Nationalisms in Action:

The Great War and Its Aftermath in East-Central Europe

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CONSEQENCES OF WAR AND VIOLENCE

PART I

APPROACHES TO THE WAR IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE AND BEYOND

László Szarka

The Great War in East-Central Europe: Nationalisms and Long-Term Consequences

The aim of this volume is to analyze the regional specificities of East-Central and Southeast Europe during the First World War and its aftermath.[1] The First World War was not unanticipated and without any antecedents, still it constituted a historical watershed in several respects. The conflict, which gradually attained global dimensions, had been foreshadowed by the malleability of European political and military relations at the beginning of the twentieth century. The struggle of the great powers for positions in Europe, Asia and Africa exacerbated the tensions that had accumulated between the two alliance systems. The relationship between the Central Powers and the Entente became extremely fragile from 1908, Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia, and this instability aggravated due to the crises in Morocco, and the subsequent Balkan Wars. The Balkan crises further stimulated the already growing nationalist and separatist movements in the multi-ethnic empires of East-Central and Southeast Europe, where large segments of public opinion and foreign policy makers were alarmed by the challenges posed by national minorities.

A great number of investigations have already set out to explore the place of nation building nationalisms, one of the ruling ideas in Europe during the 'long 19th century', among the antecedents of the Great War. These contributions conveyed an elaborate account on how nationalism inspired powerful national movements in the multi-ethnic empires in Eastern, East-Central and Southeast Europe at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The radicalization and increasingly aggressive nature of European nationalisms as reflected by

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1 Papers were prepared within the research program K 113004 of the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) under the title *East-Central European Nationalisms during the First World War*.

numerous programs and actions of separation as well as the brutalization of conflicts are also extensively treated in works published on the occasion of the centenaries of the war years. This book intends to deepen our knowledge on the First World War and the historical evolution of nationalisms by focusing on East-Central Europe in its wider settings and on aspects less frequented and even neglected in the scholarly literature. In particular, it presents arguments about the roles of the great powers in shaping war-time nationalisms in the region; it considers how the movements of the national minorities pursued their goals during the war with the support of their kin-states and reacted to the events of the war by modifying their nation building strategies; finally, it also addresses the effects of the war and violence in East-Central Europe on national development and further areas including political discourse, social transformation and the arts. It is not a manual covering all major aspects of the history of East-Central Europe during the Great War, it is the summary of the results of a Hungarian research project that aimed at clarifying the impact of state building nationalisms on the course and outcome of the war in East-Central Europe. Most of the authors come from Hungary, a major aim of the editors was to present most recent Hungarian findings embedded into a broad historiographical and historical context.

This book thus focuses on the Austro-Hungarian Dual Empire, especially on its Transleithanian part, i.e. the multi-ethnic Hungarian Kingdom, which offers some essential lessons in the area of research on wartime nationalisms and nationalisms in general.[2] The editors greatly relied on Gellner's classical

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2 There is abundant literature on the history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the First World War, especially on its imperial and Cisleithanian implications, a literature that came to be further enriched by hundreds of volumes on the occasion of the recent centenary. For a recent overview of this topic, see e.g. Rumpler, Helmuth–Harmat, Ulrike (Eds.), Bewältigte Vergangenheit? Die nationale und internationale Historiographie zum Untergang der Habsburgermonarchie als ideale Grundlage für die Neuordnung Europas. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, 2018. On the other hand, most of the works that discuss the Hungarian aspects of this topic in English are less recent. See for instance Galántai, József, Hungary in the First World War. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1990; Király, Béla–Dreisziger, F. Nándor (Eds.), East-Central European Society in World War I, Social Science Monographs, Columbia University, New York 1986. As regards the goals of the Hungarian war policy, some important questions are raised by: Piahanau, Aliaksandr,

definition that nationalism aims at creating nation-based states and if that aim cannot be implemented, tragedies will happen.[3] Numerous case studies in our volume support this point. Our research results also justify the recent developments in the field as succintly summarized by Florian Bieber in the Introduction to his new book.[4] He points out that new literature on the history of nationalism increasingly focuses on the role of ethnic entrepreneurs. War time nationalism in Eastern and Central Europe is rich in respective case studies. These actors played a decisive role in transforming banal endemic nationalism[5] into virulent, violent nationalism. Still, the classical theoretical framework as worked out by Miroslav Hroch and Emil Niederhauser on the cultural and political elements in the making of East-Central European nations and national states also greatly helped our authors.

At the same time, our book, which puts Hungary and Hungarian national considerations in the limelight, looks beyond the Hungarian borders. This is rather self-evident if we want to analyze the politics of the great powers – however, we study the entangled history of the East-Central European region from many other aspects as well, including countries and regions in the proximity of the Habsburg Monarchy, such as Poland, Serbia and Albania. In the following we will present the reasons justifying our choice of topic, then we will outline in what ways the individual studies enrich our knowledge about the region, and what findings they can contribute to the achievement of the goals of this volume.

There is little doubt that national movements and nationalisms played a decisive role in the 20th-century history of East-Central Europe and Southeast Europe, a history which began with the peace treaties closing the First World War, and ended with the political changeover in 1989–1990, and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. We

Hungarian War Aims During WWI: Between Expansionism and Separatism. Central European Papers 2. 2. (2014): 95–107.

3 For a critical approach see: Daniele Conversi, Homogenisation, nationalism and war: should we still read Ernest Gellner? Nations and Nationalism. Vol. 13, issue 3. 371-394. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129

4 Bieber Florian, Debating Nationalism. The Global Spread of Nations. Bloomsbury, 2020.

5 Michael Billlig, Banal Nationalism, London, Sage, 1995.

need only consider that today there are 22 nation states in the region. Before 1914 there were only five. From 1917 to 1923 eleven new states were created, and from 1989 to 1994 a further seven came into existence. Accordingly, the borders of these nation states, and the majority nations and ethnic structures of these states were consolidated or altered in the past one hundred years, unlike in Western Europe, and this took place in several waves, at the price of serious and repeated conflicts.[6] World War I played a predominant role in the historical genesis of these nation states and the societies of the region.

The first big wave of nationalism in the 19th century triggered radical changes of constitutional law on the Balkans: Greece, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria gradually broke free of the Ottoman Empire's control. At the same time, the majority of the territory of East-Central Europe continued to be divided between three multi-ethnic empires before 1918: the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russia and the German Empire. Consequently, the decisive actors of the First World War were the empires as the great powers of the region. However, the everyday life of the "war of empires" shortly brought to the fore the ambitions of the non-dominant nations of these empires.

As the war began to unfold, the eleven national societies composing the Habsburg Empire, an empire which played a key role in the eruption of the war, were increasingly mobilized by visions of their own national liberty and independence, rather than by imperial patriotism.[7] Naturally, the national alternatives to the dynastic Austrian state ideal had appeared much earlier. The Hungarian attempts at independence had basically been a constant phenomenon all along the history of the Habsburg Empire.[8] It was by studying

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6 Puttkamer, Joachim von, Ostmitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, Oldenbourg, München 2010.; Roth, Harald (ed.), Studienhandbuch Östliches Europa, 2nd edition, Böhlau Verlag, Köln 2009, vol. 1. Geschichte Ostmittel- und Südosteuropas; Rothschild, Joseph – Wingfield, Nancy (Eds.), Return to Diversity – A Political History of East-Central Europe Since World War II (4th Ed.). Oxford University Press, Oxford 2008.; Wandycz, Piotr, The Price of Freedom: A History of East-Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present, 2nd edition, Routledge, London 2001.

7 Schmidl, Erwin A., Krieg der Staaten, Krieg der Völker. Der Erste Weltkireg als totaler Krieg. In: Rumpler, Helmuth–Harmat, Ulrike (Eds.): Bewältigte Vergangenheit, 97-107.

8 Judson: The Habsburg Empire. A New History. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2016. 22-26.; Klimó, Árpád, Nation, Konfession,

federalist plans based on historical constitutional law and ethnic differences or with an Austro-Slavic background that Franz Ferdinand worked out his unique concept of Großösterreich, in an effort to harmonize the demands of nationalities and rigorous centralism.[9] At the same time, the Croatian, Polish and Czech trialist conceptions on the one hand, and the Romanian, Serbian, Slovak and Ruthenian plans of national autonomy in Transylvania, Vojvodina and Upper Hungary, respectively, on the other, signaled the lines of force of the internal crisis of the empire as well as the potential directions for renewal. The weakening of the internal cohesion of the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire during the Great War first manifested itself in the trench warfare that evolved on the Russian front in Galicia, then on the Italian front, among soldiers of Slav (Czech, Slovak, Serbian, Croatian) nationality taken as prisoners of war, or passing over to the enemy, then it became increasingly tangible in the Czech, Polish, Croatian and Bosnian societies as well. Phenomena of double loyalty – treated as treason – became more and more frequent especially in the last two years of the war, and they led to a collective disobedience of orders, organized desertion to the enemy, and the strengthening of the domestic social basis of the emigrant nationality movements.[10] Later on, as the national borders were demarcated, these nationalisms became even more antagonistic.

During the world war, these nation-building nationalisms thus became extremely radical in the course of a few months, so much so that it is not unjustified to talk about war nationalisms.[11] How does international literature

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Geschichte: Zur nationalen Geschichtskultur Ungarns im europäischen Kontext, 1860–1948. München 2003. 185–201; Gerő, András (Eds.), The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy Revisited New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.; Katus, László, A modern Magyarország születése. Magyarország története 1711–1914 [Die Birth of modern Hungary. History of Hungary 1711–1914]. Pécs 2012.

9 Bled, Jean-Paul, Franz Ferdinand. Der eigensinnige Thronfolger, Böhlau Verlag, Wien 2013, 125-129.

10 Gerwarth, Robert – Manela, Erez, Introduction. In: Gerwarth, Robert – Manela, Erez (Eds.): Empires at War 1911-1923. Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014. 15-16.; Cornwall, Mark, The Undermining of Austria-Hungary. The Battle for Hearts and Minds. Macmillan, Basingstoke, Houndmills, 2000. 62-72, 405-415.

11 Leonhard, Jörn, Gewalt im Schatten des Krieges: Besatzungsregime und die Erfahrung ethnischer Differenz. In: Leonhard, Jörn: Die Büchse der Pandora. Geschichte des Ersten Weltkrieges. Verlag C. H. Beck, München 2014. 282-294.

describe the phenomena of war nationalism? According to Wolfgang J. Mommsen, one of the key catalysts in the events leading up to the world war cataclysm – inconceivable for the contemporary majority for a long time – was the "radical nationalist re-interpretation" of the European culture. In his view, this nationalist mobilization in all walks of the European political processes was made necessary by two factors. On the one hand, for the political leaders of the European national societies and the radical nation-states in different stages of development, only a radical nationalist mobilization offered a chance to consolidate their own power and build a firm social base for their war goals in the extraordinary war situation. In lack of universal suffrage or in the initial stage thereof, they could have hardly found any other efficient tool for their legitimization. In the case of the multi-ethnic empires, this instrumentation, however, proved to be a double-edged sword from the beginning. As dominant and non-dominant national movements equally strove to transform the state according to their own national considerations, war nationalisms carried a serious risk.[12]

Jörn Leonhard held a very similar view of this transformation, according to whom one of the primary functions of war nationalism with respect to the various social strata and ethnic and religious groups was to create a unique mimicry of loyalty. On the one hand, this provided protection for them, and on the other, it created the basis for the recognition of their own status and the eventual improvement thereof, their deeper integration within the state, or when the opportunity arose, for the creation and deepening of their own autonomous positions.[13]

What is more, according to Wolfgang Mommsen, imperialist considerations – interpreting history on a social Darwinist basis as the rivalry of nations, a combat between them – were present in the nationalism of great nations and empires, and in national war agendas and war goals from the very beginning, and these considerations left their mark on the ethnic relations within multi-ethnicity empires and provinces as well. It is especially true in light of the fact that sooner or later each nationality found both a foe and a protector among the great powers. Analyzing the concerns of the contemporary

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12 Mommsen, Wolfgang J., Der Erste Weltkrieg. Anfang von Ende des bürgerlichen Zeitalters. Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2004. 20–21.

13 Leonhard, Die Büchse der Pandora, 260-262.

Austrian and Hungarian elite, William Mulligan calls attention to the fact that for the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire integrating the "isolated Hungarian nation", war nationalisms unfolding in the buffer zone of the southern and northern Slav, Romanian and German worlds raised the question of the integrity of multi-ethnic empires quite early on.[14]

To all of this we can add that the propagandistic and ideological functions of war nationalism manifested themselves from the very beginning and grew gradually stronger. All the more so as in the wake of the "betrayal of the [European] literati", the pro-war turn of the Social Democrats and the churches, the positions of pacifism – that had seemed rock-solid – were undermined in a matter of months, and they were unable to effectively reorganize themselves until the end of the war. The "spirit of 1914" (or "Augusterlebnis" in German), that is the purification and renewal hoped from the war, temporarily forged a national unity everywhere, which is the positive manifestation of war nationalism.[15] The patriotic treaties and ceasefire agreements signed between the political parties diminished – at least temporarily – the tension between the social and ethnic groups of the society. The Hungarian Prime Minister, István Tisza, too, could but believe in the power of the world war to bring together country and nation, when he experienced, after Sarajevo, the mobilizing effect of the national unity rhetoric and the "Augusterlebnis" on the whole country, including the non-Hungarian societies.[16] The Czech regiments, accused of illoyalty and a tendency for treason from the beginning, were drafted in a disciplined manner at the other end of the Empire. The signs of resistance to mobilization would only appear after the shockingly high number of casualties in October–November 1914, and they would do so not only in the countries of the Central Powers but also Russia.

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14 Mulligan, Wiliam, The Great War for Peace. Yale University. New Haven – London, 2014. 101-103.

15 Bremm, Klaus-Jürgen, Propaganda im Erstem Weltkrieg. Theiss Verlag, Darmstadt 2013. 21–36.; Boka László–Rózsafalvy Zsuzsanna, The War of Words. In: ifj. Bertényi Iván – Bóka László (Eds.), Propaganda az első világháborúban. Propaganda in World War I. Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár kiállítása. 2015. október 16. – 2016. április 9. Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Budapest 2016. 97–121.

16 Vermes, Gábor, István Tisza: The liberal vision and conservative statecraft of a Magyar nationalist. Columbia University Press, New York 1985. 458-462.

The crucial negative integrative function of war nationalism was mostly linked to the signs of the above, i.e. of disillusionment and resistance: simultaneously to the appearance of war fronts and trench warfare, the arrival of reports on the immense losses, and cruelties mutually committed by the occupying and defending military forces, hatemongering arose – an attitude that considered every foreigner, anyone speaking a different tongue, or professing a different faith suspicious, a spy, a potential source of danger and an enemy. The memory of the Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire, the atrocities behind the Galician fronts, the Serbian events in *Šabac*, the barbarities committed in the Belgian town of Leuven, the victims of the passenger ships sunk by the German submarines indicate that there were inhuman reprisals on almost all the fronts, and the mass murders claiming the lives of civilians became imprinted in the nationalist layers of the collective memory for many decades everywhere.[17]

During the mobilization following the breakout of the world war, rapid and vigorous changes began in the political elite of the non-dominant nationalities, then – gradually – among soldiers and civilians as well, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The solidarity and loyalty of June–July 1914, then the wartime excitement in August proved ephemeral and frail in the case of the Czech, Croatian, Serb, Italian, Slovene nationalities, just as among the Polish and the Romanians. Imperial nationalism resting on dynastic foundations quickly eroded among the soldiers fighting on the fronts, as well as in the hinterland. Instead of the fierce and patriotic speeches pronounced upon their recruitment, commands, and the – until then unknown – proximity and massiveness of death became the general experience for many. Life increasingly revolved around the choice of survival strategies and possibilities, and keeping in touch with the family at home, while the injuries suffered for the homeland, and death labeled heroic, but in reality, massive and anonymous, were made meaningful by the cult that surrounded those who sacrificed their lives for their country and nation.[18]

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17 Leidinger, Hannes – Moritz, Verena – Moser, Karin – Dornik, Wolfram, Habsburgs schmutziger Krieg. Ermittlungen zur österreichisch-ungarischen Kriegsführung 1914–1918. Residenz Verlag, St. Pölten–Salzburg–Wien, 2014. 70–79.; Bremm, Propaganda im Ersten Weltkrieg, 37–54.

18 Baron, Nick – Gatrell, Peter (Eds.), Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in

On the road leading to the disintegration of the Danubian Monarchy, it was not only internal national conflicts and the goals of national movements that proved decisive but the intentions of the great powers as well. Not independently from the integrationist attempts of the Balkans nation states, and the permanent presence of the Polish question affecting three empires, the national-ethnic conflicts of the Habsburg Empire, and within that, of the Hungarian Kingdom, had been frequently discussed in the reports of ambassadors in Vienna as well as in those of consuls in Prague and Budapest already before 1914. Following the repeated, abortive attempts of the Dualist Monarchy at an internal – trialist, federalist – transformation, it was the prolonged world war that enabled external intervention, as well as the harmonization of the small nations' efforts aimed at independence and the solutions proposed by the great powers.

In spring 1918, due to the Russian and Romanian peace treaties coerced by the Central Powers in Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest, the secessionist efforts of the nationalities became less vehement for a while in Austria-Hungary.[19] However, the black day of the German army on 8 August 1918, then the total defeat suffered by the military of Austria-Hungary on the Piave front in October 1918 made it clear as day that maintaining the unity of the Monarchy – and within that, of the Hungarian state – was no longer a realistic option.

The successive defeats of Russia and the Central Powers created a unique situation in the region that had been mostly under the supervision of Germany, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. In Paris, London and Washington, the decision had been reached: the best way to carry out the radical transformation of East-Central Europe formerly under German dominance, and to end the war as quickly as possible, would be to transform the region into nation states. Parallel to that, the resolutions approved by the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities of the region convened in Rome in April 1918 demanded the enforcement of the principle of national self-determination. This is how it was possible that Paris, London and Washington had committed themselves to the establishment of the South-Slav, Polish and Czechoslovakian states

Eastern Europe and Russia, 1918-1924. Anthem Press, London 2004. 99–102.

19 Rauchensteiner, Manfried, Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburger monarchie. Böhlau Verlag, Wien – Köln – Weimar, 2013. 896–899.

months before the termination of the war, recognizing the bodies of the latter operating in emigration as allies in advance.

The armistice signed at Padua and the prior exchange of diplomatic notes between Wilson and Berlin, and Wilson and Vienna gave green light to the non-dominant national societies of Austria-Hungary. In the successive national revolutions and declarations of independence, hopes that the victory of the Entente would open up an opportunity for the elimination of the Monarchy and with it, the creation of nation states for the small nations' nationalisms that had become more radical during the years of the war materialized.[20] Pietr M. Judson is thus right in claiming in his monograph revisiting the last two centuries of the Habsburg Empire that it was the First World War defeat and the nation state trends endorsed by the victorious Entente powers that made those trends irreversible which had already been driving the internal disintegration of the Monarchy.[21] The transformation of the region into nation states, prompted by the military and diplomatic instruments of the victorious great powers, was partly a continuation of the wartime relations, in the form of social and national revolutions, civil wars and border wars. Created in the place of the multi-ethnic imperial structure, the complex, pseudo-federal nation states were also multi-ethnic without exception.

Whatever aspects of the war in politics, society and economy we prioritize, it is manifest that the First World War generated massive changes in the aftermath of the war as well. This was particularly the case in East-Central Europe, as in this region the state boundaries and national frameworks underwent profound transformations due to the First World War, largely contributing to the dominance of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes in this part of the world during the interwar years.

Against this background, the volume seeks to explore how war time transformations shaped the societies and politics of East-Central Europe, as well as the later often diverging historical interpretations of these processes. The book pays special attention to how the Great Powers influenced state-building in East-Central Europe, and what sort of dynamics war nationalisms lent to this process. The alternatives of the latter also appear in the papers, and the – social and cultural – consequences of this war in the broader sense are

20 Cornwall, The Undermining of Austria-Hungary, 345.
21 Judson, The Habsburg Empire, 261–265.

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also given an emphatic role. The volume hopes to be a substantial contribution to the literature on the interactions of nationalisms in action in the context of the making, course and aftermath of the Great War in East-Central Europe.

The contributors of this book emphasize the great significance of the First World War in the evolution of the East-Central European nations and societies. Although the First World War can be justly considered a crucial dividing line for the history of the whole of Europe and of the world, East-Central Europe is most likely the territory on the continent where this war brought the biggest political changes, thereby giving a particular internal uniformity to the 20th-century history of this otherwise diverse region. At the same time, the memory of the creation of the "new Europe" between 1918 and 1923 remains a controversial issue in East-Central Europe to this day. To this contributed the fact that the years of the Second World War and the decades of the Cold War afflicted additional major conflicts and tragedies – including the Holocaust and the ethnic cleansings aimed at the creation of homogeneity in the nation states – on the history and conscience of the nations of this region.

Attila Pók

The Principal Trends in the Interpretation of the First World War

Brothers, if we stay alive,
leave the past behind us.
Who was guilty? never ask,
plant the fields with flowers,
let us love and understand
this great world of ours:
some will go their work to do,
some their dead to witness:
may God give us bread and wine,
drink up, to forgiveness!

Mihály Babits

The past molded into stories and history is present in our world on at least five levels: in science, the rules of the profession set the framework for research and interpretation; in politics, history is a tool for gaining and maintaining power; in the everyday life of society, individual and collective remembrance affects us according to its oft-mentioned schemes; in teaching, it is part of education and character-building; and finally, it is also present on the level of moral and legal responsibility for the past. In these extremely diverging forms of the management of the past, fundamental concepts such as perpetrator, victim, passive onlooker, sin, mistake and responsibility acquire highly different contents, so it would be pointless to expect—regardless of the lyric words of Attila József, one of the greatest Hungarian poets of the twentieth century—that "The battle which our ancestors once fought / Through recollection is resolved in peace."[1] Science can expand and structure

1 Thomas Kabdebo, ed., *Hundred Hungarian Poems*, translated by Vernon Watkins

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our historical knowledge, but it can do little for the sake of reconciliation because for the latter to occur, it would have to conceal, rather than reveal, the diverging interests of the various groups formed along different identities. On the other hand, our discipline has a crucial duty to enhance the development of mutual empathy because the resolution of conflicts begins with understanding the opposite perspective. In this analysis, I would like to expose problems—perhaps more sharply than desirable—rather than offer an inventory. But as a way of introduction, I must refer to the fundamental historiographical oeuvre of Jay Winter[2] and Antoine Prost, the most recent overviews by Jordan Baev,[3] Alan H. Kramer[4] and Mark Mazower[5] regarding the centenary literature of the history of the First World War, and the careful analysis of Oliver Janz about the crisis of July 1914.[6] I was inspired on numerous points by the works of certain Hungarian historians: Eszter Balázs; Péter Bihari; József Galántai; Ferenc Glatz; Tibor Hajdú; Péter Hanák; Géza Jeszenszky; Ferenc Pollmann; Dániel Szabó; and Zoltán Sz. Bíró.

When the preparations began for the academic and political commemorations of the assassination at Sarajevo that directly sparked the catastrophe concluding the "long nineteenth century," I still saw the matter in a completely different light. I was earnestly hoping that the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War would be a unique, extraordinary and symbolic moment. If we duly remember and commemorate the summer of 1914, science and politics in unison may send the message to the public opinion of our countries, the East-Central European region and our continent that there is a chance that sooner or later we will overcome the traumas of the twentieth century.

(Manchester: Albion Editions, 1976), accessed September 5, 2016. http://www. babelmatrix.org/works/hu/J%C3%B3zsef_Attila/ A_Dun% C3%A1n%C3%A1l/ en/1766-By_the_Danube

2 Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

3 Jordan Baev, "The Memory and Legacy of World War One and World War Two in Contemporary Western Historiography" (manuscript, 2014).

4 Alan Kramer, "Recent Historiography of the First World War," *Journal of Modern European History*, no. 1 (2014): 5–27, no. 2 (2014):155–174.

5 Mark Mazower, "Opening Lecture" (presented at the international conference The Great War: Regional Approaches and Global Contexts, Sarajevo, June 19, 2014).

6 Oliver Jansen, Der große Krieg (Frankfurt: Campus, 2013).

However, having reviewed the inconceivably rich recent literature and the long line of commemorations and conferences, and adding to that my personal experience as a science organizer, I can firmly declare: for the moment, reconciliation is not yet just around the corner. Our hopes should be the same as those of a person living in the neighborhood of an explosive warehouse: we should entrust the keeping of this warehouse to such individuals who thanks to their knowledge and character would do everything to make sure that there is no explosion due to a natural catastrophe or human error.

In the historiography of the history of the First World War, it is generally accepted that we can distinguish between three major periods—linked to the respective generations—within the research on this topic. On the other hand, it is a debated historiographical question whether the changes in the perspectives and methodology used by these generations constitute merely an expansion of the research horizon, or if they bring about qualitative development and constant improvement. The members of the first generation, those senior officers, diplomats and historians who had lived through the war themselves and in some cases began to analyze the events already during the war, examined the war from above, from the perspective of politicians and military officials shaping the course of history by each of their decisions. The effort to find those responsible, or rather, to shift responsibility, has enriched our profession with an enormous quantity of source publications. (The British historical series on the First World War is composed of 40 thick volumes, the Australian 15, the French 106 and the German 16, but to these should be added the virtually endless line of historical source publications regarding diplomacy and foreign affairs.) It is also often referred to as the "war of documents," for the first such publications appeared as early as in 1915; later, the denunciation of the tradition of covert diplomacy became an argument in the hands of both Bolshevist class warfare and of democratic Wilsonian politics. A renowned personality of this generation of researchers was Pierre Renouvin, who—although he was also wounded during the war—emphasized that it was not the trivial experiences of soldiers during the war, but the analysis of the ideas and activities of the strategic masterminds of the First World War as well as the appraisal of war merits, heroism and courage that can provide a realistic picture of the conflict. This attitude was also represented by Sidney Fay, Bernadotte Schmitt and Luigi Albertini. A great legacy of this research and remembrance

period is the highly elaborate war history and diplomatic history, but we should also highlight a work that analyzed the potential consequences of the war from a very different aspect. As J. M. Keynes[7] was quick to point out right after the war that the excessive burdening of those defeated, brushing aside the Wilsonian principles, would undermine the credibility of the winning powers while also becoming a possible cause for a new war. It was in this atmosphere that the modern research of European history was formed, the main line of which—until the 1950s—basically meant diplomatic history and the study of international relations. In the latter, American historians took a leading role.

Those studies, however, which were keen on doing justice to a particular nation had a much greater impact on European and American public opinion than the above-mentioned works. What is more, the most effective historical trend of the 1920s shifted the responsibility from the Germans to the British-American-French alliance. Thus certain American historians attributed even the atrocities in Belgium to the provocative actions of Belgian *francs-tireurs*. The general American condemnation of the Paris peace treaties was also part of the above attitude. These views were primarily advocated by American historians Harry Elmes Barnes[8] and Charles A. Beard. The latter owed his fame mostly to his book entitled *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, first published in 1913. Barnes and Beard were considered to be left-wing; they won for themselves the approval of the socialist Norman Thomas, for instance—yet those who profited the most from their writings were the German and the American right.

Nonetheless, the writings of the second generation published in the 1960s and 1970s made an even greater impact on our conception of the war over the long run, even up to our times. The first truly seminal book that can be linked to the generation writing already with the experience of the Vietnam War and the Algerian War behind its back was a roaring success with its simple, yet

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7 The seminal book that Keynes published in 1920 sets a very tragic tone when he writes about the East-Central European situation: "There it is not just a matter of extravagance or 'labor troubles'; but of life and death, of starvation and existence, and of the fearful convulsions of a dying civilization." J. M. Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), 5. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15776/15776-h/15776-h.htm

8 Harry Elmes Barnes, *The Genesis of the World War: An Introduction to the Problem of War Guilt* (New York: Knopf, 1929).

dramatic title, but mostly thanks to its personal tone.[9] Its approach drawing on the world warfare experience of the simple soldiers opened a new chapter in historiography, in which the scrutiny of wartime or war-induced social conflicts became the focus of attention. Therefore, the BBC documentary series in 1964 or A. J. P. Taylor's book[10] published in 1963 no longer memorialized the heroic fight for a noble cause, but senseless suffering. Another new element in the scholarship of this generation was the fact that instead of the vice of war responsibility, these historians devoted more attention to the examination of the causes of the war and the military goals as well as to the possibility of reconciliation because the profession had become suspicious of "official" publications on political or diplomatic history.

Nevertheless, this did not entail the disappearance of traditional diplomatic history. On the contrary, it was in this period that A. J. P. Taylor's book—first published in 1954 and still considered to be a fundamental work to this day—entitled *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1914*[11] became generally known: in this book, the author describes diplomacy as an activity free of ideology and driven by power politics. The same attitude is reflected by the work entitled *The Origins of World War II*[12] by perhaps the most well-known—though not necessarily the most recognized—British historian (published in 1961), which describes Hitler objectively as a politician who enforced German interests pragmatically. The reason I mention this book here is that it was in the same year that the most influential achievement of the second generation came out: the famous book by Fritz Fischer. The Hamburg historian published his work entitled *Griff nach der Weltmacht*[13] intending to document the continuity between the imperialisms of the Second German Reich and the Third German Reich when Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem and the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt already supported the arguments of the

9 André *Ducasse*, Jacques *Meyer* and Gabriel *Perreux, Vie et mort des Français, 1914–1918* (Paris: Hachette, 1959), 512.

10 A.J.P. Taylor, *The First World War: An Illustrated History* (London: Hamilton, 1963).

11 A.J.P Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1914* /Oxford History of Modern Europe/ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954).

12 A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of World War II* (London: Hamster, Hamilton, 1961).

13 Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht: die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland, 1914–18* (Hamburg: Droste, 1961).

politicians advocating the thesis of the collective and long-term guilt of the Germans. The most authentic and relentless opponent of Fischer—who fought in the *Wehrmacht* as a young man and became critical of the National Socialist régime only at the end of the war—was Gerhard Ritter, who had fought in the First World War from the beginning to the end and attacked Fischer's position less from the perspective of ideology, but rather on the basis of source-critical arguments.

It was in this period that the Marxist literature of the First World War and the modern wave of research on imperialism (Wolfgang J. Mommsen) began, while the several-decade-long discussion of the German *Sonderweg* concept so heavily criticized by Ritter is also rooted in the Fischer controversy. No matter how critically the works of Fischer have been received by many (he was a man of traditional German professorial mindset, yet celebrated as a pioneer by his young disciples), there is no denying the fact that it was not the thoughts of Ritter, but of Fischer that gave a decisive impetus to the far-reaching German effort, going way beyond German historians to face the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*).

Another influential personality of this generation was Arno Mayer, who can be regarded as a school founder thanks to his perspective highlighting the primacy of internal affairs. As his renowned essay written in 1967[14] observes, those countries that eventually entered the war were confronted with a revolutionary situation by 1914, and the war may be regarded as a pre-emptive counterrevolutionary strike in order to prevent these revolutions. According to Mayer, Lenin and Wilson represented the principle of new diplomacy believed to be pacifist and rational against the merciless power politics of old diplomacy relying on secret agreements. From this aspect, the crucial error committed by the Paris peace treaties was that—due to the fear of Soviet-Russia and Bolshevism—traditional diplomacy overruled new principles.

The scholarship affiliated with the social-historical school of Bielefeld developed in the 1970s. For the young liberal historians of the age, the main task of a historian was to examine the movements and conflicts of societies as well as to analyze the structures and processes on the level of social sciences, often accompanied by an overt bias for the underprivileged, the defeated and

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14 Its latest edition: "The Primacy of Domestic Politics," in Holger Herwig, ed., *The Outbreak of World War I*, 6th ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 42–47.

the losers of all eras. One of the decisive and key works of this trend was the book written by Jürgen Kocka (a historian in his 30s then) with the title *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg,*[15] *which heavily relied on Marxist methodology.*

A work that stands out among those adopting a more traditional political-historical approach was that of Andreas Hillgruber,[16] according to whom Berlin made a miscalculation in July 1914. Berlin's objective would have merely been to undermine the alliance system of the Entente by supporting the war plans of Austria-Hungary. In A. J. P. Taylor's opinion, none of the great powers wanted to launch a war; their rhetoric was only intended to intimidate. At the same time, the debate related to the First World War in the 1970s was part of an all-encompassing historical and historical-political dispute between the above-mentioned *Primat der Innenpolitik* of the Bielefield school and the concept of *Primat der Aussenpolitik* represented by Hillgruber, already acclaimed, and other conservative historians.

A later work still akin to the second generation in its academic inquiry is the much-read book by the American David Fromkin,[17] which considers Germany to be the initiator of the war, but in a curious turn, qualifies the latter as a pre-emptive war. This book sees the preventive action of the German military élite lying behind the events of summer 1914 (according to the author, Wilhelm II was left with no choice). Moreover, within the relevant academic literature, it offers perhaps the most dramatic description of the Great War as the biggest catastrophe of modern and late modern universal history.

The third generation emerged after the collapse of the bipolar world about 25 years ago: to borrow the terminology of Winter and Prost, it is the generation of the year of 1992. For it was in 1992 that the Museum of the Great War opened its gates in Péronne: the result of French, English and German cooperation, this museum takes its visitors back to the everyday reality of the Western Front of the war with great evocative strength. For this

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15 *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg. Deutsche Sozialgeschichte 1914–1918 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978).*

16 "Riezlers Theorie des kalkulierten Risikos und Bethmann Hollwegs politische Konzeption in der Julikrise 1914," *Historische Zeitschrift* 202 (1966): 333–351; *Deutschlands Rolle in der Vorgeschichte der beiden Weltkriege* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1967).

17 David Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer: Who started the Great War in 1914?* (New York: Albert Knopf, 2004).

generation (e.g., Niall Ferguson and Gerald Feldman—the role models were Paul Fussell:[18] *The Great War and Modern Memory* and John Keegan:[19] *The Face of Battle*), the primary mission was to examine the cultural aspects of the war in the broad sense (mentalities, behaviors, emotional and psychological effects, and most of all, identity and remembrance). Recently, the writings of Alan Kramer[20] should be highlighted among the literature working from a similar approach.

The most recent comprehensive analysis of the history of First World War was published in 2014: a three-volume synthesis edited by Jay Winter and constituting the work of one and a half decades.[21] In the historiographical foreword, the editor defines his own scholarship and this monumental work as belonging to the fourth, transnational generation of researchers in this domain, whose predominant feature is global inquiry and the search for global interrelatedness in the answers. One of these three volumes is dedicated entirely to civil society, but the global attitude is also demonstrated in the chapters on military history and political history (for instance, when asking: who would have thought that the assignment of Shandong Province, formerly under German control, to Japan instead of China would lead to uprisings, the birth of the May Fourth Movement protesting against the Treaty of Versailles and the creation of the Chinese Communist Party?) To put it simply, we cannot be way off the mark by classifying this work as a book that crowns the efforts of the third generation of historians. The anthropological study of the global experiences and consequences of the war is more important for the authors of this work than its political causes and military features even though

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18 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

19 John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A study of Agincourt, Waterloo and the Somme* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.,1976).

20 Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction: Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); paperback 2008, 434; Alan Kramer and John Horne, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (London, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 608 + xv. (German translation, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2004. French translation, Paris: Editions Tallandier, 2005).

21 Jay Winter, ed., *Cambridge History of the First World War I*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

they treat the latter in detail as well (thus, for instance, riots, the impact of warfare on the affected big cities, shell-shock or post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, which recently has been often analyzed). This book expands the usual horizon of the literature on the basis of the findings of wide-ranging research. The following are a few examples pertaining to these unconventional questions. In 1914, one-quarter of the world's population lived on colonies or dominions (90 percent in British dominions). A total of 1.3 million men were drafted in India alone, 827,000 of whom were sent into battle—more than the total military power of Serbia or Romania. France deployed 437,000 overseas troops, and to this should be added the workers imported to France from Algeria, Indochina and even China. This triggered the jealousy of the French workers, and resulted in conflicts between the French and those coming from faraway lands. The war engagement galvanized the political élite of these areas, which put forth increasingly important demands for self-determination. Little attention is devoted to local conflicts in Africa even though significant Entente forces were tied down in the effort to conquer Cameroon from Germany. Essentially European troops fought each other in South West Africa and in East Africa (with the biggest German population), where according to some sources, one-tenth of the population (650,000 people) fell victim to the war. Due to the lack of roads and railway lines, one of the hardest tasks was to transport military troops: the approximately 200,000 British soldiers were aided by one million carriers. Numerous riots made the African situation even more complicated, and the drafting of many colonial officers weakened the administrative structures.

From an economic-historic point of view, the growth of the state's role did not only entail the drastic regulation of internal consumption, but also—through immense state-level procurements—the influencing of international markets and the formation of state capitalist structures. The outcome of the war was fundamentally determined by the fact that the Entente powers were in possession of the majority of the global transport capacities, that the international financial markets were at their disposal, and that they could get labor more easily from their colonies than the Central Powers, which were obliged to resort to a workforce composed of prisoners of war and forced laborers. It is seldom mentioned that the biggest winner of the First World War (based on the cost-benefit ratio at least) was Japan. At the price of

minimal loss, they gained possession of those Chinese territories that used to be part of the German sphere of interest. (Japan's casualty ratio was 0.2 percent; out of 800,000 mobilized soldiers, the number of the dead, wounded or missing was 1,210—in comparison, this figure was 9.15 million in the case of Russia, i.e., 76 percent of those mobilized). Japan also obtained significant export markets. During the war, numerous governmental and civilian analysis centers were set up to study the lessons of the war that could be exploited from the Japanese perspective. Thus they came to the conclusion, among others, that sooner or later there might be a confrontation with the United States, and in order to prepare for that, Japan would need to have an American-type educational system and careful long-term military and economic planning. Another domain: it is an interesting piece of data that through media campaigns and propaganda, there was a broad pro-Entente solidarity campaign in the United States (mostly in the wake of the German atrocities in Belgium at the beginning of the war). According to Jennifer Keene,[22] by the time the U.S. entered the war, American civil society was already open to this decision.

It viewpoint is widely expressed in the relevant literature that the war was not the radiation of a big central conflict onto the world, but that the stakeholders of certain regional conflicts tried to benefit from the situations generated by the confrontation of the great powers. The latest literature devotes a lot of attention to Asia Minor, stressing that this is where one-third of the civilian casualties of the war occurred. A recurring motive of the roots of the current problems in the region is that the French and the British, sharing the territories of the Ottoman Empire between them, were unable to set up an operative political and social order within the volatile frameworks of the eight new political units formed in this region.

Most historiographical overviews leave Soviet-Russian works out of the equation. I believe the lack of Russian linguistic competence is only a technical excuse, for from a Russian perspective, the remembrance of the Second World War outshines that of the First World War. Just to cite a few well-known figures: 10.5 million lives lost in the civil war years versus the three million death toll of the First World War. And to this should be added the waves of emigration affecting about 2.5 million people. The hell of the Second World

22 Jennifer Keene, *World War I* (Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006).

War eclipsed all other losses: the official figures estimate 27 million victims of the war, nearly 14 million of which were civilian. This means that out of the approximately 70 million Soviet civilian citizens (three-fourths of whom were women, children and elderly men) who lived in the areas occupied by the German and the Allies, every fifth person died. On the occasion of the anniversary of the First World War, Russian historians and politicians mentioned more often than previously that in this war, too, the biggest wartime losses were suffered by Russia among the belligerent countries—even if these losses were of a smaller dimension than in the Second World War. In the latter, 27 million Soviet victims compare to about 1.5 million lives lost by the Allies (the Americans, the British and the French). On the occasion of the centenary, at the time of the escalation of the crisis in Ukraine, Vladimir Putin talked about the First World War with his prevailing political intentions in mind. He emphasized that it was the Russian soldiers who had fought the most heroically and the Russian people that had made the biggest sacrifice, but that victory was stolen from them by certain villains (unidentified by Putin), thus it would be appropriate to do Russia justice historically in this respect as well.

However, I only intended this historiographic overview to be a sort of compulsory exercise before returning to my thesis put forward in the introduction and raising some timely and relevant problems.

When did the war start and how long did it last? If we do not limit the war to battlefield operations and the direct physical suffering of the civilian population, we may evoke Peter Gay's nineteenth-century interpretation in search of the sources of hate-mongered lethal violence. According to the meticulously documented standpoint of the 90-year-old Yale professor, whom historians know as the author of the book *Freud for Historians*,[23] among others, the main social-political trend of the long nineteenth century was not the gradual spread of the ideals and practice of freedom and democracy, but a series of efforts of the state(s) and the societies aimed at reining in and channeling the outbreaks of violence driven by individual and collective hatred. Tools serving this purpose included duels, the competitions between active sportsmen and supporters, the manipulation of the popular press, etc. According to Gay's interpretation, the quantities of national and social

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23 Peter Gay, *Freud for Historians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

explosives that had accumulated in Europe by 1914 were so great that they could no longer be defused.[24]

In the strict sense of the word, we need to open the chronological endpoints more than usual (as was pointed out recently by Joachim von Puttkammer[25]), for in our region, the process of social and geopolitical transformation concluding the long nineteenth century lasted from the First Balkan War until the Peace of Riga. And if we open our horizon even wider, this arch may be drawn even from the Italian-Turkish war of 1911 until the Peace of Lausanne in July 1923.

Is war itself a crime or should only the atrocities of total warfare be regarded as such? In that respect, it is usually the cruelties committed by the Germans in Belgium that are mentioned, but according to a counterargument, in total warfare, the civilian population may also harm the enemy through using its own means, thus the civilian population may also be regarded as a belligerent party. According to the dominant political norms of 1914, war is an accepted form of politics, which has its own rules and rituals just like the peaceful forms of political conflict management. Taking it even further, according to the norms of this period, real or assumed insults or humiliations called for retaliation. However, war technology developed at such a pace that the thinking of decision-makers educated on classic diplomacy and warfare could not keep up with it. The strategy that took shape during the war was no longer aimed at the achievement of war objectives, but the annihilation of the enemy, even as a precautionary measure. Legal and moral norms became hollow, for the most practical and most efficient strategy was not the liquidation of the mere attackers, but the total extermination—or at least severe punishment— of those qualified as potential enemies. Until 1914, according to the moral judgment that predominates in certain milieus to this day, there was such a thing as just war, but I dare say that with the military techniques and ethics that developed during the First World War, all combat—even if waged for the noblest of causes—brings more suffering than potential benefit. This does

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24 Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred. The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud III* (London–New York: Norton & Company, 1991).

25 Jochen Böhler, Włodzimierz Borodziej and Joachim von Puttkamer, eds., *Legacies of Violence. Eastern Europe´s First World War* (Munich: De Gruyter, Oldenbourg Verlag, 2014), 15.

not mean that there are no politically justifiable and legally supportable armed interventions, but the collateral damage often surpasses the benefit of the objective to be achieved.

Where are the frontlines? Who and what fights whom and by what? Traditional descriptions focus on the confrontation of empires and nations. Depending on research and/or political perspectives, they present war as a national tragedy and a social misery or as a justified and rightful engine, if laden with blood, of legitimate national efforts and class-struggle objectives. Thanks to the spread of microhistory and gender history, however, we now learn more and more about the internal conflicts of fronts and hinterlands as well. Highly eloquent speeches were delivered about social peace in the belligerent countries in the summer of 1914, but the situation changed as fast as lightning. A frontline was opened between the supporters and opponents of the war, those rebelling against their social deprivation and their exploiters, the officers and the milieus of simple soldiers, and the descending groups of societies and the ascending groups of opportunists. Recently it was László Lőrinc who quoted Tibor Balla's study[26] from 2009 according to which from the middle of the First World War, Austria-Hungary invested more effort into bridling its own frontline soldiers than to defeating the armies of the adversary countries. As far as I know, this claim has yet to be buttressed by reliable research data. Nonetheless, it is quite perplexing that according to Tibor Balla, in the last year of the war more than half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's troops were not fighting on the frontlines because more and more soldiers were needed to keep the population and the other soldiers under control in the hinterland. Soldiers tortured and executed by their own country for the sake of the "Homeland" were the victims of the retaliatory and murderous apparatus of state-level violence, which not long after took on an industrial dimension in Germany. Military success demands a firm and homogenously molded social background; rebirth in blood and the need for the conscious shaping of human biological and intellectual quality (eugenics, social Darwinism) resonate with the practice of war discipline and constitute a force that is still effective today. Just one figure for the sake of illustration: out of the approximately nine million mobilized soldiers in the British army, nearly

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26 Tibor Balla, *Katonai alakulatok karhatalmi bevetései Magyarországon 1918-ban* (Budapest: Rendvédelmi Füzetek, 2009).

40,000 were sentenced for desertion, which included 2,000 death sentences of which 266 were carried out.[27]

A fundamental question that follows from the above is the effort to identify victims and perpetrators. In this respect we need to distinguish between political, historical, moral and legal aspects in any historical context. These diverging prisms may reflect a different picture because the consistent enforcement of laws and regulations, for instance, may lead to the most appalling tragedies, while their infringement may be a morally positive and praised act from a historical perspective. Seldom do the refractions of different prisms fall close to each other. Nevertheless, a collective tragedy such as the collapse of the pre-1918 multi-ethnic Hungary was an extraordinary situation that inflicted and continues to inflict severe pain upon all the members of the majority Hungarian community, if not in the same manner or to the same extent. This, however, does not blur the woes into one: just because we characterize as heroes those who fought heroically and died a pointless death, their sacrifice does not acquire a redemptory sense. The worthy commemoration of the victims does not endow with dignity the wrongful cause in the service of which they lost their lives. This sacrifice especially cannot be lumped together with the memory of those slaughtered on a mass scale with a cold-minded industrial pragmatism based on intentionally aroused hatred.

And this is where I would like to come back to my thesis mentioned in the introduction about the limitations of reconciliation. Our contemporary historical-political debates are mostly related to the Second World War, but in my experience, the traumas pertaining to the 100th anniversary of the breakout of the First World War shape the present and the management of the past of our region, especially of our southern neighbors, with a dramatic force similar to the Second World War. As I have mentioned before, two years ago I was of a different opinion. I was still hoping with a sort of candid naiveté that the centenary of the breakout of the First World War would be a unique and extremely symbolic moment: that if we duly remember and commemorate

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27 Cathryn Corns and John Hughes-Wilson, *Blindfold and Alone: British Military Executions in the Great War* (London: Cassell, 2001); Richard Georg Plaschka, Horst Haselsteiner and Arnold Suppan: *Innere Front. Militärassistenz, Wiederstand und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1974).

the summer of 1914, science and politics may send a message in unison to the public opinion of our country, our region and our continent that there is a chance that we will one day overcome the traumas of the twentieth century. The main reason I changed my mind was the experiences gathered during the organization and hosting of the three-day international conference (The Great War: Regional Approaches and Global Contexts) held in Sarajevo beginning on June 19, 2014. One of the seven organizing institutions was our Institute of History (Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences) in addition to the Bosnian, Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian, Austrian and German organizations. There were about 150 participants from 26 countries.

During the preparations, we could sense the extremely strong present-day political bias of European commemorative politics. In early September 2012, the most authoritative international organization of our profession, the International Committee of Historical Sciences (CISH) established in 1925 upon foundations dating back to 1898, held its general assembly in Hungary, an event organized between its world congresses held every five years. This is where it was proposed that a big conference should be held in Sarajevo. Since our institute maintains good relations with several research centers on the Balkans, we offered to play the role of intermediary between the French CISH secretary general and the Institute of History in Sarajevo. Preparations had already begun in 2010 at the Research Institute of History operating under direct federal state direction in Sarajevo and were going on in parallel. As it turned out from numerous e-mails and personal negotiations, the contents and aims of the Serbian and French commemorative politics on the one hand, and the views held by the Bosnian, Croatian, Austrian, German and Hungarian colleagues on the other were too divergent. For many Serbian colleagues, Gavrilo Princip is to this day a freedom fighter who revolted against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy oppressing the Serbian national movements. For them, the message of reconciliation of such an ambitious conference should be expressed in a way to make it evident that the responsibility for the breakout of the war lies unquestionably with Germany and Austria-Hungary. They consider it equally unjust to put even partial blame on Serbia for the First World War as it is to denounce their country with regard to the Balkan wars in the first half of the 1990s. Historical public remembrance is

heavy political weaponry in the joint state of four million Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, where peace can be maintained only with the help of external forces, while 150 ministers of 13 governments (by my count) have been trying to assert interests on three levels. Our French colleagues would have liked to have made the global aspects of the war more visible, but no matter how greatly the opinion of our Serb colleagues regarding the interpretation of the events of the summer of 1914 differed from the view of the other South Slav colleagues, they all agreed that the key issue of the Great War was the conflicting Balkan policies of the German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. There were Croats and Slovenes as well as Czechs, Polish, Slovaks and Ukrainians in the armies of several empires, so it was not only national remembrance narratives that confronted one another, but the remnants of community consciences linked to various empires and systems of alliance.

The atmosphere surrounding the preparations for the conference was not aided by the timing of the publication of Christopher Clark's book entitled *Sleepwalkers*,[28] either. Among the numerous works published on the occasion of the centenary, this book was the most persuasive by far—so much so that it gave a *coup de grâce* to Fritz Fischer's already mentioned thesis that had been highly influential for many decades, although its impact had begun to weaken over the previous years. As is well-known, Fischer placed the primary responsibility of Germany and Austria-Hungary for the breakout of the First World War within the context of the German struggle for global power lasting from Bismarck to Hitler. For his part, Clark divides the responsibility; according to the Serbian interpretation, however, this corresponds to the whitewashing of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. To simplify this thesis, leading Serbian and Bosnian Serb historians (Slobodan Soja) and political officials objected to Clark's suggestion that the main reason for the breakout of the First World War was not so much the unconditional German support offered to Austria-Hungary, but rather, Russia's taking sides with Serbia. Clark draws a parallel between June 28, 1914 and September 11, 2001, alluding to the continuity of Serbian nationalism from the Black Hand to Srebrenica and the Siege of Sarajevo from 1992 to 1995. At the same time, Clark's conception is contested by many of his colleagues who have published

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28 Christopher Clark, *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, 1st edition (London: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books, 2012).

seminal works themselves: thus Max Hastings, for example, supports the Fischer thesis and even places it into a broader political and historical-political context. "In 1914 the German Reich was a bellicose autocracy; its victory would have had disastrous consequences for freedom and democracy. Great Britain . . . was also defending the strengthening democratic world order against an authoritative system striving for global dominance. Western civilization has just as much reason to be grateful for the victory in 1918 as for the one in 1945."[29]

And this is where I would like to come back again to my commonplace thesis that cannot be repeated enough: the possibilities and limitations of historical reconciliations are determined not by the events of the past, but by the circumstances of the present as well as remembrances and commemorative policies at all times. Every pre-history is written *a posteriori*, and whether we try to demonstrate consensus regarding the interpretation of a past event or destiny with a big conference or by setting it in stone, if the given social-political milieu is divided on the issue, remembrance will lead to confrontation instead of reconciliation.

Fortunately or unfortunately, I am not the only one with this former naiveté. Now that I have come to my concluding thoughts, let me illustrate this by digressing a bit from my topic. Nine years ago, in April 2005, on the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, three dozen Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Austrian public personalities (political officials, scholars and religious leaders) addressed the members of the European Parliament in a letter at the initiative of Erhard Busek, former vice-chancellor of Austria, minister for sciences and higher education and a faithful advocate of the Central European concept. "Today there seems to be a general consensus about the fact that Hitler's régime and war adventure was a sin. On the other hand, no similar consensus has evolved with respect to the winners' side although they also committed reproachable acts. We should admit these acts because they also caused the death or suffering of many people. The acknowledgement of the latter does not veto the fundamental assessment of the war, nor does it diminish or relativize the sins of the Nazis. Nonetheless, 60 years after the end of the war, it should be made clear for the European public opinion: today's

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29 *Népszabadság*, April 5, 2014, 10.

Europe is the legitimate community of nations and states in every respect, and none of its citizens can be held directly or personally liable for what their predecessors did. The vices of the past should be made a thing of the past once and forever."[30] The signatories of the letter asked the MPs of the European Parliament to make specific steps in order to achieve this goal so that this chapter of European and world history would be closed in the spirit of justice and reconciliation.

Over the years that have passed since then, the European Parliament and the European Union have made significant efforts to shape the Pan-European historical remembrance, holding numerous events, issuing publications and establishing a House of European History that is to be opened shortly in Brussels. However, experience seems to indicate that no political will is capable of closing historical chapters: the sins of the past cannot be put into brackets. Mainly through the notions of Nazism, fascism, communism, nationalism and imperialism, a literature that is extensive enough to fill libraries and serve as source material for a legion of conferences has been researching the mechanisms that allowed individual and collective hatred to merge into twentieth-century policies of mass murder. The most recent findings of our discipline, however, go beyond that: today when we have all the technology to efficiently and swiftly wipe out not only humanity, but also the material and intellectual achievements of thousands of years, the worth, or to use modern terminology, public usefulness of disciplines dealing with man as an individual and collective being, human creativity and the nature of destructive power has increased to an immense degree. If we wanted to formulate a comprehensive conclusion on the basis of the examination of the inconceivably large quantities of products of history and remembrance policy, we could say that it was this war that opened the age of the instrumentalization of hatred politics blown up to an industrial scale via state measures. And while as a result of the war, our continent lost its leading role in the improvement of human living standards that it had obtained during the long nineteenth century, it became a pioneer in the domain of modern ideologies and techniques of destruction.

The lessons of the three-decade series of catastrophes that began in 1914 and which was termed, quite thought-provokingly, a European civil war by many,

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30 I would like to thank my Viennese colleague Arnold Suppan who was kind enough to provide me with the text.

have compelled numerous scholars of our profession to revisit the notions of modernization and progress in today's world of global lethal hatred politics. It was the rational logic of science that led to this conclusion, but as a member of the generation of 1968, let me end this writing with a less scientific and much more human thought: let us be realistic—let us demand the impossible! Let us try to believe the words of the Hungarian poet, Attila József, who lived between the two world wars:

> *The battle which our ancestors once fought*
> *Through recollection is resolved in peace,*
> *And settling at long last the price of thought,*
> *This is our task, and none too short its lease.*[31]

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31 Thomas Kabdebo, ed., *Hundred Hungarian Poems*, translated Vernon Watkins (Manchester: Albion Editions, 1976), accessed September 5, 2016, http://www.babelmatrix.org/works/hu/J%C3%B3zsef_Attila/A_Dun%C3%A1n%C3%A1l/en/1766-By_the_Danube

PART II

THE GREAT POWERS AND THE WAR
IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Gusztáv Kecskés D.

East-Central European Nationalities
and French Foreign Policy during the First World War

Before the First World War there was consensus between the influential groups of French specialists dealing with East-Central Europe and the foreign affairs administration of France that although it was time to modernize and federalize the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it should continue to exist. Before 1914, due to the Russian strategic alliance, the Quai d'Orsay was not concerned about promoting the development of the nation-states of the peoples living in the territory of the Tsarist Empire, either. However, the years of "the Great War" brought fundamental changes in the approach of the French academic and government milieus regarding our region.

Distressed by the horrors of the prolonged war, certain Slavists—who, as the pro-Czech Louis Leger, Ernest Denis[1] and Louis Eisenmann, were already biased toward their specific research area—increasingly opted for the language of political propaganda instead of that of scholarly objectivity. They also reconsidered their views in favor of the survival of the Monarchy. Already in late 1914–early 1915, Leger would write: "Austria has failed to fulfill its historic mission"; "Austria has become the outpost of Germany"; and "Austria must cease to exist."[2] Denis brooded in a similar tone: "The Habsburgs could have acted as Germany's inspector, but they rejected this role, and now it

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1 Ernest Denis lost his youngest son already in the first days of the war, which obviously increased his exasperation. See Antoine Marès, Louis Leger and Ernest Denis, "Profils de deux bohémisants français au XIXème siècle," in Bohumila Ferenčuhova, ed., *La France et l'Europe centrale*, numéro spécial 2 de *Slovanské štúdie* (Bratislava: Academic Electronic Press, 1995)

2 Louis Leger, *La liquidation de l'Autriche-Hongrie* (Paris: Librarie Félix Alcan, 1915), 10; Ignác Romsics, "Détruire ou reconstruire l'Autriche-Hongrie? Franciaország dunai politikájának dilemmája a XX. század elején," in Romsics, *Helyünk és sorsunk a Duna-medencében* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 1996), 17.

is too late to return to that. The Habsburgs must go down. The first and foremost condition of the stability of the new Europe is the disappearance of Austria."[3] In an article published in 1915, Eisenmann blamed the war on the 1879 Austrian-German alliance.[4] The next year he also drew the most definite conclusion: "There is but one solution for us: Austria-Hungary must cease to exist"[5] These specialists, who began to advocate more and more radical views, did everything in their power to propagate their ideas in addition to writing books. Denis, for instance, participated in the editing of the journal entitled *Nation Tchèque* launched in 1915 and the monthly paper entitled *Le Monde slave* published from 1917. He was also a member of the National Committee of Social and Political Studies (Comité national d'études sociales et politiques), which had been set up with the objective of defining the war goals of France.[6] On March 16, 1916, he chaired the conference of intellectuals held in the Great Lecture Hall of the Sorbonne that took a firm stand in favor of the elimination of the Habsburg Empire and the creation of the Czechoslovak state.[7]

Those émigré politicians who fled to the West from East-Central Europe during the First World War also supported the elimination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This meant a total reversal of opinion, for prior to the war, nearly all the currents of the national movements in the region desired to preserve the territorial unity of Austria-Hungary.[8] Back then, Tomáš

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3 Ernest Denis, *La grande Serbie* (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1915), 307; quoted by Romsics in "Détruire ou reconstruire l'Autriche-Hongrie?" 17.

4 Louis Eisenmann, *Revue politique et parlementaire*, t. LXXXIII, no. 246, May 10, 1915, 237–249, quoted in Marès, "Louis Eisenmann et l'Europe centrale (1897-1937)," *Regards sur l'indomptable Europe du Centre-Est du XVIIIᵉ siècle à nos jours*, Revue du Nord, collection Histoire, no. 10, Lille, 1996.

5 Eisenmann, "La politique des nationalités," *Revue France* 1, no. 3 (1918): 182; cited by Marès in "Louis Eisenmann et l'Europe centrale (1897-1937)," 134.

6 István Majoros, "Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia felbomlása és a francia törekvések a dunai régióban" in Ferenc Fischer, István Majoros and József Vonyó, eds., *Magyarország a (nagy)hatalmak erőterében. Tanulmányok Ormos Mária 70. születésnapjára* (Pécs: University Press, 2000), 422.

