



# **Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914 (Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany)**

*Pieter M. Judson*

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## **Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914 (Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany)** Pieter M. Judson

*Exclusive Revolutionaries* traces the development of German liberal and later nationalist political culture in imperial Austria from the revolutions of 1848 to the outbreak of World War I. Drawing on archival research from several regions of the former Habsburg Monarchy, Pieter M. Judson provides a clear, chronological political narrative that demonstrates the continuing influence of liberal ideas and values well after the defeat of liberal political parties.

In the mid-1800s, Judson argues, German liberal activists built an effective political movement whose ideology was rooted in its members' social experience in voluntary associations. The liberals were committed to the creation of a market economy based on personal property rights, to a society based on the values of individual self-improvement and personal respectability, and to a fundamental distinction between active and passive citizenship. They were determined to achieve a harmonious community of free peoples, in which personal enlightenment would bring an end to the divisive influence of localism, ethnicity, religion, and feudal social hierarchy.

Yet after 1880, as newer, more radical mass political movements threatened their political fortunes, the liberals forged a German nationalist politics based increasingly on ethnic identity. Their emphasis on national identity became a way for former liberals to hold together an increasingly diverse coalition of German speakers who had little in common outside of their shared language. Only "Germanness" bridged the dangerous gulf between social classes. This nationalism helped the liberals to compete for power in the multinational, multicultural Austrian Empire down to 1914, but it left a legacy of nationalist extremism and tolerance of anti-Semitism that continues to influence political cultures in the former lands of the Habsburg Monarchy today.

*Exclusive Revolutionaries* will interest social and cultural historians of nineteenth-century Europe, and of Germany and Central Europe in particular.

Pieter M. Judson is Professor of History, Swarthmore College. He is the recipient of a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation.

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