

***Workers and Nationalism: Czech and German Social Democracy in Habsburg Austria, 1890–1918.*** By Jakub S. Beneš. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xvi, 268 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$90.00, hard bound.  
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In 1899 at their party conference in the Moravian city of Brunn/Brno, Austrian Social Democrats adopted a platform calling for the re-organization of the Austrian half of the Habsburg Monarchy as a federation of nationalities, with national belonging predicated on personal conviction. Such an embrace of ethnic nationalism by a Marxist, internationalist workers' organization seemed to fly in the face of Socialist Orthodoxy in the years before World War I, but the Austro-Marxists who articulated it, especially Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, were convinced that national identity was a reality that not only should be embraced but one that would strengthen the international workers' movement. This Socialist embrace of nationalism in Austria has long puzzled scholars who have studied Austrian Social Democracy, and they have generally explained it in terms of opportunism or pragmatism in the face of the vituperative nationalities conflict that engulfed Austrian politics in those years.

In his compelling new book on Austrian, German, and Czech workers in late Habsburg Austria, Jakub Beneš has convincingly demonstrated that this turn to nationalism resulted not from the opportunism, pragmatism, or conviction of party leaders, but primarily from the fact that German- and Czech-speaking industrial workers embraced ethnic nationalism. Turning his attention away from party leaders and party platforms, he focuses instead on speeches by lower-level party leaders, almanacs, May Day brochures, local newspapers, memoirs, diaries, and literature—novels, poetry, songs—aimed at and read (or sung) by workers. In so doing, Beneš paints a richly-textured picture of the worldview of Austrian, German, and Czech workers who lived and worked side by side in Vienna and northern Bohemia. Through this work, Beneš has transformed our understanding both of the role of nationalism in Austrian Social Democracy and the very nature of national identification in Habsburg Austria, revealing its complicated and malleable nature in a sensitive and sophisticated way.

In his analysis, Beneš emphasizes the significance of urban space. Expanding on the work of Wolfgang Maderthaner and Lutz Musner for Vienna, Beneš reminds us that in the industrial cities of Lower Austria and the Bohemian lands, Czech- and German-speaking workers lived together in working-class outer districts that surrounded the bourgeois and aristocratic cores of the cities. In many places, Czech-speaking workers were migrants into space earlier dominated by German-speakers, and some of them wanted to assimilate and adopt the dominant German language of those cities, especially in Vienna. Nevertheless, in these mixed-language peripheries industrial workers experienced the solidarity that emerged from the shared experience of horrific working conditions in factories and the squalor of the workers' tenements in which they lived. As a result, many workers joined the

internationalist Austrian Social Democratic workers movement as it developed in the 1890s and afterwards, and they embraced its quasi-religious ideology that borrowed from popular Catholicism, emphasizing suffering, martyrdom, and redemption in a future socialist utopia. At the same time, these workers remained aware of the ethnic differences between them, differences largely based on language. After all, even if they were functionally bilingual, Czech- and German-speaking workers did speak different languages. They experienced ethnic difference, or what Rogers Brubaker calls “everyday ethnicity,” in both positive and negative ways. German and Czech workers lived and worked together, they empathized with each other, socialized and drank together in local pubs, married each other, and shared common working class concerns, but they also misunderstood each other and came into conflict, sometimes engaging in brawls and other acts of violence. More importantly, Beneš argues, workers had a strong sense of belonging to their own ethnic nation, whether German or Czech. Working class nationalism was stronger among the Czechs than the Germans, largely because German was the “taken for granted” language (59) in most of the industrial regions of Austria. Living together in the same districts also meant that working class ethnic nationalism in one group spurred the development of such nationalism in the other. Just as middle-class Germans in Prague became more aware that they belonged to a German national group in response to middle-class Czech nationalist activism (as Gary Cohen has shown), so too did Czech workers in Vienna and elsewhere become more aggressive about their Czech identities in response to German workers’ assumptions about the superiority of German culture and their conviction that German was the rightful language of the Austrian socialist movement, which they claimed as a German contribution to civilization.

National identification among Czech or German workers may have been strong, but it differed from the nationalism espoused by bourgeois activists. It was a nationalism conceived in working-class terms, devoted simultaneously to class and ethnic interests, and locating national virtue in the working classes. Feeling excluded from their respective national communities, Czech and German workers did not want to politicize ethnicity in the ways that the bourgeois nationalists did. They could be sympathetic to each other’s causes. German workers in northwestern Bohemia, for example, supported Czech workers’ demands for Czech-language schools. Workers of both ethnic/national groups rejected the bourgeois nationalists’ demand that they buy only in stores of co-nationals or socialize only in monolingual pubs, and they resented the bourgeois nationalist parties for their lack of concern for the economic and political needs of the working classes. Czech workers in particular opposed the Young Czech Party’s demand that Czech workers ally with Czech entrepreneurs to defeat German capital. Indeed, apart from working with bourgeois nationalists to establish Czech schools, Czech working class nationalists eschewed cooperating with the Young Czechs or other bourgeois parties in political matters until the last years of World War I.