7 Romsics, "Détruire ou reconstruire l'Autriche-Hongrie?" 19.

8 László Szarka, "A soknemzetiségű birodalmaktól a multietnikus nemzetállamokig. Kelet-közép-európai nemzet- és államépítő nacionalizmusok az I. világháború éveiben," *Világtörténet* 2 (2015): 174; Magda Ádám, *Ki volt valójában Edvard Beneš?*

Garrigue Masaryk, the leader of the Czech national movement, was still worried that "if Austria should disintegrate in a European conflagration, the Czech would be annexed by Germany." It was in October 1914, in his memorandum sent to the British government, that Masaryk first talked about the necessity to create an independent Czech state.[9] On October 19, 1915, he gave an inaugural lecture at King's College London under the title "The Problem of Small Nations in the European Crisis" in which he declared that "small nations have the right to, and a possibility for, independent cultural and state development." According to his conclusion, "the principal task of the World War is to divide Austria-Hungary."[10] France became one of the main operational areas of the East-Central European émigré movements, which now placed the creation of sovereign nation-states on their banner. The Czech Committee, which was transformed into the Czechoslovak National Council in February 1916, had its headquarters in Paris. It was partly from there that the president of the Committee, the London-based Masaryk, oversaw the activities of the Czech and Slovak émigré committees of Moscow and Rome. Romanian émigré leaders also set up their headquarters in Paris.[11] The Polish National Committee, founded in Lausanne in August 1917, also moved to the French capital.[12]

The leaders of the Czech émigrés in Paris, especially Edvard Beneš, the secretary general of the Czechoslovak National Council, deployed their extensive social connections in an effort to convince French government circles of the necessity of creating an independent Czech state. Beneš, who obtained his doctorate at the University of Dijon in 1908,[13] maintained a close relationship with

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(Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2009), 46.

9 Magda Ádám, *A Kisantant, 1920–1938* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1981), 9.

10 Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *A világforradalom 1914–1918* (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1990), 104.

11 Magda Ádám, *A Kisantant*, 10, 15.

12 Majoros, "A lengyel kérdés az első világháború idején a francia külpolitikában," in Ferenc Fischer, Katalin Hegedűs, István Majoros and József Vonyó, eds., *A Kárpát-medence vonzásában: tanulmányok Polányi Imre emlékére* (Pécs: University Press, 2001), 297.

13 It is interesting to note that Beneš, in his doctoral dissertation entitled "The Austrian Problem and the Czech Question," argued in favor of the unity of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, notably as a federal state. See Majoros, "Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia felbomlása," 425; Magda Ádám, *Ki volt valójában Edvard Beneš?*, 18.

pro-Czech specialists on East-Central Europe. He was the co-editor of the newspaper *La Nation Tchèque* together with Denis. Beneš held a series of lectures at the Sorbonne regarding the Slav question, the text of which he published in 1916 under the suggestive title: *Détruisez l'Autriche-Hongrie!* (Destroy Austria-Hungary!).[14] He got acquainted with André Tardieu and Charles Loiseau, who were journalists with *Temps* at the time, as well as left-wing politicians Albert Thomas and Henry Franklin-Bouillon. Thomas paved the way for Beneš to the French socialists and the Ministry of Armaments. In the salon of Louise Weiss, he had a chance to meet the top officials of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs such as Philippe Berthelot, Jules Laroche and Pierre de Margerie, who would play a decisive role in the peace negotiations after the war.[15] Through Eisenmann, he got acquainted with the Ministry of Defense, which he soon started to supply with information.[16] He transmitted intelligence to the Deuxième Bureau, which had been collected in the Austro-Hungarian Empire by the Czech resistance group called Maffia and communicated through Switzerland.[17]

A close examination of the 1914–1915 French press reveals that—similarly to the university circles and the Czech émigrés and also heavily influenced by their information activities—nearly all of the French media and public opinion anticipated the disintegration of the Monarchy.[18] It is all the more surprising that the program of the fragmentation of Austria-Hungary was approved by the French government with a significant delay, only in the course of the years 1917–1918. Even the recommendation issued in 1916 by the committee in charge of the elaboration of the French peace proposals stressed that France

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14 Edvard Beneš, *Détruisez l'Autriche-Hongrie! Le martyre des Tchéco-Slovaques à travers leur histoire* (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1916)

15 Majoros, "Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia felbomlása," 427. His references: Henry Bogdan, *Histoire des pays de l'Est. Des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 1991), 256; Antoine Marès, *Le séjour d'Edouard Beneš en France, 1915-1919* (Paris: Université de Paris I Sorbonne, 1976).

16 Antoine Marès, *Edvard Beneš, de la gloire à l'abîme. Un drame entre Hitler et Staline* (Paris: Perrin, 2015), 68.

17 Ibid., 92.

18 Romsics, "Détruire ou reconstruire l'Autriche-Hongrie?" 18–19. The author refers to the research of Edith Marjanović, *Die Habsburger Monarchie in Politik und öffentlicher Meinung Frankreichs 1914–1918* (Vienna–Salzburg: 1984), 19–25.

was interested in the federal transformation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and not in its destruction. All of the above seems to indicate that in the first half of the war, French government policy was not substantially influenced either by the lobbying of the renowned Slav specialists or the East-Central European émigré politicians.[19] The paradigm shift—as we will see below—was primarily connected to the evolution of the military situation.

When it became clear to the Central Powers by 1916 that they would not be able to sign a separate peace with Russia, which would have enabled them to fight on just one front, they decided to support not only the Russian revolutionaries, but also to use the nationality question as a weapon.[20] In accordance with this policy, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire recognized the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Poland on November 5, 1916, while the Finns declared their independence on December 5, 1917, under the protection of German troops. The Entente, including France, was forced to react to the deployment of the "nationality weapon." A possible territory for counterattack was Central and Eastern Europe, but the French government had to proceed with extreme caution due to Russian interests.[21] Moreover, the French leadership also had to assure the supply of soldiers, because the blood-soaked battles of 1916 had decimated the French army. The idea of the military deployment of Czech and Polish troops emerged in response to these challenges, which foreshadowed the transformation of the French foreign policy paradigm in relation to East-Central Europe.

In November–December 1917, a qualitative change took place in the East-Central European policy of the French government. In November 1917, the Bolsheviks came to power in St. Petersburg, and it was predictable that due to their peace program, Russia would leave the war and that the French-Russian alliance—of strategic importance for Paris—would break up. Therefore, it became quintessential for French foreign policy to find a new eastern power in order to replace the Tsarist Empire and to counterbalance Germany. It was

19 Majoros, "Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia felbomlása," 422–423; Antoine Marès, "Les slavisants français face à la Hongrie avant le traité de Trianon," *Cahier d'études hongroises* 6 (1994): 190.

20 Georges-Henri Soutou: "Diplomatie de guerre," in Jay Winter, ed., *La Première Guerre mondiale*, vol. 2 (Paris: Fayard, 2014), 539, 542–543.

21 Majoros, "A lengyel kérdés az első világháború idején," 293.

in this context that the future Poland became even more valuable and that the nations living in the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which sought to establish their independent states or to join the neighboring nation-states, were suddenly seen in a different light as well as the political émigrés representing them, especially the Czechoslovaks.

One of the first documents of the new conception about to take shape was a memorandum dated November 26, 1917, and produced at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which examined the significance of the Polish state from the French perspective. The ministry thought that the Polish would be able to provide a large number of soldiers: about 700,000 Poles served in the Russian army, while there were 800,000 additional soldiers who could be mobilized in the territories under German occupation. The French Foreign Ministry considered it important from a political point of view that the example of the independent Poland could reinforce the independence efforts of the Slav peoples of the Habsburg Empire, which could further strengthen the eastern defenses against Germany.[22] As a logical consequence of this line of thought, French Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon advocated the creation of an independent Poland in his declaration on December 27.[23]

Losing Russia as a military ally in November 1917 brought a change in the attitude of the French government towards Austria-Hungary as well. It steered Georges Clemenceau, the prime minister who came to power as a result of the French change of government on November 17, and his friend, Foreign Minister Pichon, towards implementation of the project of breaking up the Monarchy.[24] This new conception also cropped up in the above-mentioned memorandum of November 26. Besides the priority defense function of Poland against Germany, the document talks about another important pillar: an "enlarged Romania." What is more, "The protective belt against the German expansion can be appropriately completed by the creation of new states in the east," the author of the memorandum noted. These new states could only be

22 Kalervo Hovi, *Cordon sanitaire or barrier de l'Est? The Emergence of the New French Eastern European Alliance Policy 1917-1919* (Turku: Annales Universitatis Turkuensis, 1975), 72–73. Qutoed by Majoros, "A lengyel kérdés az első világháború idején," 297–298; Majoros, *Vereségtől a győzelemig. Franciaország a nemzetközi kapcsolatok rendszerében (1871–1920)* (Budapest: Eötvös Kiadó, 2004), 175.
23 Majoros, *Vereségtől a győzelemig*, 200.
24 Romsics, "Détruire ou reconstruire l'Autriche-Hongrie?" 27.

created after the disintegration of Austria-Hungary and in place thereof.[25] A few weeks later, on January 5, 1918, de Margerie, the head of the Department of Political Affairs, outlined the same new conception to the Belgian ambassador, and emphasized that it was also approved by Pichon, Clemenceau, and Chief of General Staff Ferdinand Foch. He pointed out that in order to build an efficient alliance against Germany, Poland in itself could not sufficiently replace Russia: Czechoslovakia, Belorussia, Ukraine, Bessarabia and Romania would also need to be involved in the anti-German French security zone.[26] Under the aegis of the new French leadership, a committee was set up on December 7, 1917, in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs that received the duty of elaborating a propaganda and action plan regarding Russia with the use of foreign elements (Czechs, Ukrainians, etc.). Beneš and Rastisláv Štefanik, one of the vice-presidents of the Czechoslovak National Council, both became members of this committee. At the request of the Deuxième Bureau, Beneš prepared a precise action plan (dated December 15) regarding the organization of sabotage actions in the hinterland of the Monarchy. Meanwhile, on December 16, a French government decree was signed regarding the creation of a Czechoslovak army under the supervision of the Czechoslovak National Council.[27] Nevertheless, all of these steps did not yet signify an irrevocable commitment on behalf of the French government toward the destruction of the Habsburg Empire and the creation of an independent Czech state.

The period between January and October 1918, that is the period of the formation of the new French policy regarding East-Central Europe, was simultaneously characterized by uncertainty and consolidation. In relation to Polish statehood—which did not entail the dismantling of the long-standing Habsburg Empire that had been regarded as indispensable for the equilibrium of Europe—we can observe a relatively steady development in the policy of France and its allies. Shortly after the French took a stand in favor of an independent Poland at the end of December 1917, British Prime Minister Lloyd George suggested the drawing of Polish ethnic borders on January 5,

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25 Hovi, *Cordon sanitaire or barrier de l'Est?*, 71–75; quoted by Romsics in "Détruire ou reconstruire l'Autriche-Hongrie?" 27.

26 Majoros, "A lengyel kérdés az első világháború idején," 298.; Hovi, *Cordon sanitaire or barrier de l'Est?*, 75.

27 Marès, "Les slavisants français face à la Hongrie," 188.

1918, while U.S. President Woodrow Wilson also demanded a sovereign Polish state with an outlet to the sea in point 13 of his declaration of January 8. Although the leading powers of the Entente formulated different positions concerning the frontiers of the new Poland (while the French thought it possible for a while to restore the 1772 borders,[28] the British government rejected the historical frontiers), the necessity of the Polish reunification was not questioned by either of them. As a result of this, at the meeting of the Supreme War Council of Versailles held on June 3, 1918, France, England and Italy all referred to the creation of the independent and reunited Polish state as one of the conditions of a just and long-lasting peace. This position was confirmed by French President Raymond Poincaré on the occasion of the swearing in of the first division of the Polish army on June 22. On September 28, the French government handed over the command of the Polish army to the Polish National Committee, thereby recognizing the Polish military as an allied belligerent party. Shortly thereafter, the other Entente states made the same decision. On October 7, 1918, the Polish Regent Council declared Poland's independence. France played a proactive and decisive role throughout the Polish affair, which was related to the fact that based on the series of negotiations that had taken place since the British-French agreement was signed on December 23, 1917, France considered the Polish territories as its own action zone, and its role as initiator was not questioned even by the Allies.[29] However, the process that led to the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire and the formation of new state entities in its former territory was a much more contradictory and complicated process.

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28 This included Lithuania, a part of Latvia, Belarus and most of Western Ukraine to Kiev.

29 Majoros, "A lengyel kérdés az első világháború idején," 298–299; Ghislain de Castelbajac, "La France et la question polonaise, 1914–1918," in Georges-Henri Soutou, ed., *Recherches sur la France et le problème des nationalités pendant la première guerre mondiale (Pologne, Ukraine, Lithuanie)* (Paris: Presse de l'Université de Paris Sorbonne, 1995), 94–96; Michael Jabara, *Revolution and Intervention: The French Government and the Russian Civil War 1917–1919* (Kingston–Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 1983), 84–86. As well as: István Majoros, *Párizs és Oroszország (1917–1919)* (Szekszárd: IPF-Könyvek, 1999), 96–98, 184–185; István Majoros: *Vereségtől a győzelemig,* 201–202.

The American and the British governments as well as part of the French political élite feared the disruption of the European balance of power as a result of the possible dissolution of Austria-Hungary. British Prime Minister Lloyd George declared in his speech delivered before the delegates of the British trade unions on January 5, 1918, that the destruction of Austria-Hungary was not among the British war objectives. In point 10 of his famous address to the United States Congress on January 8, 1918, President Wilson called for autonomous development—and not independence—for the peoples of Austria-Hungary.[30] On February 15, during his hearing before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Senate, Foreign Minister Pichon talked about those difficulties that were caused by the reservations of the British regarding the application of the right of nationalities to liberation from foreign rule.[31] The study of the French General Staff entitled "The Reconstruction of Russia and the French Interests" (March 1) considered the termination and the subsistence of the Habsburg state equally possible.[32] The French Chamber of Deputies heard arguments in favor of the survival of the Monarchy even after the breaking off of secret separate peace negotiations with Vienna in early April. Former Prime Minister Paul Painlevé said the following on April 30: "The Entente did not want to end the Austria of the Habsburgs, but rather wished for the reorganization of Austria on modern foundations that would take into consideration the principle of peoples' right to self-determination." On May 3, Marius Moutet declared "You have burnt up the bridges to Austria. We will feel the consequences of this policy later on. Russia has been ruined; I do not know whether it is in our interest that Austria should be cut into pieces. I do not know what kind of influence will prevail in these fragments." On the same day, Clemenceau also admitted to representatives: "We had no policy for Austria, neither I, nor anyone else." In light of the above, it is not surprising that on May 28, Beneš asked for a clear and precise statement from Pichon concerning the Czechoslovak question. The concerns of the Czechoslovak National Council were not dissipated even in the summer of 1918: they were afraid of the new peace offensive of Charles I of Austria and feared that the

30 Majoros, "Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia felbomlása," 429; Galántai József: *Az első világháború* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1980), 428–430.
31 Marès, "Les slavisants français face à la Hongrie," 189.
32 Majoros, "Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia felbomlása," 429.

French political élite would settle on a judgement favorable to the Monarchy. They were also worried that Germany might launch an ultimate—and this time successful—attack.[33]

Despite the uncertainty occasionally manifest in French government circles, the new French conception for East-Central Europe that had crystallized by November–December 1917 was further reinforced between January and October 1918. There were three significant events in this period that influenced the course of the war, and which consolidated the new direction: on March 3, 1918, Soviet-Russia signed a separate peace with the Central Powers and withdrew from the war, which obviously resulted in the immediate termination of the French-Russian and British-Russian alliance; at the beginning of April, the secret separate peace talks pursued with the Austro-Hungarian Empire since March 1917 collapsed under scandalous circumstances (the Czernin incident);[34] and on May 14–15, 1918, Germany and Austria-Hungary signed an agreement in Spa aimed at tight economic cooperation oriented toward a customs union. The *Mitteleuropa* scenario thus seemed to take shape, which terrified promoters of the French security policy.[35] In other words, Russia was definitively eliminated as an ally and the unity of the Central Powers seemed to be further reinforced, while the masses of American troops expected to relieve the Western Front had not yet arrived in France. In this critical situation, the French government tried to deploy all of its possible reserves—including the "nationality card" that the Central Powers had been playing for years. In the spirit of this policy, France overtly supported the congress of the so-called "oppressed nations" of the Habsburg Empire, which was held in Rome on April 8–10, 1918. Those who participated in this congress called

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33 Marès, "Les slavisants français face à la Hongrie," 189; Marès, *Edvard Beneš, de la gloire à l'abîme*, 77.

34 For the separate peace talks initiated by Charles IV, see Soutou, "Diplomatie de guerre," 556–559.

35 Romsics, "Détruire ou reconstruire l'Autriche-Hongrie?" 27–28; Majoros, "Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia felbomlása," 429–430. For the French aspects of the *Mitteleuropa* question, see Majoros, "Párizs és a német Mitteleuropa-terv az első világháború végén," in Tamás Krausz and Gyula Szvák, eds., Életünk Kelet-Európa. Tanulmányok Niederhauser Emil 80. születésnapjára (Budapest: Pannonica, 2003), 131–135.

for a common fight against the common oppressor.[36] Franklin-Bouillon, the president of the Foreign Policy Committee of the French Chamber of Deputies, was a member of the semi-official delegation sent to the congress by Paris and assured the participants that the French government agreed with the resolutions of the congress.[37] Even Clemenceau himself appeared before the representatives of the nations and decried the Monarchy. Shortly thereafter, Beneš asked him to recognize the independence of Czechoslovakia. At that point, the "Tiger" did not officially yet do so, though his conviction became firm concerning his support for the efforts of the Czech émigrés. From then on, Beneš was regularly received by the architects of French foreign policy, and a special officer was entrusted with the task of monitoring the Polish and the Czech cause at the Quai d'Orsay. In May 1918, the French prime minister affirmed in one of his statements that the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was necessary.[38] The further improvement of the positions of the Czechoslovak émigrés was, just like before, due to military factors. The Entente assigned a special role to the relatively well-equipped and -organized Czechoslovak Legion composed of between 50,000 and 70,000 soldiers and around which the other anti-Bolshevik forces were supposed to gather and open an anti-German eastern front.[39] That was how they wanted to prevent Germany from transferring substantial forces to the Western Front and also from acquiring Russian raw materials. The strategic importance of the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia was further increased by the fact that as a result of its May 26 revolt against the Soviets who were preparing to disarm the force—the legion actually controlled the majority of the Trans-Siberian Railway together with its secondary lines. Since by that time there was a significant number of American troops present on the Western Front, the British and the French governments thought that the Czechoslovak units preparing to be deployed on the French front would better serve the interests

36 Majoros, *Vereségtől a győzelemig*, 196; Marès, *Edvard Beneš, de la gloire à l'abîme*, 100.
37 Ádám, *A Kisantant*, 18–19.
38 Clemenceau had doubts even in October and November 1918 regarding the pertinence of the complete dismantling of the Monarchy. The French prime minister was afraid that the Austrian part of the Dual Monarchy would join Germany: see Soutou, *Recherches sur la France et le problème des Nationalités*, 9; Soutou, "Diplomatie de guerre," 571.
39 For information about the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia, see: Marès, *Edvard Beneš, de la gloire à l'abîme*, 87–91.

of the Entente if they stayed in Russia and became the hub of anti-Bolshevik forces. On June 20, Clemenceau notified the French military mission in Russia about the decision, and it was also confirmed by Pichon on June 25.[40]

Thus we can affirm that the French foreign policy paradigm in relation to East-Central Europe went through a radical transformation during the First World War. While earlier the French foreign policy administration did not support the independence efforts of the nationalities of the region usually living within an empire (in consideration of the interests of the allied Russia and, in the case of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, for the sake of maintaining the European power balance), the French government became more and more interested especially in the Polish and the Czechs from 1916. As we saw above, this change was mainly due to the new challenges posed by the theaters of war and not to pressure from the extremely active French Slavists and Czech émigré politicians or, for that matter, from French public opinion. The utilization of the nationality question as a weapon by the Central Powers as well as the growing problem of the lack of soldiers for the French army put the issue of the military deployment of the Czech prisoners of war and the Polish on the agenda. Their military involvement increasingly strengthened the political position of the Polish and Czech émigrés in France. These émigré organizations were considered to be the most recognized organs of the peoples represented by them internationally as well. Nevertheless, the factor that influenced the East-Central European policy of France the most was the withdrawal of its Russian ally from the war due to the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917. That is why Paris was forced to look for another counterpoise lying to the rear of Germany instead of Russia. For the majority of the French population, the demographic advantage, the economic and military power of Germany and its presumed aspiration for European hegemony were considered to be an even more serious challenge at the time of the breakout of the world war than the consequences of the 1870 French defeat.[41] After the shrinking and collapse of

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40 Majoros, "Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia felbomlása," 430–431. Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *Clemenceau* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), 812–813. For the history of the Czech Legion in Russia, see also Majoros, *Párizs és Oroszország*, 104–109; Majoros, "A Csehszlovák légió, Párizs és az Orosz polgárháború," *Múltunk* 4 (1990): 81–94.

41 Jean-Claude Allain, Pierre Guillen, Georges-Henri Soutou, Laurent Theis and Maurice Vaïsse, *Histoire de la diplomatie française*, vol. 2 (Paris: Perrin, 2005), 287.

the empires in East-Central Europe, the solution seemed to be the creation and reinforcement of a zone of France-friendly nation-states, of which the program of the termination of the Monarchy was a logical consequence. Thus we can declare that the foreign policy of France with respect to our region was determined during the First World War by security policy considerations—as it had always been throughout the centuries since early modern history.

In 1917–1918, Paris was more proactive in this region than its Anglo-Saxon allies, which usually followed France with greater or lesser delay, for example, when it came to the recognition of the émigré organizations and cooperation with them. Undoubtedly, the greater activism of French foreign policy could also be attributed to the fact that it was France that suffered the biggest losses in terms of human lives. Moreover, after the withdrawal of the Russian ally, it was up to France to confront the increased German danger directly. After the failure of the secret separate peace talks with the Monarchy, the influence of France grew within the Entente, and it had a major impact on the policy of its partners in the matter of Austria-Hungary as well.[42]

After this general overview, let us attempt to offer a more sophisticated explanation for the underlying causes. The prolonged transformation of French foreign policy with regard to East-Central Europe – which was initiated in January 1916 and existed for nearly three years – can be attributed to the deep divide over the issue within the ruling French élite. There were two conceptions that competed with one other: the relatively new principle of the right of nations to self-determination and the contemporary version of traditional power politics, that is, the need to preserve the European concert based on the equilibrium of the five big powers (United Kingdom, France, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany and Russia). The advocates of the first conception are referred to as "Progressives" while the latter are called "Conservatives."

As for the "Progressives": the question of the right of nations to self-determination had been present in French intellectual life since the 1830s as a result of the wave of empathy for the Poles (preceded by the empathy triggered by the cause of the Greeks) and it remained on the agenda until the transformation of East-Central Europe in 1918.[43] There was increasing

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42 Ádám, *A Kisantant*, 19.

43 Antoine Marès, "Construction, deconstruction et marginalistation de l'Europe centrale

interest toward this region within public opinion, university circles and certain political groups (radicals, radical socialists, a part of the socialists and certain groups affiliated the classical right wing). More information became available and there was a greater willingness to find an answer to the demands for self-determination among the peoples of the region.[44] Since the end of the nineteenth century, having seen the crises and wars in the Balkans, the Russian pogroms and the recurrent massacres in the Ottoman Empire, numerous specialists and politicians came to the conclusion that multi-ethnic dynastic empires had become outdated and that East-Central Europe should be reorganized according to a nation-state model.[45] The most enthusiastic flagbearers of the right to self-determination in France were associated with the radical party. Their ideas seemed progressive and even revolutionary in those times.[46] The president of the Central Office of Nationalities (Office Central des Nationalités) set up in 1911 was Paul Painlevé, an independent Republican-Socialist representative, then minister of defense and prime minister, who most probably outlined a foreign policy alternative versus the dominant policy of alliance with Russia.[47] During a speech held in 1912 on the anniversary of Zola's death, Painlevé criticized the government's Russian-friendly power policy and shared his conviction that the Austro-Hungarian Empire should be brought down in order to reorganize Europe and that the oppressed nations of the Russian Empire should be liberated. He suggested that France should take the lead in the movement of the oppressed peoples of East-Central Europe, thus ensuring its influence over them.[48]

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dans le discours français," in Paul Gradvohl, ed., *L'Europe médiane au XXe siècle. Fractures, décompositions – recomposition – surcompositions* (Prague: CEFRES, 2011), 202.

44 Ibid., 203.

45 Soutou, "Diplomatie de guerre," 539, 560–561.

46 Soutou, *Recherches sur la France et le problème des Nationalités*, 6; Soutou, "La France et le problème des nationalités pendant la guerre de 1914–1918: le cas de la Serbie," *Balcanica* 45 (2014): 371.

47 Soutou, "Jean Pélissier et l'Office Central des Nationalités, 1911–1918: un agent du gouvernement français auprès des Nationalités" in Soutou, *Recherches sur la France et le problème des Nationalités*, 15–16.

48 Soutou, "Les grandes puissances et la question des nationalités en Europe centrale et orientale pendant et après la Première Guerre mondiale: actualité du passé?" *Politique*

The other group, the "conservatives," was composed primarily of government politicians. Their circles were characterized by indifference for East-Central Europe, ignorance and great caution in the name of realism because they did not see any foreign policy opportunities in this initiative that could have been used to take revenge on the Germans.[49] The prime ministers and foreign ministers of the French governments during the First World War all belonged to this group. They focused primarily on the geostrategic interests of France and after the war they endeavored to restore the "European concert" that looked back on 100 years of history.[50] The problematics of the nationalities was of secondary importance to them in comparison to this.[51] In their view, it was necessary that the allied great powers oversee the national movements and keep them under control according to their own interests. Nevertheless, this also allowed for the cautious and gradual consideration of national progression as it could be observed during the Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913. For them, the fundamental principle was not the right to self-determination, but that the nations would be recognized by the allied great powers.[52] The caution of the French leaders during the war was only increased by the widespread suspicion that the leaders of East-Central Europe working for the creation of independent states were, in fact, allied with Germany. This assumption pertained especially to the Ukrainians and to the peoples of the Baltics. But it was raised several times in relation to the Serbs as well that they might sign a separate peace treaty with the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[53]

étrangère 3 (1993): 701; Allain et. al, *Histoire de la diplomatie française*, 288.

49 Marès, "Construction, deconstruction et marginalistation de l'Europe centrale dans le discours français," 203.

50 Allain et. al, *Histoire de la diplomatie française*, 288.

51 Concerning the situation of non-dominant nationalities before the First World War, see Guy Hermet, *Histoire des nations et du nationalisme en Europe* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1996), 158–164.

52 Soutou, *Recherches sur la France et le problème des Nationalités*, 7; Soutou, "La France et le problème des nationalités," 371; Soutou, "Les grandes puissances et la question des nationalités," 699.

53 In fact, the specialists on the area could not explain the complexity of the situation to the French authorities, see: Soutou, "La France et le problème des nationalités," 370.

The negative assessment may have been reinforced by prejudice concerning the underdeveloped culture of the region in question.[54]

The several-decade debate between the two camps was illustrated by two seminal historical works of French intellectual discourse. The views of the "progressives," on the one hand, were represented by the book series edited by Ernest Lavisse (*Histoire de la France contemporaine depuis la Révolution jusqu'à la paix de 1919*), the closing volume of which (written by Lavisse and published in 1922) emphasized the messianic role of France, which defended the nationalities after gaining victory in the world war. On the other hand, the eight-volume work of Albert Sorel published between 1885 and 1904 (*L'Europe et la révolution française*) reflected the stance of the "conservatives," criticizing the nationality policy of Napoleon III, which had contributed to the creation of the unified Italy and Germany. The intellectual debate, which had been conducted for a century, was now rekindled by the Great War.[55]

In his book entitled *Requiem pour un empire défunt*, Ferenc Fejtő put the ideas and activities of the leaders of the group that we have referred to as "progressives" into the context of modern French history and observed that for them, the aim of the fight to be fought until "total victory" and the complete destruction of the enemy was ideological in nature. It was a continuation of the conflict that had placed the conservative and the republican France in opposition to one other since 1793. In his view, the heirs of the "anti-monarchist and anti-clerical Jacobin French republic" wanted to wage this ideological war at an international level and turn Europe into a republic. They saw the archenemy in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was regarded as the citadel of clericalism and monarchism. According to Fejtő, this is what explains their receptiveness to the arguments of the émigrés who had arrived from the Monarchy.[56] He considered Freemasonry to be the flagship of this struggle.[57] The Masonic Congress of the Allied and Neutral Countries held in Paris on June 28–30, 1917, took a stand in favor of the freedom of the

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54 Ibid., 371.

55 Soutou, *Recherches sur la France et le problème des Nationalités*, 7; Soutou, "La France et le problème des nationalités," 372.

56 François Fejtő, *Requiem pour un empire défunt. Histoire de la destruction de l'Autriche-Hongrie* (Paris: Lieu Commun, 1988), 307-310; Michel Winock and Jean-Pierre Azéma, *La troisième république* (Paris: Pluriel, 1976).

57 Ibid., 337.a

oppressed nations of the Monarchy, emphatically demanding independence for the Czechs.[58] Antoine Marès's thick monograph about Beneš also mentions French Freemasonry as a key player in the transformation of East-Central Europe, one which energized the Slavic nations of the Habsburg Empire. As opposed to Fejtő, however, Marès does not regard Freemasonry as a decisive actor, but as only one of the important factors.[59] Georges-Henri Soutou also highlights the recurring Masonic connections of the European radical nationalist movements and the French radical Socialists.[60] We can observe the interaction of the "progressive" and the "conservative" currents in the decision-making of the French government in relation to East-Central Europe during the First World War. Which were the principal factors affecting the position of Paris? Among the domestic political forces, the Radical Party especially tried to influence the actions of the government. When in July 1918 the French government clearly stated its intention to support the Yugoslav, Polish and Czechoslovak efforts, the decision was forced by the Chamber of Deputies, notably by the Radicals, while Clemenceau was opposed to it.[61] Without their insistence, the prime minister would have been inclined to adhere to his extremely cautious position regarding the nationalities of East-Central Europe and to ensure the reinvigoration of the Russian ally in an effort to prevent a vacuum of power from emerging to the east of Germany.[62] The person who played a key role in putting pressure on the prime minister was Henry Franklin-Bouillon, a Radical Socialist representative and the president of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, who established the Bureau of Nationalities (Bureau des nationalités) in 1918.[63] As a member of the semi-official French delegation, along with Minister of Armaments Albert Thomas, he took part—as was mentioned previously—in the congress of the so-called oppressed nations of the Monarchy in Rome in April 1918, the

58 Majoros, *Vereségtől a győzelemig,* 195.
59 Marès, *Edvard Beneš, de la gloire à l'abîme,* 97–98.
60 Soutou, "Les grandes puissances et la question des nationalités," 701.
61 Soutou, "Diplomatie de guerre," 571–572.
62 Soutou, *Recherches sur la France et le problème des Nationalités*, 8.
63 Ibid., 10, 32, 33.

success of which also contributed to the finalization of the resolution of the French government.[64]

Among the foreign policy factors, the influence of the British was only collateral. London and Paris fundamentally agreed that after the war, Germany would have to be substantially weakened and its European hegemony terminated. However, the British regarded the pushing back of Berlin's influence over East-Central Europe to be much less feasible. Therefore, their primary focus was on the securitization of Western Europe (France, Belgium and the Netherlands) and of the Middle East.[65] By contrast, French foreign policy was much more heavily influenced by President Wilson's new diplomacy. In light of the Soviet-Russian separate peace in March 1918 and the Romanian separate peace in May as well as the strengthening of the alliance of the Central Powers, Wilson became a genuine flagbearer of the right of peoples to self-determination.[66] Coerced by Wilson, the French government had no choice but to accept the nationality principle, if reluctantly, although this was done to some extent in order to legitimize its own policy.[67] This influence was especially strong in relation to the creation of the Baltic states and Czechoslovakia.[68]

Among the East-Central European émigré movements, that of the Czechs proved to be especially influential. Its success was facilitated by its carefully constructed multi-layered network of social relations. From autumn 1915, the Czech cause was widely promoted in the French press. During this campaign, the negative presentation of the evolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was accompanied by a description of the assistance that the Czechs could offer to the cause of the Entente. Thus the Czechs gradually appeared on the horizon of France's East-Central European expectations as potential new and reliable allies.[69] The message announced by Masaryk in October 1915 at King's College London, according to which the only way to stop German

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64 Soutou, "La France et le problème des nationalités," 390; Majoros, *Vereségtől a győzelemig*, 196.

65 Soutou, *L'Europe de 1815 à nos jours* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2007), 166.

66 Soutou, "Les grandes puissances et la question des nationalités," 703.

67 Soutou, "Diplomatie de guerre," 571.

68 Soutou, *L'Europe de 1815 à nos jours*, 168.

69 Marès, *Edvard Beneš, de la gloire à l'abîme*, 68.

expansion was the creation of an independent Czech state and the dissolution of the Monarchy, was repeated over and over. The power of their message was amplified by their peculiar way of argumentation, which simultaneously played on sentiments ("the defense of the oppressed") and applied legal arguments (the right of peoples to self-determination). In the emotionally charged atmosphere of the era, they exploited all instances of persecution to demonstrate that the Austrians were driven by the same hatred of the Slavs as were the Germans and that the Czechs courageously supported the Entente.[70] The program of the destruction of Austria-Hungary was completed by sketching a credible alternative: they wished to call to life a Czechoslovak-Romanian-Yugoslav alliance that would cooperate with Poland in order to stop German encroachment.[71] The advocacy potential of the Czech organization was further increased by the fact that the East-Central European émigrés living in France—especially the Czechs and the South Slavs—cooperated with each other closely during the war: for instance, they formed a solid unity against the separate peace efforts of the Monarchy.[72]

According to Fejtő, the Masonic lodges, which exercised a decisive influence over the press and political life, served as a crucial hinterland for the propaganda activities of Masaryk and Beneš in France.[73] Antoine Marès also talks about Freemasonry as an important base of the social networking of Czech émigrés. In his book about Beneš, he claims that the publication of the earlier mentioned *Détruisez l'Autriche-Hongrie!* brochure was financed by the Grand Orient.[74] According to him, these threads would also explain the tightness of Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations. However, Marès has found no evidence that the primary Czech émigré leaders, Masaryk, Beneš and Štefanik, were Freemasons during the war.[75]

French government circles did not have a clear understanding of the complicated evolution of the nationalities of the region, e.g., of the effects

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70 Ibid., 73.

71 Ibid., 74.

72 Ibid., 98–99.

73 Fejtő, *Requiem pour un empire défunt*, 341-342.

74 Marès, *Edvard Beneš, de la gloire à l'abîme*, 97; Henri Pozzi, *Les Coupables. Documents officiels inédits sur les responsabilités de la guerre et les dessous de la paix* (Paris: Éditions européennes, 1935), 322.

75 Marès, *Edvard Beneš, de la gloire à l'abîme*, 97–98.

of the diversionary activities of the Germans among the Polish and the Ukrainians, whose leaders were also deeply divided. This obscurity was aggravated by the fact that experts and "fake experts" often put forth essentially diverging views.[76] The extremely poor knowledge of the region, coupled with the increased strategic importance of the latter, generated a high demand for intermediaries who could provide seemingly reliable knowledge about East-Central Europe. Besides the French Slavists, the political émigrés originating from this region played a crucial role in this: they provided visibility for their people and "comprehension" for their demands on behalf of the allied great powers.[77] From the end of the nineteenth century, the intellectuals who had emigrated from this region became the visible imprints of the increasingly active national movements, the "matrices of self-identity."[78] Masaryk and Beneš acted as knowledgeable specialists on the region and by delivering a coherent program, they were able to influence the international decisions affecting their nation.[79] The question arises: was it the collapse of the empires that enabled the foundation of the states of the individual nations of East-Central Europe, that is, did the evolution of the international context intersect with the development of the national movements? Or did the effective propaganda activities of the individual émigré communities play a decisive role?[80] In my opinion, both components acted simultaneously, mutually reinforcing one other.

The French government merely used the nationality principle as a tactical weapon. In the end, Paris subordinated everything to the single objective of creating a counterpoise in East-Central Europe that could resist Germany.

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76 Soutou, *Recherches sur la France et le problème des Nationalités*, 6.

77 Isabelle Davion, "Conceptions de l'Europe centrale et orientale, des empires multinationaux à l'entre-deux-guerres," in Nicolas Beaupré and Caroline Moine, *L'Europe de Versailles à Maastricht. Moments, enjeux, acteurs* (Paris: Éditions Seli Arslan, 2007), 52–53.

78 Pierre Renouvin, *La Crise européenne et la Première guerre mondiale* (Paris: PUF, 1969); quoted by Davion in "Conceptions de l'Europe centrale et orientale," 55.

79 Marès, *Edvard Beneš, de la gloire à l'abîme*, 117.

80 Davion, "Conceptions de l'Europe centrale et orientale," 57; Pierre Milza, *Les relations internationales de 1918 à 1939* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1995); François Fejtő, *Requiem pour un empire défunt. Histoire de la destruction de l'Autriche-Hongrie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993).

Therefore, using the rhetoric of the liberation of "the oppressed nations," it promoted the creation of states including large minority populations, that is, Poland and Czechoslovakia.[81] It is important to underscore that not even the French radicals wanted to enforce the purely national aspect over strategic considerations. Even Franklin-Bouillon, the president of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, who was highly supportive of Czech and Polish émigrés, emphasized in July 1918 that "a barrier should be built from viable states against Germany," even at the price of "compromising the nationality principle."[82] Furthermore, political officials were also conscious of the risk of creating weak small states that would "Balkanize" the region. In order to avoid this, many supported the creation of politically, militarily and economically strong "big nations," even at the price of letting one nation prevail over the other within the same country. The adherents of this conception endeavored to create multi-component, though more or less homogeneous states with a historically "more advanced" nation that would have the mission to lead the others. This was how they perceived the situation of the Serbs in Yugoslavia or the Czechs is Czechoslovakia. The standardizing and centralizing French Jacobin model was also proposed as a potential analogy.[83] Philippe Berthelot, one of the influential French architects of the Paris treaties, did not even mention the nationalities, but rather he talked about the "four pillars" of French foreign policy in relation to East-Central Europe that would serve as France's allies in its effort to contain Germany. These allies included the resurrected Poland, Czechoslovakia patched together from historical Czech territories and regions inhabited mostly by Slovaks, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes born from the unification efforts of the Serbs and the South Slav peoples of the Monarchy and the enlarged Romania.[84]

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81 Ibid., 571; Soutou, *L'Europe de 1815 à nos jours*, 167–168.
82 Soutou, "Jean Pélissier et l'Office Central des Nationalités," 33, 37.
83 Soutou, "La France et le problème des nationalités," 395.
84 Soutou, "Les grandes puissances et la question des nationalités," 705; Allain et. al, *Histoire de la diplomatie française*, 297–298.

Mark Cornwall

Escaping a Prison of Peoples?
Exits and Expectations at the End of Austria-Hungary

In the autumn of 1918 a new play by a Czech author was being performed in one of the main theatres in Prague. Its title was *The Night in the Bastille* [*Noc v Bastille*].[1] Some Czech theatre-goers may have expected a melodrama. A few may even have known that the author, Karel Mečíř, was a journalist who had shown little sympathy for the Habsburg empire during the war: one of his plays, entitled *Emperor* [*Císař*], had been banned a year earlier. In fact *The Night in the Bastille* was a "rococo-comedy" about the antics of Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of the French King Louis XV. Mečíř in his fictional writings often inclined to light comedy or satire.[2] But he was also a serious journalist, later a diplomat, and his Czech patriotism is revealed by the fact that after the war, by 1919, he was co-opted as a delegate to the first revolutionary parliament of Czechoslovakia.

Mečíř's obscure play which appeared in the twilight days of the Austro-Hungarian empire introduces us to the whole notion that the wartime state was akin to a prison or a "Bastille". This metaphor – suggesting that despotism reigned in Austria-Hungary akin to late eighteenth-century France – was however not something suddenly suggested during the First World War. Already in the decades before the war such parallels were being made. In the 1880s, socialists who were hounded by the Viennese police labelled one prison there the "Vienna Bastille".[3] Similarly in Croatia in 1908, one prominent lawyer asserted that the Habsburg system of justice resembled a

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1 "Weinberger Stadttheater", *Prager Abendblatt*, 9 September 1918, 3.
2 "Karel Mečíř," in Jaroslav Kunc (ed.), *Slovník soudobých českých spisovatelů* (Prague, 1945), 541-2. The banned play was another comedy, in fact about the Emperor Napoleon: *Prager Tagblatt*, 25 January 1918, 4.
3 Gustav Haberman, *Aus meinem Leben* (Vienna, 1919), 142-150.

"Croatian Bastille".[4] In other words, even in peacetime, governance in some parts of the monarchy was thought to be unjust or even despotic. The rule of law, the so-called *Rechtsstaat*, was being regularly questioned by lawyers or other dissident voices.[5] This should make us question how far the *Rechtsstaat* was really functioning well before 1914.[6] Later in the war itself, the criticism gained even more traction. In January 1918, one Czech politician who had been locked up for three years without trial gave a dramatic speech to the Austrian Reichsrat (parliament). Based on his own experience in prison, Václav Klofáč now quoted Jean-Jacques Rousseau at the Habsburg regime: "You can send me ten times to the Bastille, but I will ten times and for ever more cry out the word Freedom."[7]

Yet it was after the war and Austria-Hungary's collapse that the prison-metaphor really gained momentum in some of the successor states, especially in Czechoslovakia. This reflected the fact that by the early 1920s there was a notable burst of publishing of Czech memoirs about the war. Whether or not they were officially sponsored (many were), the purpose was to explain and legitimize the recent national trauma with an uplifting narrative from darkness into light. The most prominent memoirs were those celebrating the work of Czech émigrés in the West (led by Tomáš Masaryk and Edvard Beneš); or the colourful exploits of Czechoslovak legionaries in Bolshevik Russia – a staple of second-hand bookshops still today in the Czech Republic. But a close second in these ego-documents were those which described the "Golgotha" of

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4 Hinko Hinković, "Istražni zatvor veleizdajnika," *Pokret*, 23 September 1908, 2.

5 See ibid.; and for example, the criticism by the socialist newspaper *Zukunft* in 1882: Anna Staudacher, *Sozial-revolutionäre und Anarchisten. Die andere Arbeiterbewegung vor Hainfeld. Die Radikale Arbeiter-Partei Österreichs (1880-1884)* (Vienna, 1988), 195.

6 Cf. historians who have exaggerated the degree to which the start of the war was a complete watershed in removing an "orderly functioning *Rechtsstaat*": John Deak and Jonathan E. Gumz, "How to Break a State: The Habsburg Monarchy's Internal War, 1914-1918," *American Historical Review*, 122/4 (October 2017): 1105-1136 (especially 1117, 1125).

7 Speech of Václav Klofáč: *Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des österreichischen Reichsrates im Jahre 1917 und 1918. XXII Session. III. Band* (Vienna, 1918) [hereafter *Stenographische Protokolle*]: 53. Sitzung, 22 January 1918, 2812. The Rousseau quotation may be apocryphal or a paraphrase.

Austrian persecution on the home front. One list of such memoirs from 1923 already suggested well over seventy major Czech publications on this theme.[8] Here the metaphor of the Bastille was striking. For during the war many of the most notorious Czech traitors or martyrs had been held in the military court prison in Vienna. In several memoirs it was nicknamed the "Viennese Bastille" and within it was the notorious "Tower of Death" for the condemned.[9] The memoirs described at length the insecurity, the sadism, even the torture that some prisoners experienced in solitary confinement. In turn, this became a standard trope for how Czechs or other citizens had supposedly experienced wartime Austria-Hungary. The British historian and commentator R.W. Seton-Watson duly wrote about a "reign of terror" during the last years of the empire.[10] Clearly, it was this oppression which had doomed the Habsburg monarchy. Its peoples had been eager to leave the Habsburg prison; eventually, aided by friends from outside, the Bastille had been stormed and they had achieved their liberation.

In the following I will dissect this myth further, to probe why in 1918 different peoples were encouraged, or chose, to exit from this multinational empire. Of course this has had a recent topicality for any British historian. Though the comparison should not be exaggerated, we can observe in the recent UK traumas over Brexit a divided nation which was eventually led towards a complete exit from another multinational structure. Amid the hopes and fears about Brexit before and after the 2016 referendum there developed a violent rhetoric, on a par with the propaganda that circulated at the time of the Habsburg monarchy's collapse. We might recall the inflammatory language in 2018 of Jeremy Hunt as British foreign secretary: "If you turn the EU club into a [Soviet] prison, the desire to get out won't diminish, it will grow".[11] As

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8 F.J. Havelka, "Literatura o rakouské válečné persekuci", in Alois Žipek (ed.), *Dokumenty naši národní revoluce*, ročník 2-3 (Prague, 1924-5), 92-94. This was just a selection (excluding novels).

9 See for example, the memoirs of Jan Řezníček, *Ve věži smrti* (Prague, 1927); Bohumil Vrbenský, "Videňská Bastila", in Alois Žipek (ed.), *Dokumenty naši národní revoluce*, ročník 1 (Prague, 1923), 145-6; Jaroslav Kunz, *Náš odboj v zrcadle rakouské vojenské justice* (Prague, 1930), 58.

10 R.W Seton-Watson, "The Formation of the Czecho-Slovak State", in H.V. Temperley (ed.)¸ *History of the Peace Conference*, vol. IV (London, 1922), 248.

11 *The Guardian*, 2 October 1918, 8.

in the Brexit chaos, so in Central Europe a century ago there were a mass of conflicting expectations and grievances which drove human behaviour – some optimistic about the future, many pessimistic. Some people clung to an old order even if they acknowledged it as unsatisfactory; others were prepared to risk a fundamental change on the basis of what they understood as the likely benefits.

Exploring these contradictory expectations in the Habsburg empire helps us to understand the exit dynamics of 1918. It should also caution us against succumbing to a one-sided nationalist narrative of the kind that dominated after the war in Austria-Hungary's successor states. Indeed, with hindsight we can do what is becoming increasingly possible with the Brexit enterprise; we can make some fair judgements about which expectations were realized after the watershed and which were not. Perhaps predictably, the post-Habsburg or post-Brexit futures (in the latter case concerning migration and financial opportunities) were not what many expected.[12] The rhetoric had been ratcheted up, and there could only be disappointment in the aftermath when that rhetoric did not match reality.

So different expectations and different exits are the key themes of this chapter in order to deepen our understanding of the Austro-Hungarian domestic collapse. I will concentrate principally on Cisleithania and how these hopes and fears played out in the Czech and South Slav lands. These were regions whose secession was critical, even necessary, for the monarchy's disintegration. They also witnessed the most idealistic nationalist agendas, producing on the European map the radically new states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.[13]

While focusing on the year 1918, we should however also ponder the *long durée* in terms of Habsburg state disintegration. Some historians over the last two decades have argued that it was chiefly the crisis of the Great War that destroyed the Habsburg empire. In this argument, the empire before 1914 was not in decline or even in crisis; if there was any crisis at that time, it was

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12 See the views of Jonathan Freedland in *The Guardian: Journal*, 3 December 2022, 2: "Bit by bit, reality is succeeding where rhetoric failed…..The national argument over Brexit has shifted from abstractions and promises to a cold, increasingly hard reality".

13 The departure of Hungary from the Habsburg monarchy deserves a chapter in its own right. Suffice to say, despite the agitation of Mihály Karolyi and his Independence Party from 1916, the trajectory towards the exit was gradual and only really speeded up in October 1918.

a "crisis of growth" as the monarchy successfully negotiated stages in social and political modernization.[14] As Pieter Judson has convincingly argued, it was an on-going positive experience for many of its peoples, with empire and nationhood evolving in tandem rather than being binary opposites.[15] Judson and others have revised the teleological nationalist narrative of decline that so dominated twentieth-century historiography. Yet even so, the war alone cannot explain the exits and the disintegration of 1918. As with Brexit, so with Austria-Hungary, there existed a long history of serious complaints about the supranational structure. Many of these were deep-seated, unresolved criticisms and, in the right circumstances, they could be reactivated by political activists when individuals felt particularly insecure. Although the nationalist rhetoric of 1918 was certainly exaggerated, it drew on embedded tropes or narratives which had been laid down for at least two generations and were understood by many in the respective regional audiences. The war years were crucial in giving a new meaning to these national narratives; and the narratives then continued, across the watershed of 1918, with extra intensity in the interwar successor states.

Conditional and Unconditional Exits

To understand the rationale behind this exodus of peoples, we must ask when the key decisions were taken, why they were taken, and by whom. Were they taken by small nationalist cliques, or were the events of 1918 akin to a series of democratic explosions, as was suggested in many photographs, postcards and films of the time and thereafter?[16] How far anyway could individual

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14 As the British journalist Henry Wickham Steed in fact suggested in 1913: *The Hapsburg Monarchy* (London, 1913), ix. See also, for one positive assessment: Gary Cohen, "Neither Absolutism nor Anarchy: New Narratives on Society and Government in Late Imperial Austria", *Austrian History Yearbook* 29 (1998): 37-61.

15 Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge MA, 2016). See also Judson's incisive comments: "'Where our Communality is Necessary…': Rethinking the End of the Habsburg Monarchy", *Austrian History Yearbook*, 48 (2017): 1-21.

16 See for example the contemporary Czech film footage put together on the tenth anniversary of Czechoslovakia in 1928 to demonstrate the "national revolution" of 28 October 1918 in Prague.

civilians or soldiers have agency at a time of immense upheaval? Throughout 1918 many people spoke of being overwhelmed by the pace of change. As one Czech politician opined in January 1918: "Any day a storm may come which will sweep everything away and create a totally different picture."[17]

It is clear from the outset that the exits from the Habsburg monarchy were staggered, dependent on the available opportunities at home and abroad as well as the course of Austria-Hungary's war. Some regions or national leaders led the way – notably Czech politicians and intellectuals - while others copied by example. Others were forced down that road due to the circumstances of a mass exodus from the monarchy by late October 1918. Among the latter can be singled out the democratic leaderships in German-Austria and in Hungary, even if they too made path-breaking declarations of independence that autumn. A second general truth concerns the reasons behind each regional exodus from the empire. In each case a major motivating factor was that of insecurity. Regional leaders, backed by many war-weary citizens, believed that their future was not safe in the hands of the Habsburg imperial regime, that only new state structures could provide real security in an uncertain post-war world.

Yet alongside this hard-headed discourse of insecurity which emerged directly from the wartime horrors there also ran a more positive and visionary narrative, notably national or social in its aspirations.[18] According to this, now was the time for the peoples of Austria-Hungary to assert their "right to self-determination" and liberate themselves from an undemocratic regime. In 1918 such a slogan sounded fully of the moment, propagated from the Bolshevik East by Vladimir Lenin and from the capitalist West by Woodrow Wilson and his allies. For many imperial subjects it also had a strong mythical resonance. It suggested the fulfilment at last of those historic missions which supposedly had been crushed or obstructed over the centuries by the oppressive Habsburgs.

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17 Speech of Vlastimil Tusar: *Stenographische Protokolle*, 54.Sitzung, 23 January 1918, 2893.

18 The twin themes were identified in one classic study of the dissolution: Z.A.B. Zeman, *The Break-Up of the Habsburg Empire 1914-1918: A Study in National and Social Revolution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

For Czech leaders in particular, theirs was a powerful narrative of national liberation, preached since the 1848 revolutions. The Czech nation had supposedly existed for centuries; and if Austria failed to satisfy the Czechs, they would proceed in another direction; as František Palacký had warned in 1865, "we were here before Austria, and we will be here after her".[19] For South Slav leaders in the empire – Croats, Serbs and Slovenes - this historic trajectory existed too, but in a more complex form. Some Croat politicians for a generation had asserted the tradition of historic "Croat state right". In Croatia there always lingered the memory of Eugen Kvaternik, the visionary who in 1871 had risked all, raising a revolt to attempt full Croatian independence.[20] Some Habsburg Serbs in turn might aspire to the resurrection of a medieval Serbian kingdom, especially with twentieth-century Serbia as an example; or at least they might hope for a renewal of the special privileges granted them by the Habsburgs in the early eighteenth century.[21] In contrast, any Slovene historic consciousness was far more recent. It drew on the experiences or myths of national discrimination by German-Austria over the past half-century.[22] Out of this fluid mass of myths and insecurities there coalesced the ideal of some South Slav unity and particularly an idealistic "Yugoslav" solution for the south of Austria-Hungary. It then needed unique circumstances, the chaos of 1918, to push this solution in a radical direction outside the confines of the empire.

Indeed, until the last year of the war the idea of an unconditional exodus from the Habsburg empire was rarely enunciated. It had little support at all within the empire, nor was it encouraged *per se* by any of the belligerent Great Powers (except Italy with its irredentist agenda). The people who did back an unequivocal exit were that small group of politicians – again most prominently Czech and South Slav – who from 1914 had burnt their bridges by fleeing the empire and agitating in western Europe. From the start these émigrés took a radical stand, believing on the basis of long pre-war experience that the

19 Jiří Kořalka, *František Palacký (1798-1876). Životopis* (Prague, 1998), 450.
20 See Mirjana Gross, *Izvorno Pravaštvo. Ideologija, agitacija, pokret* (Zagreb, 2000), 309-21.
21 The conflicting standpoints of educated Habsburg Serbs is nicely set out in the study of Nicholas Miller, *Between Nation and State: Serbian Politics in Croatia before the First World War* (Pittsburgh,1997).
22 See Carole Rogel, *The Slovenes and Yugoslavism, 1890-1914* (New York, 1977).

monarchy could not be reformed or restructured. It had to be destroyed. For example, the maverick Czech politician and academic leader Tomáš Masaryk in the pre-war decade was increasingly alienated from the monarchy.[23] Having concluded that Austrian policy at home and abroad was autocratic and dangerous for Czech interests, his stance was only confirmed when in 1914 Vienna began a war on the side of Germany. Masaryk's decision convinced fellow-travellers like R.W. Seton-Watson to work for a New Europe. As the latter noted in a public lecture in London in July 1915, in place of the "foul and unnatural system" of Austria-Hungary, "we hope that Bohemia may rise phoenix-like from the great European conflagration".[24]

Among the idealistic Yugoslav émigrés similarly, there was no way back. When in July 1914 Frano Supilo first met Ante Trumbić in exile in Venice, he exclaimed, "Either Yugoslavia or nothing!"[25] Another leading émigré, the Croatian lawyer Hinko Hinković, had learnt first-hand the arbitrary nature of Habsburg justice in the Balkans. He had been the leading defence lawyer in the infamous Zagreb treason trial of 1909 when fifty-three Serbs were prosecuted and many were given long prison sentences. When he then tried to secure a public pardon for those convicted in that trial, he himself was prosecuted and imprisoned for six months.[26] After the outbreak of war he rightly felt he was a marked man and fled abroad. Both Masaryk and Hinković duly spread in the West the image of a despotic Habsburg regime which must be toppled if peace was to return to Europe. With typical hyperbole Hinković, in a lecture in Paris in 1915, was claiming that 19,000 Croats had already been executed since the start of the war.[27] It was a graphic imagining of the Habsburg yoke, preached

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23 See H. Gordon Skilling, *T.G. Masaryk: Against the Current 1882-1914* (Pennsylvania State University, 1994).

24 *R.W. Seton-Watson and his Relations with the Czechs and Slovaks. I: Documents 1906-1951*, eds. Jan Rychlík, Thomas D. Marzik and Miroslav Bielik (Martin, 1995), 244.

25 Dragovan Šepić, *Supilo diplomat* (Zagreb, 1961), 11.

26 See Hinković's vivid concluding speech: *Govori branitelja u kaznenoj parnici protiv Adam Pribićevića i petdeset dvojice drugova radi zločinstva veleizdaje* (Zagreb, 1909), 3-112. See also the controversy over Hinković's own trial in May 1911 as reported in the Croatian Progressive newspaper, *Hrvatski Pokret*.

27 *Le Matin*, 4 May 1915. This lecture was noted by the (Habsburg) Croatian authorities. See also Hinko Hinković, *Les Persécutions des Yougoslaves. Procès politiques (1908-1916)* (Paris, 1916), where the author suggested the continuity of Habsburg oppression from

by most radical émigrés who, if they had failed, would have been eccentric footnotes in the history of the Great War. Instead, by 1918, their portrayal of the empire as a prison would become mainstream in Allied propaganda, and in the post-war world it became the standard narrative too in the victorious successor states.

Yet for much of the war this unconditional stance – a crusade for secession and independence – was not to be found at home in Austria-Hungary. Certainly there were always exceptions. The Czech National Socialist leader Václav Klofáč was before 1914 already a traitor, plotting with Tsarist Russia to organize an underground Czech resistance should war break out; in September 1914, after returning from an American lecture tour full of subversive speeches, he was duly arrested and kept in a Prague prison for the next three years.[28] However, most politicians and citizens did not share this radical stance; any idealistic goals were tempered by opportunism, by the practicalities of what might be possible as the war developed. Thus, even someone like Józef Piłsudksi, who was fighting on the Austrian side with the end goal of uniting all Poles in an independent state, realized that he might have to compromise on that maximum aspiration and accept Polish unity under the Habsburgs.[29] Similar opportunism was displayed by the elitist politicians in Croatia whose regional assembly in Zagreb (the Sabor) continued in session for most of the war. This, and the relative weakness of army interference in Croatia, helps explain why so many hesitated for so long to turn against the empire; for some autonomy and normality was at least being preserved, even if many Croatian politicians' Habsburg loyalty was increasingly conditional on what the empire might offer Croatia in the post-war world.[30] For Czech and Slovene leaders too, there was a pre-war tradition in Austria of political "activism" – in other words, a steady negotiation with the Austrian government in Vienna in order to secure social and national benefits for their regions. By 1917, however,

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before the war.

28 Milada Paulová, *Dějiny Maffie: Odboj Čechů a Jugoslavanů za světové války 1914-1918*, 2 vols., (Prague 1937), 1: 27ff, 113-15.

29 Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Jozef Pilsudski: Founding Father of Modern Poland* (Cambridge, MA., 2022), 251-52.

