

Austria-Hungary during the First World War: German-Language Material in the Seton-Watson Collection at New College Library, Oxford

Robert William Seton-Watson (1879–1951), New College alumnus, historian, and political commentator, had a profound influence on the politics of Central and Eastern Europe—a region he travelled extensively in after his graduation. ‘A progressive liberal, with Scottish and puritan sensibilities’,¹ Seton-Watson strongly supported the independence of several South-Eastern and Central European states following the First World War, most notably Czechoslovakia, as well as prioritising the study of the languages and cultures of these regions in Britain.² After his death, he left over 3,000 items to New College Library, which naturally reflect his life and research interests. An important and wide-ranging collection which contains works in several different languages, it has been excellently introduced in an earlier New College Note, written by Caitlín Kane.³

This new article aims to build on this earlier article and has three main aims. Firstly, and most broadly, it aims to highlight the existence of the rich Germanic material in this collection to researchers. Secondly, it narrows its focus to provide more detail on one aspect of its wide coverage—Austria-Hungary in the First World War—as it has particular strengths in this area. Finally, it intends to demonstrate its importance for historical study by exploring the wide variety of both primary and secondary sources within it and the historical debates it can help to address. After highlighting the newspaper content in the collection, its published books are discussed, before the article finishes by discussing two of the many pamphlets it contains—easily one of the richest parts of the entire collection due to their rarity.

To fully appreciate the wide variety of sources in the Seton-Watson collection in this area, it is first necessary to establish the historical background of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the start of the First World War. Shortly before the conflict, the Empire was increasingly divided by nationalistic tensions. As it covered such a diverse geographical area, stretching from the Swiss border in the West to modern Ukraine in the East, there was a corresponding diversity of cultures and languages within its borders. This diversity is evident in the mobilization posters for the Austro-Hungarian army at the outbreak of the war—they were written in fifteen different languages.⁴ These different nationalities, despite fighting in the same army, had been vying for position within the Empire for decades. Following demands for more national rights and liberalism,⁵ Kaiser Franz Joseph I (1830–1916) had split the Empire into two equal parts in 1867, Austria and Hungary,⁶ with Hungary receiving home rule.⁷ This division had only caused further conflict, both between Austria and Hungary as they vied for power and with the other Slavic areas of the Empire that wanted more recognition for their individual nationalities. Indeed, the situation was so fractious that it was almost impossible to govern. A Reichsrat, or Imperial Parliament, had been created in Vienna to address these issues, granting universal suffrage in 1907. By 1910, though, nationalistic divisions had made the passing of any legislation almost impossible without the use of emergency decree.⁸ A tripartite solution, with capitals in Vienna, Budapest, and Zagreb,

¹ Wickham Steed, revised by R. J. W. Evans, ‘Watson, Robert William Seton- (1879–1951)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 September 2010) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/36024>> (Accessed: 12 June 2024).

² Seton-Watson was instrumental in the foundation of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, now part of University College London. For more information about the school, visit <www.ucl.ac.uk/ssees/centenary/ssees-past> (Accessed: 12 June 2024).

³ Caitlín Kane, ‘“Scotus Viator”: R. W. Seton-Watson and the Making of Czechoslovakia’, *New College Notes* 18 (2022), no. 10.

⁴ Norman Stone, *Europe Transformed 1878–1919* (London: Fontana Press, 1985), p. 303.

⁵ Such demands were part of a series of revolutions in the mid-19th century, which saw the rise of powerful nationalist movements across Europe. See Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 9.

⁶ Stone, *Europe Transformed*, p. 305.

⁷ Martyn Rady, *The Habsburg Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 6.

⁸ Stone, *Europe Transformed*, p. 309.

was supported by Archduke Franz Ferdinand (1863–1914),⁹ but his assassination brought an end to any hope of a compromise, with the additional consequence of an Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia—the spark that led to the First World War itself.

These difficulties faced by Austria-Hungary both before and during the First World War have been much discussed by historians. On the one hand, it is argued that the Empire in the early 20th century was already a historical anachronism, pre-destined to fail. C. A. Macartney, for example, argues that Franz Joseph's 'attempt to make his peoples forget their national loyalties in an a-national one had never enjoyed even a semblance of success in Hungary or Galicia, and its failure in the West had become obvious' even by 1859.¹⁰ Norman Stone supports this, writing that the Dual-Monarchy system was a 'preposterous way to run a country',¹¹ with the last fifty years of the monarchy's history being seen as 'the inevitable decline and fall of a dynastic supra-national state unable to resist the tide of nationalism'.¹²

On the other hand, more recent historians have started to counter these claims, arguing that the reality is likely to be more complicated. Some have argued that the Austro-Hungarian Empire was, in fact, a solution to the problems of competing nationalities in Central and Eastern Europe, with George Kennan writing that the 'Austro-Hungarian Empire still looks better as a solution to the tangled problems of that part of the world than anything that has succeeded it'.¹³ This viewpoint is echoed by Martyn Rady, who argues that the Habsburgs in fact governed the region more effectively than the thirteen republics that eventually replaced it.¹⁴ Instead, historians have argued that it was the unprecedented stress of the First World War that caused the Empire's demise, as 'there was no domestic or even foreign threat to its integrity until 1918'.¹⁵ As Pieter M. Judson points out, the true impact of the war on the country was not the fighting on the frontline, but rather the unprecedented effect of the conflict on people's living standards¹⁶—through food shortages and disease—which were previously unimaginable.¹⁷ It was not the political system that caused collapse, he argues, but rather the state's failure to address these shortages that 'imperilled its popular legitimacy'.¹⁸ Such historical debates started soon after the end of the conflict and continue to the present day, making the contemporary sources present in the Seton-Watson collection key subjects of modern historical enquiry.

