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Perspective from the Pinnacle

STATE CHANCELLOR KAUNITZ ON NOBILITY IN THE HABSBURG MONARCHY

In one of the most oft-quoted passages from the reports of the long-serving Habsburg State Chancellor, Count Wenzel Anton Kaunitz-Rietberg, to Empress Maria Theresa the minister gave vent to his feelings about an attempted aristocratic reaction to the centralizing administrative reforms of the empress:

I, too, am Bohemian and have estates in Moravia. Therefore, if I were to consult my self-interest, I would have every ground to endorse the opinion of those who now propose to elevate the nobility and Estates above their present status, and to play the administration of supreme executive power into their hands. However, if one keeps one's oath and duties in mind, then one must think first of one's gracious sovereign and of the common good. ... To absolve myself before God and Your Majesty for any responsibility in this, I must advise with deepest respect, that I regard the re-introduction of the stadtholder system as something which at one fell swoop would destroy all reforms and all hopes, and would deal your all-highest power the deadliest of blows.¹

He was seconded in these sentiments by the young crown prince, the Archduke Joseph. In a scathing and violent confidential memorandum to his mother he recommended that it ought to be the future policy of the dynasty "to pull down and impoverish" the aristocracy.² What seem to be unambiguous statements of hostility to nobility, however, need to be qualified.

Kaunitz's own status in the Habsburg aristocracy was uncontested. The Kaunitzes (Kúnici, Kounici, Kaunici) were descendants of the old Bohemian nobility, with Závíše z Újezdec a Kounic, son of the burgrave of Prague and himself Grand

¹ Wien, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv [hereinafter: HHStA], Staatskanzlei: Vorträge, carton 91, "Geheimer Vortrag", 1 May 1763. Cf. Alfred Ritter von ARNETH, *Geschichte Maria Theresias*, 10 vols. (Vienna 1863–1879) VII, 29–31; Carl Freiherr von HOCK, Hermann Ignaz BIDERMAN, *Der österreichische Staatsrath (1760–1848)* (Vienna 1879) 18; Friedrich WALTER, *Die Geschichte der Österreichischen Zentralverwaltung in der Zeit Maria Theresias (1740–1780)*, vol. 1, part i of Heinrich KRETSCHMAYR, ed., *Die Österreichische Zentralverwaltung, Section II: Von der Vereinigung der österreichischen und böhmischen Hofkanzlei bis zur Einrichtung der Ministerialverfassung (1749–1848)* (Vienna 1938) 360–361. The "stadtholder system" refers to the almost complete monopoly over senior dignities of state by the aristocracy and its control of provincial administration through lieutenancy councils.

² Derek Beales, Joseph II's 'Reveries', in: *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 33 (1980) 155–160, especially p. 155.

Chamberlain of Bohemia from 1327 to 1333, the first in the recorded family line.³ The core of the Kaunitz estates, the seigniorship of Austerlitz (Nouosedelitz, Slavkov) in Moravia was acquired by the family in 1509. Leading members of the Bohemian nobility in the sixteenth century, the family proved to be a classic case in point of the Evans thesis: some members of the family deeply involved in the rebellion of 1618 and disgraced; others maintaining the family's preeminence as Catholic loyalists, rising in due course to the very peak of the Habsburg magnate elite⁴ – that powerful oligarchy of some 200 families that has led Jean Bérenger to characterize the Habsburg polity as more of a “diarchy” than a monarchy.⁵ Dominik Ondřej Kounic (1654–1705) – better known in the literature by the German version of his name, Dominik Andreas Kaunitz – effectively became Habsburg foreign minister when made Vice-Chancellor of the Holy Roman Empire in 1698, while his son and Wenzel Anton's father, Maximilian Ulrich (Maximilián Oldřich) was governor of Moravia. Kaunitz thus fairly fulfilled the promise inherent in the family position and followed in the footsteps of his grandfather when he became State Chancellor, that is, foreign minister, of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1753.⁶

Certainly Kaunitz's father had little doubt about the social and political role that he felt God entrusted to the aristocratic elite, nor about the family duty to uphold the “splendor” of his house. Other than limitations imposed by the family's financial constraints as a result of Dominik Ondřej's profligacy, Wenzel Anton's

³ On the Kaunitz family see: Constant von WURZBACH, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Österreich*, 60 vols. (Vienna 1856–1891) XI, 60–68; Franz VLASÁK, *Der altböhmische Adel und seine Nachkommenschaft nach dem dreissigjährigen Kriege* (Prague 1866) 61–62; Roman von PROCHÁZKA, *Genealogisches Handbuch erloschener böhmischer Herrenstandsfamilien* (Neustadt a.d. Aisch 1973) 137; Jan K. LINHART, Kounicové (Brno 1982); Jiří PERNES, Ivo HOLÁN, Slavkov u Brna: Město a Okolí (Prague 1987) 65–77, 173–174.

⁴ R.J.W. EVANS, *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550–1700* (Oxford 1979) 195–216; IDEM, *The Habsburg Monarchy and Bohemia 1526–1848*, in: Mark GREENGRASS (ed.), *Conquest and Coalescence: The Shaping of the State in Early Modern Europe* (London, N.Y.–Melbourne–Auckland 1991) 141–146 [reprinted in: IDEM, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs: Essays on Central Europe, c.183–1867* (Oxford 2006) 75–98].

⁵ Jean BÉRENGER, *Finances et Absolutisme autrichien dans la second moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris 1975).

⁶ On the careers of Dominik Ondřej and Maximilián Oldřich and on the early education and career of Kaunitz, see Grete KLINGENSTEIN, *Der Aufstieg des Hauses Kaunitz: Studien zur Herkunft und Bildung des Staatskanzlers Wenzel Anton* (Göttingen 1975), which supercedes the earlier Alfred Ritter von ARNETH, *Biographie des Fürsten Kaunitz: Ein Fragment*, in: *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 88 (1900) 1–201, and Emma STEFLICEK, *Das Reichsvizekanzleriat unter Dominik Andreas Graf von Kaunitz, 1698–1705*, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Vienna 1954). On Kaunitz's early diplomatic career see William J. MCGILL, *The Roots of Policy: Kaunitz in Italy and the Netherlands, 1742–1746*, in: *Central European History* 1 (1969) 131–149; IDEM, *Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz-Rittberg and the Conference of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748*, in: *Duquesne Review* 14 (1969) 154–167; IDEM, *The Roots of Policy: Kaunitz in Vienna and Versailles 1749–1753*, in: *Journal of Modern History* 43 (1971) 228–244.

path to high office was not without built-in assumptions of entitlement. But at the same time Maximilian Ulrich was painfully aware of changing times and of the need to change with them. Above all, both in his capacity as governor of Moravia and as father, he was aware of the inadequacies of the educational institutions of the Monarchy, and of their inability to provide the kind of practical, technical and professional skills necessary to exercise a role of political leadership successfully. As a result, though young Wenzel Anton's education followed a traditional path of foreign university and cavalier tour, it was more rigorously academic than most and complied with the paternal injunction that the first priority had always to remain "the painstaking acquisition of knowledge."⁷ Temperamentally inclined to what he himself called a compulsive commitment to a "spirit of order,"⁸ he was an ideal pupil of the mathematical deductive reasoning of Christian Wolff he imbibed at the University of Leipzig, and rigorous logic – a Cartesian "political algebra" stressing careful reflection and critical analysis⁹ – would remain the lifelong hallmark of his reports and memoranda. But what is equally evident from the diary Wenzel Anton kept during part of his cavalier tour and from other correspondence at that time was that the enthusiasm of Wolff for the popular neo-Stoic, Justus Lipsius, and the eudaemonistic emphases of the cameralist tradition remained a hallmark of Leipzig during his university years. The young cavalier bitterly admonished rulers guilty of neglecting their subjects, considered the "exploitation and desecration" of common people the root of all underdevelopment, and praised those princes who did justice to their subjects by not saddling them with excessive taxes and burdens.¹⁰

Thus, while as a beneficiary of the society of orders Kaunitz had no reason to question the basic assumptions of the traditional hierarchical system (something that would have been highly implausible in the 1730s), he early on understood privilege to entail responsibility, duty and public service. As has been pointed out, Kaunitz became "the most prominent ... example of aristocratic adaptation to the changing conditions of eighteenth-century Court service."¹¹ His strong words as cited at the beginning of this article described his feelings about peers who failed to do so, and in this he remained consistent into old age. As the famous German philologist and philosopher, Ernst Platner, reported in 1787, Kaunitz remained

⁷ KLINGENSTEIN, *Aufstieg des Hauses Kaunitz* 230–31, 244.

⁸ ARNETH, *Biographie* 80.

⁹ For a discussion of Kaunitz's "political algebra" see Walter L. DORN, *Competition for Empire, 1740–1763* (N.Y. 1940) 296–297; Harm KLUETING, *Die Lehre von der Macht der Staaten: Das außenpolitische Machtproblem in der "politischen Wissenschaft" und in der praktischen Politik im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 1986) 171–172.