30 See Mark Cornwall, "Between Budapest and Belgrade: The Road to Pragmatism and Treason in 1914 Croatia", in Mark Cornwall (ed.), *Sarajevo 1914: Sparking the First World War* (London, 2020), 223-25.

in many Czech and Slovene communities and certainly among their most popular politicians, there was a clear shift in attitude to one far more critical of the imperial leadership and its mission of salvaging the empire intact from its wartime crisis.

This shift against the monarchy had wartime and pre-war roots. It certainly fed off war-weariness, and the grinding impact of an empire-wide food crisis caused as much by the loss of grain-rich territory like Galicia as the Allied economic blockade. We know too that many Czechs were intrinsically grudging about the war, for example through their weak subscription to war loans (which can be contrasted with the attitude even of the supposedly unpatriotic novelist Franz Kafka).[31] This fully mirrored the lack-lustre patriotic commitment of most Czech politicians. Aspects of civilian morale can be glimpsed in the summaries of postal correspondence, put together periodically by Austrian censor officials. For as one censor recorded, the hundreds of letters passing daily through the censors' hands provided something of a snap-shot of public opinion, a "photograph at an unconcealed moment" like no other.[32] The censor reports regularly noted that although ordinary Croats and Slovenes might be materially demoralized, they were still fairly reliable and at heart *Kaisertreu*. This was never the case with the Czech population. By late 1915 the censors were being asked to weigh up more carefully the depth or shallowness of Czech patriotism. What they found was a wariness among ordinary Czechs about expressing their views in letters (complaints were often coded), while the underlying tone seemed overwhelmingly hostile to the state. As one censor concluded in early 1916: "A Czech generation has grown up which publicly recognizes only the kingdom of Bohemia as its fatherland, sees the German nation as the irreconcilable enemy, and is at its core completely alienated from the Austrian state."[33] When it came to the symbols of Czech patriotism, the Bohemian lion easily eclipsed or overshadowed the Habsburg double-headed

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31 Ivan Šedivý, *Češi, české země a velká válka 1914-1918* (Prague, 2001), 239-42. For Kafka's patriotism, see Mark Cornwall, "The First World War'", in Carolin Duttlinger (ed.), *Franz Kafka in Context* (Cambridge, 2018), 170-72.

32 The words of Milan Hodža: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Vienna, Kriegsarchiv [Austrian State Archives: ÖStA KA], Armeeoberkommando [AOK] Evidenzbüro [EvB] (G.Z.N.B, Zensurabteilung), karton 3737, Nr 3098, "General report, part III", 20 December 1915.

33 Ibid., karton 3738, Nr 3230: Critical summary by Dr H. Gomperz, 8 February 1916.

eagle.[34] In other words, the Czech national-imperial symbiosis of the past was fracturing.[35]

For ordinary subjects across the monarchy it was however material hardship and war-weariness that mattered most, something quite clear by 1917 in all censor reports. In contrast, fundamental for alienating the Czech and Slovene political classes was the early character of the Austrian wartime regime. For this was a time when the Austrian Reichsrat and the Austrian regional diets were closed, cutting off any public forum for complaint or compromise; notoriously, the prime minister Count Stürgkh felt that "every political debate will damage Austria more than a lost battle".[36] Two major features also characterized 1914-17 as years of darkness (*temno*) in post-war mythology, a period of persecution which Czech nationalists would stereotype as a repetition of their nation's last traumatic era of darkness in the seventeenth century.[37]

First, was the military regime imposed until 1917 across Cisleithania (which Hungary and Croatia largely escaped). This meant the widespread imposition of martial law across the Austrian half of the empire with devastating consequences. In the words of one of Emperor Karl's closest advisers, the harm was "absolutely incalculable"; the monarchy's Slavs were "forcibly driven into the camp of traitors and enemies".[38] For crucially, in the new accumulation of army power, all "political crimes" including treason were placed under military jurisdiction. It was a license for arbitrary justice. In the south there were mass arrests of Slovene community leaders, including veteran politicians like Franc Grafenauer. In the north, although Czech regions were not in the

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34 Ibid., karton 3748, Nr 4496: Czech report by Dr Karl Ritter von Eisenstein, February 1917.

35 For pre-war tensions and tendencies in this direction, see Hugh Agnew, "The Flyspecks on Palivec's Portrait: Francis Joseph, the Symbols of Monarchy, and Czech Popular Loyalty", in Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky (eds), *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy* (New York, 2007), 86-112.

36 Felix Höglinger, *Ministerpräsident Heinrich Graf Clam-Martinic* (Graz, 1964), 174.

37 See Jan Hajšman, *Česká mafie* (Prague, 1932), 79ff.

38 Arthur Count Polzer-Hoditz, *The Emperor Karl* (London and New York, 1930), 94, 96. For a recent analysis see Deak and Gumz, "How to Break a State"; and for wider context on military priorities: Jonathan Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Habsburg Empire in Serbia, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 2009).

war zone, the military had *carte-blanche* to arrest and intern those deemed to be traitors. The most famous case was that of Karel Kramář and Alois Rašín who were incarcerated in the Vienna Bastille from mid-1915; there followed a trial based on circumstantial evidence which lasted a full six months and a death sentence for both "traitors" (later commuted). Such arbitrary action fuelled by a military agenda formed the main basis for the later Bastille legend, even if most ordinary Czechs and Slovenes were only tangentially affected in their everyday lives.[39]

Second, but just as important for sabotaging any pre-war national dialogue was the radical "German course" which the Austrian government began to pursue. In the historiography about the collapse of the empire it deserves much more attention. It is well-known that the war eventually radicalized Slav politicians, but it did exactly the same for German nationalists, long insecure about their national position in Austria. Since the Linz programme of 1882 they had sought ways to shore up German interests, and the war offered a unique opportunity to push through a full German solution. Already by Christmas 1914, some German politicians had hurried to Berlin to talk about a customs union, hinting at a pan-German Europe. Six months later, a German-Austrian nationalist agenda was taking shape at home: in the Linz tradition, the plan was to restructure the state (effectively detaching both Galicia and Dalmatia from "Austria"), truncating the Austrian half of the monarchy so that Czechs and Slovenes could always be outvoted by a German majority.[40] This radical programme – we might call it a betrayal of the dynasty's mission to work for all its peoples since Emperor Karl did not disown it – was what faced Czech and Slovene politicians by early 1917. By then the Austrian government of Heinrich Clam-Martinic was set on trying to push through this German solution by decree; he was prepared to negotiate only with German and Polish political leaders.[41]

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39 Mark Cornwall, "Treason in an Era of Regime Change: The Case of the Habsburg Monarchy", *Austrian History Yearbook* 50 (2019): 138-140. Wartime treatment of Slovenes is well-described in Martin Moll, *Kein Burgfrieden. Der deutsch-slowenisch Nationalitätenkonflikt in der Steiermark 1900-1918* (Innsbruck, 2007).

40 Ivan Šedivý, Češi, české země a velká válka 1914-1918 (Prague, 2001), 168, 174-6.

41 The best study remains Felix Höglinger, *Ministerpräsident Heinrich Graf Clam-Martinic* (Graz, 1964), 114-57.

Those Slav leaders who were ignored soon reacted. When in mid-1917 the Austrian Reichsrat was suddenly recalled by Emperor Karl, both the Czech and South Slav political clubs pushed forward with their own demands. As dramatic alternatives to the German course and totally incompatible with it, their "May Declarations" demanded a full federal restructuring of the empire – a "Czecho-Slovak" unit in the north, a South Slav or "Yugoslav" unit in the south.[42] In both cases, the principal Czech and Slovene leaders were drawing stark lessons from the "years of darkness" and an antagonistic German agenda. It was then insecurity but also idealism that pushed them in the direction of national unification with, respectively, their Slovak or their other South Slav kinsmen. In weighing up their declarations, we can still characterize these leaders as political "activists", since they still expected dialogue with the Austrian government. They continued to envisage a future in the Habsburg empire and were not suddenly setting up conditions for full secession.

The Shift to Radical Rhetoric and Exit

It is from May 1917 that we move forward fast on the road to exit, but it is worth pausing a moment at this critical juncture. For in retrospect these months might be seen as Vienna's last real chance for meaningful dialogue with the Czech and South Slav (especially Slovene) leaders. Admittedly, theirs were revolutionary acts – they demanded a federal empire in place of Austro-Hungarian dualism. Even so, the Austrian government of Clam-Martinic gave no glimmer of compromise at all. His public reply to the Reichsrat declarations was very vague - "my programme is Austria"; he characterized this Austria as "the proud, solid and everlasting castle of its peoples".[43]

It was a reply which antagonised the Czech and Slovene politicians into sharpening their rhetoric. For to them, the notional image of an Austrian castle (*Burg*) easily morphed into a prison (*Gefängnis*). In parliament, the Slovene leader Anton Korošec recalled all those locked up over the past three years, a sacrifice on the home front never to be forgotten. According to Korošec, the

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42 Zeman, *The Break-Up of the Habsburg Empire,* 124-29.
43 Felix J. Bister, *"Majestät, es ist zu spat…". Anton Korošec und die slovenische Politik im Wiener Reichsrat bis 1918* (Vienna, 1995), 225.

prime minister's Austria was a "false Austria", a creeping German state that had jettisoned the essence of Austrian *Staatsgedanken*. The South Slavs were not calling now for a break with the monarchy, he said, but they were demanding a break with the ubiquitous German bureaucracy. It was a stance echoed by Czech politicians in even stronger language. Adolf Stránský recalled Czech "traitors" like Karel Kramář languishing in prison, and then recalled the old adage of Palacký – that the Czechs would outlive Austria. There was a hint here of a conditional exit, a threat that any Czech belief in the Habsburg state was fast disappearing.[44]

It is true that the constitutional route was not dead. Not least, the calling of the Austrian parliament was evidence of that, so was an easing of press censorship which allowed a plethora of conflicting voices to be heard publicly in wartime for the first time. In the summer of 1917, against all advice, Emperor Karl went further with a general amnesty for political prisoners; those denounced as traitors, like Kramář, Klofáč or the defendants in the Bosnian Banjaluka trial, were liberated and gradually re-appeared in society.[45] Fatally, no conditions were set as to how the former prisoners should behave; they needed to demonstrate no imperial loyalty. And this sudden opening up of a public discourse was equally fatal if the Austrian and Hungarian governments stayed publicly committed to German or Magyar nationalist courses.

This rigidity – and the absence of any real regime alternative in terms of aid or devolution to the regions – would from this point drive national leaders at different speeds towards an unconditional exodus. We can best understand this by comparing how many people in the South Slav and Czech regions were mobilized in this final year of the war; the political rhetoric was ratcheted up, becoming ever more aggressive and populist. This of course did not happen in a vacuum, for by 1918 the public discourse was being fully internationalized. Whether from the East with Bolshevik slogans of revolution and self-determination, or from the West with Allied promises of national liberation

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44 Ibid., 225-31.

45 For the controversial amnesty, see Polzer-Hoditz, *The Emperor Karl*, 303-13. For the Banjaluka treason trial of 156 Serb intellectuals, which came in the wake of many smaller wartime trials across Bosnia, see the essays in Galib Šljivo (ed.), *Veleizdajnički proces u Banjaluci* (Banjaluka, 1987). Seventy of the Banjaluka prisoners were in fact pardoned and released only after an imperial decree of September 1917.

and democracy – foreign subversive propaganda was invading the empire. The Bolshevik message came via printed leaflets which circulated on the porous Eastern front, but also from March 1918 via returning Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war (so-called "homecomers"). By June over 500,000 had returned from Russian prison camps to the monarchy, and some were at the heart of the six military rebellions which occurred in the Habsburg hinterland.[46]

Enemy propaganda from the western Allies was even more focused on stimulating an exodus of Austria-Hungary's "oppressed nationalities". Starting in April 1918, a sophisticated Italian air operation distributed more than sixty million leaflets in ten different languages over the Habsburg fronts and hinterland.[47] The attack was two-pronged. On the one hand the propaganda offered national liberation, on the other it told Habsburg soldiers and civilians about their oppressive confinement within a state wholly shackled to the despotism of Germany. National legends from the past were drawn upon to drive the points home. Thus, Czechs were reminded of the suffering of Jan Hus in his prison cell on the eve of execution; Serbs were warned about the danger of experiencing another Kosovo disaster, "the symbol of our national Golgotha" in 1389. Whether portrayed as a house burning down or a sinking ship, the Habsburg state was likened to a site of incarceration from which anybody sensible would want to escape: the future offered only the "brutal force of German militaristic barbarism.... further slavery".[48] This violent rhetoric targeted at different national audiences increasingly chimed with the populist language circulating at home, encouraging those who wanted change to take further risks in their demands of the Habsburg authorities.

Indeed, as we will see, the Czech exit was soon unconditional. In contrast, the South Slav exodus was far less predictable, dependent on the gradual closing down of any viable Habsburg option for the future. By the winter of 1917 South Slav politicians in Austria were publicly ceasing to use guarded language. According to one, "how we have been treated in this war exceeds

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46 For these rebellions, see the very full account in Richard Plaschka, Horst Haselsteiner, Arnold Suppan, *Innere Front. Militärassistenz, Widerstand und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918*, 2 vols (Vienna, 1974), I, 251-415.

47 Mark Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary: The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (New York, 2000; new ed. 2018), 209.

48 Ibid., 342 (other quoted examples: 346, 352, 355, 422).

anything that has occurred in the history of humanity".[49] Another referred to a "reign of terror" comparable only to the Spanish Inquisition or the 1572 atrocity of St Bartholomew's Night in Paris.[50] But most striking was how from the autumn a major part of the Slovene leadership acted as real pioneers in challenging the empire and demanding Yugoslav unification. A key event was when the bishop of Ljubljana, Anton Jeglič, publicly spoke out for the May Declaration. His statement in no way reflected any dynastic disloyalty; rather he was anxious about the Slovenes' future and felt a duty to speak out to his Catholic flock (God, nation and empire were still his mantra).[51]

His example led to a frenzied popular mobilization in the south. Councils and individuals (especially women) began to collect signatures and sign petitions for the Declaration; activists like Anton Korošec began to hold mass rallies.[52] This declaration movement was a real plebiscite for change, perhaps unlike any other in the empire; it spilled out of the Slovene lands into Dalmatia, Croatia and Bosnia. Yet when analysing this movement, we find a real mixture of emotions, hopes and frustrations. For many the Declaration became the catch-all solution to their everyday misery. Women began wearing lockets containing a portrait of Korošec, and many grasped something of the political context (as Urška Strle's research of one Slovene housemaid's diary has recently revealed).[53] It was a message offering both change and continuity: future security but also a continued existence within the empire. Thus for many Slovenes the geopolitical threats, from a domestic German state or from foreign Italian aggression, would be surmounted not by destroying but by restructuring the empire.

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49 *Stenographische Protokolle*, 47. Sitzung, 3 December 1917, 2484: speech by Vjekoslav Spinčić.

50 Ibid., 58. Sitzung, 6 February 1918, 3058-59, speech by Vukotić.

51 Janko Pleterski, "Zapis ob razpravi o izjavah za majniško deklaracijo", *Zgodovinski časopis*, 47/4 (1993): 572. See also Pavlina Bobič, *War and Faith: The Catholic Church in Slovenia 1914-1918* (Leiden, 2012).

52 For the following see the analysis by Vlasta Stavbar: "Izjava v podporo Majniško Deklaracije", *Zgodovinski časopis* (1992-3): vols. 46/3, 357-81; 46/4, 497-507; 47/1, 99-106.

53 Urška Strle, "Da Agnes a Neža: un esempio di formazione d'identità nazionale tra la popolazione rurale slovena (1917-1920)", in Matteo Ermacora (ed.), *Le 'disfatte' di Caporetto. Soldati, civili, territori 1917-1919* (Trieste, 2019), 145-158.

The language used in petitions or rallies by this grassroots movement was revealing: "We want to be free in a great Habsburg Yugoslavia"; "Long live the beloved Habsburg dynasty and lucky Yugoslavia under its glorious sceptre!"[54] Only from April 1918 did the tone begin to shift, as it became clear that both the Austrian and Hungarian governments opposed any southern Slav unity. The censor slowly picked up on a more radical Yugoslav mood across the south, one that state officials could monitor but not control. By mid-August, when Korošec spoke at a major rally in Ljubljana, he was still referencing the May Declaration (of Yugoslav unity) but he no longer mentioned the Habsburg monarchy nor the emperor's birthday.[55] By this time, for ordinary Slovenes and other Slavs down the Dalmatian coast, a popular basis had been laid for exiting the empire. As one censor position observed by September: "The people are convinced that [the Declaration] will be realized and therefore expect a better future."[56]

In the final twelve months, this relative degree of consensus does much to explain the unusual Slovenian stability after that region entered the new state of Yugoslavia. Not a national revolution but a strong degree of popular mobilization had occurred. It can be usefully compared to developments in Croatia where a great gulf existed between the urban elite and a restless peasantry. Here many Croatian politicians, opportunistic to the last, were slow to abandon their historic state-right ambitions within the empire; most still expected a Habsburg future for they had not really experienced the "Habsburg Bastille". Yet when at the very end of the war an elite group of politicians finally made the leap into Yugoslavia ("dashing headlong like geese in a fog" as Stjepan Radić memorably warned), it was soon clear that they had not carried most of the population with them.[57] There followed not just peasant violence but a "Croatian problem" which persistently destabilized the new state. As the veteran politician Živko Bertić had warned in the summer

54 Stavbar, "Izjave", 359, 363.

55 Lojze Ude, "Deklaracijsko gibanje na Slovenskem", in V. Čubrilović, F. Čulinović and M. Kostrenčić (eds), *Naučni skup u povodu 50-godišnjice raspada Austro-Ugarske Monarhije i stvaranje Jugoslavenske države* (Zagreb, 1969), 156.

56 ÖStA, KA, EvB 1918, Fasz. 5759, Nr 28731, Zensurstelle Udine to HGK FM von Boroević, Res. Nr 263, 5 September 1918.

57 Radić's warning in his speech of 24 November 1918 to the National Council: Stjepan Radić, *Govori u Hrvatskom saboru 1917., 1918. godine* (Zagreb, 1996), 270.

of 1918, "great swathes of our people still act more according to their dark instincts than under the influence of this great [Yugoslav] idea."[58]

The real contrast to this dysfunctional exit was surely the Czech populist experience. For while "Czexit" shared characteristics with the Slovene experience – indeed they fed off each other – the Czech political leadership seemed by 1918 the least equivocal, the most determined, in its anti-Habsburg behaviour. Many ordinary Czechs were surely bystanders to the national performance.[59] But a significant number who were well-educated had long bought into a nationalist mindset and would respond quickly to the mixture of mounting social and national grievances (there were 996 strikes in the Bohemian lands in 1918).[60] By mid-1918 one government agent visiting Prague sensed a dangerous agitation at work among much of the population. They might not understand high politics, he wrote, but they were certainly reacting to the regime's autocratic and unjust behaviour. It could be seen even at Prague's National Theatre. During one performance of Smetana's opera *Libuše*, somebody jumped onto the stage and shouted out "Slavs for themselves…..Down with Karl, Willy and the Austrian scarecrow!"[61]

The Austrian censor also suggested that ordinary Czechs were enthusiastically following their leaders' tactics. From late 1917 - as is clear from political diaries - the Czech "activists" who still favoured talks with Vienna were fast being crowded out by national radicals, amnestied politicians like Klofáč and Rašín who had personally experienced a Habsburg prison.[62] They abhorred Vienna's German course, and were simply emboldened by the emperor's amnesty of July 1917. Czech politics was entering what Ivan Šedivý has called a new phase

58 Josip Horvat, *Politička povijest Hrvatske*, 2 vols (Zagreb, 1990), II, 56-8.

59 See one revisionist assessment by Claire Morelon: "Street Fronts: War, State Legitimacy and Urban Space, Prague 1914-1920" (PhD diss., Birmingham and Paris, 2015).

60 Šedivý, Češi, české země, 319. (In 1916: 46 strikes; in 1917: 555).

61 ÖStA, KA, AOK (1918), Fasz. 371, Nr 110034: "Mitteilungen eines nach Prag entsandten deutschen Berichterstatters", 2 June 1918.

62 For the activist perspective see the diary of Zdeněk V. Tobolka: *Můj deník z první světové války*, ed. Martin Kučera (Prague, 2008). By late August 1918, even Tobolka felt it was too late to think of restructuring Austria, telling one newspaper editor "that in Bohemia I belonged to the most moderate tendency, and therefore this statement from my lips meant a lot". (514).

of "aggressive passivity".[63] Indeed, in January 1918 the so-called Epiphany Declaration of Czech politicians was really a statement of Czechoslovak independence or full state-rights. Although not explicitly anti-Habsburg, its trend was quite clear: "The Czechoslovak people want to live in their own Czechoslovak state, free and independent, united and consolidated." This was accompanied by very radical rhetoric – that Germany was now squeezing Austria like a "boa constrictor", that the war had witnessed an extermination of the Slavs. As the socialist Gustav Habrman noted in a fiery speech to the Reichsrat, the Habsburg state had not fulfilled its historic mission; rather, it had been persecuting its own peoples, so one could expect no justice in the future.[64]

Already then by early 1918, the chance of "Czexit" was very predictable if Austria-Hungary lost the war. In June, the emperor privately rebuked Czech leaders for their ingratitude, for not issuing a pro-Habsburg proclamation after his political amnesty a year earlier. The Czechs responded cheekily that it was the monarch who had broken his promise in 1917 by following a German course in Austria.[65] The more open political debate in the last year of the war allowed national politicians to contest any monopoly by the state on justice or morality. Those whom the regime had once called traitors had become heroes and now turned the derogatory label on the state itself: it was the Habsburg empire which had betrayed its peoples and no longer deserved allegiance.

Conclusion: Exits and Expectations

The phenomenon of staggered exits from the empire helps to explain why some regions of the monarchy were better prepared than others for the transition to new statehood. While many Czech leaders' disillusionment had occurred by the winter of 1917-18, for many Slovenes the grievances and expectations had mounted in the course of the "declaration movement" so that

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63 Šedivý, Češi, české země, 315.

64 *Stenographische Protokolle*, 57. Sitzung, 5 February 1918, 3018-19.

65 Šedivý, Češi, české země, 323. Notable too was the way that the emperor's tour of Bohemia in March 1918 had focused on visiting the German-speaking areas and avoided Prague.

their exit seemed more likely by August 1918. Even more decisive was the case of the Polish intelligentsia of Galicia who by mid-1918, in the words of one Habsburg loyalist, "no longer feel part of the Austrian state".[66] Educated Poles, the Austrian censor had suggested in 1917, were increasingly confident about Poland's reunification thanks to promises both by the Central Powers and the Allies. But it then took Austria-Hungary's "bread peace" with Ukraine of February 1918 to turn many against the monarchy: that was a clear watershed in terms of a negative shift in Polish public opinion.[67]

Yet apart from these regional trajectories, it is still true that the real confluence of exits that created the final disintegration only took place in October 1918.[68] Only then, with the break-down of Habsburg legitimacy, and with military retreat on all fronts, did Croatian, Slovak, Romanian or Ukrainian leaders fully react, realizing suddenly that they had to respond in kind to the other regional exits. In turn, and most devastating perhaps, was the impact of the collapse on many living in the German or Hungarian heartlands. In contrast to many Czechs or Poles, they had not prepared mentally for this catastrophe, or – in the case of German nationalists – they had put their faith in the radical German course that now lay in ruins. Many would wake up in November 1918 to find themselves in new states with new borders. In the new Czechoslovakia, for example, one female youth leader scribbled in despair: "What will become of our *Deutschböhmerland*, of our German Bohemian people? A depressing feeling, a dark presentiment holds us all spellbound. Our people are in danger!"[69]

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66 ÖStA, KA, EvB 1918, EvB Nr 23510: kk Gendarmeriekommandant für Galizien und die Bukowina in Czernowitz (GM Eduard Fischer), "Bericht über die Vorkommnisse im Monate Juni 1918", 22 July 1918. Fischer noted that Polish "activists" (around Lviv) were now in a distinct minority.

67 Ibid., EvB Nr 6552, Zensurstelle Feldkirch, Bericht für Februar 1918: Beilage 37, "Polenfrage". This report highlighted the sudden anti-Austrian tone of Polish correspondence after the peace with Ukraine: "There is no letter which does not express indignation".

68 For some ideas about mentalities in the final days, see my chapter "Austria-Hungary", in Hugh Cecil and Peter Liddle (eds), *At the Eleventh Hour. Reflections, Hopes and Anxieties at the Closing of the Great War, 1918* (London, 1998), 285-300.

69 Johannes Stauda, *Der Wandervogel in Böhmen 1911-1920*, 2 vols (Reutlingen, 1975-8), II, 143.

The last year of the war had witnessed an especially radical public discourse in the Austrian half of the empire with competing and contradictory agendas for the future. Hopes, but especially fears, were raised to fever pitch by nationalist leaders, demanding change and rejecting imperial governance. Many of them used graphic metaphors and violent rhetoric to describe their people's wartime treatment. The image of a prison gained traction specifically because it matched the severity of military rule in the early years of the war. By 1918 however the prison metaphor was taking new shapes, exploited by nationalist politicians to suggest that their people were trapped in a vice and enslaved since the regime not only refused to reform but offered no real security. While we can agree with Pieter Judson that now "for the sake of survival, each region had to go it alone", it was still usually the nationalist leaders who were the key decision-makers.[70] They were most actively setting the broader agenda for radical change and, while many individuals secured agency by joining these band-waggons, others – perhaps a majority - found themselves dragged in their wake.

The regional leaders' colourful rhetoric now harmonized with the blunt anti-Habsburg propaganda being disseminated by the Allies. In the millions of propaganda leaflets disseminated from the Italian front in the hinterland, the Poles' Catholic "martyrdom" was vividly evoked; Romanians were told of atrocities in Transylvania; and Magyar soldiers were urged to reflect on the poetry of Sándor Petőfi and reject "Austria" once and for all.[71] Certainly, both in domestic and foreign propaganda, there were also uplifting images – the bright future that would come with national liberation. But as with the debate over Brexit in 2016, the fundamental spur for change was negative: the Habsburg empire had not only supposedly failed in its historic mission but now offered its peoples an insecure or dangerous future. This was a powerful message, gaining its edge from the wartime traumas and even more from the intense campaigning of 1918. Yet it was not caused solely by the war; it drew heavily on pre-war tropes about injustice and discrimination behind the façade of the Habsburg *Rechtsstaat*.

Lastly, what about the long-term impact of the exaggerated rhetoric from this hot-house of 1918? Satirical journals of the time suggested the jubilation of

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70 Judson, "'Where our Communality is Necessary…'", 17.
71 Cornwall, *The Undermining of Austria-Hungary*, 357-58, 424.

many at leaving the "prison", and the disappointment or confusion of others who were left behind during the mass exodus. In one Hungarian cartoon of November 1918, "Miss Hungary" is shown being joyfully swept away from the imperial castle by a dashing hussar, leaving an ugly old woman ("Austria") fuming in the gateway. Miss Hungary announces "Goodbye auntie! I'm going off home, and I'll never come back or think of you again!".[72] The image summed up the unrealistic expectations raised everywhere in 1918 that the post-war world would be an era of peace, security and national fulfilment. These ideals were not realized, for the Habsburg war was followed by new types of conflict over the fate of the region; the violent sparring of 1918 was transformed into a variety of civil wars. The rhetoric of wartime therefore had created dangerous benchmarks for idealistic national goals, and many living in the successor states would quickly sense that they were unfulfilled. This applied to right-wing nationalists on the "winning side" like Czechs or Poles, but even more it applied to those labelled as the "defeated": Hungarian or (Sudeten) German nationalists who now felt themselves locked into the strait-jacket of the Versailles settlement.[73]

Thus the prison metaphor, or at least a lively discourse about state injustice, continued. In the successor states it was appropriated not just by the victors to justify their liberation narrative, but by many individuals who felt a sense of *déjà vu*, that the flawed Habsburg rule of law still existed. From the start some national leaders, like the Slovak Andrej Hlinka or the Croat Stjepan Radić, viewed the new states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia as illegitimate because they did not deliver on expectations of autonomy or liberation. Both Hlinka and Radić were soon locked up as "traitors", just as they had been in the old empire. Thus for some, the figurative Bastille continued within the borders of the New Europe. So did a vicious political rhetoric which had fermented during the last Habsburg war, arousing conflicting and dangerous expectations that a non-Habsburg world would be better.

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72 *Magyar herkó páter*, November 1918, 1: "Isten vele néni". http://www.epa. hu/02700/02711/00012/pdf/EPA02711_magyar_herko_pater_1918_43.pdf

73 See Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917-23* (London, 2016); and for the conflicted memory in the successor states, the essays in Mark Cornwall and John Paul Newman (eds), *Sacrifice and Rebirth: The Legacy of the Last Habsburg War* (New York, 2016).

Árpád Hornyák

The British Balkans Policy and the Question of Serbian Territorial Concessions, 1914–1915

During the First World War, the Balkans policy of Great Britain was influenced – as always – by its own imperial interests, which in practice coincided with assuring the conditions needed to win the war. This realpolitik approach was completed by a new element, the manifestation of the national principle, which was either applied as a mere ideological context or as a genuine consideration. After Sarajevo, London consistently proclaimed the necessity to enforce the national principle. It emphasized that the primary war target of His Majesty's Government was to guarantee that the national development of all states of Europe, small and big alike, would not be harmed, but would freely unfold. Consequently, Great Britain would accept only such peace terms that would guarantee the conditions of an enduring peace providing for the implementation of such national aspirations.[1]

This was, of course, highly motivating for the small states in the first place, but potentially it could also serve to win over the nationalities of the opposing multi-ethnic empires such as Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire.[2] In the first year of the war, this principle was designed to encourage the joining of the hesitant Italy, to reinforce the perseverance of Belgium, which

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1 TNA FO 371/2804, Memorandum of Ralph Paget and W. Tyrell, August 7, 1916 (No. 18510).

2 It is important to point out, however, that according to the contemporary interpretation, the national principle was not equivalent to the principle of national self-determination. While the first was an adequate tool to reach political goals, the second would have resulted in the revolutionary transformation of the European political structure. Nevertheless, the principle of national self-determination was a logical, rather natural consequence of the former, and it became widely accepted in higher political circles quite early, already at the end of the war. Kenneth J. Calder, *Britain and the Origins of the New Europe 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 16.

had been overrun despite the country's neutrality, and just as importantly, to gain the sympathies of the Balkan nation-states, which were still neutral at the time. The nationality principle was an excellent tool in the hands of the British political élite for the future settlement of the fate of those territories in which Great Britain had no specific interest, such as those in the Balkans.[3] As the Balkan problems seemed to be rooted in nationalism, the application of the national principle promised a double advantage: it seemed to provide an appropriate ideological background for the successful satisfaction and long-term settlement of the territorial conflicts, claims and concessions in the Balkans, while it was also an unfailing way to entice the targeted neutral states over to the Entente's side. Nevertheless, no one except for the extremely naive would have had any doubts that when the application of the national principle clashed with the interests of strategic necessity, as in the case of Italy, it would always be the latter that would prevail when it came to the definition of the ultimate political direction to follow.[4]

At the beginning of the war, British politics was cautious not to make any specific commitments that would have tied its hands. It was able to do that as long as the war reached the dimension in which winning over new allies became paramount for winning the war itself – which came as early as at the end of 1914. At that point, Great Britain was forced to give up its comfortable, i.e., uncommitted, attitude, and during the territorial give-and-take of the Balkans, London also had to take responsibility regarding the destiny of some of the territories. In the first year of the war, London, in concert with the ideas of the allied great powers, intended to use the distribution of territories in the Balkans to renew the Balkan League that would – concomitantly – commit itself to supporting the Entente. According to this proposal, raised by Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece – in addition to Serbia – would have formed a united front to block the southeastern expansion of the Central Powers and prevent their contact with the allied Ottoman Empire. In order for the Balkan League to be revived, the state that had to be persuaded of the advantages of this alliance was precisely

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3 Ibid., 16.

4 "In such an event our attitude should be guided by circumstances generally and British interests in particular." TNA FO 371/2804, Memorandum of Ralph Paget and W. Tyrell, August 7, 1916 (No. 18510).

the one that had got the short end of the stick in the Second Balkan War and which had been stripped of territories it had legitimately considered as its own by each and every one of its neighbors: Bulgaria.

In autumn 1914, the chances of winning Bulgaria over to the Entente's side actually seemed quite good. At least that was the conclusion to which the foreign-affairs officials of the great powers must have arrived based on the reports of their diplomats accredited to the Balkan states. Nevertheless, it seemed advisable that before the great powers approached Bulgaria with the idea of forming the Balkan League again, the affected Balkan states would reach an agreement as to the concessions they would be ready to make to that end.[5] This did not seem like a mission impossible. Great Britain's ambassador to Sofia, Sir H. Box-Ironside, judged that Serbia could be easily won over for the plan as it would get huge concessions in other areas, and if it lost the war, Austria would give Macedonia to Bulgaria anyway. Box-Ironside thought that Greece could be persuaded without much difficulty to give up Kavala in exchange for the favorable settling of its other territorial disputes with Sofia.[6] In his opinion, the stumbling block would have been Romania as he saw no reason for Romania to cede any territories to Bulgaria.[7]

In fact, the optimistic view of the British ambassador to Sofia was shared by many. The ambassadors of Britain and Russia to Athens also thought that in order to conquer Bulgaria for themselves, it would suffice to get Serbia to make some territorial concessions, which would be able to offer a sufficiently large territory on its own and which could be amply compensated afterwards from Austria's lands.[8] However, Charles des Graz, Britain's ambassador to Belgrade, was of a different view – and he would be right, as we shall see: he was not at all certain that the Serbian government could be persuaded to make territorial concessions, especially without stating precisely what lands it would be getting from Austria in exchange.[9]

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5 TNA FO 438/2, Sir H. Box-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey, August 1914 (No. 522).

6 It seemed logical anyway that Greece would hardly need Kavala if it was in possession of Saloniki, two port cities that are situated so close to each other that they would be redundant. Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 TNA FO 438/2, Erskin to Sir Edward Grey, August 15, 1914 (No. 517).

9 TNA FO 438/2, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, August 20, 1914 (No. 683).

Based on the above, it seemed evident that the key to the creation of the Balkan League was in Serbia's hands. Having recognized that, Great Britain and Russia, the two Entente powers showing the most interest in this question, tried to convince Belgrade by divergent means regarding the utility of the territorial concessions to be made in favor of Bulgaria. The Russians advanced a concrete proposal already in the first months of the war: they asked Serbia to cede to Bulgaria the territories that had been originally allocated to Bulgaria in the Serbian-Bulgarian alliance agreement of March 1912, but which in the end were given to Serbia in the Second Balkan War.[10] In return for these territories, Russia vowed that Serbia "would get many territories elsewhere."[11] However, Serbia understandably did not wish to be solely in charge of offering the bait to Bulgaria. It was ready to cede territories, though only if Romania and Greece were willing to do the same: the former would turn over Dobrudja in exchange for Transylvania, while the Greeks would trade Kavala for the Turkish islands and Epirus. Furthermore, Serbia insisted on support for the creation of the South Slav national union and the definitive settling of the issue.[12] Yet the Serbian government was not as enthusiastic about the Balkan League as its great power allies. It did not trust the Bulgarians at all, and instead of pan-Balkan collaboration, it counted on the goodwill of the Greek government, to which it was bound by a defensive alliance signed in May 1913. Instead of a Balkan bloc, it would have contented itself with the benevolent neutrality of the Bulgarians, which would manifest itself in the assurance of a free connection to Russia, in exchange for which Bulgaria would have been rewarded via the "rectification of the borders."[13]

Contrary to Russia, Great Britain tried to deploy a more "sophisticated" method at this point to ensure Belgrade's willingness to support its political goals: money. To be precise, in exchange for 800,000 pounds sterling in

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[10] In this agreement, Serbia acknowledged Bulgaria's right to the territories situated east of the Cape of Rodon located on the Albanian coast and the Struma river. See Momir Stojković, ed., Balkanski ugovorni odnosi 1876–1996, vol. 1, 1876–1918 (Belgrade: JP Službeni list SRJ, 1996), 287. In contrast to this, the Serbian prime minister was willing to offer only the territories around Štip and Maleš as concession to Bulgaria.

[11] Radoš Ljušić and Milandin Milošević, eds., *Jovan M. Jovanović Pižon. Dnevnik (1896–1920)* (Novi Sad–Belgrade: Prometej Radio-Televizija Srbije, 2015), 123.

[12]a Ibid., 123–124.

[13] TNA FO 438/2, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, August 20, 1914 (No. 683).

financial aid, it expected the Serbian government to take the British demands in consideration to the greatest possible extent.[14] It was in this spirit that the British handed over their memorandum to the Serbian government on September 10, 1914. However, the Serbian government did not intend to yield to blackmail, and it did what any state would have done in order to protect its honor: with a heavy heart, it turned down the British assistance offered with such conditions.[15] Naturally, the assumption that making territorial concessions in favor of Bulgaria would have been set as a prerequisite for their help was dismissed by London as a mere misunderstanding,[16] but Great Britain did not abandon the effort to make Belgrade take its words seriously. Thus when there was a possibility that the Serbian government could regroup some smaller military units on the Albanian border to occupy certain strategic points in order to prevent an Albanian incursion into Serbia, London warned Belgrade that the latter should focus all its forces on the fight going on against Austria.[17]

In light of the given military situation, that was a reasonable demand on behalf of the great powers. In November 1914, on the eve of the concerted attack of the troops of Austria-Hungary against Serbia, British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey saw the only flicker of hope for Serbia in Romania's joining the Allies. However, for that to happen, he also deemed it unavoidable to satisfy Bulgaria's claims by making a definite pledge with respect to Macedonia and Thrace. Regarding Thrace, Grey left it entirely up to Russia to decide how much it could promise to Bulgaria. However, in the case of Macedonia, the key to the problem was still in Serbia's hands, so London thought that the time

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14 As was unequivocally revealed by the conversation between British Ambassador to St. Petersburg Sir George Buchanan and the Russian foreign minister at the beginning of September: "On my asking whether he thought that we could tell Serbia that we were ready to place 800 000 £ at her disposal, but that we expect her in return to follow our advices with regard to territorial concessions to Bulgaria, his Excellency said that he thought it would be more useful if we could say something to this effect." TNA FO 438/3, Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, September 5, 1914 (No. 77).

15 TNA FO 438/3, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, September 15, 1914 (No. 199).

16 "It was expression of a hope contingent upon Serbia acquiring large territorial gains as result of the war." Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. des Graz, September 16, 1914 (No. 208).

17 TNA FO 438/3, Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, September 7, 1914 (No. 104).

had come to make it clear to the Serbian government: the time had come for it to repay something for all the support Serbia had enjoyed. The circumstances made it necessary that Serbia should cede the territories promised to Bulgaria in the 1912 agreement so that the latter would take the side of the Allies and stand up to Turkey, thus making it possible for Romania and Greece to come to Serbia's aid and save it from destruction, Grey warned. In return, he promised Belgrade access to the Adriatic, satisfaction of its aspirations towards Bosnia as well as warranting a shared Greek-Serbian border section.[18] For the sake of more efficient communication and the speedier creation of a statement on behalf of the great powers, London placed the initiative in Russia's hands,[19] even though Great Britain also had a clear idea about how the agreement could be facilitated between the Balkan states and how the circumstances could be arranged to favor the creation of a Balkan bloc.[20]

Serbia's victory over the Austro-Hungarian Empire in December 1914 temporarily took the issue of the Balkan bloc off the agenda of urgent matters,[21] which, however, did not mean that it lapsed into oblivion. The allied

18 TNA FO 438/4, Sir Edward Grey to Francis Bertie, November 16, 1914 (No. 197).

19 The British ambassador to Sofia received instructions to act according to the wishes of the Russian foreign minister in all matters. TNA FO 438/4, Sir Edward Grey to F. Bertie, November 7, 1914 (No. 89).

20 Grey considered the following five actions to be necessary: first, to assure Greece about the possession of Epirus and the islands; second, to assure Bulgaria that it would get those territories that had been attached to Turkey after the Second Balkan War, and also that the great powers demanded that Serbia cede the territories to Bulgaria that were due according to the 1912 treaty; third, to assure Serbia that it would have access to the Adriatic through its own territories and that it would receive compensation in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in Northern Albania; fourth, to recognize Romania's right to Transylvania and Southern Bukovina; and fifth, to promise that if the Balkan states needed financial assistance, the three great powers would do their best to satisfy their demands. In exchange, they expected "only" that the Balkan states would mobilize their entire military and agree with the great powers regarding their deployment. TNA FO 438/4, Sir Edward Grey to F. Bertie, November 7, 1914 (No. 89).

21 On February 5, 1915, Grey tried to persuade Matej Bošković, the Serbian ambassador to London, that the key to solving the situation was winning over Bulgaria. As the British foreign secretary explained to Bošković, it was more rational to give up some of the less valuable Macedonian territory and get much more precious lands in the west. It was not a question of justice or right, but of wise policy of Serbia. Nevertheless, he made it clear that as long as Serbia was fighting so fiercely, they would not put pressure

attack against the Dardanelles was also quite clearly related to this effort. This incident served to beautifully illustrate Great Britain's *ars poetica*: wartime diplomacy could produce results only if it was supported by a successful military operation. Consequently, it was diplomacy that needed to be assigned to a strategy and not the other way around.[22] With respect to the attack against the Dardanelles, this position, the rightfulness of which would have been hard to deny, meant that London could have a better chance at a diplomatic breakthrough in the Balkan capitals in the event of military success against Turkey.[23] The correctness of this philosophy was justified when on March 3, 1915, Italy indicated its willingness to join the Entente, and negotiations accelerated with Bucharest about Romania's adherence to the Allies.

However, the attack against the Dardanelles was blocked as early as May 1915, and military fortunes took an unfavorable turn for the Entente in the eastern military arena, which made it increasingly urgent to find additional allies in the Balkans. Moreover, on top of and partly in consequence of the above-mentioned military situation, more and more intelligence warned about the possibility of Bulgaria joining the war on the side of the Central Powers. This turned it into a key priority for the Entente, and Great Britain within that, to make immediate efforts to win over Bulgaria. The most efficient way they saw to achieve this was still territorial concessions that Serbia was supposed to make. All of the above was related to the creation of the Balkan bloc, to which the British leadership, especially Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, attributed immense importance at that time, i.e., around the middle and second half of 1915. The great powers saw the neutral states of the Balkans as potential allies, and they were ready to pay for their support generously, both in terms of money and land. In this way, the desire to create a united front in the Balkans permitted territorial promises soar freely.

The talks to conquer Romania for the Entente were crowned with success. In the first week of July 1915, the Russians – with London's approval – basically agreed with Bucharest regarding the conditions of Romania's entry

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on it to cede territories. They would content themselves with telling them openly what they would consider to be a wise decision. TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. des Graz, February 5, 1915 (No. 236).

22 Calder, *Britain and the Origins of the New Europe*, 29.

23 Ibid., 32.

into the war even though the agreement came into force only a year later.[24] Nevertheless, the most important link in the chain continued to be Bulgaria, and the general opinion was that the safest way to earn its favors would be through Belgrade. At the same time, the British political leadership saw clearly that territorial promises made to the Bulgarians would only make sense and could only be a matter of bargaining for Bulgaria if the Serbs themselves agreed to renounce their territories. Thus the assurance of the latter was given key priority in British foreign policy, and in June 1915 a four-month-long period of diplomatic bargaining began, in the course of which the Entente powers tried to get Serbia to concede its Macedonian territories to Bulgaria, while Serbia did everything in its might to evade this demand.

The first significant step in the negotiations with Serbia was made on May 30, when the British, Russian and French ambassadors proposed together to Nikola Pašić, the Serbian prime minister, to cede the Macedonian territories, promising to Serbia huge territories elsewhere as well as an outlet to the Adriatic in exchange.[25] Regretfully though, the Serbian government rejected this proposal virtually without any justification, with reference to the unanimous agreement of the political parties, the monarch, the regent and the military leadership.[26] The Serbian response must also have been motivated by resentment for having been left out by the great powers from the negotiations conducted with Italy and Romania about the fate of territories also coveted by Serbia. However, the British prime minister did not accept this refusal and was not moved by the resentment of the Serbs. He did not understand why Serbia should be offended by their proposal and request, for in 1912 Serbia had been ready to turn over the territories in question to Bulgaria provided that its own territorial aspirations were fulfilled by the acquisition of the Albanian territories and the Adriatic port. What is more, that outlet to the Adriatic would have passed through hostile Albanian lands, while the common Greek-Serbian border would have been terminated. Now Serbia had the chance to acquire much larger territories and broad access to the sea through territories inhabited by its kinfolk as well as a secure connection between Serbia and Greece in Albania. Thus in Grey's opinion, the Serbian government was

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24 Ibid., 41.
25 Simultaneously, the Entente also handed over its proposal to Sofia.
26 TNA FO 438/6, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, June 9, 1915 (No. 357).

inherently wrong to frame this request as if the great powers were expecting a sacrifice from Serbia.[27] He expressed his displeasure in a telegram in which he supplied the British ambassador to Belgrade with arguments for his negotiations with the Serbian government. The instruction authorized the deployment of quite raw and occasionally disputable moral arguments for Charles des Graz, who, however, would use the array of arguments provided by his foreign secretary only with moderation as testified by his reports.[28]

The Serbian arguments were all the less acceptable for the British prime minister as he thought that their proposal had been drafted precisely on the basis of that national principle with reference to which Serbia had also formulated its own territorial claims after the war. In Grey's opinion, the territories to be attached to Serbia were mostly or overwhelmingly inhabited by Serbs, while the population of the Macedonian territories to be ceded to Bulgaria was predominantly of Bulgarian ethnicity.[29] Nevertheless, accepting the worries of the Serbian government concerning the rumors leaked about the negotiations between the Entente, Romania and Bulgaria, which was a sore

27 TNA FO 438/6. Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. des Graz, June 4, 1915 (No. 339). However, the situation was not seen in such a simple light by all. Nevile Henderson, the second secretary of the British Embassy in Belgrade, expressed a rather negative view about his country's steps in the Balkans: "To obtain this result only one course was open, harsh as such a course seemed which might even be looked upon as the practical betrayal of an ally and of a friendly neutral, namely, to definitely guarantee to Bulgaria certain portions of Macedonia and Trace." TNA FO 438/7, Nevile Henderson's Memorandum on the Negotiations at Niš in regard to the Cession By Serbia of the Uncontested Zone in Macedonia to Bulgaria, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, September 2, 1915 (No. 68/2).

28 His reports stated that the Serbs enjoyed a relative calm since December 1914 in comparison with other areas devastated by war. The foreign secretary mentioned the worth of the medical help delivered to it, and that Serbia was not the only country with regard to which they had to have consideration for the public mood, and that had Serbia accepted the request of the great powers in August 1914 regarding concessions, they would not be here today. The military situation would be much more favorable. Finally, he emphasized that the troops of Great Britain were fighting all over Europe, though did not claim for themselves any land at all. At the same time, Serbia, through its heroic struggle, was not only furthering the greater cause, but it was also promoting its own expansion and fulfilment. TNA FO No. 438/6, Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. des Graz, June 24, 1915 (No. 431).

29 Calder, *Britain and the Origins of the New Europe,* 31–32.

point for Serbia, as well as the criticism put forth by the Serbian government in relation to this, Grey deemed it important for the Allies to place more confidence in Serbia in order to prevent the Serbs from losing heart and concluding that their continuous sacrifices would not yield any advantages for them. Although he could not undertake to make an official statement without prior consultation with the Allies, he could let the Serbian government know what he considered to be the interests of Serbia and the Allies. Their number-one priority was to achieve total victory over Germany and Austria, which was crucial in order for Serbia's interests to be guaranteed. Even though the foreign secretary was not at all sure whether they could make Romania and Bulgaria enter the war or not, he would have considered it unwise from Serbia to reject the proposal of the Allies to make reasonable concessions to either Bulgaria or Romania in order to win them over. Especially if in exchange for that, Serbia could receive Bosnia and Herzegovina, a broad outlet to the Adriatic, increased strategic security of its capital and a substantial reinforcement of its position in general compared to its status before the war.[30]

In July, in close collaboration with Russia, Great Britain tried to convince the Serbian government that its sacrifice was greatly needed for the common cause. Leaving the essentials unaltered, Grey finally turned to Serbia with a somewhat more flexible proposal at the end of July: Serbia should agree to cede the undisputed territories to Bulgaria; as a sign of its benevolence, it should consent that for the duration of the war, the Allies be permitted to occupy the territories east of the Vardar, and that after the war, when Serbia would have received its newly acquired territories as due, the former territories would be ceded to Bulgaria along with the other part of the undisputed territories. This solution would offer a perfect guarantee to Serbia, which would no longer have to fear a Bulgarian attack, and thus it could concentrate all its power and might on the fight against Austria-Hungary. Grey intended to hand over the memorandum composed in this spirit as a joint note of the great powers; the weight of this memorandum would have been further increased by a reminder of the tsar to the Serbs regarding the power to which they actually owed their existence.[31]

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30 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. des Graz, July 20, 1915 (No. 138).

31 "The communication would be undoubtedly far greater effect, and would appear far more forcible to Serbia if His majesty the Emperor were at the same time to remind

The British foreign secretary wanted to rely on the sense of justice and common sense of the Serbian government, hoping that Britain's reference to factors related to the prevailing political and military situation to support its request would not fall on deaf ears in Serbia.[32] However, the great powers forgot that the Serbian government had numerous legitimate reasons to bear a grudge against the Allies, which did not favor the approval of its requests. In addition to the fact that the Serbs deemed the request of the great powers to turn over their recently acquired territories to be unacceptable for political, military, constitutional and sentimental reasons, the Serbs also resented the fact that Serbia had not been informed about the talks with Italy, that they were not considered as allies and that they had also been left out from the negotiations with Romania. This conduct of the great powers undermined the domestic position of the head of the Serbian government, the main advocate of full-scale cooperation with the Allies, and exposed him to serious political attacks. The last argument – without questioning its veracity – was also suitable to shift the blame for rejection at least partly on the great powers. Another argument for the rejection was that the great powers demanded an immediate sacrifice from Serbia, i.e., that it would give up some of the territories it rightfully and indisputably owned and held in exchange for a distant compensation of an uncertain dimension and outcome.[33] Therefore, Serbia was reluctant to make any sort of concession, trying to bargain and play for time, which was beginning to bear its fruits.

London became more and more convinced that the safest way to conquer Belgrade was to let Serbia know clearly which territories it could count on

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the Prince Regent of Serbia that about a year ago His Royal Highness placed the fate of Serbia in the hands of His Imperial Majesty and that this great war had its origin in an attempt to wipe Serbia out of existence, and in her determination of Russia not to abandon her in her desperate extremity. Her existence has been saved by the exertions of Russia and of her Allies at the cost of very heavy sacrifices, from the fate which she was threatened." TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan, July 23, 1915 (No. 156).

32 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan, July 23, 1915 (No. 156).

33 Pašić noted that the Allies could not have been serious in making such a claim without offering the prospect of any immediate concession. However, he did not specify that to which he was alluding. TNA FO 438/7, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, Niš, July 31, 1915 (No. 231).

after the war was over. In consideration of this, at the end of July, Grey was willing to offer to Pašić – in exchange for the Bulgarian or, possibly, allied occupation of the territories stretching to the Vardar and the concession of the entire "undisputed territory" after the war – his government's firm commitment that Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia would gain possession of the territories lying to the west and south of the line of the Drava and the Danube, including Zagreb, together with part of the coastline including Fiume, Split, Dubrovnik and San Giovanni di Medua and their hinterland "subject only to the reservation that we may have to stipulate for the neutralization of a part or the whole of the Dalmatian and Albanian coast so guaranteed." Furthermore, Grey deemed it necessary to assure the Serbian government that Britain would facilitate the unification of Serbia and Croatia if the Croatian nation was also in favor of that. Moreover, he also raised the possibility that as a sign of their goodwill, British officials would ask the Serbian government to join the alliance of the great powers created on September 5, 1914.[34]

If the negotiations with Bulgaria proved to be successful, thus enabling the establishment of the Balkan League, it would guarantee the full materialization of the Serbian and Greek aspirations. If the Bulgarians could not be won over in favor of the League, the Allies would no longer pester Belgrade with their request, Grey promised to Pašić.[35] Besides Great Britain's great-power allies, Grey also counted on Romania's backing in convincing Serbia and in the creation of the Balkan bloc. He considered it essential to persuade Romania to negotiate with Bulgaria, urging it to support the efforts of the great powers in

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34 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd, July 31, 1915 (No. 227). It is worth noting here that in contrast to this, the Russian minister of foreign affairs firmly rejected Serbia's elevation to the position of an ally, saying that "In spite of her gallant conduction the war, this kingdom does not yet hold rank of a great Power, and to treat it on that footing would entail disadvantage of imposing upon it burdens which it would not be in position to bear." TNA FO 438/7, Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, August 11, 1918 (No. 336).

35 But he warned the head of the Serbian government that in the new Balkan war that was unfolding, the implementation of the Serb and Greek aspirations was by far less certain. TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. des Graz, August 2, 1915 (No. 248).

Sofia by starting immediate talks with the Bulgarian government about ceding Dobrich and Balchik.[36] This idea, however, was totally impracticable.

In the end, the four great powers urged the Serbian government in a joint memorandum on August 4, 1915, to cede the undisputed territories to Bulgaria if the latter entered the war on the side of the Allies. The territories would have been attached to Bulgaria at the end of the war, and in return the Allies promised that once the war was over, they would guarantee Bosnia and Herzegovina, territories in the Adriatic region and ample territorial compensations that had been reserved for Serbia.[37]

Although Grey wanted to make sure that the Allies would dispel the suspicions of the Serbian government – i.e., that the Allies were intentionally being vague in their wording – through an entirely clear pledge, the Serbian prime minister still did not find the memorandum handed over by the great powers on August 4 to be specific enough.

Having studied the memorandum, Pašić asked the representatives of the great powers to answer three essential questions: first, what were the precise compensations that the powers proposed to grant to Serbia in exchange for the sacrifices which they demanded of her?; second, did the powers consider the treaty of 1912 to be a *sine qua non*, or was the agreement open to modification?; and third, what did the powers understand by the term "frontiére communicque" between Serbia and Greece and what would safeguard that frontier and where would it be fixed?[38]

While the great powers were discussing the answers they would give to the questions asked by the Serbian prime minister, the letter written by the British, Russian and Italian leaders as well as the French president, addressed directly to the Serbian monarch, King Peter, arrived in Niš on August 10, 1915: these letters asked Serbia to make the necessary sacrifice.[39] On August 14, the British ambassador to the Serbian government still deemed that the

36 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Barclay, August 7, 1915 (No. 299).

37 At the end of the memorandum, it was orally noted, however, that if Bulgaria did not enter the war on their side, then all these offers would naturally lose their effect, and the Allies would not have any commitments in this regard. TNA FO 438/7, Communication made to the Serbian Government by the Four Powers on August 4, 1915 (No. 271).

38 TNA FO 438/7, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, August 5, 1915 (No. 285).

39 TNA FO 438/7, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, August 11, 1915 (No. 520).

latter would be willing to make the concessions.[40] Alas, he was disappointed in his expectations. After the great powers delivered their answer to Pašić's questions on August 15, stating precisely what Serbia could expect in exchange for its sacrifice for the common good, even the faintest willingness to make the concessions vanished. The Serbian prime minister reacted rather passionately to the memorandum of the great powers: "We thought decision we had been asked to take would be difficult one, but it will not be difficult now. We shall fight against Austrians as long as we have munitions of war, and then we shall perish. We have done our best loyally, and you have never even yet told us that we were your Allies." In light of the above, Charles des Graz naturally revised his opinion as to the potentially positive answer of the Serbian government.[41] The fact that the specific commitments made by the great powers were by far inferior to the expectations of the Serbs could be attributed mainly to Italy. For by that time, the Entente powers had made formal commitments to Italy, and Rome, the full ally of the Entente, vetoed Croatia's potential adherence to Serbia, and it was very much against guaranteeing Slavonia to the Serbian government.[42] Based on the documents, France played a far lesser role than Russia and Great Britain in the formulation of the conditions, so it was up to London and Petrograd to elaborate the proposal stating the exact size of the territorial gain for Serbia. Russia elaborated its proposal in consideration of the earlier British and French opinions, which the four great powers were to hand over to the Serbian government:

> Allies offer Serbia, in return for sacrifices which they demand of her, following compensations:
> 1. Bosnia and Herzegovina
> 2. Slavonia, Syrmia with Semlin and Batchka
> 3. Dalmatian coast from Cape Planca to point 10 kilometer south of Old Ragusa with the islands of Great and Little Zirone, Bna, Solta Brazza, Jaclian, and Calamota, and the peninsula of Sabioncello. Portion of

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40 At the same time, the ambassador did not exclude the possibility that he would propose modifications with respect to line 12. TNA FO 438/7, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, August 14, 1915 (No. 375).

41 TNA FO 438/7, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, 15 August 1915. (No. 383)

42 TNA FO 438/7, Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey, 11 August 1915. (No. 341)

coast from Cape Planca to the present frontier of Montenegro to be neutralized with the exception of port of Ragusa. Coast from the point mentioned above to the River Drin shall be reserved to Serbia and Montenegro to be divided between them after the conclusion of peace. Newly acquired portion of this coast shall be neutralized.

4. On the west of Serbo-Bulgarian frontier, strip of territory in Albania as wide as possible joining Serbia to Greece. Serbians and Greeks will be authorized to make themselves their common frontier, but the Allies reserve to themselves the right to determine western limit of that frontier.

5. Portion of the Banat inhabited by Slavs in the event of Romania deciding not to take action in the present war on the side of the Allies.

Allies regret their inability to modify limits of portion of Macedonia based on treaty of 1912 which they ask Serbia to cede to Bulgaria.[43]

Sazonov did not insist that the memorandums of the great powers should be word-for-word identical. Simultaneously, in consideration of the Italian protest, the Russian prime minister drafted yet another memorandum, which he also intended to communicate to the Serbian government in order to facilitate Serbia's decision in favor of the sacrifice. He suggested that the French, British and Russian governments should make the following declaration:

The Allies are bound to Italy by the promise not to dispose until the end of the war, of the future of Croatia, with the Adriatic coast from the Bay of Volosca to the Dalmatia coast, including Fiume. They can consequently only confidentially inform Serbian Prime Minister of their firm decision to favor, at the conclusion of peace, reunion of Croats with Serbians, if the former show wish for it. Italian Government is prevented by reasons of internal politics from taking part in this declaration, which the Allies beg Serbian Government to keep absolutely secret.[44]

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43 Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, August 12, 1915 (No. 353). He is forwarding the aide memoire of the Russian minister of foreign affairs.
44 TNA FO 438/7, Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, August 12, 1915 (No. 354).