Now that we have established the historical background behind the conflict, we can turn to these very sources. The Seton-Watson collection, as mentioned above, is particularly rich as it contains several primary sources for historians of this period, including many newspaper issues. Here, a few examples from this extensive collection are highlighted. Below, you can see the front page of the newspaper *Pester Lloyd* from 22 November 1916¹⁹—a particularly important date for the history of Austria-Hungary as it was the date that the death of the Emperor Franz Joseph I was announced.

⁹ Rady, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 6.

¹⁰ C. A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire 1790–1918* (London: Faber, 2010), p. 480.

¹¹ Stone, *Europe Transformed*, p. 309.

¹² Steven Beller, *A Concise History of Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 141.

¹³ Quoted in Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815–1918*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 4.

¹⁴ Rady, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 108.

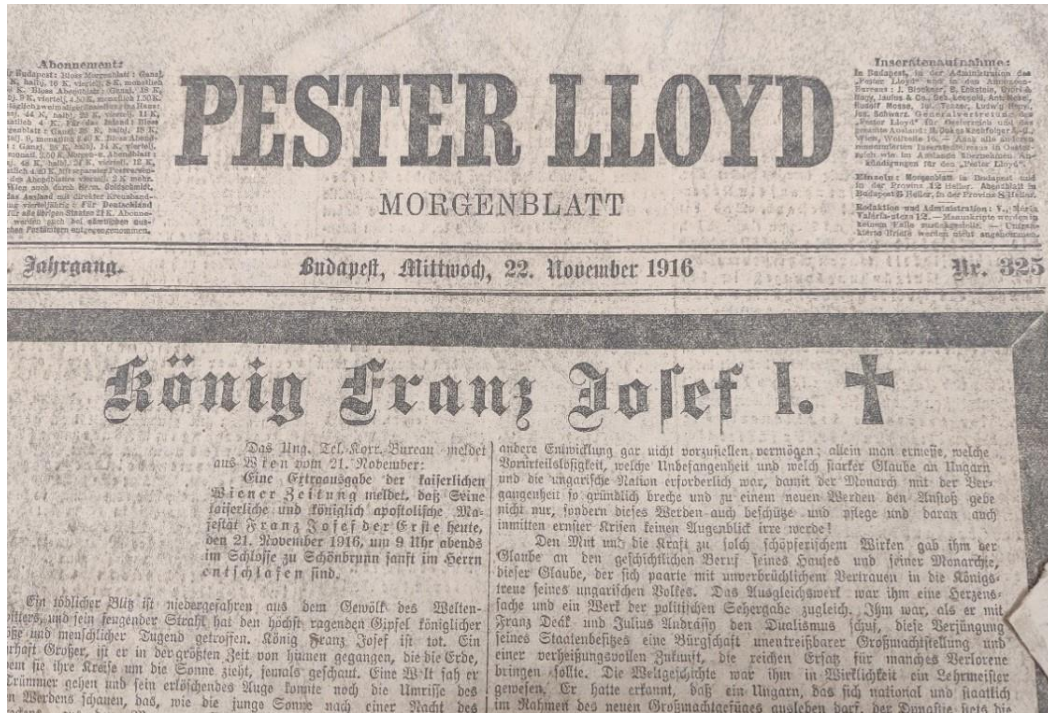
¹⁵ Sked, *Decline and Fall*, p. 6.

¹⁶ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 387.

¹⁷ Maureen Healy, *Vienna and the Fall of the Habsburg Empire: Total War and Everyday Life in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 300.

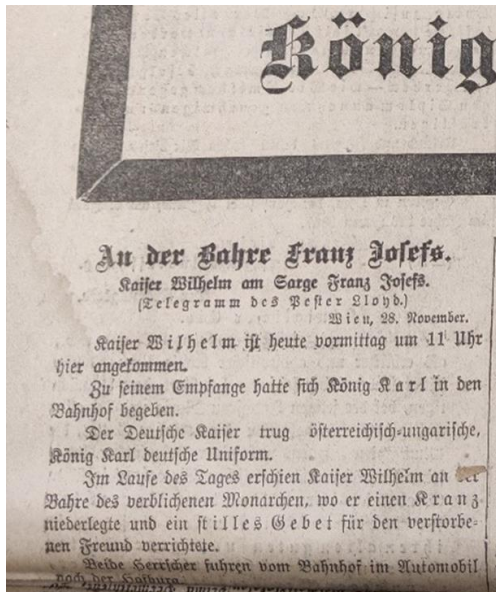
¹⁸ Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, p. 387.

¹⁹ *Pester Lloyd* newspaper series, New College Library, Oxford, SWN01.



The front-page of *Pester Lloyd*, 22 November 1916
New College Library, Oxford, SWN01

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'Kaiser Wilhelm at Franz Joseph's coffin'
Pester Lloyd, 28 November 1916
New College Library, Oxford, SWN01

