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Military Newspapers and the Habsburg Officers' Ideology after 1868

The Habsburg officer corps of the late nineteenth century played a significant role in sustaining the feudal anachronism of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Despite its constant appeals to tradition, it was in fact a product of the struggles to reform the army. The tensions that resulted are evident in the military press of the reform period and left their mark on the officers' ideology.

The Habsburg officer corps from 1867 to 1914 was distinguished from its contemporary counterparts among the European powers by a unique ideology. In outlining this ideology and the patterns of knowledge that it drew upon, this brief account will draw upon both hard historical data and more ephemeral material from the contemporary press. The Habsburg officers' ideology represented on the one hand an authentic military tradition, stretching back through the era of Radetzky to the Napoleonic wars and the defence of Vienna against the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, significant aspects of the ideology were of comparatively recent vintage and can be traced to the upheavals of the mid-nineteenth century. Those momentous events produced a need for a new and relatively untried institution – the professional officer corps.¹ Where the officer corps of the pre-reform era had been dominated by the aristocracy, after 1868 its members were increasingly middle-class and drawn from a progressively isolated social caste who were the sons of soldiers and other Habsburg civil servants. Günter Kronenbitter sums this up in a

¹ Johann Christoph Allmayer-Beck, 'Das Heerwesen', p. 71.

telling phrase in his study of Austro-Hungarian military leadership before the First World War: ‘Tornisterkinder unter sich’.² Henry Wickham Steed’s contemporary observation of Habsburg officers at the start of the twentieth century as a ‘kind of Samurai caste’ contains the remark that ‘many families of modest fortune have been “military” for generations, sending all or most of their sons into the Army and Navy’.³ For the bulk of officers who were from this ‘stock of military families’, in Wickham Steed’s words ‘one of the great assets of the dynasty’, issues of social acceptability and demarcation between officers and other groups were existential questions. Despite not being particularly well paid, they were expected to keep up the appearance of latter-day knights, referring to themselves as ‘der erste und ritterlichste Stand’, the ‘first and most chivalrous estate’.⁴ The flood of pamphlets and handbooks on the duel (when to duel, who was *satisfaktionsfähig*, or socially acceptable as an adversary) betokens not just the existence and importance of individual combat as a means to resolve questions of honour, but perhaps also a degree of social panic and an increasingly desperate need to hold on to those privileges that identified officers as a distinctive group.

Two major military defeats in quick succession – in 1859 and 1866 – at Solferino and Königgrätz – triggered a profound shift in military policy.⁵ The existing, largely aristocratic military elites took the brunt of the blame. However diplomatically it is represented in some accounts,

² Günther Kronenbitter, “*Krieg im Frieden*”, p. 17.

³ Henry Wickham Steed, *The Hapsburg Monarchy*, pp. 62-63. See also Gunther Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, p.151.

⁴ Gunther Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, p. 82.

⁵ See Gunther Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, pp. 74-79.

we should observe that after Königgrätz, two former heads of the general staff, Ludwig von Benedek – who some present as bearing most responsibility for losing a war from a position of advantage – and Alfred von Henikstein left the army in disgrace. The *Kriegsschule* instructor who had educated large numbers of general staff officers implicated in the defeats, the conservative Gideon von Krismanich, suffered a similar fate.⁶ Senior officers by and large blamed the general staff for the catastrophe.

Historians of the defeat in the Austro-Prussian campaign have typically concentrated on the technological superiority of the Prussian forces. Alongside the use of railways to deploy troops and the telegraph to communicate, the Dreyse *Nadelgewehr* or *preußische Zündnadelgewehr* - the needle rifle, a breech-loading weapon so called because of its needle-shaped firing mechanism - gave the Prussian infantry superior fire power and made the shock tactics of advancing in close column used by the Austrian infantry near suicidal. Later commentators have often drawn attention to the Prussian combat successes in Schleswig-Holstein in 1864 using this weapon as something that the Austrian generals failed to remark.⁷ Yet, despite the Austrian Army's reputation for tardiness when it came to innovation, we find that within two-and-a-half years of Königgrätz, the practical issues of outdated weaponry and tactics had been dealt with, in principle at least, though the regime within the war ministry was again found wanting in this respect in the mid-1870s.

