

## Re-Imagining Empire: The Persistence of the Austrian Idea in the Historical Work of Heinrich Ritter von Srbik

This article examines the academic and political career of the famous Austrian historian Heinrich Ritter von Srbik. It focuses on his historical philosophy of *gesamtdesche Geschichte* (total German history) and explains its historiographical background as well as its political aims. Srbik was a fanatical German nationalist who believed it was the right of the culturally superior German people (*Volk*) to dominate and rule the whole of Central Europe. After 1918 he advocated *Anschluss* with Germany, and after this occurred in 1938, he joined the Nazi Party which rewarded him by making him President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and a member of the German *Reichstag*. He welcomed Hitler's conquests and after 1945 was banned from university teaching. He refused, however, to see German history in racial terms and his multi-volume *magnum opus*, *Deutsche Einheit* (German Unity) described how the drive for German unification was sustained by the idealism of the German people throughout centuries of Austro-Prussian and international conflicts. Central to his history was the role of the Holy Roman Empire. Today historians are once again linking the Holy Roman Empire to the emergence of the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union. Even the idealism of the German *Volk* has made a comeback. Srbik, however, is never mentioned.

The academic career of Heinrich Ritter von Srbik provides a fascinating example of a mind obsessed with the future of the German people after the fall of the Habsburg and Hohenzollern Empires in 1918. Srbik believed that this apparent rupture with the past should be taken as an opportunity to rekindle the earlier tradition of the Holy Roman Empire. The main goal was for all Germans to unite in order to resume their mission of organizing and defending Central Europe, indeed of being the bulwark of Christian civilization in the West. Obviously, Srbik's ideas bore a close affinity to Nazi ideology, which he acknowledged by joining the Party in 1938. Yet Srbik's dilemma was never about "racial" dogma, and his antisemitism was complicated by his close ties to German and Austrian Jewish scholars. Rather it was the predicament of a historian consumed by the so-called German Question: How should a numerous and dynamic people as the Germans, geographically based in Central Europe and dispersed throughout much of the East, fit politically into Europe as a whole? This was a burning question

in the interwar years, and in particular for Austrians now living in a diminished nation-state of some 6.2 million people, the vast majority of whom were ethnic German Catholics. Srbik's Nazi membership ruined his career after 1945, and has tarnished his legacy ever since. But his body of work and view of history can help us to tease out aspects of continuity and rupture in Austro-German history from the end of the First World War right up to the present day.

Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, this most important of Austrian interwar historians, whose theory of *gesamtdutsche Geschichte* ("total German history") increasingly influenced the entire German-speaking historical profession and remains relevant for all European historians today, could not at first have been expected to have such a profound impact on the *Zeitgeist*. Srbik studied at Vienna University's *Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* (Institute for Austrian Historical Research), where he specialized in medieval history before joining a historical commission concerned with modern Austria. This secured him a teaching post. Yet despite this foray into modern Austrian history, Srbik's doctoral thesis (1901) and first book were grounded firmly in the Middle Ages — the former a study of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Burgrave Frederick III of Nuremberg; the latter on church-state relations in Austria. As for his *Habilitationsschrift* (postdoctoral thesis, 1907), it was an economic history of Austria during the mercantilist era from Leopold I to Maria Theresa.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Institute authorized Srbik to teach general history in Vienna from 1910, he left for Graz two years later, where he appears to have promised to concentrate on medieval history. In 1914, he wrote that economic history was his specialty. But shortly after the war, in which he served with distinction as an artillery officer in Tyrol, he complained that his focus on economic history had diminished his reputation as a historian, and that he wanted to "get out" of it (his academic correspondence in general suggests a "pronounced ambition").<sup>2</sup> Srbik's first attempt at widening his research and reputation was the book *Wallensteins Ende. Ursachen, Verlauf und Folgen der Katastrophe* (Wallenstein's End: Causes, Course, and Consequences of the Catastrophe, 1920), which did indeed make him fairly famous. It also represented the turning away from economic history towards the exploration of a "total German" statesman — Albrecht von Wallenstein. Czech by birth and German by education and preference, Wallenstein had been baptized a Protestant and converted to Catholicism. It was precisely his ability to straddle religious and national lines, as well as his ambition to reconcile the peoples of Central Europe, that made Wallenstein a "total German" type for Srbik, thus foreshadowing his later writing.

Much the same could be said of the great Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich. In the early 1920s, Srbik's career was further enhanced when the

<sup>1</sup> SRBIK 1904; SRBIK 1907.

<sup>2</sup> DERNDARSKY 2002: 190 and 190 (note #4).

German historian Erich Marcks asked him to write about Metternich for the series *Meister der Politik* (Political Giants).<sup>3</sup> With astonishing speed, Srbik followed up this chapter with a research-intensive two-volume biography of the statesman that appeared in 1925, and immediately stirred controversy.<sup>4</sup> Srbik had completely revised Metternich's traditional reputation as a reactionary, transforming him into an enlightened, rational statesman of the first rank. His distinctly European caste of mind, however, had subjected the *deutsche Führervolk* (the German "leading people") to the "danger of slavification" (*Verslavung*) by encouraging the emergence of a "slavified state." For this reason, Srbik preferred Prince Felix zu Schwarzenberg, Metternich's successor after the 1848 revolutions and, in Srbik's judgement, a true *Realpolitiker* who attempted —albeit in vain— to create an "empire [Reich] of seventy million", a united *Mitteleuropa* ranging from the Baltic to the Adriatic under Austrian economic and political leadership.<sup>5</sup>

Despite finding Metternich too indulgent of the Slavic peoples, Srbik clearly admired him, above all for being the only statesman of his time to understand that nationalism, as it had developed in Western Europe, was not applicable to Central and Eastern Europe. Srbik's biography was to dominate Metternich studies thereafter until very recently. Indeed, its author often complained that English biographers relied on it without giving him due credit.<sup>6</sup> From Germany, by contrast, the success of *Metternich* brought offers of chairs, all of which Srbik turned down at no cost to his enhanced academic reputation.

The next milestone in Srbik's career came in Salzburg in 1929, when he lectured on the topic with which, apart from Metternich, his name would forever be linked: *gesamtdutsche Geschichtsauffassung*, or the "total German interpretation of history," which was meant to be a symbiosis of *großdeutsch* (great German) or *großösterreichisch* (great Austrian) and *kleindeutsch* (small German) history.<sup>7</sup> "Great German history" was the historical tradition that conceived of Germany within the framework of the whole Reich, including (especially) Austria (thus the term "Great Austrian history"). "Small German history" understood the German past in terms of the rise of Prussia as a great power, culminating in the establish-

---

<sup>3</sup> SRBIK 1922: 357-400.

<sup>4</sup> SRBIK 1925.

<sup>5</sup> All these usual criticisms are duly noted in DERNDARSKY 2002: 190.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, his review of the American Arthur Herman's 1932 *Metternich*, in *The Journal of Modern History*: SRBIK 1933. Herman is condemned thus: "...a man who is not a historian has, without any independent research worth mentioning, shortened the work of a historian, has taken the other's work almost step for step and changed it about into a smaller and more easily read presentation. He has not, however, given any sufficient indication to his public of the basis on which his, from the first almost to the last page, rests" (100). Unfortunately, foreign publishers who were interested in Srbik's work insisted on a shorter version, which he felt unable to produce until after the Second World War.