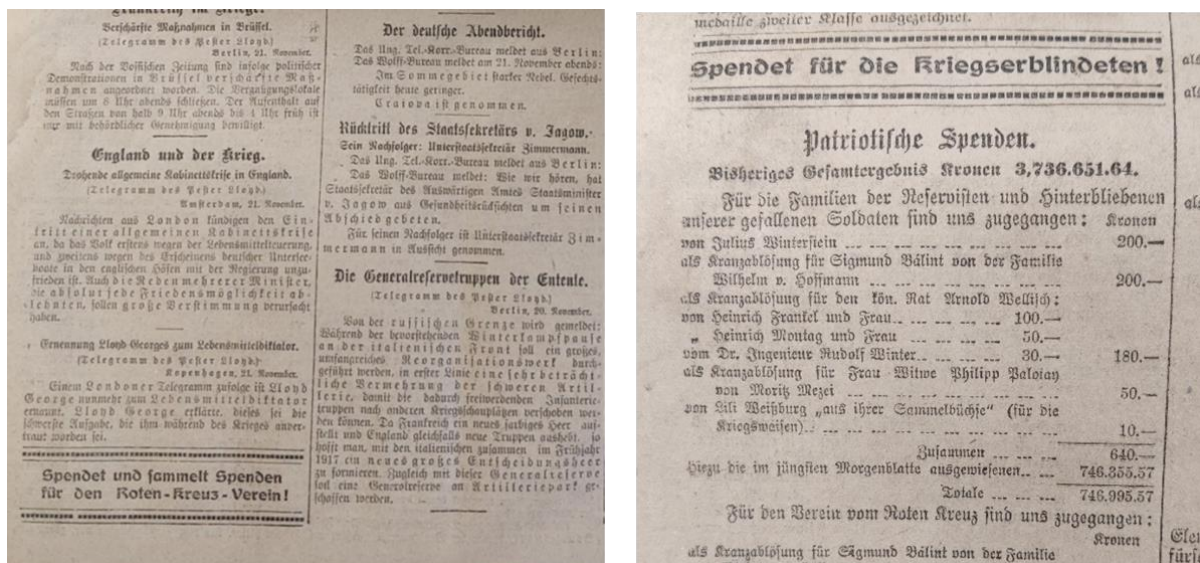
Pester Lloyd was an influential newspaper in the Empire, first founded in 1854 and aimed at German speaking merchants in Pest, the Hungarian capital. It defended the Habsburg Monarchy and supported the dual state approach developed after 1867 by Franz Joseph.²⁰ In the Seton-Watson collection, there is a series of issues from the Emperor's death on 21 November until 30 November 1916, including both early and evening editions. A rare primary resource from Austria-Hungary during the First World War, it gives a unique insight into daily life in the Empire during the conflict. Naturally, there is extensive discussion of Franz Joseph, with the newspaper including a detailed biography and information about the funeral preparations. On the left, you can see an announcement of the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II to Vienna after Franz Joseph's death, so that he could pay his respects in person.

In other parts of the issues, though, we gain a greater glimpse into the true extent of the war. Firstly, it is possible to see the true geographical scale of the conflict.

Below on the left, you can see the section of the newspaper that includes reports from all the different theatres of the war. There is a report from the Italian Front, a report about a suspected 'cabinet crisis' in the British Government due to food shortages, a report about the success of German U-Boats in the English Channel, and a report about the difficulties faced by Russian

²⁰ Andrea Seidler, 'Pester Lloyd and the German-Speaking Upper Classes of Hungary: A Budapest Newspaper in the Context of Increasing Magyarisation', in *Narrated Empires: Perceptions of Late Habsburg and Ottoman Multinationalism*, ed. Johanna Chovanec and Olof Heilo (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), pp. 239, 254.

troops on the Eastern Front. A primary source of war propaganda, it gives an insight into the ways that citizens in Austria-Hungary were informed about this fast-moving conflict, fought on an unprecedented scale.



Reports from the various frontlines (left)
 A list of patriotic donations to raise money for those affected by the conflict (right)
 Both from *Pester Lloyd*, 22 November 1916
 New College Library, Oxford, SWN01

Finally, in other parts of this newspaper series, it is possible to learn more about the impact of the war on day-to-day life, with the true scale of human suffering caused by the conflict very evident. Above on the right you can see a list of donations, listed below the text ‘Spendet für die Kriegserblindeten!’—a call to donate to those blinded by the conflict. Underneath, there is a list of donations made to the families of fallen soldiers. Many of these payments are a ‘Kranzablösung’. Literally translated as a ‘wreath replacement’, this described a payment made in lieu of expensive funeral arrangements to support surviving family members. The listing of individual names and the large sum of money raised (over three million krone) puts into perspective the true human cost of the war on the population.

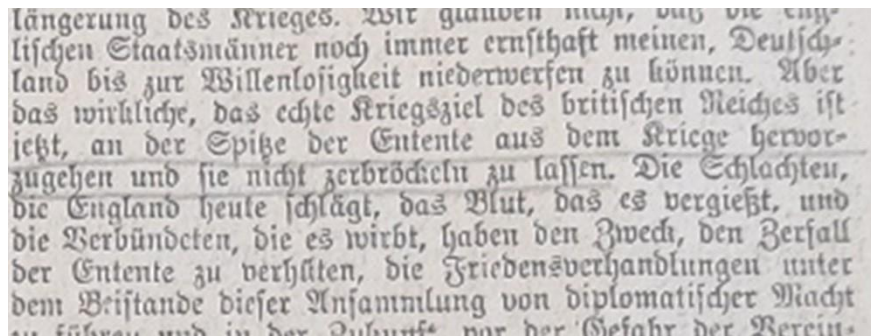
The newspaper collection is so interesting because it also stretches across multiple years of the First World War. Below, you can see the front page from another newspaper, the *Neue Freie Presse*,²¹ this time from 27 May 1917 when Austria-Hungary was already looking towards the end of the conflict. Described as the ‘leading Viennese newspaper’,²² this important publication was founded in 1864 and ran until 1939. The main headline for this issue discusses the peace objectives of Austria-Hungary, entitled ‘The War Aims of the Monarchy: Peace and the Smaller Nations’. After first discussing the food supply issues in the Empire, caused by harsh weather and the ongoing conflict,²³ the newspaper argues that a lasting peace in Europe would not be possible if there were still a conflict in the Balkans after the war—with the relationship between Austria-Hungary, Serbia, and Romania being particularly important. As such, this article somewhat predicts the future, as these issues were not resolved in the peace negotiations, causing ongoing instability in the Balkans for decades after the end of the First World War.

²¹ *Neue Freie Presse* newspaper series, New College Library, Oxford, SWN01.
²² *The Oxford Companion to German Literature*, ed. Henry Garland and Mary Garland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) <www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198158967.001.0001/acref-9780198158967-e-3829> (Accessed: 13 June 2024).
²³ Due to Allied blockades, food shortages became acute as the war progressed. In 1917, conditions had deteriorated so much in Vienna that each citizen was only allocated 830 calories of food per day. See Healy, *Vienna*, p. 31.