Franz Joseph's choice as the new reforming war minister was not an aristocrat. Appointed in 1868, General Franz Kuhn von Kuhnenfeld, like his fellow reformer General

⁶ See Scott Lackey, *The Rebirth of the Habsburg Army*, p. 31.

⁷ See Geoffrey Wawro, *The Austro-Prussian War*, p. 34.

John, was the son of a low-ranking officer who had received a noble title for exceptional bravery. He managed to reduce (at least temporarily) the independence of the general staff and attempted to centralise planning operations within the War Ministry itself.⁸

The most radical reforms were enshrined in the Army Law of 5th December 1868. For the first time in the long history of the Habsburg Empire, all of its male subjects were to be liable for military service. Conscription caused the single most far-reaching change in the lives of (male) Habsburg subjects for centuries, for it exacted from them a duty of service that had not previously obtained. It should not surprise us that the idea of a reciprocal right to vote was later adduced alongside the duty to serve in the armed forces at the time of Franz Joseph's decision to introduce universal male suffrage – at least in the Cisleithanian half of the Empire in 1907.

The Army Law of 1868 created what is usually referred to in English as the Common Army – at first called the 'kaiserlich-königliche Armee', changed in 1889 to 'kaiserliche und königliche Armee' in deference to Hungarian sensitivities that the hyphen placed Hungary on a level with the other monarchies within the Empire.⁹

A central Hungarian concern in negotiating the constitutional compromise or *Ausgleich* of 1867 had been to establish an autonomous national army. The later Chief of General Staff and reformer General Friedrich von Beck was able to secure from the Hungarian representatives full support for conscription to the Common Army from the lands of the Hungarian Crown in return for the promise that 20% of all recruits would serve in a Transleithanian

⁸ See István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, pp. 59-60.

⁹ See Norman Stone, *Europe Transformed*, p. 306.

and therefore Hungarian-dominated *Honvéd* (home guard) or a Cisleithanian *Landwehr*.¹⁰ Though the *Honvéd* did not have artillery regiments and wore the same insignia as the troops of the Common Army, its men did swear a different oath, to Franz Joseph as the King of Hungary, rather than to Franz Joseph as Emperor of Austria. Of such small concessions are national identities made.

In theory, from 1868, all male subjects were to be liable for twelve years' service at the age of 20 (raised to 21 in 1889), with exemptions for the clergy, teachers, theological students and compassionate cases.¹¹ The nobility also retained its immunity from military service on the basis of a law of 1827, though this rule did not apply in some provinces.¹²

Liability for service itself was decided by a drawing of lots. Those drawing the highest lots were inducted into the Common Army for three years' active service, and then spent seven years in reserve, with the final two years attached to the *Honvéd* or *Landwehr*. Those drawing the middle lots spent two years on active service in the the *Honvéd* or *Landwehr*, then being placed in reserve. Active service typically could mean in such cases initial training followed by a two-week company drill and muster once a year, and a battalion exercise in alternate years. The final group drawing the lowest-numbered lots received no actual training but were placed in the reserve cadres of the *Landsturm*, or militia, to be called up only in time of war.¹³

¹⁰ See Tibor Balla, 'Hungarian Soldiers in the Army of Dualism', p. 325.

¹¹ See Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, pp. 80-81.

¹² See Alexander Hajdecki, *Officiers-Standes-Privilegien*, p. 65.

¹³ See Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, p. 80.

Despite these provisions Austria-Hungary never fully exploited her manpower potential. Recruitment figures were fixed by law and not automatically indexed to the rising population. The principal reason for this failure lay in the constitutional settlement itself. As a common institution the funding for the Imperial and Royal Army had to be approved by the so-called ‘delegations’ of the parliaments of Vienna and Budapest every ten years. There were inherent dangers. As László Péter has succinctly put it: ‘Arguments about the status of the Army are the main vehicle for Hungarian nationalism after 1867’.¹⁴ The raising of army recruits, determining the size of contingents that could be demanded from the Lands of the Hungarian Crown, required the consent of the delegation of Hungarian Parliament. Debates about this subject became ‘growth points for the Constitution’ expending an extraordinary amount of parliamentary time.¹⁵

The irony of this was that – unlike the German-speaking Liberals of the Vienna Parliament for example – the Hungarian delegations were not in principle against higher military spending, especially as some of it would go to bolster the symbolically important *Honvéd* contingents.