¹⁰ KLINGENSTEIN, *Aufstieg des Hauses Kaunitz* 235.

¹¹ James Van Horn MELTON, *The Nobility in the Bohemian and Austrian Lands, 1620–1780*, in: H.M. SCOTT (ed.), *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 2 vols. (London–N.Y. 1995) II, 139.

bitterly sarcastic about nobles who had nothing but “their titles, orders and riches” to recommend them.¹² Adaptation, however, required above all education. In a lengthy assessment of a wide-ranging memorandum of the young Joseph II prepared for Maria Theresa in 1766, Kaunitz asserted explicitly that “the strength of states depends on the good fortune of having virtuous citizens,” and this in turn depended on education, from which the vast majority of the population could benefit “if an education appropriate to each class of citizen gives young people a sober and clear sense of their duties.”¹³ In pursuit of this objective a multi-tiered educational system was envisioned that clearly mirrored the society of orders. The three “classes of citizens” remained workers (*laboueurs*), bourgeoisie and nobles.

By “*laboueurs*” Kaunitz understood the broad base of the social pyramid comprised primarily of peasants, and for these he advocated education that reinforced confessional piety and morality and disabused them of inclinations to “theft, mendacity, drunkenness, ingratitude and all vices” that might not be punishable by law but that were counterproductive to a prosperous society. Their education should place emphasis on agronomy and animal husbandry, or other pursuits in which they were likely to be engaged, such as mining. The bourgeoisie, whether artisans or merchants, required specialized schools devoted to technical training in relevant fields, though this class was clearly defined in economic terms. Bourgeois children could not be sent to such professional academies without a family net worth of at least 30,000 Gulden – which was certainly an imposing sum considering that the annual salary of a university professor was about 600 Gulden.¹⁴ The emphasis in noble education was to be no less on the development of “useful citizens,” but here university education became a *sine qua non*. But even within the aristocracy, a different focus was to apply to its various strata – magnates, gentry, army officers, government officials and rentiers – with magnates focusing on developing skills required for state service that demanded the greatest outlay of money and the highest degree of polish and social grace (by which he likely meant ministerial and ambassadorial posts). Disciplines favoured here were public law, history, geography, the fine arts and modern languages. For the others, depending on their state or profession, education in law or finance (“but never both together”), art and design, engineering, architecture, mathematics, commerce and agronomy were favoured.¹⁵

¹² HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Wissenschaft und Kunst, carton 1, Platner to (?), 29 May 1787. Cf. Heinrich von SRBIK, Ein Charakterbild des Staatskanzlers Kaunitz aus dem Nicolaischen Kreis, in: SGITUMBION: H. Swobod dargebracht (Reichenberg 1927).

¹³ Adolf BEER (ed.), Denkschriften des Fürsten Kaunitz, in: Archiv für österreichische Geschichte 48 (1892) 101.

¹⁴ Income estimates from Leslie BODI, Tauwetter in Wien: Zur Prosa der österreichischen Aufklärung, 1781–1795 (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar 21995) 441.

¹⁵ BEER, Denkschriften 102–105.

Clearly, a stratified society remains the basic assumption in these reflections. However, this is not a static picture. To begin with, it is clear that Kaunitz's definition of "noble" was broadly inclusive and encompassed all strata of aristocracy. This has to be seen within the context of the rapid rate of ennoblement and rank advancement in the Habsburg Monarchy during the eighteenth century. Kaunitz himself was raised from the rank of count to that of prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1764 and prince in the dynasty's Hereditary Lands in 1776, and the number of nobles raised to magnate status in Hungary under Maria Theresa almost tripled.¹⁶ Of the more than 2,500 titles conferred between 1711 and 1789, at least half were awarded to commoners. Under Charles VI ennoblements tended to be made in favour of state officials, while under Maria Theresa equal emphasis was placed on army officers. By the reign of Joseph II, state officials, army officers and merchants and industrialist were preferred at roughly the same rate.¹⁷ Hence, in the Habsburg Monarchy, it was less a matter of nobility being required for state service than nobility being conferred as a corollary of state service.

Military preferment was a case in point. In contrast to the Prussia of Frederick II who after the Seven Years' War spent the balance of his reign purging what he considered objectionable bourgeois material from his officer corps,¹⁸ or to trends in France that became increasingly caste-bound,¹⁹ the Habsburg Monarchy, as has been pointed out, consistently "pursued the most egalitarian policies of officer recruitment and promotion" in Europe.²⁰ That Kaunitz fully supported such policies is evident from his consistent backing in the Seven Years' War for his main protégé, Baron Ernst Gideon Loudon. Loudon's military successes accounted for his rapid rise from major to full general in that war, earning the fulsome praise of Kaunitz as the Monarchy's "Joshua."²¹ So tied was Loudon's command appointment to Kaunitz's support that the army over which Loudon was given independent command in 1761 was popularly referred to as "the army of Kaunitz" in Viennese polite society.²² Yet, to the exasperation of Kaunitz and despite clear evidence

¹⁶ Moritz CSÁKY, *Stellung und Funktion des ungarischen Adels im 18. Jahrhunderts*, in: Gerda MRAZ, Gerald SCHLAG (eds.), *Maria Theresia als Königin von Ungarn. Katalog der Ausstellung in Schloss Halbturn, Burgenland, Austria, 15 May–26 October 1980 (Eisenstadt 1980)* 59.

¹⁷ P.G.M. DICKSON, *Finance and Government under Maria Theresia, 1740–1780*, 2 vols. (Oxford 1987) I, 79–80.

¹⁸ Gordon A. CRAIG, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640–1945* (Oxford 1955; revised pb. 1964) 17.

¹⁹ David D. BIEN, *La réaction aristocratique avant 1789: L'exemple de l'armée*, in: *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 29 (1974) 23–48, 505–534. See also, Rafe BLAUFARB, *Noble Privilege and Absolutist State Building: French Military Administration after the Seven Years' War*, in: *French Historical Studies* 24/2 (2001) 223–246.

²⁰ Christopher DUFFY, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (London–N.Y. 1987) 43.

²¹ ARNETH, *Maria Theresia VI*, 120–125.

²² HHStA, *Kabinettsarchiv: Nachlass Zinzendorf. Tagebücher des Grafen Karl*, vol. 6, 28 August 1761. Excerpts from Zinzendorf's early diaries (to 1763) have been published: Maria BREUN-

of the military gifts of Loudon, the latter could not be assured of the obedience and loyalty of noble subordinates because he lacked, despite high military rank, “a certain grand prestige” that only people of higher birth possessed.²³ Kaunitz’s feelings on this subject were expressed very clearly a little over a decade later, as local administrators were being appointed in the newly acquired province of Galicia. In response to complaints from the local nobility that they could not be expected to take orders from non-noble bureaucrats, Kaunitz wrote, not without a sarcastic note:

As far as the situation that some of the district captains [to be appointed] are not noble, it has always been my understanding that in the civilian, ecclesiastical, military and political sphere [of the Monarchy], subordinates no matter how noble, are obliged to obey their superiors even if the latter are of non-noble origin. However, in order not to do violence to dear nature in connection with this directive, this important objection could easily be obviated if Your Majesty simply deigned to ennoble them all.²⁴

It would seem clear that this was not a policy of protecting caste interest so much as one of rewarding talent with caste-inclusion.

Though Jay Smith has recently shown the varying and sometimes opposing assumptions that lay behind the use of the concept of “merit” in specific institutional settings in the eighteenth century, particularly in France,²⁵ in the Habsburg case it was much less ambiguous. When Kaunitz argued that “Your Majesty’s all highest state interest demands that you appoint [to office] the individual who is in all respects the most skilled and appropriate,” he was certainly articulating a concept of merit in the modern sense of a quality that *entitles* one to reward or gratitude. To leave no doubt, he continued in the same note, jotting in his own hand a particularly personal plea to his monarch: “My sincere zeal for Your service moves me to beg Your Majesty that in the appointment to be made, care be taken that *no other consideration* except the needs of Your service be taken into

LICH, Marieluise MADER (eds.), Karl Graf von Zinzendorf: Aus den Jugendtagebüchern, 1747, 1752 bis 1763 Nach Vorarbeiten von Hans Wagner (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar 1997). Further selections from the late 1770s and early 1780s will be published shortly with an extensive introduction by Grete Klingenstein.

²³ HHStA, Sonstige Sammlungen: Kriegsakten, Faszikel 425, Kaunitz to Grechtler, 5 August 1761 and Grechtler to Kaunitz, 8 August 1761. Cf.: Eberhard KESSEL, Beiträge zu Loudon’s Lebensgeschichte. 1. Zur Frage des Oberbefehls der österreichischen Armee in Feldzug 1761, in: Militärgeschichte und Kriegstheorie in neuerer Zeit: Ausgewählte Aufsätze ed. by Johannes Kunisch (Berlin 1987) 240–246; Johannes KUNISCH, Der kleine Krieg: Studien zum Heerwesen des Absolutismus (Wiesbaden 1973) 50–78.

