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Gernot Stimmer. *Eliten in Ö?sterreich 1848-1970.* Vienna, Cologne and Graz: BÖ¶hlau Verlag, 1997. 1140 pp. DM 240, cloth, ISBN 978-3-205-98587-7.

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This is a massive work with an ambitious goal, namely to trace the development of Austrian elites from the Revolution of 1848 into the Second Republic. Naturally, such an undertaking is fraught with difficulties, not the least of which is the fact that the geographical boundaries of the entity under study underwent considerable change in the course of this 122-year period. Stimmer's work represents an honest and workmanlike effort to resolve the difficulties involved, and it yields some useful and interesting conclusions. The nature of the work's methodology and focus, however, result in it offering somewhat less than its length and title might initially lead the reader to hope.

Though the work is substantial, it deals with only one type of elite--those who made their careers in politics and administration. Important and influential areas of society are therefore excluded from the study. There is only tangential treatment of financial and commercial elites. The work also does not examine the crucial area of the ecclesiastical elite. Though admittedly they lost much importance for Austrian society in the course of the period under study, the upper clergy have played a vital role in Austria's historical development. Furthermore, the cultural elites of Austria, which have contributed so much to the country's international reputation, are not mentioned even tangentially. Stimmer's definition of elites is therefore a very limited one, determined in large part by his background as a political scientist. By narrowing his focus in this way, he avoids dealing with issues of gender and power, for example. This is pretty traditional stuff. In fairness, however, in his introduction Stimmer makes his narrow definition of elites very clear.

The work is really constructed as a dialogue between Stimmer and some of the important research on elites in the past forty years. Accordingly, it begins with an overview of the development and current status of elite theory. While there are nods to work done in the field by American and British researchers, it is the German-language literature, especially that by Wolfgang Schluchter, Hans Peter Dreitzel and H.J. Wolff [1], that provides the theoretical backdrop for Stimmer's analysis. This is symptomatic of a pattern typical to

the book: a familiarity with English-language literature is almost completely lacking.

Stimmer's main thesis is that the administrative and political elites of Austria--in the monarchy, as well as the First and Second Republics, took two forms: the ***Bund- und Anstaltselite***. The members of the ***Anstaltselite*** were graduates of elite educational institutions that provided their students not only with an education, but also imprinted them with a particular set of values. In the process they were transformed into a unified social group that shared a common sense of their role in the world. The ***Bundelite***, on the other hand, were the product of specific ideologically-based organizations, especially the academic fraternities. These also imparted a unified world view to their members, resulting in a closed social group with shared values and expectations. It is the construction of a typology of historically verifiable elites that Stimmer sees as his major contribution to current scholarship on elites.

The book is divided into three sections devoted to the monarchy and the First and Second Republics. The monarchy and the First Republic, however, receive far more attention than the Second (pp. 413, 485, 85, respectively). In each section, the author undertakes a statistical analysis of parliamentary representatives, high-level bureaucratic officials, and cabinet members, examining their social and educational background, party affiliation, fraternity membership. Elite educational institutions and fraternities also receive special attention, given their importance in Stimmer's analytical scheme. Their graduates/members are tracked statistically by Stimmer, so one receives a picture of where they ended up, even if it did not in the end result in a cabinet or high bureaucratic position. Most of this is, of course, presented in the aggregate, and the book's ponderousness is seldom relieved by recourse to the anecdotal. Still, it does yield some interesting results.

Stimmer concludes that the political elite of the monarchy was not a uniform clique recruited on the basis of a unified selection system, but rather a coalition of various elite groups with different selection criteria. The upper aristocracy, for example, continued to be a prime recruiting ground to fill the top positions in provincial government, the foreign ministry, especially ambassadorships, as well as cabinet officers, but with a nationalist twist. After 1848, the Bohemian aristocracy largely abstained from carrying out this role, and instead became leaders of the nationalist opposition, while the Polish and Hungarian aristocracy more consistently backed the regime by filling top posts within it. The military also represented an important recruiting ground for high government officials, both in the diplomatic corps and increasingly in the ministerial bureaucracy.

But what distinguished the monarchy's ruling elite after the formation of the enlightened absolutist state was that it no longer used an exclusively feudal legitimation for its rule. The upper echelons of the bureaucracy, for example, were increasingly recruited on the basis of merit and educational background. Attendance at one of the elite schools of the monarchy (such as the Theresian Academy, The Oriental Academy, the Theresian Military Academy, or the Technical Military Academy, to name some of the most important), though not a ***sine qua non*** for appointment to a cabinet post, certainly did not hurt. No less that 54% of the k.u.k. cabinet officers for the period 1849-60 had been trained in one of the elite schools. This may be contrasted with the lower house of parliament, where only 2.9% of the representatives were graduates of elite institutions.

Under the monarchy, this essentially aristocratic ruling elite was challenged by a liberal one, which Stimmer labels a "counter-elite." The universities were one of the main sources of these members of the "counter-elite," and initially they made their careers in private business or as party functionaries, often in opposition to the govern-

ment. The student organizations at the universities performed the function of recruiting and training the future members of this "counter-elite".