Conscription was bound to alter the composition of the Army, since it brought individuals from every quarter of the polyglot Empire into the armed forces for the first time. The statistical information collected at the time confirms that the Armed forces became broadly representative of the population as a whole, but there were some discrepancies over speakers of languages that did not figure in the offi-

¹⁴ László Péter, ‘The Army Question in Hungarian Politics’, p. 87.

¹⁵ László Péter, ‘The Army Question in Hungarian Politics’, p. 87.

cial list. Deák cites such small groups as Friulians, Armenians, Turks, Greeks and Romanis as examples.¹⁶

Another major change to Habsburg military custom was an indirect consequence of the Austro-Prussian War. Traditionally, the Habsburg emperors had stationed troops outside of their home regions – the idea being that soldiers would be less likely to side with insurgent or revolutionary groupings if they came from another part of the Empire. Still smarting from defeat and humiliation at Königgrätz, the Habsburg high command became keen observers of German operations. Realising that Prussia had been able to mobilise an army of six hundred thousand men on its borders in three weeks using the railway network and advanced planning, spurred Friedrich Beck, at that point Head of the Military Chancellery, to propose a territorial system of deployment, under which troops would be garrisoned wherever possible in their home region.¹⁷ This system finally came into being after Beck's promotion to chief of general staff in 1882. The Empire was divided into fifteen (and later sixteen) territorial corps command areas, each of which raised an army corps principally consisting of soldiers recruited within that district.¹⁸ The exception was the XV corps in Bosnia-Hercegovina, which always served outside its home territory. Also, for practical reasons more sparsely populated border areas would often be garrisoned by troops from other regions. In Galicia in particular, in preparation for mobilisation in a war against Russia, cavalry regiments from across the monarchy were deployed in rotation. Each command area was further sub-

¹⁶ See István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, p. 178.

¹⁷ See Scott Lackey, *The Rebirth of the Habsburg Army*, p. 42.

¹⁸ See James Sidney Lucas, *Fighting Troops of the Austro-Hungarian Army*, p. 45.

divided into military districts, numbering 106 in total (rising to 112 in 1914).¹⁹ Nevertheless, distribution between the various service branches was sometimes dictated by practical considerations. There really were more Hungarians in the cavalry, because of the geographical location of the cavalry regiments near the border with the Russian Empire, and more German-speakers in the Alpine infantry regiments.²⁰

Managing this multilingual rank and file that spoke at least 13 different languages was addressed in two ways. Firstly, German was decreed by the Emperor to be the language of command. Different sources give between 60 and 80 words – in practice, a limited vocabulary through which officers commanded those in their charge.²¹ Secondly, each regiment would have one (or sometimes more) regimental languages, which their officers, supposing they were not themselves speakers of those languages, would be expected to learn. For example, by 1901, there were 94 units in the Common Army using only German, 133 using two languages, 28 with three or even four. In the Hungarian half of the monarchy there were 27 regiments which had various national languages as regimental language other than Hungarian. There were two regiments speaking Slovak, three Romanian, six German and Hungarian, one German and Slovak, three German and Romanian, five Hungarian and Slovak, six Hungarian and Romanian and even one Hungarian, Romanian and Ruthene (Ukrainian).²²

¹⁹ See Lackey, *The Rebirth of the Habsburg Army*, p. 112.

²⁰ See István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, p. 180.

²¹ See Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, p. 108.

²² See Ian Foster *The Image of the Habsburg Army*, p. 10.