As opposed to this Russian proposal, it was only the proposal drafted by the British that was communicated on August 15 that showed a clear consideration for the Italian interests. The memorandum did not guarantee that Serbia would receive Slavonia as a war gain; it only guaranteed this if the fate of the territory ended up in the hands of the Allies at the end of the war. The promise of a Greek-Serbian border was also left out, as was the promise regarding the western part of the Banat; nor did it mention that the great powers would undertake to promote the unification of Croatia with Serbia.[45] As is revealed by the above, the August 15 memorandum of the great powers had not been duly harmonized, and it was handed over then and in that form specifically at the urging of the British foreign secretary. Presumably due to difficulties of communication, the items suggested by the Russians were omitted from the negotiated version; they had still been included in the British proposal of August 10 and were excluded by Grey only on August 12, after his discussion with the Italian government. The urgency was due to the fact that the British foreign secretary deemed it important to submit the memorandum to Pašić already before the session of the Serbian parliament, so he informed the British ambassador that he could transmit it to the Serbian prime minister on his own account, even independently of the other great powers.[46] As a matter of fact, the head of British diplomacy – similarly to his Russian counterpart – did not think that the memorandums of the great powers had to be absolutely identical as long as their meaning and core points were similar to each other. "The main point is to deliver them with the least possible delay."[47] However, in this case, "the spirit and the essence" of these memorandums were far from being equivalent to each other, as we could see. The new memorandum containing the detailed territorial guarantees astonished not only Pašić: Russia, the chief patron of Serbia, took serious offense at London as well. Sazonov, who had seen the content of the proposed and finally submitted memorandum on August 14, before its transmission, objected to the fact that London had not consulted him, and resented that

45 TNA FO 438/7, Communication made to the Serbian Government by British, French and Russian Ministers, August 15, 1915 (No. 380).
46 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Berie, August 12, 1915 (No. 317).
47 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. des Graz, August 7, 1915 (No. 300).

Russia would be forced into a subservient role in the Balkans.[48] Of the ten points of the British memorandum, he approved of only three.[49] But by then it was too late for amendments. The British, French and Russian ambassadors together handed over the memorandum drafted by the British to the head of the Serbian government. As the Italian ambassador received no instructions, he abstained. Nevertheless, the Russian ambassador completed the joint memorandum orally in accordance with the memorandum drafted by his minister of foreign affairs, indicating that Russia would promote Serbia's unification with Croatia by all means at its disposal and that it would support Serbia's interests in the Slav-inhabited parts of the Banat if Romania did not enter the war on the side of the Entente.[50]

Grey was extremely disappointed by Pašić's reaction. He could not imagine what more could be expected within the limits of rationality other than what had been offered. Practically, they had promised Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slavonia and half of Dalmatia with Split and Fiume to Serbia. Although the future of Croatia was dependent primarily on the Croats, Great Britain alluded to the possibility that Croatia, along with Fiume, could freely join Serbia. An additional step they could make was to agree that Fiume would be a free port and promise that they would use their influence to promote Croatia's adherence to Serbia if the Croats so wished. All they would ask from Serbia in return was to consent to a promise regarding the concession of those territories to Bulgaria that Serbia itself had acknowledged in 1912 would be due to Bulgaria. It all depended on Serbia's answer whether there would be unity or dissent in the Balkans, as Grey summed up the situation.[51] In order to make the decision easier for the Serbian prime minister, Grey once again

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48 Grey was, of course, excusing himself, saying that "The question was so urgent, and the time so short before the meeting of Skuptchina to-day, that it was necessary to hasten matters. The methods and procedure which rightly prevail in peace time cannot be observed by always in war time in matters of extreme urgency and importance. Nothing was further from my thoughts than that Russia should be expected to play a subservient part in the Balkans. It is self-evident that a great Slav State like Russia must necessarily and rightly enjoy a very great and most influential position in all Balkan affairs." TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan, August 16, 1915 (No. 386).

49 TNA FO 438/7, Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, August 14, 1915 (No. 370).

50 TNA FO 438/7, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, August 16, 1915 (No. 396).

51 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. des Graz, August 16, 1915 (No. 389).

raised the possibility that Serbia would not renounce these territories in favor of Bulgaria, but would cede them to the Allies, which would then decide about their fate according to their best judgment.[52] The British foreign secretary did not wish to raise the stakes any higher and increase the size of the lands to be given to Serbia. Nor did he want to continue pressuring the Serbian government, apart from pointing out to it that Serbia was to decide between a bright future and complete doom, and it all hung on its own decision.[53]

Even though one of the earlier arguments of the Serbian government against satisfying the demand for territorial concessions was that it would have to be ratified by the parliament, which was impossible to convene in wartime conditions, the *Skupština* still managed to hold a session by mid-August. The head of the Serbian government could present the matter before the parliament, which discussed the request of the Allies in three confidential sessions. Pašić tried to convince the members of the *Skupština* that the situation demanded certain concessions because only at that price could Serbia continue to expect further support from the Allies. For if Serbia did not grant the Allies' demands, the great powers would give the promised arms, money and ammunition to someone else. Although Macedonia was part of the Serbian state now, Europe had sadly not yet acknowledged the fact that it was a Serbian land inhabited by members of the Serbian nation. However, the Serbs knew and professed that, and the territorial concession to be made by Serbia under the given constraints should be regarded as territories lost in the war.[54] After a heated debate, during which signing a separate peace, capitulation and fighting until the last breath were all raised as alternatives, the Serbian parliament finally made its decision on August 25 to continue fighting on the side of the Allies with the objective of liberating the Serbo-Croats and Slovenes and making those sacrifices that

52 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. des Graz August 17, 1915 (No 401). In Grey's opinion, the fact that the territories to be ceded to Bulgaria would be occupied by the Allies would mean a double guarantee during the war: on the one hand, it would assure that Serbia would not be attacked by Bulgaria; on the other hand, it would provide a guarantee to Bulgaria that, when the time came, it could occupy Macedonia and that the territory would be ceded without protest. TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Lord Bertie, August 23, 1915 (No. 455).

53 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd, August 20, 1915 (No. 429).

54 Đorđe Stnaković, ed., *Nikola Pašić u narodnoj skupštini*, vol. 4 (Belgrade: Službeni list, 1998), 43, 50–51.

would guarantee the existential interests of the nation. The parliament thus approved the government's policy.[55] In other words, the Serbian government and Pašić were given a free hand to make the concessions. Nevertheless, it would have been tremendously naive to qualify the response given by the Serbian government to the memorandum of the Allies and delivered to the representatives of the great powers on September 1, 1915, as positive.[56]

The Serbian government consented to making a sacrifice, but it set certain conditions: the creation of a strategic border in order to secure Skopje and Ovčije polje; keeping Prilep; and the drawing of a common Greek-Serbian border so that the Bulgarian territories would not neighbor Albania even if that meant the detachment of Monastir (Bitola). Moreover, in light of the magnitude of the sacrifice expected from it, Serbia formulated several special requests as well, which the Allies were to approve jointly if they wanted Serbia to satisfy their demands.[57] The requests were as follows:

1. Bulgaria to attack Turkey with all her forces as soon as possible, and to give her . . . help in . . . Constantinople and the Dardanelles;

2. Serbia in addition to promises contained in the note of 3rd August, shall receive as soon as possible formal promise of Allied Powers of her union with Croatia, together with Fiume, that the Slovene races shall be freed and have the right to dispose of their own fate, and that the western part of the Banat shall be united to Serbia as absolutely necessary for the protection of Belgrade and the Morava Valley;

3. Serbia to be formally recognized as an Ally, and to receive guarantee of active participation and consultative voice at the conclusion of peace or at the Peace Congress;

4. Serbia to be guaranteed punctual monthly subvention of 36, 000, 000 fr. until the end of the war;

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55 Stnaković, *Nikola Pašić u narodnoj skupštini*, 53.

56 The Serbian ruler had the day before issued his response to the requests sent by monarchs and heads of state and had evaded the request with reference to constitutionality, saying that this was the government's competence. TNA FO 438/7, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, August 31, 1915 (No. 527).

57 TNA FO 438/7, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, September 1, 1915 (No. 540, 541, 542).

5. Guarantee to Serbia of all the privileges in connection with the Aegean railways which she has hitherto enjoyed for imports and exports for all goods and munitions of war;

6. Allied Powers to guarantee Serbia their assistance in all questions affecting her safety independence and full sovereignty;

7. Promised cession of territory to take place after precious demarcation of geographical and strategical line and after Serbia has entered into possession of territories promised, as well as those mentioned herein. Serbia reserves the right before cession to settle all questions affecting the nationality, property rights and religious ties with Serbia of all the inhabitants of the ceded territory, as well as questions affecting . . . historical monuments, churches and monasteries.[58]

We could hardly be wrong in supposing that the Serbian government worded its reply intentionally in an ultimatum-like way, assuming that it could not be accepted by the great powers. In fact, the Serbian government was fully aware of the fact that the great powers and the Romanian government had already signed their agreement, even if it had not yet entered into force, which made it impossible for them to accept the Serbian memorandum. Another factor that made the *en bloc* approval of the Serbian conditions even more impossible was the secret agreement between the Entente and Italy (well-known to Belgrade) that accorded the Dalmatian coast to Italy. In any case, it is quite curious that while Pašić himself was inclined to agree to the concessions, for which he had actually received the parliament's approval, he drafted the memorandum in such a way that was sure to be rejected. It cannot be excluded that Russia also interfered with the wording of the answer because, as we have seen above, it consented to the handover of the memorandum worded by Grey only for the sake of preserving the impression of the great powers' concerted action, and informed the Serbian government about its own dissenting opinion regarding Croatia and the Banat. A threat from the military clique is also a possibility. However, the most likely scenario is that based on the reports and information that reached him, Pašić thought that Bulgaria's entry into the war could happen at any time, which would nullify the whole bargain. He was playing

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58 TNA FO 438/7, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, September 1, 1915 (No. 540, 541, 542).

for time, trying to avoid at all costs that Serbia would voluntarily renounce its territories earned with blood. Time was life – or territory – the prime minister must have reasoned, and events proved him right.[59]

Whatever the motivation that was behind Pašić's memorandum, the British foreign secretary was certainly outraged by the Serbian response. He would not hear of taking the Serbian proposal as a basis for negotiations, and giving up his earlier patient stance, he was ready to put additional pressure on the Serbian government in order to force it to satisfy the requirements of the great powers fully and in due time. He was willing to recognize Serbia as its ally and guarantee its participation at the future peace conference, but he would not undertake any commitment to additional territorial concessions favoring Serbia.[60]

As we have seen, in the process of bargaining, the British and the Serbian positions did not come an inch closer regarding territorial concessions. One

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59 The second Secretary of the British Embassy to Belgrade reported about the circumstances in Serbia and the public mood quite vividly, with a great deal of understanding, but also a sense of superior contempt to the leadership of the Foreign Office: "Opposition to the session was practically universal through Serbia: on the part of the King and the Crown Prince, for dynastic reasons; on the part of the Skupsthina, for party as well as patriotic reasons; and on the part of the entire people and army, on popular, military and sentimental grounds. To counteract this opposition was the weight and influence of M. Pasich himself and a very limited number of broadminded politicians in this country; . . . Unfortunately M. Pasich's influence suffered a set-back owing to the failure of the Powers to keep him informed of the negotiations respecting Dalmatia and the Banat. . . . Moreover owing to the intensely democratic constitutional Government of Serbia, the representations made by the Powers lost half their weight owing to the failure of a nation of peasants to do more than half-appreciate the greatness of the issues at stake . . . In addition to practical considerations, every feeling of sentiment in a nation that is far more sentimental than practical cried out against the proposed cession of territory won at the price of considerable bloodshed and in spite of the treacherous attack of a hated enemy, of territory rich in the historic traditions of the Serbian race. Strategical objections, however weighty possibly have been overcome; but the force of popular sentiment was a rock against which the influence of any Government, however strong, far seeing and conciliatory, might well have flung itself in vain." TNA FO 438/7, Nevile Henderson's Memorandum on the Negotiations at Niš in regard to the Cession By Serbia of the Uncontested Zone in Macedonia to Bulgaria, Sir C. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey, September 2, 1915 (No. 68/2)

60 TNA FO 438/7, Sir Edward Grey to Lord Bertie, September 4, 1915 (No. 565).

of the leitmotifs of the British territorial promises was the national principle, which necessarily introduced the question of a South Slav union into the political perspective, but London did not wish to deal with this at the time. For the majority of the British political élite, the South Slav question was virtually equal to the Serbian one until the end of the war. Accordingly, London addressed its requests/demands/offers to a Serbia seeking to fulfill the Serbian national goals, whereas by that time, it was actually facing a Serbia that put the creation of the South Slav union on its banner. According to the position of Serbian historiography, the fact that Serbia turned down the proposal could be explained by the fact that Belgrade dared to dream big, and by then it was already thinking in terms of a South Slav solution.[61] The conflicts were chiefly due to the fact that a South Slav union would have logically entailed the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or at least the loss of its southern territories, but that did not figure among the goals of the great powers, especially of Great Britain, in the first years of the war— at least not among the declared goals. Still, by offering Austro-Hungarian territories generously to Serbia, and Dalmatia, Trieste and South Tyrol to Italy, and by going along with the independence of Croatia or its adherence to Serbia, this was the direction in which they implicitly shifted.[62]

Though the British political leadership did not entirely give up hope even by September 1915 of enticing Bulgaria to their camp, it saw a decreasing chance for it as time went by. Thus instead of trying to gain Sofia, it concentrated on winning over Athens. On October 1, the Serbian government announced

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61 Dragoljub R. Živojinović, *Velika Srbija ili Jugoslavija? Velika Britanija i jugoslovensko ujidinjenje 1914–1918. godin*. In *Stvaranje Jugoslovenske države 1918. Zbornik radova* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju IRO–"Narodna Knjiga," 1983). orđe Stanković, *Nikola Pašić, saveznici i stvaranje Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1984).

62 It is not easy to estimate precisely to what extent Serbia was intent on the creation of complete South Slav unity, and to what extent this cause was put in the service of propaganda because it is a fact that Serbia had talked about the creation of the South Slav unity already in August and September 1914, and then in December 1914, in the famous Niš Declaration, it raised this project to the level of the government program. At the same time, it is also a fact that when the Russian envoy warned Pašić that he could not have both Croatia and Macedonia, the head of the Serbian government chose Macedonia. orđe Stanković, *Nikola Pašić, saveznici i stvaranje Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Nolit,1984), 156.

through the British ambassador that it considered the issue of territories to be ceded to Bulgaria and their Bulgarian occupation to be obsolete.[63] As a matter of fact, the British government was also of this view by that time. In the end, the question that had been on the agenda for more than a year was resolved by Bulgaria's entry into the war on the side of the Central Powers. With that, a highly embarrassing affair had been closed, and Serbia was at last saved from the threat of having to give up its recently acquired territories of its own will. However, the danger of being forced to make territorial concessions did not entirely pass over the head of the Serbian government. The most burning issue connected to the British Balkan foreign policy was now the termination of the military neutrality of Greece and its entering the war on the side of the Allies. In order to make Athens side with the Entente and bring it to meet the stipulations of the secret agreement signed with Serbia in 1913 regarding military assistance,[64] London was inclined to convince the Serbian government about the usefulness of territorial concessions, in favor of the Greeks this time. As London suggested to Pašić on October 8, with regard to the danger represented by the proximity of the Bulgarian border north of Lake Dorian, Serbia should immediately cede the so-called "enclave" to Greece. "The frontier would be thus rectified, and the Greeks would be obliged to extend their left further north, while there would be distinct material gains to the Serbians."[65] However, the Serbian government did not wish to deal with this issue, and qualified all proposals about territorial concessions as obsolete.[66]

The Greek government did not show any sort of inclination to assist Serbia, saying that their agreement of assistance of 1913 applied only to the Balkan conflict, and that Germany's appearance in the region changed the situation completely. Upon hearing that, the British realized that they would not be able

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63 TNA CAB 42/4 Précis of documents and proceedings connected with the political and military developments in the Balkan Peninsula, September 29 to October 5, 1915.
64 It also stated the following: "In case of war between the contracting parties and a third party, or in case Bulgaria should attack with considerable forces the Serbian or Greek army, Serbia and Greece promise to aid each other with all their land and naval forces." TNA CAB 42/4 , Précis of documents and proceedings connected with the political and military developments in the Balkan Peninsula, September 29 to October 5, 1915.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.

to count on the cooperation of the Greeks in helping Serbia.[67] At the same time, London was seriously annoyed by Serbia even if its resentment did not last long. The British government adopted a unified position that their conduct related to Serbia would subsequently be guided by two considerations: their commitment and politics.[68] Not that it would have been otherwise beforehand. As for the first one, His Majesty's Government had made commitments only with respect to Greece, so it was not bound by any commitment to Serbia, for Bulgaria could not be won over to the Entente, as it was declared at the October 6 session of the War Council.[69]

The diplomatic game going on between the British political leadership thinking in terms of territorial concessions and land swaps and the Serbian government wanting to evade such requests, playing for time and perhaps, partly, for upping the ante, in which the stakes were rising due to the increasingly threatening war situation for the Entente, finally ended in October 1915, when Bulgaria entered the war on the side of the Central Powers.[70] With that, the fate of Serbia was temporarily sealed, and for the rest of that year and at the beginning of 1916, the Entente's greatest concern regarding Serbia was not to bring it to accept territorial concessions, but to figure out how to rescue the rest of the Serbian army and the Serbian government.

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67 Ibid.

68 Even the commitments given to Greece would be terminated if the government of Venizelos resigned. TNA CAB 42/4, War Council meeting on October 6, 1915.

69 Churchill was of the opinion that Serbia could only blame itself for its difficult situation because it had been consistently rejecting their advice. TNA CAB 42/4, War Council meeting on October 6, 1915.

70 Naturally, the role of Russia and France should not be underestimated, but in this paper my primary aim was to present the British position and diplomatic maneuvers.

PART III

NATIONALISMS AND THEIR ALTERNATIVES

Barna Ábrahám

From Union to Union: Transylvania in the Romanian Nation- and State-Building Process between 1867 and 1918

This paper examines the place of Transylvania in the age of dualism in the process of (all)-Romanian nation-building. It aims to transcend the monolithic and ideological narrative that became utterly politicized in the past century as well as to reveal the alternatives that were valid in their age, but which receive less attention these days.

The Romanian National Movement and the Hungarian Nation-State

As a preliminary to the investigation of this issue, we should recall Schmerling's 1861–1865 "Provisorium" (provisional government), which is remembered by the Romanian collective memory—just as by the Slovaks and the Serbs—as a period of national ascendance and important triumphs.[1] Among the delegates

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[1] "Like elsewhere, change was brought in Transylvania by the October Diploma, which had important consequences in the use of languages as well. The new trend wanted to give some benefits to the new political factor, i. e., the Romanians. It is true, pre-1848 government organs were restored, but at the Court Chancellery and the Gubernium some offices for Romanian affairs were established, and Romanian advisers and secretaries were appointed. Romanian became the internal language in the territory of the former Romanian border regiments, the regions of Fogaras (Făgăraș) and Naszód (Năsăud). What is more, Romanian leaders (*főispán*) were appointed to Felső-Fehér (Alba de sus) and Hunyad (Hunedoara) counties." Judit Pál, "A hivatalos nyelv és a hivatali nyelvhasználat kérdése Erdélyben a 19. század közepén," *Regio* 1 (2005): 3–26; See also: Mester Miklós, *Az autonom Erdély és a román nemzetiségi követelések az 1863–64. évi nagyszebeni országgyűlésen* (Budapest: Dunántúl, 1936), 142–145.

of the 1863–1864 Diet of Nagyszeben (Sibiu, Romania), Romanians constituted a relative majority (due to the boycott of the Hungarians), so the centuries-old national aspirations could be easily fulfilled. The Transylvanian Diet codified that the "Romanian nation, the Greek Catholic religion as such and the Greek Orthodox religion shall be recognized by law, along with the other three recognized nations and four religions, in accordance with the Transylvanian Constitution." This was followed by the emancipation of the three languages (Hungarian, Romanian and German).[2] However, in the course of the intensive negotiations with the Hungarians that started in September 1865, Franz Joseph annulled all of the above. He summoned the Romanian leaders and convoked a new Diet on November 19 in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) on the basis of the restrictive electoral law of 1791. This time Romanians composed only one-sixth of the representatives. Although they declared that only a Diet convened on the basis of the 1863 conditions could make decisions about the union, they could not prevent the final Transylvanian Diet from approving the resolution that proclaimed the unification on December 9, 1865. With this, Transylvania ceased to exist as an autonomous province at the end of 1865.[3] When in January 1866 Franz Joseph authorized the participation of the Transylvanian representatives in the Hungarian Diet in his ordinance, the issue of "unification," i.e., union with Hungary as one of the key Hungarian prerequisites of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, became an accomplished fact well before the approval of the union law XLIII of 1868.[4]

Throughout the dualist era, the Transylvanian Romanian élite rejected the union that had been renewed with Hungary without the approval of Romanians, while it was natural for most Romanians living in Hungary that the matters of the country were handled in Pest. However, the self-governance of Transylvania and the national-religious equality proclaimed in Nagyszeben nevertheless remained a core principle of Romanian politics until the end. All of the above was also underlined by the Pronunciamentum of Balázsfalva

2 Judit Pál, *Unió vagy "unificáltatás"? Erdély uniója és a királyi biztos működése (1867–1872)* (Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca]: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2010), 132–138; Lajos Jordáky, *A Román Nemzeti Párt megalakulása* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974), 44–46.

3 Ibid., 60.

4 Zoltán Szász, ed., *Erdély története*, vol. 3 (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1986), 1506.

(Blaj, Romania) of 1868 calling for Transylvania's autonomy and its separate Diet as well as the program of the Romanian National Party (RNP) founded in 1869 (and banned immediately). This was also advocated by the leadership of the national party finally set up in 1881[5] as well as the Romanian press, especially *Tribuna*—launched in 1884, thus serving to radicalize national rhetoric—which succeeded at isolating the Romanian politicians of Hungary, who were known as partisans of the current represented by Archbishop Miron Romanul that sought to find a *modus vivendi* with the Hungarian government and the similarly moderate political wing, including representatives Alexandru Mocsonyi/Mocioni and Vincențiu Babeș.[6]

As a representative action, a memorandum enumerating national grievances was addressed to His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty. In this memorandum, the Romanian people demanded their due rights. According to the argumentation contained in the memorandum, the Romanians, who constituted one-fourth of the country's population, labored diligently on their lands, paid all their taxes, provided recruits for the army who shed their blood if necessary, and maintained thousands of schools using their own resources. All of this demonstrated that "their national conscience was awake, and they do not want to be regarded as individuals only, but also as a nation because they have their own cultural initiatives."[7] As is well-known, this document was not read by anyone with authority, and the RNP leadership was put on trial in Kolozsvár in 1894 in a case that caused quite an uproar in international circles and was sentenced to several years in prison (later waived via amnesty). Understandably, the party took a lion's share in the organization of the Congress of Nationalities convened in Budapest in 1895 as well as in the creation of the declaration protesting against the Millennium Festivities of 1896.[8]

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5 Ibid., 81–82., 99–101, 127–130.

6 See Sándor Bíró, *A Tribuna és a magyarországi román közvélemény* (Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca]: Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1941), 43–52.

7 "Az erdélyi és magyarországi románok memorandum" [The Memorandum of Romanians of Transylvania and Hungary], Hungarian-language translation published in Gábor G. Kemény, *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korában*, vol. 1, 1867–1892 (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1952), 824–847.

8 Keith Hitchins, "The Rumanians of Transylvania and the Congress of Nationalities," in Hitchins, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness* (Pelham – Montreal – Paris

The Romanian élite was battling against the Hungarians not only in the political arena, but also in cultural press and in literature. When in 1870 the poet Mihai Eminescu from Bukovina learned that in the National Assembly of Hungary, Kálmán Tisza had talked in the course of a debate about whether a new Romanian-language theater should get any state support about the "material and intellectual superiority" of the Hungarians and thus about their natural leadership role, he at once inserted spiteful passages into the novel he was writing about the 1848 revolution:

> Once again, but now for the last time, the Hungarians thought that with the help of the Union and the gallows they could exterminate Romanians from the face of the earth; they thought they would be able to Magyarize the cool breeze and the clear water springs, that they could Magyarize the old and dignified forests, that they could inject the notion of the Hungarian union into the old and troubled minds of the mountains. […] They thought the old and weathered years of the stronghold of Transylvania—the stone-fronted mountains—would continue to sleep in their eternal dream and would not rise up to the false roaring of the imbeciles who conjured up an enormous empire and 16 million Hungarians.

In all that, according to Eminescu, the Hungarians were halted by the Romanians:

> But the royal guards were awakened. The rustling of the leaves in the woods wakened the soaring iron wing of the Romanian eagle from its centuries-long numbness, and it frightened the enemy: and the dream of

this eagle makes them terrified to this day, because they know how this dream will multiply the eagle's strength.[9]

The columns of the Ioan Slavici-directed *Tribuna* presented the Romanians as the eastern propagators of Western culture who had enabled the Hungarians to adopt that culture, although the latter eventually subjugated the former. The Romanians were able to rise with the rule of the Habsburgs (from 1690), so it was natural that in 1848 they were also defending the order and the legitimate monarch, who expressed his gratitude through the October Diploma, thus creating a federal state of equal nations. By contrast, the essence of dualism was the identification of Hungary with the Hungarian nation and continuous Magyarization. However, this attempt was doomed to failure in the case of the three million members of a so-called superior race (i.e., the Romanians); what is more, it would lead the way for the other oppressed peoples in their struggle.

The Notion of the Unity of Romanians Living on Both Sides of the Carpathians

If the position of the Romanian élite regarded as national in nature was so adverse to Hungary, where did the members of this élite see the potential for a national state? They saw it in the unification of all territories inhabited by Romanians—at least in the case of the radicals. The idea of unification emerged quite markedly already in 1848–1849. The Transylvanian Romanian Ioan Maiorescu, who was active in Wallachia, envisioned that a Greater Romanian state that would be put in place as a German protectorate, although under the Habsburg scepter. Nicolae Bălcescu hoped that in the confederation to be formed with Hungary, Transylvania would naturally turn into a Romanian country, and thus the political unity of the nation would be accomplished.[10]

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9 Mihai Eminescu, "A szárnyaszegett géniusz," in Béla Köpeczi, ed., *Mihai Eminescu válogatott művei* (Budapest: Európa, 1967), 349. Fort the genesis and content of the novel, see Béla Köpeczi, "Eminescu és az 1848–1849-es magyar szabadságharc," in Köpeczi, *Nemzetképkutatás és a XIX. századi román irodalom magyarságképe* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1995), 131–160.

10 Benedek Jancsó, *A román irredentista mozgalmak története* (Máriabesnyő – Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2004), 54.

In 1855, Cezar Bolliac, one of Bălcescu's fellow revolutionaries, published the first map of Greater Romania (*Carta Rumâniei*), in which the country stretches from the Dniester to the Tisza—according to where the name of the county is placed. At the same time, Ion C. Brătianu, their renowned contemporary, declared the following during the negotiations between Prince Cuza and György Klapka (in 1859): "We must not cede Transylvania to Hungary under any circumstances. The Romanians living across the Carpathians wish to unite with us. And we have promised to support them."[11] Based on the letters addressed to Kossuth, the Romanian prince must have been an ardent partisan of the unification of the nation as well. One of Kossuth's Polish agents warned: "Do not be fooled by Cuza: he is speculating to get Transylvania and Banat. [. . .] His whole nation—at least, the part that has ever heard of politics—is full to the brim with this intoxicating ambition. The Vlach press is talking about Transylvania as if it were already a Vlach province."[12] Those living on the western side of the Carpathians could hardly voice their desires within the framework of Austrian absolutism, but the Transylvanians living in Romania on its way to unification were free to do so. Alexandru Papiu-Ilarian informed Cuza in a memorandum in 1860 that the Transylvanians were—as he wrote—exclusively looking to the principalities, expecting to gain their liberation from them. In fact, these entities were interdependent: "Without Transylvania, the Principalities have no future ahead of them; their persistence is shaky and dubious. Only merging with Transylvania can lay the foundations of Romania's eternity."[13]

Naturally, up until the First World War, the Romanian governments did not have a realistic chance to accomplish their big plan. On the contrary, they even had to tone down their rhetoric regarding Austria-Hungary due to their alliance from 1883, so the idea of unification was advocated mainly by the press and civil associations. The Romanian Academic Society founded in 1866 (from 1878: Romanian Academy) had members equally from both

11 Ibid., 59.

12 Ibid., 62. For a more detailed analysis of Cuza's relations with Hungarian émigré leaders, see Béla Borsi-Kálmán, *Nemzetfogalom és nemzetstratégiák. A Kossuth-emigráció és a román nemzeti törekvések kapcsolatának történetéhez* (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1993)

13 Jancsó, A román irredentista mozgalmak története, 60; Vasile Netea and C. Gh. Marinescu, Liga Culturală şi Unirea Transilvaniei cu România (Iaşi: Junimea, 1978), 14–15.

sides of the Carpathians (what is more, there were some Aromanians from the Balkans as well). B. P. Hașdeu, a renowned historian affiliated with the academy, declared the following already in 1867: "There is no Moldova, Transylvania and Wallachia on the earth (as separate entities), but there is only one Romania, one body and one soul."[14]

Founded upon a Transylvanian initiative in 1868, the Transilvania society wished to become—in addition to providing aid for students and apprentices coming from the other side of the Carpathians—the symbol of protest against the dualist system and the assimilation of Transylvania as well as the driving force of the movement. Finding this to be insufficient in the wake of the Magyarizing laws, the Kárpátok (Carpați) association was formed in 1882 by Transylvanian students (originally under the name Román Irredenta), which aimed to fan the flames of protest with its newspaper, speeches, theater performances and concerts. In 1885, in response to the foundation of the Erdélyi Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület (the Transylvanian Hungarian Community Cultural Association, known by its Hungarian-language acronym EMKE), the organization went as far as to proclaim the program of armed revolt beyond the Carpathians, issuing the following summons to all Romanians:

> Raise high the flag of Romanian irredentism! Proclaim cohesion and the community of aims of all Romanians in families, schools and the army! Tell your children in your families and schools that Romania has been torn apart by the Hungarians! Tell the soldiers that the true strengthening of the Romanian land will not be complete until the seizure of Transylvania. [. . .] Let us not forget that we are only partial here [on this side of the Carpathians], and if we are ever to have a mission in the east, that is only because there are 12 million of us.[15]

A total of around 100,000 copies of the above document, which was printed in red, were distributed in both in Romania and in Hungary.[16]

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14 Netea and Marinescu, *Liga Culturală și Unirea Transilvaniei cu România*, 20.

15 Quoted in Jancsó, *A román irredentista mozgalmak története*, 104.

16 Netea and Marinescu, *Liga Culturală și Unirea Transilvaniei cu România*, 32–34.

The relationships between the élites living on the two sides of the Carpathians were constantly growing. According to the memoirs of a leading Transylvanian politician, Teodor Mihali, "We often received instructions from Bucharest. The words to soothe our fierceness often came from Bucharest, but the orders also came from Bucharest when we had to go into battle. [. . .] Over fifteen years, I attended private auditions on twenty-two occasions with King Carol."[17]

The best-known propagator of the Romanian unification idea was the Liga Culturală, which moved to Bucharest at Slavici's urging. It was founded by university students in 1891 on the model of the Berlin Deutscher Schulverein and EMKE, but in reality, it was directed by the partisans of the Liberal Party from the very beginning.[18] At the beginning of the century, under the direction of historian and leading national politician Nicolae Iorga, it advocated the idea of Romanian unity throughout the entire linguistic area as well as at the European university and political centers, considering itself the preparatory agent for the ultimate step. As Iorga said in his speech delivered at a free university in 1911, "It will prepare the ground, and when that is done, it will step back and cede its place to the army."[19]

Naturally, Romania—which was struggling with serious economic and social difficulties—did not stand a chance against the army of the (also deeply divided) Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was backed by the power of Germany. Moreover, the Romanian ruler, Carol I, was a Hohenzollern himself, who forced his country to join the Triple Alliance in 1883, and renewed the agreement later on. Even if he tried to convince Vienna and Berlin from time to time to exert some pressure on Budapest in order to improve the situation of Romanians living in the territory of Hungary, he did so with reference to the stabilization of the alliance. Despite the continuous all-Romanian rhetoric, the two political parties that alternated with one other saw the Transylvanian question rather as a means of generating political

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17 Quoted in Sándor Bíró Sándor, "Az erdélyi román értelmiség eszmevilága a XIX. században," in József Deér József and László Gáldi, eds., *Magyarok és románok 1–3*, vol. 2 (Budapest, 1943), 175.

18 For summary of the activity of the Liga, see: Jancsó, *A román irredentista mozgalmak története*, 120–130,148, 201–205, 230–235, 276–280, 283–286; Nóra Polónyi, *A Liga Culturală és az erdélyi román nemzetiségi törekvések* (Budapest, 1939); Netea and Marinescu, *Liga Culturală şi Unirea Transilvaniei cu România*.

19 Quoted in Jancsó, *A román irredentista mozgalmak története*, 285.

capital in the domestic arena. The anticipated unification with those living on the other side of the Carpathians was not equally welcomed by all Transylvanians. They had long been appalled by the assumed anti-national atmosphere of the two Romanian principalities, their copying of foreign models and their generally ostentatious and extravagant lifestyle—as had been captured by Ioan Maiorescu, the spiritual father of *Daco-Romania*, in 1838. Meanwhile, those in the principalities waged war against the excessive Latinization of the Transylvanians (that is, their corruption of the language) as well as against their uncritical Roman-consciousness. In his famous speech of 1844, the Moldovan Mihail Kogălniceanu stated unequivocally: "They will find a Romanian in me, but never to the extent that I should contribute to the heightening of the adulation of the Romans, [. . .] this illness is especially widespread in Transylvania these days."[20]

Another celebrated Moldovan, Alecu Russo, warned that the 40,000 peasants present at the notorious Assembly of Blaj in 1848 had barely understood a word of the Latinized speeches of the orators. "Transylvanian grammarians think that the salvation and the bliss of Romania lie only in linguistic systems, so they condemned themselves to become two nations once and for all: therefore not a single book is printed in Transylvania that the entire Romanian nation could read and understand."[21] The father of modern Romanian culture and critical thinking, the likewise Moldova-based Titu Maiorescu—the son of Ioan Maiorescu—shattered the Transylvanian art-language and ideology at the end of the 1860s.[22]

Eventually, the Transylvanians gave up their Latinized language, and accepted that the literary canon was being built in Bucharest, but they did not consider the society of the Regat (the Romanian Old Kingdom) as superior to theirs. Slavici—despite holding the political conviction that "the sun rises in Bucharest for all Romanians!"—described in an open letter addressed to his peasant acquaintances in 1907 the impressions that he had gained the previous year at the Bucharest exhibition, or to be more precise, in surrounding villages,

20 Mihail Kogălniceanu, "Bevezetés a nemzeti történelemről szóló előadásokhoz," in *A román irodalom kistükre*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Irodalmi, 1961), 404.

21 Quoted in Béla Borsi-Kálmán, *Nemzetfogalom és nemzetstratégiák*, 43.

22 László Gáldi, "A román irodalomtörténet tájrajzi problémái," in István Gál, ed., *Apollo 1934–1939* (Budapest: Argumentum, 2001), 358–362, 368, 376.

basically asserting in the letter that the Transylvanians were at a higher level in all respects compared to the local inhabitants.[23]

Finally, let us mention the typical model for national unification in the Habsburg Empire. Aurel Constantin Popovici's Greater Austria plan[24] was the only realistic route of attaining the national ideal for both him and his associates: the unification of all Romanians could be achieved through joining the Kingdom of Romania as a strong member state under the Habsburg scepter. Indeed, Franz Ferdinand was considering the integration of the neighboring Balkan territories, and Romania, increased with the territory of Transylvania, could have joined as Bavaria had become affiliated with the German Empire.[25]

Was this idea on the mind of the masses of Romanian peasants and artisans of the Hungarian Crown? Did they long for such unification? The dominant historiographical discourse takes this for granted, but due to a lack of authentic sources, it is rather a question of faith and national education. Loyalty to Austria-Hungary, or to the monarch, was general in the initial years of the First World War: Romanian troops fought in an exemplary manner, and Petre Nemoianu from the Banat, fighting on the other side of the Carpathians, noted in his memoirs: "The Romanians proved that between the national sentiment and the throne, they chose the latter."[26]

Similarly, we have no data regarding the attitude of the Romanian masses, but we have no reason to question the judgment of an authoritative and then conservative politician, according to whom they attempted in vain to bring up the national issue on their electoral tours—the peasants reacted only to speeches concerning everyday hardships, food prices and, of course, the rumored land distribution. They were highly efficient, but indifferent soldiers, they knew nothing about the existence of Transylvania, and it was all the same to them what would or would not happen beyond the mountains.[27] As Lucian

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23 Ioan Slavici, Închisorile mele. *Scrisori adresate unui prieten din altă lume* (Bucharest: Viața Românească, 1921), 91.

24 Aurel Constantin Popovici, *Die vereinigten Staaten von Groß-Österreich* (Leipzig, 1906).

25 Constantin Nuțu, *România în anii neutralității 1914–1916* (Bucharest: Științifică, 1972), 89.

26 Quoted in Cornel Sigmirean, "Átalakuló identitások. A Monarchia iránti hűségtől a nemzeti identitásig," *Pro Minoritate* 3 (2016): 29.

27 Constantin Argetoianu's memorials quoted in *Lucian Boia, "Germanofilii." Elita*

Boia, describing the situation, pointed out elsewhere as a general truth: the population—60 percent of which was illiterate—had never even heard of the national ideal, it was a cause advocated by the narrow and already manipulated élite.[28]

For the sake of thoroughness and fairness, let us ask ourselves the question whether there were any people in the higher milieus who considered Hungary to be the only possible framework of national existence and development, though not due to their objections to the Regat, but as unshakable patriots of principles. Available data suggests that there were few such people, because criticizing Budapest and refusing the state's swallowing up of Transylvania and—allegedly—continuous oppression of the Romanians was regarded as the duty of the national élite. Yet there were some who saw the positive side of the merging of Transylvania and Hungary: Romanian politicians living in Hungary, especially in the Banat, such as Alexandru Mocsonyi, Vincenţiu Babeş and others. They participated in elections and as fierce defenders of rights, they regarded the National Assembly of Hungary in Pest as a natural terrain for struggle, and they were able to include the recognition of dualism in the 1880 party program as well.[29] Another partisan of Hungary was Miron Romanul, a professor of Orthodox theology in Arad, a member of parliament, then Bishop of Arad and, from 1874 until his death, Archbishop of Nagyszeben. Romanul strove to protect the autonomy of his Church, rejected all bills aimed at Magyarization in general, and even discouraged the faithful from attending the millennium festivities. Nevertheless, he condemned the radicalizing policy of the nationals, founding the ephemeral Romanian Moderate Constitutional Party in 1884. Vasile Mangra followed a similar path: he took part in the elaboration of the memorandum as a professor of theology in Arad, was the head of the party's central committee during the incarceration of its leaders, organized the Congress of Nationalities in 1895 and was considered a voice of authority in national circles. However, from the beginning of the century, now

intelectuală românească în anii Primului Război Mondial (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2009), 52–53.

28 Lucian Boia, *Primul Război Mondial. Controverse, paradoxuri, reinterpretări* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2014), 68–69. This thesis appeared already in Glenn E. Torrey, "Rumania and the Belligerents 1914–1916," *Journal of Contemporary History* 3 (1966): 174.

29 Jordáky, *A Román Nemzeti Párt megalakulása*, 127, 129.

as the vicar of Nagyvárad, oriented towards Hungarian liberal policy, Mangra saw István Tisza as a statesman who sought honestly to make peace between Hungarians and Romanians. In 1910, Mangra got into the National Assembly as a National Labor Party representative in the constituency of Magyarcséke (Ceica, Romania). He advocated mutual trust and understanding between Hungarians and Romanians.[30]

The activity of the social democrats should also be mentioned here. Their leaders (Aurel Cristea, Josif Jumanca, Tiron Albani, Ioan Flueraş, etc.) expected the reinforcement and representation of the not-too-numerous camp of Romanian industrial workers, dispersed in the Hungarian and German crowds, only from a national force, the Social Democratic Party of Hungary. In any case, they held the conviction that ethnicity-based distinction and policy was a reactionary phenomenon because it obstructed the (over) development of capitalism, thus inhibiting the triumph of socialism. Finally, the events of October 1918, the political chaos and the arrogance of the top-level party leadership during the negotiations in Arad led by Oszkár Jászi (i.e., upon the orders of the Budapest leadership, the Romanian social democrats were supposed to accept the proposed canton system) propelled the leaders in the pro-secession camp and to the national assembly in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia).[31]

Naturally, patriotic sentiments for their homeland were not alien to the consistently passivist Transylvanians either, and now in Greater Romania many felt that in Hungary they had lived in a European cultural atmosphere amid good public administration and educational circumstances, in contrast to the Balkan or even "Asian" mentality that by this time extended to Transylvania as well. As opposed to the authoritarianism of the new order, civil and political rights had been more respected in Hungary.[32] Some, of course, had always been of this view, and it is acknowledged nowadays that the loyal, dualism-

30 Marius Eppel, *Vasile Mangra. Activitatea politică 1875–1918* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2004).

31 Keith Hitchins, "Rumanian Socialists and the Nationality Problem in Hungary, 1903–18" in Hitchins, *Studies on Romanian National Consciousness*, 187–207.

32 Opinion of Alexandru Vaida-Voievod that could, however, be regarded rather as a political weapon against the centralizing and assimilation efforts of Bucharest. See Boia, *"Germanofilii,"* 79–80.

based position was also part of contemporary Romanian political thinking, and it is a historical component that can be studied.[33]

Grigore Moldovan, alias Gergely Moldován, who is well-known in Hungarian academic circles, was an ethnographer, literary historian, journalist and head of the Romanian Department at the University of Kolozsvár (1886–1919), serving as dean several times, then rector of the institution. He never stopped working on the mutual presentation and pacification of Romanians and Hungarians. He considered himself an authentic representative of his nation: "I am and want to remain a true Romanian. I will not let anyone consider himself better than me."[34] With his writings crowned by his handbook written in 1913,[35] Moldovan wanted to earn recognition for his nation, but he rejected the historical and political activity of the national élite just as much as the intellectual life of "those beyond the Carpathians," which—according to him— was built upon falsehoods. An academically less important, but politically key figure of the age was Ioan Ciocan, first teacher and director at the Romanian grammar school in Naszód (Năsăud, Romania), then head of the Department of Romanian Philology at the University of Budapest between 1898 and 1909, and in the same period, the parliamentary representative of the Naszód constituency in the ranks of the then governing party. He was attacked by the national side, but his close acquaintances—even such personalities as Alexandru Vaida-Voevod and Constantin Stere—remembered him in a positive light.[36]

The accusation of being a renegade is much harder to question in the case of Iosif Siegescu. Thanks to his loyalty to the government, he was appointed to

33 Remus Câmpeanu, "Profesori ai Catedrei de Limba Română de la Universitatea din Budapesta în secolul al XIX-lea: identitatea politică a lui Ioan Ciocan în analizele istoriografice," in Ambrus Miskolczy, Tibor Hergyán and Levente Nagy, eds., *Inter Scyllam et Charybdim. Identitásképző stratégiák és a budapesti román tanszék története* (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös, 2013), 40.

34 Quoted in Béla Köpeczi, "Egy kitagadott. Moldován Gergely (1845–1930)," *Kisebbségkutatás* 2 (2000): 281.

35 Gergely Moldován, *A magyarországi románok* (Budapest, 1913).

36 Câmpeanu, "Profesori ai Catedrei de Limba Română," 41–42; Levente Nagy, "A budapesti Román Filológiai Tanszék százötven éve," in Miskolczy et al., *Inter Scyllam et Charybdim*, 85.

serve as Ciocan's successor by Count Albert Apponyi, and with this, he also became the National Assembly representative for the constituency of Oravica (Oraviţa, Romania). An eternal target of the nationalists and students, he was remarkably active in promoting knowledge about Romanian language history and Church history.[37] Some hesitation can be seen even with such nationally minded persons as Gheorghe Alexici, another professor at the department, who published an open letter in 1908 in the *Pester Lloyd* to Björnstjerne Björnson, a supporter of the ethnic minorities of Hungary, stating that he did not feel oppressed and that Romanians enjoyed the same rights as Hungarians in Hungary. In vain did he stress a year later before students that Romania was the homeland of the true language and spirit: Goga's accusations could not be erased according to which Alexici was a paid journalist who legitimized the oppression of his nation.[38]

Transylvania the Eternal: The Idea of an Autonomous Romanian National Territory in the Eastern Region of Hungary

The conception of Transylvania as a geographically and ethnically distinct space is more straightforward and easier to grasp than the idea of political unification. The émigré Bălcescu offered a very expressive description of the uniqueness and variety of this territory: "A proud and blessed country lies on the highest peak of the Carpathian Mountains. [. . .] It is akin to a beautiful and spacious palace, a masterpiece of architecture, where all those natural beauties can be found in masterly arrangement that adorn the other provinces of Europe . . ." Transylvania is divided by mountains, endless forests, rushing mountain springs and rivers carrying gold; north and south cohabit in its vegetation, and the depth of the mountains conceals the richest ore treasure of Europe. Generals have admired this fortress built on a rock, which has given refuge to so many peoples, while politicians are amazed by "the diversity of the nations and religions which have come to this land from all over the world as if God has convoked them personally, setting them a copious table; [they] can equally admire its excellent democratic institutions, which the ring of the

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37 Ibid., 93–94.
38 Ibid., 99–102.

mountains protected when they were all swept aside by tyranny in the whole of Europe." On the other hand, archaeologists and historians are enchanted by the remains from the Dacian and Roman times: the ruins of immense fortresses, churches, cathedrals, aqueducts and baths.[39]

The Transylvanians were even more convinced that whoever ruled Transylvania ruled the plains as well, both in the direction of the Tisza and the Lower Danube, thus Transylvanian Romanians were the heart of the nation not only due to their historical heritage, but also to their geographical position.[40] Nevertheless, they recognized, or at least did not deny, that Transylvania meant the same for Hungarians. In 1847, George Bariț compared Transylvania to Switzerland, unable to comprehend why its nations would embitter each other's lives and why they could not live peacefully as the sons of the same mother.[41] Decades later, in 1885, Ioan Slavici asserted: "It was nature itself that wanted Transylvania to be a separate country because it surrounded it with high mountains and such climatic, meteorological, economic and ethnographic features that set it apart from all other neighboring countries." Yet its many-centuries-old autonomy was terminated for the sake of a few hundred thousand dispersed Hungarians. "Transylvania is the pillar upon which the Hungarian state is built. Transylvanian Hungarians are the vanguard of the Hungarian nation: their rule must be maintained at any cost or the Hungarian state and the Hungarian nation will be lost."[42] In a later work published in 1893, Slavici pointed out: the territory constitutes a regular geometric form, an equilateral triangle, the area of which can be precisely defined at 50,000 square kilometers.[43]

It was this national fortress, which they had always considered as intrinsically Romanian, that they tried to defend with their movement for autonomy (as

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39 Nicolae Bălcescu, *Istoria Românilor sub Michaiu voda Vitézul* (Bucharest: Academia Română, 1887), 325–327.

40 Luminița Ignat-Coman, "Identity Geographies of Transylvanian Romanians in the Dualist Period," in Sorin Mitu, ed., *Building Identities in Transylvania: A Comparative Approach* (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut Publishing, Gatineau: Symphologic Publishing, 2014), 21.

41 Sorin Mitu, "Imagining Transylvania as Romanian Land: From National to Regional Identity," in Mitu, *Building Identities in Transylvania*, 15.

42 *Tribuna*, 7/19, February 1885, 1.

43 Ignat-Coman, "Identity Geographies of Transylvanian Romanians," 23–24.

we have seen, without hope of success) and with their cultural and economic activities (now with long-term results). The separate existence of Transylvania increased the importance of knowing the history and the geography of the region (the Hungarians and the Saxons served as models, of course). As throughout the centuries, the Romanians usually did not shape politics in Transylvania: they lacked this type of collective memory and material remains, while the élite regarded the traditional costumes, the mother tongue, the songs and dances of the people as well as the classical literary works to represent an intellectual heritage proclaiming the greatness of their Roman ancestors and their descendants defending Christian Europe. According to this view, mothers incited their infants to learn about landscape and history already in the cradle.

The foundation of the Transylvanian Romanian museum represented another nation-wide initiative. For the (Romanian) nation did not benefit at all—they said—from the National Museum in Pest, which addressed only the development of Hungarian painting, archaeology and natural sciences, partially from the money of Romanian taxpayers. What is more, the "treasures of the Romanian land" also ended up in the collections of Pest and Vienna, whereas they should have stayed at home. The first step towards the foundation of the museum was a call for the collection of historical remains, which would have continued with the foundation of a Transylvanian Romanian society of scholars and the construction of the museum building through a national fundraising effort: "In this way we would have a national museum, which would heal numerous wounds of ours; with the help of this we could specialize in sciences, because in no other way can we have excellent and pioneering masters in every domain and can we begin to lay the cornerstones of well-being and prosperity for our dear nation."[44]

A less-than-successful attempt at creating a historical collection was the numismatic and archaeological section of the Romanian exhibition in Nagyszeben in 1881, in relation to which one could lament that, as opposed to the impressive Hungarian and Saxon collections, scholarly visitors would not be able to find any Romanian museums or collections—"we are strangers in our own land."[45] However, a program article a decade later focused much

44 Mihaiu Biju, "Necesitatea unui museu national," *Familia* 10 (1868): 115.
45 Greg Silaşi, "Esposiţia română din Sibíiu," *Familia* 72 (1881): 461.

more on ethnographic values: it proposed the foundation of an all-Romanian museum in view of presenting the traditional costumes of all the Romanian-inhabited regions. Only Bucharest had an appropriate building and means for this, and it was up to the élite of the individual regions to send in items characteristic of the given location with a description and photographs. It would not only be destined for foreigners, but would also become a national shrine, a meeting forum and a scientific research center. However, based on the material of the high-standard domestic crafts and folk-art exhibitions, an article written a few years later deemed the same enterprise to be feasible locally as well.[46] Finally, the National House of Nagyszeben was inaugurated in 1905, with the Museum of History-Ethnography inside its walls, which had initially collected about 4,000 objects.[47]

Naturally, the key to cultural management was successful economic self-organization and the creation of cooperatives and financial institutions.[48] Constantin Stere, the ideologist of the Romanian *poporanism*, i.e., a sort of cooperative peasant embourgeoisement, visited southern Transylvania on several occasions, and once he traveled to Szelistye (Săliştea, Romania) in Szeben County. Upon returning home, he spoke with admiration about the operation of the cooperative and the awareness of the population: "Hats off, sirs, to these *free* people, who are proud to be called *peasants*, who have never known the state of serfdom, who were able to resist the voracity of the Municipality of Szeben for seven centuries, and who will continue to overthrow any intentions of subjugation, who implement in their beautiful, *genuine* Romanian village life the ideal of a healthy and solid democracy."[49] In southern Transylvania, Stere encountered such horizons of bourgeois development that existed only on the level of utopia in his homeland. Thus

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46 At. M. Marienescu, "Museu pentru imbrăcămintele românesci," *Familia* 30 (1891): 349–350; Daniil P. Barcianu, "Exposiţiile de industria de casă," *Revista Orăştiei* 31–32 (1897): 131–132.

47 Eugen Hulea, *Astra. Istoric, organizare, activitate, statute şi regulamente* (Sibiu, 1944), 9.

48 For a recent summary of modernizing efforts in economy, society and culture, see Barna Ábrahám, *Az erdélyi románság polgárosodása a 19. század második felében* (Csíkszereda [Miercurea Ciuc]: Pro-Print, 2004).

49 Quoted in Z. Ornea, *Viaţa lui C. Stere*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1989, 1991), 384–385.

the Carpathians were, both to the east and to the west, the border of a unique and headstrong population.

The Question of Transylvania in the Years of the Great War

With the outbreak of the war, the territorial propositions discussed above gained momentum or were voiced more blatantly. Naturally, freedom of speech in this regard was only conceivable in Romania—in Hungary, the leading figures of the National Party were either forced to remain silent, swear allegiance or move to the mother country. Moreover, the mother country could also be regarded as a persuasive factor because both Carol I and Prime Minister Ion C. Brătianu appealed to the Romanians of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for loyalty, as their resistance would have questioned Romania's neutrality in the international arena. Due to the above, the majority adopted a wait-and-see approach; some of the leaders, such as Alexandru Vaida-Voevod and Theodor Mihali, exhorted the nation to meet its obligations, as did archbishops and bishops, while the key figures of the radical wing, Vasile Lucaciu and Octavian Goga, left for Bucharest and spread vociferous propaganda advocating the immediate liberation of the part of the nation suffering under foreign domination. The domestic masses complied with their call-up to the military, and—at least until the last year of the war—served faithfully.[50]

The Romanian streets radiated with a unanimous Entente-friendly attitude: the general assemblies of the Liga Culturală (which changed its name to Liga pentru Unitatea Politică a tuturor românilor [All Romanians' Political Unity League]), the Acțiunea Națională and the local Transylvanian organizations demanded the immediate liberation of Transylvania (i.e., all the territories under Habsburg rule). The newspapers with the largest readership (*Adevărul*, *Dimineața*, *Universul*, etc.) fanned the flames of belligerence. Nicolae Filipescu, one of the chief apostles of the war of liberation, posed the question: What is the Kingdom of Romania without Transylvania? And he provided an answer as well: "A geographical absurdity. A strip of land twisted and bent in a semi-

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50 Liviu Maior, *Habsburgi și români. De la loialitatea dinastică la identitate națională* (Bucharest: Enciclopedică, 2006), 127–128; Béni L. Balogh, "1916 – a fordulat éve. Románia hadbalépése és az erdélyi románság," *Pro Minoritate* 4 (2016): 22–23.

circle." If it should stay like that, it would have no future. In order to fulfill its role in Europe, it would need to have a strong bastion, "the natural fortress of Transylvania" and "the Acropolis and heart of Romanism."[51] Nicolae Titulescu put it similarly: "Transylvania is the cradle that protected [the Romanian people] in their infancy, the school that forged a nation from them, the cure that kept them alive. There is no one who would not give his life willingly for Transylvania; there is no effort that we would not gladly make for it."[52] The declaration of war nevertheless came only two years later.

Let us examine the meaning of Transylvania (sticking to that name for the sake of simplicity) to gain an understanding of individual currents and their relationship with the Central Powers in light of it. First of all, we need to underscore: there was no Romanian public personality who did not desire the unification of the entire Romanian ethnic population at one point—the differences arose only in terms of the chronological order and timing.

An immediate war of liberation was urged by politicians Take Ionescu, Nicolae Filipescu, Mihai Cantacuzino and Barbu Ştefănescu Delavrancea as well as by the great historians A. D. Xenopol and Nicolae Iorga. They proclaimed in general terms that in the struggle of the two camps, the fraternal France symbolized European civilization and arts, and helping the latter country was the duty of all honest Romanians; moreover, the unification of the nation could be achieved by siding with the Entente. They voiced these views in opposition, without any sense of judgment in foreign affairs—much rather in the hope of forging domestic political capital.[53]

By the third year of the war, it became clear that Ferdinand I and Prime Minister Brătianu were, in fact, committed to this very same current, but as responsible politicians, they had seen clearly at the outbreak of the war that the Romanian army would not be able to cross the Carpathians for a long time, and it would not have made any sense either, as long as the Entente Powers had not recognized the territorial claims of Romania. Therefore, the success of a future crossing had to be ensured by long-lasting neutrality, which included—in addition to the secret negotiations—gestures made for

51 Quoted in Ştefan Pascu, *Făurirea statului naţional unitar român*, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Academiei RSR, 1983), vol. 1, 364.

52 Ibid., 368.

53 Ibid., vol. 2, 36.

the Central Powers, cautious promises and the conditions of joining as well. Transylvania was always on the agenda of these talks; the expectations ranged from the broadening of language use and political rights of Romanians to the restitution of autonomy, although here territorial gain was proposed only in the case of Bukovina (the reannexation of the southern counties or the entire province).

In order to divert attention, he persuaded Constantin Stere, his close party associate, to write a series of articles tipping the balance in favor of the Central Powers.[54] Vienna got a declaration of war from Romania on August 27, 1916, partly because the Entente ran out of patience, and partly because the Western powers were able to force St. Petersburg to fully recognize the Romanian territorial claims. Of equal importance, Brătianu could sense the growing desire of Europeans for peace, and there was a risk that Romania would "miss" the world war in the end.[55] We cannot say that the Romanian troops launched their offensive from a winning position, taking a minimal risk[56]; at the Crown Council announcing the intention to enter the war, the prime minister did not conceal the fact the operation could go either way, but as he said, some losses could take the country one step closer to victory.[57]

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54 Ornea, *Viața lui C. Stere*, vol. 2, 61–62.

55 The author has used the following works as the basis for information regarding the diplomatic and economic activity of the government: Glenn E. Torrey, "Rumania and the Belligerents 1914–1916," *Journal of Contemporary History* 3 (1966); Nuțu, *România în anii neutralității*; Pascu, *Făurirea statului național unitar român*; Victor Atanasiu et al., *România în anii primului război mondial. Caracterul drept, eliberator al participării României la război*, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Militară, 1987); *Lucian Boia, "Germanofilii"*; Lucian Boia, *Primul Război Mondial. Controverse, paradoxuri, reinterpretări* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2014); The text of the political and military convention can be found in Ion Ardeleanu et al., eds., *1918 la Români. Desăvîrșirea unității național-statale a poporului Român. Documente externe 1879–1916*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Științifică și enciclopedică, 1983), 763–774.

56 For a retrospective mention of unfulfilled obligations of the Allies, see Ion I. C. Brătianu, "Politica României în marele război," in Dumitru Preda et al., *România în timpul primului război mondial. Mărturii documentare*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Militară, 1996), 35–36. Lucian Boia speaks about choosing a totally unsuitable term: Boia, *Primul Război Mondial*, 67–68.