<sup>7</sup> SRBIK 1930: 1-12.

ment of the German Empire of the Hohenzollerns in 1871. Srbik's self-appointed mission was to combine the best of both traditions such that the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns were the essential elements of the unfolding destiny of the German people as it spread into and conquered Central Europe.

Srbik's aim was political as well as historiographical. Ethnic Germans, he argued, had to be made aware of the need to end their internal rivalries over history and politics. Srbik thus called for "the creation of a common consciousness of Germans as a people [*Volk*]" based on "a common historical consciousness." The task of German historians was to "build a new German house on this basis" through the explicit, mutual recognition of the positive elements of both *klein* and *großdeutsch* historiographical traditions. The result would be greater German unity *and* a greater German state, or Reich.

Srbik pointed the way by arguing that Bismarck's *kleindeutsch* policy from 1866 to 1871 actually made sense, since at the time German unity under the Hohenzollerns was the only possible solution to the German Question. Yet he also insisted that the *großdeutsch* trajectory in German history was the necessary final outcome, not to mention a value in and of itself. It should thus be pursued to its end. The apologists for Prussia, Srbik always insisted, had to accept that the Austrian or Habsburg tradition represented more than just Austrian history — it stood for the universalist tradition of the old Reich (Holy Roman Empire). Although this would later lead to disagreements with German historians, the purely Germanic aspect of Srbik's lecture, with its promise of reconciliation between the two historiographical traditions, garnered a warm reception in 1929. Indeed, that same year Srbik accepted an invitation from the Austrian German Nationalist Party Chancellor, Johann Stober, to become Education Minister (he never accepted appointments offered by the Christian Socialists).<sup>8</sup>

The origins of Srbik's "total German" historical philosophy are not difficult to discern. For starters, he was a "total German" himself, with roots in both northern Germany and Austria. If the family name is any indicator, the Srbiks had originally been Czech, though they were already German by education and worked in German-speaking professions when they arrived in Vienna from Bohemia. Srbik's mother, Walpurga, was a Westphalian whose father, the historian Wilhelm Heinrich Grauert, had taught at Vienna University. As for Srbik's father, Franz, he was an imperial civil servant of old-Austrian heritage, although the family's patent of nobility — awarded to Srbik's grandfather — was fairly recent. Srbik himself, in any case, certainly had a strong personal claim on "total German" history.

At university in Vienna, Srbik joined the German nationalist *Burschenschaft* "Gothia" rather than an elite aristocratic duelling fraternity. He also had a front row seat at one of the era's major nationality conflicts — the failed attempt by the

<sup>8</sup> DERNDARSKY 2002: 192 (note #10).

Austrian government to make Czech equal with German as a language of internal administration in Bohemia (the Badeni Ordinances). These experiences led the historian Ronald J. Ross to argue that, “to a large extent, ... the ideas expressed in [Srbik’s] *gesamtdeutsch* theory were molded in his youth.”<sup>9</sup> Ross also credits one of Srbik’s university tutors, Professor Alphons Dopsch, for impressing upon him the national and supranational missions of the Germans. Dopsch had long argued that the collapse of the Roman Empire and the barbarian conquests had made Germans the legatees of Rome. Their mission was thus to preserve the *Pax Romana* and *Pax Christiana*, and to protect the Occident. That mission, which persisted, required the total German domination of Central Europe.<sup>10</sup>

And at perhaps no time in modern European history was this more obvious than in the aftermath of the First World War. Until then, the Habsburg Monarchy, despite its defeats in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the rise of Bismarck’s Germany, had been able to organize the peoples of Central Europe under Germanic leadership. But the treaties of 1919 not only stranded large numbers of Habsburg German subjects in the successor states and reduced Vienna to a sort of historical afterthought, they turned Austria herself into a small, unstable republic bereft of the basic securities of Srbik’s bourgeois upbringing. Given his pre-existing German nationalism, it is not surprising that Srbik embraced *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* — “overcoming the past” by rejecting Austrian war guilt and the country’s foreign imposed political condition, while longing for *Anschluss* with Germany in order to rescue the honour of the Habsburg Monarchy (and despite the fact that the victorious powers expressly forbade it). This orientation would, so to speak, “give history a happy ending.”<sup>11</sup> If before 1914 Srbik had been critical of the Monarchy, now, forced by its collapse to reconsider the question of German unity and the reorganization of Central Europe, the Empire became an object of nostalgia for him, just as it did for so many intellectuals and others who had come of age in the Habsburg era.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, the Dual Alliance during the war helped the two diminished countries to overcome obstacles — both material and ideological — to unification. As the historian Stanley Suval wrote in his aptly entitled article, “Overcoming *Kleindeutschland*”:

“The way had already been prepared by the movement for a German-dominated *Mitteleuropa* in World War I. The promise implicit in such a construction turned academicians from an exclusive interest in a Prussian-centred Reich. These hopes did not die with the end of the war. In the 1920s, Vienna still seemed an ideal base for the German economic and political

---

<sup>9</sup> ROSS 1969: 93.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> DERNDARSKY 2002: 190.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example: ROMSICS 2010; COLE 2004: 25-58; RÁSKY 2009: 473-504; MAGRIS 2000.

penetration of southeastern Europe. This view necessitated a reappraisal of the Austrian Germans, who would become partners in this newly formed *Mitteleuropa*.<sup>13</sup>

Willingly or not, Austrians and Germans had been brought into military and economic cooperation during the war. And this, in turn, had fostered discussions for a new *Mitteleuropa* — an economically and politically united German bloc stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic that could have resisted the Allied naval blockade and persisted after the war. To be sure, there had been much disagreement over how this alliance would function, as well as rival German and Austrian ambitions in Poland, the Ukraine, and the Baltic countries.<sup>14</sup> Yet in the aftermath of defeat, there was renewed interest in some sort of Central European federalism.

In Austria itself, the overwhelming majority of the population, from both ends of the political spectrum, favoured *Anschluss*, as they well demonstrated when Hitler achieved it in 1938. Nonetheless, there were important holdouts. The Austrian prelate and politician Ignaz Seipel, who twice served as chancellor in the 1920s, feared that Austrian culture might not survive union with majority Protestant Germany. Several Catholic intellectuals and literary figures such as Hermann Bahr, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and the historian Hugo Hantsch shared these concerns. Some even worried that traditional Austrian culture might already have disappeared. And Srbik's colleague-rival at Vienna University, Viktor Bibl, saw *Anschluss* in and of itself as a victory for *Kleindeutschland*. The racist German historian Heinrich Wolf agreed, though obviously for different reasons — he thought it would cleanse Vienna of Jews.

Yet these were the exceptions, and the fact that Austrians overwhelmingly supported unification encouraged many Germans, and German scholars, to do so also — after all, the peace settlement had also altered Germany's geopolitical calculus by thwarting Bismarck's ambitions for the Reich, not to mention excising parts of its territory.<sup>15</sup> According to the historian Hans Hertzfeld, the concept of *Anschluss* between the two republics became “one of the strongest forces in Weimar historical thought.” And the leading German historian, Friedrich Meinecke, wrote in 1919 of the need to give highest priority to “union with our Austrian brothers.”<sup>16</sup> Another major German historian, Erich Marks, argued that *Anschluss* would not only represent a victory over the hated Versailles Treaty, it would provide a renewed sense of purpose to Germans and a means with which

<sup>13</sup> SUVAL 1969: 314-15.