Educating and training an officer corps up to the challenge of commanding this new multilingual and socially diverse mass army therefore became a critical factor in ensuring its effectiveness in the field. It was the successes and failures in this programme that created the ferment from which the very literary officers of the Habsburg Army sprang in such numbers at the end of the nineteenth century.²³

Reform of military education had begun in fact before the military defeats of 1859 and 1866.²⁴ Many of the so-called 'Militär-Erziehungs-Anstalten' had lost their educative function and degenerated into mere 'Versorgungshäuser' for the sons of impecunious soldiers. The key institutions created by the first reforms of 1852 were the 'Cadetten-Institute', which educated boys from the age of 11 for four years. Their curriculum was a broad one. Religion, German, French, 'Redekunst', natural history, geography, history, arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, 'Abrichtungsreglement', drill ('Exerzieren'), penmanship ('Schönschreiben'), free-hand drawing, gymnastics, fencing and swimming. Those who passed out successfully could proceed to the military academies at the age of 15 or 16 to train directly as officers. There was originally a plan to create a single military academy at Wiener Neustadt, but the academies remained decentralised with a limited capacity restricted to 400 cadets in Wiener Neustadt, 200 in Olmütz (which moved to Mährisch-Weißkirchen in 1858), and 160 at Klosterbrück.

These early changes were followed by substantial educational reforms in the Army Law of 1868. Two among

²³ See István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, pp. 213-224.

²⁴ See Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des Oesterreichischen Bildungswesens*, Vol. 4, pp. 320-328.

these changed the character of the officer corps for ever. The first was the abolition of the rights of the *Regiments-inhaber*, by means of which the aristocratic ceremonial commanders of each regiment had held the exclusive privilege of nominating officers for promotion. Without *Protektion* or patronage, chances of promotion were limited, especially for those who had risen through the ranks.²⁵ After 1868, decisions on promotion were passed in full to the Emperor and thus to the War Ministry. Secondly, the new category of *Einjährig-Freiwillige*, one-year volunteers was created in Austria-Hungary in 1868. These volunteer officers had helped to create a strong reserve officer corps in Prussia. Educated young men of good family were permitted to volunteer for a single year's service. After this, they completed an examination to obtain a reserve officer's commission. In Austria-Hungary, pass rates were poor between 1869 and 1885, when only 35% of one-year volunteers were actually commissioned.²⁶ Overall, the system was ultimately not as successful in Austria-Hungary as it had been in Germany. One-year volunteer officers also attracted some resentment from career soldiers. A commentator writing in 1870 refers for example to the over-estimation of their own importance of these volunteers and calls for some distinction in uniform to be made between them and the regular officer corps.²⁷

The Dual Monarchy never entirely made up the shortfall in the number of officers required by army estimates. By the turn of the century, *Danzer's Armee-Zeitung*, a publi-

²⁵ See Ferdinand von Saar's *Novelle* of 1887 *Leutnant Burda* for a psychological portrait of the social travails of the regimental officer without a powerful patron in the pre-reform era.

²⁶ See Gunther Rothenberg, *The Army of Francis Joseph*, p. 82.

²⁷ See *Österreichische Wehr-Zeitung*, 6 November 1870.

cation close to the conservative circles of Franz Ferdinand, was to comment: 'Der Mangel an Offiziersnachwuchs ist eine Tatsache, die immer wieder offiziös geleugnet wird und dennoch weiterbesteht'.²⁸ ['The lack of young officers in training is a fact that remains despite persistent official denials that there is a shortage.] Together with the absence of a strong body of senior non-commissioned officers, the poor standard of one-year volunteers gave rise to doubts about the Austro-Hungarian army's likely effectiveness in the field. The military experiences of non-military men, the former students, medical doctors and lawyers – Freud, Schnitzler, and Hofmannsthal among them – stem from the innovation of the One-Year Volunteer.

The net result of these changes was an almost inevitable, irreversible decline in the previously aristocratic character of the officer corps and the parallel emergence of a new professional caste which enjoyed a very different kind of education and also through its contact with the largely bourgeois *Einjährig-Freiwillige* a different set of social expectations. One contemporary commentator writing in 1890 summed up the long-term consequences of the changes made in 1868:

Seit dem Ausbruch der „neuen Aera“ ist der österreichisch-ungarische Adel der Armee auffallend und bedauerlich fremder geworden. Wenn es sich ehemals die ersten Familien des Reiches zur Ehre schätzten, ihre Söhne wenigstens bis zum Rittmeister in der Armee dienen zu sehen, begnügt man sich jetzt zumeist, das Einjährig-Freiwilligenjahr zu machen und dann die Reserveofficers-Charge zu erwerben.²⁹

²⁸ *Danzer's Armee-Zeitung*, 19 May 1904.