57 Torrey, "Rumania and the Belligerents," 190.

In contrast to the previously discussed clamorous pro-Entente group, others urged that Romania enter into the war in other ways. Petre P. Carp, the conservative leader who had by then become isolated, demanded at the Crown Council of August 3, 1914, that Romania should meet its obligations as an allied power—all the more so as he predicted the victory of the Central Powers. He stuck to his opinion even at the Crown Council preceding the declaration of war because he thought that a victory would prove devastating for the country.[58] The latter view was advocated by Carol I himself—who was a Hohenzollern!—but he quickly understood that all the authoritative politicians favored the other side. Thus he presented neutrality as an accomplishment to Vienna and Berlin because in this way his country could secure the borders of Austria-Hungary along a long section of the border. According to a bizarre proposal—which was presumably free of any ulterior motive—that was delivered to the addressee through the intermediary of Berlin, the Romanian army could have marched into Bukovina and Transylvania in order to protect them from an impending Russian attack.[59] Furthermore, some of the conservative politicians clearly gravitated toward the Central Powers (the two key figures here were Titu Maiorescu and Alexandru Marghiloman), but considering the public atmosphere, they thought that benevolent neutrality was the only possibility or realistic option. In addition to weighing the odds, their anti-Russian attitude and the allure of German culture was also decisive. At the outbreak of the First World War, about half of the university professors, renowned scholars, writers, leading journalists, i.e., of the intellectuals, could be regarded as "Germanophile."[60]

The arguments of the Germanophiles were typically not based on sentiments, but rather on geopolitical and trade policy. They warned that just as throughout the nineteenth century, the main enemy of the Romanian state was still Russia, which now received authorization from the Western allies to take possession of

58 Ion Bulei, *Sistemul politic al României moderne. Partidul conservator* (Bucharest: Politică, 1987), 383; Z. Ornea, *Junimea şi junimismul* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1998), 387, 390.

59 Nuţu, *România în anii neutralităţii*, 134, 149.

60 For the pro-German orientation, which had present from the 1860s, see Ion Bulei, *Sistemul politic al României moderne. Partidul conservator* (Bucharest: Politică, 1987); Z. Ornea, *Junimea şi junimismul* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1998); Z. Ornea, *Viaţa lui Titu Maiorescu*, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1986, 1987). For an overview of the Germanophile trend, see Boia, *"Germanofilii."*

Constantinople and the Straits. In order to do that, Russia had to occupy the road leading there. Thus Romania—even if it increased its territory through the acquisition of Transylvania and Bukovina—would become a Russian province. But even if it did not, the blocking of Romania's access to the Black Sea and thus of its (wheat and corn) export, which was significant even on a global scale, would still ruin the country. Therefore, Romania would have to build upon its own Danube and maritime strength by reannexing Bessarabia from under the tsar's rule and the securing of the Danube Delta, among others. The Germanophiles cautioned that this must not be risked for Transylvania in exchange for territorial gains in the west. Behind all these considerations, there were some underlying regional interests as well: namely, the discontented "Moldovan critical spirit," frequently mentioned since the nineteenth century, which rejected the Wallachian mentality due to its self-perception as being superior and Central European. This spirit considered the northern part of the country as the loser in the 1859 unification, and now it hoped to regain its former influence through the longed-for reannexation of Bessarabia. The Germanophiles did not think that Transylvania was an urgent matter: the firm system of institutions and the mature identity of Transylvanians would ensure the preservation of their national existence, and as for the reacquisition of the region and national unification, everything would fall into place in one way or another. There would either be a strong all-Romanian member state set up within a federative Greater Austria, or the Austro-Hungarian Empire would collapse, and its Romanian territories would return to the mother country without a fight.[61]

Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, the unequivocally Germanophile party politician who remained in the territory of Austria-Hungary, assured the inhabitants of the Regat in an interview given in July 1914 that the existence of Transylvanians was safe, while it was Bessarabia that needed to be saved from destruction![62] At that time, Vaida was an "intransigent *großösterreicher*."[63] Another proponent of shared patriotism was a former colleague of his, Vasile Mangra, who came from the ranks of the ruling power. After the Romanian invasion, he strongly condemned the aggression along with his bishops (which was, of course, an

61 *Boia, "Germanofilii," 63–66, 99; Boia, Primul Război Mondial, 72–75.*
62 Ornea, *Viața lui C. Stere*, vol. 2, 60–61, 65.
63 L. Balogh, "1916 – a fordulat éve," 18.

expectation on behalf of the government, but which they could have tried to evade, similarly to other political officials affiliated with the party). He assured Bucharest that the Romanians living in Hungary did not want to be "liberated" because having lived under the scepter of the Hungarian king, they had fully assimilated into the Hungarian nation. Romania should be grateful to Hungary because it was the subjects of the latter, the Transylvanians, who had created Romania's statehood and culture. The people to be liberated were the Romanians, from the Muscovite political oppression that was driving the whole Romanian nation into perdition.[64]

Immediately following the Romanian invasion, Josif Siegescu wrote such a harsh article to the Romanian-language newspaper of Pest that it was not allowed to go into publication. Let us cite a brief passage to illustrate its tone:

> Now Romanians from beyond have come against us to destroy and annihilate Transylvania, from where they had also quenched their thirst for books (culture). [. . .] Do they want to liberate us who live here in peace and happiness? We are firmly determined to protect this peace and liberty because we do not want to live like them, serfs in their own country.[65]

Among Transylvanians living in Romania, who were thus free to express their opinion, some influential figures also rejected the unification of Transylvania or at least did not demand it, such as the entirely Germanophile Ioan Slavici, George Coşbuc and Liviu Rebreanu.[66]

The above-mentioned Germanophile personalities and many others were opposition politicians or journalists, or at least positioned in a neutral zone. There was, however, one leading political official among them who considered himself an old friend of Brătianu's and the guiding intellect of the governing Liberal Party. A former Bessarabian *Narodnik*, a prisoner of the tsar and a Siberian deportee who became a Romanian agrarian politician, cultural press leader as well as the rector of the University of Iaşi, Constantin Stere was the most consistent advocate of the above-discussed arguments in his articles and parliamentary speeches, and, in particular, he was the most fervent defender of

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64 Eppel, *Vasile Mangra*, 279, 283–290.
65 Quoted in Nagy, "A budapesti Román Filológiai Tanszék," 95.
66 *Boia*, "Germanofilii," 73–74, 207–213, 288–291, 306–311.

Bessarabia's place on the map of the nation. As he put it, Bessarabia could not be thrown away for Transylvania, there must be no bargaining about square kilometers and headcounts![67] What is more, the stakes were much higher than that:

> In exchange for a pretended unification with the Romanians of Transylvania and Hungary, they are asking us to give up the freedom of the Kingdom of Romania and to renounce our national mission at the Danube Delta merely for the pleasure of disappearing in the Russian ocean together with Bukovina and Transylvania—"united" in a common grave.

As Stere emphasized, he was not willing to give up these Romanian lands (that is, over the long run); to the contrary, he stood up for the only possible policy that "could lead to the genuine unification of the nation because in reality, it is not the Carpathians, but the Prut that separates us from Transylvania."[68]

In spring 1917, after the military fiasco and the occupation of Bucharest, Stere felt compelled to save the country from being divided. With a memorandum in his suitcase, he traveled to Vienna and then to Berlin to persuade the leading circles in those cities to find an equitable arrangement for the Romanian question. Warming up to the idea of Greater Austria, he suggested Romania's integration in the Habsburg Empire: Charles I (Charles IV) would have assumed the title of King of Romania, and in this way the national unification of the two sides of the Carpathians would have been implemented (his proposal was not welcomed in either capital).[69] In the short run, the next phase for Romania included the Treaty of Bucharest (May 7, 1918), the detachment of Dobruja and the Carpathian region as well as strictly binding agreements, which basically merged the country into the German economic sphere. The article written by Stere's old fellow fighter, the equally Germanophile Garabet Ibrăileanu, voiced just as much pain as hatred for Brătianu when he revisited

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67 Ornea, *Viața lui C. Stere*, vol. 2, 57–58, 64, 75, 106, 109,
68 Ibid., vol. 2, 96–97. For a summary of his career, see *Boia*, "Germanofilii," 312–316.
69 Pascu, *Făurirea statului național unitar român*, vol. 2, 406; Ornea, *Viața lui C. Stere*, vol. 2, 161–164.

in spirit the detached summits and the holy places of natural wonders and folk ballads, tales, beliefs and royal shrines.[70]

The austere predictions of Stere and his spiritual peers seemed to have come true if in a different way. Apparently, Romania made the wrong choice, and it was subdued by Russia (the tsarist leadership had offered no help, and the Bolsheviks quit the war, leaving the remaining country, pushed back to Moldova, to its fate). True enough, causing quite a surge of enthusiasm, Bessarabia joined the mother country in April, but Transylvania seemed to be lost forever. Because few could foresee that the Austro-Hungarian Empire would collapse within half a year, and what could not be achieved at the price of the lives of several hundred thousand soldiers and what could not be reasonably hoped for (i.e., territorial expansion both in the east and west), Romania would accomplish by the end of the year without a single gunshot. As Petre P. Carp put it: Romania got so lucky that it did not even need politicians.[71]

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70 Ibid., vol. 2, 199–200.
71 Quoted in Boia, *Primul Război Mondial*, 67.

Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics

Serbia, the Albanian Question and the Issue of International Peace on the Eve of the Great War

The outbreak and the events of the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 took the great powers by surprise. They were forced to acknowledge that the foreign policy of the states of the Balkan Peninsula posed just as much of a threat to international peace as the conflicts between the great powers. The diplomats of the great powers were devastated to find out that the nation-states of the Balkans would do anything they could to achieve their own national goals: they were ready to risk even a world-war conflict. For years and years, the diplomatic bodies of the great powers did nothing else than to manage crises related to a war whose outbreak they had nothing to do with—and now their crisis management failed miserably.

In my study, by revisiting the published Entente sources,[1] I would like to call attention to the fact that the examination of the road leading to the Great War cannot be complete without the investigation of the Balkan Wars. In the case

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[1] Edward Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-Five Years, 1892–1916* (London, 1925), 260–274; Sergej D. Sasonoff, *Sechs schwere Jahre* (Berlin, 1927), 81–108; Raymond Poincaré, *Memoiren. Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges 1912–1913* (Dresden, 1928), 370–536; Harold Temperley and George P. Gooch, eds., *British Documents on the Origin of the War, 1898–1914*, vol. 10, part 1, *The Near East on the Eve of the War* (London, 1936); Gerold P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, eds., *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente über den Ursprung des Weltkrieges 1898–1914*, vol. 9, part 1 (edited in German by Herman Lutz) (Berlin–Leipzig, 1935); Valentin Duka, *Dokumente britanike për Shqipërinë dhe shqiptarët*, vol. 1 (Tirana, 2012); Benno von Siebert, ed., *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Ententepolitik der Vorkriegsjahre* (Berlin–Leipzig, 1921); Otto Hoetzsch, ed., *Die Internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus. Dokumente aus den Archiven der Zarischen und der Provisorischen Regierung*, vol. 4 (Berlin, 1942); Friedrich Stieve, ed., *Der Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis 1911–1914. Aus den Geheimakten der Russischen Staatsarchive*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1924–25).

of Serbia, it is especially important to reread the above-mentioned sources because the Albanian question also discussed by the published Entente sources was not included in the Serbian national canon due to its sensitive nature.[2] Considering that the above sources report only laconically about the events of autumn 1913, it is indispensable to complete the historiography regarding the Albanian-Macedonian-Serbian war with Austro-Hungarian and Serbian sources.

This paper does not dispute the legitimacy of the contemporary Serbian national objectives at the time. It does not call into question those national grievances that Serbia wanted to avenge in 1912–1913 nor the fact that Serbia felt threatened by Austria-Hungary. Nor does it seek to shift the principal blame for the world war on the Balkan countries (since the main actors responsible for the war were the great powers themselves). This study attempts to examine Serbia's image among the Entente Powers through the prism of the Albanian question (1912–1913). It is through this lens that it demonstrates that Serbia, too, actively contributed to the outbreak of the First World War (but was not only, exclusively or principally responsible for it!). The thesis put forth in this paper could also be applied to Romania or Greece as well as to Bulgaria or the Ottoman Empire.

The Entente and the Balkan Wars

The more or less flexible cooperation of the alliance systems of the great powers had broken down before 1912. While at all other points on the globe, the great powers were able to make compromises in one way or another, the Balkan Peninsula proved to be unmanageable. Among the Entente Powers, only Russia had direct vested interests there, while Great Britain and France did not. The latter two could only see their positions of power impaired with any

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2 Mile Bjelajac, *1914–2014 zašto revizija* (Belgrade, 2014); Andrej Mitrović, *Prodor na Balkan* (Belgrade, 2011), 151–152, 174, 240, 247; Andrej Mitrović, "Les intérêts français en Serbie àla veille de la Première Guerre mondiale," in Dušan T. Bataković, ed., *La Serbie et la France* (Belgrade, 2010), 231–250; Dragoljub R. Živojinović, *Kralj Petar Karađorđević* (Belgrade, 2009), 501–502, 509–510; Aleksandar Rastović, *Englezi i Balkan 1837–1914* (Belgrade, 2015), 126–140.

conflict in the Balkans. According to the memoirs of British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, cooperation between the great powers was corrupted in three stages. First in 1908 in relation to the annexation ("disturbance"), then in 1910 in the Tripolitanian (Italo-Turkish) War ("shock") it was the Adriatic powers that reneged on the tacit agreements. Nevertheless, it was not the Adriatic powers that delivered the ultimate blow, but the small Balkan nation-states. In Grey's opinion, the fatal blow came from the Balkan Allies with regard to the status quo and the management of the Eastern Question.[3]

Since the great powers were unable to exert a decisive influence on the Balkan nation-states, the First Balkan War broke out. The ministers of foreign affairs of the great powers were aware of the fact that if the territorial status quo were to collapse, the great powers that had interests in the peninsula would be forced to react, and that this would automatically affect the relations between the major alliances. Therefore, Vienna and St. Petersburg did everything in their power to localize the armed conflict and prevent any territorial changes. On the whole, the great powers opted for non-interference: they waited not only until the end of the war, but for the outcome of the negotiations between the belligerent parties as well.

The unexpectedly decisive military victories of the Balkan Allies upset the internal relations between the Entente Powers. London and Paris did their utmost to prevent St. Petersburg's armed intervention during the war under any circumstances. Grey suggested the issuing of an all-power resolution, while his French counterpart proposed the convening of an all-power conference. On behalf of France, which had been passive in this region, Poincaré made the following suggestion concerning the basis for any future territorial settlement: each great power should declare that it would give up any demands for compensation. It was easy for Poincaré to say this since his own country had no direct interests in the peninsula.

At the end of October 1912, the only thing that Grey deemed essential was that the Entente should take a unified position; he did not think it was necessary to elaborate specific proposals. At that time, the British foreign secretary still believed that the status quo could be preserved in some form. At

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3 Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, 260.

the same time, French foreign policy was aimed at playing an active role, which unsettled the high-ranking representatives of British and Russian diplomacy.[4] Their disquiet was not unfounded: Paris seemed to aspire to a leading role within the Entente with regard to the settlement of the Balkan War. Having become active, the French minister of foreign affairs demanded with more and more vehemence that Russian diplomacy inform him about the content of the Balkan Alliance's agreements. The aim of this move was to force Russia to give up its independent Balkan policy. St. Petersburg denied having information about all the relevant agreements, and did not react to the approaches of its ally. This led to misunderstandings in French-Russian diplomatic communication.[5] Besides harmonizing the Entente's operations, Paris introduced fundamental changes in its Balkan concept: as a result of the military successes of the Allies, the state openly embraced the economic expansion that had been taking place informally. Political influencing was now more emphatic, and the French-German economic and political rivalry became more overt, while the French-Russian cooperation was reinforced in the Balkans, and France's relationship with the states of the peninsula was also transformed.[6]

Although Russian diplomacy undoubtedly had strong ties to the Balkan Allies, the relationship between St. Petersburg and Vienna was defined by mutual solidarity until September–October 1912. In mid-October, Sazonov still deemed it possible that tighter cooperation with Austria-Hungary could be a solution in the region, thus he tried to fend off the new initiatives of French diplomacy because he wanted to negotiate with London instead.[7] However, the French change of concept put an end to this possible cooperation as well. The idea that a potential armed conflict in the Balkans could end without the intervention of the great powers turned out to be an illusion already by August 1912. The Albanian uprising of that time proved to be successful, and the creation of an Albanian *vilayet* was imminent in the Ottoman Empire. The unification of the Albanian ethnic territories in one common administrative

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4 Siebert, *Diplomatische Aktenstücke*, Benckendorff to Sasonoff, London, 9/22. Oktober 1912, 556.

5 Poincaré, *Memoiren*, 386, 391.

6 Peter W. Reuter, *Die Balkanpolitik des französischen Imperialismus 1911–1914* (Frankfurt–New York, 1979), 295–298.

7 Siebert, *Diplomatische Aktenstücke*, Beckendorff to Sasonoff, London, 8/21. Oktober 1912, Nr. 267, 551–552, 551.

unit would have meant an end of the possibility for Belgrade, Sofia and Athens to increase their territory. Consequently, the Balkan Allies did not hesitate to invoke the relevant passages of the military alliance agreements.

The rights granted to the Albanians and the protection of the interests of the Eastern Orthodox peoples of the Balkans automatically placed Austria-Hungary and Russia in opposition to one another. While Berchtold wanted the great powers to acknowledge the rights won by the Albanians, Sazonov stood up for the Serbian and Bulgarian minorities of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul. The military victories achieved by the Balkan Allies ruled out the possibility that the victorious states would not gain any territories and that the borders would not be redrawn. This, however, posed two significant problems for the Entente: on the one hand, the ownership of the straits was called into question; and on the other hand, it was to be expected that the Austro-Hungarian Empire would in one way or another try to defend its vested interests in the peninsula. Negotiations were launched between Paris, London and St. Petersburg in order to find a solution to both problems in such a way that would prevent the outbreak of a European war. Interestingly enough, the issue of the straits proved to be an easier nut to crack: in this matter, each of the great powers insisted on compliance with the agreements already in force. As for Austria-Hungary, the foreign policy experts of the Entente were more pessimistic: in the territory of coastal Albania, the clash of the Austro-Hungarian and Serb interests seemed unavoidable.

The Entente and the Albanian Question

When the intervention of the great powers became inevitable, the Entente states announced that in addition to numerous other issues, they considered the settlement of the fate of coastal Albania to be their prerogative. The alliance of the great powers denied the possibility of autonomous decision-making to the victorious Balkan states in those matters that could have triggered potential conflicts for the great powers. Albania was problematic not only because the interests of several great powers were directly at conflict there, but also because Serbia and Greece were planning to divide its territory between themselves.

In the last months of 1912, the Entente had to prevent most of all that Serbia would find itself at conflict with the Adriatic powers. In relation to coastal Albania, Austria-Hungary was not the only interested party: Vienna and Rome had a valid agreement about keeping any third party away from the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea even at the price of war. Although Great Britain, France, Germany and Russia were aware of the fact that Austria-Hungary and Italy had been negotiating about the fate of the Albanian territories on the Adriatic coast for decades, they effectively had little information about these agreements. Or even if they did have such information, they did not consider it important since Albania as a geographic unit was a territory lying outside their interests. This position changed for two reasons: first, it was the Albanian political efforts that gave the last impulse to the outbreak of the Balkan War; and second, Italian–Austro-Hungarian relations became so tense by 1912 (due to other issues) that the Entente feared that if these two great power allies were left to themselves in Albania, an armed conflict could break out between them sooner or later. In order to prevent this clash, the foreign ministries of the Entente decided not let the Adriatic powers shape the destiny of Albania. Thus for the first time in modern history, Albania became the center of attention of all the great powers.[8]

Based on the published Entente sources, not even Russia—which was directly interested in the Balkans—had precise information about the content of the relevant Austro-Hungarian–Italian agreements. Therefore, in late autumn 1912, Sazonov ordered his diplomats to learn as much as possible about these relations of the Adriatic powers. The Russian diplomats tried to obtain information with reference to the Raccogini Agreement of 1909. Italian diplomats were indeed ready to provide some information to the Entente—but to Great Britain, not Russia. The Consulta itself was worried about being left alone with Austria-Hungary in Albania because that would have poisoned their relations. Thus Rome decided to establish closer Italian-British foreign relations. As part of that, if only to a modest extent, Italian diplomats were willing to disclose information regarding the Albanian agreements.[9]

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8 Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, 262.
9 Siebert, *Diplomatische Aktenstücke*, Sasonoff to Krupenski (Rom), London, 18/31. Oktober 1912, Nr. 676, 482–483.

Among the great powers, only the Austro-Hungarian Empire had made any specific suggestions about the settlement of the Albanian question. Already in August 1912, Berchtold suggested that the Ottoman Empire should be decentralized, and from four European *vilayets* (Ioannina, Shkodra, Bitola and Kosovo), one autonomous Albania should be created in which the Albanian ethnicity would get political rights. However, since this proposal was interpreted by both Serbia and Russia to indicate that the Albanians would get privileges to the detriment of the Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek ethnicities, it was discarded by all the interested parties. In the end, the Albanian question was withdrawn from the agenda until the military collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

The foundation of the November compromise of the great powers regarding Albania was that Paris had finally understood: Austria-Hungary really did not wish to expand its territory and Vienna did not oppose the territorial expansion of Serbia as such—all Vienna was against was Serbia's access to the Adriatic Sea. From this point on, France supported the notion that Albania should become a territorial entity in terms of international law. Similarly, a sign of the willingness of the French to reach a compromise was that when they had consented at the Ballhausplatz to the creation of a joint great power presence over Albania, Poincaré gave the green light in December to the confirmation of the autonomous character of the new state (in Vlora on November 28, 1912, the Albanians had already proclaimed the creation of the autonomous Albania).

Serbia and the Albanian Coast

Simultaneously to the first military successes, the Balkan Allies began to negotiate regarding the proportions and borders along which they would split between themselves the liberated territories, including coastal Albania. For historical and economic reasons, Serbia claimed the territory of northern Albania (including the ports of Shëngjin, Lezha and Durrës). According to the published Russian sources, the Serbian political élite and military leadership were ready to defend the planned occupations by force of arms as well.[10]

10 Hoetzsch, *Die Internationalen Beziehungen*, 3/4/1, Nr. 207. Hartwig to Sasonoff,

Although it was no secret to Belgrade that the Austro-Hungarian Empire would do anything to prevent the Adriatic expansion of the Serbian state, the government put all its eggs in one basket. Between November 7 and 10, the Serbian embassies operating in the German and the British capitals officially announced that Serbia now claimed all of Albania as well as the Ottoman Adriatic.[11]

The debates about the issue of the Serbian port were interpreted mainly according to conflicts of economic interests by contemporary journalists and historical works dealing with the subject. However, the truth was that neither Durrës nor any other Albanian port possessed significant economic weight at the time. The Romanian ports of Brăila and Galați, which had similar characteristics, had already around 1850 generated traffic four to six times larger (and that only from the wheat trade) than that recorded in the Albanian Adriatic port city in 1912.[12] Moreover, the coastal areas were all covered by malarial swamplands that were several kilometers wide. Moreover, there were no major inland roads or railway lines in Albania.

The state of the inland roads is well-illustrated by the fact that during the First Balkan War, it was easier to transport the Serbian troops attacking Shkodra from Prizren to Saloniki by train, then to take them around the Peloponnesus and disembark them near the Montenegrin coasts than it was to traverse the mountains from Prizren and cover the mere 150 to 200 kilometers as the crow flies!

Belgrade, 27.10/9.11.1912, Nr. 276, 217; Sasonoff, Sechs schwere, 88–89.

11 Hoetzsch, *Die Internationalen Beziehungen*, 3/4/1, Nr. 178. Kinderlen-Wachter to Pourtalés, Berlin, 25.10/7.11.1912, 191–192; Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 101. R. Paget an Grey, Belgrade, 2.11.1912, 131.

12 Gábor Demeter, *A Balkán és az Oszmán Birodalom*, vol. 1, Társadalmi és gazdasági átalakulások a 18. század végétől a 20. század elejéig (Budapest, 2014), 143–162.

The Diplomatic Efforts of the Entente to Moderate the Territorial Claims of Serbia

Although the Entente member states preferred a compromise between the great powers, they did not want to alienate Serbia. The diplomatic goal of the Entente was to induce Belgrade to renounce some of its interests in favor of Paris, London and St. Petersburg. In Serbia, however, the government, the army as well as public opinion were intoxicated by victory, and Sazonov was terrified to see in mid-November that they had turned the acquisition of the Albanian port into a matter of prestige.[13] Therefore, the Entente Powers launched a special diplomatic action to force Serbia to exercise restraint as well as to ensure that in order to ward off any unforeseeable consequences, the Serbian army would not march into the eastern coastal region of the Adriatic. In the first two weeks of November, it was particularly the diplomats loyal to Sazonov within the Russian diplomatic corps who attempted to make the Serbian government retreat. They were in no easy position. Russian public opinion was clearly pro-Serbian and because of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, it nursed irrevocably hostile feelings toward Austria-Hungary. Based on the recollections of the Russian minister of foreign affairs, the task was difficult because St. Petersburg had to support the Serbian objectives while continuously inducing the Pašić government to show moderation. Sazonov was certain that Franz Joseph I did not want war.[14]

The amicable Russian warnings fell on deaf ears in Belgrade. Therefore, Russian diplomacy asked its allies several times between November 2 and 12 to amplify the message in Belgrade through their embassies: Serbia could not count on the Entente's assistance with its current Adriatic policy. Poincaré admitted in his memoirs that Sazonov asked London and Paris to urge the Serbs to proceed with "serenity." According to the Russian minister of foreign affairs, Belgrade did not take the unequivocal admonishments seriously, i.e., those warning that the Balkan Allies could not divide European Turkey between themselves without taking into consideration the interests

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13 Sasonoff, *Sechs schwere Jahre*, 90.

14 Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 213. F. Bertie to Grey, Paris, 16.11.1912, No. 200, 253; Sasonoff, Sechs schwere, 94, 96, 99.

of Austria-Hungary and Italy.[15] Although Poincaré did not understand why the Russians had to rely on the assistance of French diplomacy, he satisfied Sazonov's request. But by the time the French and the British ambassadors took action in Belgrade, Serbian troops were only a few days away on foot from Durrës.

The coordinated diplomatic offensive of the Entente caused astonishment and incomprehension in Belgrade, for one of the cornerstones of Pašić's maximalist policy was his trust in the diplomatic support of the Entente.

The Serbian Occupation of Durrës

Serbia did not take the warnings and threats of the great powers to heart. The troops of the Serbian army got closer and closer to the Adriatic coast. At this point, the Albanian problem, or rather, the necessity to create an Albania became one of the priority issues in the communication between the great powers. There was some disarray among the Entente diplomats because they did not know how Austria-Hungary would react the moment the coast was occupied. Surprisingly, however, this situation did not increase the tensions between the two alliance systems of the great powers, but mitigated them to some extent. On the one hand, on the eve of the occupation of the Albanian port, even Hartwig obeyed the strict orders of his superior and warned Prime Minister Pašić on several occasions,[16] while on the other hand, the Foreign Office became active in the matter once again. Grey ordered his ambassador in Belgrade to warn the representatives of the Serbian government: London was of the view that the Ballhausplatz was looking for a peaceful solution (in other words: if an Austro-Hungarian–Serbian war should break out, Belgrade would be held responsible for it).[17]

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15 Poincaré, *Memoiren*, 476.

16 Hoetzsch, *Die Internationalen Beziehungen*, 3/4/1, Nr. 274. Hartwig to Sasonoff, Belgrade, 4/17.11.1912, 275.

17 Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 190. Grey to R. Paget, FO London, 13.11.1912, 229; No. 270. Buchanan to Grey, St. Petersburg, 25.11.1912, 312.

Thirdly, the Ballhausplatz tried to convince the Entente Powers that it had accepted the key principle of the Balkan Allies, i.e., "the Balkans belong to the Balkan peoples." Therefore, as the Viennese argument went, since the Albanians constituted a separate nation, they had the right to self-governance just as much as the neighboring peoples. But Pašić was relentless. The Serbian government, public opinion and the press were unanimously adamant that Serbia must not renounce the acquisition of Serbian access to the Adriatic Sea. What is more, according to Hartwig's report, the Serbian government and military circles declared that they were ready to wage a war even against the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[18]

Fiat Albania!

With the Serbian occupation of Durrës, the scenario that the great powers ended up with was precisely what they had wanted to prevent. Serbia's encroachment in the Adriatic forced Austria-Hungary to react, and there was a chance that the events would lead to a large-scale European war. However, at the end of November 1912, the foreign ministries of the great powers were still able to make a rational decision.

After the occupation of Durrës, the Austro-Hungarian ambassadors delegated to the Entente countries declared that Austria-Hungary continued to oppose the Serbian presence in the Adriatic region and was ready to take up arms against it. In the last days of November, the Italian ambassadors followed their example and confirmed that Rome was ready to support its ally in this matter. On December 2, 1912, Bethmann-Hollweg delivered a bellicose parliamentary speech in favor of Vienna. In order to halt the escalation of the situation, the French and Russian ministers of foreign affairs announced that the creation of Albania could suffer no further delay. Although the creation of the new Balkan country was not in the direct interest of the British or the French, both Entente Powers agreed that a potential war between the great powers over Albania must be prevented. On the one hand, such solutions had to be found that would calm both the Russian ally and Serbia, victor of the Balkan War; on the other

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18 Hoetzsch, *Die Internationalen Beziehungen*, 3/4/1, Nr. 317. Hartwig to Sasonoff, Belgrade, 9/22.11.1912, 316.

hand, they had to prevent the increasingly sour Austro-Hungarian–Italian relations from hopelessly aggravating the situation due to the catalyst effect of the diverging interests of these two countries in Albania. The latter meant that the system of great powers was on the verge of a breakdown not only because the two major alliance systems had less and less room for maneuver, but also because there were crucial fault lines within one of them.[19]

The negotiating positions of the Entente Powers were determined by their attitude toward three questions. First, although the Ballhausplatz had stated months earlier that it had given up all territorial extension, Paris never actually believed that. Therefore, the French wanted to get further guarantees that Austria-Hungary did not have any territorial aspirations in the Balkan Peninsula. Second, another problem was that the two potentially belligerent parties, Austria-Hungary and Serbia, rigidly insisted on the interests they had announced, and this was a fundamental impediment to finding a compromise. Third, the Entente Powers had to take into consideration that the Adriatic powers were not to receive a European mandate to organize the new Albanian state because that might have led to war between them. Out of the three questions above, a joint Entente position was quickly formed in the latter: the new Balkan state should be supervised by the six powers.

Immediately after the occupation of Durrës, negotiations were launched between the Entente Powers regarding Albania and a Serbian port in the Adriatic to determine what goal exactly they would want to achieve at a conference of the great powers to be convened. The first difficulty was that Serbia had to be persuaded to cede the settlement of the issue to the great powers. After the occupation of Durrës, Pašić only accepted that when he learned about the parliamentary speech delivered by Bethmann-Hollweg. Keeping to its earlier promise—namely, that it would do its best to ensure that in addition to satisfying the Serbian economic demands, the eastern borders of coastal Albania would be as favorable for Belgrade as possible—Russia indicated to its allies already in the first days of December the borders that it envisioned for the new Balkan state. The above is proven by the fact that on December 3, 1912, Grey personally lodged a protest against the relevant plans with Russian ambassador

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19 Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 175. E. Goschen to Nicolson, Berlin, 10.11.1912, 208–209; No. 195. Buchanan to Grey, St. Petersburg, 13.11.1912, 233–235.

Benckendorff. The British foreign minister himself informed Buchanan, the British ambassador to St. Petersburg, that while he would support a Serbian rail connection to Durrës to be built under international supervision, he found it unacceptable that Albania would be created in a narrow coastal band only.[20]

Austro-Hungarian–Serbian relations continued to be sensitive. Before the convening of the international conference, the Entente made another attempt at inducing both Vienna and Belgrade to exercise restraint. The Entente diplomats pressured Pašić to accept the concept of the autonomous Albania and give up Durrës, and they expected Vienna to allow room for the economic interests of Serbia. However, the latter was an unrealistic expectation from several respects. Making such a compromise would have signified a tremendous loss of prestige for Austria-Hungary, which as a great power could not allow itself to subordinate itself to a small nation-state with regard to a key strategic question. Also, it should be stressed that the Serbian army had closed all the routes of rapprochement between the positions of Austria-Hungary and Serbia: first, it occupied Durrës despite warnings from the six great powers; second, during the Balkan War, it committed atrocities against Albanian Catholics (murders, forced conversions, destruction of buildings); and third, Serbian army troops marching into Prizren brutally tortured the local consul of Austria-Hungary, the Czech Oskar Prochaska. It is possible that the unfortunate diplomat was castrated by his torturers. Thus the search for a compromise came to a deadlock. A war situation had already evolved due to the occupation of Durrës. Finally, the Entente felt that if it had to choose between the two parties, the preservation of peace and cooperation between the great powers was the most important priority.[21]

During the first week of December, the Serbian prime minister asked Russia to act as an intermediary in trying to find a solution. Through St. Petersburg, Pašić tried to set conditions in exchange for ceding the right of decision to the great powers. His conditions, however, did not enhance the search for a compromise, and were naturally rejected by the governments of the Entente Powers. The primary reason for the rejection was that through them, Serbia

20 Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 320. Grey to Buchanan, FO London, 3.12.1912, 371.

21 Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 224. Grey to Buchanan, FO London, 18.11.1912, 264–265.

was looking for the possibility of a separate war with Austria-Hungary.[22] On December 17, 1912, the conference of the ambassadors began in London. This was the first time since 1878 that the six great powers had been forced to sit down at the negotiating table on the highest level with regard to such a large-scale European issue. The representatives of the Balkan states and the Ottoman Empire were also present in London, but they had no influence over the course of the negotiations.

Essentially, there were two parties opposing one another: Russia (France) and Austria-Hungary (Italy). Great Britain and Germany played a role somewhere between allies and mediators. In accordance with Vienna's demands, the ambassadors of the great powers decided to create of an autonomous Albania under the sultan's sovereignty and also under the protectorate of the great powers [sic!] and that Serbia would get a neutral railway line under European control with some concession to one of the Albanian ports. The Serbian army was to withdraw from the coast, or else it could be attacked by the Austro-Hungarian army.[23]

At the London conference, the fate of Albania and the Serbian port on the Adriatic was decided primarily in consideration of the conflicts of interest between Austria-Hungary and Russia rather those between Austria-Hungary and France. Austria-Hungary wanted to create a new viable state (along ethnic borders), while Russia kept to its promise made to Belgrade, and tried to reduce the new country's territory as much as possible. The positions of the two parties became more and more rigid, and the alliance systems represented increasingly unified policies, which made cooperation between the great powers more and more difficult. The London negotiations were fundamentally influenced by the fact that the Balkan Allies continued their military operations in spring 1913, and the situation could change from day to day.

The compromise solution that was finally reached was based on the idea that instead of drawing lines, the great powers would determine the status of

22 Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 313. R. Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 30.11.1912, 365.

23 Heinrich Srbik, Ludwig Bittner, Alfred Francis Pribram and Hans Übersberger, eds., *Österreich–Ungarns Außenpolitik von der bosnischen Krise 1908 bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914*, vol. 5 (Vienna–Leipzig, 1930), No. 4944. Mensdorff to Berchtold, London, 17.12.1912, 147–149.

individual towns. Austria-Hungary gradually "renounced" possession of the towns of Peja/Peć, Djakova/Gjakova, Prizren and Debar in favor of Serbia, and Russia agreed in turn that Shkodra and the coast would be an indivisible part of Albania. In the south, Korça and Gjirokastra were incorporated by the new state. Based on the July 1913 agreements, the task of border demarcation was assigned to the demarcation commissions of the great powers operating on site.

The First Balkan War formally ended with the signing of the Treaty of London on May 30, 1913. After that, Serbia's attention was briefly diverted from the Adriatic coast because it had to protect its newly conquered territories with another war, this time against its former ally, Bulgaria. As a result of the Second Balkan War, the road opened for the consolidation of Serbian power in the central Balkans.

In their memoirs, Grey and Sazonov recall the London negotiations in spring 1913 in very similar terms. According to Grey, the creation of an independent Albania gradually became one of the highest priorities on their agenda of issues to be negotiated. In December 1912, the British still believed that Serbia should have access to an Adriatic port, but by spring 1913 this was overshadowed by the need to maintain peace between the great powers. The British prime minister's lack of knowledge about the Balkans is demonstrated by the fact that he referred to the contested towns (see above) as "villages" (as did Sazonov and the German Jagow in their memoirs!). Based on Sazonov's memoirs, the Russian minister of foreign affairs also gave priority to peace between the great powers.[24]

The Serbian government and Pašić never abandoned their claim to the maritime port on the Adriatic coast. Although the London compromises were the fruit of the last-ditch diplomatic efforts of the great powers, i.e., this was the last possibility to secure international peace through direct negotiations, Belgrade was fully convinced that the borders laid down in the Treaty of London could be changed.[25] It was convinced of this despite the fact that the

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24 Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, 265–268, 272–274; Sasonoff, *Sechs schwere Jahre*, 100–108; Gottlieb Jagow, *Ursachen und Ausbruch des Weltkrieges. Neue erweiterte Ausgabe* (Berlin, 1919), 69.

25 Österreichisches Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (hereafter ÖHHStA) PA XII/449/23a, Storck to Berchtold, Belgrade, 22.9.1913, No. 194 A-E.

six great powers made it clear to the Serbian government on several occasions that the borders had been drawn and nothing could change that.[26]

Autumn 1913: the Albanian-Macedonian Attack[27]

As a consequence of the annexation of the central Balkan territories and the introduction of Serbian military administration, Serbia was attacked in autumn 1913 by Albanian-Macedonian forces from the territory of Albania. The independent Albania did not include all Albanian ethnic territories, and the new state had to face several internal and external difficulties. Around 120,000 Albanian and Macedonian refugees fled to Albania from Kosovo and Macedonia. The provisional government in Vlora failed to take care of these refugees, many of whom attempted to return home in September 1913 after months of idle waiting and increasing hardships. The idea of an attack came from the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO), which had set the goal of creating an autonomous Macedonia, while the Albanian leaders of the central Balkans wanted to "liberate" their territories from Serbian occupation.

In the regions of Gjakova, Prizren, Ohrid and Debar, they launched an attack against the Serbian troops defending the new borders. Out of the three attacks, only the one led by Isa Boletini against Debar was effective. The Serbian army of 50,000 troops did not take long to defeat the advancing Albanians, and during their counterattack they once again attempted to secure a port on the Adriatic. In other words, the punitive army crossed the borders established in London. The total invasion of Albania was prevented by the ultimatum of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy on October 18, 1913.

26 Dušan Lukač, ed., Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici kraljevine Srbije (1903–1914) (Belgrade, 1981). Nr. 120. Stevanović to Tadić, Belgrade, 20.4./3.5.1913, pov.br. 193, 208.

27 Georgi Georgiev, "Novootkrit dokument za bâlgaro-albanskoto vâstanjie ot 1913," Makedonski Pregled 33, no. 2 (2010): 135–148; Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics and Gábor Demeter, "Albanian-Bulgarian Relations during the Balkan Wars and the Albanian-Macedonian Uprising (Third Balkan War, 1913)," in Beqir Meta, ed., 100 Years of Independence: Speeches of the International Scientific Conference (Tirana, 2014), 271–290.

The Outbreak of the War from the Perspective of the Entente

In the weeks prior to the outbreak of the war, Belgrade was fully aware that something was brewing on the other side of the border. But what exactly and who was behind it was probably unclear to the Serbian government. The political interpretation of the war by contemporary Serbian authors suggests that the events either took Pašić by surprise, or he simply had no access to information from that region. Earlier it would have been inconceivable that the Serbian government would formulate its position in a matter of such importance after nearly a week! (The fighting began on September 20–21, whereas Belgrade issued the official Serbian position on September 26–27.)[28] According to the released statement, the Adriatic powers were also partly responsible for the attack. Based on Viennese sources, this claim could be incontestably refuted.[29] The grounds for this accusation were that the Serbian government supposed that the military officers of the two great powers were on the ground providing counsel to the attackers.[30]

Based on the reports of the British embassy in Belgrade, the Serbian troops never left the territory of Albania, i.e., they violated the London borders and were garrisoned on foreign territory. Moreover, the Serbian military administration never ceased to provoke the Albanian tribes both inside and outside the country. As London feared that this policy would lead to armed clashes, the Foreign Office authorized its ambassador to Belgrade to exercise pressure in cooperation with his counterparts of the other great powers, on the Serbian government to pull back its troops.[31] France did not react to the news that arrived in the middle of September.

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28 ÖHHStA PA XII/449/23a, Serbian Memorandum to Berchtold, Vienna, 29.16/9.1913, 1-10; Kliment Đambazovski, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici kraljevine Srbije (1903–1914)* (Belgrade, 1983), 337. Note to Pašić, Belgrade, 28/15.9.1913, pov. br. 6207, 376–378.

29 ÖHHStA PA XII/421/6f, Rudnay to Berchtold, Durazzo, 16.5.1913, No. 157. Berchtold to Rudnay, Vienna, 23.5.1913, No. 24; KA Nachlässe, B 1450–Nachlass Hötzendorf, Akt. 84/222, Spaits to Conrad, Vienna, 28.5.1913, Geh.Nr.179.

30 Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 8. Crackanthorpe to Grey, Belgrade, 15/12.9.1913, 6–7.

31 Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 7. Grey to Crackanthorpe, FO London, 12.9.1913, 6.

After the launching of the Albanian attack, Russian diplomacy sat on the fence for days. St. Petersburg supported Serbia's self-defense measures, and considered it only natural that Serbia would temporarily occupy strategic points as part of its counteroffensive. Based on the conversations between Austro-Hungarian diplomats and their Russian colleagues, the latter did not even see clearly what had happened in the last week of September on the Albanian-Serbian border.[32]

In the end, the embassy of Austria-Hungary to St. Petersburg managed to persuade the Russian party that the war had not been started by the independent Albania, but by the refugees from central Albania. Ambassador Czernin assured Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Neratoff that Vienna did not question Serbia's right to self-defense; nevertheless, the attack had been provoked by Belgrade itself with its political, administrative and military decisions. Finally, the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian diplomats agreed on September 29–30 that they would expect Belgrade to respect the borders laid down in the Treaty of London.[33]

In the last days of September, Russia acted only partially in the spirit of this agreement. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs signaled to Belgrade that it would continue to consider all acts of self-defense in good faith in the future, too, but suggested caution and care in all matters. In exchange, Serbia received a promise from St. Petersburg that the latter would support the modification of the border by diplomatic means—that is, that Russia was willing to commit a unilateral breach of the agreements of London between the great powers that took so much effort to achieve. It should be noted that through the ultimatum of October 18 the Austro-Hungarian Empire had also violated a compromise: namely that the great powers would always act in concert and on the basis of prior arrangements. Nonetheless, it is equally true that through the ultimatum they tried to mitigate the magnitude of a genocide and a humanitarian catastrophe.

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32 ÖHHStA PA XII/449/23a, Storck to Berchtold, Belgrade, 21.9.1913, No. 193 and 22.9.1913, No. 194 A-E; Czernin to Berchtold, St. Petersburg, 14/27.9.1913, No. 35 C; Đambazovski, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici kraljevine Srbije* 6/3, 332. Tadić to Spalajković, St. Petersburg, 27/14.1913, pov.br. 460, 372-374.
33 ÖHHStA PA XII/449/23a, Czernin to Berchtold, St. Petersburg, 30.9.1913 No. 12.

The published Russian sources reveal in relation to what exactly the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommended caution and care. As Serbian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Spalajković explained in a conversation with a Russian diplomat in Belgrade, Serbia envisaged the pushing of the Albanian-Serbian border to the west, and that the rest of Albania would be reorganized as a pro-Serbia country instead of a pro-Austria one. In the interest of achieving this, the Serbian government had already interfered directly in Albanian internal affairs (and by doing so, with a question that supposedly belonged to the authority of the great powers).[34]

France was even less informed about the situation than Russia. All in all, Minister of Foreign Affairs Poincaré did not accept that the conflict had been provoked by Belgrade, although he, too, insisted on the borders defined in London. The leader of French diplomacy personally told this to the Serbian head of the government Pašić, who tried to get diplomatic support in Rambouillet for a planned intervention against Albania.[35]

At the time of the attack, London's attention was primarily focused on the increasingly tense Greek-Turkish opposition. Great Britain feared that the military counteroffensive of Serbia might further harm relations between the two south Balkan states, and it would lead to another pan-Balkan conflict. On September 24, the Foreign Office informed the other great powers and Belgrade about its position: i.e., that it would insist on the borders determined in London and that it would be willing to send officers to the Albanian-Serbian border as part of an international committee.[36]

Also, it is clear from the published documents that at the end of September, the correspondence between the Entente Powers contained more and more information about the role of Austria-Hungary in the management of this conflict. The British and Russian parties deemed it "suspicious" that among the great powers, the best-informed should be the Ballhausplatz in the region

34 Miloš Boghitschewitsch, Die auswärtige Politik Serbiens, Bd. 2, Berlin 1928, Nr. 854, Strandmann to Neratoff, St. Petersburg, 12/25.9.1913, 438–439.

35 ÖHHStA PA XII/449/23a, Somssich to Berchtold, Paris, 27.9.1913; Stieve, *Der Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, Nr. 1066. Neratoff to Benckensdorff, St. Petersburg, 30/17.9.1913, 294–295.

36 Temperley and Gooch, *British Documents*, No. 23. Cartwright to Grey, Vienna, 27.9.1913, 18–20; Đambazovski, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici kraljevine Srbije* 6/3, 369. Borđević to Pašić, London, 26.9.1913, pov.br. 258, 402–404.

and that Austria-Hungary was putting increasing unilateral political pressure on Belgrade in order to end the fighting.[37]

The Serbian occupation of North Albania and the Entente

In the first week of October 1913, Serbian diplomacy tried to prevent the joint protest of the great powers against the crossing of the border. In fact, the Serbian ambassadors succeeded in convincing the individual governments that the Serbian troops had crossed the Black Drin only temporarily in order to protect the borders. They emphasized that Belgrade also strove to close the incident as soon as possible, but in order to do that, it would have to contact the internationally recognized government of Albania. As soon as this government was established and managed to consolidate the internal relations of the new state, Serbia would settle its conflicts with Albania and pull out. The concerted diplomatic action was efficient: in the end, there was no joint démarche by the great powers against Belgrade.

However, the Entente Powers were far from being unified. Although Belgrade could generally count on the support of Russian and French diplomacy, neither St. Petersburg nor Paris wished to fight a war for the sake of Serbia.[38] On the contrary, Great Britain ended up overtly siding with Austria-Hungary regarding the war fought over the borders—it did not want to help Balkan states ignore the decisions of the great powers without any consequences. When in mid-October more and more territories of the independent Albania were occupied by the Serbian military, the British ambassador to Belgrade, Dayrell Crackanthorpe, went to see his Austro-Hungarian counterpart to inform him about the position of his government in the matter, and made it clear that in his opinion Serbia would not evacuate its troops from the territory of Albania, so it was time for the Austro-Hungarian Empire to take resolute action. Despite the fact that Crackanthorpe did not make a specific proposal about the form of this action and that Grey thought that an

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37 Gooch and Temperley (Lutz), *Die Britischen Amtlichen Dokumente*, No. 16. O'Beirne to Grey, St. Petersburg, 23.9.1913, 11–12.
38 Srbik et al., *Österreich–Ungarns Außenpolitik 7*, Nr. 8857. Czernin to Berchtold, S. Petersburg, 17.10.1913, 459–460.

ultimatum would be an unnecessary and nonsensical idea, it is certain that the Ballhausplatz interpreted the statements of the British ambassador as a sign of the benevolent support for the British government.[39] Meanwhile, the French government urged Belgrade not to provoke Austria-Hungary any further and to withdraw from the territory of Albania. In return, France would be ready to grant Serbia the long-awaited government loan.[40]

The Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum of October 18, 1913 and the Entente

Among the Entente Powers, Russia indicated through the Austro-Hungarian embassy in St. Petersburg that it would accept Serbia's reply to the ultimatum to be given on October 18. Moreover, Neratoff informed the Austro-Hungarian and German embassies in St. Petersburg that while respecting the borders determined in London was important for Russia, the evacuation of the Serbian troops would take time. Russian diplomacy seemed open to the acceleration of the border demarcation and the establishment of Albania. Apart from that, Russian diplomacy did not plan any other actions.[41]

Paris thought that the form of the ultimatum was rather unfortunate, and it voiced its disapproval. On top of that, Minister of Foreign Affairs Poincaré still had information that the Albanian attack had been instigated by the Austro-Hungarian Empire's machinations.[42] The head of French diplomacy modified his position only when in order to clarify the misunderstandings, the Ballhausplatz on October 19 transmitted to him a copy of the Austro-Hungarian consul's reports about the attack.

The British Foreign Ministry understood and accepted the goals of the ultimatum, but did not approve of its form. Grey communicated through

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39 ÖHHStA PA XII/451/25a, Berchtold to Somssich, Vienna, 17.10.1913, No. 482; Temperley and Gooch, *British Documents*, No. 38. Goschen to Grey, Berlin, 16.10.1913, 32–33.

40 Stieve, *Der Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, Nr. 1093. Isvolsky to Sasonoff, Paris, 23/10.10.1913, 318–319.

41 Stieve, *Der Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, 1095. Neratoff to Benckendorff, St. Petersburg, 5/18.10.1913, 313–315.

42 Poincaré, *Memoiren*, 457–458.

various channels and for nearly two weeks that Great Britain was in favor of a joint action by the great powers because in his opinion the independent démarche of Austria-Hungary was in a certain sense Vienna's confrontation with the other great powers, and as such, it impaired the joint authority of the great powers.

The Ballhausplatz answered to its London counterpart through the British embassy in Vienna and the Austro-Hungarian embassy in London. Berchtold declared that considering the state of affairs on the Albanian-Serbian borders and that the Albanians were the first to suffer from the violence, there was no other way to avoid the further loss of human lives and time (the second Serbian occupation of Albania also took several tens of thousands of civilian lives). According to Vienna, there were no more diplomatic means that could have been deployed against Belgrade.[43] It is noteworthy that the British protests declined after Sazonov proposed on October 26 that the Entente, for its part, should close the affair of the Serbian-Albanian war. Partly because, contrary the Entente's earlier general information, Serbia, according to Russia, was principally responsible for the outbreak of the armed conflict.[44]

On October 19, the British ambassador to Belgrade paid a visit to Pašić and told him that although the Entente Powers did not agree with the form of the ultimatum, they would not give any military assistance to Serbia. The Serbian government decided to evacuate its troops on October 19. Belgrade agreed to withdraw its troops from the territory of Albania within eight days and to respect the borders established in London. According to British diplomatic reports, the Serbian military party most likely did not share the Serbian government's willingness to compromise.[45]

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43 ÖHHStA PA XII/451/25a, Pro domo, Vienna, 20.10.1913, Nr. 4985, and 22.10.1913, No. 8321; XIX/Nachlass Berchtold, Kt. 4, Bd 4/II, 19.10.1913, 101–102.

44 "Mr. Sazonow said to me in the strictest confidence on the 26th that Servia had been more to blame than was generally supposed in the events which had led up to the recent ultimatum from Austria." Temperley and Gooch, *British Documents*, No. 56. O'Beirne to Grey, St. Petersburg, 3.11/28.10.1913, 49.

45 Temperley and Gooch, *British Documents*, No. 44–45. Crackanthorpe to Grey, Belgrade, 18–19.10.1913, 37–39.

Epilogue: the Rapprochement of the Entente and Serbia

Parallel to the evacuation of the Serbian troops, the organization of the state could begin in Albania. This was the very point when and where the cooperation of the great powers collapsed. On the one hand, the Entente Powers did not place particular emphasis on the organization of the state—their interest was essentially to keep an eye on Austria-Hungary and Italy[46]; on the other hand, after the failed Young Turks putsch, trust between the great powers permanently disappeared, while relations between Austria-Hungary and Italy deteriorated (partly due to their different policy regarding Albania, partly to other issues). The above had two major consequences: the Entente Powers began to negotiate regarding the unilateral withdrawal from the Albanian international commissions,[47] while Italy began to draw closer to Great Britain and started to back out from the Triple Alliance.[48]

All of the above events created a new situation not only for Serbia, but for all the Balkan nation-states. The role that individual Balkan states had played what role during 1912 and 1913 became an insignificant detail. The nineteenth-century great-power system had become irreparably dysfunctional. The states of the peninsula recognized the systemic defects as well as the room for maneuver that was opening up, and they did not hesitate to take advantage of these opportunities. The countries of the Balkans aligned themselves with the alliance systems of the great powers, and from that time on, the outbreak of the world war was only a spark away.

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46 Temperley and Gooch, *British Documents*, No.74. O'Beirne to Grey, St. Petersburg, 5.11.1913, 62; No. 79. Bertie to Grey, Paris, 11.11.1913, 66–67.

47 Duka, *Dokumente britanike*, Nr. 228. Grey to O'Beirne, London, 4.11.1913, 285–286; Nr. 335. O'Beirne to Grey, St. Petersburg, 19.11.1913, 388.

48 Duka, *Dokumente britanike*, Nr. 229. Grey to Dering, London, 4.11.1913, 286–287.

Miklós Mitrovits

"Let the Polish know what they can expect of us…"
The Polish Question through the Prism
of the Hungarian Élite, 1914–1918

From the perspective of Hungarian politics in the era of dualism, the Polish were the only non-dominant nationality of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that was seen by Budapest in an incontestably positive light. This affection for the Poles derived mostly from the shared history of the two nations and their wars of independence fought shoulder to shoulder in the nineteenth century. After the partitions of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, the politically engaged members of the Hungarian intelligentsia adopted a fully Polish-friendly stance. Thousands of Hungarians participated and sacrificed their lives in the uprisings fought for Polish independence in 1830 and 1863. Similarly, the Polish provided substantial help to the Hungarians in the Hungarian War of Independence of 1848–1849. During these common struggles for sovereignty, the Polish and the Hungarians were united by the pathos of patriotism. In the last third of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, the Galician Poles were loyal to the Monarchy, thus becoming a factor consolidating the Empire, and unlike the other small nations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, they were not regarded as a "centrifugal tensioning force." The attitude of the Galician Poles was not accidental: the Polish nation had been cut into three parts and those of its members who lived in the Austro-Hungarian Empire enjoyed the most favorable position. As opposed to the Germanizing Prussian and the Russianizing Russian territories, the former had a certain degree of self-governance. There were two Polish higher education institutions operating in Krakow and Lemberg (Lviv, Ukraine), Polish-language newspapers and books

could appear, and the Polish upper classes were able to pursue a career even in state administration.[1]

Naturally, Polish nationalism had no anti-Hungarian edge whatsoever. Neither of the two emblematic figures of the creation of an independent Poland had any reservations or objections regarding the Hungarian efforts. Roman Dmowski was a proponent of anti-German and anti-Jewish Polish nationalism, while Józef Piłsudski endorsed the concept of a multi-nationality federative state from the beginning.[2] Hungarian political circles saw the Poles as a historical nation that was prevented from forming a united state only by the contemporary international power constellation. Moreover, the good relations between the two peoples could also be attributed to the fact that the Polish-inhabited Galicia officially belonged to the Austrian Empire and not to the Kingdom of Hungary, which more or less excluded the possibility of any direct Hungarian-Polish conflict of interest.

The Question of Polish Statehood in Vienna and Berlin

All the strata of the Polish society that had been torn into three parts were intent on achieving a single agenda: the formation of a unified sovereign Poland. After the fiasco of the uprising of 1863 in the Russian Partition (Russian Poland) and the creation of the unified German Empire in 1871, it became clear that

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1 For the Polish issue before the First World War, see Joel Burnell, *Poetry, Providence, and Patriotism: Polish Messianism in Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, Princeton Theological Monograph. Series (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010); Wiktor Sukiennicki, *East Central Europe during World War I: from Foreign Domination to National Independence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland in Two Volumes*, vol. 2, *1795 to the Present* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Maciej Janowski, *Polish Liberal Thought before 1918* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2004); Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795–1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975); Wojciech Roszkowski, *Najnowsza historia Polski 1914–1945* (Warsaw: Świat Książki, 2003).

2 Piotr S. Wandycz, "Poland's Place in Europe in the Concepts of Piłsudski and Dmowski," *East European Politics and Societies* 4, no. 3 (1990): 451–468; Andrzej Walicki, "The Troubling Legacy of Roman Dmowski," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 14, no. 1 (December 1999): 12–46.

the international context would not allow for the modification of the borders. Consequently, the concept that gained more and more ground in Galician Polish political circles, especially among "Cracovian Conservatives," was the so-called Austro-Polish solution. Essentially, this scenario would have implied that the Russians would be expelled from the region, i.e., from the territory of the Kingdom of Poland, with the help of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Next this territory would unite with Galicia, and crowning a member of the Habsburg dynasty, it would join the Austro-Hungarian Empire within the framework of a real union. All of the above, however, presupposed that the dualist system based on the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 would be transformed into a trialist arrangement. Because of that, many looked to Galicia as a kind of "Polish Piedmont," or the potential starting point of Polish unification.[3]

Besides the Austro-Hungaro-Polish trialism based on a real union, the Austro-Polish concept existed in other versions as well. According to one of the ideas, after the liberation of Russian Poland (i.e., the Kingdom of Poland, also called "Congress Poland," created within the framework of Russia by the Congress of Vienna in 1815) and its unification with Galicia, the new Polish state-to-be would have joined the Austrian Empire with an agreement similar to that concluded between the Hungarians and the Croats in 1868. Accordingly, based on the Croatian-Hungarian analogy, a so-called subdualist system would have been established between Austria and Poland. According to another version, the new Poland would have united with the Kingdom of Hungary. In fact, the latter solution would not have been unprecedented: let us recall the reign of King Louis the Great. As a first step, it was proposed already in the 1870s that Galicia and Bukovina, i.e., the Principalities of Halych and Lodomeria, should be detached from the Austrian state and returned to the Kingdom of Hungary since these territories had been conquered by the kings of the Árpád dynasty a long time ago, thus the Kingdom of Hungary could justly claim them.[4]

The Austro-Polish ideas were reinforced with the outbreak of the First World War. After the Russian victory on the Eastern Front at Przemyśl in March 1915, Austria-Hungary was able to push back the Russian army with German

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3 Zoltán Tefner, "Ausztria-Magyarország lengyelpolitikája I," Valóság 7 (2003): 47–63; Tefner, "Ausztria-Magyarország lengyelpolitikája II," Valóság 8 (2003): 36–58.
4 Ibid.

assistance. Following the breakthrough at Gorlice (Gorlice-Tarnów Offensive) on May 2–5, 1915, the Central Powers recaptured Przemyśl, Lemberg and Warsaw. With that, Russian Poland came under the occupation of Austria-Hungary and Germany.