<sup>14</sup> For an excellent account of Austro-Prussian differences in the First World War, see SHANAFELT 1985.

<sup>15</sup> For a recent study of the bipartisan political support for *Anschluss* in Germany, see: HOCHMAN 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in SUVAL 1969: 312.

to surmount their difficulties and secure their national faith. In short, *Anschluss* meant “something new with a promise of a future.”<sup>17</sup>

The fact that leading German historians were so willing to stake out this pro-*Anschluss* political position was abetted by the fact that, after the world war, there were few professional obstacles to challenge them. The founders of the old *kleindeutsch* school were all dead; its most distinguished representative, Frederick the Great’s biographer Rheinhold Koser, had passed away in 1914. Even the eminent historian of German public administration and the Hohenzollern dynasty, Otto Hintze, had begun to see history from a more European perspective. Consequently, with defeat in 1918, “small German history” quickly fell out of fashion. The German-American historian Felix Gilbert could write in 1931 that “Droysen’s Prussian historiography belongs to a period which lies behind us.”<sup>18</sup> Only the great historian of the *Reichsgründung* (founding of the Second Empire), Erich Brandenburg, continued to defend Prussia’s rulers, though he abstained from any teleological view of their historical role (“They were forced by the situation of the state itself to represent German interests...”). Nevertheless, and despite harbouring no love for Austria or Austrians, even Brandenburg came to accept the necessity of *Anschluss* to undermine the Versailles settlement.<sup>19</sup> When the old Prussian *Kreuzzeitung* condemned any *Anschluss* policy in 1927, the journal was widely denounced, including by traditional conservatives.

Of course, old attitudes die hard, and despite the extraordinarily quick intellectual agreement on the necessity of *Anschluss*, German schools still taught traditional *kleindeutsch* history and German politicians (and some historians) retained suspicions about Austria’s past. Moreover, the division between the Catholic South and Protestant North remained more relevant in Germany than it did in Austria (except for the Austrian clergy). In order to combat these traditional trends, the President of the Weimar Republic, who personally controlled the *Reichsszentrale für Heimatdienst* (literally, the Imperial Agency for Domestic Service, or the propaganda arm of the Republic), used it from the late 1920s to organize 136 lectures throughout Germany to promote *Anschluss* and highlight historical works that favoured it. The office even offered to extend its functions into Austria, where all parties supported *Anschluss* anyway (though the Christian Socials somewhat ambiguously).<sup>20</sup> Moreover, this official propaganda was reinforced by private initiatives undertaken by the Austro-German People’s League and the German-Austrian Association (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*). All of these pro-*Anschluss* efforts, of course, further focused attention on Srbik’s theory of “total German history.”

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 315.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 316.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 328.

Srbik's publicly developed the concept of *Mitteleuropa* centred around Germans as a people (*Volk*) rather than a nation-state or states.<sup>21</sup> According to his theory, the diffusion and dominance of the German *Volk* throughout Central Europe protected the Occident and kept order in Europe generally. Moreover, it was the *Volk*'s consciousness of this task and abiding collective memory of its historical role which, according to Srbik, provided the true impetus behind the German people's eternal quest for unity. As for Central Europe itself, Srbik defined it geographically as bounded by the Baltic in the North, the Adriatic in the South, the Rhine and its tributaries in the West, and by a line drawn roughly between Riga and Odessa in the East. Of course, only the Western part was overwhelmingly German. The territory bounded by a vertical line from Danzig to Trieste and the easternmost limits of Central Europe comprised a transitional zone of assorted nationalities, all of them unsuitable candidates for acquiring their own nation-states. Since only Germans had spread throughout this Central European zone, they alone could unite and organize the region. Yet in order to undertake this mission properly, the German people itself had to be in accord about it. Hence national and supranational factors were linked in Srbik's mind and vital for his historical philosophy.

A critical further aspect of Srbik's historical work leading up to the 1930s was its intellectual and diplomatic orientation, particularly at the expense of economic and social history (in this respect, at least, Srbik remained a self-conscious pupil of Ranke.). Srbik had been influenced by Meinecke's concept of *Ideengeschichte* (intellectual history), in which history was a conflict between the spiritual-moral (*Geist*) and political power (*Macht*) — or as Srbik saw it, between "Idea" (*Idee*) and "Reality" (*Wirklichkeit*). He would later describe the historical search for German unity as a conflict between the *Reichsidee* (imperial idea) — that is, the memory of and striving for German unity — and the reality of power politics as embodied in German particularism, Austro-Prussian dualism, and religious conflict. For Srbik, the *Reichsidee* gradually transformed itself into German national consciousness, which in turn became stronger than the reigning political reality. This meant that whatever the course of political events within "Germany," the German people, imbued with their historic national self-consciousness, would always strive for unity and the control of Central Europe. The "idea of a Reich" was, in other words, eternal and universal. In the four volumes of Srbik's *magnum opus* on the subject entitled, plainly, *Deutsche Einheit* (German Unity), there emerged, writes Ross:

a kind of historical determinism, an organic law of existence which seeks self-protection for a state and its people. Size of territory, among other things, is a condition for survival in the realm of power politics. The German nation, then, of necessity had to grow or die. German historical growth was the inexorable march towards the unity of all Germans in Middle Europe.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> SRBIK 1937; compare with MEYER 1955.

<sup>22</sup> ROSS 1969: 98-99.



It is not surprising that such ideas appealed to the Nazis.

Srbik's pursuit of "total German history" had already brought him into conflict with fellow Austrian historians, notably his former Graz colleague Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, author of the 1926 study, *Österreich-Preußen-Deutschland. Deutsche Geschichte in großdeutscher Beleuchtung* (Austria-Prussia-Germany: German History in a Greater German Light). Srbik's highly critical review took particular issue with Kaindl's treatment of Bismarck.<sup>23</sup> In his view, which he further developed in *Deutsche Einheit* (German Unity, 1935), Austria's defeat in 1866 was a tragic necessity. The German Confederation under Austrian leadership could no longer protect German interests; both the Habsburg dynasty and the Confederation were anachronistically organized and incapable of adapting to modern times. Thus, for Srbik, the sick body of the Confederation could only be preserved and revitalized through Austria's amputation from the German body politic. The greater good of Germany, in other words, came before the prestige of Austria. Kaindl's duty as an historian, Srbik argued, should have been to understand this rather than blaming Bismarck for doing what was historically necessary. Yet Bismarck's Reich in turn proved inadequate in protecting Germans when it lost the First World War. The German people, imbued with German historical consciousness, demanded that the struggle for unity continue.

Srbik himself now envisaged writing a definitive "total history" of Germany, though it would take him nearly a decade and a half to complete it. Much of this work, moreover, was to be based on new documents being released from the Austrian and Prussian archives, which Srbik co-edited with Oskar Schmid and published — in five volumes dealing mainly with Austria's German Policy — between 1934 and 1938.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, the first two volumes of his "total German" history were published in 1935, under the Schuschnigg regime, when Austria was pursuing a separate course from Hitler's Germany. Given his political views, Srbik decided at the last minute to give his work the title *Deutsche Einheit*, both for its intrinsic catchiness and as a "powerful reminder" of what Austrian policy should actually be.<sup>25</sup> The work's subtitle was a direct expression of his historical philosophy: *Idee und Wirklichkeit vom Heiligen Reich bis Königgrätz* (Idea and Reality from the Holy Roman Empire to Königgrätz).

