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T. Mills Kelly. *Without Remorse: Czech National Socialism in Late Habsburg Austria.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. iii + 235 pp. $40.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-88033-586-7.

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Exploring the Nature of Nationalism and Socialism in Czech NationalSocialism

Without Remorse by T. Mills Kelly, associate professor of history at George Mason University, is a valuable addition to Habsburg and Czech studies. Based on his dissertation that he completed in 1996 at George Washington University, the book analyzes the development of the Czech National Socialist Party in the Bohemian Crownlands during the closing years of the Habsburg Monarchy. In the first two chapters, Kelly provides an introduction to politics, economics, and society in the Bohemian Crownlands; and in the subsequent five chapters, he examines the efforts of National Socialists to build their party, appeal to voters, confront their political opponents, and have an impact on Vienna's policy with respect to the Bohemian Crownlands. In his research, Kelly employed some archival materials, but he relied most heavily on periodicals and published primary sources.

The National Socialist Party emerged from the Social Democratic Party in the spring of 1897 because of the strong presence of Jews in the latter party, its attention to workers in large industry at the expense of those in smaller manufacturing concerns, its doctrine of proletarian internationalism, and its rejection of the notion that the Kingdom of Bohemia should regain its state rights from the Habsburgs. Although a child of socialism, the newer party also was a product of growing impatience with Czech liberal politicians, particularly those in the Young Czech Party (formally the National Liberal Party), and their lack of aggressiveness in pursuing state rights. Given the inability of their political opponents to be sufficiently aggressive in demanding concessions to Czech nationalism and the state rights, in weakening the perceived influence of German-Jewish capitalists, and in addressing certain other issues that appealed to Czech shopkeepers and workers, the Czech National Socialists made headway with these groups by gaining votes and legislative seats.

As a newcomer to the political spectrum, the National Socialist Party aggressively sought the loyalty of Czech voters. National Socialist politicians eagerly challenged the Young Czechs, who they saw as vulnerable, in an effort to sway voters before they could attach themselves to other political parties. Having turned in socialist class struggle for nationalistic state rights, the National Socialists also attacked Social Democrats. Further, since they identified the Roman Catholic Church as an ally of the Habsburgs, they were staunchly anticlerical and targeted Catholic politicians.

Throughout the book, Kelly recounts the progress, and lack of it, that the party made in the many issues that it tackled. It was a champion of Bohemian state rights and its adherents criticized liberals, especially the Young Czechs, for their lack of energy and courage to be more forceful with Vienna in securing self-rule for the Bohemian Crownlands (although the National Socialists called it independence). Linked with state rights was the language question. The party demanded that Czech be used throughout the administration in the Bohemian Crownlands. Eventually Vienna approved the use of Czech only in certain circumstances, so the party continued to keep language at the forefront of politics. The party supported universal equal manhood suffrage, not only as a matter of principle but also because it would give Czechs a more powerful voice and increase the number of National Socialists in various legislative levels (imperial, provincial, and municipal). Universal equal manhood suffrage became law in the Austrian half of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1907 only for the Reichsrat, not the Bohemian Diet or other representative bodies. For similar reasons, the National Socialists supported women's suffrage, which never became law. Thus, the expansion of voting rights was another popular National Socialist cause.

Kelly discusses how the party, led by Vaclav Klofac, promoted pacifism in the monarchy, in part because its members believed that the Austro-Hungarian military should not fight the wars of its ally, the German Empire,

since its *Drang nach Osten* targeted Slavs. The National Socialists favored economic measures to improve Czechs' standard of living, and the party championed Hussitism, which it promoted in opposition to the clericalism of the Habsburgs. Kelly also examines the party's structure, affiliate organizations, and press to explain how they helped the party to promote its interests. Finally, he considers how the party used meetings, demonstrations, *tabory* (camps), and street violence to achieve its goals.

National Socialists played on ethnicity in the Bohemian Crownlands. From the middle of the nineteenth century until the end of the First World War, ethnic tensions were high in the Habsburg Monarchy, even though intense political competition, rather than outright conflict and violence, was the norm. Playing the ethnic card might appear in hindsight as an easy way for the party to have built its constituency, but National Socialist leaders along with the party's rank and file were serious about the ethnic tenets in the party's ideology. They believed that German capitalists and politicians in the Bohemian Crownlands and in Vienna hampered the Czechs' path to political ascendancy and economic prosperity in the Bohemian Crownlands.

The party also had a strong anti-Semitic streak. In its taxonomy of intolerance, however, Jews may have been detestable, but German Jews, especially the wealthy capitalists of Vienna, who for the National Socialists combined the anti-Czech and anti-Slav German identity with the worst exploitative nature of Jews, were abominable. Czech-speaking Jews, because of their adoption of Czech culture, attracted less negative attention from National Socialists. Kelly notes that the party abandoned its anti-Semitism in 1902, but he does not explain the circumstances surrounding this decision. In the conclusion, Kelly mentions that a strong measure of anti-Semitism remained in the party but does not elaborate on this issue.