From spring 1915, the occupied territories needed to be dealt with not only on a military level, but also in terms of public administration and state law. Since extensive Polish territories came to be attached to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the question of the unification of the Polish lands was also raised. It was clear from the very beginning that if the occupied Congress Poland was united with Galicia, it would produce such an impressive territory inhabited by Poles and Ukrainians that it would, first of all, jeopardize the majority of German-speaking inhabitants, and second, it would inevitably boost the popularity of the idea of Polish independence.

At the same time, in contrast to the Austro-Polish concept, there existed another thought regarding the future of Poland. Since Austria-Hungary would have been unable to capture these territories without Germany's military force, it had to take into consideration German intentions as well. That was the case even if initially the German government did not show much interest in the Polish question. However, it must not be forgotten that the Germans cherished political, economic, ideological as well as military and security policy goals in relation to the Polish lands just liberated from Russian oppression. Granting independence to the Polish territories that had already been occupied by the Germans—i.e., the Grand Duchy of Posen annexed to the Kingdom of Prussia, Chelm or Gdańsk—was, of course, out of the question.

Among the numerous German concepts, this paper will focus on the most important one. Its core idea was that a buffer state (*Pufferstaat*) would be created in the territory gained after defeating and pushing Russia back to the east. The German military staff considered this zone between Germany and Russia to be a military springboard, which was to be subordinated entirely to German military objectives. Naturally, Berlin planned to draft the local inhabitants and also to exploit the natural resources of the area (especially coal). Practically, this puppet state would have included all of the former Russian Polish territories, regardless of the fact that the southern parts of

the latter (with Lublin as its center) had been under Austro-Hungarian occupation all throughout the war.[5]

After the outbreak of the First World War, but still before the breakthrough at Gorlice, i.e., from August 1914 until May 1915, Austro-Hungarian diplomats formulated four different proposals aimed at solving the Polish question:

1. An Austro-Polish concept based on nineteenth-century traditions, the essence of which was that all of Congress Poland would be annexed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire according to a plan to be elaborated later on.
2. After defeating Russia, Poland would be split up between Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
3. A buffer state would have been created between Germany and Russia from the Polish territories, Lithuania, and Courland. This entity would have become a German satellite state.
4. With the exception of Galicia, all Polish territories would have been incorporated by Germany.

The second version had the highest degree of support within the Austro-Hungarian political élite. It turned out very quickly that because of the Hungarian government's insistence on dualism, the Polish territories annexed by Austria-Hungary could not be accorded a status similar to that of Austria and Hungary. In that context, the proponents of the "subdualist system" had the upper hand. What that meant was that the Polish-Ukrainian territories were related to Austria in the same way as Croatia was related to Hungary. With the progression of the war, it was the fourth scenario that became increasingly popular among the German political and military leadership; that is, Poland was to be divided into two parts after the war as well.

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5 Zoltán Tefner, "Ugron István és a német külpolitika 1918 áprilisában–májusában," *Századok* 6 (2011): 1423.

The Question of Polish Statehood in the Policy of the Hungarian Parliamentary Parties

Until May 1915, the Polish question did not appear on the Hungarian agenda. It was considered so secondary that from summer 1914 until the end of 1915, not a single parliamentary speech focused specifically on the Polish question. The policy advocated by Count István Tisza, the Hungarian prime minister, was in sharp contrast both with the idea of the creation of a sovereign and autonomous Poland and with that of the transformation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into a trialist system. For Hungary, the first scenario would have entailed the loss of Galicia, while the second would have meant the end of dualism. For Tisza, only two concepts were acceptable: Poland would either come under German rule or it would join the Austrian Empire in a "subdualist" framework without injuring the Austro-Hungarian dualist system.

From January 13, 1915, Austria-Hungary got a Hungarian minister of foreign affairs in the person of István Burián. He was appointed after the breakthrough at Gorlice. Not surprisingly, he contacted the German government immediately concerning the Polish issue. He went to Berlin with the "subdualist plan" supported by Tisza, the plan which had been elaborated by Austrian Prime Minister Karl von Stürgkh. This proposal, however, was too much for Germany and too little for the Poles because it would not have guaranteed Polish independence in military affairs, budget and foreign policy. Although a Polish king would have been elected, Vienna would have delegated a general governor to Warsaw. In other words, executive power would have remained in the hands of Vienna. What is more, Galicia would have been divided on an ethnic basis into Polish and Ukrainian parts.

The person who challenged Tisza's policy the most vehemently was one of the leading figures of the Hungarian parliamentary opposition, Count Gyula Andrássy the Younger. A proponent of trialism, Andrássy tried to obtain Berlin's support for the cause already in November 1914. Tisza reacted at once, and informed the Germans that the public law structure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was unalterable. Count Gyula Andrássy launched a series of articles on the Polish subject in autumn 1915 in *Magyar Hírlap* and *Neue Freie Presse*. He first spoke about the Polish question at length in the Hungarian National Assembly on December 7, 1915. According to Andrássy,

although the Polish question did not figure among the military objectives of Austria-Hungary, it needed to be dealt with in public due to the historic developments.

Andrássy's basic position was that the Polish lands acquired would have to be utilized in order to resolve the Polish question. He formulated two theses:

1. It would be a cardinal mistake to return the historical Poland to Russia once the military actions have been resolved. For that would entail the healing of Russia's Achilles heel because Poland would realize that it had nothing to gain from the victory of Central Europe, that destiny had chained it once and for all to Russia and that it would have to give up all hope of being ever liberated from this yoke.

2. We must not expose Poland to the danger of partition again. Whatever solution should be found for the question, we must exclude the possibility that another operation be performed on the body of the Polish nation, otherwise this policy would result in turning yet another race that had been attracted to us into our enemy, and with that we would commit a sin.[6]

Obviously, the second thesis raised the question of what should happen to the Polish lands occupied by the Germans. For there was no word of the German Empire renouncing its part of these lands acquired at the end of the eighteenth century. If only the Russian and the Austrian parts were to be united, Poland would still remain divided. Andrássy did not go into that, but he did mention that if Russian Poland was to become a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, then it should be united with Galicia, and the trialist public law structure should be introduced. He did not consider the creation of an independent Polish state to be feasible; he questioned the viability of such a state—just as in the case of Hungary.

While Andrássy approached the Polish question from the perspective of public law and geopolitics, at the parliamentary session of December 9–11, 1915,

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6 "Parliamentary session 593 on December 9, 1915," in *Az 1910. évi június hó 21-ére hirdetett Országgyűlés Képviselőházának naplója* (hereafter abbreviated *KHN*), vol. 27, May 7–December 21, 1915 (Budapest: Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársulat Könyvnyomdája, 1916), 328.

several speakers emphasized the Polish affiliation with the West and cultural connections. The first speaker, Sándor Giesswein, began by pointing out that the Poles had always been allies of Hungary: "They always fought alongside the Hungarians whenever freedom was at stake."[7] As Giesswein put it, "Wherever the Hungarian national flag is waving, it must signal in the future as well that people are fighting for freedom here and that they shall not fight on behalf of the oppressors of peoples."[8] This statement could be interpreted in only one way: if the Hungarians went into battle in Polish territories and helped expel the Russians, it was not to let the Germans take the place of the Russians. Károly Huszár, also an MP of the Catholic People's Party, went even further. He talked about a single political nation: "It is desirable that the unfortunate Polish nation, which has suffered so much over the centuries, should persist as a single political nation and that it should not be partitioned once again."[9] Count Móric Esterházy, who briefly filled the position of prime minister in 1917, highlighted the cultural aspects. In his speech, he said that the Polish "population was the vanguard of Western civilization for centuries, thus it can make a claim for the cultivation of its cultural needs even under the current temporary administration."[10] In his reply, Tisza rejected these approaches, and made it clear that "the governance of a hostile territory under military occupation is a military task." In addition to the military command, there were civilian staff as well, and already from a linguistic aspect, it was better for the staff to be Austrian.[11]

The reason that this debate took place in the Hungarian National Assembly at the end of 1915 was that as of October 1, two General Governments had been created with their seats in Lublin and Warsaw and were occupied and directed by the Austro-Hungarian and the German armies, respectively. The Hungarian opposition wanted to ensure that these Polish territories would not be governed exclusively by the military, but that there would also be a civil public administration set up in parallel, and that the Polish could express their

7 *KHN*, December 9, 1915, vol.27, 364.

8 Ibid.

9 *KHN*, December 10, 1915, vol. 27, 422.

10 *KHN*, December 9, 1915, vol. 27, 380.

11 Ibid., 381.

cultural and political needs. This, however, was not to be. What is more, even the earlier autonomy of Galicia was terminated.

In contrast to the above, the Hungarian government believed in early October 1915 that it would have been more favorable for the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Hungary to sign a separate peace with Russia than to annex Russian Poland. Tisza made sure to limit even the manifestation of the Hungarian society's sympathy for the Polish at assemblies and sympathy demonstrations.

The Reception of the Mitteleuropa Plan in Hungary and the Polish Question

In the meantime, the German Empire's interest was also piqued by the Russian Polish territories. At the end of 1915, the Germans were considering the implementation of the so-called Mitteleuropa Plan, and they proposed that Austria-Hungary receive the Russian Polish territories if it formed a customs union with Germany in exchange.[12] At this point, Minister of Foreign Affairs Burián tried to persuade the German government that these solutions would only reinforce the concept of Polish independence. In Burián's opinion, some sort of a state would have to be created for the Polish as soon as possible, and their destiny should be placed into their own hands. This argumentation was in accordance with the Polish political events that had taken place since the outbreak of the war. Already on August 14, 1914, the Juliusz Leo–headed National General Committee (Naczelny Komitet Narodowy) was set up in Krakow as the supreme military, treasury and political institution of Galicia. The aims of this institution were to unite the Polish territories liberated from

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12 Friedrich Naumann, *Mitteleuropa* (Berlin: Reimer, 1915). For a description of the *Mitteleuropa* conception, see Henry C. Meyer, *Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action, 1815–1945* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Der Erste Weltkrieg. Anfang vom Ende des bürgerlichen Zeitalters* (Bonn: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2004), 94–117. Jürgen Elvert, "'Irrweg Mitteleuropa' Deutsche Konzepte zur Neugestaltung Europas aus der Zwischenkriegszeit," in Heinz Duchhardt and Małgorzata Morawiec, eds., *Vision Europa. Deutsche und polnische Föderationspläne des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 117–137.

Russian occupation with Galicia and to transform the Austro-Hungarian Empire into a trialist structure.

With that in mind, the Polish had recourse to the military as well. At the behest of Józef Piłsudski, three Polish Legions were set up under the National General Committee. The First Brigade was headed by Piłsudski himself in the territory of Podhale, the Second Brigade was subordinated to Józef Haller and fought mostly in the Carpathians and Bukovina, while the Third Brigade was sent to the Lublin region. There were altogether approximately 25,000 soldiers fighting in these three brigades. The Polish Legions took part in combat until they were called back at the end of 1916. Meanwhile, Piłsudski created the Polish Military Organization (Polska Organizacja Wojskowa), which carried out intelligence and diversionary tasks in the area occupied by the Russians. Thus, at the end of 1915, the politicians of the Hungarian opposition and Minister of Foreign Affairs Burián—going against Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza and the Berlin government—were theoretically pressing for what the given situation actually demanded if they wanted to keep up with the Polish initiatives.

However, the German government was so adverse to the plans of Burián and other Polish-friendly politicians that in early 1916 the issue clearly began to drive a wedge between Austria-Hungary and Germany. Finally, Germany laid its cards on the table in April 1916. German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg declared that Berlin did not support the Austro-Polish concepts, and that they would either create a German puppet state, or Poland would remain divided according to the occupied territories.

Italy's entry into the war in summer 1916 produced a substantial change in the relations of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The latter was significantly weakened by the regrouping of its troops on the Italian Front, and taking advantage of this, the Russians launched an attack in the east. During the Brusilov Offensive, the military of the Austro-Hungarian Empire suffered a serious blow. From then on, Vienna was politically devalued in the eyes of Berlin, and its opinion regarding the Polish question carried less weight.

The above had repercussions in the Hungarian National Assembly as well. In his parliamentary speech delivered on September 16, 1916, Count Gyula Andrássy spoke about the Polish question as well. He shared his conviction that "a whole series, an entire chain of the gravest foreign policy and governmental

mistakes have been committed in this question, too, from the first minute to the last."[13] Count Tivadar Batthyány spoke about the Poles in much more passionate terms. He called them the sister-nation of the Hungarians, and alluded to the fact that "the Hungarian nation has always condemned the abolition of the Kingdom of Poland, the territorial partition of the Polish state, and the party demanded that the government should take a stand in the Polish question and exert an influence, and (. . .) [the party demands] a national government, state-level existence, and a national army for the Polish people."[14] Moreover, he criticized the government for not having carried through with its promise to the Polish nation to liberate it: "This is a promise that was made in the name of a nation, and staying true to this promise is not only a matter of honor, but also a moral duty."[15] Therefore, Batthyány also said it was a mistake to have immediately divided Russian Poland into two parts following its occupation and to have placed four governments under Austro-Hungarian administration with Lublin as their seat. Instead of another partition, Batthyány asserted unequivocally that "Russian Poland must without a doubt be developed into a single and united national state."[16] He then continued:

Every Polish individual has a natural desire and wish to see the old Kingdom of Poland restored, all the former Polish territories united in one national state, and all the Poles gathered in one national state so that they can get back their former independence as a sovereign national state. I cannot interpret the term liberation in any other way than the latter solution. [. . .] Both the Austrian and the German governments must rise to the height where they can enforce our great interests, the general interests of all of us, of Germany, Austria and Hungary, and by ceding certain territories if necessary—as it will be—they must create an independent Polish Kingdom, a sovereign national state, establishing

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13 *KHN*, September 6, 1916, vol. 31, 491.
14 *KHN*, September 14, 1916, vol. 32, 161.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 162.

its appropriate relation, its appropriate nexus with the Monarchy and through the dynasty.[17]

During the war, this was the first Hungarian parliamentary address that took an unequivocal stance in favor of the creation of an independent, sovereign Polish Kingdom, and which took as a starting point that the partitions should be reunited. Batthyány closed his speech by saying that "this is in the interest of Hungary, but also of Austria and of Germany."[18] For this 20-million-inhabitant Kingdom of Poland would be grateful to Germany and Austria-Hungary, and this "liberated Polish nation will stand as a bastion against a potential future attack of the Russian colossus."[19]

Three days later, Member of Parliament Gábor Ugron demanded the floor and analyzed the Polish situation at length. He addressed his harsh criticism of the Austrian government (!) for having introduced in the occupied territories a military public administration unacceptable for the local Poles. According to Ugron, the military governors, the Hungarian hussars, the Czech policemen and the (naturally) non-Polish-speaking clerks who had been sent there had made life unbearable for the Polish. Ugron stated:

> After the breakthrough at Gorlice came the occupation of Russian Poland. This automatically evoked the idea that the ancient big Polish nation should be revived, and a new state should be constituted for the Polish. This would have its own political and military advantages, namely that a territory that is geographically wedged between us and Germany would not belong to the Russian Empire with a huge military apparatus, but it would be an independent state.[20]

However, what was happening in reality was just the opposite. Instead of introducing a system better than that of the Russians, the Austro-Hungarian state was "Germanizing to the detriment of those who had fought against the Russification. Women and children have been collected in internment camps,

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17 Ibid., 163.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 *KHN*, September 19, 1916, vol. 32, 217.

whose only sin was that they were of Russian Polish descent, and whose virtue was that they wanted to live under the scepter of our ruler."[21]

Ugron urged the government to do something against the situation that had evolved:

> War is not a goal in itself; it is only one of the tools of diplomacy. And the aim of diplomacy cannot be the total annihilation of a victorious war by poor public administration. The situation should be remedied before it is too late. For in contrast to Germany, Austria-Hungary has not yet declared—either solemnly, officially or confidentially—what fate should await the Polish nation after the end of the war.[22]

Prime Minister István Tisza qualified Ugron's words as "harsh and unilateral" criticism. In his opinion, it did not help the cause if the members of parliament treated that question in "such a manner." At the same time, he did not deny a single word of Ugron's nor did he say anything about the future that he envisioned for the Polish. This was not the first time that Tisza gave an evasive answer to a direct question.[23] Tisza's "reply" was not left without response by Count Albert Apponyi either. He, too, called the prime minister to explain why Austria-Hungary was procrastinating with regard to the issuing of a clear statement regarding the future of the Polish.[24]

On November 5, 1916, Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph and German Emperor Wilhelm II issued a joint manifesto in order to win the sympathy of the Polish population: they announced the creation of a Polish state from the territories liberated from Russian occupation (though no borders were designated). The declaration of the two emperors was a disappointment for the Polish population and political élite because it made no mention of the borders of the future country and said nothing about the unification of the tripartite Poland. Nevertheless, it was a positive development that this was the first time that two of the three partitioning powers interfered with the internal affairs of the third power, which meant that Polish question had become an

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21 Ibid., 219.
22 Ibid., 222.
23 Ibid., 304.
24 Ibid., 326.

international issue and no longer represented an internal affair of the three occupiers.[25]

Not much later, certain changes took place that fundamentally modified the Austro-Hungarian management of the Polish question. Franz Joseph passed away on November 21, 1916 and Charles I of Austria (Charles IV of Hungary) became the new ruler. Minister of Foreign Affairs István Burián was replaced by Ottokar Czernin on December 22. Therefore, it was no accident that Count Tivadar Batthyány, the chief proponent of Polish independence in the Hungarian National Assembly, brought up the Polish question again on December 11, 1916. He called the proclamation of the two emperors "a dog's breakfast" that was unfeasible in its existing form and would only generate uncertainty and distrust among the Poles, thus bringing only despair. Batthyány was of the view that it should have been clearly stated what kind of Poland the Hungarians would like to see after the war: "Let the Polish know what they can expect of us."[26] In his opinion, the statement that should have been issued was that "we will demand an entirely independent big Polish Kingdom. This would be a grand oeuvre of grand times."[27] As for Germany, he said that "in order to secure its own borders, it could make the sacrifice of liberating those poor Poles who had enjoyed everything under Prussian rule but the faintest freedom."[28] Finally, he called attention to the fact that this proclamation implied tacitly that the future Poland would sooner or later become a German puppet state—not quite the outcome for which the Austrian and Hungarian soldiers had been fighting. What Batthyány meant by that was that Germany was considering the creation of a buffer state between itself and Russia—a plan completely unacceptable for the Polish.

Prime Minister István Tisza replied to Batthyány's remarks, and without actually refuting the representative's claims, he just said that in the given situation, public criticism aimed at the activities of the governments did not help the Polish cause. Moreover, he asked the opposition's representative not

25 Adam Dziurok, Marek Gałęzowski, Łukasz Kamiński and Filip Musiał, *Od niepodległości do niepodległości. Historia Polski 1918–1989* (Warsaw: IPN, 2010), 19.

26 *KHN*, December 11, 1916, vol. 33, 54.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

to arouse such desires in the Poles that would be impossible to satisfy. Tisza declared:

> I think there are two dangers that threaten an adequate solution to the Polish question: one of them is if we manage to raise doubts in the Polish nation concerning the seriousness and efficiency of the solution initiated by Austria-Hungary and the German Empire, and the other is if we manage to awaken such desires and aspirations in the Polish nation that exceed the extent of feasibility.[29]

The Central National Committee (Centralny Komitet Narodowy) reacted to the declaration of the two emperors on November 16, 1916, and it demanded the creation of a Polish government. As a result of this, a Temporary State Committee was established on January 14, 1917. A few days later, on January 22, the war objectives announced in the United States Senate by President Woodrow Wilson included "the creation of a united, independent and sovereign" Poland.[30] On February 10, strikes broke out in St. Petersburg that escalated into a revolution by the end of the month. Clearly, the international power landscape was changing radically, thus altering the weight of the Polish question as well.

The Hungarian political élite was not blind to these changes either. Unsurprisingly, Tivadar Batthyány rose to speak again on February 10, 1917, in the House of Representatives. He observed that Berlin had completely taken the upper hand in the Polish case vis-à-vis Vienna; what is more, the whole affair had been mismanaged from the very beginning. But this time he criticized the fact that although the creation of an independent Polish army had been proclaimed, and Hans Hartwig von Beseler—the military general governor of the Russian Polish territories occupied by the Germans—was trying to organize this army, in reality the governments of the Central Powers were doing everything in their power to prevent it from being established. Batthyány also objected to subordinating the Polish Legions to the German army. Batthyány asserted:

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29 *KHN*, December 13, 1916, vol. 33, 91.
30 Roszkowski, *Najnowsza historia*, 32–33.

The right policy would have been to send as many Hungarian statesmen, officers and generals there as possible, and to entrust the difficult task of establishing the Polish Kingdom to as many Hungarians as possible because in that case the performance of the Hungarians would have been received with the fullest confidence, whereas it is undeniable that be it the Prussians or the Austrians, they will encounter a certain distrust due to memory of the past.[31]

The Germans indeed assumed control over efforts to resolve the Polish question beginning in early 1917. Although Vienna maintained its claim for at the least the territory under Austro-Hungarian occupation, the Germans were already demanding the evacuation and handover of the Austrian general government. Meanwhile, István Tisza noted with pleasure that the German plans would be implemented, leaving the dualist system intact, i.e., the Polish case would cause no "interference."

However, the Hungarian prime minister was wrong. Polish political and military leaders demanded even more autonomy on the basis of the declaration of the two emperors. On May 28, the Polish Circle in Vienna urged the unification of the three Polish territories and total independence. Piłsudski made a similar statement. These actions led to the so-called Oath Crisis. On July 9–11, the First and Third Brigades of the Polish Legions refused to swear allegiance to the emperor, which was mandatory in the German and the Austro-Hungarian armies. The Second Brigade was transformed into the Polish Auxiliary Corps, operating within the army of Austria-Hungary. In response, the Germans arrested about 90 Polish leaders and imprisoned Józef Piłsudski in the Fortress of Magdeburg. At the end of August, Germany dissolved the Temporary State Committee, too.[32] In other words, it was the concept of the German buffer state that was gradually put in practice.

After the Bolshevik October Revolution in 1917, Russia quit the war, Austria-Hungary shifted its remaining forces to the Italian Front and the construction of the German puppet state was continued in the Polish territories. As a matter of fact, it had become clear by April 1917 that the government of Austria-Hungary had renounced its claim to control over the territory. Minister of

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31 *KHN*, February 10, 1917, vol. 34, 184.
32 See Roszkowski, *Najnowsza historia*, 36.

Foreign Affairs Czernin declared that Austria-Hungary was willing to give up Galicia and would consent to the creation of a German-dominated Poland. True enough, in autumn 1917 Austria-Hungary returned to its Austro-Polish plans for one last time: it set up the Regents' Council, summoned the members of the latter in Vienna, and promised a personal union to them. What is more, Vienna began to organize the trip of Charles I of Austria to Warsaw, but in the end this initiative came to nothing.

On November 20, 1917, István Tisza interpellated his successor, Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle, on the Polish matter. He questioned the government about its plans and whether it would maintain the dualist system. Wekerle gave two guarantees in his reply:

> First of all, in all circumstances, we shall protect the parity situation of our state, its autonomy provided by the law as well as its economic interests; and second, we shall confer jurisdiction in the matter of the protection of these interests and the solution of this issue in general as regards the relation of the new Polish state to our Monarchy to the competent legislative authority.[33]

At the same time, Wekerle was unwilling to make a promise regarding Poland's sovereignty.

On January 8, 1918, President Wilson presented his famous Fourteen Points. Point 13 stated the following: "An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant." However, the leadership of the Austro-Hungarian Empire seemed to be unaware of world politics. After the announcement of Wilson's Fourteen Points, on February 12 the delegations of the Central Powers, which had originally conducted negotiations with Soviet Russia, made peace with the Ukrainian People's Republic in Brest and ceded the Chelm region to Ukraine in exchange for food. The so-called "bread peace"—according to which Berlin and Vienna recognized Ukraine in exchange for food supplies—caused a tremendous uproar among the Poles.

33 *KHN*, November 20, 1917, vol. 37, 364.

No wonder: while the Entente Powers were discussing the possibility of a united independent Poland, the leadership of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire were already sacrificing the territories of a Poland that had not even been constituted.[34]

On February 22, 1918, Count Tivadar Batthyány interpellated Prime Minister Wekerle specifically about the detachment of the Chelm region. The speaker sympathized with the exasperation of the Poles; moreover, it was rumored that other lands would also be detached from the Kingdom of Poland. In his reply, Wekerle assured Batthyány that "this question will be resolved with the observation of the entire peace treaty, and with the mutual satisfaction of the parties, honoring the Polish interests."[35]

However, Polish military leaders were not so optimistic. Upon learning about the loss of Chelm, the Polish Auxiliary Corps under the command of Józef Haller refused to follow further orders and marched to Rarańcza in order to join the Second Polish Corps that had seceded from the Russian Army. On May 11, 1918, the united Polish forces fought a battle against the German troops near Kaniów. Although they lost, the battle had immense symbolic importance. This marked the first instance in which Polish forces that had been fighting on opposite sides joined forces to reconquer Polish territory. After the defeat, captured Polish soldiers were interned in Huszt (Khust, Ukraine), while Haller fled to France. On June 3, 1918, England, France and Italy issued a common statement in the "Wilsonian spirit": "the creation of a united and independent Polish state, with free access to the sea, is one of the conditions of durable and just peace and of a rule of law in Europe."[36]

At that point, the common Austro-Hungarian minister of foreign affairs was no longer Czernin, but Burián (again), who delegated Gábor Ugron to serve as special representative of the minister of foreign affairs in Warsaw. Burián's Polish-friendly stance did not change, and Ugron was considered to be an expert on Polish matters. Burián insisted on the reunification of Poland and supported the personal union to be concluded with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Burián had a second argument up his sleeve. He declared

34 Spencer Tucker, Laura Matysek Wood and Justin D. Murphy, eds., *The European Powers in the First World War: An Encyclopedia* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis, 1996), 707–708.
35 *KHN*, February 22, 1918, vol. 38, 457.
36 Roszkowski, *Najnowsza historia*, 41.

that without Galicia, Austria-Hungary would be confronted with "political misery": its economy would be weakened, it would lose its advantageous military-geostrategic position, and in terms of domestic policy, it would be stripped of one the factors cementing the empire together. Naturally, the Germans discarded his argument. For them, the existence of an independent Poland would have posed a great danger because of Posen, Western Prussia and Danzig.[37]

On May 14, 1918, pro-government MP Sándor Dobieczki took the floor regarding the Polish matter. He started by saying that it would be an enormous mistake to depart from the "historic foundations" and leave more room for ethnic self-determination. He, too, criticized Austrian diplomacy for having ceded Chelm to the Ukrainians:

> Now instead of reinforcing the Polish and thus erecting a wall between our Ruthenians and the Ukrainians, Austrian diplomacy demolished even the existing one, and it did so at a time when there was a possibility that Hungary, Austria and the new Kingdom of Poland would unite their forces under the scepter of the Habsburg dynasty in a personal union in an effort to achieve their political and economic independence against German expansion as well as Russian encroachment that may become potentially dangerous once again in the future.[38]

Next Bobieczki explained that by German expansion he meant the excessive economic weight of Germany. As opposed to that, he would have deemed it favorable if the 45 million inhabitants of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were to continue their economic struggle reinforced by the 20 million inhabitants of the new Poland. In Dobieczki's view, the Hungarians should have acquired the Polish markets: "Having played such an insignificant role in the domain of foreign trade in the past, we should grab the slightest opportunity to obtain this new market."[39]

37 Zoltán Tefner, "Ugron István és a német külpolitika 1918 áprilisában–májusában," *Századok* 145, no. 6 (2011): 1449.

38 KHN, May 14, 1918, vol. 39, 165.

39 Ibid., 167.

Batthyány seconded the Labour MP Dobieczki in saying that an independent Poland could help Hungary "to achieve (. . .) [its] political and economic independence against the German expansion as well as the Russian encroachment that may become potentially dangerous once again in the future."[40]

However, in the end, Batthyány seemed to have backed away from his earlier firm position when he summarized the possible scenarios:

> On my part, I hold the view that today the only possible solution is to set up the Kingdom of Poland within the framework of a pure personal union under the rule of His Majesty the King. What the Entente is promising, i.e., that it will unite all the Poles, including those in Posen and so on, is a utopia, and the Poles know very well that it would go way beyond the possibilities of feasibility. On the other hand, it is also quite certain—and again, the Poles know it the best—that the restoration of the Russian Polish royal territory to a kingdom without Lithuania on the one hand and without Galicia on the other, not to speak of the territory of the Chelm Government, would be an incomplete work that would once again conceal the seeds of discord and reclamation, and which would pose the gravest danger for Austria because irredentism would naturally flare up in Galicia.[41]

In conclusion, we can say that during the First World War, the Hungarian governments supported Polish efforts to gain independence as long as they did not affect the dualist system. This was especially true with regard to the position of Prime Minister Count István Tisza. The ultimate solution with he could identify was the Austro-Polish subdualist scenario. Naturally, the opposition always demanded more from the government. Gyula Andrássy the Younger was the only politician who overtly supported trialism, i.e., the creation of an Austro-Hungaro-Polish state. Tivadar Batthyány urged the creation of a unified and independent Poland as early as autumn 1916. But reality was different. Neither trialism nor a united Poland stood a chance during the war because the military outcomes tipped the balance in favor of

40 Ibid., 321–322.
41 Ibid., 324.

Germany, and the concept that came to the fore was that of the German buffer state. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that even in this situation, the opposition members of the Hungarian House of Representatives considered it important to take a stand in favor of an independent Poland with reference to the links between the two nations. We can affirm that during the war, the contemporary opposition acted as the nation's conscience and the voice of the thousand-year-old Polish-Hungarian friendship.

However, autumn 1918 overwrote the plans of both the Hungarian government and the leadership of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After 123 years of partition, Poland was revived from its ashes on November 11, 1918. By that time, the Aster Revolution had already taken place in Hungary and Mihály Károlyi was appointed to form a "people's government." István Tisza was assassinated at his home in Budapest on October 31, 1918. The Czechs and the Slovaks proclaimed their independence on October 28–30, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire de facto ceased to exist. The ruling emperor, Charles I of Austria, relinquished the throne on November 11 in Austria and on November 13 at the Castle of Eckertsau as Charles IV, King of Hungary. At the same time, the future borders had not been demarcated either for Poland or for Hungary. Hungary's borders were determined by the Paris Peace Treaty signed on June 4, 1920, while the definitive shape of Poland was laid down by the Peace of Riga concluded on March 18, 1921.

But even before that, Hungary and Poland had officially established diplomatic relations with each other on October 31, 1919, and Hungary supported the Polish with arms and munitions in their fight against the Bolsheviks. In other words, Polish-Hungarian relations continued to be founded upon mutual assistance even after the First World War.

Enikő Gyarmati

Federalism in Austria-Hungary during the Great War

All throughout the long nineteenth century, the structural transformation of the states under the rule of the Habsburg dynasty and the reorganization of the legal framework of interstate relations of the Danube states along federative principles remained a recurrent and unresolved issue on the political agenda. The demand for federative transformations derived, on the one hand, from the necessity to reform internal state structures. This issue lost none of its relevance despite the outbreak of the Great War. On the other hand, in the last two years of the Great War, the creation of a federative Habsburg Empire appeared as a strategic element of negotiation in the array of diplomatic tools at the separate peace talks. In two cases when attempts were made at signing a separate peace, there is evidence that Emperor Charles I (IV) also considered the possibility of turning the Empire into a federation with a view to ending the war, thus wishing to secure the support of the Entente Allies. The present study seeks to offer an overview of the strategic considerations of the various interest groups.

The Set of Arguments Underpinning the Federation Plans

Before the First World War, the federal conceptions aimed at the reorganization of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were usually nourished mostly by the need for internal reforms. It was in this understanding that Theodor Fuchs[1] put his

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1 Theodor Fuchs (1842–1925): geologist, university professor, member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences from 1883 and court councilor from 1904. He was the vice-president of the Vienna Geological Society founded in 1908. See Helmut Dolezal, "Fuchs, Theodor," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 5 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1961), 674, accessed on March 15, 2015, http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/

ideas on paper right before the war. In his proposal regarding the reform of Austro-Hungarian dualism, he evoked Adolf Fischhof's idea.[2] Both of them suggested that the Austro-Hungarian Empire should be transformed into a "monarchic Switzerland."[3] This monarchic Switzerland should set up a federal state composed of five kingdoms: the Kingdom of Hungary; the Kingdom of Galicia, Lodomeria and Bukovina; a kingdom of the territories united under the Czech Crown; the United Kingdom of Alps Countries; and the United Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.[4] "The mission of the five kingdoms united by the Austro-Hungarian Empire is to constitute the core of a European confederation as the proto-cantons of a European Switzerland. Vienna must become Europe's Rütli."[5]

Still before the war, Anton Korošec, the representative of the Croatian-Slovenian Club, said at the 143rd session of the Vienna House of Representatives held on May 20, 1913, that in the future they would reject a Monarchy with exclusive German and Hungarian hegemony because South Slavs would be much more contented with a large Switzerland.[6] According to

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2 According to Swiss historian Urs Altermatt, the Central European interest at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Swiss model of the ethnic cohabitation was motivated by the need for the transformation of the German Empire and the Habsburg Empire. Urs Altermatt, "Die Idee 'Schweiz.' Modell für Nationalitätenstaaten und Europa," in Altermatt, *Die Schweiz in Europa. Antithese, Modell oder Biotop?* (Frauenfeld–Stuttgart–Vienna: Huber Verlag, 2011), 28–30.

3 Adolf Fischhof, Österreich und die Bürgschaften seines Bestandes. Politische Studie (Vienna: Wallishausser, 1869), 89; Theodor Fuchs, *Der Zusammenbruch der österreichischen Verfassung und ihre Wiederaufrichtung* (Pressburg [Bratislava]: Buchdruckerei F. C. Wigand, 1914), 46. Fuchs's writing is briefly presented in Stefan Malfer, "Der Konstitutionalismus in der Habsburgermonarchie – Siebzig Jahre Verfassungsdiskussion in 'Cisleithanien,'" in Helmut Rumpler and Peter Urbanitsch, eds., *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, vol. 7/1 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 61.

4 Fuchs, *Der Zusammenbruch der österreichischen Verfassung*, 44–45.

5 Ibid., 46.

6 Anton Korošec (1872–1940) was a member of the House of Representatives of the Vienna Imperial Council between 1906 and 1918. At the Imperial Council convened on May 29, 1917, he was elected president of the Yugoslav Club. See Franz Adlgasser, ed., *Die Mitglieder der österreichischen Zentralparlamente 1848–1918. Ein biographisches Lexikon*, 2 vols. (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014). For

Korošec, the time had come for the federal transformation of the Monarchy. He also assured his fellow representatives that the South Slavs of Austria-Hungary were not gravitating outwards, but that they were looking for a solution to their troubles within the existing frameworks. Nevertheless, they demanded freedom and rights equal to those of other nations as well as freedom to take advantage of their cultural and economic opportunities.[7]

In Hungary, sociologist Oszkár Jászi, one of the founders of the Civic Radical Party, often made reference to the national and ethnic experiences of Switzerland in his writings.[8] In his article published in summer 1915, he emphasized that the main difference between the evolutional curve of Hungary and Austria as a state was that Austria was becoming more and more similar to a monarchic Switzerland and it had become capable of creating territorial autonomy. Hungary could not go down that road, but it should gradually implement the principle of the national equality of rights. By that he meant free racial and cultural development.[9]

It was in spring 1918 that Jászi first hit a positive tone regarding the idea of a monarchic Switzerland that he had earlier rejected in relation to Hungary. In his work outlining the concept of the alliance of Danubian states, or the Danubian United States, which became available for the public only in October, he was ready to accept that the monarchic Switzerland—along the idea embodying the free alliance between peoples—could offer a solution for the Danubian and Balkan nations as well.[10] As he pointed out, there were

information on Korošec, see vol. 1, 611–612.

7 Feliks J. Bister, *"Majestät, es ist zu spat . . ." Anton Korošec und die slovenische Politik im Wiener Reichsrat bis 1918* (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 1995), 158, 393.

8 For Oszkár Jászi's federalist plans, see László Szarka, "Ungarische Föderationspläne in 1918 und die Auflösung der Habsburgermonarchie," in Marcella Rossová, *Integration und Desintegration in Mitteleuropa. Pläne und Realität* (Munich: Martin Meidenbauer, 2009), 145–147; Rossová, "Volt-e reformalternatíva? A Habsburg-monarchia felbomlása," *Rubicon* 15, no. 10 (2004): 17–23; Rossová, *Duna-táji dilemmák. Nemzeti kisebbségek–kisebbségi politika a 20. századi Kelet-Közép-Európában* (Budapest: Ister, 1998), 29–30.

9 Oszkár Jászi, "Az entente nemzetiségi politikája," *Világ*, no. 226, August 15, 1915, 1–3. The article was also published in Gábor G. Kemény, *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korában*, vol. 7, *1914–1916* (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézet, 1999), 459–462.

10 Oszkár Jászi, *A Monarchia jövője. A dualizmus bukása és a dunai egyesült államok*

five nations within the Austro-Hungarian Empire—the Hungarians, the Germans, the Czechs, the Polish and the Croatian-Serbians—that fulfilled the criteria of historical-political individuality. He thought that the confederation of these five nations organized on a hereditary dynastic basis would also be recognized by the Entente Alliance because it corresponded to the ideas propagated by them. In other words, it rationally implemented the right to national self-determination and guaranteed the uninhibited development of national minorities. This transformation would have also democratized the entire territory of the state.

Jászi considered the prospect of the unification of these peoples with their racial relatives living in the neighboring countries to be economic, geographical and political nonsense. However, the other alternative, i.e., the creation of small nation-states would more than likely bring about their future transformation into buffer states for Germany or Russia.[11] In Jászi's reading, Switzerland was a prime example of the compatibility of linguistic and ethnic diversity within the framework of a federal state, for the notion of federation was able to unite nations that used to be independent and which had an advanced national conscience into a lasting association.[12] Nevertheless, the only territorial autonomy that Jászi could envision within the Kingdom of Hungary pertained to Transylvania owing to its historical and economic past.[13]

Jászi believed that the Swiss experiences could be applied in the formulation of the constitution of the empire to be transformed into a federative state. He suggested that a federative imperial assembly elected by popular representation be established. He conceived of operating the key competencies of the confederation on the basis of a territorial distribution of labor. He designated Vienna as the seat of the ministry of defense, Budapest as the place for the ministry of foreign affairs and Prague as the center of finances, while he assigned the direction of transportation affairs to Trieste, and envisioned Warsaw as the capital of the federative court. At the same time, he refrained from elaborating the details of the constitution.[14]

(Budapest: Új Magyarország Rt., 1918, reprint 1988).

11 Ibid., 37–39, 51–53, 75–76.

12 Ibid., 81–82, 97–98.

13 Ibid., 52–53.

14 Ibid., 83–86.

In his declaration of summer 1917, Teodoru Mihali, the influential representative of ethnic Romanians living in Hungary and the chair of the ethnicities' club at the parliament in Budapest, emphasized that the ethnicities living in Hungary did not have particular demands. In his opinion, there were no irredentist or federative trends present within the ethnic parties of Hungary. What they did aim for, however, in agreement with Korošec's view, was to ensure political enfranchisement, proper public administration, appropriate arbitration, popular education in the language of the given ethnicity as well as uninhibited political, economic and cultural development.[15] In light of the opinions of South Slavs living in western and southern Hungary, Fran Ilešić considered the ethnic arrangement proposed by Jászi to be only a partial solution because it would not have allowed for free cultural development. As he saw it, the mother-tongue public administration, justice and education that was quintessential for free cultural development no longer sufficed. According to him, it was not enough if those working in public administration could speak Hungarian: ethnic stakeholders should also receive due state and public administrative power. This, however, could only be fully guaranteed within the framework of territorial autonomy.[16]

On the Way to Ethnic Autonomies

Many were reluctant to raise the issue of federalism during the war because, due to the exceptional measures that had been enacted, they would have run an even higher risk of being arrested for high treason. Thus even more courageous authors went only as far as to weigh the possibility of ethnic enfranchisement and ethnic autonomies when discussing the structural problems of the Monarchy. Two proposals survived in Hungarian memoirs literature that proposed a federative solution to alleviate ethnic problems, but which, rather cautiously, considered assuring ethnic autonomies. Baron Gyula

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15 Tivadar Mihali, "Nemzetiségi kérdés és demokrácia Magyarországon," *A Monarchia,* vol. 2, no. 12, June 30, 1917, 398–401.

16 Fran Ilešić, "A nemzeti önrendelkezés és a magyarok," in György Litván and László Szarka, eds., *Duna-völgyi barátságok és viták. Jászi Oszkár közép-európai dossziéja* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1991), 79–82, here 79.

Szilassy[17] completed his first memorandum on November 9, 1917.[18] Similarly to the motives underlying Fuchs' proposal, this Austro-Hungarian diplomat was also inspired by the need for a reform of dualism, but he also alluded to the importance of the swift management of the ethnic crisis that had been exacerbated during the war.[19] The baron transmitted his memorandum to the emperor-king through the intermediary of Count Mensdorff[20] and Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Count Ottokar Czernin. The document assessed international relations, and in order to ease the tensions threatening to shatter the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the baron made a proposal regarding the transformation of its dualist structure. As a courteous Austro-Hungarian solution to the ethnic question in Hungary, he wished to direct the emperor's attention to the introduction of general suffrage in Hungary, the inclusion of ethnic representatives in municipality-level and county-level public life and the necessity of the parity-based use of the ethnic languages. He advocated full autonomy for Croatia, but he also deemed it important to point out that the Hungarian state should preserve the right to maintain the railways.[21]

17 Baron Gyula Szilassy (1870–1935) was born in Bex, Canton Vaud/Waadt, in French Switzerland. He worked as an Austro-Hungarian diplomat at the embassy in Athens from 1914 until 1916. In summer 1918, he was the top official at the embassy in Constantinople. After his long discussion with Count Mihály Károlyi on December 17, 1918, he represented Hungary in Bern as a plenipotentiary representative from February until April 1919.

18 Julius Szilassy, "Das erste Memoire an den Kaiser. Der zukünftige Bürgerkrieg in Österreich-Ungarn und wie man ihn verhindern kann. Konstantinopel, 9. November 1917," in Szilassy, *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie. Diplomatische Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Verlag Neues Vaterland, E. Berger & Co., 1921), 379–399.

19 Éva Somogyi, "Magyar diplomaták a közös Külügyminisztériumban," *Századok* 138, no. 3 (2004): 617; Somogyi, "A magyar diplomaták házassági szokásai 1867–1914," in Tamás Krausz and Gyula Szvák, eds., Életünk Kelet-Európa. *Tanulmányok Niederhauser Emil 80. születésnapjára* (Budapest: Pannonica, 2003), 220–225.

20 Count Albert Mensdorff-Pouilly Dietrichstein (1861–1945) was the Monarchy's ambassador to London from April 1904 to August 1914. He negotiated on behalf of Charles IV in December 1917 with the representative of the Entente, British General Jan Smuts, regarding the separate peace plans of the monarchy. See Eleonora Jenicek, "Albert Graf Mensdorff-Pouilly Dietrichstein" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Vienna, 1965); Adlgasser, *Die Mitglieder der österreichischen Zentralparlamente*, vol. 2, 790.

21 Szilassy, *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, 397.

Szilassy described the concept of the new alliance of states to be composed of four state-level units—German-Austria, Bohemia, the Kingdom of Hungary and the South Slavic State—only *a posteriori* in his memoirs. However, he thought that the assurance of autonomy would be the most adequate solution for Trieste, Slovakia as well as for Romanians and Rusyns living in Hungary.[22] On August 13, 1918, Szilassy addressed the monarch again, and argued for exiting the war immediately. He was convinced that if the Austro-Hungarians were to do that, they would have a fair chance of becoming the core of a European federation of states.[23] In his political agenda handed over first to Prince Windischgraetz on September 9, 1918, then four days later, on September 13, 1918, to Count Hunyady, he advocated the granting of internal autonomy to Bohemia, the unification of Croatia with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia, the transfer of Galicia to Poland or Ukraine, and finally, the provision of Trieste with the title of commercial capital, similar to New York and Amsterdam, as soon as possible.[24]

Internal secret councilor and retired Hungarian royal minister for internal affairs József Kristóffy sent the emperor his thoughts on the reorganization of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in June 1918 through cabinet secretary Baron Géza Nagy.[25] Taking the concept approved by the heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, as his point of departure, Kristóffy suggested that the delegations should be united into a single federal council. According to this solution, which had quite a lot in common with the ideas of Theodor Fuchs, peoples and countries representing independence, autonomy and constitutional rights would thus acquire national representation. The dualist state of Austria-Hungary would be transformed into a trialist state by declaring the independence of the Czech state, but the Slovak counties of Hungary would not become part of it. Kristóffy envisioned the management of the South Slav

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22 Ibid., 313–315.

23 Julius Szilassy, "Das zweite Memoire an den Kaiser. Die Notwendigkeit eines sofortigen Friedens, selbst eines Separatfriedens. Yeniköj, August 13, 1918," in Szilassy, *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, 400–408. His advocacy for a federative Hungary continued to determine his views after the war as well.

24 Julius Szilassy, "Mein politisches Programm. 9.–13. September 1918," in Szilassy, *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, 409–413.

25 József Kristóffy, *Magyarország kálváriája. Az összeomlás útja. Politikai emlékek 1890–1926* (Budapest: Wodianer, 1927), 863.

question only and exclusively within the framework of provincial autonomy, respecting the territorial integrity of the Holy Crown of Hungary. This plan also recommended that Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia should be attached to Croatia. Kristóffy also saw the token of the ethnic rights of Romanian, Slovak, Serb, German and Rusyn inhabitants of Hungary in universal suffrage and the guarantees of the ethnic law.[26]

In his memoirs, i.e., in retrospect, Count Mihály Károlyi also contended that the Monarchy "should have moved towards a federation," and that it should proceed in the spirit of Lajos Kossuth via the will of the masses.[27] As the count argued, this decision would have been instrumental in deferring two major threats. In the first instance—German victory—Austria-Hungary would have become an inseparable part of Greater Germany, which would have also meant the materialization of Friedrich Naumann's plan. The other danger— Entente victory—would have still allowed for the creation of a federation, but Hungary's arguments would not have been heard and its interests would be swept off the table.[28] With that line of thought, which by the way Kristóffy also used in support of urgent internal transformation, Károlyi pronounced himself in favor of internal, as opposed to external, federalization. The later prime minister of Hungary was of the view that internal federalization would have by all means gained support with the ethnicities, including the Czechs, who strove for the transformation of the Monarchy "into an alliance of free national states enjoying equal rights" and the South Slavs, who maintained similar demands.[29]

The declaration issued by the Yugoslav Club on the occasion of the opening of the Viennese Reichsrat in May 1917 as well as numerous other speeches delivered in the following months demonstrate consistent loyalty to the House of Habsburg.[30] According to Korošec's biographer, biased loyalty to the emperor was characteristic of the Slovene representative only before the

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26 Ibid., 775–777.

27 Mihály Károlyi, *Egy egész világ ellen* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1965).

28 Ibid., 145–146.

29 Ibid., 181–182.

30 See, for example, his speech delivered at the fourth meeting of session 22 on June 12, 1917: "StPHH XXII. Stenographische Protokolle über die Sitzungen des Hauses der Abgeordneten des Reichsrates XXII. Session (1917–1918), 4887," in *Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online*, accessed on April 18, 2015, www.alex.onb.ac.at

war. In all likelihood, he must have abandoned all his hopes attached to any sort of Habsburg solution at the beginning of 1918. After that, the countless declarations of the Yugoslav Club regarding the rejection of the unification of Croatia, Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina within the framework of dualism, the memorandum issued in concert with the Czechs for the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk and the ratification of the Zagreb resolution of March 3, 1918, all suggested that Anton Korošec would draw closer to the policy advocated by the South Slav émigrés.[31]

Karl Renner, the representative of Austrian social democracy, also prepared his political proposals within the constitutional structure of the empire, but especially with respect to the settlement of the ethnic issues of Cisleithania.[32] His journalistic pieces published in the first years of the war reveal a consistent policy in light of the social democratic agenda of Brno put forward before the turn of the century.[33] The core idea of the program elaborated with the objective of assuring ethnic rights was that the nations as the embodiments of public law and the bearers of public authority should create a federative state composed of autonomous nations as member states. Taking Wilhelm von Humboldt's attempt at drawing the limits of state power as a model, Renner made a proposal aimed at defining the legal conditions pertaining to the distinction between a state above nations and national autonomy. Thus a key element of Renner's political agenda during the war was the concept of national autonomies coming together in a federative state.[34] This plan went further than the above-described proposals for autonomy in that it specifically determined the mode of association, that is, the thought of creating a federal state.[35]

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31 Bister, "*Majestät, es ist zu spat . . .* ", 319–325.

32 Karl Renner (1870–1950) was a member of the German Social Democrats' Club from 1911. See Adlgasser, *Die Mitglieder der österreichischen Zentralparlamente 1848 1918.*, vol. 2, 1006.

33 Karl Renner, Österreichs Erneuerung. Politisch-programmatische Aufsätze, 3 vols. (Vienna: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung Ignaz Brand and Co., 1916).

34 Karl Renner, "Demokratie und Autonomie," in Renner, Österreichs Erneuerung, vol. 1, 69–73.

35 Similarly to Naumann's views, Renner thought that a state above the nations was necessary for small nations. According to Renner, nations should form an economic and defense community together.

Nation-States Instead of National Autonomies

Before 1914, it was only the Czech Constitutional Progressive Party founded in 1908 that demanded the creation of an independent Czech state.[36] The accession to the throne of Charles Habsburg I (IV) did not entail any modifications in fundamental issues either in the ideas of ethnic representatives having emigrated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire or in the claims of the ethnicities that were politically active in the parliaments of the Monarchy. While the former continued to think in terms of a nation-state alternative outside the framework of the Monarchy, the latter—as it was also demonstrated by the policy pursued by Korošec—assured the emperor of their loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty. The monarch's conception of the internal federalization of the Monarchy for the sake of an eventual separate peace and the plans elaborated in the political workshops of the Entente Allies were no secret to the ethnic representatives who were living in exile in France, Great Britain and the United States. What is more, they were well-known by English and French public opinion as well, and the views in favor of the preservation of the Monarchy's integrity were also widely debated. According to one of the often-cited argumentations, the demand for independence was not general among the Slavic and Latin peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This is also supported by the statements of the historical participants cited above. According to the other view, the group of small Central European states created as an alternative to the Monarchy would not have represented a real obstacle to German expansionism. These two arguments were often brought up in the reasoning for the reorganization of the Monarchy according to federative principles. A significant proportion of European politicians saw the post-war preservation of the Monarchy's unity as a long-term token of the stability of the Central European region.

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36 Jiři Kořalka, "A világpolitika színpadán. Egy 'állam nélküli nemzet' a nemzetközi kapcsolatokban 1900 és 1918 között," in László Szarka, ed., *Csehország a Habsburg-monarchiában 1618–1918. Esszék a cseh történelemről* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1989), 161.

Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk,[37] the leader of the Czech(oslovak) political émigrés, described Central Europe as a zone of small oppressed peoples.[38] According to his line of thought—also shared by Beneš—the notions of freedom and federation were inseparable from each other, thus nations could only enter a federation if they did so freely, of their own will. While neither of them questioned the viability of a federation, they contested that this road could be taken by the extension of autonomies. In many of his works, Masaryk tried to convince his readership that national autonomy could not offer an adequate solution to the ethnic problems of the region. Similarly to Friedrich Naumann, he saw the "program of association" dictated by the era as the biggest challenge. While the German politician envisioned the future via the creation of a German Central Europe on the basis of a dynastic alliance,[39] the representatives of Czech political émigrés set the objective of establishing a democratic, republican Central Europe.[40] The latter designated the cutting up of Austria as their primary war objective, for Austria had betrayed the ideal of federation when it terminated Czech state-level sovereignty.

37 Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937) wrote a memorandum to British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey in May 1915 in which he called his attention to the fact that the Slovaks living in the monarchy were also seeking independence and that they would agree to be united with the Czechs. It was considered to be an achievement of émigré politics when Masarýk was received in person by French Prime Minister Aristide Briand on February 3, 1916, and by United States President Woodrow Wilson on June 19, 1918. See László Szarka, "Egy XX. századi államalapító emlékiratai," in Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *A világforradalom 1914–1918* (Pozsony [Bratislava]: Madách Könyvkiadó, 1990), 429–463; Szarka, "Csehszlovákia államalapítói" (Budapest: ELTE–BTK MTT Tanári Tagozat, 1994), 28–34.

38 Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, *The Problem of the Small Nations in the European Crisis* (London: Council for the Study of International Relations, 1915).

39 Frigyes Naumann, *Középeurópa*, translated by Andorné Kircz (Budapest: Politzer Zsigmond és Fia, 1916).

40 Tamás G. Masaryk, *Az új Európa. A szláv álláspont*, translated by Bálint Domby (Košice: Globus, 1923), 44–45.

Czech émigré politician Edvard Beneš[41] wrote his pamphlet against the federalization of Austria-Hungary precisely to refute the above arguments.[42] He disseminated the short memorandum drafted in spring 1917 in official circles in France and Great Britain. As he recalled in his memoirs, his essay against Austria was used efficiently in Italian circles as well.[43] In his writing, Beneš first of all challenged the idea that Austria could be separated from the German alliance though the granting of national autonomies. Second, he also contested the notion that a federative Austria would join anti-Prussian forces and offer a guarantee against eastern and southern German expansion. According to Beneš, the token of lasting peace could only be the territorial completion of Serbia, Poland and Romania.[44]

Czech émigré political officials also proposed some options regarding the political demands of the Slovaks living in Hungary. The signatories of the Pittsburgh Agreement signed on May 31, 1918, by Masaryk and American Slovaks committed themselves to the pledge that the Slovaks would enjoy autonomy within the future Czechoslovak state. This agreement implied the use of double standards to some extent: sovereign statehood for the Czechs and autonomy for the Slovaks. This duality remained characteristic of the views of these politicians throughout the war.

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41 Edvard Beneš (1884–1948) led the anti-Monarchy organization called Maffia in 1915, then he emigrated to Switzerland on September 3, 1915. From March 1916, he was active as the founder and secretary general of the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris. For information regarding the Czechoslovak political émigrés, see Magda Ádám, *Ki volt valójában Edvard Beneš?* (Budapest: Gondolat, 2009), 21–31; László Gulyás, *Edvard Beneš. Közép-Európa koncepciók és a valóság* (Máriabesnyő–Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2008), 54–77.

42 Edvard Beneš, "Néhány egyszerű igazság. Ausztria-Magyarország föderális berendezkedéséről," *La Nation Tchèque* 3, no. 12, December 1, 1917, 403–408.

43 Edvard Beneš, *A nemzetek forradalma*, vol. 2 (Pozsony [Bratislava]: Eugen Prager Kk., 1936), 13.

44 Beneš, "Néhány egyszerű igazság," 404–405.

The political efforts of South Slav émigrés were characterized from the very beginning by a consistent denial of loyalty vis-à-vis the Monarchy.[45] The majority of the South Slav émigrés—with the exception of the representatives of the Serbian government—were also in favor of federalism between the South Slav nations, but they did not wish to implement this within the constitutional framework of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was the Yugoslav Committee, their political organization, that was to formulate the émigré political agenda that communicated the South Slav political aims to the Entente Allies.[46] Their press medium entitled *Bulletin Yougoslave* was the most important element of their press propaganda.[47] The cardinal difference between the political views of the two leading and decisive figures of the Yugoslav Committee was a temporary hindrance to South Slav cohesion. Ante Trumbić,[48] the president of the committee, advocated cooperation with the Serbs. Frano Supilo,[49] however, threw his political weight behind the creation of a Croat-dominated Greater Croatia. From the early stages of the

45 The Yugoslav Committee issued a declaration on January 1, 1917, on the occasion of Charles Habsburg's coronation as emperor and king in which they refused to accept him as their ruler.

"Déclaration du Comité Yougoslave à l'occasion du couronnement de l'Empereur et Roi Charles de Habsbourg," *Bulletin Yougoslave*, no. 18 (January 1, 1917): 1, accessed on December 21, 2015, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57400654/f1.item.zoom

46 The Yugoslav Committee (*Jugoslovenski Odbor*) was created on November 22, 1914, in Florence by South Slavs having emigrated from the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Their objective was to conduct political advocacy aimed at gaining freedom and an independent state of South Slavic nations.

47 The *Bulletin Yougoslave* edited by the Yugoslav Committee, Milan Marjanović and Srgjan Tucić published numerous memorandums issued by the Yugoslav Committee.

48 Ante Trumbić (1864–1938) was mayor of Split (Spalato) from 1905 to 1907. He emigrated to Italy when the First World War broke out. He was the founder of the Yugoslav Committee and its president from 1915 to 1918. He signed the Corfu Declaration of 1917. He attended the Rome Congress of ethnic representatives living outside the Monarchy in spring 1918 and headed the Yugoslav delegation. See Adlgasser, *Die Mitglieder der österreichischen Zentralparlamente*, vol. 2, 1312–1313.

49 Frano Supilo (1870–1917) was a leading representative of the émigré Yugoslav political movement after June 1914. He was a member of the Yugoslav Committee, but he quit the committee in April 1915 after the internal Yugoslav conflicts following the Entente's secret Italian agreement in London. See Miško Radošević, *Frano Supilo. Politička studija* (Zagreb: Obnova, 1930), 117.

war, it was Ante Trumbić's policy that received majority support. The émigré representatives of the Serbian government were against the politics of the free unification of South Slav nations with equal rights until the conclusion of the Corfu Agreement.