Srbik's *magnum opus* was published in Nazi Germany, where it went through several editions and was officially promoted by the Nazi *Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums* (the Reich Office for the Promotion of German Literature). These volumes represented the peak of creativity for Srbik, who viewed

---

<sup>23</sup> See the review in SRBIK 1926: 251-260. Compare with his treatment of events in 1866 in his *Deutsche Einheit*: SRBIK 1935-1942: 468.

<sup>24</sup> SRBIK-SCHMID 1934-1938.

<sup>25</sup> DERNDARSKY 2002: 193.

his enormous investment of time and energy in them as a political service to the *Volk*. Or as Srbik stated explicitly in the Introduction, his aim was to discover why, from the depths of the German past, the Germans had been denied a harmonious unity of *Volk, Raum, Reich und Staat* (people, territory, empire and state), and had in fact suffered more than other *Kulturvölker* (peoples of culture). If Ranke had been correct to say that all centuries were equal in the eyes of God, then all centuries of German history had to be examined in order to understand what had gone wrong. Srbik therefore looked at epochs when Germany had been divided and impotent, yet its higher cultural unity allegedly still existed, “and exists.”<sup>26</sup> At the root of his volumes was this assertion: “in the soul of the simple German people lived the yearning for the World Emperor (*Weltkaiser*), who slumbered in the mountain, and a national faith in the *translatio Imperii Romani*, in the world mission of the Germans, in *Christianissima Germania*.”<sup>27</sup>

The basic theme of *Deutsche Einheit* is that despite many opportunities to unify the German people—including the reign of Charles V, the Thirty Years’ War and the rise of Austria in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries – German unification never occurred. The Reformation, Srbik argued, had made Germans the appointed bearer of the idea of a world emperor. But they had been incapable of achieving the reality. At the conclusion of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648, particularism once again brought about the Empire’s defeat. Yet according to Srbik, “the gigantic, world-historical process of Austria’s final rise to great power status could never have occurred without the highest honours of Christendom [a reference to the fact that Austrian rulers were almost always Holy Roman Emperors thus blessed by and allied with Rome] and both the spiritual and power-political alliance with Germany at the end of the depressing seventeenth century.”<sup>28</sup> It was thus no coincidence to him that the armies which defeated the Turks in Hungary had fought under the white cross on a red background, the banner of the German kings. For Srbik, this was a great symbolic fact, even if those involved in the war did not know it.<sup>29</sup>

In his description of the clash between Frederick the Great and Maria Theresa, Srbik’s sympathies were clearly not with the Prussian king. Indeed, his reaction to him has been described as “allergic.”<sup>30</sup> Srbik stressed Frederick’s hostility to the Reich, which only Austria could preserve whereas Prussia wanted to weaken and kill it off. Austrian colonization of the East purportedly also came from German national motives, while Prussia’s *Drang nach Osten* was driven by mere *raison d’État*. Srbik tried to locate the Reich in the “Third Germany,” but found

<sup>26</sup> SRBIK 1935: 9.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 71 (footnote).

<sup>30</sup> DERNDARSKY 2002: 199.

it to be a weak, sad, bureaucratic entity — “no longer a self-sufficient state.” Nevertheless, he went on to argue that, “since the Peace of Westphalia,...the *Reichsidee* lived on,” and it did so “despite the dualism of Emperor and Reich; despite the growing particularism of the German states; [and even] in spite of the internal weakness of the spiritual princes of the Empire [i.e., the ecclesiastical rulers of ecclesiastical states that were part of the Holy Roman Empire] and the imperial towns.”<sup>31</sup>

As for the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, Srbik could at once lament the collapse of the old framework of German political unity and be cheered by the fact that “the idea of a German Emperor and Reich had fled...to the South-East, where in close association with the old Reich it had become a great power.”<sup>32</sup> This identification of the Reich with Austria had already become an article of faith in Srbik’s historical account. Even in his review of Kaindl’s book, Srbik had justified Bismarck’s policy on one hand, and described Franz Joseph as “the last of the medieval emperors” on the other. Unsurprisingly, this raised the ire of many of his critics.

*Deutsche Einheit* did not cover the period after 1866, but the failure of the Second Reich to win the First World War did not dash Srbik’s faith in the future of the German people either. In the final section of a 1927 article on the end of the Holy Roman Empire, he wrote: “A new Third Reich, and along with it a *Mitteleuropa* guided by the German spirit and German power, remains as a guiding star before our eyes.”<sup>33</sup> His concluding remarks in Volume IV of *Deutsche Einheit* (1942) suggest that his ideal had been achieved: “Germany has [now] carried her thousand-year mission and role of leadership to the very frontiers of the Western World...Not as imperialism, and not on the basis of a humanitarian ideal (*Menschenheitsidee*), but grounded rather in a new idea, that of *Volkstum*, which recognizes the personalities of nations and organically attaches the small nations to the leadership of the great *Volk*.”<sup>34</sup> The historian and Foreign Service Officer Paul Sweet commented that the “cavalier way in which [Srbik] kissed goodbye” to the humanitarian ideal “comes as something of a surprise.”<sup>35</sup> Yet Meinecke, who had become a democrat after 1918, appeared little astonished when he wrote Srbik in 1940: “These days you must be thinking often about your ideas of the Reich. Sometimes one thought of them merely as romantic, but they were the premonition of what was to come.”<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> SRBIK 1935: 142.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>33</sup> SRBIK 1927: 133-171.

<sup>34</sup> SRBIK 1942: 483-484.

<sup>35</sup> SWEET 1970: 48.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 54.

One could certainly find much to criticize in Srbik's history. Erich Brandenburg's review of *Deutsche Einheit* in a 1935–36 issue of the *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* objected to his treatment of Prussia and compared Bismarck's ideal of a territorially satiated state, which posed no danger to its neighbours, with Srbik's Reich and its ambitions in Central Europe. For him Srbik was a windbag who wrote inaccurate history, and he suggested that the subtitle of *Deutsche Einheit* should have been: "Great Idea, Pathetic Reality" (*Große Idee und jämmerliche Wirklichkeit*).<sup>37</sup> Many German historians objected to what they took to be Srbik's partisan defence of Austria after the war. Indeed, Srbik presented himself to the Austrian authorities precisely as someone who had defended Austria's role in German history. And despite the criticism, he established a sort of school of "total German" historians, whose leading members included the German Wilhelm Schüssler and Austrian Harold Steinacker, as well as Erich Keyser, Gustav Roloff and, later, Hellmuth Rössler.<sup>38</sup> Yet after World War II, the Swiss historian Werner Näf wrote that Srbik had merely wanted to show how his idea was greater than the reality. The Austrian historian Michael Derndarsky, by contrast, saw it the other way around: "[Srbik] made his own reality out of his idea and convictions and created, not without wishful thinking, a Reich as a monument to thought in which his patriotic ideals could find a home."<sup>39</sup>

These criticisms were professional and technical. The real criticism of Srbik was that his historical school allowed him to be seduced by the Nazis. To quote Paul Sweet again:

If there had ever been any instinctive revulsion against National Socialism's character, it was not manifest. The historian who had worried about the legal aspects of Ferdinand's orders to eliminate Wallenstein in the seventeenth century was not, it would appear, significantly disturbed by the summary execution in 1934 of some estimable Catholics when the SA leader Roehm gave Hitler a pretext. Antisemitism presented no great problem either. Srbik remained a pillar of the *Historische Zeitschrift* after a section on the Jewish Question, presided over by the antisemite Wilhelm Grau, had become a noteworthy feature of that journal.<sup>40</sup>

Although Srbik's scholarship did not enter into the realm of pure racism and restricted itself to the historic role of the German *Volk* in *Mitteleuropa*, it was unquestionably consistent with Nazi policy. His ideas were also easier to understand than, for example, the philosopher and fellow traveller Martin Heidegger's abstruse existentialism, thus making Srbik's work more intellectually serviceable

<sup>37</sup> BRANDENBURG 1935-1936: 768.