²⁴ HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv: Voten des Fürsten Kaunitz zu Staatsratakten [henceforth Kaunitz Voten], carton 2, no. 2633 of 1773, Kaunitz Votum, 4 December 1773.

²⁵ Jay M. SMITH, The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600–1789 (Ann Arbor, Mich. 1996).

account.”²⁶ Appointments in his own ministry and support he gave to others in different ministries confirm this. In the complete reorganization of the Chancellery of State upon his assumption of office in 1753, merit and talent, not rank and status were the primary considerations. None of the officials appointed – whether his second-in-command and effective deputy minister, Baron Friedrich von Binder, or the three department heads (effective assistant deputy ministers), Aedot Joseph Philipp du Beyne de Malechamps, Johann Jakob von Dorn and Heinrich von Collenbach, and later others such as Luigi Guisti, Christian August von Beck, Elias von Hochstätter or Joseph von Sperges – could boast particularly illustrious backgrounds and all were appointed on the basis of their particular skills.²⁷ The same might be said of Kaunitz’s unstinting support of his primary economic adviser, Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Though the scion of a Lower Austrian noble family, he had been born in exile as a Protestant and only returned to Austria in 1740 after he converted to Catholicism at the age of nineteen. He did not find easy acceptance by his peers in Austria, and apart from Kaunitz, found stiff resistance to most of his ideas on economic policy.²⁸ Among Kaunitz’s gifted protégés of modest background outside his ministry, Loudon has already been mentioned, and men such as the forward-looking agrarian reformers, Franz Anton von Blanc and Franz Anton von Raab, would also fit the mould.²⁹

The permeation of Kaunitz’s memoranda with the language of “citizenship” and “state” – and more specifically of the education of the “citizen” for the “state” – make clear that the aristocracy was seen primarily as a service nobility, with the obligation to service increasing with the gradations of caste. What elicited the bitter comments by Kaunitz cited at the beginning of this essay was precisely the failure of members of the magnate-elite to perceive the obligations inherent in their position. As Wangermann has shown, the “symbols of power and greatness” that found concrete expression in the lavish building and artistic commissions with which great noble families gave expression to their wealth, power and new-found

²⁶ HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Vorträge, carton 125, Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, m.p., n.d. [January 1778]. Emphasis in the original.

²⁷ On the reorganization of the State Chancellery see Grete KLINGENSTEIN, *Institutionelle Aspekte der österreichischen Außenpolitik im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: Erich ZÖLLNER (ed.), *Diplomatie und Außenpolitik Österreichs: Elf Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte* (Vienna 1977) 87–90; *IBID.*, *Aufstieg des Hauses Kaunitz* 295–301.

²⁸ On Ludwig von Zinzendorf, see Gaston von PETTENEGG (ed.), *Ludwig und Karl, Grafen und Herren von Zinzendorf: Ihre Selbstbiographien* (Vienna 1879) 46–164; Christine LEBEAU, *Aristocrates et grands commis à la Cour de Vienne (1748–1791)*, in: *Le modèle français* (Paris 1996) 163–192.

²⁹ On Blanc see Karl GRÜNBERG, *Franz Anton von Blanc: Ein Sozialpolitiker der thesesianisch-josephinischen Zeit* (Munich–Leipzig 1921) [originally published in *Schmollers Jahrbuch* 35 (1911) 1155–1238]. For Raab, WURZBACH, *Biographisches Lexikon*, XXIV 155–157 and Václav ČERNÝ, *Pozemková reforma v. XVIII. století*, in: *Časopis pro dějiny venkova* 14 (1927) 27–39.

confidence in the wake of the defeat of the Turks and the re-conquest of Hungary were also expressions of the Great Power status of the Monarchy.³⁰ Their status, in short, was inextricably tied to the status of the Habsburg Monarchy as a Great Power. Samuel Clark has astutely observed that in the early modern period states emerged in Western Europe as powerful ‘political-geographical centres’ rather than ‘nation-states’ or ‘national states,’ and that these states in turn shaped the aristocracy and transformed its political, economic, cultural, and status power.³¹ This dynamic corresponds precisely to Kaunitz’s vision. The Habsburg Monarchy may very well have been, in Evans’ felicitous phrase, “a complex and subtly balanced organism, ...[and] a mildly centripetal agglutination of bewilderingly heterogeneous elements,”³² with no potential as a national state, but it had every potential for becoming a powerful ‘political-geographical centre’ if taken as a whole. Of course, it is not surprising that Kaunitz as foreign minister of the Monarchy took a unitary view of the Habsburg conglomerate, but that view had its origins in the so-called “Bohemian Party” at the Court of Leopold I. This group included Kaunitz’s grandfather, Dominik Ondřej, and generally deprecated the whole wisdom of striving for the Spanish inheritance. They wished instead to consolidate the core of the Monarchy, supplemented by the acquisition of Bavaria and surrounded by a defensive perimeter that included Balkan and northern Italian possessions as well as the traditional *Vorländer* (or Hither Austria).³³ This re-orientation of the priorities of the Monarchy from the periphery to the central triad of Austria, Bohemia and Hungary, which was lent new urgency by the Prussian rape of Silesia, was the central thrust of Kaunitz’s foreign policy.³⁴ That is also why the project of creating a powerful ‘political-geographical centre’ was integrally tied to a domestic rational constructivism, the intent of which was to

³⁰ Ernst WANGERMANN, *The Austrian Achievement, 1700–1800* (London 1973) 21–45.

³¹ Samuel CLARK, *State and Status: The Rise of the State and Aristocratic Power in Western Europe* (Montreal–Kingston–London–Buffalo 1995).

³² EVANS, *Making of the Habsburg Monarchy* 447.

³³ The most important analysis of the “Bohemian Party” and the evolution of the policy which was to culminate with Kaunitz is Max BRAUBACH, *Versailles und Wien von Ludwig XIV. bis Kaunitz* (Bonn 1952). Chapter I deals with the group mentioned above. See also Arnold GAEDECKE, *Die Politik Oesterreichs in der Spanischen Erbfolfrage*, 2 vols. (Leipzig 1877) I, 260; II, 69–75, 171–175; Heinrich von SRBIK, *Wien und Versailles: Zur Geschichte von Strassburg, Elsass und Lothringen, 1692–1697* (Munich 1944) 33–36; and KLINGENSTEIN, *Aufstieg des Hauses Kaunitz* 49–52.

³⁴ Cf. Franz A.J. SZABO, *Wenzel Anton Kaunitz-Rietberg und Seine Zeit: Bemerkungen zum 200. Todestag des Staatskanzlers*, in: Grete KLINGENSTEIN, Franz A.J. SZABO (eds.), *Staatskanzler Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz-Rietberg, 1711–1794: Neue Perspektiven zu Politik und Kultur der europäischen Aufklärung* (Graz–Esztergom–Paris–N.Y. 1996) 12–13.

organize society for encouraging productivity within the framework of a *Rechtsstaat*.³⁵

In the complex eighteenth-century French discourse on the nature and role of nobility, new competing visions of patriotism emerged, but however these were understood, the promotion of patriotism stood at the centre.³⁶ Kaunitz's appeals to the patriotism of nobles as stakeholders in the project of creating a powerful 'political-geographical centre' can be understood in this context. We see it in operation particularly as the Seven Years' War was reaching its critical stage. As early as the second year of the war it had become very apparent that even the most liberal pre-war expense estimates had fallen short of the mark. The War Cabinet extravagantly expected annual military expenditures to double (to 28 million gulden), but hoped that the principal means of raising additional revenue could be through the utilization of foreign and domestic credit. It did not take long for problems to materialize. The President of the Directory, Friedrich Wilhelm Haugwitz, began by requesting a loan of 12 million gulden from the various provincial Estates of Austria and Bohemia, but the response was an unpropitious omen for the future. Carinthia, Carniola and Upper Austria refused outright to raise the 4 million requested of them. The other Estates declared that they were prepared to do their utmost to come up with the remaining 8 million, but despite their initial burst of enthusiasm, actual receipts added up to only 1,340,170 gulden.³⁷ As the war progressed two further unpleasant realities became manifest. The first was that the wartime military expenditure was not double, but more than triple the peacetime costs, and the second was that even the revenues calculated for peacetime could not be collected in full. Of the nearly 392 million gulden that the Seven Years' War consumed, barely over 144 million came from ordinary taxes.³⁸

Domestically, Estates' credit – effectively noble credit – was the precondition to a victorious war. Most officials in the Monarchy's financial ministries were suspicious of a governmental bonds-scheme, modeled on the most successful short-term English government bonds (the so-called 'Exchequer Bills'), as proposed with Kaunitz's support by his protégé, Ludwig von Zinzendorf. By 1761,

³⁵ As argued in detail in Franz A.J. SZABO, *Kaunitz and enlightened absolutism, 1753–1780* (Cambridge 1994).