²⁹ *Armee- und Marinezeitung. Militärische und belletristische Zeitschrift*, 17 April 1890 Leader article on 'Adel und Bürgerliche im Heer'.

[Since the beginning of the 'new era' the Austro-Hungarian nobility has been noticeably and regrettably less a part of the army. Whereas the first families of the Empire once held it an honour to have their sons serve at least long enough to become captains in the army, now one is increasingly content to merely have them complete the one-year volunteer service and gain a reserve officer's commission.]

The emergence of a new professional military culture was reflected in and shaped by a number of related phenomena. For a brief moment, Liberal politics was in the ascendant. The neo-absolutist state under Franz Joseph had been weakened by military defeats whose political consequences were expressed in the *Ausgleich* of 1867. Before long, however, Liberalism itself was under threat as the stock exchange crash of 9 May 1873 damaged its credibility. Although censorship was well-established in the 1860s and 1870s, the debates on the army reform after 1868 were conducted in a public manner that was uncharacteristic of Austria-Hungary's military men and their institutions. As a retrospective overview put it in 1870:

Das Streben nach geistiger Fortbildung hat einen neuen Aufschwung genommen. In den meisten größeren Garnisonen bildeten sich militär-wissenschaftliche Vereine [...]. Die rege Teilnahme an der Militärpublizistik und die große Nachfrage nach den neuesten Erscheinungen der Fachliteratur [...] geben Zeugniß für einen erhöhten geistigen Pulsschlag in der Armee.³⁰

[There has been an upturn in the striving for intellectual development. In most larger garrisons military scientific clubs are forming [...]. Active participation in military journalism and the high demand for the latest technical publications [...] are evidence that the intellectual pulse of the army is beating faster.]

³⁰ *Österreichische Wehr-Zeitung* 4 January 1870.

One key and previously under-examined source on these debates may be found in the military press of the period. There is a wealth of material, particularly in the weekly press, which reflects a vigorous and at times impassioned debate on military reforms being conducted in public.

This military press can be classified in a number of ways. On the one hand, there were professional military journals. The most illustrious of these, the *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, had fallen into a moribund state and in fact been discontinued in the neo-absolutist era. It was refounded on the explicit instruction of Emperor Franz Joseph in 1860 under the editorship of Major Valentin Streffleur, one of the Emperor's former teachers and a noted statistician and cartographer.³¹ So successful and influential was Streffleur that the journal was named after him following his sudden death in 1870, giving us *Streffleurs Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, which ran until the demise of the Empire.

The gathering impetus to professionalize training and raise the level of technical debates on military matters can also be gauged from the founding of the *Organ der militärwissenschaftlichen Vereine* in 1870 – a journal that subsequently evolved in 1882 into the *Armeebblatt*, a heavily subsidized quasi-official publication.

Analysing these largely technically-oriented publications allows us to quantify the rising educational levels and sophistication of the military establishment. However, there is a further category of the military press in Austria-Hungary that flourished in the initial reform period which can assist in considering the more openly ideological aspects of officers' training: the military newspapers that

³¹ See 'Valentin Ritter von Streffleur. Nekrolog' in *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, XI (1870) vol. 4, pp. 106-112.

grew up in this period. The most notable titles were the *Neue Militär-Zeitung* (1869-1895)³², the *Oesterreichisch-Ungarische Wehrzeitung: Der Kamerad* (1869-1896) and *Die Vedette* (1869-1904). These newspapers typically appeared at least twice or three times a week, the *Neue Militär-Zeitung* on Wednesdays and Saturdays, the *Wehr-Zeitung* on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, the *Vedette* on Wednesdays and Sundays. They covered only items of interest to the army, rather than giving a military slant on current affairs in general. A leader on a technical matter or a current military story was followed by two or three pages of articles of a similar nature. Military publications were reviewed and internal army news reported. They even ran a soldiers' agony column where correspondents could ask for expert opinions on their problems. All of the three papers mentioned also published fiction in their Feuilleton section, as did subsequent similar publications.



Fig. 1 Masthead Graphic of *Armee-Zeitung. Organ für militärische Interessen* (Detail).