<sup>38</sup> ROSS 1969: 96.

<sup>39</sup> NÄF 1952: 95-101; DERNDARSKY 2002: 204.

<sup>40</sup> SWEET 1970: 52.

to the Third Reich. Srbik may have honourably refused the chair of modern history at Berlin after the Nazis purged the faculty in 1935, yet he was still singled out for praise by the Nazi historian Walter Frank in an address before the new *Reichsinstitut für die Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands* (Imperial Institute for the History of the New Germany). In this light, Srbik's decision to join the National Socialist Party was more rational than opportunistic. And it paid him dividends both professionally and politically — after the *Anschluss*, the Nazis made Srbik a member of the German Reichstag and the President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, positions he held right through to the fall of the Third Reich. On the other hand, both the Amt Rosenberg and the *Gauschulungsamt Wien* (Vienna District Training Office) dismissed Srbik as a passive party member who refused to undertake an assessment of race as a driving force in history. He was also put down for being too obsessed with universal Reich history.<sup>41</sup>

Clearly, 1938 was a big year for the author of *Deutsche Einheit* — besides the *Anschluss*, he celebrated his sixtieth birthday with a *Festschrift* promoted by Austria's leading Nazi, Arthur Seyss-Inquart; and a series of lectures he had given during the winter 1935–36 on Austria's role in German history — “resounding with political overtones” — were published along with a lecture on the concept of *Mittleuropa* that he gave at the University of Cologne in 1936.<sup>42</sup> In the meantime, Srbik allowed a purge of Jewish members of the Vienna Academy and welcomed news of the conquest of the Sudetenland in the *Völkischer Beobachter*. He comes in for yet more criticism for his assertion that the Germans had the right to rule Central Europe, and his assumption that the German minorities outside the Reich would all agree to this arrangement.

Should Srbik be read and studied as a “Nazi intellectual”? Such controversy typically revolves around Martin Heidegger and the prominent German political theorist Carl Schmitt.<sup>43</sup> Srbik's obscurity relative to these thinkers is likely rooted in his Austrian origins and the fact that he largely confined his career to the ivory tower rather than also becoming a major public intellectual. After all, it would be difficult to say of Srbik's works what the novelist and literary critic Paul Hühnerfeld did of Heidegger's “barely decipherable” books: “[they] were devoured. And the young German soldiers in the Second World War who died... with the writings of Hölderlin and Heidegger in their knapsacks can never be

<sup>41</sup> GRAF-STUHLHOFER 1998: 154; KLEE 2003: 593.

<sup>42</sup> The lectures appeared in print as *Österreich in der deutschen Geschichte*: SRBIK 1938. See ROSS 1969: 101-102, for Srbik's growing Nazi links.

<sup>43</sup> Probably the best introduction to Schmitt is Mark Lilla's chapter in LILLA 2001, 47-76. The quickest introduction to the controversy over Heidegger is probably COLLINS 2000, though for a sympathetic view of him with sources, see NESKE and KETTERING 1990. For more hostile views see, for example, LANG 1996 and FAYE 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in GAY 1968, 85.

counted.”<sup>44</sup> Today, leading intellectuals consider Heidegger one of the greatest philosophers who ever lived.

Schmitt too has long had a considerable following, particularly among legal experts. More recently, he has also had a favourable revival thanks in part to the political theorist Jan-Werner Müller’s well-received study, *A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Post-War European Thought* (2003). The dust jacket alone says it all: “Schmitt...[was] one of the twentieth century’s most brilliant and disturbing critics of liberalism. He was also one of the most important intellectuals to offer his services to the Nazis, for which he was dubbed the ‘crown jurist of the Third Reich.’ Despite this fateful alliance, Schmitt has exercised a profound influence on post-war European political and legal thought...”<sup>45</sup> By contrast, Srbik’s historical philosophy never became popular after the war.

Moreover, after 1945, the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe would presumably have rendered Srbik’s thesis anachronistic, if not untenable altogether. Yet in an effort both to purge himself of his Nazi past and uphold the validity of his ideas, Srbik published *Geist und Geschichte vom deutschen Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart* (Spirit and History of German Humanism Through the Present, 1950–51), which re-examined his own historical principles in light of the long-term development of German historical thought generally.<sup>46</sup> It also denounced Nazi excesses while insisting on the validity of his *gesamtdeutsche* theory, which had “evolved quite independently of the Nazi movement [and] was rooted in the Austrian environment, with its tradition of the *Sacrum Imperium*, and in German universalistic thought.” Srbik further stressed the scientific nature of both his theories and studies as opposed to the distortions and pseudoscience of Nazi propaganda.<sup>47</sup>

Nor should these claims be dismissed as the desperate efforts of an ex-Nazi to preserve his central contribution to historical thinking on the German Question. Srbik was a highly meticulous scholar both in his use of documents and knowledge of sources. If the framework of his history was controversial, his methodology was traditional. In light of his Nazi past, it is all too easy to forget how much Srbik did to shake up ossified views of German history, with its rigid division into Greater and Smaller historical schools.

Indeed, a recent trend in German historiography is the revision of the *klein-deutsch* school, with its assumption that a German national state was the logical outcome of German history. Abigail Green’s article “The Federal Alternative? A New View of Modern German History,” and Maiken Umbach’s book *Federalism and Enlightened Germany, 1740–1806*, are excellent examples of this.<sup>48</sup> In Ger-

<sup>45</sup> MÜLLER 2003.

<sup>46</sup> SRBIK 1950-1951.

<sup>47</sup> ROSS 1969: 104.