³⁶ The discourse analyzed in detail in Jay M. SMITH, *Nobility Reimagined: The Patriotic Nation in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca–London 2005).

³⁷ HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Vorträge, carton 78, War Cabinet minutes of 18 July and 8 August 1756. Minutes of the meeting of 18 July are published in part in Rudolf KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH, Hanns SCHLITZER (eds.), *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias: Tagebuch des Fürsten Johann Josef Khevenhüller-Metsch, Kaiserlichen Obersthofmeisters*, 8 vols. (Vienna–Leipzig 1907–1972) IV, 176–183.

³⁸ DICKSON, *Finance and Government II*, 124–147, 388–390, which revises substantially upward the earlier total estimate of 260 million Gulden in Adolf BEER, *Die Staatsschulden und die Ordnung des Staatshaushaltes unter Maria Theresia*, in: *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 82 (1895) 116–124.

however, the situation had become so desperate that objections to the scheme were overcome and a bond issue of 12 million gulden was released, whose sinking fund was to be covered by an additional compulsory issue of 6 millions to be assumed by the Estates. To this end an 'Estates Credit Deputation' was set up to which the Austrian and Bohemian Estates were ordered to dispatch delegates to Vienna. The first meeting of the 'Estates Credit Deputation' was addressed by Kaunitz with an earnest appeal to patriotism,³⁹ and the initial impact seemed to be positive, as agreement with the Estates delegates was reached very quickly. But in the end the bonds failed to bring anywhere near the revenues of English Exchequer Bills. Major creditors with large cash reserves found it much more profitable to speculate in the standard loan notes the government had taken out since 1756. These were trading as much as 30% below face value so that adventurous speculators could potentially realize profits far in excess of the mere 6% offered by the Estates bonds. Patriotism clearly took second place to profit.⁴⁰

A similar dynamic revealed itself in Hungary. The Hungarian direct war tax (*contribution*) of approximately 4.3 million gulden per annum was proportionally at about the same level as the 4.1 million collected for the Austrian lands and the 5.9 million for the Bohemian provinces.⁴¹ As costs escalated and officials in Austria and Bohemia increasingly resorted to such fiscal devices as indirect taxation, forced loans, and the like, the Hungarian contribution as a relative proportion of the war effort declined. At the same time the personal profits of the seigniorial elite, fed by the hothouse atmosphere of high demand during the war, grew dramatically. Since the extraordinary fiscal devices applied in Austria and Bohemia could not be implemented in Hungary without the consent of the Diet, other means to raise money in the Kingdom of St. Stephen had to be sought. In this atmosphere the Habsburg loyalist and reform-minded Count Miklós Pálffy was appointed Hungarian Chancellor and made a member of the War Cabinet.⁴² Under Pálffy's chancellorship, voluntary war credits expanded dramatically to a high of over 2.5

³⁹ HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv: Nachlaß Kaunitz, 1 carton, Part A, Kaunitz's "Anrede an die Ständische Deputierte."

⁴⁰ The most detailed analysis of the implementation remains Hans GROSS, *Die Ständische Kredit-Deputation und der Plan eines erbländischen Nationalkredits. Ein Beitrag zur Finanzpolitik unter Maria Theresia* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Vienna 1935), which is followed closely by DICKSON, *Finance and Government II*, 133–138. See also Johann SCHA-SCHING, *Staatsbildung und Finanzentwicklung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des österreichischen Staatskredits in der 2. Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Innsbruck 1954) 18–22, and SZABO, *Kaunitz and enlightened absolutism* 115–128.

⁴¹ DICKSON, *Finance and Government II*, 389–390.

⁴² Henrik MARCZALI, *Magyarország története III. Károlytól a bécsi kongresszusig (1711–1815)*, vol. VIII of *A Magyar nemzet története*, ed. by Sándor SZILÁGYI (Budapest 1898) 285–288; Domokos KOSÁRY, *Felvilágosult abszolútizmus–felvilágosult rendiség*, in: *Történelmi Szemle XIX* (1976) 700. On Pálffy in general, see Henrik MARCZALI, *Gróf Pálffy Miklós főkanzellár emlékirata Magyarország kormányzásáról* (Budapest 1884).

million gulden in 1760 alone.⁴³ In the War Cabinet itself, Pálffy waxed confident that Hungarian contributions to the common cause would meet rising requirements,⁴⁴ but his ability to deliver on these promises declined precipitously. By 1762 these cash credits had declined to less than 10% of their 1760 levels.⁴⁵

Once again, leading magnates were summoned to a conference in Vienna, where in December 1762 an appeal to their patriotism was prepared by Kaunitz himself. Not “charity, but patent necessity” should persuade the Hungarians not to deny the crown “proportionate help.” Above all, he hoped to elicit a sense of common effort with an explicit appeal to a pan-monarchical vision:

This important observation is actually intended to suggest that the common welfare [of the Monarchy] demands that all the Hereditary Lands [of the House of Habsburg] mutually render each other all possible assistance, and observe complete equity in this process.⁴⁶

In the covering report to the empress, Kaunitz stressed that his brief intended to show the Hungarian nobles that assenting to major increases was in their own interest. Their “protective privileges and other objections” could no longer be permitted, since these could offer no security against the Monarchy’s dangerous foes, and since, in any case, the matter at hand concerned “the welfare and preservation of the whole Monarchy.”⁴⁷ This dramatic appeal went for naught, and when Pálffy offered only a modest tax on the Hungarian clergy for the repair and upkeep of fortifications, and a small one-time *don gratuit* from the counties, Kaunitz’s despair was evident in the response he advised Maria Theresa to make to this offer. There was no point in giving the Hungarian elite the opportunity to assert how “cooperative” it had been if it was not prepared to respond to the crown’s desperate appeal in any meaningful way.⁴⁸ There is little doubt that this experience contributed substantially to his hostility toward the Hungarian aristocracy in the post-war period, so frequently lamented by Hungarian historians, though it should be stressed that, contrary to Joseph II, Kaunitz insisted that the policy be pursued “with all possible forbearance,” and with the award of various “distinctions” to seduce rather than bludgeon the nobility.⁴⁹ Similarly, as he put it with regard to the Polish nobility in the newly acquired province of Galicia in

⁴³ DICKSON, Finance and Government II, 389.

⁴⁴ HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Vorträge, carton 86, Protocollum Conferentiae, 21 January 1760. For Pálffy’s attendance record see also *Ibid.*, cartons 83–87, Konferenz Extrakte, *passim*, and KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH, SCHLITZER, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias V*, 236–259.

⁴⁵ DICKSON, Finance and Government II, 389.

⁴⁶ HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Vorträge, carton 90, Kaunitz’s “Aufsatz, umb die Hungarischen Magnaten von der Nothwendigkeit der Hülffe zu überzeugen” [25 November 1762].

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, 25 November 1762.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, 20 December 1762.

⁴⁹ HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv: Kaunitz Voten, carton 5, no. 2555 of 1784, Kaunitz Votum, 3 July 1784.

1772, they had to be re-educated, enlightened and purged of their irresponsible selfishness, but not irretrievably alienated.⁵⁰

The failure of both the bonds scheme and the appeal to the Hungarian magnates, however, was for Kaunitz simply symptomatic of a “state illness” that beset the Monarchy, which consisted of the fact that

all the Hereditary Lands [of the dynasty] have never been in complete union with each other. As we know, they came under the sovereignty of the Arch-House [of Habsburg] piece by piece. Each had its particular government and constitution which it sought to keep, and the Estates and functionaries of each, moved by a lamentable jealousy of each other, sought to keep themselves separate from the rest and to maintain their privileges. ... The project of unification seemed at times too dangerous and at times too difficult, and the benefits [of such a project] have yet to be fully recognized.⁵¹

It was clear to Kaunitz that the noble functionaries and noble-dominated provincial Estates were the villains of the piece, and as Joseph II faced virtual open rebellion from precisely these individuals and bodies at the end of his reign, his successor, Leopold II, tried to calm the storm by withdrawing some of Joseph’s measures and by other concessions, the most significant of which was convening the Estates of the various lands. Kaunitz could see this as a positive development only if these Estates were in due course re-structured in order “to secure a better balance between the nobility on the one hand and the bourgeoisie and peasants on the other,” and ceased to be mere instruments of noble privilege and particularism.⁵² For the future, Kaunitz opined, the only law that should be observed was the “supreme law” of the “*salus universae reipublicae*.”⁵³ It is therefore not surprising that Kaunitz stood in the forefront in suggesting the creation of Monarchy-wide symbols. During his first attempt to create a navy for the Monarchy in the post-Seven Years’ War period – an experiment that proved to be short-lived – Austrian ships were told still to fly the imperial eagle.⁵⁴ When the project was revived in 1786, this time on a permanent basis, Kaunitz not only recommended that the eagle, but also the coats of arms of the various lands of the Monarchy be abandoned as well. Instead he suggested that all Austrian ships and ports fly a new colour of his own design, consisting of the simple red-white-red horizontal

⁵⁰ HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Vorträge, carton 113, Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, 2 September 1773, Beilage: zu Beantwortung der von S.M. dem Kaiser aufgestellten 154 Fragepunkte.