Federation as a Condition to Separate Peace

In 1917, Charles I (or Charles IV as king of Hungary) proposed to make peace on several occasions to the representatives of the Entente Alliance. Following the talks between Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma and Count Tamás Erdődy in Neuchâtel, the Armand-Revertera summit arranged by the French secret service and the tentative, but fruitless official negotiations between Smuts and Mensdorff in 1917,[50] the monarch commissioned secret court councilor Heinrich Lammasch[51] with the task of transmitting a new peace offer. Lammasch's negotiating partner was George Davis Herron, an American professor of theology.[52] The unofficial meeting took place on February 3–4, 1918 in Geneva.[53] According to the memorandum drafted by Herron, Lammasch outlined the concept of a federative state, for the

50 Ferenc Fejtő, *Rekviem egy hajdanvolt birodalomért. Ausztria-Magyarország szétrombolása* (Budapest: Minerva, Atlantisz, 1990). For the Sixtus affair, see 172–192; for the Armand-Revertera discussions, see 225–239, for the Smuts-Mensdorff negotiations, see 247–251.

51 Heinrich Lammasch (1853–1920) was a retired professor when the war broke out, then an active pro-peace publicist during the war. One of his most famous writings bears the title *Para pacem* (1915). In autumn 1918, Lammasch served as the Austrian prime minister of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for a few days. See Heinrich Benedikt, *Die Friedensaktion der Meinlgruppe 1917/18* (Graz–Cologne: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nachf., 1962), 54–70.

52 George Davis Herron (1862–1925) was an American professor of theology who moved to Switzerland after the war broke out. His journalistic activities in Geneva were aimed at promoting Wilsonian policies. He had good relations with Serb émigré circles in Switzerland. Ibid., 144–149.

53 George Davis Herron, "Heinrich Lammasch's Suggestion for Peace in Bern 1918," in Marga Lammasch and Hans Sperl, eds., *Lammasch Heinrich* (Vienna: Deuticke, 1922), 186–197; Heinrich Lammasch, "Friedensversuche mit Präsident Wilson," in ibid., 96–102.

implementation of which he solicited the help and support of the Americans. Placing the center of the outlined federative state in Vienna, the independent states of German-Austria, the countries of the Czech Crown, the South Slav territories, Galicia, Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary would have made an alliance under the leadership of the Habsburg dynasty, following the example of Swiss cantons. The proposal also aimed to assure the Americans that the authors would do their best to make Germany join this peace plan. Confederative concepts aimed at settling the nationality issue in the region cropped up during the second half of the war as well, even in the last year.[54] While Leo S. Amery envisioned an alliance of Danubian states with German-Austria,[55] Lord Northcliffe imagined such an alliance without the latter. According to British Minister for Propaganda Lord Northcliffe's assessment of the situation in February 1918, the separate peace negotiations conducted with the monarchy were not successful, thus British foreign policy had to be modified, and shifting to a policy of weakening the Austro-Hungarian Empire had to be considered.[56]

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54 Lajos Arday, *Térkép, csata után* (Budapest: General Press, 2009), note 81, 8–53. Especially for a description of the content of the two memorandums in 1917 authored by Sir Eric Drummond, the secretary of British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Arthur Balfour, see 12–15. The first document dated February 12, 1917, laid down the federation of four states instead of dualism: Austria, Hungary, Bohemia and Yugoslavia. Bosnia-Herzegovina, southern Dalmatia and Montenegro were intended to be given to Serbia. The proposal accepted the granting of free-port status to Trieste. Italy received Trentino. The second Drummond memorandum (December 12, 1917) basically reworded the terms of the first one in preparation for the Smuts-Mensdorff negotiations.

55 Géza Jeszenszky, "A dunai államszövetség eszméje Nagy-Britanniában és az Egyesült Államokban az I. világháború alatt," in Ignác Romsics, ed., *Magyarország és a nagyhatalmak a 20. században* (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 1995), 49–63; the October 20, 1918 memorandum of Leo S. Amery, counsellor of David Lloyd George, who served as the prime minister of Britain from 1916 to 1922, 58–59; Géza Jeszenszky, *Az elveszett presztízs. Magyarország megítélésének megváltozása Nagy-Britanniában (1894–1918)* (Budapest: Magyar Szemle Könyvek, 1994). (1984) 284–314.

56 Lord Alfred Charles Northcliffe (1865–1922) was the head of the British Ministry for Propaganda when David Lloyd George was prime minister. As the owner of *The Times*, he had a decisive influence over the course of British politics in the second half of the war.

The Entente achieved this aim by convening the Congress of Rome for the "oppressed nationalities" of the monarchy and its semi-official participation in the congress. The official declaration of the United States came out a few weeks later, on May 31, 1918. In this document, the American government, too, assured the ethnicities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that it would support their effort to create their own state-level entity. After that the United States treated the monarchy as a tool of German hegemony, and saw it as a hindrance to the rights of the ethnicities and to its own goals.[57]

In his memorandum addressed to President Woodrow Wilson, U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing called the president's attention to the fact that the propaganda used successfully by the Germans in Russia might also be used to help defeat the monarchy. He thought that it would be unwise for the United States not to utilize propaganda in a similar fashion in order to weaken Austria-Hungary.[58] The oppressed nationalities of the monarchy proved to be great assets for this kind of policy. Until spring 1918, Wilson's policy was characterized by the effort to preserve the unity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and to separate it from Germany. As a result of Lansing's memorandums, U.S. diplomacy made a strategic shift in foreign affairs regarding the monarchy in early summer.[59] Although it is always worth discriminating between the personal views of politicians and political strategies, which are always a matter of political power relations and in times of war of military force as well, in light of historical research on American

57 "Offizielles Bulletin des Aussenministeriums der USA über sein grosses Interesse an den Beschlüssen des Kongresses von Rom," in Kovacs, *Der Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie*, 352–354.

58 "Der Staatssekretär der USA, Robert Lansing, an den Präsidenten der USA Woodrow Wilson," in Kovacs, *Der Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie*, 346–348.

59 András Tóth Péter, "Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok I. világháborús részvétele és Európa-politikája," in István Németh, ed., *Az első világháború 1914–1918. Tanulmányok és dokumentumok* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2014), 231–246; Sándor Taraszovics, "Amerikai békeelőkészületek az I. világháború alatt és tervek az új Magyarországról," in Ignác Romsics, ed., *Magyarország és a nagyhatalmak a 20. században* (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 1995), 65–82; Viktor Mamatey, *The United States and East Central Europe 1914–1918: A Study on Wilsonian Diplomacy and Propaganda* (Port Washington–New York: Kennikut Press, 1957); Béla Bródy and Lajos Magyar, *Wilson beszédei és üzenetei a háborúról, békéről és a Népek Szövetségéről* (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1999).

public discourse during the First World War, President Wilson was not optimistic regarding the fate of the monarchy.[60] In December 1914, he told a *New York Times* journalist that, in his opinion, Austria-Hungary would fall to pieces and that it should, indeed, disintegrate for the sake of the well-being of Europe.[61]

Created by the U.S. President with the aim of preparing the peace, the Inquiry also made some plans regarding the federative transformations that were to hold the Monarchy together. The idea proposed by American historian Charles Seymour, the Inquiry's[62] Central European rapporteur, is especially noteworthy because it highlighted the problematics related to the borders of a federative state construction. On the one hand, it would be impossible to draw the borders consistently between the member states due to their ethnically mixed populations; while on the other hand, they would not be capable of guaranteeing practical or economic needs either. Therefore, his proposal did nothing else but to give preference to a federative state instead of an alliance of states (a confederation). Fuchs, Jászi, Renner and Lammasch reasoned along very similar lines. Seymour argued that in the case of borders between the states of a federation, the adverse effects of problems ensuing from ethnic divides and economic fragmentation could be more easily attenuated.[63] According to Charles Seymour, President Wilson's Fourteen Points did not

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60 Silvia Daniel, "'A Brief Time to Discuss America'. Der Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges im Urteil amerikanischer Politiker und Intellektueller," in Dahlmann, et al., eds., *Internationale Beziehungen. Theorie und Geschichte*, vol. 3 (Göttingen: Bonn University Press, V and R Unipress GmbH., 2008). In Hungarian historical literature, the topic has been discussed in great detail in the works of Tibor Glant. See Tibor Glant, "Woodrow Wilson and Austria-Hungary: A New Look," in Zsolt K. Virágos, ed., *Hungarian-American Ties: Essays and Studies in Intercultural Links and Contacts* (Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 2013), 182–192; Tibor Glant, *Through the Prism of the Habsburg Monarchy: Hungary in American Diplomacy and Public Opinion during the First World War* (New Jersey: Atlantic Research and Publication, 1998), 392.

61 Daniel, "'A Brief Time to Discuss America,'" note 91, 428. Based on Herbert Bruce Brougham's notes made on December 14, 1914.

62 Charles Seymour was an American historian. For information regarding the plan of the Inquiry's Central European rapporteur and a map, see Ignác Romsics, "Az angolszász nagyhatalmak és a trianoni békeszerződés," in Romsics, *Helyünk és sorsunk a Duna-medencében*, 319–320.

63 Jeszenszky, "A dunai államszövetség eszméje," 59–60, 62.

seek to break up the Habsburg Empire. By autonomy and free development for the nationalities of the Monarchy, they did not mean the creation of sovereign nation-states at the turn of 1917–1918. In the public debates conducted in the countries of the Entente Alliance, there were some voices that wished to delegate the issue of the creation of greater state constructs to the competence of the future League of Nations. Lewis Bernstein-Namier,[64] for instance, would have deemed it more prudent not to formulate *a priori* a definite federal opinion of the future state-level relations of the peoples living in the Danube region, especially if not even their politicians knew exactly what they wanted. French public opinion and politics also saw a great number of plans for reorganization[65] and division[66] over the four years of the war.[67] Irrespective of the paradigm shift of France's alliance policy, the transformation of the Monarchy into a federation was still on the table as an

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64 Bernstein-Namier was an employee of the British Foreign Office's Political Intelligence Department. See Arday, *Térkép, csata után*, 23.

65 In 1914 and 1915, the plans of an Austro-Hungarian Empire as a federation composed of three or four states were already known. See Edith Marjanović, *Die Habsburger Monarchie in Politik und öffentlicher Meinung Frankreichs 1914–1918* (Vienna–Salzburg: Geyer, 1984), 19–25; Ignác Romsics, "'Détruire ou reconstruire l'Autriche-Hongrie?' Franciaország dunai politikájának dilemmája a XX. század elején," in Romsics, ed. *Helyünk és sorsunk a Duna–medencében*, note 83, 11–33. Details regarding the French idea in 1917 attributed to the specialists of the French general staff and which can be found here: Archives Diplomatiques. Paris Guerre 1914–1918. Autriche-Hongrie. Vol. 151. Title: La situation politique en Autriche-Hongrie et ses conséquences. 23.07.1917. See Ignác Romsics, "A nagyhatalmak és az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia felbomlása," in Béla Tomka, ed., *Az első világháború következményei Magyarországon* (Budapest: Országgyűlés Hivatala, 2015), 31.

66 The French-language press items available in French Switzerland often published similar division plans. Miklós Pfeiffer brought one of them along with him from his research trip to Switzerland. See Miklós Pfeiffer, *Svájc a háború alatt. Úti benyomások 1915 nyaráról. Különlenyomat a Felvidéki Újság 1916. évi 36–46. számából* (Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 1916), 42, here 19–20.

67 Gusztáv Kecskés D., "Paradigmaváltás Párizsban. Franciaország Kelet-Közép-Európa politikájának átalakulása az első világháború idején," in Németh, *Az első világháború*, note 90, 187–207; István Majoros, "Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia felbomlása és a francia törekvések a dunai régióban," in Ferenc Fischer, István Majoros and József Vonyó, eds., *Magyarország a (nagy)hatalmak erőterében. Tanulmányok Ormos Mária 70. születésnapjára* (Pécs: University Press, 2000); Peter Pastor, "Franciaország hadicéljai

option in September 1918. It was then that French Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon learned about the proposed terms of the Austrian emperor's last attempt to conclude a separate peace via Émile Haguenin[68] and the French Embassy in Bern. According to the document transmitted to Haguenin by a Swiss intermediary, the plan combined several elements of the concepts put forward earlier by Lammasch, Foerster, Károlyi and Diner-Dénes.

This separate peace proposal declared that in case of approval by the Entente, the Monarchy would have exited the war with an immediate declaration of neutrality. Moreover, the Monarchy was ready to organize its economic relations with the Entente on the model of those established between the Entente Alliance and Switzerland during the war.[69] This plan also raised the idea of a Habsburg pentarchy constituted by the federation of five kingdoms enjoying equal rights as a democratically reorganized version of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[70] It repeated that Trentino and Friuli could decide freely about their status, and Trieste's status as a free and neutral city was also established. The plan partly adopted the proposal of British politician and diplomat Eric Drummond concerning the restitution of Serbia's statehood, its unification with Montenegro and the implementation of border modifications with regard to the territories of Bosnia inhabited by Serbs.[71]

Ausztria-Magyarországgal szemben," in Romsics, *Magyarország*, 37–47.

68 Haguenin, François-Émile (1872–1924) assumed the position of director at the press office of the French embassy in Bern at Philippe Bethelot's request at the end of 1915. In 1916–1917 he conducted unofficial talks with the Germans regarding the conditions of a consensual peace.

69 This proposal would have in all likelihood guaranteed the Entente countries the right of oversight over the Monarchy's economy. Georg Kreis, *Insel der unsicheren Geborgenheit. Die Schweiz in den Kriegsjahren 1914–1918* (Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2014), 82–85.

70 The Kingdom of Austria, the Kingdom of Poland, the Kingdom of Hungary, the Kingdom of Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

71 In January 1916, after the occupation of Serbia and at the time of the conquest of Montenegro and Albania, Count Gyula Andrássy the Younger, the Monarchy's last minister of foreign affairs, suggested orally to Foreign Minister István Burián that they should create a "Switzerland" composed of Serbia, Montenegro and northern Albania. Burián thought that the Swiss model could not possibly be adopted. See Báró Burián István naplói 1907–1922 [Diaries of Baron István Burián, 1907–1922] and *Báró Burián István távirati könyvei 1913-1915* [The telegram books of István Burián, 1913–

The Monarchy proposed that it would renounce Albania. Provided that the Entente consented to the Austrian-Polish solution, also examined by the document prepared for Sir Henry Wilson, the Austrians would have accepted that the new Polish borders be determined by the resolutions of the peace conference. This envisaged the alteration of the conditions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and the Treaty of Bucharest. As had been already proposed in the Northcliffe plan, the Monarchy would have been ready to renegotiate the annexation of certain Austrian-German territories to Germany if the Entente had guaranteed that Romania would in turn join the five-member Monarchy, and that on the basis of the alliance between the Kingdom of Bavaria and the German Empire.[72] This separate peace proposal contained numerous elements of compromise, but due to the transformation of the military situation, the capitulation of Bulgaria, there was no chance for the opposing parties to discuss the terms of the agreement.

Völkermanifest: A Belated Idea or a Premature One?

The federal transformation plans elaborated in the political, diplomatic and military *coulisses* of the Entente Alliance were mostly intended to inform the decision-makers and prepare for the peace negotiations. During the official tentative meetings, the issue of the internal transformation of the Monarchy was of secondary importance as the negotiators on behalf of the Entente countries established as a precondition that the separation of Austria-Hungary from Germany and the renunciation of territorial annexations—the areas of Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine in particular—must be specifically declared. The notion of the "right of self-determination of nations" was first used by Woodrow Wilson, the president of the country that eventually decided the outcome of the war, in his speech delivered in Baltimore on April 6, 1918. Since in January 1918, both the U.S. president and the British prime minister

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1915] (Budapest: Dunamelléki Református Egyházkerület, 1999), 167.

72 Émile Haguenin an den französischen Aussenminister Stephen Pichon: "Österreichischungarisches Separatfriedensprojekt zwischen der Entente, ÖsterreichUngarn und Bulgarien. Bern, 18 September 1918," in Kovacs, *Der Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie*, note 38, II, 386–388.

had left the issue of the preservation of Austria-Hungary up in the air, a few days later Woodrow Wilson modified his Baltimore message by saying that the United States did not intend to force constitutional conditions upon other states. Nonetheless, it was their different views regarding the right of self-determination that drove a wedge between Czernin and Wilson in spring 1918. After all, the U.S. President saw the structural reform of Austria-Hungary as a condition for the peace agreement.[73] Yet the success of the peace attempts did not depend on this. Positions did not come closer to each other with respect to the settlement of the European areas, and after the agreement signed in Spa, the hopes of a separation of Austria-Hungary from the German alliance also went up in smoke.

On October 16, 1918, after a lengthy consideration, but fully aware of the loss of the war in the military sense, the monarch of the Austro-Hungarian Empire made a decision regarding the reorganization of Austria.[74] He expressed his intention to restructure Austria on a federative basis in his manifesto addressed to all the peoples of the Monarchy, though especially to those of the Cisleithanian provinces. This declaration did not affect the countries of the Hungarian Crown as it respected their integrity and the will of the Hungarian government.

The roadmap for the Danubian nations to form an alliance was elaborated by Heinrich Lammasch, the last Austrian prime minister of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[75] According to a source that has been preserved in the form of a draft, the recognition of the nation-states would have entailed the establishment of national governments as a first step. These national governments would have sent delegates to the executive committees of the national governments. These executive committees would have been entrusted with carrying out the political and economic tasks of the transition period. According to the proposal, not only the settlement of border issues, but the way the new nation-states would have allied themselves would have belonged

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73 William Mulligan, *The Great War for Peace* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2014), 247.

74 Völkermanifest Kaiser und König Karls vom 16. Oktober 1918. In Kovacs, *Der Untergang oder Rettung der Donaumonarchie* (note 38), vol. II, 395–397.

75 He was Prime Minister between October 28 and November 6, 1918. Joseph Redlich, "Heinrich Lammasch als Ministerpräsident," in Lammasch and Sperl, *Lammasch Heinrich*, 154–185.

to the authority of the peace conference.[76] The Habsburg dynasty continued to work according to Lammasch's idea until the very last moment in order to implement the federalization of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Many parties counted on the possibility of federalization. The Czechoslovak declaration did not exclude this possibility on a theoretical level either. Baron Szilassy also shifted toward the idea of an alliance between sovereign states.[77] However, the representatives of the Austro-Hungarian political élite were reluctant to initiate negotiations regarding the details of a top-down federative transformation in the last two months of 1918.

Federalism, trialism and quadrilism—these were not popular among the shapers of the Austrian and Hungarian public opinion either. Thus conviction and the arguments of persuasion and commitment were all missing from relevant public debate. According to the prevailing views within Hungarian political circles, a Habsburg federation would have resulted in the disintegration of the Monarchy and would have annihilated the very same cohesive forces that formerly guaranteed the empire's status as a great power. They presented Austro-Hungarian dualism as a functional system that had stood the test of time, and raised the counter-argument that there was no experience whatsoever with regard to trialism and federalism. According to them, neither the dynasty nor the two constitutive nations of the Monarchy could have an interest in a federative state. It was not only because of the war that the formulators of Hungarian public opinion refused to break up the constitutional relationship between Austria and Hungary.[78] The notions of federalism and trialism were often disavowed by the press and the Houses of Representatives in both halves of the empire. Gustav Gross, a member of the

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76 Ibid., 170–171.

77 As a plenipotentiary representative in Bern at the beginning of 1919, Szilassy recommended to Mihály Károlyi that he consider the creation of a federation between an independent Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia. "Szilassy Gyula Károlyi Mihályhoz (Bern, 1919. február 9.) Impressions sur la situation internationale de la Hongrie et la politique à suivre. Benyomások Magyarország nemzetközi helyzetéről és a követendő politika," in György Litván, ed., *Károlyi Mihály levelezése*, vol. 1, *1905–1920* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978), 418–427 (here: 426).

78 György Lukács, "Die Voraussetzungen der inneren Konsolidierung," in *A Monarchia*, vol. 1, no. 11–12, December 22, 1916, 41–55 (here: 44–47).

Austrian Parliament, for instance, described trialism as the hotbed of Pan-Slavism.

Regardless of Austrian and Hungarian public opinion that was mostly unfavorable to the federative transformation of the Empire, these plans could not offer a true opportunity to escape from the dead-end street of the war for a number of other reasons as well. The responsible political and military decision-makers of the Entente and the Central Powers saw consensual peace as a sort of bankruptcy or political suicide.[79] In an atmosphere of growing disenchantment, the goal set especially by the military leaders was to achieve an ultimate victory. That is how it was possible that instead of turning the federative concepts discussed during the tentative negotiations into political action plans, they prioritized the maximally achievable military goals. The Great War finally ended with the military victory of the Entente Alliance. Consequently, it was not a federative Austria-Hungary that was put in place to guarantee the Central European balance of power, but the sovereign and independent states constituted by the nations of the Monarchy, although this guarantee proved to be a short-lived one.

79 Bedrich Loewenstein, "Das Paradigma des Krieges," in Lowenstein, *Der Fortschrittsglaube. Europäisches Geschichtsdenken zwischen Utopie und Ideologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2015), 376–398.

PART IV

CONSEQUENCES OF WAR AND VIOLENCE

Tamás Révész

Between Revolutionary Concepts and Imperial Traditions. Military Policies of the New Revolutionary Governments of Austria and Hungary in 1918

On the autumn of 1918 after more than four years of bloody struggle the once mighty Austro-Hungarian army finally collapsed. Millions of soldiers began their long journey back to their homeland, where national councils seized power and began to establish their own nation states. These newly founded governments faced a massive challenge: they had to demobilize the hungry, tired and often frustrated WWI veterans, while trying to establish a new loyal armed force. The situation was particularly dire in the defeated successor states, in Austria and Hungary. These countries could not count on the support of the victorious powers and they almost immediately had to resist against the territorial demands of the neighbouring countries. Despite all of their efforts, these countries lost massive territories after signing the peace treaties of Saint Germain and Trianon. Not surprisingly, the revolutionary political leaders became scapegoated by the developing right-wing political movements. In both countries the narrative of the extreme nationalists claimed that these revolutionary governments betrayed the returning heroes and replaced the true martial values with a blind and insane pacifism. They disbanded the returning regiments and failed to organize a powerful armed force to defend the national territories. The mythology of stab-in-the-back was particularly powerful in Hungary, where Béla Linder the war minister became the symbol of the revolutionary territories' insane policy. His speech on 2nd November 1918 entailing the infamous line "I do not want to see soldiers any more" was in many way the cornerstone of the counterrevolutionary ideology of the Horthy era.

This paper aims to examine comparatively the military policy of the revolutionary governments of Austria and Hungary. First, it analyses how Budapest and Vienna tried to demobilize the former Habsburg soldiers. Than it examines the military policies of the new governments and their implementations in a local context. For this purpose it looks closer to two multi-ethnic borderland regions, Carinthia and Transylvania.

Multi-ethnic army in a local context

The Habsburg army in its modern form was established in 1868, following the long-waited political compromise with the Hungarian elite, sealed only a year earlier. The new army's internal structure reflected the unique characteristics of the dualist state. Franz Josef, the Emperor perceived the military as an essentially supranational force, a main pillar of his multi-ethnic empire.[1] This idea of a solely imperial armed force however met with the fierce resistance of the Hungarian nationalists, who demanded a completely independent national army. As a compromise, three, partly independent armed formations were established in 1868. The core of the military was the joint army and navy, which was led by the common War Ministry of Vienna. It was supported by two independent reserve forces, the imperial *Landwehr* in the Austrian and the *Honvédség* in the Hungarian part of the Monarchy. In most of the cases, the peacetime *Honvédség* was subordinated to the Budapest based Honvéd Ministry. During the entire period of its existence, the common army was considered to be the elite of the military and the *Landwehr* and the *Honvédség* were treated as second-rate forces. This situation contradicted the perception

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1 Hajdu Tibor, 'A Hadkötelezettség És a Haza Védelmének Eszménye a Soknemzetiségű Monarchiában', *Hadtörténeti Közlemények* 116, no. 1 (2003): 32–38. 33. See about the development of the European militarism as an ideological phenomenon: Wolfgang Kruse, 'Bürger und Soldaten. Die Entstehung des modernen Militarismus in der Französischen Revolution.', in *Der Bürger als Soldat: die Militarisierung europäischer Gesellschaften im langen 19. Jahrhundert: ein internationaler Vergleich*, ed. Christian Jansen (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2004). 50–51.; Rowe David M., 'Globalization, Conscription and Anti-Militarism in Pre-World War I Europe.', in *The Comparative Study of Conscription in the Armed Forces*, ed. Lars Mjøset and Stephen Van Holde, Comparative Social Research. (Amsterdam; Oxford: JAI, 2002), 137–38.

of the nationalist Hungarian politicians, seeing the *Honvéd* army as a potential national force.[2] They perceived the common army as a „foreign" institution, responsible for defeating the national revolution of 1848–1849. For them the major objective was to develop the *Honvédség* into an equal counterpart of the common army. Therefore they constantly demanded the use of Hungarian insignias and the introduction of Magyar language in the officer training and jurisdiction.[3]

Regardless the differences between the three armies, the military still had a strong supranational character. The Austro-Hungarian officer corps originated from every corner of the multi-ethnic empire. They mostly came either from traditional military families or from the land-based gentry and adopted the supranational ideology in one of the prestigious military schools. The officers were regularly redeployed far away from their homelands to distinct parts of the empire. In their regiments – at least in theory – they should have learned the native language of their subordinates.[4]

After the beginning of armed conflicts in the Balkans, the modernization of the military system became inevitable. In 1912 the *Honvéd* army was allowed to establish its own independent artillery formations. Simultaneously, the previously different *Landwehr/Honvéd* recruitment districts were harmonized with the corps of the common army.[5] Despite these major concessions, the demand for an entirely independent Hungarian force remained on the agenda of the Hungarian nationalist during the war. In December 1917 following the order of the new emperor Karl, the Honvéd Minister Sándor Szurmay

2 László Katus, 'A közös hadsereg a dualista rendszerben', in *Nagy képes millenniumi hadtörténet: 1000 év a hadak útján*, ed. Árpád Rácz (Budapest: Rubicon, 2000). 327.

3 Tibor Balla, 'A dualizmus korának hadtörténete (1867–1914)', in *Magyarország hadtörténete*, ed. Róbert Hermann (Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó, 2015), 241.

4 István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism : A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848 - 1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 54–55. See about the problems with this system and its role in nation building Tamara Scheer, 'Die k.u.k. Regimentssprachen: Eine Institutionalisierung Der Sprachenvielfalt in Der Habsburgermonarchie (1867/8-1914)', in *Sprache, Gesellschaft Und Nation in Ostmitteleuropa. Institutionalisierung Und Alltagspraxis*, ed. Martina Niedhammer and Marek Nekula (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014).

5 At the turn of the century the prestige of the Honvéd army increased significantly among the Hungarian elite. Katus, 'A közös hadsereg a dualista rendszerben', 331.

designed a new plan to reform the complicated system. He planned two independent armies under one joint command, the peacetime successor of the *Armee Oberkommando*. It also would have given complete authority to the *Honvédség* in the territory of Hungary and would have introduced the exclusive use of Magyar language in this part of the Empire. Although this proposal was rejected by the leading military figures, the negotiations about the complete reform of the army continued till the last weeks of the Great War.[6]

The issue of the armed forces was not only important for the national elites. The military became also deeply imbedded in the ordinary lives of the Austro-Hungarian residents. The most important building blocks of the Austro-Hungarian army were the regiments, which mostly stationed in one particular region for decades. The officers and servicemen of these units soon became integral part of many rural towns' everyday live. Earlier were incorporated into the regional elites, while the demands of the military helped the local businesses to boom. The regiments also participated in the public lives of these garrison towns. The units' annual regimental days were often commemorated with large public festivities.[7] Meanwhile many military formations also attached to their own region and identified themselves with the imagined characters of the local population. These strong bonds often determined the relationship between the population and the army more than the "national" or "supranational" disputes of the elites. The local regimental and veteran cultures were also able to incorporate and harmonize these seemingly conflicting concepts.[8]

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6 Ferenc Pollmann, *Trianon felé: a magyar hadsereg ügye a kiegyezéstől Trianonig* (Nagykovácsi: Puedlo Kiadó, 2008), 24–26., 29-31.

7 See about a Hungarian example: Tangl Balázs, 'Ezredideológiák És Ezredkultúrák a Cs. (És) Kir. Hadseregben', *Hadtörténeti Közlemények* 129, no. 3 (2016): 677–78., 681.

8 Wencke Meteling, 'Regimenter Als Image Prägende Standortfaktoren', *Geschichte Und Region / Storia e Regione* 14, no. 1 (2005): 44. Tangl showed how supranational and national concepts were harmonized in the western Hungary town of Szombathely. Tangl Balázs, 'Ezredideológiák És Ezredkultúrák a Cs. (És) Kir. Hadseregben', 682–84. See about the popularity of the Habsburg imperial ideology among veteran organizations in: Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

The new armies. The (lack of) concepts

In Vienna, the German-speaking representatives of the last imperial parliament elected their new national government on 30th October 1918. It was formed from the three largest parties of the time, the social democrats, the Christian-socialists and the German-nationalists.[9] The appointed chancellor was Karl Renner from the social democratic party, while the War Ministry was led by the German-nationalist Josef Mayer. The strongman in the office was however his deputy, the social democratic reserve officer Julius Deutsch.[10] After the election of 1919, latter became solely responsible for the military policy of the new republic. Although Deutsch was rather young at that time, he already had some experience in military affairs. During WWI he served in the army and had good connections to the leftist soldiers in the garrisons of Vienna.[11]

While the negotiations between the different political forces about the future of Cisleithania began in Vienna, on October 31th 1918 workers and soldiers rioted in Budapest. They forced the *homo regius*, Archduke Josef to appoint Mihály Károlyi to the new prime minister of Hungary. Like Renner in Vienna, Károlyi became a head of a very diverse coalition. On paper the major partner was his own party (called simply as Károlyi party), a traditional liberal-gentry political movement, successor of the anti-Habsburg Independence party. They were supported by the small but very progressive National Radical Party of Oszkár Jászi. The third and the most important member of the coalition was the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (MSZDP). Thanks to the very high electoral census of the pre-war period, the social democrats had no representation in the Hungarian Parliament yet, but they had a constantly growing influence among the urban working-class districts of Budapest.[12] In

9 Walter Rauscher, *Die verzweifelte Republik: Österreich 1918–1922* (Wien: K&S, 2017), 49–50.

10 Karl Haas, *Studien zur Wehrpolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie: 1918–1926*, 1967, 2.

11 Julius Deutsch, *Kriegserlebnisse eines Friedliebenden: Aufzeichnungen aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg* (Wien: New Academic Press, 2016), 31.; Karl Glaubauf, *Die Volkswehr 1918-1920 und die Gründung der Republik* (Wien: Stöhr, 1993), 14.; Archiv der Geschichte für die Arbeiterbewegung. Altes Parteiarchiv Mappe 21. Geschichten der Österreichischen Arbeiterräte (Typoskript Karl Heinz – Nachlass K. Seitz) 25.

12 Pál Hatos, *Az Elátkozott Köztársaság - Az 1918-as Összeomlás És Forradalom Története*

the new government Béla Linder, a former artillery colonel of the Habsburg Army was appointed to the first minister of war. His position became extremely weak very soon. Linder had not been a member of any party yet, so he had no powerful political backup in the national council. Namely he was only appointed because the original nominee, Albert Bartha, a moderate military officer, was not able to arrive to Budapest in time.[13] The new minister shared his power with his two deputies István Friedrich a liberal politician from the Károlyi party and Vilmos Böhm, an influential social democratic trade union leader.

The members of the Austrian and Hungarian governments had similar attitudes towards the armed forces in the new republics. In both countries, traditional middle-class parties lacked a well-prepared plan about the demobilization and remobilization of the Habsburg military. In Austria, the views of the three major parties differed however fundamentally about the exact implementation of this policy. German nationalists were convinced that all military problems are going to be solved with the soon expected Anschluss.[14] The Christian-socialists did not have any definite programme either, they mostly suggested a gendarmerie like force, which only aim is to deal with internal unrests. Like the conservative forces in Vienna, the Károlyi party also did not have any solid concept about the future of the military. Their only demand from the pre-1914 period was the establishment of an independent Hungarian army, which had been automatically fulfilled by the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy.[15] Among all the members of the Austrian and Hungarian governments, only the social democrats had a somewhat clear vision about the transformation of the armed forces. They mostly adopted the ideas of the leading European socialist thinkers of the late 19th century. They all agreed that conscription keeps the proletariat in enslavement and indoctrinates the people with nationalist ideology. They were convinced that the existence of the standing mass armies poses constant threat to the international stability. In order to replace this

(Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2018), 51–63.

13 Sándor Juhász Nagy, *A magyar októberi forradalom története : 1918 okt. 31–1919 márc. 21* (Budapest: Cserépfalvi, 1945), 251.

14 Wolfgang Etschmann, 'Theorie, Praxis und Probleme der Demobilisierung in Österreich 1915 - 1921' (1979), 70.

15 Balla, 'A Dualizmus korának hadtörténete (1867-1914)'. 236–42.

outdated system they proposed the "people in arms" concept. It meant that free citizens are serving part-time in the army, only to defend their own homeland against foreign aggression.[16]

Although in 1914 these plans were temporarily overwritten by the "*Burgfrieden*", both in Austria and Hungary they emerged again at the second half of the war. The expectations of the progressive circles about the future "world peace" grown especially high after the Bolshevik revolution and the declaration of Wilson's fourteen points.[17] At that point, the social democrats also supported the quick demobilization of the Habsburg soldiers due to two practical reasons. Firstly, they hoped that fulfilling the demand of the Entente powers would provide them a more advantageous position at the final peace negotiations in Paris. Secondly, socialist politicians were convinced that a returning mass army could be potentially dangerous for the unstable revolutionary governments.[18]

16 Ute Frevert, *A Nation in Barracks: Modern Germany, Military Conscription and Civil Society* (Oxford: Berg, 2004). 205–206.; Wolfram Wette, *Militarismus in Deutschland: Geschichte einer kriegerischen Kultur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliches Buchgeselschaft, 2008). 67–68.; Péter Csunderlik, *Radikálisok, szabadgondolkodók, ateisták: a Galilei Kör (190–-1919) története* (Budapest: Politikatörténeti Intézet-Napvilág Kiadó, 2017). 237-241. See for example: Karl Liebknecht, *Militarismus und Antimilitarismus: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der internationalen Jugendbewegung* (Leipzig: Leipziger Buchdruckerei, 1907).

17 Jörn Leonhard, '1917–1920 and the Global Revolution of Rising Expectations', in *Revolutions and Counter-Revolutions: 1917 and Its Aftermath from a Global Perspective*, ed. Stefan Rinke and Michael Wildt. (Frankfurt-New York: Campus-Verlag, 2017), 35–40.

18 József Breit, *A Magyarországi 1918/19 évi forradalmi mozgalmak és a vörös háború története.* (Budapest: Magyar Királyi Hadtörténelmi Levéltár, 1925), 36.; Glaubauf, *Die Volkswehr 1918–1920 und die Gründung der Republik*, 23–24.

The demobilization of the army in Austria and Hungary

Already back in 1915 the Austro-Hungarian military leadership began to discuss the potential demobilization of the troops. Since September 1915, the AOK and the common War Ministry together with the civilian state administration conducted continuous negotiations. They finished the first comprehensive plan in March 1917.[19] The "Richtlinien für die Durchführung der Demoblisierung" proposed a gradual demobilization process. In the first round the oldest soldiers would have been discharged together with those who were crucial for a peacetime economic transformation. At the same time they planned the military reinforcement of the railway stations and the preparation of the necessary food and medical care to supply the troops. In order to collect all the equipment for the returning soldiers, the so-called *Armeematerialssammelstellen* were established.[20] The Austrian, Hungarian and common Imperial authorities continued to discuss the exact pace of demobilization. During the summer of 1918 they even started to involve the trade union officials into the negotiations.[21] The preparation for demobilization really speeded up after the *Völkermanifest* of Kaiser Karl on 16th October 1918. Troops were commanded to the key railway junctions under the leadership of professional officers. At that time the AOK's plan was still the preservation of the conscription army. In order to conduct a smooth transition, the five youngest age groups (born between 1896–1900) were planned to be withheld in the ranks, together with volunteer soldiers and professional officers. Any other servicemen were aimed to be discharged. This version was approved at the last interministerial conference of the Empire on 29th October 1918.[22]

The revolutionary governments of Vienna and Budapest inherited this concepts from the pre-war period and they began to deal with the problems of

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19 Etschmann, 'Theorie, Praxis und Probleme der Demobilisierung in Österreich 1915 - 1921', 5–9.

20 Etschmann, 5–11., 15.

21 Honvédelmi Minisztérium, Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum, Hadtörténelmi Levéltár, Tanulmánygyűjtemény (HL TGY) 2.322. 190. d. I. 1. Kerekes József: Magyarország forradalmi harcai. Az 1918-1919 évi hadműveletek.

22 Etschmann, 'Theorie, Praxis und Probleme der Demobilisierung in Österreich 1915 - 1921', 26.

demobilization in a very similar way. Although the Austrian social democrats had clearly the upper hand in the *Staatsamt für Heereswesen*, they had massive difficulties to implement their policy plans. On the one hand, the radical leftist wing of the party insisted on the complete abolition of the entire institution of the armed forces. After fierce debates on the party day of 1st November 1918, their arguments were successfully refuted by Julius Deutsch. He argued that a state without an armed force could be a desirable aim in the distant future but at that moment the military is still needed to defend the achievements of the revolution.[23] On the other hand, Deutsch was also under pressure from the traditional military administration; the rather conservative officers insisted on a slower and gradual release of the soldiers and the preservation of a larger armed force. After serious debates in the government Deutsch won the support of the German nationalists. His proposal about the rapid demobilization of the army was accepted on 7th November 1918.[24] The returning soldiers had to hand down their weapons to any military institution, including the closest garrison, military office, gendarmerie post or at a newly established *Volkswehr* battalion. In return for their equipment they received a certificate – a so called *Urlaubschein* –, which they could use as a train ticket for their further travel home. This decree was propagated through the national and local press.[25] This "free-flowing" method of demobilization caused great confusion very quickly. On the 15th November the military leadership modified the original decree and established the so-called demobilization stations, which collected the weapons and the military equipment of the returning soldiers.[26]

Similarly to Austria, moderate political forces in Hungary did not have any solid concept about the future of the armed forces either but all major parties agreed on the quick demobilization of the returning troops. Originally the soldiers were ordered to be discharged at the border stations of the Kingdom

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23 Ludwig Jedlicka, *Ein Heer Im Schatten Der Parteien. Die Militärpolitische Lage Österreichs 1918–1938.* (Graz, Köln, 1955), 11.; Etschmann, 'Theorie, Praxis und Probleme der Demobilisierung in Österreich 1915–1921', 68.

24 Robert Glock, *Die österreichische Sozialdemokratie und der Weltkrieg*, 1951. 6–7.; Haas, *Studien zur Wehrpolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, 17.

25 „Die Abrüstung des Heeres", *Arbeiterwille*, November 8th 1918. 5.

26 Archiv der Republik Landesverteidigung Volkswehr Landesbefehlhaber Kärnten (AdR/LV/Volkswehr/LBH Kärnten) Ae. 393. Oberkommandobefehl Nr. 9. (Wehrausschuss) 25. 11. 1918.; Etschmann, 75–76.

of Hungary. Therefore, the main railway stations were reinforced with troops in the west, south-west and north-east borders of the country. After a couple of days, reports arrived from the western entry points that they cannot deal with the incoming transports. The inadequate number of servicemen did not have the capacity to disarm the returning soldiers and guard the large quantity of war equipment and ammunition   left in the stations.[27]

In order to counter these problems, on the 8th December 1918 a more elaborate demobilization decree was issued. It was formed and published by the secretary of war István Friedrich without the knowledge and permission of Linder. This divided the demobilization process into two phases. The closed and intact transports of entire military units were directed to their home garrisons where they had to hand over all of their equipment to their Ersatz battalion. The individually travelling soldiers – as in Austria – had to be discharged in the nearest military unit or office. The local military commands were repeatedly ordered to enforce this order and disarm every armed serviceman travelling through their territory. These decrees were not invented by the new military administration, the leading officers mostly just implemented the regulations, developed by the common War Ministry during the war.[28]

Contrary to the powerful interwar right-wing mythology presenting this period as a time of 'blind pacifism' and strong anti-war sentiment, the homecoming soldiers were mostly greeted fundamentally positively. This was also true to Hungary where even Béla Linder's first official command praised the endurance of the soldiers during the four long years of the struggle. He used in his text an interesting mixture of progressive and traditional ideas to legitimize the suffering of rank-and-file soldiers in the war. For instance, the minister claimed that the soldiers' sacrifice was necessary for the "salvation of their child", because they achieved the ultimate goal of the struggle: the eternal peace for mankind.[29] This primarily positive attitude towards the homecoming soldiers appears in other telegrams of the War Ministry. It was

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27 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Magyar Országos Levéltár (MNL MOL) K 803. PTI 606. f 2. 5.d. 2/1 öe. II. 228. The report from captain Aranyossy November 20th 1918.
28 MNL MOL K 803. PTI 606. f 2. 11. d. 606. f. 2/10 öe., Report on the November 7th 1918.
29 MNL MOL K 803. PTI 606. f 2. 10. d. 2/9 öe. I. 268.

repeatedly ordered that the homecoming troops had to be greeted with the utmost patriotism.[30]

This positive sentiment was particularly typical in Austria. For example the arrival of the IR 7 to Klagenfurt is a good example for this positive attitude. The train of the regiment arrived at the main station of the town in the afternoon of 13th November 1918. The unit was greeted by civilian dignitaries, the commanding officers of the reserve corps and military musicians, who played the traditional regimental march during the disembarking. Then soldiers marched to the main square of Klagenfurt where the head of the military committee, Professor Angerer, addressed the crowd. After this short celebration, the soldiers went to the *Rudolfkaserne* to hand over all their equipment at the liquidation station.[31]

Enthusiastic reception of the troops was also observable in some of the Hungarian towns. For example, Károly Kratochvil the commander of the 4th Honvéd Infantry Regiment provided a very similar description about his arrival to Oradea on November 17th 1918. He recalled that his soldiers were greeted by the local bishop, the county sheriff, vice-mayor and the entire population of the town. After disembarking at the railway station, military music was played all over the streets, while they marched to their barracks to demobilize.[32] Not all of the regiments were greeted however equally enthusiastically. The units travelled on foot arrived mostly unexpectedly in smaller groups to their home garrisons, so the local authorities could not prepare for their official and celebratory greeting.[33] Pacifism or strong anti-war sentiment appeared very rarely in the local press too. Similarly to Carinthia, Hungarian newspapers greeted the homecoming troops generally very positively. The leading column of the newspaper *Békés* for instance was published under the title "Our soldiers". It praised the heroism and the endurance of the local regiment and

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30 Hadtörténeti Levéltár, Polgári Demokratikus Forradalom katonai iratai. (HL P.d.f.) B/2. d. 3465. 371., 389.

31 Gustav Ritter Bartels von Bartberg, *Aus der Geschichte des Khevenhüller-Regiments 1691 - 1918* (Graz: Leykam, 1932), 109–10.; Kriegsarchiv, Archiv der Truppenkörper (KA AdT) IR7 57. Kart. 1061.

32 Károly Kratochvil's memoire was quoted in: Barna Gottfried and Szabolcs Nagy, *A Székely Hadosztály Története* (Barót: Tortoma, 2011), 46.

33 See for example the arrival of the Gebirgenschützenregiment 1. To Klagenfurt. KA AdT Gebirgenschützenregiment 1. 1666. 05. 11. 1918. 16–17

stated that their sacrifice brought about the independent and democratic Hungary.[34] A fictional story was published in another weekly about the heroic soldier who "did his duty" on the battlefield and "defended the country against every enemy".[35]

The remobilization in Hungary

As it was mentioned in the introduction the unsuccessful remobilization in Hungary was connected closely to the first war minister of Károlyi government Béla Linder. His blind pacifism and anti-war sentiment was blamed for the unsuccessful mobilization of the Hungarian army against the neighbouring states. This was however a massive exaggeration.

Linder did not want to entirely abolish the armed forces at once. He was convinced that in the distant future no armies were needed, because the international peace conference will be able to resolve all international conflicts. Meanwhile – he argued – the country only needs a temporarily peace keeping militia force.[36] Moreover he only had modest impact on the actual military policy of the new regime. Most of the regulations which were implemented after the collapse of the Monarchy were actually formed during and even before WWI. As a first step he fulfilled the plans of Sándor Szurmay when appointed himself to the commander in chief of every armed forces raised on the territory of Hungary.[37] In practice this action meant that the former common army units became subordinated to the Honvéd district commands. This allowed the ministry to use the well-established commander chains of the pre-1918 era.[38] The internal communication of the War Ministry did not reflect any revolutionary change either. Linder's first order to the military station commands for example referred to "his majesty, the apostolic King's" decision to legitimize his appointment as a commander of all armed forces.

34 „A mi katonáink", *Békés.* November 3th 1918. 1.
35 Révész Imre: „Vérző szívek karácsonya", *Nagybánya és Vidéke*, December 22th 1918. 1.
36 Béla Linder, *Kell-e Katona?: A Militarizmus Csődje* (Budapest: Lantos Biz., 1919).6., 50–86.
37 Pollmann, *Trianon felé*, 24–26., 29–31.
38 MNL MOL K 803 PTI 606. f 2. 5.d. 2/1 öe. I. 8.

Ironically, a couple of days later the ministry referred to the replacement of the imperial cap buttons with the Hungarian tricolours as a direct order from King Karl. [39]

The demobilization and the first remobilization decree was also directly adopted the concepts developed by the k. u. k. war ministry. The demobilization of the troops was ordered with the exception of the five youngest generation of the last wartime conscription. These young men, born between 1896 and 1900, were withheld in the army for a short-term service. While employment was promised to the servicemen in the public sector, the deserters were threatened with serious but somewhat vague sanctions.[40] Unlike the *Volkswehr*, which was based on the provincial system of Austria, Budapest kept the old *Honvéd* replacement districts as basic units of recruitment. In accordance with the Belgrade treaty, every district had to raise one independent infantry division.[41] Parallel to the foundation of the regular army, the war ministry began to regulate the establishment of civilian self-defence units as well. Due to the increasing numbers of rioting soldiers, thousands of people joined several haphazardly organized self-defence guards during the first days of November. This led to serious conflicts all over the country. In order to solve this problem, in every military district the reserve HQs were trusted with organising the local civic guards and unite them under the umbrella of the National Guards, the so called *Nemzetőrség*.[42] The war minister Linder, who opposed the idea of a conscripted army, consequently resigned on the November 9th 1918. He was followed by the original candidate to this position, the moderate staff officer Albert Bartha.[43]

Although the situation slowly calmed down after issuing the first regulation, during the autumn of 1918 the military policy of Budapest was characterized by constant conflicts between the different power centres. Bartha often conflicted with the head of the soldiers' councils, József Pogány. He was a very ambitious social democratic journalist, who served as a war correspondent during the

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39 MNL MOL K 803 PTI 606. f. 2. 11. d. 2/11. öe II. k. 8., 21.

40 HL P.d.f. B/2. d. 3435. 386.

41 Breit, *A Magyarországi 1918/19 évi forradalmi mozgalmak és a vörös háború története.* 36.

42 HL P.d.f. B/3. d. 3480. 1. and its modification HL P.d.f. B/2. d. 3444. 581-582.

43 Hatos, *Az Elátkozott Köztársaság - Az 1918-as Összeomlás És Forradalom Története,* 151–52.

war.[44] Pogány like Julius Deutsch in Austria wanted to extend his control over the armed forces. His attempts were relatively successful in the capital, where he was able to use the soldiers to organize demonstrations against his political opponents.[45] In the beginning of December, Bartha abdicated and temporarily were replaced by the prime minister Mihály Károlyi. In practice at that time, the military policy was already determined by the social democratic state secretary Vilmos Böhm.[46] Using his power, Böhm began to establish a purely social democratic militia force. The two youngest classes were discharged, the staff officers were pensioned and the soldiers' councils were established.[47]

This socialist takeover of the ministry was shortly suspended at the beginning of January, when Sándor Festetich, Károlyi's brother-in-law was appointed to Minister of War. His attempts to defeat the social democrats in the ministry failed very soon, so on the 11th January Vilmos Böhm finally seized total control over military affairs.[48] He was supported by his state secretary Aurél Stromfeld, the former head of the Budapest military academy. Stromfeld seemed to be an ideal person for building a bridge between the social democratic politicians and the old officer corps. He was both a widely-respected military expert and a committed socialist, who joined the MSZDP immediately after the collapse of the monarchy. He planned to replace the old conscription system and wanted to establish a new, democratic volunteer force. War veterans, mostly trade unions members were expected to join the armed forces. They needed a recommendation from a civil authority or from a political association. Böhm even tried to put pressure on the party administration to "encourage" more

44 Thomas Sakmyster, *A Communist Odyssey The Life of József Pogány / John Pepper* (Central European University Press, 2013).

45 Hajdu Tibor, *Az 1918-as Magyarországi Polgári Demokratikus Forradalom* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1968)., 90.

46 Tibor Hajdu, *A Magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1969)., 300–302.; Tibor Hajdu, *Ki Volt Károlyi Mihály?* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2012). 109.

47 Őry Károly, 'A Katonapolitika És Hadseregszervezés Főbb Kérdései Az Októberi Polgári Demokratikus Forradalom Időszakában. 2.', *Hadtörténeti Közlemények*, no. 1 (1971). 23–24.; Sándor Szakály, *Honvédség és Tisztikar, 1919–1947: Válogatott írások, 1984-2002* (Budapest: Ister, 2002). 10.; HL P.d.f. B/5. d. 4696. 628.

48 Hajdu, *Az 1918-as Magyarországi Polgári Demokratikus Forradalom.*, 251–252.; „Mit akar a hadügyminiszter?" *Népszava*, January, 8th 1919.

and more union members to volunteer.[49] Thus this plane shared many similar characteristics to the original *Volkswehr* plans of Deutsch in Austria. Despite Böhm's efforts, this party mobilization turned out to be completely ineffective. After the five-week long recruitment campaign only 5000 new recruits joined the armed forces.[50] Due to these internal conflicts and constant reforms, the Hungarian army was in a fairly disorganized state when the communist party seized power in Budapest at the end of March 1919.

The policy of remobilization in Austria

Parallel to the demobilization of the former Habsburg army in Austria, discussions began about the establishment of a new, republican armed force. On the 1st November the political leadership of the SDAP agreed to establish a new democratic and republican army. This was named *Volkswehr* after the Viennese revolutionary militias of 1848.[51] The recruitment of the new soldiers began almost immediately after this decision; the first call to arms was published on the November 3rd 1918. They expected people to volunteer at their Ersatz corps and remain in service for an indefinite, but limited time.[52] The government's first call to arms was relatively successful; till November 10th 1918, 6000 new soldiers enlisted in the garrisons. Parallel to this loosely organised remobilization process, Julius Deutsch and his colleagues issued a new decree about the establishment of the *Volkswehr* on November 15th 1918.[53]

According to the official discourse, the new army had to differ from the old Habsburg military system in the methods of recruitment, the social

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49 Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Történeti Tár Iratgyűjtemény (MNM TTI): 84.96. 1-2.

50 Őry Károly, 'A Katonapolitika És Hadseregszervezés Főbb Kérdései Az Októberi Polgári Demokratikus Forradalom Időszakában. 2.'29–32.

51 Jedlicka, *Ein Heer Im Schatten Der Parteien. Die Militärpolitische Lage Österreichs 1918–1938.*, 11.; Etschmann, 'Theorie, Praxis und Probleme der Demobilisierung in Österreich 1915–1921', 68., 70–71.

52 „Aufruf an die Front", *Arbeiterwille*, March 1st 1918. 3.

53 Haas, *Studien zur Wehrpolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, 8. 18.; Etschmann, 'Theorie, Praxis und Probleme der Demobilisierung in Österreich 1915–1921', 99.; Glaubauf, *Die Volkswehr 1918–1920 und die Gründung der Republik*, 23., 27.

background of the soldiers and its internal culture. With the establishment of the *Volkswehr* the old regimental system was abolished and the recruitment was decentralized according to the civil administration of the new Austrian republic. In every political district an independent battalion was to be organized from volunteer soldiers. Hypothetically the old regiments should have been dissolved, and they should hand over all of their equipment to the new formations. According to the original ideas of Deutsch, the bulk of the army should have been recruited in the major industrial centres.[54]

The new army did not have the time to train its recruits, so it only accepted officers and servicemen who already had military experience. The officers' loyalty to the republic was supposed to be controlled by the soldiers' councils.[55] This new *Volkswehr* army was introduced with various success in different parts of Deutsch-Österreich. While in Vienna and in Lower-Austria many people enlisted, in the rural and mountainous regions only a couple of new soldiers joined the army. On the December 17th 1918 around 60 000 soldiers served altogether in the *Volkswehr*, excluding the territory of *Deutschböhmen*.[56] Despite all intentions of the social democrats, the establishment of a completely new military force was only partly successful. In Vienna for example the XXII. and the XXIII. VW Baon. were formed from the servicemen of the city's military police and the XXIV. and XXV. VW Baon. incorporated even the members of the local civil rifle association, the *Wiener Bürger Scharfschützenkorps*.[57]

Besides being largely a volunteer force, the *Volkswehr* was planned to differ from the old k. u. k. military in two other aspects. First, unlike the predominantly agrarian Habsburg army, the social democrats tried to strengthen the working-class character of these units. Therefore, they conducted extensive recruitment campaign among the lower ranks of the party and the trade unions.[58] Secondly,

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54 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Archiv der Republik, Landesverteidigung Staatsamt für Heerwesen (AdR/LV/ StAfHW) Abteilung 5. 177. K. 48-10/4-2 5.; Glaubauf, *Die Volkswehr 1918–1920 und die Gründung der Republik*, 30.

55 Glaubauf, 26, 29. Erwin Steinböck, *Die Volkswehr in Kärnten: Unter Berücksichtigung des Einsatzes der Freiwilligenverbände* (Wien; Graz: Stiasny, 1963), 10.

56 Haas, *Studien zur Wehrpolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, 24.

57 Glaubauf, *Die Volkswehr 1918–1920 und die Gründung der Republik*, 56.

58 Julius Deutsch, *Aus Österreichs Revolution : militärpolitische Erinnerungen* (Wien: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1921). 27. Haas, *Studien zur Wehrpolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, 19., 24.

the internal culture of the military had to be reformed and "democarized". As Karl Seitz underlined: the "era of violence" and "blind obedience" is over. He argued that every soldier should serve in the army voluntarily and with the confidence that they are doing their patriotic duty to defend the German people of Austria.[59]

The social democrats thought that the "oppressive structure" of the military could only be changed with the proper representation of common soldiers. In order to do so soldiers' councils were elected at regimental and battalion level, which ought to channel the demands of the servicemen. Although this gave the *Vertrauensmänner* a huge power, they were still not allowed to command the troops during any military operation. The social democrats also hoped that these institutions could serve as extensions of the party organisation and would help them to control the armed forces. [60]

Despite all the efforts of the War Ministry, this militia system turned out to be insufficient during the early winter 1919. The provincial elites were especially dissatisfied with the new force. They perceived the *Volkswehr* – partially rightly so – as tool of the central government and the social democratic party to interfere in local politics. Consequently, the regional political elites – including the rather leftists Lower Austria – did not really back the introduction of the *Volkswehr* but rather supported a more locally controlled militia system. This rejection was often reinforced by the ill-discipline of the newly raised troops.[61] Vienna was clearly dissatisfied with the resentment towards the new army very soon and tried to warn repeatedly the local municipalities to cooperate with the local *Volkswehr* officers.[62]

In order to solve the problem the Renner government began to negotiate the modification of the existing military law. The new regulations introduced on the 6th February 1919. It allowed the provincial governments to introduce temporary conscription in the case of emergency. According to the Christian

59 Glaubauf, *Die Volkswehr 1918–1920 und die Gründung der Republik*, 27.

60 Haas, *Studien zur Wehrpolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, 8.; Archiv für Verein der Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung. Altes Parteiarchiv Mappe 21. Geschichten der Österreichischen Arbeiterräte (Typoskript Karl Heinz – Nachlass K. Seitz) 25.

61 Haas, *Studien zur Wehrpolitik der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie*, 28, 29. Wolfgang Rebitsch, *Tirol - Land in Waffen: Soldaten und bewaffnete Verbände 1918 bis 1938* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 2009), 23., 29.

62 AdR/LV StAfHW 178. 63. 1/1–2. 1918. 11. 22.

socialists' proposal; in case of internal unrest, natural disaster or foreign invasion 24 000 people could have been called in for a maximum of 4 months of service. This policy remained in power until the peace treaty of Saint Germain was signed on the 10th September 1919. Its proscriptions led to the complete demobilization of the *Volkswehr* and its transformation into the interwar Austrian *Bundesheer*.[63]

The remobilization in local context

The remobilization in the multi-ethnic borderlands in both countries largely differed from the intentions of the political centres. This phenomenon was more obvious in Austria, where provincial political elites remained very powerful after the collapse of the old state. The case of Carinthia demonstrates this very clearly.

While the retreating imperial soldiers were still marching through the region, the remobilization of the self-defence troops already began in province. In early November the local political elite decided to take the military matters into their own hands. Carinthia – which belonged to the III. (Graz) *Korpskommando* during the war – established its independent provincial military high command. Ludwig Hülgerth, the commander of the 1st Mountain Rifle Regiment was appointed to the head of every armed formation stationing in the Bundesland.[64] Hülgerth did not have an easy task, because this provincial HQ was a complete novelty in the military hierarchy. Thus, he had to organise an entirely new military bureaucracy and establish good cooperation with the civilian leadership of the provincial government. He largely built on the war-time traditions of the *Kärntner Freiwillige Schützen* and divided his available resources to different *Unterabteilungen* responsible for defending small sections

63 Steinböck, *Die Volkswehr in Kärnten*, 7.; Etschmann, 'Theorie, Praxis und Probleme der Demobilisierung in Österreich 191– 1921', 86.; Glaubauf, *Die Volkswehr 1918–1920 und die Gründung der Republik*, 144–145.