³² The *Neue Militär-Zeitung* changed its title from the former *Österreichischer Soldatenfreund* in 1869 and became the *Militär-Zeitung* in 1873 after briefly going out of business.

Readerships were small and consisted almost exclusively of serving and former officers. Often only a few thousand copies in total were printed, though actual reader numbers may have been far higher, given the culture of the *Officers-Kasino* or officers' mess and the coffee houses in urban centres.³³ The financial viability of this genre of twice weekly military paper was also a constant problem. A number of the newspapers in question went through changes of ownership and title as they tried to maintain a stable presence. Some titles came and vanished rapidly. A typical example of this was the *Armee-Zeitung. Organ für militärische Interessen*, whose masthead alone indicates the level of its pretensions (see Fig. 1). It lasted a mere 18 issues in 1872. We know from later cases that the War Ministry covertly subsidized some publications and also that the number of publications in this category grew far more slowly than other kinds of newspapers and magazines in the first age of mass literacy that developed the capacity to produce large print runs rapidly.³⁴ Advertising was one key source of additional revenue – something which can offer us insights into lifestyle and expectations of Habsburg officers. Typically, military newspapers contain ads for uniform outfitters, gunsmiths or raincoat manufacturers, price lists for horses, notices for removal firms offering delivery to all parts of the empire or agencies acting as middlemen for officers seeking to trade postings, companies offering loans and financial services in respect of the *Heiratskaution* – the exorbitant deposit that

³³ By comparison, growth in for example magazines and newspapers for women readers went from no recorded examples in 1875 to 86 by 1913. See Ian Foster, *The Image of the Habsburg Army*, pp. 63-64.

³⁴ See Ian Foster, *The Image of the Habsburg Army*, pp. 240-241.

serving officers had to raise if they wished to marry.³⁵ Hobbies and pastimes also featured in offers of musical instruments and supplies and notices commending fret-work 'zum Zeitverteib'. Less savoury aspects of the all-male environment are also evident in the discreet ads for contraceptives and 'pikante Lectüre'.

The issue which attracted the most sustained coverage in the press of the early 1870s was without doubt military education and training. The War Minister appointed in 1867 to reform the army, Freiherr Kuhn von Kuhnenfeld, had already made it clear that one of his principal concerns was military education and training by publishing an anonymous tract entitled *Über die Reorganisierung der Militär-Bildungs-Anstalten* in 1869.³⁶ Kuhn was concerned to ensure that military men were not isolated from developments in civilian education and that in future promotions would be on merit and talent. Unfortunately, he had a powerful enemy in the shape of the 'Generalinspektor des Heeres', the conservative Archduke Albrecht. Albrecht replied to Kuhn's intervention with a pamphlet of his own entitled *Über den Armeegeist* in 1870, which called upon Habsburg officers to maintain tradition and pride in the achievements of regiments and units and above all to consider military education in moral terms. Where Kuhn had understood the need to forge an effective and fully professional cadre of officers from the relatively socially isolated caste of young men who would now seek service careers, Albrecht harked back to the social expectations that could no longer obtain.

³⁵ See Gerwin Müller, 'Heiratsvorschriften und Heiratsverhalten', pp. 97-99.

³⁶ See Peter Broucek, 'Traditionsverständnis und Zukunftsvisionen in literarischen Arbeiten österreichischer Offiziere', pp. 512-513.

In a debate that stretched over five months and was only really sidelined by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, two of the military newspapers mentioned above took up adversarial positions that reflected the tension between Kuhn and Albrecht: the *Österreichisch-ungarische Wehr-Zeitung* in support of Kuhn's reforms, the *Neue Militär-Zeitung* in opposition to the new system.

The opposing political stance of each paper can be seen in the exchange which began with an article in the *Österreichisch-ungarische Wehr-Zeitung* on 30 January 1870, entitled 'Gedanken über militärische Erziehung und Bildung in Österreich von einem hohen Militär'. Though it is not possible to identify the author, some of the content is suggestively similar to the wording of draft reform proposals in the Nachlass of Freiherr von Kuhn, architect of the reform.³⁷ The article appeared in six parts, beginning on the inside pages and finishing as leader article in the issues of 9 and 11 February.