⁵¹ SCHASCHING, Staatsbildung und Finanzentwicklung 7.

⁵² HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv: Kaunitz Voten, carton 6, no. 418 of 1791, Kaunitz Votum, [11–15] February 1791.

⁵³ Ibid., Kaunitz Voten, carton 5, no. 2434 of 1790, Kaunitz Votum, 15 August 1790. Kaunitz recommended that every administrative district (Kreis) should be allowed six delegates to an Estates assembly (Landtag): three nobles and three commoners (two bourgeois and one peasant).

⁵⁴ On the navy, see Franz A.J. SZABO, Unwanted Navy: Habsburg Naval Armaments under Maria Theresia, in: Austrian History Yearbook 17–18 (1981–82) 29–53; on the flag 51.

bars of the House of Austria, with a red-white-red shield surmounted at the centre by a royal crown.⁵⁵ It remained the flag of the Austrian navy to the end of the Monarchy.

Closely associated with this were his views on nationalizing honour. The first initiatives along these lines came in the military sphere. As early as 1749 General, later Field Marshall, Leopold von Daun recommended the creation of a military order of valour to enhance the social status of the officer corps, and to nationalize, as it were, the concept of honour. The project initially foundered on the opposition of Emperor Francis I, but in 1757 it was revived with the support of Kaunitz, who put together a formal proposal. The Chancellor dismissed earlier ideas of a military order named in honour of St. Theresa or St. Joseph, and argued that it must have a secular, non-denominational character. Instead of an elaborate baroque ornament with a saint's picture, Kaunitz presented a design which focused on the state, and which, for him, symbolized the unity and indivisibility of the Habsburg Monarchy. Here, too, the colours of the House of Austria, the simple red-white-red horizontal bars, distinguished the ribbon as well as the centerpiece of the order's cross. Otherwise Kaunitz recommended a dignified simplicity, with the grand cross and knights' cross adorned only with the devise "*Fortitudini*" (Valour). Eschewing saints, Kaunitz proposed to name it the "Military Maria Theresa Order." Once the news reached Vienna of the Austrian victory over Frederick of Prussia at the Battle of Kolin on 18 June 1757, a date Maria Theresa enthusiastically described as "the birthday of the Monarchy," that date was selected as the most suitable one for its formal foundation. Awards of the Maria Theresa Order carried automatic knighthood for those not already of noble origin. Kaunitz was made Chancellor of the Order.⁵⁶

Kaunitz lent similar support for similar reasons to the suggestion of creating an order of civilian merit, originally planned to be called the "Civilian Maria Theresa Order" (*Maria-Theresia-Orden für Zivilverdienste*). The convening of the Hungarian Diet in 1764 then gave it a Hungarian spin. By re-naming it "Order of St. Stephen" and integrating the Hungarian cross and Hungarian green into its design, Kaunitz felt that the whole Hungarian nation would be flattered, but that in particular, in light of the coming Diet, "the sentiments of the Hungarian nobil-

⁵⁵ HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Vorträge, carton 142, Kaunitz to Joseph II, 14, 18 and 20 March 1786. Cf. Peter DIEM, *Die Symbole Österreichs: Zeit und Geschichte in Zeichen* (Vienna 1995) 90–94.

⁵⁶ Jaromir HIRTENFELD, *Der Militär-Maria-Theresien-Orden und seine Mitglieder* 4 vols. (Vienna 1857–1890) I, 1–36; KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH, SCHLITZER, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias* V, 13–15; Erwin AUER, *Der Maria-Theresiaen-Orden: Von der Ordensgemeinschaft zum Verdienstorden*, in: *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 74 (1951) 106–112; Hanns Leo MIKOLETZKY, *Österreich: Das Grosse 18. Jahrhundert Von Leopold I. bis Leopold II.* (Vienna 1967) 228–229; Franz-Lorenz von THADDEN, *Feldmarschall Daun: Maria Theresias größter Feldherr* (Vienna–Munich 1967) 299–303.

ity are more likely to be won over and reconciled to the agenda of the court"⁵⁷ – though, in the event, he was to be disappointed in this hope. From the beginning, discussions around the new civilian order stressed that it was to be reserved for individuals who had “employed their talent and rendered distinguished service to Us [the monarch] and to the *patrie*.” Like the Maria Theresa Order, awards carried automatic elevation to knighthood for those not already noble.⁵⁸ It was also clear from the beginning that it was to be a Monarchy-wide order, and though it was frequently used to win over or reward Hungarians (i.e., people residing in the Kingdom of Hungary), it was liberally given to non-Hungarians as well.⁵⁹ In effect, both Orders were forms of caste-inclusion with the object of winning support for the patriotic ‘project of unification.’ The establishment of a Royal Hungarian Bodyguard in 1760, to be staffed exclusively by nobles from the Kingdom of Hungary, had a similar objective. In March 1780 Kaunitz persuaded the empress that the Guard should take over courier duties for his own ministry. In the instructions drafted for them, he made clear that they were not only to safeguard and deliver dispatches, but to use the opportunity that their various trips afforded them to get as much education out of the process as time permitted. To maximize their observations abroad, they were explicitly given a detailed reading list for advance study, and instructed to make regular reports to the State Chancellery on what they had learned.⁶⁰ In these ways, it was hoped that these nobles would acquire a broader perspective, and thus be more easily won over to broader monarchical patriotism. In fact, though, many turned instead to “the emergent cause of vernacular Magyar literature.”⁶¹

⁵⁷ KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH, SCHLITTER, *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias* VI 31.

⁵⁸ The documents pertaining to the establishment of the Order are published in *Ibid.* 293–327. Cf. DOMINUS, *Der Stephansorden und seine Geschichte* (Vienna 1873); Attila PANDULA, *Der königlich-ungarische St. Stephans-Ordens*, in: *Zeitschrift der österreichischen Gesellschaft für Ordenskunde* 5 (1992) 4–14.

⁵⁹ For a complete list of all recipients of the order in its three gradations from 1764 to 1918, see Ferenc FELSZEGHY et al. (eds.), *A rendjelek és kitüntetések történelmünkben* (Budapest 1944). The list is available on internet at <http://tornai.com/rendtagok.htm>. Miklós Horthy revived the Order in 1940 in order to award the grand cross to, among others, Göring, Ribbentrop and Ciano!

⁶⁰ HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Vorträge, carton 131, Kaunitz to Joseph, 23 March 1780, and Kaunitz’s „Instruction Wornach sich die Herren Officiers der Königl. Hungarischen Adeligen Leibgarde zu betragen haben, welche zu Verrichtung der Kais: Königl: Hof und Kabinetts Couriers-Dienste bestimmt sind,” 26 March 1780. Cf. also Éva H. BALÁZS, *Kaunitz és Magyarország* (Doktori tézises összefoglaló) (Budapest 1990) 2, and *IDEM.*, *Hungary and the Habsburgs, 1765–1800: An Experiment in Enlightened Absolutism* (Budapest 1997) 214, 371. [English edition of *Bécs és Pest-Buda a régi századvégen, 1765–1800* (Budapest 1987)].

⁶¹ R.J.W. EVANS, *Maria Theresa and Hungary*, in: *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs* 31. Cf. Aladár BALLAGI, *A Magyar Királyi Testőrség története, különös tekintettel irodalmi működésére* (Budapest 1878).