One of the most innovative parts of Kelly's work is his correlation of voting results to the standard of living. This section provides the statistical backing for Kelly's thesis that the party succeeded in voting districts that modernized early but whose standard of living failed to keep pace with neighboring districts. The author banks on the work of Gary King, who provides a model for such an analysis, but he fails to give many details about the procedure. There is the possibility of statistical inaccuracy due to the uncertainty of how officials placed certain occupations into broad categories. Kelly notes some of these pitfalls. He also gives estimates of occupational support for each Czech political party grouping. It also would have been helpful, if he had illustrated how each occupational category voted. The tables in the book are useful for anyone examining politics in the Bohemian Crownlands in the closing years of the Habsburg Monarchy. Still, statistics on district-level voting, not just provincial-level voting, would have been more beneficial in illustrating Kelly's analysis and as a resource for historians considering the electoral success of the National Socialists and other Czech parties. The absence of this data might have resulted from concerns regarding publication costs. Kelly suggests that his analysis could be extended to the period between the world wars to determine what changes may have occurred in voting patterns. Such a study, with district data for the period before 1918 based on census and voting results, would be beneficial not only for understanding the National Socialists but also for examining the fate of other parties and the social history of politics between the world wars.

In several instances, Kelly could have provided the reader with more background information to strengthen his analysis. He, for example, claimed that the party attracted the lower middle class and "Progressive intellectuals," but other than explaining the intellectual credentials of Klofac, Kelly provides no systematic evidence about the party's appeal to intellectuals (p. 56). He explains that the party's "lack of a hard and fast ideological structure" aided it in building its unions and affiliate organizations (p. 66). However, he does not explain in detail how the party relaxed its ideology (one might suppose with respect to the Social Democrats) or specifically what appeal this looseness had for potential party adherents.

Occasionally, there are some confusing passages. For example, Kelly could have more clearly analyzed the 1901 Reichsrat elections. He states that three radical parties, logically including the National Socialists, formed an electoral coalition, but he identifies neither the coalition nor its member parties. Similarly, the Young Czechs formed an electoral coalition. Only by correlating the electoral results in the text (pp. 76-77) with the tables (p. 79), including the need to subtract one seat to account for one radical party that deserted the other two and joined with the Moravian Catholics, can the reader comprehend that the Radical Nationalist electoral coalition included the National Socialists and that the Young Czechs dominated the Elite Nationalist electoral coalition. Furthermore, in the text, Kelly states that five Radical Nationalist deputies went to Vienna, but he neglects to inform readers that three of them were National Socialists. Another area of confusion arises with the results of the 1911

election. For clarity, Kelly could have combined tables 15.1 and 15.2. It also would have been helpful if he explained that although the National Socialists and the Progressives who advocated state rights ceased to cooperate during the 1911 election campaign and the voting results reflected this division, he had reassembled the old coalition to assess the progress in the election of the radical movement. While such instances may cause readers to check a passage a few times and compare it with information on other pages, they are inconvenient, not fatal.

In his conclusion, Kelly mentions that part of the legacy the National Socialists of the Habsburg Monarchy gave to the political culture of the Czechoslovak First Republic was "that politics was a zero-sum game with clear winners and losers, where compromise was synonymous with failure" (p. 191). Extending this notion to the politics of nationalism, according to Kelly, meant that the Germans and Jews must lose. He sees the glass as half-empty. If he is correct, Czechs after 1918 might have rallied behind a radical nationalist party to suppress the Germans and Jews. Instead, Czechs divided their votes among many moderate parties, making coalitions a necessity. Furthermore, voters continued to vote for the parties that had engaged in political compromise. When Germans entered the government, voters did not withdraw their support from the parties that cooperated with them. There appears to be a logical link between some elements of National Socialism before 1918 (strong Czech nationalism, anti-Semitism, and thirst for action, even if the catalyst for change must be violence) and fascism between the world wars, including the movement in Czechoslovakia of Jiri Stribrny, who until 1926 was a National Socialist. Yet, Kelly does not link the two.

As with any book, readers will find a few idiosyncrasies, minor errors, and technical problems. Kelly includes several brief biographies of National Socialist politicians, but he does not provide any birth or death dates. The Agrarian Party began in 1899, rather than 1900 (p. 48). Ustredni skola delnicka, the party's informal education program for workers, is misspelled (p. 67), and *Selbstandige* is misspelled in the tables (pp. 127-128). There are a few technical difficulties, such as endnotes sharing the same line (pp. 198 and 201). Unfortunately, Eastern European Monographs opted not to include an index, which would have made Kelly's work more usable.

Even with these problems, *Without Remorse* is a valuable contribution to understanding politics in the Bohemian Crownlands, the actions of Czech politicians in the Reichsrat, and the development of one of the most important parties in what was to become the Czechoslovak First Republic. Kelly's scope is broad, his approach is often innovative, and his explanations are concise. The book will become a standard reference not only for those who study the politics of the Habsburg Monarchy but also for those who seek to understand the workings of National Socialism after 1918 in Czechoslovakia.

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