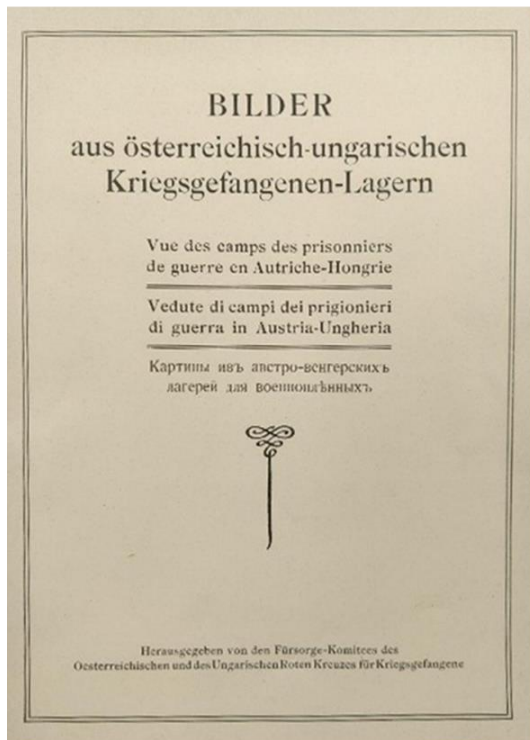
Front-page of the *Neue Freie Presse*, 27 May 1917
New College Library, Oxford, SWN01

This newspaper article is of further historical interest as the section mentioned above has also been highlighted in pencil, presumably by Seton-Watson himself. This conclusion is further supported in the close-up image of part of the article on the right, as the text that has been highlighted refers to the war aims of Britain—naturally of interest to Seton-Watson. At this point, the article argues that the main war aim of the British Empire was to emerge from the conflict as the head of the Entente alliance and to not let this alliance between France, the United Kingdom, and Russia fail after the end of hostilities. This second newspaper source, therefore, is interesting on several levels. Firstly, it acts as a useful comparison to the earlier *Pester Lloyd* issues, providing more contemporary reaction to events during the First World War from an Austro-Hungarian perspective. Secondly, it also provides a possible link to Seton-Watson himself through these manuscript additions. It represents opinion during the very last few years of the Empire and starts to consider what would replace it—a process that Seton-Watson would be actively involved in throughout the interwar period.



Manuscript highlighting of text, presumably by Seton-Watson
Neue Freie Presse, 27 May 1917 [detail]
New College Library, Oxford, SWN01

The newspapers make up only one small part of the Seton-Watson collection. We can now turn our attention to some particular highlights from the largest group contained within it—printed books relating to the history of Eastern and Central Europe. Again, many of these publications are written in German. One significant item from this collection is the book pictured below, which appeared in 1918.



The title-page, a picture of Christmas celebrations (p. 5), and a picture of a reading lesson (p. 77)
New College Library, Oxford, SW1071

Entitled ‘Pictures from Austro-Hungarian Prisoner of War Camps’ in English,²⁴ this book was published by the Austro-Hungarian Red Cross to demonstrate the quality of their camps to an international audience—it is deliberately written not only in German, but also in French, Italian, and Russian. The book is mainly pictorial, with hundreds of images of camps throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the image above, you can see both the title-page of this volume and some images contained within it. On the top right, Christmas celebrations in one camp are depicted and, on the bottom right, you can see illiterate prisoners of war taking part in a reading lesson. This work is important, both due to its rarity²⁵ and due to its role as a piece of wartime propaganda. In the book, Austrian prisoner of war camps are depicted as safe, sanitary, and with a focus on recreation and education. The true scale of its propaganda is revealed through historical investigation into the prisoner of war camps in the Empire. Throughout the First World War, a total of between 1.86 million and 2.3 million prisoners of war were kept in Austria-Hungary²⁶ a huge number that the authorities were simply not prepared for. Instead of the organised camps presented in this source, planning deficiencies at the start of the conflict caused rapid outbreaks of epidemics, especially in the winter of 1914/15.²⁷ As the conflict continued, authorities did manage to improve the conditions in some camps, as indicated in this source. Buildings were improved, facilities upgraded, and, as indicated above, there were even attempts to educate Russian soldiers. (Although this did come from a position of cultural superiority—the Austrian authorities

²⁴ Red Cross Austria-Hungary, *Bilder aus österreichisch-ungarischen Kriegsgefangenen-Lagern* (Vienna: C. Hermann, 1918), New College Library, Oxford, SW1071.

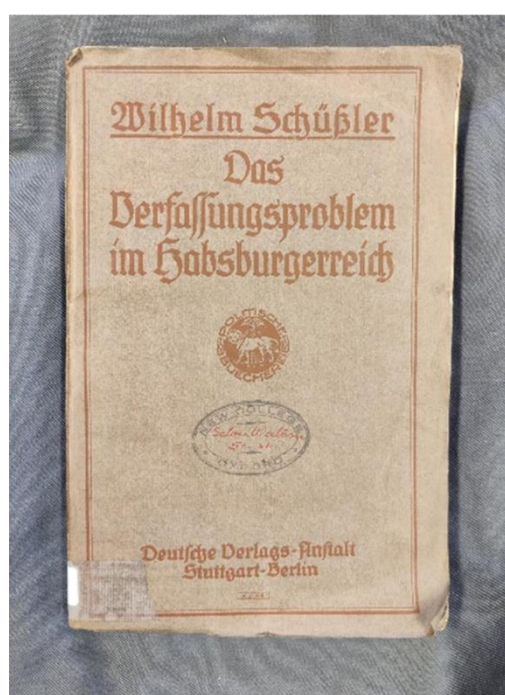
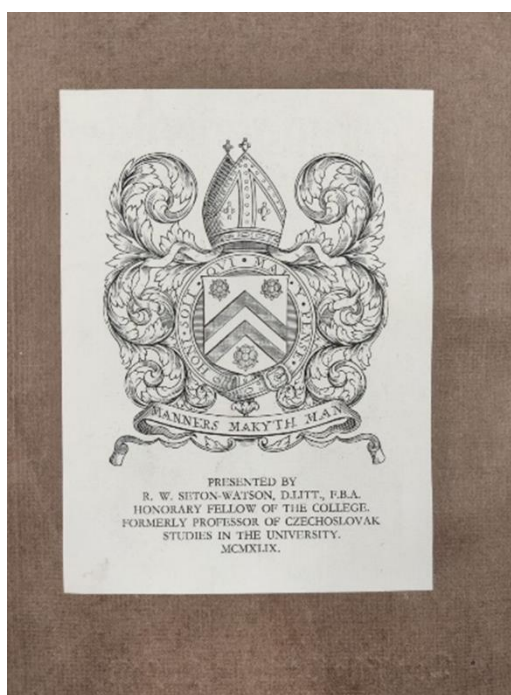
²⁵ There is only [one copy](#) of this book in libraries in the United Kingdom, and only [eight physical copies](#) in the world—the majority of them understandably in Austrian libraries.