Another area where Kaunitz urged aristocratic adaptation was in the agrarian sphere. Here Kaunitz was among the leading voices pressing for reform after the Seven Years' War. His programme included the formal abolition of the remaining legal bonds of serfdom, the commutation of compulsory labour services (*robot*) into quitrent, and the parceling of large estates (*Meierehöfe*) into smaller peasant freeholds.⁶² Though his ideas were dismissed by the young Joseph II as being unfeasible because they attacked "the most essential, indeed one may say the palladium of seigniorial rights,"⁶³ Kaunitz returned with renewed emphasis to the same theme in a long memorandum on the domestic reform of the Monarchy only nine months later,⁶⁴ and it remained one of the strongest and most consistent planks of his reform agenda.⁶⁵ He was, of course, not alone in this. Recognition of the need for substantial agrarian reform was widespread, and many nobles were already beginning to commute labour services into quitrent.⁶⁶ Kaunitz himself began a massive implementation of land division and labour service commutation on all his own estates in the summer of 1773, and persuaded his protégé, Ludwig Zinzendorf, to give serious consideration to a similar action.⁶⁷ We know that the Governor of Bohemia, Carl Egon von Fürstenberg, among others, became an ardent supporter and implementer of such reforms, and he was joined by such leading figures as the Austro-Bohemian Chancellor, Count Heinrich Cajetan Blümegen, Count Johann Baptist Mittrowsky and Count Johann Buquoy.⁶⁸ A real corner was turned when one of the bitterest opponents of labour service commutation, Prince Ferdinand Lobkowitz, changed his mind, and implemented a commutation programme on several of his estates. Within a decade very dramatic breakthroughs had been made. Substantial parceling of estates could be reported in Bohemia, more in Galicia and Moravia, and a greater proportion still in the Austrian prov-

⁶² HHStA, Österreichische Akten: Österreich-Staat, Fasz. 5, Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, 21 April 1767. I have published this document in Franz A.J. SZABO, *Competing Visions of Enlightened Absolutism: Security and Economic Development in the Reform Priorities of the Habsburg Monarchy after the Seven Year War*, in: János KALMÁR (ed.), *Miscellanea Fontium Historiae Europaeae: Emlékkönyv H. Balázs Éva történészprofesszor 80. születésnapjára* (Budapest 1997) 194–196.

⁶³ HHStA, Österreichische Akten: Österreich-Staat, Fasz. 5, Joseph Votum, 27 April 1767.

⁶⁴ HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Vorträge, carton 101, Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, 25 January 1768, § 49, § 67.

⁶⁵ For a discussion in detail: SZABO, *Kaunitz and enlightened absolutism* 155–180.

⁶⁶ Milan MYŠKA, *Der Adel der böhmischen Länder: Seine wirtschaftliche Basis und ihre Entwicklung*, in: Armgard von REDEN-DOHNA, Ralph MELVILLE (eds.), *Der Adel an der Schwelle des bürgerlichen Zeitalters* (Stuttgart 1988) 172.

⁶⁷ Vienna, Deutscher Orden Zentralarchiv [hereinafter: DOZA], Handschriften, vol. 66, Ludwig Zinzendorf to Karl Zinzendorf, 13 June 1773.

⁶⁸ James Van Horn MELTON, *Absolutism and the eighteenth-century origins of compulsory schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge 1988) 164–166, 137–139; William E. WRIGHT, *Serf, Seigneur, and Sovereign: Agrarian Reform in Eighteenth-Century Bohemia* (Minneapolis 1966) 67 (footnote 27).

inces. By 1794 Bohemian seigneurs had commuted labour services on 351 estates and were negotiating commutation on 181 others, while in Carinthia and Carniola 208 of the 275 estates existing in those provinces were subdivided and leased.⁶⁹ Whether or not, as Lütge has suggested, Joseph II's sweeping land and tax reform of 1789, which seemed to render such agreements superfluous, tended to slow down and even arrest the process,⁷⁰ it is clear that a re-thinking of the still-dominant Marxist analysis that interprets dissent against Joseph's decree as noble resistance to agrarian reform⁷¹ is long overdue.

An important factor that also influenced Kaunitz's views on nobility was what François Furet called the growing "horizontal solidarity of Enlightenment society." Furet stressed the need "to examine the rôle played by cultural ... unification" of educated elites. They tended to read the same books and have the same cultural horizons, and they included nobles and non-nobles, while excluding not only the lower classes but large swaths of the nobility as well.⁷² Furet's thesis has been subject to some criticism in the French context, but in the Habsburg context the argument still carries weight, and Kaunitz can be adduced not only as a prime example, but also as a prime proponent of the need to cultivate such "horizontal solidarity." As has been pointed out, the development of new norms of sociability and intellectual exchange in salons and other venues established mutual respect as well as disregard for hierarchy as basic expectations of "enlightened" social intercourse.⁷³ We know that during his term as Habsburg ambassador to France, Kaunitz sought out the salons of Mmes. Geoffrin, Blondel and Dupin, and remained full of affectionate nostalgia for this experience in the decades thereafter, corresponding with these women, and lavishly entertaining Mme. Geoffrin when the latter visited Vienna in 1766.⁷⁴ In Vienna, Kaunitz graciously and congenially hosted virtually

⁶⁹ Statistics for Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia in ČERNÝ, *Pozemková reforma XV (1928)*, 287–312. Cf. Gerhard HANKE, *Das Zeitalter des Zentralismus*, in: Karl BOSL (ed.), *Handbuch der Geschichte der böhmischen Länder*, vol. II: *Die Böhmisches Länder von der Hochblüte der Ständeherrschaft bis zum Erwachen eines modernen Nationalbewusstseins* (Stuttgart 1974) 491. Statistics for Galicia and the Austrian provinces in Friedrich LÜTGE, *Die Robot-Abolition unter Kaiser Joseph II.*, in: Heinz HAUSHOFER, Willi A. BOELCKE (eds.), *Wege und Forschungen der Agrargeschichte: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Günther Franz* (Frankfurt a/M 1967) 162–168. See also, Anton MELL, *Die Anfänge der Bauernbefreiung in Steiermark unter Maria Theresia und Joseph II.* (Graz 1901) 197–213.

⁷⁰ LÜTGE, *Robot-Abolition* 159–160, 165–168.

⁷¹ Roman ROZDOLSKI [ROSDOLSKY], *Die Grosse Steuer- und Agrarreform Josefs II.: Ein Kapitel zur österreichischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Warsaw 1961).

⁷² François FURET, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, trans. by Elborg Foster (Cambridge 1981) 114–115. [Originally published as *Penser la Révolution Française* (Paris 1978)]

⁷³ SMITH, *Nobility Reimagined* 6. Cf. Daniel GORDON, *Citizens without Sovereignty: Equality and Sociability in French Thought, 1670–1789* (Princeton 1994); Dena GOODMAN, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1994).

⁷⁴ Brno, Moravský zemský archiv [hereinafter: MZA]: Rodinný archiv Kouniců, Václav Antonín Korrespondence, carton 5 [Since my research in this archive, the Kaunitz family papers have

nightly *assemblés*, where he fêted artists, scholars, scientists and other intellectuals who came through Vienna.⁷⁵ We know that he was an avid collector of French books (including erotica) and one of the first subscribers of the *Encyclopédie*. That this reference work was used extensively by Kaunitz is confirmed not only by reports that material from these volumes gave him his favourite conversation topics,⁷⁶ but also by handwritten notes which show how the *Encyclopédie* helped crystallize his thoughts on the relationship between Church and state.⁷⁷ He was an enthusiastic reader of Voltaire,⁷⁸ and some of his opinions on such issues as toleration often seem closely to reflect Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique*.⁷⁹ He occasionally corresponded with Baron Friedrich Melchior Grimm⁸⁰, had a wide familiarity with German cameralist authors ranging from Johann Heinrich Gottlob Justi to August Ludwig Schlözer to Jakob Friedrich Bielfeld,⁸¹ and was anxious to secure both Johann Joachim Winkelmann and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing for Vienna.⁸² Kaunitz's association with Italian *illuministi* is clearer still. To begin with,

been re-catalogued. My carton numbers refer to the 20 previously un-catalogued cartons reserved specifically for Wenzel Anton's papers.] Mme. Blondel to Kaunitz, 1 September 1753, 18 June 1767, 24 February 1768, 20 December 1780, carton 11, Mme. Geoffrin to Kaunitz, 24 March 1767, 27 April 1768, carton 15, Kaunitz to Mme. Geoffrin, 9 March 1767; HHStA, Sonstige Sammlungen: Grosse Korrespondenz, Fasz. 405, Kaunitz to Mme. Blondel, 31 July 1774. HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv: Tagebuch Zinzendorf, 4 October 1766, 26 January 1767. Cf. Alexander NOVOTNY, Staatskanzler Kaunitz als geistige Persönlichkeit: Ein österreichisches Kulturbild aus der Zeit der Aufklärung und des Josephinismus. (Vienna 1947) 66–67.

⁷⁵ HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv: Zinzendorf Tagebuch, vols. 6–39, passim.

⁷⁶ Friedrich Schlichtegroll, Nekrolog auf das Jahr 1794 [5. Jahrgang] 2 vols. (Gotha 1796) I, 146; Wurzbach, Biographisches Lexikon XI, 82.

⁷⁷ Ferdinand Maass, Der Josephinismus: Quellen zur seiner Geschichte in Österreich, 1760–1790, vol. I: Ursprung und Wesen des Josephinismus, 1760–1769 (Vienna 1951) 335–366.

⁷⁸ MZA, Rodinný archiv Kouniců, carton 5, book order from Carl Wilhelm Ettinger in Gotha, 7 April 1787; carton 15, notes copied from Voltaire's works, n.d.

⁷⁹ Novotny, Staatskanzler Kaunitz 199.

