

Social democracy in the Habsburg monarchy between supranational loyalties and nation building

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In no other country did social democracy have a better opportunity to test its internationalism than in the Habsburg monarchy. The different sections of the social democratic workers' party in Austria were referred to as the 'Little International'. Not only did the Austrian social democracy firmly believe that while the Habsburg state should undergo federal reform, it was worth preserving as a plurinational state – its political impact was also felt throughout the entire territory of the monarchy. However, other trends ran counter to these factors. At least since the introduction of the 1905 electoral reform for the Reichsrat elections, centrifugal tendencies became apparent among the national divisions. The latter now increasingly interacted with the respective national parties and regarded themselves as part of their respective national political constellations. One result of this kind of national integration at subnational level was that even social democrats developed concepts of space as alternatives to the preservation of the Habsburg state. The paper explores the interplay between internationalist values and national political practice.