²⁶ Christian Steppan, ‘The Camp Newspaper *Nedelja* as a Reflection of the Experience of Russian Prisoners of War in Austria-Hungary’, in *Other Fronts, Other Wars? First World War Studies on the Eve of the Centennial*, ed. Joachim Bürgschwentner, Matthias Egger, and Gunda Barth-Scalmani (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 167–94, at p. 169.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 169.

considered soldiers from the east to be particularly ‘rough and uneducated’).²⁸ Despite these initial improvements, though, there was a continued reduction in conditions as the war progressed. Towards the end of the conflict, as shown above, Austria-Hungary experienced a marked food shortage, which resulted in a ‘general crisis in provisioning the civilian population’.²⁹ As such, food began to be diverted from the camps, causing living conditions to further decline. This book, therefore, is without doubt a work of war propaganda, one written to present a situation that was not completely accurate either at the start or the end of hostilities.

The second book, pictured below, was also published towards the end of the war in 1918, but has a very different subject matter. Instead of the Austro-Hungarian perspective of the conflict outlined in the sources discussed thus far, this source provides an alternative German perspective of their allies in Austria-Hungary. Entitled ‘The Constitutional Problem in the Habsburg Empire’,³⁰ the source was written by the German historian Wilhelm Schüssler (1888–1965), who was a noted historian not only of Austria, but also of the German Empire under Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm II. Here, you can see both the title-page of the book, as well as the New College Library bookplate at the front of it, which records Seton-Watson’s donation.



New College bookplate for the Seton-Watson collection, recording his donation (left)

Front cover of the volume (right)

New College Library, Oxford, SW1221

Considering the fact that Austria-Hungary and Germany were close allies during this period, the attitude expressed towards the Habsburg Empire is, at first glance, perhaps surprising. Instead of two equal allies, a sense of superiority from Germany is apparent right from the first page, with Austria-Hungary considered to be notably unimportant for its more powerful neighbour. In the preface, for example, Schüssler writes that when the Empire was mentioned in Germany before the war:

²⁸ Verena Moritz, ‘The Treatment of Prisoners of War in Austria-Hungary 1914/1915’, in *1914: Austria-Hungary, the Origins, and the First Year of World War I*, ed. Günter Bischof, Ferdinand Karhofer, and Samuel R. Williamson (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2014), pp. 233–46, at p. 235.

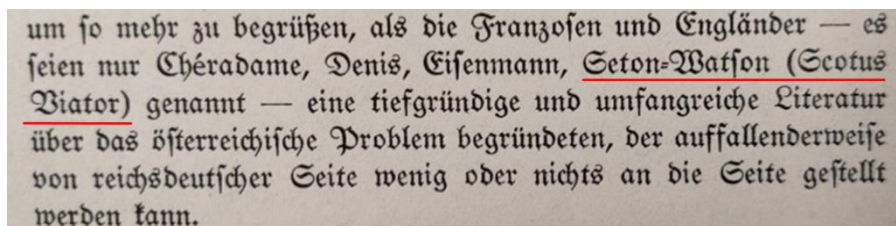
²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 237.

³⁰ Wilhelm Schüssler, *Das Verfassungsproblem im Habsburgerreich* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1918), New College Library, Oxford, SW1221.

die meisten Menschen das Thema mit einem Seufzer oder Achselzucken abzutun liebten; denn was wusste man viel von den „Reich der Unwahrscheinlichkeiten“, wie es einst treffend genannt wurde?³¹

[*most people tended to dismiss the subject with a sigh or a shrug of the shoulders; for what much did anyone know about the 'Empire of Improbabilities', as it used to be aptly called?*]

Indeed, Schüssler admits that he is writing this book to address this very lack of interest, contrasting the German approach to the attitude of the French and British, arguing that historians from these countries had researched Austria-Hungary and its importance in Europe more thoroughly. Below, you can see that one of the British historians mentioned in the book is none other than Seton-Watson himself—proving that he had an international contemporary following.



um so mehr zu begrüßen, als die Franzosen und Engländer — es seien nur Chéradame, Denis, Eisenmann, Seton-Watson (Scotus Viator) genannt — eine tiefgründige und umfangreiche Literatur über das österreichische Problem begründeten, der auffallenderweise von reichsdeutscher Seite wenig oder nichts an die Seite gestellt werden kann.