In emphasizing the ethnic nationalist convictions of Habsburg Austrian workers, Beneš takes issue with the current scholarly view, originally posited by Pieter Judson and Tara Zahra, that there was widespread national

indifference among workers and peasants. On the contrary, at least among workers, there was clear ethnic identification and appropriation of national symbols, including Jan Hus and the Taborites for Czech workers and Friedrich Schiller and Richard Wagner for German ones. Indeed, Beneš shows that many workers responded indignantly to charges of national indifference leveled at them by bourgeois nationalist politicians by declaring that they, the workers, were the true bearers of the Czech or German national spirit, and thus entitled to leadership of their respective nationalist movements. During the mass demonstrations in November 1905 for universal manhood suffrage, *Habsburgtreu* workers insisted that they were fighting for workers rights, democracy, and the Czech or German nation. The success of those demonstrations, and the electoral success of Socialist candidates in the 1907 elections, convinced them that they could lead their nations to a new Austrian utopia. Nationalist convictions, however, also led to the fragmentation of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, as Czech workers created a separate Czech Social Democratic Party in 1911. During World War I, increasingly radical workers were angry at the Social Democratic Party leadership for cooperating with the Habsburg authorities. Especially Czech workers coupled their increased social radicalism with greater concern for national autonomy, and then in 1918, for independence and Czech sovereignty.

*Workers and Nationalism* is an important book with a convincing argument that reminds us that national identification played an important role in late Habsburg Austria, and not just among the bourgeoisie. The book also provides industrial workers with a large measure of agency in the development of Austrian Social Democracy. Nevertheless, I wish that Beneš had paid more attention to local differences and to other regions of the Monarchy. Although he deals at some length with the development of German national identification among German-speaking workers, his primary focus is on the development of Czech national identity among Czech-speaking workers. Beneš uses much evidence both from northern Bohemia and from Vienna, but I wondered about Moravia, where Brünn/Brno and Mährisch Ostrau/Ostrava Moravská were important industrial centers. To be sure, the latter case is complicated by the presence of Polish-speaking workers in the coal mines and steel mills, but that raises a second problem. What about the Poles? Beneš correctly focuses his book on Germans and Czechs, since they were the overwhelming majority of industrial workers in Habsburg Austria, but surely the development of Polish national consciousness among Polish Socialists and Polish-speaking workers, especially in Galicia, but perhaps also in Moravia and Silesia, must have influenced German and Czech workers. It also would have been useful if Beneš had paid some attention to the role of Jews, whether as factory owners or Socialist ideologues, in the development of working-class nationalism, or the influence of the Bund, the Jewish Socialist party, active mostly in the Russian Empire, but also to some extent in Galicia. After all, the Bund also articulated a socialism that included nationalism, in its case, Jewish ethnic nationalism. Beneš did not need to focus on the Poles or the Jews, but he could have mentioned their possible impact on other workers in the Monarchy.

These criticisms, of course, only reflect the fact that Beneš has written an excellent book which raises the important question of why Austrian Socialists

embraced ethnic nationalism in the late nineteenth century. He has demonstrated that Austrian workers influenced the movement they joined, so that its political posture reflected not only the intellectual work of its leaders, but the shared convictions of its rank and file. He has also reminded us that national identification played an important role in the lives of many people in late Habsburg Austria.

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***Uroven' zhizni naseleniia i agrarnoe razvitie Rossii v 1900–1940 godakh.***

By Sergei Aleksanrovich Nefedov. Moscow: Izdatel'skii dom Delo, 2017. 430 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Figures. Tables. RUB 378, paper. doi: 10.1017/slr.2018.132

This monograph is about living standards and agricultural development in Russia in 1900–1940. These issues are of great importance for understanding events in the Russian Empire and the USSR. The book's author uses his previous publications, literature in Russian and English, numerous Russian dissertations, and both central and provincial archives. This history is set in the context of a neo-Malthusian demographic-structural theory of the history of agrarian societies, in which there are three factors that determine historical processes: demographic, technological, and geographical/ecological. It is these three processes, and their influence on developments in 1900–1940, that Sergei Nefedov studies. He is concerned with European Russia. Given the area's diversity, he deals not just with averages but concentrates on two regions—the Central Black Earth region and the Urals region. The book ignores other parts of the Russian Empire/USSR, such as Siberia, the Far East, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, Transcaucasia, Poland, and Finland.

The argument throughout is based on the available statistical sources, which are carefully evaluated in light of previous assessments of their quality, and summarized in numerous tables. A valuable feature of the book is that where the author disagrees with other writers, he carefully explains the causes of the disagreement. For example, when disagreeing with Boris Mironov about the economic implications of anthropometric data, he explains that the difference in interpretation results from a dispute about which years are most important for human growth (birth years or puberty), and cites evidence to support the puberty view (364–74). Similarly, after reaching different conclusions from Robert Allen about rural consumption in the late 1930s, he explains the difference as resulting from different estimates of the amount of grain needed for animal fodder (349–50).

For the years 1900–1914, the Nefedov belongs to the pessimistic school. He paints a picture of rural poverty, overpopulation and environmental degradation (largely caused by growing population). As far as food consumption is concerned, his figures, which are very close to those of Allen, show that average consumption was just above the subsistence minimum, but fluctuated considerably from year to year, depending on weather conditions. In the