

the first day of the conference. With the eloquence of a master of social sciences and an experienced politician, Lammert spoke about German and European politics and answered a number of questions. It was a pleasure to listen to the deeply confident parliamentarian and his entertaining comments. Let us conclude with one of them, which Lammert used to answer a question regarding non-voters and the general level of interest in politics: “ADAC (Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club – General German Automobile-Club, comment J. P.) has more members than all of the German political parties.”

*Jurij Perovšek*

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**Janez Cvirn: Dunajski državni zbor in Slovenci (1848–1918) [Vienna National Assembly and Slovenians (1848–1918)].** Zgodovinsko društvo Celje, Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete Ljubljana. Celje, Ljubljana 2015, 280 pages

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Based on several years of research into the issue of parliamentarism in the Austrian Monarchy, the late Prof. Dr. Janez Cvirn (1960–2013) published as early as 2006 a university textbook entitled *Razvoj ustavnosti in parlamentarizma v habsburški monarhiji (dunajski državni zbor in Slovenci 1848–1918)* [Development of Constitutionality and Parliamentarism in the Habsburg Monarchy: Vienna National Assembly and Slovenians (1848–1918)]. This textbook was far more than what its name suggested and indicated that the author was about to realise even more ambitious plans regarding this subject. Those of us who were close to him knew that he was also planning a book edition, i.e. a thorough and comprehensive history of Austrian parliamentarism (and the Slovenian experience within its context). However, he was not able to realise this project (the book was supposed to be published by another publisher a few years ago but, unfortunately, was not). It was finally co-published posthumously by the Historical Society of Celje and the Faculty of Arts of Ljubljana (also in cooperation with the Institute of Contemporary History – the book was edited by Dr. Jure Gašparič). Cvirn’s book is an essential source for studying the political history of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, as such, finally available in Slovenian libraries and bookstores as the last, fifteenth book of the collection *Zgodovini.ce*, based on Cvirn’s idea (with this book the Celje book collection is therefore completed). Regrettably, Cvirn will not be able to read, evaluate or in any way assess this book, but I am convinced that he would certainly approve of it, as it is.

Cvirn has profoundly marked Slovenian historiography with his work and is considered the leading Slovenian expert in the history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In his final work, which is a result of systematic research, he presented the crucial turning points in the constitutional history of Austria – from the first steps toward constitutionalism in 1848 until the end of the Monarchy in 1918. Apart from that, the book is

an exhaustive political-historical overview, as the author analysed the relationships between the governments and the parliament and thus described the role of the Austrian National Assembly in the political life of the state. The book also contains a detailed presentation of the activities of the Slovenian deputies (who had always been forced to resort to opportunistic politics because of their limited numbers) in the National Assembly between 1848 and 1918, which is particularly valuable.

Let us take a quick glance at the book. The early constitutionalism, established especially by certain (south) German states in the pre-March period, was very slow to penetrate the conservative Austria on the eve of the March revolution. Only the revolution encouraged the Court to rely on the new societal model. However, the April (Pillersdorf) Constitution which, as the author convincingly demonstrates, followed constitutionalism only as far as to clearly enforce the separation of powers (judicial, executive and legislative), still conferred many powers on the emperor. The author then presents the initiative of the Provincial (Estate) Assemblies which joined the reform movement. The National Assembly elections in June 1848, establishing the first Austrian Parliament, were even more important. Cvirn analyses the elections in detail and notes, among other things, that the national component is indisputably a result of the political development of the later period.

With the imposed constitution the young Emperor Franz Joseph demonstrated that concessions to the revolution had come to an end. The author skilfully guides us through the developments which led to the neo-absolutist regime through the New Year's Eve Patents, thus ending the early constitutional period in Austria. A ten-year period of resumed »silence«, personified by the Minister of the Interior Bach, was followed by the restoration of the constitutional life in 1860/61, when the period of oppression and censorship had, in a moral and material sense, come to an end. However, the creator of the new political course Anton Schmerling added a »German character« to the Austrian parliamentarism with his electoral structure, which also favoured the wealthier strata on the basis of a tax and intelligence census. The author thus offers a sound and coherent description of the development of political thought until the introduction of dualism in 1867, when Cisleithania was forced to re-establish the state-legal foundations of the Austrian half of the Monarchy and provide for the further (political) modernisation of the state with the December Constitution. The author then meticulously highlights individual issues concerning the directly-elected Vienna National Assembly (from 1873 on) and presents them through a perspective related to the functioning of governments and each convening of the Parliament. Cvirn does not conclude his work before World War I, as it would be expected, but follows the Austrian parliamentary life until the fall of the Monarchy.

One of the basic findings of Cvirn's book is that the dissolution of the Monarchy was not a consequence of a belated and insufficient political democratisation. As it was, the liberal December Constitution of 1867 transformed Cisleithania into a relatively modern constitutional monarchy, which, as far as democracy was concerned, did not exhibit a significant lag in comparison with most European countries. With

a set of electoral reforms the Monarchy advanced towards enforcing the universal manhood suffrage and also achieved it in 1907. The reasons for the Monarchy's tragic end lied primarily in the fatal lack of basic consensus on the matter of how the state should be organised. The latter was becoming increasingly evident in the Austrian parliamentary practice. Namely, since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the parliament had become the place of severe national conflicts with no room for an agreement.

The present book is Cvirn's final and most comprehensive work on the history of parliamentarism. The editor manly followed Cvirn's university textbook and strived to refrain from interfering with the text as much as possible. The author concludes the book with World War I. However, the editor completed Cvirn's structure of the book by ending it with a few additional chapters written by the author (on the electoral reforms of the National Assembly, women's suffrage, rules of procedure, language of proceedings, immunity of deputies, and deputies' wages), which complement and clarify the primary text as well as underline the magnitude of the history of parliamentarism.

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