

THE HABSBURG MONARCHY: PAST IN THE PRESENT?

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In this study, a comparative analysis is carried out between the ethnic and cultural plurality of modern-day Europe and the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire. The main question here is whether it makes sense to live by the principle of national homogeneity even where the multi-ethnic is, one might say, nothing out of the ordinary. The problem is analyzed by reexamining three relevant cases with regard to integrating and disintegrating factors in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the principal aspect being the relationship between the "equal status of the nationalities" on one hand and the differences which existed with regard to the demographic, economic, and cultural situation on the other. In every case, the constitutional stipulation is juxtaposed to what happened in reality. The three chosen examples are the Badeni language regulations of 1897 and the national "compromises" in Moravia (1905) and the Bukovina (1909/10). The conclusion is that seeking among the experience, positive as well as negative, of the Habsburg Monarchy, explanations for today's neo-nationalism and clues as to which ideas might make possible a multinational state as well as a common, peaceful Europe is not altogether futile.