⁸⁰ MZA, Rodinný archiv Kouniců, carton 4, Grimm to Kaunitz 3 January 1771, 23 July 1780, 20 December 1780, carton 15, Kaunitz to Grimm 10 March 1771, 1 June 1780; HHStA, Sonstige Sammlungen: Grosse Korrespondenz, Fasz. 405, Kaunitz to Grimm, 13 February 1777. Cf. Justus Schmidt, Voltaire und Maria Theresia: Französische Kultur des Barock in ihren Beziehungen zu Österreich, in: Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien XI (1931) 78. This is not necessarily meaningful since Grimm specialized in a literary correspondence for the rich and powerful to disseminate the ideas of Enlightenment.

⁸¹ A good discussion of this in KLUETING, Die Lehre von der Macht der Staaten 184–204. Kluebing has attempted to reconstruct Kaunitz's bibliographical leanings by analyzing the foreign ministry's reference library holdings which Kaunitz assembled. The problem with this analysis is that titles conspicuous by their absence from this library can be demonstrated from other sources to have been in his private library or to have been read by him otherwise.

⁸² Erich SCHMIDT, Lessing: Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Schriften 2 vols. (Berlin 1909) II, 132, 154–155, 167; Kurt WOLFEL (ed.), Lessings Leben und Werk in Daten und Bildern (Frankfurt a/M 1967) 217–218.

there was his fruitful friendship with Giacomo Durazzo and Raniero Calzabigi, both of whom considered themselves citizens in good standing of the republic of letters, and were as responsible as anyone for keeping Kaunitz up with the latest intellectual developments. In addition, Kaunitz was not only familiar with the outpourings of the *Il Caffè* group, but often much influenced by their thought. Many of its most prominent members found service in the Austrian administration of Milan, or were granted academic engagements thanks to Kaunitz. These included the leading political economists of their day, Pietro Verri and Alfonso Longo, the historian and economist, Gianrinaldo Carli, the influential social reformer and philosopher, Cesare Beccaria, the outstanding poet, Giuseppe Parini, and above all, the mathematician and encyclopedic *philosophe*, Paolo Frisi, whose erudition Kaunitz especially prized.⁸³ In short, Kaunitz was a good citizen of the republic of letters in the eighteenth century, and whatever his relationship with or debt to specific *philosophes*, he explicitly considered himself to be one of them. As he wrote to Count Silva, he had every right to call himself a “*philosophe*” because he was interested in “public enlightenment and the abolition of harmful prejudices for the sake of humanity.”⁸⁴ Though Voltaire could on occasion lavish flattery shamelessly, there was more than a grain of truth and sincerity in a 1766 letter to Kaunitz: “We [*philosophes*] ask only to show Europe how much progress true philosophy, that is to say beneficial philosophy (*philisofie bienfaisante*), has made in our century. You, sir, are at the head of those who encourage this.”⁸⁵

While Kaunitz may have been the most distinguished and influential member of the Enlightenment party in the Habsburg Monarchy, he was by no means alone even among his aristocratic peers. While the subject still needs scholarly investigation, there appears to have been a dramatic turn to a broad cosmopolitan literacy in Austrian aristocratic circles in the second half of the eighteenth century. We get a glimpse of such channels of literary transmission from the correspondence between Kaunitz’s friend and confidant, Giacomo Durazzo, and the Parisian poet and dramatist, Charles Simon Favart. The latter not only forwarded theatrical materials to Vienna, but acted as Durazzo’s “literary agent” by keeping him advised of all Parisian publications and filling book orders where requested.⁸⁶ From

⁸³ Adam WANDRUSZKA, *Österreich und Italien im 18. Jahrhundert* (Vienna 1963) 59–83; Franco VENTURI, *Settecento riformatore* vol. V: *L’Italia dei lumi (1764–1790)*, Part 1: *La rivoluzione di Corsica. Le grandi carestie degli anni sessanta. La Lombardia delle riforme* (Turin 1987), 769–773.

⁸⁴ HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Wissenschaft und Kunst, carton 1, Kaunitz to Silva, 29 March 1769. It is not clear whether the correspondent was the elder Count Emanuel Silva-Tarouca, or his Austrian-born son, Franz.

⁸⁵ Theodore BESTERMAN et al. (eds.), *Les oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, 135 vols. (Geneva 1953–1965) vol. 114 295–296. For more details on Kaunitz’s engagement with Enlightenment thought, see SZABO, *Kaunitz and enlightened absolutism* 20–35 and *passim*.

⁸⁶ Charles Simon FAVART, *Mémoires et Correspondance Littéraires, Dramatiques et Anecdotes* 3 vols. (Paris 1808, reprinted Geneva 1970) I, II, *passim*; Favart as “agent littéraire,” I, 7;

the diary of the young Count Karl Zinzendorf, who arrived in Vienna in 1761, we get a clear picture of just how *au courant* Viennese high society was with an amazingly broad spectrum of Western (and especially French) books. Voltaire and the *Encyclopédie* were apparently common currency with both men and women at social gatherings,⁸⁷ and new books appeared to have been passed from hand to hand, and avidly devoured by each reader in turn.⁸⁸ From the sheer range of titles, from politics and philosophy, through science to erotica, it would appear that whatever censorship restrictions might have existed for the broader public, there seemed to be virtually no restrictions on the reading of the elites.⁸⁹

If this was one example of Furet's "horizontal solidarity," so was the approach to art. Widely known as a patron of the arts and a fierce promoter of public cultural institutions, such as the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, Kaunitz remodeled a part of his summer residence in the Viennese suburb of Mariahilf (which also housed his *salon*) into a gallery, which he made accessible to the same broad spectrum of nobles and non-nobles.⁹⁰ On a more official level, he supervised the transfer and systematic rearrangement of the imperial art collection to the Belvedere palace where both students of the Academy and the general educated public were, upon his recommendation, also admitted free of charge.⁹¹ We see this pattern of noble collectors turning their private collections virtually into public museums

Durazzo's request to be kept informed on all publications, I, 86.

⁸⁷ Some typical examples: HHStA, Kabinettsarchiv: Tagebuch Zinzendorf, vol. 6, 16 March 1761; vol. 11, 5 October 1766; vol. 17, 7 January 1772. Cf. *Jugendtagebücher* 198.

⁸⁸ Thus, for example, Zinzendorf received Arthur Young from Kaunitz's seventeen-year-old [!] daughter, and Rousseau from Princess Kinsky. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, 10 May 1762; vol. 8, 8 April 1763. Cf. *Jugendtagebücher* 318–319.

⁸⁹ Customs officials, Ludwig Zinzendorf advised his brother Karl, searched the bags but not the pockets of nobles. Casual mention of friends and relatives in high places would also guarantee "a more gentle treatment" when importing forbidden books. DOZA, *Handschriften*, vol. 64, Ludwig Zinzendorf to Karl Zinzendorf, 8 September 1766.

⁹⁰ Jiří Kroupa, Václav Antonín Kaunitz-Rietberg a výtvarná umění. Kulturní politika nebo umělecký mecenát? in: *Studia comeniana et historica* 18 (1988) 71–79; *idem.*, Václav Antonín kníže Kounic-Rietberg a jeho doba / Václav Antonín kníže Kounic-Rietberg a výtvarné umění, Catalogue for the two exhibitions of the same name held at the Historické museum - zámek Slavkov u Brna, June to December 1994, and the Muzeum města Brna - Letohrádek Mitrovských, June to September 1994 (Brno 1994); *idem.*, Fürst Wenzel Anton Kaunitz-Rietberg. Ein Kunstmäzen und Curieux der Aufklärung, in: Klingenstein, Szabo, Staatskanzler Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz-Rietberg 360–382; Szabo, Kaunitz and enlightened absolutism 197–204.