Seton-Watson, or 'Scotus Viator' mentioned in a contemporary source by German historian Wilhelm Schüssler
New College Library, Oxford, SW1221, p. 9

The structure of the book is straight-forward, providing a chronological overview of the Habsburg Empire and its attempts to address the long-running national disputes within its borders. It is particularly interesting from a historical perspective, though, not because of its content, but because it reveals the attitude of Germany not only towards Austria-Hungary as an Empire, but especially towards the German-speaking population within its borders. At the end of the book, the sense of German superiority alluded to in the preface is further expanded, as Schüssler highlights that all efforts must be made by Germany to stop the Habsburg Monarchy from developing into 'ein magyarisch-slawisches Imperium',³² or in other words an Empire increasingly dominated by its Hungarian and Slavic populations.³³ If this situation were to occur, he argues that the ten million German-speaking Austrians would be better served if Austria became part of the German Empire itself.³⁴ The dismissive attitude in this source is key, as it helps us to understand the often fractious relationship between the two Empires during the First World War. Although there was strong support of Austria-Hungary at the outbreak of hostilities, Austro-Hungarian military defeats and the re-emergence of nationality conflicts soon caused the German attitude to revert to the pre-war disdain described in this source, with critique rising especially in right-wing circles.³⁵ Austria-Hungary began to be seen as less of a partner and more as a liability—an ally that needed constant support and an Empire containing a German-speaking population that, in a clear foreshadowing of the 1930s, would be better served with political union with Germany.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 9.

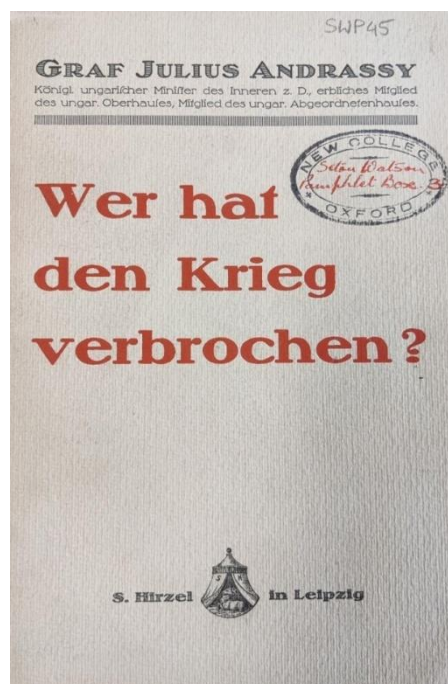
³² *ibid.*, p. 226.

³³ Although this source expresses a deliberate pro-German sentiment, this statement is not completely unfounded. The balance of power in the Empire had, in fact, started to shift following the establishment of the Dual-Monarchy after 1867, particularly with regards to Hungary. Over time, Hungary had negotiated an increasingly strong position in the governmental structures of the Monarchy in comparison to the other half of the Monarchy, Cisleithania, which consisted of the northern and western parts of the Empire. See: Steven Beller, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1815–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 181–2.

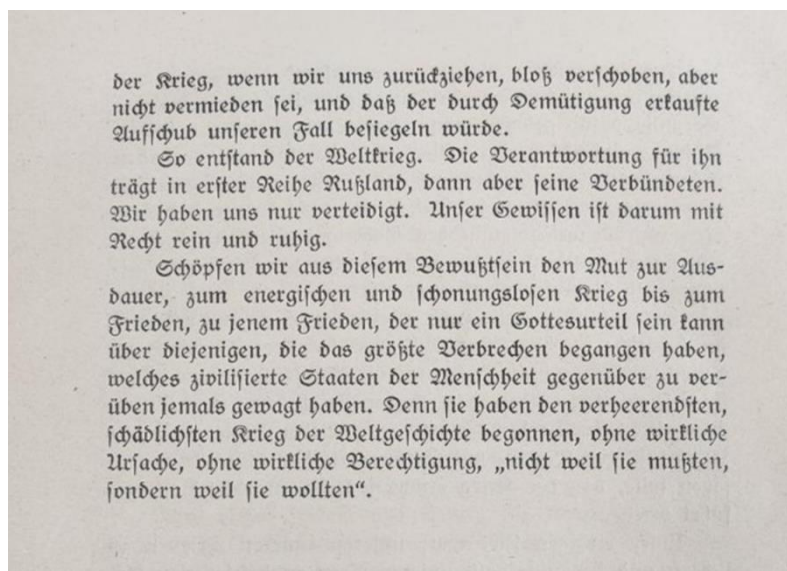
³⁴ Schüssler, *Versassungsproblem*, p. 226.

³⁵ Jan Vermeiren, *The First World War and German National Identity: The Dual Alliance at War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 345.

To conclude this note, we can shift our focus once more—this final time towards the significant collection of over 1,200 pamphlets included in the Seton-Watson collection. As with other parts of this collection, the pamphlets contain unique material relating to Austria-Hungary in the First World War. One highlight has to be the fascinating pamphlet pictured on the right. Entitled *Wer hat den Krieg verbrochen?* or ‘Who caused the war?’, this pamphlet was written in 1915 by Count Gyula Andrassy the Younger (1860–1929), a high-ranking member of the government (he served as the last Austro-Hungarian foreign minister in 1918) and a staunch supporter of Hungary’s entrance into the war in the previous year.³⁶ The pamphlet is divided into a series of short chapters, each focusing on a different country involved in the fighting and considering their actions in the years prior to the start of the conflict. The pamphlet’s most interesting part, therefore, is its conclusion, where Andrassy summarises his arguments and lays the blame of the war, unsurprisingly, on the enemy Entente powers. The bulk of the blame is attributed to Russia, with Andrassy arguing that Austria-Hungary was deliberately threatened by the Russian Empire, who had propagated a ‘großserbische Idee’, or Pan-Slavism in Serbia,³⁷ deliberately to undermine Austro-Hungarian unity and to secure Russian access to Asia through the Black Sea.³⁸ According to Andrassy, the Austro-Hungarian decision to invade Serbia was an act of self-defence, with the only aims being to ensure internal peace within the existing boundaries of the Empire and to put an end to the aggressive stance of Serbia outside the Empire that had been witnessed throughout the war.³⁹



Front cover of *Wer hat den Krieg verbrochen?*
New College Library, Oxford, SWP45



The final paragraphs of the pamphlet
New College Library, Oxford, SWP45

³⁶ Gyula Andrassy, *Wer hat den Krieg verbrochen?* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1915), New College Library, Oxford, SWP45.