<sup>48</sup> GREEN 2003: 187-202 and UMBACH 2000.

man, a key work is *Föderative Nation. Deutschlandkonzepte von der Reformation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* (Federal Nation: Conceptions of Germany from the Reformation to the First World War), edited by the historians Dieter Langewiesche and Georg Schmidt. In his essay “Föderativer Nationalismus als Erbe der deutschen Reichsnation” (Federal Nationalism as the Heir of the German Imperial Nation), Langewiesche begins by asserting that “federal nationalism” is not an “established concept,” and then draws attention to a line of development in German history that does not automatically equate the desire for unity with the demand for a German nation-state. Before 1871, Langewiesche maintains, there was a German nationalism which, given the variety of the German states, did not recognize any need to unite them.<sup>49</sup>

Langewiesche’s insight is one that recalls *völkisch* history, although not of course in the Nazi sense. Rather it emphasizes that the state-building projects of Austria and Prussia were not what were central to the German past; what was central to it was the experience of people (*das Volk*) throughout the Reich in terms of their consciousness of being German. In other words, the desire of all Germans in each state to feel as one was the true driver of German history. All this, obviously, recalls Srbik’s concept of *Volk*, his *Ideengeschichte*, and the tension he drew between *Idee* and *Wirklichkeit*. Srbik himself, however, is absent from Langewiesche, who prefers to quote Goethe: “What makes Germany great but its *Volkskultur*, which has spread equally to all parts of the Reich?...”.<sup>50</sup>

This revision of German national history parallels and even complements recent revisionist work that places the Holy Roman Empire in a more positive light. Driven in part by such political changes as the reunification of Germany and the country’s absorption into the European Union, some scholars (and many political commentators) have gone so far as to posit that German dominance in the EU has made it into a kind of modern-day equivalent of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>51</sup> That may be a stretch, but it is interesting to consider Srbik’s ideas in light of the most recent and important study of the Holy Roman Empire, Cambridge scholar Joachim Whaley’s two-volume *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire* (2012).<sup>52</sup> The main theme of Whaley’s volumes is that the attempted reforms of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I (r. 1486–1519) marked a decisive turning point in the Reich’s development that continued through the late eighteenth century. If, as scholars widely accept, Emperors generally had less power than their rival

---

<sup>49</sup> LANGEWIESCHE 2000: 215.

<sup>50</sup> LANGEWIESCHE 2000: 221 (footnote #27).

<sup>51</sup> See, for example: SIMMS 2013a; SIMMS 2013b; “‘Now Europe Is Speaking German’: Merkel Ally Demands that Britain ‘Contribute’ to EU Success,” *Spiegel Online International*, 15 November 2011; “The Holy Roman Empire — European Disunion Done Right: The ‘Old Empire’ Offers Surprising Lessons for the European Union Today,” *The Economist*, 22 December 2012.

<sup>52</sup> WHALEY 2012.

European monarchs, Whaley nonetheless contends that the history of the Reich should not be seen as one of stagnation and failure; rather, after 1500 came 300 years of transformations, including the Reformation and the Westphalian settlement, which established a *modus vivendi* that enabled the Reich to act both as the centre of a European balance of power and a stable framework for constitutional development.

Indeed, the unity of the early modern period is underlined by the fact that it is characterized by a remarkably persistent series of reforms at both the Reich and territorial levels. The dates 1517, 1555, 1648, 1700, 1740–50 and, finally, 1789, all mark watersheds in this process. According to Whaley, each reform period, though always complicated, was broadly resolved or at least accommodated in ways that cannot be described as conservative. Some of these periods were actually progressive, producing an imperial framework that allowed various Christian denominations to co-exist peacefully and protected the independence of even the smallest territorial units. They also led to the establishment of a system of imperial courts through which subjects could appeal to the Emperor over the heads of their overlords. In fact, the German states often offered more legal protection to their subjects than did the western monarchies. Hence, Germans believed that they enjoyed “German liberties” and “German freedom.” This led to the advent of German patriotism by the late eighteenth century, when most German commentators were insisting that the Reich was a state even if it had no imperial capital, comprised 314 territorial units (with over 1,000 others not represented at the Diet), and had a limited monarchy, albeit with traditions different from neighbouring ones. Even if most Germans regarded their locality as their *Vaterland*, they also often referred to the Reich as such. There was, in other words, unity in diversity, and Whaley concludes that by the end of the eighteenth century German nationalism already existed on the basis of various memories from the wars against the Turks to those against Louis XIV.

There is much to criticize here, as I showed in my own review of Whaley’s unquestionably monumental achievement.<sup>53</sup> The most important issue is that his “reform” periods all seem to coincide with German civil wars or their aftermath, and that during the seventeenth century leading German states were backing Louis XIV rather than fighting him. Prussia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was not merely attacking Austria but planning to dismantle the Reich, which in fact it and most other German states had helped Napoleon to do by 1806. This does not immediately appear like steady progress towards unity. The details, however, are beside the point. What matters is that whatever the setbacks to German unification, Whaley, like Srbik, always finds that “reform” continues. His use of the concept parallels Srbik’s use of the *Reichsidee* as a *deus ex machina* to keep the *Volk* on the path

<sup>53</sup> SKED 2012.



to unity. Yet like Langewiesche, Whaley acknowledges no debt to Srbik. Indeed, despite the uncanny correspondence between these men's academic work, Whaley cursorily mentions Srbik only once, on page four of the first volume (1493–1648). Put another way, both Srbik and Whaley argue that at key moments in German history either the memory of the Reich and the unity it represented, or the reforms introduced to overcome crises, enabled Germans to progress along the path to unification.

### *Conclusion*

Today, German historians discuss whether the Federal Republic within the European Union should be viewed in the context of Germany's past as a conglomeration of different-sized states bound loosely together in the Holy Roman Empire, whose members included non-German states just as the EU's does. In such a scenario, the Empire is typically depicted as decentralized and based on the rule of law, thus enabling Germans to reclaim a peaceful past to offset their Prussian and Nazi traditions. The paradigm also historically legitimizes the FRG and the EU, while delegitimizing the nation-state. At the centre of this historical revisionism, of course, is the issue of continuity in German history.

Srbik tackled a similar problem, but lived in an era when most Germans were far from ready to discard the history of the national state created by Bismarck, or the feats of German arms up to and during the First World War. His self-assigned task, therefore, was to give Germans an historical consciousness of their place in a different kind of Europe, one with a tradition that also included the legacy of the Holy Roman Empire. His hope was that, imbued with this "total German historical consciousness," Germans could create a new Reich that would again dominate Europe. Today, a reunited Germany arguably dominates continental Europe, but her new Srbiks are unwilling to connect it with the past provided by the author of *Deutsche Einheit*, however much their interpretations, like his, rely on the role of the Holy Roman Empire.

## Bibliography

*Newspaper articles*

- “‘Now Europe Is Speaking German’: Merkel Ally Demands that Britain ‘Contribute’ to EU Success,” *Spiegel Online International* (15 November 2011).
- “The Holy Roman Empire—European Disunion Done Right: The ‘Old Empire’ Offers Surprising Lessons for the European Union Today,” *The Economist* (22 December 2012).