⁹¹ HHStA, Familienarchiv: Sammelbände, carton 70, Joseph to Kaunitz, 22 November 1780. Cf. Gerlinde GRUBER, "'En un mot j'ai pensé à tout.' Das Engagement des Wenzel Anton Kaunitz-Rietberg für die Neuaufstellung der Gemäldegalerie im Belvedere," in: *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien* 10 (2008), 191–205; Ernst WANGERMANN, Maria Theresa: A reforming monarchy, in: A.G. DICKENS (ed.), *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage and Royalty, 1400–1800* (London 1977) 303; Alfons LHOTSKY, *Festschrift des Kunsthistorischen Museums zur Feier des Fünfzigjährigen Bestandes*, section II: Die Geschichte der Sammlungen, part 2: Von Maria Theresia bis zum Ende der Monarchie (Vienna 1941–1945) 445–446.

repeated by other magnate families, with the collection of the Princes Liechtenstein and their summer palace-cum-gallery in the Viennese suburb of Rossau being the most famous and extensive.⁹² But perhaps the best example of “horizontal solidarity” was in the Masonic movement, which reached its high point of popularity and influence in the Habsburg Monarchy in the second half of the eighteenth century, and which explicitly erased class distinctions among its members.⁹³ While Kaunitz does not appear to have been a Mason himself – unlike his father, his sons and many associates in his immediate circle – it is clear that he was sympathetic to their ideals.⁹⁴

David Bell has argued that in France changes in the “realm of material organization” contributed to the perception of France as a cohesive community. He focused in particular on ever more effective government administration, the explosion of print media and the emergence of what Jürgen Habermas called the “bourgeois public sphere.”⁹⁵ We have already seen how Kaunitz saw the strengthening of centripetal forces as vital to the modernization of the Monarchy; awareness of the importance of the emergence of public opinion and the role of print media in the process accompanied this conviction. As Wangermann has shown, one of the consequences of the tide of enlightened reform in Habsburg Central Europe was the emergence of an increasingly politically conscious public, which was accelerated when Joseph II’s sensational loosening of the censorship laws in June 1781 unleashed a flood of pamphlets and brochures that enthusiastically availed them-

⁹² Evelin OBERHAMMER, Die Fürsten von Liechtenstein im 18. Jahrhundert, in: Amt der niederösterreichischen Landesregierung (ed.), Adel – Bürger – Bauern im 18. Jahrhundert, Catalogue for the exhibition of the same name held in Schallaburg, Lower Austria, May to November 1980 (Mödling 1980) 16–17; Johann KRÄFTNER, Die Geschichte der Fürstlichen Sammlung, in: Johann KRÄFTNER (ed.), Liechtenstein Museum in Wien: Die Sammlungen (Munich–Berlin–London–N.Y. 2004) 11–25. The summer palace in the Rossau was re-opened as a public museum by Prince Hans-Adam II of Liechtenstein in 2004.

⁹³ The literature on the Masonic movement in Austria is enormous, in part because of Mozart’s membership in the Order. The best introduction remains Edith ROSENSTRAUCH-KÖNIGSBERG, Freimaurerei im josephinischen Wien: Aloys Blumauers Weg von Jesuiten zum Jakobiner (Vienna–Stuttgart 1975), as well as her collection of essays published under the title Zirkel und Zentren: Aufsätze zur Aufklärung in Österreich am Ende des 18. Jahrhundert, edited by Gunnar HERING and introduced by Ernst WANGERMANN (Vienna, n.d. [1992]). Cf. also BALÁZS, Hungary and the Habsburgs 33–42. The otherwise laudable Margaret JACOB, Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe (Oxford 1991) is weak on the Habsburg Monarchy.

⁹⁴ NOVOTNY, Staatskanzler Kaunitz als geistige Persönlichkeit 215–216.

⁹⁵ David A. Bell, The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680–1800 (Cambridge, Mass. 2001; pb. 2003) 27–35. The quotation from Habermas in Jürgen Habermas, The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society, translated by Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence. (Cambridge, Mass., c 1989) 14 [translation of Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit : Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft (Darmstadt 1978)]

selves of the new freedom.⁹⁶ The literary level of these publications may have been modest, but their impact came precisely from their accessibility. As Kaunitz's librarian, the writer Johann Pezzl put it: "Books educate scholars; pamphlets educate people."⁹⁷ The political utility of such literature was something Kaunitz had stressed as early as 1768,⁹⁸ and in the 1780s he even had his own reports to the emperor published in this medium in order to win public support for the cause of reform.⁹⁹ Again, the need for "horizontal solidarity" among proponents of enlightened reform is the animating factor, and, indeed, it was precisely Joseph II's contempt for the print media that elicited this bitter assessment, written after the emperor's death for his successor, Leopold II:

His [Joseph II's] express low opinion and inclination toward scholarship and letters (*Schriften*) not only retarded the germination of an Austrian literary culture ... but, above all, also promoted the general spread of a hostile and in some respects very harmful [public] opinion against government institutions and measures. As worthy of imitation as many of the intentions and measures of this prince were in various regards, I must stress all the more frankly the damage he caused in this regard.¹⁰⁰

In short, understanding and enlisting public opinion was yet another sphere that required noble adaptation.

Wenzel Anton Kaunitz frequently identified himself as a "Bohemian noble,"¹⁰¹ but as first minister of the Habsburg Monarchy and, in P.G.M. Dickson's phrase, virtual "third head of state" beside Maria Theresa and Joseph II,¹⁰² he clearly had a unique perspective on nobility in the Habsburg Monarchy. The society of orders remained the premise of his notions of "citizenship," but citizenship itself came to demand – of the nobility as much as of everyone else – merit, service and patriotism. Animated by a strong commitment to the reform impulses of the Enlightenment, Kaunitz's arguments are essentially based on what he understood to be the

⁹⁶ Ernst WANGERMAN, *Die Waffen der Publizität: Zum Funktionswandel der politischen Literatur unter Joseph II.* (Vienna–Munich 2004). Cf. IDEM., *From Joseph II to the Jacobin Trials: Government Policy and Public Opinion in the Habsburg Dominions in the Period of the French Revolution*, 2nd edition (London 1969) 12–25; IDEM., *Austrian Achievement* 130–147; Marianne LUNZER, *Josephinisches und antijosephinisches Schrifttum*, in: Erich ZÖLLNER (ed.), *Öffentliche Meinung in der Geschichte Österreichs* (Vienna 1979) 52–63; Oskar SASHEGHYI, *Zensur und Geistesfreiheit unter Joseph II.* (Budapest 1958).

⁹⁷ Cited in WANGERMAN, *Austrian Achievement* 137.

⁹⁸ Ernst WANGERMAN, *Deutscher Patriotismus und österreichischer Reformabsolutismus im Zeitalter Josephs II.*, in: Heinrich LUTZ, Helmut RUMPLER (eds.), *Österreich und die deutsche Frage im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna 1982) 62.

⁹⁹ WANGERMAN, *Waffen der Publizität* 64–66.

¹⁰⁰ Elemér MÁLYUSZ, *Kaunitz über die Kulturpolitik der Habsburgermonarchie*, in: *Südostdeutsche Forschungen* [now renamed *Südostforschungen*] 2 (1937), 11.

¹⁰¹ Jiří KROUPA, *Alchymie štěstí: Pozdní osvícenství a moravská společnost, 1770–1810* (Brno–Kroměříž 1986) 18.

¹⁰² DICKSON, *Finance and Government I*, 255.

patent imperative of aristocratic adaptation. As R.J.W. Evans has shown, the nobility consolidated its position in the Habsburg Monarchy during the seventeenth century on the basis of the seigneurial system, Catholic orthodoxy and loyalty to the dynasty. By the mid-eighteenth century, however, the resulting polity found itself confronted by challenges “from new circumstances and ideas” that undermined the premise of the Baroque Counter-Reformation establishment. On the one hand, the Monarchy proved increasingly uncompetitive in the highly competitive world of emerging proto-national states of the eighteenth century, and on the other the whole Baroque world had begun to crumble before the emancipatory credo of the Enlightenment.¹⁰³ Bell’s argument for France, that in an increasing secular age, patriotism was filling a void left after “God’s ‘withdrawal’ from the world,”¹⁰⁴ therefore has some validity for the Habsburg case as well. But as Kaunitz understood it – quite contrary to the French case – this was not perceived as a mandate for a noble alternative to putative monarchical “despotism;” rather it was aimed at creating a more modern, production-oriented, dynamic political culture, stressing progress and rationality, and freeing individual energies in the pursuit of a society governed by law, to which the nobility would be required to adapt.

That part of this adaptation would also require, as has been argued in the British case, “a much broader access to citizenship,”¹⁰⁵ seemed self-evident. But just as further aristocratic participation required adaptation to the new rational and secular norms, broader access to “citizenship” for commoners also demanded adaptation. The obedient subject was now to be turned into the self-disciplined and self-reliant citizen, who served not his local lord but a new abstract entity called the state, and who did so less in the name of God than in the name of the common good. In a state-conglomerate as complex as the Habsburg Monarchy this could only be accomplished with a high degree of elite solidarity that cut across traditional class lines and perforce would lead to a limitation of the kind of monopoly of political power that nobles had theretofore enjoyed. Kaunitz had no sense that the nobility had any natural aptitude or God-given right to participate in this new political process, but he not only had every confidence that they could adapt but also a strong conviction that they had the duty to do so. And because conferring noble status or rank within the nobility became a reward for service, it is clear that the very concept of nobility was being turned on its head. As commerce councilor Franz Mygind put it in 1768 when criticizing a French naval officer’s insistence on noble birth for the officer corps of a future Habsburg Navy: “He assumes good sense only in people of noble birth. What presumption! It would be more correct to say that it is good sense that ennobles.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ EVANS, *Making of the Habsburg Monarchy*. Quotation on p. 448.

¹⁰⁴ BELL, *The Cult of the Nation* 27–32 (quotation on p. 28).

¹⁰⁵ LINDA COLLEY, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, Conn. 1992) 5.

¹⁰⁶ SZABO, *Unwanted Navy* 46.