxford: Berghahn, 1997), pp 240-284. Bunce emphasizes the common historical experiences and regional interests and affinities among the Visegrad group and contrasts their pre- and post-1989 trajectories to those of Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria. In the case of Yugoslavia, "transition" ended in a disaster; in the cases of Romania and Bulgaria, their initial "revolutions" of 1989 were less complete than in the Visegrad states and account for their lackluster performance as reform states since then.

[6]. See *The Clash of Civilizations: Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), p. 158-160.

[7]. See Timothy Garton Ash's reflections on Central Europe 10 years after 1989: "Where is Central Europe Now?" in his *History of the Present: Essays, Sketches, and Despatches from Europe in the 1990s* (London & New York: Penguin, 1999), pp. 383-398.

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