The author reasons his case for reform by attributing blame for the defeats of 1859 and 1866 on 'Mangel an Intelligenz', but clearly separates the role of the army from the neo-absolutist state when he insists it is an error to see the military solely as 'Vertreterin des Absolutismus'. He also advocates that attention must now be paid to the 'Verbreitung des wissenschaftlichen Wissens'. In the final two sections, he makes a number of telling observations about the social status of the officer. These form a clear contrast to the attitudes evident by the 1890s and 1900s, where the rhetoric of the officer class focussed on their separateness from the rest of society as honorary members of the first estate. A fine illustration of this can be seen in the republi-

³⁷ See Austrian State Archives: Kriegsarchiv, Militärische Nachlässe, VII, Catalogue number AT-OeStA/KA NL VII.

cation in 1911 of the work of the conservative Austrian General Karl Bigot de St Quentin (1805-1884), whose *Von einem deutschen Soldaten*, first published in 1847, put the matter as follows: ‘...der Soldat [...] hat nichts, wenn ihn sein stolzes Selbstgefühl nicht über alle andern Stände hebt...’.³⁸ By contrast, 40 years earlier, the *Österreichisch-ungarische Wehr-Zeitung* (11 February 1870) considered that ‘die den Zöglingen beigebrachten Begriffe der Ehre und des Rechtes nicht das alleinige Prärogativ unseres Standes, sondern das jedes anständigen gebildeten, feinfühlenden Menschen jedweden Standes seien’. [‘the concepts of honour and justice taught to the cadets are not the exclusive prerogative of our estate but belong to any decent, educated, sensitive person of any class’]. The author recommends that young officers should associate with educated people to acquire the manners of polite society and an appropriate social tone (9 February 1870). We also find a strong recommendation that rhetoric be cultivated extensively (11 February 1870).

The rival *Neue Militär-Zeitung*, which published 43 articles on the subject of military education and training, beginning on 19 February 1870, refers to the ‘Überstürzungen’ (‘precipitate actions’) and ‘zerstörungssüchtige Eile’ (‘destructive haste’) that now threaten ‘manches Gesunde und Erprobte’ (‘many a healthy and tried and tested aspect’) of the existing system. The principal sequence appears under the title ‘Das neue Erziehungssystem in den Militär-Bildungs-Anstalten’ written by ‘ein Fachmann’, an expert.

The *Fachmann* sees the reforms as a botched and ill-informed *Experiment*, a word that is emphasised in *Sperr-*

³⁸ Karl Graf Bigot de St. Quentin, *Von einem deutschen Soldaten*, p. 54. See also István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, pp. 214-215.

druck, that crams too much into its curriculum that will result in 'dünnelhaftige Vielwisserei, eine unbrauchbare Halbheit in den jungen Männern', 'vain know-all posturing and a useless insipidity in the young men' (5 March 1870). He is concerned that young military academicians are now allowed to leave their place of education and take part in the life of their towns and cities.

The vehemence of the articles prompted an official response: the *Neue Militär-Zeitung* was forced to publish a six-page supplement refuting the accusations of the Fachmann (30 March 1870). Influence and conviction was clearly on the side of the *Österreichisch-ungarische Wehr-Zeitung* in this debate, as the supplement was announced as having been sent in from a high office of government ('eingesendet von hoher Stelle'). The author attributed the criticism of the new system published in the *Neue Militär-Zeitung* to those who had lost out under the new system – supernumerary commanders and teachers from disbanded schools and parents unhappy that they would no longer receive a free education for their sons.

The extended public debate on the kind of education of officers should receive demonstrates that the decidedly more bourgeois take on these matters represented by Kuhn at the War Ministry was vehemently rejected by Archduke Albrecht and his supporters. Kuhn was replaced in 1874 by the more conservative General Friedrich Beck-Rzikowsky (1830-1920). Beck, who became a personal friend of the Emperor, did not reverse all of his predecessor's reforms. In particular, the key elements of the ideology of the post-1868 officer corps remained in place until the First World War – its conception of itself as the apolitical servant of the dynasty, its peculiar mix of bourgeois liberal notions of self-improvement and aristocratic exclusiveness.

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