

DOMINIQUE KIRCHNER REILL. *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation: Adriatic Multi-Nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste, and Venice*. (Stanford Studies on Central and Eastern Europe.) Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press. 2012. Pp. xvii, 313. \$65.00.

The study of nationalism was long considered the default area of interest for historians of Habsburg Central Europe. But over the past decade or so, a number of scholars have pushed for increased attention to the attitude of men and women who found the exhortations of national activists unappealing or even incomprehensible. Becoming national was, in this view, often a process of dragging and disciplining the nationally indifferent, not of gently “awakening” inhabitants’ preexisting identities.

Dominique Kirchner Reill’s monograph can be seen as both a useful contribution to this recent surge of interest in national indifference and as a healthy corrective to it. As the paradoxical title suggests, Reill’s focus is on a group of people who were unmistakably national activists themselves—and thus poor candidates for the label of nationally indifferent—but who nonetheless expressed a very similar kind of skepticism about the consequences of pursuing monist national logics. Just as appreciation of national indifference has required de-pathologizing such an attitude, so Reill argues that to understand such “fearful nationalists,” we need to avoid dismissing their ambivalence as the result of “idealistic confusion, bouts of denationalization, or wily political maneuvering” and instead explore how their nationalism and their pluralism developed in tandem (p. 3).

The main characters of this story are six journalists and political activists—Niccolò Tommaseo, Francesco Dall’Ongaro, Pacifico Valussi, Medo Pucić, Ivan August Kanačić, and Stipan Ivičević—who lived and worked in Venice, Trieste, and Dalmatia, near the shores of the Adriatic Sea, in the early nineteenth century. Dall’Ongaro and Valussi have been remembered as part of Italy’s national revival, Pucić, Kanačić, and Ivičević as contributors to the South Slavic awakening. Tommaseo emerges as the pivotal figure of the book, both because of his intellectual stature and resulting influence among the others and because he has been viewed as both an Italian and a Slavic patriot. But Reill persuasively describes all of these men as part of an integrated and evolving debate about how national particularity could be cultivated alongside multinational interaction.

The book is an impressive example of socially embedded intellectual history. Reill’s main sources are the published writings of and the correspondence among the six protagonists, and her main quarry is understanding their political and philosophical visions. But she devotes admirable attention to the various settings in which these ideas were articulated, vividly describing both the common world that the writers shared and the importance of local particularity and personal backgrounds. The long history of Venetian domination of

the Adriatic meant that *La Serenissima* loomed large in everyone’s understanding of the region. But other locations exerted a gravitational pull. Dall’Ongaro and Valussi promoted their publishing base, Trieste, as the “Hamburg of the Adriatic” (p. 94), a trading hub tying the region together, while Pucić’s multinational vision ultimately moved toward a kind of “Greater Dubrovnik” (p. 221), extrapolating outward the Slavic-Italian cultural balance of his hometown.

The revolutions of 1848 provide the natural climax to Reill’s story. These events have often been viewed as the end of an innocent phase in the development of nationalism, the moment when nationalists came to view rival nationalists, not supranational dynasties, as their primary foes. Reill tries to avoid narrating this shift as either an inevitable awakening from utopian illusions or an inexplicable triumph of xenophobic passions. She instead provides a thick description of the “rupture in experience” between the city of Venice, which became locked in a desperate showdown with Habsburg counterrevolution, and Dalmatia, which saw little revolutionary violence. Facing hunger and deadly outbreaks of cholera, Venetians were given increasingly strident exhortations by their leaders, portraying the city’s enemies as not only lackeys of the Habsburgs but as bloodthirsty Germans and Croatians. Most residents of Dalmatia, in turn, were happy to have avoided Venice’s fate and became preoccupied with other political issues, such as the province’s future relationship to the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia. Reill’s emphasis on contingency may not satisfy every reader; ethnicized appeals, after all, presumably only resonate—or come to mind in the first place—where ethnicized views of the world are already familiar and meaningful. But this is, on the whole, a nuanced and persuasive account.

The final paragraphs of *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation* are gems of lucidity and economy. Reill first notes how national storytelling—“our need to map a clear trajectory of imagining a nation, founding a nation, and then consolidating it” (p. 243)—has previously shoehorned figures such as Tommaseo, Dall’Ongaro, Valussi, Pucić, Kanačić, and Ivičević into crude genealogies of Italian or South Slavic national awakening, blinding us to the shared discussions and partially overlapping visions that shaped their work. But she also rightly cautions readers against lapsing into alternative (Central) European mythologies, naturalizing a “world bridged together by borderlands and multi-national seas” destined to harmony in the present and future despite the inexplicable hatreds of the past (p. 244). This book is, in short, an impressive example of how historians can productively balance empathy and critique, and it is a welcome addition to the scholarship on nationalism in modern Europe.

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DANIEL B. SCHWARTZ. *The First Modern Jew: Spinoza and the History of an Image*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. 2012. Pp. xv, 270. \$39.50.