



# The Emperor and the Peasant

*Two Men at the Start of the Great War and the End of the Habsburg Empire*

Kenneth Janda



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“A unique, engaging account of World War I as seen through the eyes of both the Austro-Hungarian emperor and one of his Slovakian peasants—a fascinating read combining geopolitics, class, ethnicity, and personal history.”—Bernard Tamas, Valdosta State University.

There was more to World War I than the Western Front. This history, presented as two intertwined narratives in alternating chapters, juxtaposes the experiences of a monarch and a peasant on the Eastern Front. Franz Joseph I, emperor of Austria-Hungary, was the first European leader to declare war in 1914 and the first to commence firing. Samuel Mozolák was a Slovak laborer who sailed to New York—where he fathered twins who were taken as babies (and U.S. citizens) to his home village—before being drafted into the army and killed in combat.

The author interprets Franz Joseph’s view of the war from the perspective of the emperor and his contemporaries, Kaiser Wilhelm II and Tsar Nicolas II. Mozolák’s story depicts the life of a peasant conscript in an army staffed by aristocratic officers, and illustrates the pattern of East European immigration to America. Both stories are enlivened with references to the art and culture of the period.

**Kenneth Janda** is Professor Emeritus at Northwestern University. In 2009, he received the Frank J. Goodnow Award for distinguished service to the American Political Science Association and the profession. He has authored or edited several books on computer methods of data analysis, the cross-national study of political parties, and American government and politics. He lives in Roseville, Minnesota.

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