

Surveillance, Revolutionary Activism, and the Afterlives of 1848 on the Southwest Fringes of Habsburg Central Europe

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This paper takes events in and around the Habsburg lands south of the Alps in the aftermath of the 1848-1849 revolutions as a starting point to offer new avenues through which to interpret European politics in the second half of the nineteenth century. Most historians agree that the defeat of the 1848-1849 revolutions resulted in a decade of conservative hegemony in Europe, as former revolutionaries fled into exile and counterrevolutionary politicians implemented modernising and centralising policies to prevent future unrest. In this paper, I argue that Habsburg attempts to control the movements and activities of potential revolutionaries were not nearly as successful as they intended to be, generating widespread official anxiety and allowing revolutionary activity. In the port-city of Livorno, in the Habsburg satellite-state of Tuscany, frustrated exchanges between local officials and a garrison from sent from Vienna show how the multiple transport possibilities of the Mediterranean Sea and an element of jurisdictional confusion created gaps in counterrevolutionary surveillance networks. Meanwhile, the activities of the thousands of Habsburg subjects who settled in the Kingdom of Sardinia's capital of Turin and its main port of Genoa after the 1848-49 revolutions proved extremely dangerous to the Empire's neo-absolutist experiment. Many of these exiles grew rich in Genoa's commercial boom of the 1850s and forged links to the Kingdom of Sardinia's ruling elite. Their business ties and access to funds and powerful backers helped them play a key role in orchestrating the wars and revolutions that led to the creation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, changing the political geography of Europe and ending the Habsburg neo-absolutist experiment. A focus on the south-western fringes of the Habsburg lands can thus help to change narratives of empire and revolution in nineteenth-century Europe and to showcase the continued relevance of revolutionary activity after 1848.

Railroads and Revolutionaries

My proposed paper, “Railroads and Revolutionaries” seeks to draw attention to the diversity of ideas regarding the technological innovation of railroads during the *Vormärz* in the Habsburg Empire. This paper explores the intriguingly large number of writings by Habsburg citizens on railways, who later became prominent revolutionaries in 1848. Józef Bem, Daniele Manin, Carlo Cattaneo, as well as István Széchenyi, and Lajos Kossuth all published about railways during the *Vormärz* as Habsburg subjects. They wrote for different audiences, small scientific communities, regional periodicals, etc. However, they also frequently wrote for the wider imperial community. In all these cases the railroads’ potential—in reality so few of them had actually been built—obtained a broad intellectual hold across the ethnically and politically heterogeneous Habsburg Monarchy. Significantly, in these writings about railroads, the future was thought of in the context of the preservation of the monarchy. It is unlikely these authors could have published if they framed the future otherwise. The coming of the railroad was therefore conceived as both a transformation—culturally, socially, economically—as well as a continuation politically, at least as far as the monarchical system was concerned. How did these future revolutionaries’ railroad visions compare to each other before they all sought to bring political transformation through revolution in 1848? In juxtaposition to this question, I will also be examining how the Habsburg government approached the arrival of railways in the monarchy through the many internal memoranda written by Prince Metternich to the *Hofkammer*. Contrasting the future revolutionaries writings about the potential of railroads with Metternich’s experience of governing with railroads allows us to more clearly see the variety of imagined futures for the Habsburg Monarchy that existed before 1848, and helps us to develop our understanding about Metternich’s own receptiveness to progress.

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EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

New York University, PhD History •GPA: 3.98	2020-Present
New York University, MPhil History •GPA: 3.98	2020-2024
Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, MA History, distinction •GPA: 3.77 •Student representative communicating students concerns to department and administration	2017–2018
The University of Chicago, BA History, honors; minor in Human Rights •GPA: 3.52 – GPA in Major: 3.71 •Dean's List 2012–16	2012–2016

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AWARDS

Fulbright-Mach US Student Award, University of Vienna	2023–2024
Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh	2023
Summer Language Institute Scholarship, University of Pittsburgh	2023
MacCracken Fellowship, New York University	2020–2026
Visegrád Visiting Research Fellow, Open Society Archivum	2019

ACADEMIC PROJECTS

Doctoral Dissertation, New York University <i>Railroads and the Transformation of State and Society in the Habsburg Empire</i> •A doctoral dissertation on how the early development of railroads during the Habsburg monarchy changed the state's relationship to its subjects of various nationalities, impacted technological innovation and industrialization, and developed new spatial and material realities in the nineteenth century.	2020–2026
Graduate Master's Thesis, Central European University <i>Religious History in an Atheist State: Teaching the Reformation in the German Democratic Republic</i> •A master's thesis on the presentation of the Reformation in East Germany in the medium of children's textbooks, tracking the development of a distinct national narrative opposed to West Germany rooted in a reinterpretation of the sixteenth century.	2018
Undergraduate Bachelor's Thesis, University of Chicago <i>The Olympic Project for Human Rights and the 1968 Mexico City Olympics</i> •A bachelor's thesis on the distinctions between civil and human rights in the late 1960s through the popular press and activists' statements.	2016

CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

“Anticipating Habsburg Modernity: Vienna's First Railway,” Eastern European Workshop, New York University, September 25, 2024.

“Railroads and the Transformation of State and Society in the Habsburg Empire,” 3rd Annual Workshop of the Late Habsburg PhD Network, University of Vienna, May 27-28, 2024.

“Railroads and the Transformation of State and Society in the Habsburg Empire,” Fulbright Seminar in American Studies, Strobl, Austria. April 29- May 1, 2024.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

German
•Advanced reading ability; intermediate conversational level

Spanish
•Advanced reading ability; intermediate conversational level

Italian
•Intermediate reading ability; elementary conversational level

Polish
•Elementary reading ability; elementary conversational level

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Fears of Sedition and the Autocratic Securitization: Ruling Polish Lands from Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Berlin, 1830s–1850s

The post-Napoleonic settlement, which seemed to bring the long-awaited peace and political tranquility to Europe, in fact, gave rise to revolutionary turbulence. Various secret societies and nationalist movements conspired in order to bring down the absolute monarchies and multiethnic empires. Mostly real but quite often fictitious, these subversions turned into an object of obsession for the conservative elites. Since the insurgents from different countries acted in collaboration, the European monarchs sought to protect their thrones by unifying their efforts against the international conspiracy.

My presentation will focus on the early attempts at cross-border cooperation in policing and surveillance on the territories of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between the three imperialist states that partitioned it: the Habsburg Monarchy, Prussia, and the Russian Empire. Since the 1830 November Uprising in the Kingdom of Poland, the mutual fear of the looming plot by Polish emigres prompted Austrian, Prussian, and Russian authorities to strengthen their partnership, including the intelligence exchange, extradition of suspicious subjects, border control, public opinion manipulation, and joint military interventions. Based on the archival sources from Austria, Germany, Poland, and Russia, I will reveal how the leading statesmen, diplomats, and police officials of the three states interacted with each other to safeguard their borders against the perceived threat of the revolutionary sedition.

This presentation will examine and evaluate the results of the nascent “security alliance” in the context of the internationalization of policing in Europe. It will discuss the differences between the development of this process in Western and Central Europe and highlight the specific features of the early autocratic securitization. Analyzing the intricate relationship between conspiracy fantasies and reality in nineteenth-century secret policing will allow us to foreground the motives of this collaborative project, its efficiency or lack thereof, and its long-standing legacy for the Central European region.