*Literature*

- BECK, Ulrich. 2013. *German Europe*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- BRANDENBURG, Erich. 1935-1936. Deutsche Einheit, *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* 30/4: 757-770.
- COLE, Laurence. 2004. Der Habsburger-Mythos. In *Memoria Austriae I: Menschen Mythen Zeiten*, eds. Emil Brix, Ernst Bruckmüller, and Hannes Stekl, 25–58. Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik.
- COLLINS, Jeff. 2000. *Heidegger and the Nazis*. Cambridge: Icon Books.
- DERNDARSKY, Michael. 2002. Zwischen ‘Idee’ und ‘Wirklichkeit’. Das Alte Reich in der Sicht Heinrich Von Srbiks. In *Imperium Romanum – irregulare corpus – Teutscher Reichs – Staat. Das Alte Reich im Verständnis der Zeitgenossen und ihr Historiographie*, ed. Matthias Schnettger, 189–205. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern Verlag.
- FAYE, Emmanuel. 2009. *Heidegger. The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- GAY, Peter. 1968. *Weimar Culture*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- GRAF-STUHLHOFER, Franz. 1998. Opportunisten, Sympathisanten und Beamte: Unterstützung des NS-Systems in der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften, dargestellt am Wirken Nadlers, Srbiks und Meisters, *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift* 110/4-5: 152–157.
- GREEN, Abigail. 2003. The Federal Alternative? A New View of Modern German History, *The Historical Journal* 46/1: 187–202.
- HOCHMAN, Erin R. 2016. *Imagining a Greater Germany: Republican Nationalism and the Idea of Anschluss*. Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press.
- KLEE, Ernst. 2003. *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich: Wer war was vor und nach 1945?* Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer.
- LANG, Berel. 1996. *Heidegger’s Silence*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- LANGEWIESCHE, Dieter. 2000. Föderativer Nationalismus als Erbe der deutschen Reichsnation. Über Föderalismus und Zentralismus in der deutschen Nationalgeschichte. In *Föderative Nation. Deutschlandkonzepte von der Reformation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, eds. Dieter Langewiesche and Georg Schmidt, 215–42. München: R. Oldenbourg.
- LILLA, Mark. 2001. *The Reckless Mind. Intellectuals in Politics*. New York: NYREV.
- MAGRIS, Claudio. 2000. *Der habsburgische Mythos in der modernen österreichischen Literatur*. Wien: Zsolnay.
- MEYER, Henry Cord. 1955. *Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action, 1815–1945*. The Hague: M. Nijhoff.

- MÜLLER, Jan-Werner. 2003. *A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Post-War European Thought*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- NÄF, Werner. 1952. Heinrich Ritter von Srbik (1878–1951), *Historische Zeitschrift* 173: 95-101.
- NESKE, Günther, Emil KETTERING. 1990. *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism. Questions and Answers*. New York: Paragon House.
- RÁSKY, Béla. 2009. Erinnern und Vergessen der Habsburger in Österreich und Ungarn nach 1918. In *Österreich 1918 und die Folgen: Geschichte, Literatur, Theater und Film*, eds. Karl Müller and Hans Wagener, 473–504. Wien: Böhlau.
- ROMSICS, Gergely. 2010. *The Memory of the Habsburg Empire in German, Austrian and Hungarian Right-Wing Historiography and Political Thinking 1918–1941*. Boulder: East European Monographs.
- ROSS, Ronald J. 1969. Heinrich Ritter von Srbik and ‘Gesamtdeutsch’ History, *The Review of Politics* 31/1: 88–107.
- SHANAFELT, Gary W. 1985. *The Secret Enemy: Austria-Hungary and the German Alliance, 1914–1918*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- SIMMS, Brendan. 2013a. *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy from 1453 to the Present*. New York-London: Basic Books.
- SIMMS, Brendan. 2013b. The Ghost of Europe Past, *The New York Times*, 9 June 2013.
- SKED, Alan. 2012. Review of Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire* (review no. 1315), *Reviews in History* (date accessed: 7 November, 2018).
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1904. *Die Beziehungen von Staat und Kirche in Österreich während des Mittelalters*. Innsbruck: Wagner.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1907. *Der staatliche Exporthandel Österreichs von Leopold I bis Maria Theresia. Untersuchungen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Österreichs im Zeitalter der Merkantilismus*. Wien: Braumüller.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1922. Metternich. In 1922. *Meister der Politik: eine weltgeschichtliche Reihe von Bildnissen*, vol. 2, eds Erich Marcks and Karl Alexander von Müller, 357-400. Stuttgart-Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1925. *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch*, 2 vols. München: Bruckmann.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1925. *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch*, 2 vols. München: Bruckmann.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1926. Kleindeutsch und Großdeutsch, *Archiv für Politik und Geschichte* 7: 251-260.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1927. Das Österreichische Kaisertum und das Ende des Heiligen Römischen Reichs (1804–1806), *Archiv für Politik und Geschichte* 8: 133-171.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1930. Gesamtdeutsche Geschichtsauffassung, *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 8: 1-12.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1933. Metternich by Arthur Herman, *The Journal of Modern History* 5/1: 100-102.

- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von, Oskar SCHMID (eds.). 1934-1935. *Quellen zur deutschen Politik Österreichs, 1859–1866*, 5 vols. Oldenburg: Stalling.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1935. *Deutsche Einheit: Idee und Wirklichkeit vom heiligen Reich bis Königgrätz*, vol. 1. München: Bruckmann.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1935-1942. *Deutsche Einheit: Idee und Wirklichkeit vom heiligen Reich bis Königgrätz*, 4 vols. München: Bruckmann.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1937. *Mitteleuropa: das Problem und die Versuche seiner Lösung in der deutschen Geschichte*. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1938. *Österreich in der deutschen Geschichte*. München: Bruckmann.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1942. *Deutsche Einheit: Idee und Wirklichkeit vom heiligen Reich bis Königgrätz*, vol. 4. München: Bruckmann.
- SRBIK, Heinrich Ritter von. 1950-1951. *Geist und Geschichte vom deutschen Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart*. München: Bruckmann.
- SUVAL, Stanley. 1969. Overcoming Kleindeutschland: The Politics of Historical Myth-making in the Weimar Republic, *Central European History* 2/4: 312-330.
- SWEET, Paul. 1970. The Historical Writing of Heinrich von Srbik, *History and Theory* 9/1: 37–58.
- UMBACH, Maiken. 2000. *Federalism and Enlightened Germany, 1740–1806*. London: The Hambleton Press.
- WHALEY, Joachim. 2012. *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Ponovno zamišljanje Carstva: postojanost austrijske ideje u povijesnom djelu Heinricha Rittera von Srbika

U ovome radu istražuje se akademska i politička karijera austrijskog povjesničara Heinricha Rittera von Srbika i objašnjava se podrijetlo njegove teorije o *gesamt-deutsche Geschichte* (općenjemačke povijesti ili, možda bolje, potpuno ili posve njemačke povijesti). Suštinski, on je želio, nakon katastrofe Prvog svjetskog rata, pomiriti historiografije pruskocentrične malonjemačke povijesti usredotočene na dostignuća Hohenzollerna i Bismarcka, s jedne strane, i velikonjemačke ili velikoaustrijske povijesti temeljene na ulozi Habsburga u Svetom Rimskom Carstvu i kasnije u Austrijskom Carstvu. Srbikovi vlastiti pogledi bili su bliži ovoj posljednjoj tradiciji. Međutim, kao njemački nacionalist koji je vjerovao u pravo Nijemaca sa, kako je smatrao, superiornom kulturom, da vladaju čitavom središnjom Europom, želio je pokazati da će to ponovno moći samo ako se ujedine kako bi ispunili svoju sudbinu.

U višesveščanom djelu *Deutsche Einheit* (Njemačko jedinstvo), dao je prikaz njemačke povijesti i austro-pruskog rivalstva, inzistirajući da je ispod svih vojnih

i političkih sukoba ideja njemačkog jedinstva održavana na životu trajnom potporom u srcima i umovima običnih njemačkih ljudi (*das Volk*), čija su folklorna sjećanja na ratove protiv Turaka i Louisa XIV. podržavala žar za nacionalnim jedinstvom. Ukratko, bili su prožeti pojmom *Reichsidee*, koji se razvio za dugih stoljeća Svetog Rimskog Carstva, žudnjom za carstvom, koja je preživjela sve mijene koje donosi *Realpolitik*. Stoga je podnaslov djela *Deutsche Einheit* bio *Idee und Wirklichkeit* ili „Ideja i stvarnost“.

