

Preliminary Examination

April 1995

EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE Bernard and Hitchens

Answer 3 of the following:

1. Contrast and compare the two vast military/diplomatic fiascoes that the Habsburg monarchy sustained vis-a-vis the Ottomans in 1737-39 and in 1787-90. Is it an exaggeration to maintain that, had it not been for these, the monarchy might well have gone on into the 19th century, not as an unstable and continually weakening entity, eventually to be utterly dependent on its strongest ally, but as a major force in its own right?
2. There is a school of historians which puts the blame for the first world war squarely on Austria-Hungary: in part because of various evil machinations which they impute both to the monarchy's rulers and to its military leadership; and in part because, they argue, Austria-Hungary was so weak that it had no positive policy options, and was thus exposed to the irresistible temptation to pull down an edifice in which it could no longer reside. Comment in detail.
3. What were the main aspects of the nationality problem in the Habsburg Monarchy between 1867 and World War I? How successful were the Austrian and Hungarian governments in dealing with it?
4. Discuss the fate of Western-style parliamentary government in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in the period between the two World Wars. What forces, ideas, and events supported or opposed democracy?
5. How did Communist regimes in Eastern Europe after World War II try to solve the main social and economic problems of the interwar period (1919-1939)?

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Answer 3 of the following:

1. What elements, both from within the respective peoples and from the outside, stimulated and sustained the national awakenings of the East European peoples in the latter half of the eighteenth century and the first few decades of the nineteenth ?
2. What were the chief elements of cohesion in the Habsburg Monarchy in the latter eighteenth and the nineteenth century ? Do any significant changes occur over time ? Why ?
3. Discuss the Habsburg-Ottoman rivalry in Eastern Europe in the course of the eighteenth century. To what extent did this rivalry contribute to the emergence of autochthonous political forms in the region.
4. What were the main aspects of the nationality problem in the Habsburg Monarchy between 1867 and 1914 ? How successful were the Austrian and Hungarian governments in solving it ?
5. Explain why democratic, liberal political systems did not prosper in Eastern Europe between the two World Wars. Is Czechoslovakia an exception ? Why ?