³⁷ Andrassy, *Krieg*, p. 87.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 95.

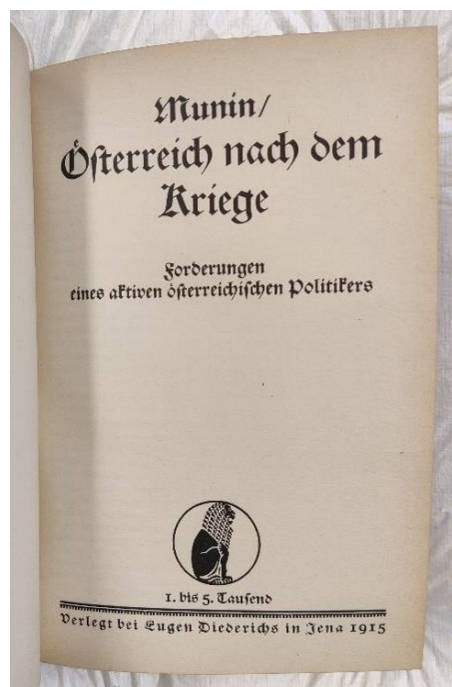
³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 95.

As can be seen in the final paragraphs of the pamphlet pictured above, Andrassy finishes with a discussion of the morality of the conflict, commenting that Germany and Austria-Hungary's conscience is clear ('Unser Gewissen ist darum Recht rein und ruhig').⁴⁰ The true scale of the war in comparison to previous conflicts is also highlighted, with Andrassy writing that the war was 'den verheerendsten, schädlichsten Krieg der Weltgeschichte'—the most devastating and most harmful war in world history. This attribution of moral blame is significant historically, as the question of war guilt was both a key part of the peace treaties in 1919⁴¹ and of the work of historians in the years after the conflict. The counter-argument to Andrassy's statements in this pamphlet, for example, states that an expansionist Germany in the early 20th century was always ready to threaten a European war to their advantage⁴² and that Austria-Hungary would have been reluctant to declare war without Germany's express backing.⁴³ This pamphlet, written in 1915, is key to understanding the outbreak of the First World War as it represents the very start of this historical debate.

The second pamphlet, pictured below right, reveals the true variety of sources in the Seton-Watson collection, as it again focuses on the end of the conflict—on an Austria-Hungary already considering its future after the war as early as 1915. Written by Austrian politician Karl Iro (1861–1934), under his pseudonym 'Munin', this pamphlet discusses the relationship between Austria-Hungary and Germany and considers the possible make-up of Austria-Hungary after the war.⁴⁴ After considering the demands of the 'alldutsche Partei' or pan-German party for a unification with the German Empire, Iro argues that such a move would create a politically unstable central Europe, writing that the 'Zerstümmung' or disintegration of Austria would create a series of smaller states to Austria's south east, all vying for position with each other and easily dominated by Russia. Instead, he argues that the Empire's future can only be secured if Austria-Hungary is split again, from two parts into four, namely:

1. The German-speaking areas of Austria and Triest;
2. Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Serbia;
3. Hungary;
4. Galicia, Bukowina, and Podolia, in the far east of the Empire.⁴⁵

These ideas are further explicated in the afterword to this pamphlet, *Österreich nach dem Kriege*, a picture of which can be seen below.



First page of *Österreich nach dem Kriege*
New College Library, Oxford, SW1179(2)

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 98.

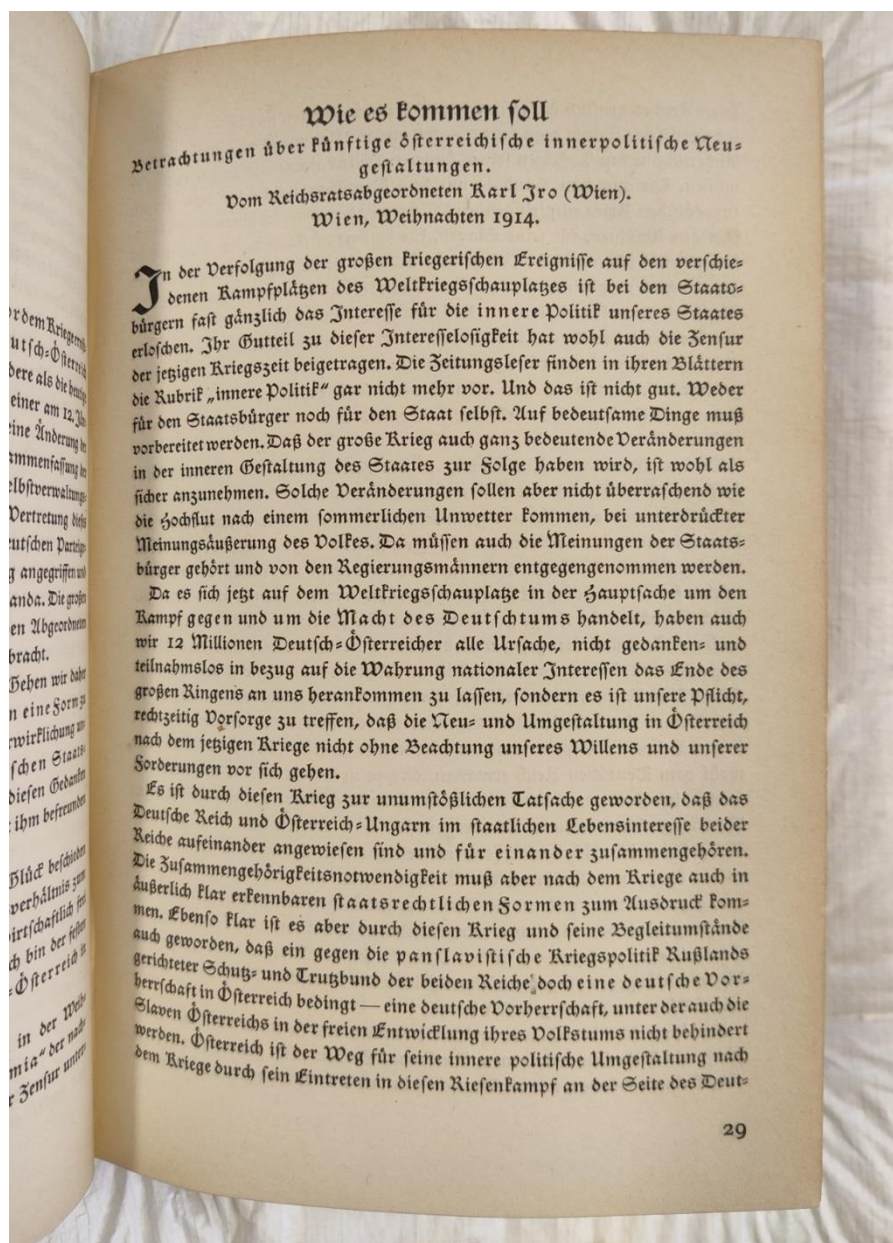
⁴¹ The finalised Treaty of Versailles with Germany placed the blame squarely with the Central Powers stating that '1. The War was premediated by the Central Powers together with their allies, Turkey and Bulgaria, and was the result of acts deliberately committed in order to make it unavoidable' and that '2. Germany, in agreement with Austria-Hungary, deliberately worked to defeat all the many conciliatory proposals made by the Entente powers and their repeated attempts to avoid war.' Quoted in Mark Hewitson, *Germany and the Causes of the First World War* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 223.