Just as was the case with the aristocratic elite of the monarchy, the "counter-elite" was not a monolithic group. Ideological differences abounded, so the chief common characteristic among them was their opposition to the aristocratic elite. To put Stimmer's argument in the simplest of terms, this counter-elite of the monarchy became the First Republic's ruling elite. Stimmer postulates that this elite differed fundamentally from the Western European model of parliamentary representation. The elite of the Austrian First Republic conceived of themselves as answerable primarily to the members of their own elite corporate group, rather than as representatives of a set of constituencies to whom they were then accountable. This is the main difference in Stimmer's view between the Western model of representative democracy and the Central European corporative tradition, and it is rooted in the way these elites were trained and recruited.

The elites of the First Republic were to a much greater extent based in the political parties of the three main "camps" (Christian Socials, Social Democrats and German Nationals), and were recruited very heavily from their respective academic organizations. Thus the principle of enlisting members on the basis of achievement was overshadowed by a stress upon ideological conformity. In selecting for governmental positions, a candidate's "mentality" became just as important as his objective qualifications, which provided a justification for the extensive system of patronage in the First Republic. One could not substitute ideological conformity for academic credentials, but no amount of education could compensate for ideological shortcomings.

Still, there were observable changes in the recruitment system during the course of the First Republic. Stimmer statistically documents a shift away from recruitment mainly through the CV (***Cartelverband***--the umbrella organization of Catholic fraternities) under Dollfuss to an increased preference during the Schuschnigg regime for graduates of the Catholic elite schools (Jesuit-run gymnasiums, for example). Attending such a gymnasium did not preclude later membership in a Catholic fraternity, but this change in emphasis did narrow the pool of potential office-holders. It represented a shift from Stimmer's ***Bundelite*** to an ***Anstaltselite***. And because the graduates of these elite secondary schools remained more likely to be from aristocratic backgrounds, this shift also meant a change in the social makeup of the ruling elite. Only 5% of the members of Dollfuss' first cabinet were of aristocratic origins, while 53% of Schuschnigg's third cabinet were from noble families.

The makeup of the First Republic's elite was to have a profound effect on the early stages of the Second Austrian Republic, since immediately after the war there was a reconstituting of the old party-based elites (minus the German Nationals, of course). The result was a reestablishment of many of the old systems of recruitment and political patronage. The elite monarchist secondary schools, such as the Theresianum, lost much of their significance in the Second Republic, though the CV and the Socialist student organizations continued to be important recruiting fields for the two main parties.

The social partnership, with its emphasis upon decision-making by a cadre of carefully selected party functionaries from the two main political camps, was a continuation and amplification of the elite system already established under the First Republic. Though in the 1960s all three parties (SPOe, OeVP, FPOe) began to emphasize a new "rationality" in politics that was supposed to manifest itself in a increasingly technocratic approach, the old methods of maintaining ideological solidarity continued to be employed. In Josef Klaus' two governments (1966-1970), for example,

only two cabinet members were really apolitical technocrats with no strong ties to the OeVP. All members of Bruno Kreisky's first two cabinets (1970-1975) were similarly dominated by persons who had made their careers in the party, the Socialist unions or the chamber of labor, and almost all cabinet members were ideologically "safe" owing to their past membership in socialist student organizations.

Stimmer has gone to great pains to trace the development of the ruling elites of the monarchy, the First and Second Republics. The results are thought-provoking, but the work is not without its problems. The writing is jargon-ridden and sometimes overly repetitive. Stimmer's statistical analysis is extensive, though not particularly sophisticated, limited as it is to simple percentages.

It is also curious, given the breadth of Stimmer's bibliography, that almost all of the standard historical works in English dealing with the book's topics are missing. Though Stimmer emphasizes the importance of the army and navy as sources for the monarchy's political elites, the seminal works of Guenther Rothenberg and Lawrence Sondhaus on these subjects go unmentioned.[2] While I do not mean to suggest that all wisdom comes from the English-speaking world, these two works, at the very least, are not ones that should be overlooked by anyone investigating the formation of Austrian political elites. It is also unfortunate, given the overlapping publications times of the two books and the importance of education to Stimmer's argument, that he was unable to make use of Gary Cohen's brilliant recent work on that subject. [3] Thus, while a very useful contribution to our understanding of political change in Austria, Stimmer's book is not likely to be the last word on the subject.

Notes:

[1]. Wolfgang Schluchter, "Der Elitenbegriff als soziologische Kategorie," *Koelner Zeitschrift fuer Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 15 (1963), 233-256; Hans Peter Dreitzel, *Elitenbegriff und Sozialstruktur: Eine soziologische Begriffsanalyse* (Stuttgart: F. Enke, 1962); H.J. Wolff, "Die Repraesentation," in Heinz Rausch, ed., *Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Repraesentation und Repraesentativverfassung*, vol. 184 of *Wege der Forschung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), pp. 116-208.

[2]. Guenther Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph* (West Layfayette, Purdue University Press, 1976); Lawrence Sondhaus, "The Austro-Hungarian Naval Officer Corps, 1867-1918," *Austrian History Yearbook*, 24 (1993), 51-78.

[3]. Gary Cohen, *Education and Middle Class Society in Imperial Austria, 1848-1918* (West Layfayette: Purdue University Press, 1996), reviewed on HABSBURG: http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=23066910378708.

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