U 1930-ima Srbik je ohrabrivao ideju njemačkog jedinstva kroz *Anschluss* između Njemačke i Austrije, ideje koja je postala veoma intelektualno popularna u obje zemlje nakon 1918. Nakon što se on i dogodio 1938., Srbik je logično pristupio nacističkoj stranci, što mu je omogućilo da postane predsjednik Austrijske akademije znanosti i član njemačkog Reichstaga. Zadržao je obje funkcije za vrijeme Drugog svjetskog rata i bio je nedvojbeno antisemit koji je hvalio Hitlerova osvajanja. Međutim, uporno je odbijao napisati rasnu povijest Njemačke, inzistirajući na vlastitoj verziji kulturne superiornosti. Tek je nakon rata kritizirao nacističke ekscese, no tada mu je već bilo zabranjeno predavati na sveučilištu.

Odnedavno njemački i drugi povjesničari reinterpreteraju njemačku povijest u svjetlu članstva u EU-u. Zastupa se stav da nacionalna država Hohenzollerna i Bismarcka ipak nije bila prirodni ishod njemačke povijesti. Federalna Republika napokon je federalna država i EU kojom dominira federalno je tijelo s nenjemačkim članovima. Stoga se pojavila rehabilitacija Svetog Rimskog Carstva koje se sada tumači kao pravi predač suvremene Njemačke. Sveto Rimsko Carstvo danas se smatra politički difuznom državom koja je, iako dominirana od Nijemaca, temeljena na vladavini prava bez povijesti agresije. Čak se tvrdi da se u njemu pravi duh nijemstva može naći među narodom prije nego među časnicima ili službenicima. Sve to, naravno, podsjeća na Srbika, no njegovo se ime i djelo nikada ne spominju.

*Ključne riječi:* Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, Sveto Rimsko Carstvo, Habsburško Carstvo, Njemačko Carstvo, *Mitteleuropa*, središnja Europa, nacizam, njemačko pitanje, *Deutsche Einheit*, njemačko jedinstvo, *gesamtdeutsche Geschichte*, Metternich, *Anschluss*, *Volk*, *Volkstum*.

*Keywords:* Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, Holy Roman Empire, Habsburg Empire, German Empire, *Mitteleuropa*, Central Europe, Nazism, the German Question, *Deutsche Einheit*, German unity, *gesamtdeutsche Geschichte*, Metternich, *Anschluss*, *Volk*, *Volkstum*.

Alan Sked  
London School of Economics and Political Science  
Department of International History  
Houghton Street, London, WC2A 2AE  
A.Sked@lse.ac.uk

FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET SVEUČILIŠTA U ZAGREBU

ZAVOD ZA HRVATSKU POVIJEST  
INSTITUTE OF CROATIAN HISTORY  
INSTITUT FÜR KROATISCHE GESCHICHTE

# RADOVI

# 50

# BROJ 1

ZAVOD ZA HRVATSKU POVIJEST  
FILOZOFSKOGA FAKULTETA SVEUČILIŠTA U ZAGREBU

The logo for FF press, featuring the letters 'FF' in a stylized font with a horizontal line through them, followed by the word 'press' in a lowercase sans-serif font.

ZAGREB 2018.

RADOVI ZAVODA ZA HRVATSKU POVIJEST  
FILOZOFSKOGA FAKULTETA SVEUČILIŠTA U ZAGREBU

Knjiga 50, broj 1

*Izdavač / Publisher*

Zavod za hrvatsku povijest  
Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu  
FF-press

*Za izdavača / For Publisher*

Vesna Vlahović Štetić

*Glavni urednik / Editor-in-Chief*

Hrvoje Gračanin

*Izvršni urednik / Executive Editor*

Nikola Anušić

*Uredništvo / Editorial Board*

Bruna Kuntić-Makvić (stara povijest/ancient history), Zrinka Nikolić Jakus (srednji vijek/  
medieval history), Hrvoje Petrić (rani novi vijek/early modern history), Željko Holjevac  
(moderna povijest/modern history), Tvrtko Jakovina (suvremena povijest/contemporary history),  
Silvija Pisk (mikrohistorija i zavičajna povijest/microhistory and local history),  
Zrinka Blažević (teorija i metodologija povijesti/theory and methodology of history)

*Međunarodno uredničko vijeće / International Editorial Council*

Denis Alimov (Sankt Peterburg), Živko Andrijašević (Nikšić), Csaba Békés (Budapest), Rajko  
Bratož (Ljubljana), Snježana Buzov (Columbus, Ohio), Svetlozar Eldarov (Sofija), Toni Filiposki  
(Skopje), Aleksandar Fotić (Beograd), Vladan Gavrilović (Novi Sad), Alojz Ivanišević (Wien),  
Egidio Ivetić (Padova), Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo), Karl Kaser (Graz),  
Irina Ognyanova (Sofija), Géza Pálffy (Budapest), Ioan-Aurel Pop (Cluj),  
Nade Proeva (Skopje), Alexios Savvides (Kalamata), Vlada Stanković (Beograd),  
Ludwig Steindorff (Kiel), Peter Štih (Ljubljana)

*Izvršni urednik za tuzemnu i inozemnu razmjenu /*

*Executive Editor for Publications Exchange*

Martin Previšić

*Tajnik uredništva / Editorial Board Assistant*

Dejan Zadro

Adresa uredništva/Editorial Board address

Zavod za hrvatsku povijest, Filozofski fakultet Zagreb,  
Ivana Lučića 3, HR-10 000, Zagreb  
Tel. ++385 (0)1 6120 150, 6120 158, faks ++385 (0)1 6156 879

Časopis izlazi jedanput godišnje / The Journal is published once a year

Časopis je u digitalnom obliku dostupan na / The Journal in digital form is accessible at  
Portal znanstvenih časopisa Republike Hrvatske „Hrčak“  
<http://hrcak.srce.hr/radovi-zhp>

Financijska potpora za tisak časopisa / The Journal is published with the support by  
Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i športa Republike Hrvatske

Časopis je indeksiran u sljedećim bazama / The Journal is indexed in the following databases:  
Directory of Open Access Journals, EBSCO, SCOPUS, ERIH PLUS, Emerging Sources Citation  
Index - Web of Science

*Naslovna stranica / Title page by*  
Iva Mandić

*Grafičko oblikovanje i računalni slog / Graphic design and layout*  
Marko Maraković

*Lektura / Language editors*  
Marijana Ivić (hrvatski / Croatian)  
Dražen Nemet (engleski / English)

*Tisak / Printed by*  
Tiskara Zelina, Sv. Ivan Zelina

*Naklada / Issued*  
200 primjeraka / 200 copies

*Časopis je u digitalnom obliku dostupan na Portalu znanstvenih časopisa  
Republike Hrvatske „Hrčak“ <http://hrcak.srce.hr/radovi-zhp>*

*The Journal is accessible in digital form at the Hrcak - Portal of scientific  
journals of Croatia <http://hrcak.srce.hr/radovi-zhp>*