⁴² *ibid.*, p. 229.

⁴³ Michael Howard, *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 15.

⁴⁴ Munin [i.e. Karl Iro], *Österreich nach dem Kriege: Forderungen eines aktiven österreichischen Politikers* (Jena: Verlag bei Eugen Diederichs, 1915), New College Library, Oxford, SW1179(2).

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 1, 3, 17.



The first page of Karl Iro's afterword
New College Library, Oxford, SW1179(2)

Iro recognises that Austria-Hungary is reliant on the German Empire for military support, using the excellent German compound word 'Zusammengehörigkeitsnotwendigkeit' to give a sense of their need to work together.⁴⁶ Despite this, he also recognises a need to not be dominated by their German allies, as an Austria-Hungary dominated by German-speakers would be politically unacceptable to the other nationalities within the Empire's borders. Instead, he argues that the war should act as a catalyst to create a greater sense of Austro-Hungarian national identity that would respect and protect all nationalities within the Empire.⁴⁷ Consequently, this source effectively foreshadows the consequences that would be caused by the collapse of Austria-Hungary, in a similar manner to the *Neue Freie Presse* article and Schüssler's book discussed above. As part of the peace-negotiations at the end of the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian Empire did collapse, with the Treaty of St Germain creating a much smaller Austria centred on the German-speaking

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 30.

areas around Vienna, together with the independence of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Hungary.⁴⁸ Instead of peaceful cooperation or the continuation of the Empire argued in this source, the decades after the First World War were marked by political instability, with a militarization of the new borders and forced population transfers. Indeed, it has been argued that ‘far from resolving territorial conflicts . . . this re-mapping of East Central Europe in the wake of World War I made for more contestation.’⁴⁹ Taken together, these two pamphlets showcase a defence of the Austria-Hungarian Empire by its German-speaking political leaders. Crucial first-hand accounts of Austrian opinion during the First World War, they look both backwards to the start of the conflict and forwards into a future that would be completely altered by it.

In conclusion, this New College Note has demonstrated the true richness of the Seton-Watson collection. It has revealed that the collection contains a wealth of unique or rare primary and secondary material in German for an important part of European history. From newspapers to books and pamphlets, the collection includes both contemporary political thought and historical analysis, as well as providing a glimpse into everyday life in the Austro-Hungarian Empire during this unprecedented conflict. As seen above, there are still many debates between historians around the Austro-Hungarian Empire and its role in the First World War. Indeed, the starts of these debates can be glimpsed in the Seton-Watson collection itself—particularly regarding the future of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, its relations with Germany, and its effectiveness as a supra-national state. If we take just one of these research areas—the future of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the First World War—this article has shown that the Seton-Watson collection contains a wide range of contemporary viewpoints from both within Austria-Hungary itself and its close ally Germany. That is why this collection is so useful for historians. Together with the material at University College London,⁵⁰ Seton-Watson bequeathed to New College a collection that allows historians to gain a more accurate and multifaceted impression of this crucial region, and crucial moment, in European history. By necessity, this note has had to focus on a small number of these sources. In total, though, the Seton-Watson collection is just waiting to be researched in more detail and used to answer a much wider range of research questions.⁵¹

Will Shire
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⁴⁸ Holger H. Herwig, *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary 1914–1918*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 425.

⁴⁹ James Koranyi and Bernhard Struck, ‘Space: Empires, Nations, Borders’, in *The Routledge History of East Central Europe since 1700*, ed. Irina Livezeanu and Árpád von Klimó (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 27–80, at p. 56.

⁵⁰ There is a corresponding collection of Seton-Watson material held in the archives of University College London. For more information, please visit <www.ucl.ac.uk/library/ssees-archives/sew.htm> (Accessed 17 June 2024).

⁵¹ The Seton-Watson collection has been catalogued in its entirety and can be searched on SOLO. All items have the letters ‘SW’ as a prefix to their shelfmark. If you would prefer to browse through the collection, please contact library@new.ox.ac.uk, and library staff will be able to send you a list of all the material.