64 Ludwig Hülgerth, 'Wie ich Landesbefehlshaber von Kärnten wurde', in *Kampf um Kärnten : [1918–1920]*, ed. Josef Friedrich Perkonig (Klagenfurt: Kollitsch, 1930), 6.; Hülgerth was approved by Vienna 13 days later. Steinböck, *Die Volkswehr in Kärnten*, 20.

of the province.[65] In order to coordinate the cooperation between the military and the civilian sectors, the temporary provincial parliament elected a separate military committee (*Wehrausschuss*). This became solely responsible for the military affairs in Carinthia.[66]

The provincial elite were deeply concerned about the risks caused by the enormous number of returning soldiers marching through the province after the collapse of the Italian frontline. Consequently, on the 7th November 1918 the *Wehrausschuss* decided to introduce the conscription of every eligible men between 18 and 36 years old. This was very similar to the reaction of the province to Italy's entry to the war three years earlier. Evidently the introduction of conscription went totally against Vienna's intentions about the establishment of a volunteer force. Not surprisingly, only a couple of days later the Renner government forced Klagenfurt to cancel this call.[67]

Although on paper the provincial government had to abide by the orders of the central government, the Carinthian recruitment practice still differed from the ideas of the Viennese government. The local *Volkswher* was not a new army but rather a mixture of old and new military formations. The more or less still intact parts of the traditional "old" Carinthian regiments were simply renamed *Volkswehr* Battalions. The Mountain Rifle Regiment 1 became the *Volkswehrbattalion 1.*, the 7th common Infantry Regiment the VW Baon. 2., the *Kärntner Freiwillige Schützen* to the VW Baon. 3. and the 8th Field Rifle Battalion to the *Volkswehr Kompagnie 8. Jäger*. Meanwhile new units began to be organised in the political districts, following the military decree of the central government. This turned out to be effective only in certain parts of the province. Three battalions were established, the VW Battalion 4 in Nötsch, the VW Battalion 8 in Villach and the largest of these „new" units the VW Battalion 10 in Wolfsberg.[68] Similar to other parts of German-Austria, soldiers' councils were also established at all of these armed formations. Their influence however differed fundamentally from unit to unit. As Hans Steinacher recalled, in the IR7 the officer corps was able to preserve

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65 Hülgerth, 'Wie ich Landesbefehlshaber von Kärnten wurde', 65–67.

66 Ludwig Jedlicka, *Ende und Anfang Österreich 1918/19: Wien und die Bundesländer* (Salzburg: Salzburger Nachrichten Verlag, 1969), 67.

67 Jedlicka, 69.

68 Steinböck, *Die Volkswehr in Kärnten*, 6–7.

its position and in every key issue they simply overcome the opposition of the *Vertrauensmänner*.[69]

While in Austria the Carinthian provincial government was able to form its more or less independent military policy, in Hungary local actors played a less significant role in the formation of military policies. Unlike in Cisleithania, old regional autonomies were abolished in Hungary after the compromise of 1867 and a centralized state was established. Subsequently, the local state and municipal authorities adjusted to wait for the decisions of Budapest. They did not have the traditions and patterns to take things in their own hands. Interestingly so Transylvania was to some extent an exception in this regard. After the outbreak of the revolution, two so-called Szekler National Councils were established in Budapest. One of them was formed by progressive Transylvanian politicians of the Károlyi party. The leading figure of this group was István Apáthy, a zoology professor from the University of Cluj, while the second one in Budapest was led by István Bethlen, who later became the influential conservative-liberal prime minister of the Horthy regime.[70] The Károlyi government realized very soon that they could not entirely govern the region from Budapest. On the December 8th 1918 the Commissariat for Eastern Hungary was established in Cluj. Its head, István Apáthy and his colleagues became solely responsible for managing the military and domestic affairs of Transylvania.[71]

At least till mid-December 1918 the military policies of Transylvania were also determined by the central authorities of Budapest. The Sibiu and the Cluj districts were merged together and renamed to Transylvanian military district.[72] Conscription was introduced, but failed spectacularly. Only 2050 people joined the Hungarian army till the end of November.[73] In order to handle the crisis, Károly Kratochvil was appointed to the head of the Transylvanian military district. He began to organize his own troops on the ruins of the 38th Honvéd Division. The unit – named from January 1918 as

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69 Hans Steinacher, *Sieg in deutscher Nacht: ein Buch vom Kärntner Freiheitskampf* (Wien: Wiener Verlag, 1943), 62.

70 Ernő Raffay, *Erdély 1918-1919-ben* (Budapest: Magvető, 1987), 148.

71 Béla Köpeczi, ed., *Erdély története 1830-tól napjainkig.* (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1986). http://mek.oszk.hu/02100/02109/html/580.html

72 MNL MOL K 803. PTI 606. f 2. 5.d. 2/1 öe. I. 8.

73 HL P.d.f. B/5. d. 3642. 53.

Székely division – incorporated the regiments withdrawing from the southern parts of Transylvania. These included four Honvéd regiments, the HIR 21, the HIR 24 and the HIR 12 and HIR 32.[74] The military leadership of Budapest also realized the grave situation of the province, so the two youngest age groups, which were conscripted after the war, were not discharged in the province.[75]

Due to the incorporation of several local self-defence guards and the successful recruitment from the multi-ethnic parts of Transylvania the Székely Division became the largest armed formation of the Károlyi government. The narratives of its complete independence were largely exaggerated during the interwar period but due to its size and relative distance from the capital its leaders had a certain degree of independence. The youngest conscripts of the Székely division were not discharged and the soldiers' council system was only temporarily introduced. Although in some units these councils were formed, they still could not fulfil the expectations of the government. In many garrisons they were used only to reinforce the traditional military hierarchies inside the army. For instance, in Arad and Timișoara the officer corps completely occupied these councils. Moreover, in Szeged general Károly Soós, a conservative officer and a Honvéd Minister of the 1920s was "elected" to represent the interests of the common servicemen.[76]

Although it was repeatedly claimed in the memoir literature, the military policy of the new republican governments could hardly be characterized as ungrateful and anti-militaristic. In both countries the demobilization of the imperial army was supported by all political parties. Although pacifism was present in the public discourse, radicals were quickly overshadowed by the moderate forces and by the traditional military administration. Thus, the process of demobilization was mostly conducted according to the plans and regulations developed by the late monarchy. The positive attitude inherited form the era of the Habsburg time towards their "own soldiers" is even more obvious in the local contexts. The political elites of the towns greeted – at least

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74 Gottfried and Nagy, *A Székely Hadosztály Története*, 56–57.

75 Gottfried and Nagy, 63-64.

76 Tibor Hajdu, *Tanácsok Magyarországon 1918–1919-Ben* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1958), 113–115.; Kálmán Shvoy, *Shvoy Kálmán titkos naplója és emlékirata 1918–1945* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1983), 36.

some of – their regiments with public festivities and seemingly valued their suffering in the frontline.

Parallel to the demobilization of the imperial army, the two republics began to establish their new republican armed forces. In both countries only the social democrats had a somewhat clear vision about the future of the military. They wanted to break with the old militaristic system and establish their own, new militia like people's armies, adopting democratic principles of the trade union movements. The social democratic intentions to form the armed forces in their own image was only partly successful and differed slightly in the two countries. The SDAP was in a more powerful position in Austria, therefore they were able to put their plans in practice immediately after the end of WWI. This however did not mean that they were really successful in every part of the country. The old regiments were usually simply renamed to *Volkswehr* battalions and the newly raised units often became very unpopular among the local elites.

In spite of the fact that the Hungarian memoir literature tended to emphasize the revolutionary nature of the army more, it seems to be that the remobilization was more traditional in Hungary then in Austria. Budapest basically fulfilled the last demobilization plans of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The enlistment of the five youngest age groups meant practically the preservation of the conscription system. The ministry continued "old school" Hungarian national traditions and realized the long-planned, independent Honvéd army. The social democrats were only able to take charge of the military affairs at the beginning of 1919 but their efforts to establish a *Volkswehr*-like militia army was completely unsuccessful.

The continuation of the Habsburg traditions was especially characteristic to the distant borderlands, where powerful local elites acted mostly according to the practices they learned before and during the war. The old regiments were simply renamed and incorporated into the seemingly "new" army and they were – at least partly – subordinated to the local political leadership. Here the soldiers' councils were also not the means of the social democratic party but used by the officer corps to reinforce their own power.

In conclusion, it seems that the degree of the revolutionary change in the field of the military affairs were exaggerated. The home fronts was not really dominated by anti-militarism but rather the reflexes learned during and before

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WWI. The towns welcomed their returning regiments and the governments implemented military policies that were formed and developed before 1918. In a local context these conservative policies were often even more dominant. However, due to later political developments, these dynamics were forgotten or simply reinterpreted according to the current ideological tendencies. Understandably so. After 1918, no serious political actor was interested in emphasizing the continuities with the fallen Habsburg monarchy.

László Szarka

National Development and Minority Policy in the Multi-Ethnic States of East-Central Europe

Antecedents and Alternatives

Since the middle of the twentieth century, it has been a generally accepted claim in international historiography that the majority of European nation-building nationalisms—without a sovereign state or interested in the unification of their own ethnic community—were about to enter a new, state-building stage by the beginning of the twentieth century.[1] The national character and content of the European states as well as the intra–nation-state location of nations, national minorities and diasporas living in their territories were the subject of heated debates from the start. Moreover, similarly to the concept of nation, nation-state also carried several meanings. The process of the gradual rapprochement and mixing of the various forms of "national," "state" identity and loyalty had been going on for very a long time. All of the above factors contributed to the fact that—regardless of the actual ethnic and linguistic composition of the individual countries—nation-states were regarded as the state of the majority or entitled nations.[2] The Hungarian historical traditions that existed before and after 1918 are a perfect demonstration of the political and emotional contents underlying the two different interpretations of the notion of nation-state: the self-definition of the multi-ethnic nineteenth-

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[1] Miroslav Hroch, "Nationales Bewusstsein zwischen Nationalismustheorie und der Realität der nationalen Bewegungen," in Eva Schmidt-Hartmann, ed., *Formen des nationalen Bewusstseins im Lichte zeitgenössischer Nationalismustheorien* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1994), 39–52; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London–New York: Verso, 1991), 37–46. https://sisphd.wikispaces.com/file/view/Benedict_Anderson_Imagined_Communities.pdf

[2] Walker Connor, "When Is a Nation?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13, no. 1 (1990): 92–103.

century Hungary as a nation-state is much more accepted in Hungarian historical thinking at the beginning of the twenty-first century than the similar self-classification of the equally multi-ethnic twentieth-century successor states.

In our study, we will examine the arguments upon which the old-new countries in the region with a fundamentally multi-ethnic structure founded their self-definition as a nation-state in the 1920s; how they attempted to merge into the artificial construction of uniform political nations those majority nations that were related to each other, but aspired to an autonomous national life, and to what extent they guaranteed the rights of the ethnic minorities.[3]

3 Ignác Romsics, *Dismantling of Historic Hungary: the Peace Treaty of Trianon, 1920* (Boulder: East European Monographs; Wayne, NJ : Center for Hungarian Studies and Publications Inc., 2002), 17–27; Romsics, "A nemzetállamiság eszméje Közép- és Kelet-Európában," in Romsics, *Helyünk és sorsunk a Duna-medencében* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 1996), 345–359; Romsics, "Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia felbomlása és a Duna-táj nemzetiségi feszültségeinek továbbélése," ibid., 307–313; Péter Kende, "Önrendelkezés Kelet-Európában egykor és most," in Kende, *Nemzetek és népek Kelet-Közép-Európában* (Pozsony [Bratislava]: Kalligram, 2014), 56–63. Part of the literature attempts to categorize the European states by the proportion of the majority nation and their ethnic characteristics. "1. Those countries can be considered homogeneous nation-states where the proportion of ethnic minorities is below 10 percent on a national level, and the state has no major territorial unit where ethnic minorities would represent a majority. 2. Nation-state: ethnic minorities constitute a(n absolute) majority in certain well-delineated territories of the state, but their overall ratio does not attain 10 percent of the population on a national level. 3. Ethnic minority state: the ratio of ethnic minorities varies between 10 and 25 percent of the total population. 4. Pluri- or multi-ethnic state: the "biggest" nation makes up less than 75 percent of the population." Róbert Győri Szabó, *Kisebbség, autonómia, regionalizmus* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2006), 44–45; Georg Brunner, *Nemzetiségi kérdés és kisebbségi konfliktusok Kelet-Európában* (Budapest: Teleki Intézet, 1995), 20–25; The ambiguous nation-state character of the region that took shape after 1918 has been accepted by most authors not only in the legal sense, but also as an analytical category. However, the history books of the nation-states concerned have recently started to emphasize the ethnic diversity of the newly created "nation-states." Jan Němeček and Jan Kuklík, *Od národního státu ke státu národností? Národnostní statut a snahy o řešení menšinové otázky v Československu v roce 1938* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, 2012), 317–320; Joseph Rotschild, *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Seattle–London: University of Washington Press, 1977), 11–14; Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Der Erste Weltkrieg. Anfang vom Ende des bürgerlichen Zeitalters* (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 2004), 10–11.

The "New Europe" that emerged in the wake of the First World War, the post-war conflicts between 1919 and 1922 and the peace treaties terminating them more or less leveled out the "nation-state" structure of Western and Eastern Europe: besides the historical "nations," the newly constituted, enlarged or, on the contrary, reduced nation-states put down in their constitutions the state-constituting right of the majority nations to self-determination and state-building nationalism. Looking back from the beginning of the twenty-first century, we may affirm that with the birth of the Baltic and Balkan states created along the border of Tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire at the cost of tedious and harsh conflicts, the eastern half of Europe saw a new starting point and a basis of legitimacy for the twentieth-century transformation of the continent as a set of nation-states.[4] The demands for national self-determination and national sovereignty came together in state-building nationalisms.[5]

The nation-building function of nineteenth-century East-Central and Southeast European nationalisms had always constituted an objective believed to be historically well-founded: i.e., that the ideal of the equality of nationalisms could be definitively assured by the creation of own national states and the constitutionalization of the national character of the states. However, another idea had also been present since the beginning, according to which it was not or not exclusively the national legitimacy of the given state that guaranteed the actual equality of the nations and nationalities living in its territory, but the framework of democratic institutions.[6] With the creation of the Greek, Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Montenegrin and Albanian

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4 Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East, 1918-1923* (London: Routledge, 2001), 57–62.

5 Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 85

6 For a review on the nation-state processes that intensified at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and in the years prior to the war, see Joachim von Puttkamer, "Collapse and Restoration: Politics and the Strains of War in Eastern Europe," in Jochen Böhler, Joachim von Puttkamer and Włodzimierz Borodziej, eds., *Legacies of Violence: Eastern Europe's First World War* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2014), 9–24; On the multiple meaning of self-determination leading to nation-states, see Benyamin Neuberger, "National Self-Determination: Dilemmas of a Concept," *Nations and Nationalism* 1, no. 3 (November 1995): 297–325.

principalities and kingdoms, the state-building aspirations of nationalisms in the Balkans region was a simultaneous example of the "Balkanization" of the earlier imperial spaces and the possibility to create national states and obtain their international recognition.[7]

The desire to set up an own national state allows for the two fundamental principles – national sovereignty and national self-determination – of the modern world-order to essentially reinforce each other, though they are often at conflict. This was especially true for the movements of those nations that had lost their own, sovereign state to neighboring empires sometime in the past, such as the Irish, the Polish, the Czech and the Croat nations. Similar tendencies could be detected in those nations as well in which a part of the nation or a related national community had already achieved or restored its statehood in the course of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, in the name of national unification, it was precisely these states – Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania and Italy – that offered an own nation-state alternative as opposed to eventual federalization by the empires. This is how the Romanian, Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, South Slav and Italian unity movements were born in the last third of the nineteenth century. For the other "oppressed," i.e., non-dominant, national societies living on the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Tsarist Russia – such as the Slovenes, Slovaks, Romanians, Rusyns, Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians and Finns – it became an increasingly burning issue by the beginning of the twentieth century whether they would be able to obtain the constitutional status corresponding to their own ethnic weight and level of national development within the given imperial framework. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the nation-building nationalisms were able to mobilize the lower strata of the given national groups – with the intermediary of art works of historical or national value, linguistic and cultural values regarded as evidence for their equality with other nations, national papers reaching the tiniest hamlets and parties running with a national agenda in general elections. Besides the traditional

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7 Miroslav Hroch, "From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe," in Gopal Balakrishnan, ed., *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996), 78–97; Ignác Romsics, *Dismantling of Historic Hungary*, 107–119; Ulrike von Hirschhausen and Jörn Leonhard, ed., *Nationalismen in Europa. West- und Osteuropa im Vergleich* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001), 456.

imperial, dynastic loyalty—then increasingly in opposition to it—they shaped and reinforced the conscience of belonging to the national community.[8]

Within the Danubian Monarchy, the federative solutions equally promoted by the social democrats as well as the Czech, Polish, Romanian, Croatian, Slovakian and other national(ity) parties had all fallen through by 1914. Similarly – with the exception of the Moravian Pact and the Bukovina Compromise – most of the autonomy plans of the individual nationalities related to the ethnic, historical-provincial territories also remained on paper. Naturally – according to the analogy of the glass that is half empty or half full – we could also say that in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, especially in its Cisleithanian provinces, auspicious internal processes of reform began. During the war years, all of the above led to the circumstance that the political parties and MPs of the dominant and non-dominant nations equally started to place emphasis on the reinforcement and assurance of their own national sovereignty.[9]

In opposition to the centralist ideas, the dualist status quo advocates and the separatist national aspirations, Austrian social democrats and Christian socialists as well as Romanian, Slovak, Serb and Austrian politicians involved in the work of the Belvedere "workshop" of Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand worked on potential imperial reforms of various depth until 1914. Oszkár Jászi's "minimalist national agenda" put forth before the First World War was still looking for a solution within the framework of the Monarchy in order to satisfy justified nationality claims. In the series of drafts, the radical federative transformation of the system of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise also appeared in the work of Aurel C. Popovici.[10] However, parallel to that, all

8 István Bibó, "A kelet-európai kisállamok nyomorúsága," in Bibó, *Válogatott tanulmányok*, vol. 2 (Budapest: Magvető, 1945–49), 207–210.

9 For the federalization plans with regard to the Monarchy formulated in the years 1900–1918 from recent literature, see Jost Dülffer, "Die Diskussionen um das Selbsbestimmungsrecht und die Friedensregelungen nach den Weltkriegen des 20. Jahrhunderts," in Jörg Fisch, ed., *Die Verteilung der Welt. Die Selbsbestimmung und das Selbsbestimmungsrecht der Völker* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2011), 114–120.

10 Aurel Popovici, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Groß-Österreich. Politische Studien zur Lösung der nationalen Fragen und staatrechtlichen Krisen in Österreich-Ungarn* (Leipzig: Elischer, 1906); Johannes Schönner, "Die Geschichte einer Flucht nach Vorne. Die

four of the multi-ethnic Eastern European empires saw an intensification of the nationalistic assimilative processes – i.e., Germanizing, Russianizing, Turkishizing, Hungarianizing efforts – which further increased tension between the nationalities of the empires.[11]

When the world war broke out, nation- and state-building nationalisms of the minority nations would have hardly envisioned such a radical transformation of Eastern and East-Central Europe as that which eventually took place. For by the end of the war, it became clear that in light of the radically altered geopolitical status of the region, there was no longer any chance for internal reforms or a federative transformation. Just as the internal federalization announced by the young Emperor Charles proved to be insufficient for Cisleithania, the draft proposal elaborated by Oszkár Jászi on behalf of the Hungarians by October 1918 calling for the creation of the Danubian United

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Christlichsoziale im Spannungsfeld zwischen Kaiserstreue und Pragmatismus," in Maria Messner, Robert Kriechbaumer, Michela Maier and Helmut Wohnout, eds., *Parteie und Gessellschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg. Das Beispiel Österreich-Ungarn* (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), 41–52. Oszkár Jászi sought the minimal solution to the management of the nationality question in mother-tongue public administration, education and judiciary. Jászi first elaborated this position in his book published in 1912, but he was still convinced of its feasibility at the time of the 1918 spring *Huszadik Század* survey. Oszkár Jászi, "A nemzetiségi kérdés a társadalmi és az egyéni fejlődés szempontjából," *Huszadik Század* survey (Budapest: Új Magyarország Rt., 1919), 107–109.

11 For the nationalizing efforts within the empires, see, for example, Jörn Leonhard, "Imperial Projections and Piecemeal Realities: Multiethnic Empires and the Experience of Failure in the Nineteenth Century," in Maurus Reinkowski, ed., *Helpless Imperialists: Imperial Failure, Fear and Radicalization* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 21–46; Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, *Empires und Nationalstaaten im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 11–13; Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, eds., *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 568; Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Harper Collins, 2014), 23–26; Elizabeth Kovács, ed., *Kaiser und König Karl I. (IV). Politische Dokumente aus internationalen Archiven* (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2004), 395–397. On the context of the *Völkermanifest* at the end of the world war and its reception in Hungary, see László Szarka, "Volt-e reformalternatíva? A Habsburg-monarchia felbomlása," *Rubicon* 10 (2004): 17–22.

States was not considered to be a realistic alternative by the political leaders of the nations pursuing sovereignty either.[12]

Instead, in November 1918, Jászi—as the minister for nationalities in the Károlyi government—set the objective of temporarily maintaining Hungary's integrity until the decision of the peace conference. Calculating with a partly federative, partly cantonized Transylvania (based on the Swiss model), he proposed the concept of an "Eastern Switzerland" as a scenario for the internal reform of the Hungarian state. This proposal, however, was categorically rejected by three of the nationalities affected: the Romanians, the Slovaks and the Serbs (though not by the Rusyns, Slovenes and Germans living on Hungarian territory). Jászi, who drew the necessary conclusions after the rejection of the possibility of an agreement-based peace or at least a provisional negotiated solution by the nationalities, submitted his resignation three times between November 1918 and January 1919, which Prime Minister Mihály Károlyi did not accept until the convocation of the peace conference. Incidentally, by early December, Károlyi also treated the policy of reaching compromises with the nationalities as a provisional political aim of which certain elements could, ideally, have been cited as an argument for equitable internal ethnic borders.[13] The gradual emancipation of nations, the association of related ethnicities and the independence of new entities recognized as nation-states by the victorious Western great powers launched an unstoppable process of transformation in East-Central Europe at the end of the First World War.

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12 Jászi's book published in 1918 in two editions suggested dividing the Monarchy into Austrian, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, South Slav and Romanian parts. Oszkár Jászi, *Magyarország jövője és a Dunai Egyesült Államok* (2nd edition of the work entitled *A Monarchia jövője*) (Budapest: Az új Magyarország Részvénytársaság, 1918), 37–44. http://mek.oszk.hu/09300/09364/09364.pdf With regard to the "illusionists" and critics of the contemporary Hungarian nation and the ideal of a national state, and the assessment of Jászi's federative transformation plans for Hungary, see János Gyurgyák, *"Ezzé lett magyar hazátok." A magyar nemzeteszme és nacionalizmus története* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2007), 90–135, 157–168.

13 For Jászi's provisional conception elaborated during his period as minister and its precedent function and rejection by the national parties concerned, see László Szarka, "A helvét modell alternatívája és kudarca 1918 őszén," *Kisebbségkutatás* 17 (2008): 2. http://epa.oszk.hu/00400/00462/00038/1563.htm

The Impact of the First World War on Nation-Building Nationalisms

Those ideas that sought to harmonize the advantages of a modern economic empire set up within the framework of the old dynastic structure with the independence of their own national existence were still present at the beginning of the First World War. At the same time, the debates sparked by Naumann's Mitteleuropa Plan in 1915 signaled that despite all the advantages of the great economic area, there were no supporters – with the exception of the Austrian Pan-Germans – for this Central European idea advocated mainly by the Germans.[14]

As a First World War "solution" to the Polish question, the rivaling Russian, Austrian and German plans for the restitution of the Polish state cut up at the end of the eighteenth century were constantly being modified. The cause of the restitution of the Polish state was both obvious and conflictual to all the parties. The *restitutio in integrum* constitution of the Rzeczpospolita as it had been, i.e., a Polish-Lithuanian union that constituted the largest European state of the early modern period, was out of the question since despite the simultaneous defeat of the three neighboring (Russian, Austrian and German) empires that had divided the Kingdom of Poland, other neighbors were already aching for major parts of the historical Polish territories.[15]

In November 1916, the Central Powers managed to come to an agreement regarding the sovereignty of Russian Poland (also known as Congress Poland), but there was no consensus about the area of the new Polish Kingdom. Russia, whose situation was worsening by the minute, recognized Poland in 1917,

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14 István Németh, "Hatalmi politika Közép-Európában. Német és osztrák-magyar Közép-Európa tervezés (1914–1918)," in Németh, ed., *Az első világháború 1914–1918. Tanulmányok és dokumentumok* (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2014), 86–104.

15 Accordingly, the penultimate point of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points was cautious about envisioning a Polish state: "An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea." https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=62

With regard to debates surrounding Wilsonianism, see David Fromkin, "What Is Wilsonianism?," *World Policy Journal* 11, no. 1 (Spring, 1994): 100–111; Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23–41.

while the Soviet-Russian government recognized the country in August 1918.[16] With the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Baltic and Eastern European states located in the area subordinated to German imperial interests could gain their independence only little by little.[17]

Wilson's Fourteen Points announced on January 8, 1918, made full Polish independence a goal to be achieved. However, partly due to the decisions of the peace conference, partly to the peace treaties ending Poland's frontier wars against the Soviets, Poland's sovereignty and definitive territory did not crystallize until 1921.[18] Latvia declared its independence in November 1918, while Estonia had to use weapons to enforce the Treaty of Tartu of February 1920 and obtain its sovereignty. There were also fierce debates regarding the Curzon Line, which delineated the eastern borders of "Congress Poland" that had belonged to Russia for over 100 years. József Pilsudski, of Lithuanian origin, who governed the Polish state as interim head of state, declared war against Ukraine in 1919 and against Soviet-Russia in 1920. Fending off the counterattack of the Soviet army, he managed to gain some of the eastern parts of the historical Polish state as well. The new borders of Poland were mutually recognized by the stakeholders in the Peace of Riga in March 1921. However, the price of the above was that the proportion of the Polish population was slightly below 70 percent in their national state that had just regained its independence.[19]

For the Czechs, until the breakout of the First World War and the appearance of the Czechoslovak émigré group led by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, it was the

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16 Jesse Kaufmann, "Schools, State-Building and National Conflict in German Occupied Poland, 1915–1918," in Jennifer D. Keene and Michael S. Neiberg, eds., *Finding Common Ground* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011).

17 István Németh, "A keleti német impérium kiépítése 1918 első felében," in Németh, *Az első világháború*, 105–122.

18 Aija Priedite, "Latvian Refugees and the Latvian Nation State during and after World War One," in Nick Baron and Peter Gatrell, eds., *Homelands, War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia*, (London: Anthem Press, 2014), 35–52.

19 Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy. Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia and Ukraine Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 69–71; Mommsen, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 112–114; István Lengyel, "Béke Breszt-Litovszkban," *História* 2 (1981): 2. http://www.tankonyvtar.hu/en/tartalom/historia/81-02/ch04.html

federative conception of the Habsburg Empire and Palacký from the Kremsier Parliament in 1849 as well as the Czech trialist attempt of 1871 that had been prevented by the Austrian centralists and Gyula Andrássy which for long represented the historical models of constitutional freedom and democratic self-determination. After the introduction of universal suffrage in Austria in 1907, it was the federalization of the empire according to nationalities that constituted the optimal internal alternative for the Czechs, and in part also for the Polish and Croatian parliamentary parties.

However, the non-materialization of federalization, the attractive example of the Balkan nation-states and, later, the increasingly intensive independence efforts of the nation-building nationalisms in the years of the First World War opened a new chapter in the emancipatory struggles of the non-dominant nations of the region: it was the independent nation-state that came to the fore as the primary goal of war nationalisms and became the—first covert, then more and more stridently demanded—ideal that was upheld also by the Western Powers in the last year of the war.[20]

Accordingly, the Serbs, the Romanians and the Bulgarians would have accepted autonomies and various federative combinations only as a temporary solution at most—and the same goes for the creation of a system of autonomies by nationality. Regardless of their nationality, all politicians who had their heart set on full sovereignty strove to set up or restore the unity of their earlier biggest "national" states, historical principalities and kingdoms.[21]

The two wings of the Neo-Slav movement bearing pragmatic Slav cooperation on their banner provided a curious pre-1914 backdrop to this. The pro-Russian wing was represented by the Czech Karel Kramář, who had been condemned to death during the world war, but who eventually received amnesty from Austrian Emperor Charles I. The pragmatic cooperation of western, southern

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20 William Mulligan, *The Great War for Peace* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2014), 223–251.

21 For some classical and more recent works on the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, see Oszkár Jászi, *A Habsburg-monarchia felbomlása* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1983), 597; Rudolf Schlesinger, *Federalism in Central and Eastern Europe* (4th edition) (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 540; Leonhard and von Hirschhausen, *Empires und Nationalstaaten*, 112; Mark Cornwall, ed., *Last Years of Austria-Hungary: A Multi-National Experiment in Early Twentieth-Century Europe* (2nd edition) (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 240.

and eastern Slav nations was advocated by T. G. Masaryk, who had criticized in the Imperial Council the Austrian-Hungarian measures leading up to the annexation crisis. The majority of the Congress representatives of the movement saw their principal task as the achievement of collaboration between the small Slav nations as well as in preparation for the approaching major global conflict. Of the Slovak delegates attending the Neo-Slav conference in Sophia in 1910, it was Svetozár Hurban Vajanský whose name was linked with the solution hoped to be delivered via the worldwide confrontation predicted by many and the crucial role played in it by Russia: it was from the latter two that they expected those changes that were supposed to provide full sovereignty for the small nations of the Monarchy and the Balkans.[22]

As opposed to Vajanský, during the years of the First World War, the advocates of Czechoslovak unity—including Franz Ferdinand in his Belvedere atelier, the Romanians Aurel Popovici and Iuliu Maniu and the Slovaks Milan Hodža and Vavro Šrobár, the first plenipotentiary Slovak minister in the Czechoslovak government in Prague—all looked for ways to solve the Slovak question outside Hungary.[23]

Parallel to the gradual eclipse and military and political defeats of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, the direct, neighboring relationship between the Serbian and Romanian nation-states and the Austro-Hungarian Empire made significant progress by the beginning of the twentieth century. Austrian-Hungarian diplomacy and, within that, the foreign ministers and diplomats representing Hungarian interests as well had endeavored from the very beginning to create amicable relationships with the newly emerged national kingdoms. Within its own frontiers, however, Vienna and Budapest had continuously introduced measures restricting the use of the national languages, curbing the autonomy

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22 For the Neo-Slav movement and the role of Kramář and Masaryk, see Paul Vyšný, *Neo-Slavism and the Czechs* (Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 164–210. On Vajanský's theory regarding an inevitable Russian intervention in the event of a great European war, see Mateusz Gniazdovski, "Predstavy národa v publicistike S. H. Vajanského," *Národní myšlenka* 10 (2002): 6. http://www.narmyslenka.cz/view.php?cisloclanku=2002060004

23 Dušan Kováč, *Szlovákia története* (Pozsony [Bratislava]: Kalligram, 2001), 163–168. With regard to the Belvedere atelier, see Victor Naumann, "Federalism and Nationalism in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: Aurel C. Popovici's Theory," *East European Politics and Societies* 16 (2002): 854-869.

of the Serbian and Muslim religions and limiting the development of Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian culture in the South Slav provinces.[24] Naturally, the state-building nationalisms of the small nations were at work not only in the Southeast European crisis zone before 1914. Similar constitutional efforts popped up from Scandinavia through the Baltic region to all over East-Central Europe.

National Self-Determination: Multi-Ethnic Nation-State?

The 51 months of the Great War fundamentally changed European power relations between the great powers, especially in East-Central and Southeast Europe. In the meantime, if only temporarily, the war eliminated Russia from the struggles as well as from among those powers that upheld the system. The war forced the two key states of the Central Powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary, as losing entities to surrender unconditionally. In the Balkans it also brought the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Bulgaria to their knees, the former permanently losing enormous territories in Asia and Africa (territories inhabited by Arabs).[25] The world war fiasco of four defeated multi-ethnic empires of the region, the secession of territories with different ethnicities and the post-conflicts sparked by the disintegration temporarily destabilized the entire region concerned. The domestic and émigré representatives of the nations living in the area of the multi-ethnic empires wanted to put forward at the peace conference closing the war their territorial claims and their diplomatic preparations and efforts that had been going on for four years. With that in mind, they set up their national councils in the name of national self-determination, they declared a "national revolution" and they launched a campaign to clarify the constitutional status of their nations and guarantee

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24 Mile Bjelajac, "Serbien in Erstem Weltkrieg," in Gordana Ilić Marković, ed., *Veliki rat. Der Grosse Krieg. Der Erste Weltkrieg im Spiegel der serbischen Literatur und Presse* (Vienna: Promedia, 2014), 47–71; Marwin Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims in the Balkans During World War I* (London: Palgrive Macmilan, 2014), 27–36; Katrin Boekch, *Von den Balkankriegen zum Ersten Weltkrieg. Kleinstaatenpolitik und ethnische Selbsbestimmung auf dem Balkan* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996), 145–165.

25 Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism*, 28–32, 57–62.

their independent nation-states through international law and the great powers.[26]

In an effort to save what they could, the losers or those who saw the fiasco coming tried to persuade the political delegations of the nations getting ready to secede with federalist and autonomist plans, convincing them to stay and sign a consensual peace. This desperate struggle was well-illustrated by the series of negotiations that Hungarian Minister for Nationalities Oszkár Jászi conducted in November 1918 with the Rusyns, the Romanians and the Slovaks as well as the categorical rejection of the plan of national autonomies laid down in popular laws in the case of the Rusyns, the German and the Slovaks and that of the proposals regarding condominial Transylvanian governance.[27] However, the small nations that were recognized by the Entente as their allies and were thus standing on the winning side presented unification and separatist proposals and agendas to the crowds celebrating them and their national liberty. Moreover, they managed to mobilize a substantial military force as well.[28] Everywhere from Lemberg to Dublin, from Cetinje to Riga,

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26 Jászi, *A Habsburg-monarchia*, 83–94; Konrád Salamon, *Nemzeti önpusztítás 1918–1920* (Budapest: Korona Kiadó, 2001), 87–96; Romsics, *A nemzetállamiság eszméje*, 346–347; Szarka, *A helvét modell.*

27 On Jászi's negotiations, see Zsolt K. Lengyel, "Keleti Svájc és Erdély 1918–1919. A nagyromán állameszme magyar alternatíváinak történetéhez," in Lengyel, *A kompromisszum keresése. Tanulmányok a 20. századi transzilvanizmus korai történetéhez* (Csíkszereda [Miercurea Ciuc]: Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, 2007), 73–96; László Szarka, "Jászi Oszkár, az elemző programalkotó," *História* 30, no. 9 (2008): 23–26. http://www.historia.hu/userfiles/files/2008-09/Szarka.pdf; Gyurgyák, *"Ezzé lett magyar hazátok,"* 176.

28 The Czechoslovak Legion in Russia had about 61,000 soldiers at the end of 1918, although they returned to Europe only a year later via Vladivostok. At the end of November 1918, the approximately 20,000 soldiers of the Italian legions also appeared in the Slovak region of northern Hungary: they were integrated into the Czechoslovak army first under Italian, then under French command. Martin Zückert, "National Concepts of Freedom and Government Pacification Policies: The Case of Czechoslovakia in the Transitional Period after 1918," *Contemporary European History* 17, no. 3 (2008): 325–344; Piotr S. Wandycz, "Poland's Place in Europe in the Concepts of Piłsudski and Dmowski," *East European Politics and Societies* 4, no. 3 (1990): 451–468; Piotr J. Wróbel, "The Revival of Poland and Paramilitary Violence, 1918–1920," in Rüdiger Bergien and Ralf Pröve, eds., *Spießer, Patrioten, Revolutionäre. Militärische Mobilisierung und gesellschaftliche Ordnung in der Neuzeit* (Göttingen: V &

from Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia, Romania) to Turócszentmárton (Martin, Slovakia), people designated the achievement of their nation-state ensuring the nation's independence, freedom and equality—a nation-state legitimized by the national majority—as the objective of the war that they had formerly considered pointless.[29]

Following the armistice agreements in November 1918, the diplomatic corps and military commanders of the victorious great powers sought to pacify the defeated East-Central European adversaries and conflict zones through military threats that were as aggressive as possible and which used the armies of the Czechoslovak, Romanian and South Slav allied states. After the preliminary talks of the winning powers, the peace conference began on January 18, 1919, in Paris in the presence of delegates from the victorious great powers and the allied or associated countries. The peace conference had an attendance unmatched in world history and was administratively well-organized. The representatives of the losing states were not invited to take part in its work even though the primary goal of the conference was to hammer out a peace treaty to be signed with the losing countries, especially Germany.[30]

The Supreme Council of the peace conference, the assembly of the prime ministers and foreign ministers of the five great powers—the United States, France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan—approved the fundamental principles of the peace treaty. The Supreme Council issued decisions regarding the most important political issues, reviewed the obligations undertaken during the war and approved the recommendations of the territorial and other special committees. Subsequently the council heard the claims of the relevant allied states, and then on the basis of the various reports of the technical (military, railway, water management, minority, etc.) committees, it made decisions regarding the content of the German, Austrian, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Turkish peace treaties. Having submitted the draft peace treaties, the Supreme Council heard the leaders of the delegations of the losers, though they had no right to ask questions or engage in negotiations with the members of the body.

R Unipress, 2010), 281–303.

29 Ian F. W. Beckett, *The Great War: 1914–1918* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 9–14.

30 Ignác Romsics, *A trianoni békeszerződés* (Budapest: Osiris, 2008), 107–132; Margaret Macmillan, *Béketeremtők. Az 1919-es párizsi békekonferencia* (Budapest: Gabo, 2005), 86–89.

The key demarcation decisions concerning the future of East-Central European states were born as a result of the frontier-establishing activity of the Polish, Czechoslovak and Romanian-Yugoslav territorial committees operating from February 10 to mid-April 1919. The work of the committees, and in some special cases of their subcommittees, was carried out by the delegates of the great powers. In the event of conflict, they interviewed the heads of the Czechoslovak, Romanian and South Slav delegations that were present at the peace conference.[31] The work of the committee determining the demarcation of the frontiers of Poland typically followed a similar procedure, but with a much more complicated set of problems to resolve.[32]

With the designation of the new borders, Czechoslovakia, Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes all received extensive borderlands with a Hungarian ethnic majority. When in December 1919 the Hungarian government was invited to take receipt of the draft peace treaty, the neighboring countries did everything in their might to make sure that the protest of the Hungarians living in their newly acquired territories would not reach the peace conference. The appendices of the Hungarian peace memorandum contained several such protest documents.[33]

The Czechoslovak government declared a state of emergency that would last for many months: in Subcarpathia it was maintained for a year and a half. The government announced general elections in 1920 before the signing of the Treaty of Trianon. Both Romania and Yugoslavia attempted to make the life of Hungarian intellectuals and public employees impossible or make them leave their territory, e.g., by forcing the latter to take an oath of loyalty to the new state. In the years 1919–1920, more than 300,000 Hungarians who had found themselves in the neighboring countries moved or fled across

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31 Romsics, *A trianoni békeszerződés*, 107–132; Macmillan, *Béketeremtők*, 166–167, 177–178.

32 Ibid., 263–289.

33 Mária Ormos, "Új rend a világban. Egy meghasonlott békerendszer," *Rubicon* 8, no. 2 (1997), accessed October 1, 2017, http://www.rubicon.hu/magyar/oldalak/uj_rend_a_vilagban_egy_meghasonlott_bekerendszer/; László Szarka, "A magyar békecélok alakulása az első világháború után. Adalékok az 1918–1920. közötti béke-előkészítés történetéhez," in Dániel Ballabás, ed., *Trianon 90 év távlatából. Konferenciák, műhelybeszélgetések* (Eger: Líceum Kiadó, 2011), 41–59.

the borders to reach the post-Trianon territory of Hungary.[34] The number of Polish, Latvians, Belarusians, Jews and Lithuanians who fled from the not-yet-solidified extensive borderlands of Poland and Russia amid the turmoil of the post–First World War conflicts greatly exceeded the number of Hungarians who were forced to migrate.[35]

Border Disputes, Referendum and Protection of Minorities

Through the ratification of the German, Austrian and Bulgarian peace treaties as well as the Czechoslovak, Polish, Yugoslav and Romanian minority treaties of 1919, the peace conference radically transformed the power and ethno-political relations of the East-Central European region that were formerly under the rule of the Habsburg Monarchy. The proportion of ethnic minorities living on the territory of the newly created states exceeded 20 percent in each case. In Czechoslovakia, taking the Czechs and the Slovaks as the majority nation, ethnic minorities made up 34.6 percent of the population, in Poland 31.2 percent, in Romania 28.8 percent and in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, taking all three nations as one, 20.7 percent. When demarcating the new national borders, the theoretical instructions of the Supreme Council of the peace conference and the decisions of the territorial committees both created mixed solutions in which historical, constitutional, economic and strategic criteria were sometimes considered to be equally important to the nationality principle and sometimes even much more important. The consequences of this were also manifested in the territorial provisions of the German and Austrian peace treaties. Thus, on the basis of historical public law arguments, the territory of the countries of the former Czech Crown, for instance, were given to the Republic of Czechoslovakia—along with the 3.3 million Germans living there. Similarly, the bulk of the German-majority

34 István Mócsy, *The Uprooted: Hungarian Refugees and Their Impact on Hungary's Domestic Politics, 1918–1921* (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1983), 22‒34; Emil Petrichevich-Horváth, ed., *Jelentés az Országos Menekültügyi Hivatal négy évi működéséről* (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda Rt., 1924), 8–11.

35 Nick Baron and Peter Gatrell, "War, Population Displacement and State Formation in Russian Borderlands, 1918–1924," in Baron and Gatrell, eds., *Homelands, War, Population and Statehood*, 10–35.

territories of West Prussia that used to belong to the historical Poland were assigned to the Polish.

Fervent German protests and armed riots broke out in both Poland and Czechoslovakia. During the winter of 1918–1919, the Czech, Moravian and Silesian provincial German communities in Czechoslovakia, which altogether numbered 3.25 million people, set up their independent German provincial governments—under the names Deutschböhmen, Sudetenland, Böhmerwaldgau and Deutschmähren in accordance with the Austrian government's peace policy—with reference to the right of self-determination and in protest against their annexation to Czechoslovakia. These provinces were swiftly occupied by the troops of the Czechoslovak army raised quickly under Italian and French leadership, and the administrations of the German provinces were eliminated.[36] These provincial attempts were easily countered by the Czechoslovak army through military force. A whole series of similar tensions were generated in Silesia and in several other Polish-German and Lithuanian-German border regions.[37]

The country-wide protests of March 4, 1919, were suppressed in bloodshed by the Czechoslovak authorities. Ignoring Vienna's appeals for ethnic German frontiers, the Austrian peace treaty designated the historical Czech borders as the definitive borders of the new Czechoslovak state. In the West Prussian territories promised to Poland, the ratio of Germans exceeded 70 percent, in the province of Posen-Poznan 35 percent and in the western districts of Upper Silesia 50 percent. According to the Polish census of 1921, the total number of Germans living in Poland was higher than one million (see figures in Table 1). The two Silesian Polish uprisings in 1918–1919 served to promote the realization of the West Prussian Polish claims, permitting the Polish army

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36 Ladislav Josef Beran, *Odepřená integrace. Systémová analýza sudetoněmecké politiky v Československé republice 1918–1938)* (Prague: Pulchra, 2009), 69–85; Peter Haslinger, *Nation und Territorium im tschechischen politischen Diskurs 1880–1938* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2010), 237–252.

37 Christian Reitz von Frentz, *A Lesson Forgotten: Minority Protection Under the League of Nations: The Case of German Minority in Poland 1920–1934* (Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 1999), 74–77. Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 56–70.

to put the overwhelmingly German-inhabited areas *via facti* under Polish administration.[38]

Wishing to override the territorial clauses of the peace treaty of Saint-Germain as well as the prohibition of Austria's accession to Germany, 99 percent of the population voted for Germany at the provincial referendums held in Tyrol and Salzburg in April and May 1921. The Austrian government was obliged to call off this internal initiative under international pressure. The "peacemakers" used referendums, the only democratic tool for deciding the outcome of debated territorial issues, under the supervision of the League of Nations at only five locations throughout Europe. That would have been the only possible means of clarifying the status of the debated areas and ethnic groups: i.e., by taking into consideration the will of those concerned and making just decisions accordingly.

Of the five referendums that were effectively held, one pertained to the Danish-German borderland, three affected the German-Polish frontiers (the southern part of East Prussia, Upper Silesia and the so-called Kashubian Corridor), while one concerned Austria (South Carinthia). In three further instances, with regard to the Czechoslovak-Polish debate over the Těšín (Cieszyn/Teschen), Orava (Orawa/Arwa) and Spiš (Spisz/Zips) regions as well as in the Belgian-German dispute over Eupen-Malmedy, the idea of holding a referendum was eventually dropped. As for the referendum pertaining to Sopron, Hungary, and its surroundings, it took place on December 14–16, 1921, on the basis of the Venice Protocol of October 11, 1921, thanks to the mediation of Italy, overriding the resolution of the Council of Ambassadors ordering the Hungarian evacuation of the counties in western Hungarian counties.[39]

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38 Nina Jebsen and Martin Klatt, "The Negotiation of National and Regional Identity During the Schleswig-Plebiscite Following the First World War," *First World War Studies* 5, no. 5 (2014): 181–211.

39 Bernard Linek, "Deutsche und polnische nationale Politik in Oberschlesien 1922–1989," in Kai Struve and Phillip Ther, eds., *Die Grenzen der Nationen: Identitätenwandel in Oberschlesien in der Neuzeit* (Marburg: Herder Institut Verlag, 2002), 37–68; Peter Haslinger, *Der ungarische Revisionismus und das Burgenland 1922–1932* (Frankfurt–Berlin–Bern–New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 37–44; Mária Ormos, *Civitas fidelissima. Nészavazás Sopronban 1921* (Győr: Gordiusz, 1990), accessed October 1, 2014, http://w3.sopron.hu/ nepszavazas1921/ Ormostot.html

The ratification of the Hungarian and Turkish peace treaties was hindered by domestic political and military events within the two countries. The head of the Hungarian peace delegation, Albert Apponyi, explained to the Supreme Council on January 16, 1920, that Hungary was willing to submit to a referendum concerning all the contested areas. However, Apponyi's request fell on deaf ears just as much as the territorial pleas and proposals of the German, Austrian and Bulgarian delegations had earlier. With the exception of Germany and the winning powers, all victorious and defeated states had to honor their obligations stipulated in the minority treaties. These were part of the Austrian, Hungarian and Bulgarian treaties. The addenda promoted by the Hungarian peace delegation that were supposed to guarantee the religious, cultural and regional autonomy and extensive language-use rights for the Hungarians now living outside the borders of Hungary were equally rejected by the representatives of the great powers.[40]

When the borders of Hungary were being demarcated, the neighboring countries protested jointly and successfully against the referendum solution advocated by the Apponyi-led Hungarian peace delegation. Thus, with the exception of the Sopron plebiscite on December 14–16, 1921, no referendum was held with regard to the Trianon borders, even in cases (Salgótarján and the Muravidék/Prekmurje) in which the disputes provoked during the establishment of the borders would have necessitated and justified it.

The structure of the peace treaties of the losing states was identical to that of the Austrian treaty signed on September 10, 1919, in Saint-Germain. In addition to political and territorial provisions, stipulations regarding war reparations, military obligations and restrictions, rules regulating international economic, commercial and transportation relations and clauses regarding the agreement's execution and miscellaneous issues, the Treaty of Trianon also contained those international minority protection provisions that were included in a separate treaty with the victorious states of the region.[41] The

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40 József Galántai, *Trianon és a kisebbségvédelem. A kisebbségvédelem nemzetközi jogrendjének kialakítása 1919–1920* (Budapest: Maecenas, 1989), 71–110.

41 Ferenc Eiler, "A két világháború közötti nemzetközi kisebbségvédelem rendszer működése az első években," in Nándor Bárdi, Csilla Fedinec and László Szarka, eds., *Kisebbségi magyar közösségek a 20. században* (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, MTA Kisebbségkutató Intézet, 2008), 60–63.

treaties of Saint-Germain and Trianon tied the hands of the two successor states with regard to questions that were less important to Hungary, though were extremely relevant to Austrian peace policy: the potential return of the Habsburgs, the unification of Austria and Germany and other similar, theoretically possible constitutional developments before which an article of each peace treaty locked the door of international law.[42]

Similarly to the other losing countries, Hungary had no choice but to sign the peace treaty due to the grave domestic crises of 1919, permanent isolation in foreign policy and the concomitant economic and military vulnerability of the country. But regardless of the side of the border on which people lived, interwar Hungarian public opinion was unable to come to terms with the peace treaty.

Hungarians considered the detachment of the borderlands and towns with a compact Hungarian majority and the constraint of more than three million Hungarians into minority existence to be unreasonable and deeply unfair in the same way as the Germans regarded the separation of Danzig (Gdańsk) and the annexation of the German-majority areas of the Posen (Poznań) region and Upper Silesia to Poland and the Czech-Moravian German borderland to Czechoslovakia to be irrational and unjust.[43]

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42 According to Article 88 of the Austrian peace treaty and Article 73 of the Treaty of Trianon, the two countries had to submit to the clause that they could not renounce their independence and could not associate themselves with another state without the permission of the Council of the League of Nations.

43 The biased and partial decision-making mechanism of the peace conference is vividly described by Mária Ormos: "Upon the drawing of the borders, the competent committees and sub-committees were guided by the principle that they should find the ultimate ethnic frontier from the perspective of the beneficiary small ally and not the other way around. This in itself was usually enough to determine the fate of the territories with a mixed population, but within that, a seemingly theoretical debate might have developed about the significance of a town or village. The question was raised also with respect to Germany and Austria, although for a whole series of Hungarian towns, it became cardinal. [...] The peacemakers would, of course, favor the small allies economically, but in this respect they did somewhat take into consideration the life prospects of the suffering party as well. An indication of this was the Silesian referendum (even if its outcome was subsequently distorted to some extent) and also that the coal fields of Salgótarján and Pécs and the industrial district of Ózd were kept within Hungary despite all pressure to the contrary from the small powers." Ormos,

Contemporary Hungarian public opinion uniformly regarded the historical Hungarian state to be one of the basic assets of nineteenth-century nation-building nationalism. The right to self-determination of other nationalities living in the territory of the historical Hungarian state and the foundation of states on that basis was seen as a consequence of the lost world war, hence as a kind of punishment, and public opinion was unable to recognize the fact that the neighboring nations were also entitled to set up their own independent state. The contemporary political élite was also unable to comprehend the historical weight and role of the transformation process that simultaneously led to the creation of states for the small nations living in three sub-regions of Eastern Europe—the Baltic region, East-Central Europe and the Balkans. After the failure of the initial ephemeral attempts at establishing contact and starting bilateral negotiations with Czechoslovakia and Romania, the Hungarian governments in office between the two world wars made the revision of the borders the primary goal on their foreign political agenda. The way in which the demarcation of the borders had ignored ethnic realities for hundreds of kilometers and the continuous limitation and violation of the rights of ethnic Hungarians preserved the antipathy of Hungarian public opinion toward the Versailles system.[44]

Here we should briefly point out again that neighboring Austria, the history of which ran parallel to that of Hungary in many respects, but which had chosen to go down different paths in many fundamental regards, was just as gravely affected by the Treaty of Saint-Germain as Hungary was by the Treaty of Trianon in terms of its constitutional law and territory.[45] The Republic of Austria lost nearly three-fourths of the lands and population that had belonged to the Austrian Empire before 1918 as well as one-third of its Cisleithanian

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Új rend a világban. Egy meghasonlott békerendszer. http://www.rubicon.hu/magyar/oldalak/uj_rend_ a_vilagban_ egy_ meghasonlott_bekerendszer

44 "Between the two world wars, revision was the strongest legitimate consensus-generating factor. The character of revisionism, however, was nationalist, according to the taste of the government—and not democratic as in the case of some of the opposition parties—thus it reinforced confrontation and self-isolation." Miklós Zeidler, *A revíziós gondolat* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2001), 188.

45 Helmut Konrad and Wolfgang Maderthaner, eds., *Das Werden der Ersten Republik: . . . der Rest ist Österreich* (Vienna: Gerold's, 2008), 382.

territories with a German majority. The harshness of this latter punishment was comparable to the loss of the Hungarian-majority territories detached from Hungary. Therefore, Chancellor Karl Renner, as he was getting ready to attend the peace conference, upheld and demanded the implementation of the principle of national self-determination—in accordance with his nation's interests, of course—just as the Károlyi government that had declared the Hungarian People's Republic pinned its hopes on an invitation to the peace conference and the just decisions of the latter. For lack of any substantial policy and military alternatives, the Hungarian peace delegation led by Apponyi was obliged to follow the same course concerning the territories detached by its neighbors and under military occupation in 1919 and demanded a referendum in January 1920. As early as the year 1919, Vienna would have insisted "only" on its Cisleithanian territories with a German majority, but it was "urging the unification of Germany with German-Austria."[46] The Republic of Austria led by social democrats wished to compensate itself in this way for having been reduced to a "dwarf state" with the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire, and for the fact that more than four million Cisleithanian Germans found themselves in the Czechoslovak, South Slav and Italian states.[47]

The priority of statehood based on national legitimation instead of historical dynastic rights continued to function as a matter of principle in the peace treaties following the Second World War, though, of course, subordinated to the geopolitical decisions of Yalta and Potsdam conferences in the same way as occurred during the arrangements following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia at the end of the twentieth century

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46 Georg E. Schmid, "Selbstbestimmung 1919. Anmerkungen zur historischen Dimension und Relevanz eines politischen Schlagwortes," in Karl Bosl, ed., *Versailles-St. Germain-Trianon. Umbruch in Europa vor fünfzig Jahren* (Vienna–Munich: Oldenbourg, 1971), 127–142.

47 "The Austrians were fully aware of their defeat. They focused on the points that were crucial for them during their preparation for the negotiations, while they tried to put themselves at the head of the leaders of the great powers. See Róbert Fiziker, "Herr Karl és Here Kurt. Történelemkép Ausztriában" (an extended written version of a paper presented at the Hungarian Association of History Teachers–organized conference entitled "What Do We Remember? The Selectivity of Collective Memory in Hungary and in the World," accessed October 2, 2014, http://www.tte.hu/media/pdf/fiziker_vegl.pdf

or in the statutes laying the foundations for the operation of the European Union.[48]

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48 At the same time, it is very revealing that while reference to (national) self-determination was made to an excessive degree at the Paris Peace Conference from 1919 to 1920, it was barely ever mentioned in any of the important documents prepared at the peace conference closing the Second World War. Dülffer, "Die Diskussion um das Selbstbestimmungsrecht," 120–125.

Csaba Katona

The Sources of Everyday Life during the War: Diaries and Memoirs in Research on World War I

"In contrast with earlier professional literature, which focused mostly on exploring the military–diplomatic and political–economic background of the two armed clashes and their consequences, now the general emphasis has shifted to more broadly interpreted social and cultural (intellectual and mental) aspects. This qualitative change in research perspective is partly due to the fact that the attention of history writing has turned from political history through social history to cultural historical aspects and modern socio-historical considerations." The above statements are made by Slovak historian Gabriela Dudeková in one of her articles, in which she discusses the survival strategies of families during World War I.[1] First of all, her claim is hardly disputable, and second, the examination of the role of diaries and memoirs in Hungarian research on the "Great War" could be of scholarly interest.[2]

It is not surprising that this topic should attract so much attention. As highlighted by the above quote, this domain has become an important trend in international research[3] as part of a longer process (which is not to say

1 Dudeková, Gabriela, Család és túlélési stratégiák az I. világháborúban. Hosszú távú változások a szlovák társadalomban. In: *Világtörténet*, 37. [5.] (2015) 2. sz. 312.

2 Kiliánová, Gabriela, Divided Memories: The Image of the First World War in the Historical Memory of Slovaks. In: Sociológia, 35. (2003) 35. 3. sz. 229–246.

3 Kramer, Alan, Recent Historiography of the First World War. I–II. In: *Journal of Modern European History*, 12. (2014) 1. 5–27., 2. 155–174.; Krumeich, Gerd–Hirschfeld, Gerhard, Die Geschichtsschreibung zum Ersten Weltkrieg. In: *Enzyklopädie Erster Weltkrieg: Aktualisierte und erweiterte Studienausgabe*. Hrsg. Krumeich, Gerd–Hirschfeld, Gerhard–Renz, Irina. UTB, Stuttgart, 2014. 304–315.; Hirschfeld, Gerhard, Der Erste Weltkrieg in der deutschen und internationalen Geschichtsschreibung. In: *Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 29–30. (2004) 3–12.; Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphane–Becker, Annette, *14–18, retrouver la guerre*. Gallimard, Paris,

that the traditional research orientations would have been pushed into the background[4]). Among the earliest such approaches, we could mention the ambitious project operating in the framework of the U.S.-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Foundation, which analysed the economic and social circumstances of the World War while from the German territory, the volumes of the series entitled *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Weltkriegs, Deutsche Serie* should be highlighted, published in Stuttgart between 1927 and 1932. Due to the attention generated by the World War centenary, interest in private documents as war sources has surged to unprecedented heights. Historians have declared that in addition to the social consequences of the war (e.g. demographic changes, changes in the employment structure, etc.), it is necessary to examine the events from a "bottom-up" perspective as well.[5] Many have analysed everyday life on the battlefield and in the hinterland, the experiences and impressions of the "man of the street" caught in the whirlwind of war. Focus has shifted onto the socio-cultural aspects of life carried on in the extraordinary war situation, especially to the situation of the various groups and layers of society (i.e. soldiers, prisoners of war, women, children, etc.)."[6]

This paper does not allow for a detailed analysis, of course, but for instance, memoirs[7] have received special attention as well as the examination of how the

2000 [Bibliothèque des histoires]; Weinrich, Arndt, „Grosser Krieg", grosse Ursachen? Aktuelle Forschungen zu den Ursachen des Ersten Weltkrieges. In: *Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte*, 40. (2013) 233–252.; Cornelissen, Christoph, „Oh! What a Lovely War!" Zum Forschungsertrag und zu den Tendenzen ausgewählter Neuerscheinungen über den Ersten Weltkrieg. In: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 65. (2014) 5–6. sz. 269–283.; Mombauer, Annika, Der hundertjährige Krieg um die Kriegsschuld. In: *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 65. (2014) 5–6. sz. 303–337.

4 For example: Clark, Christopher, *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914.* Harper, New York, 2013.

5 For exapmle: Kiliánová, Gabriela, Erlebt und erzählt. Der Erste Weltkrieg aus der mikrosozialen Perspektive. In: *Aggresion und Katharsis. Der Erste Weltkrieg im Diskurs der Moderne.*
Hrsg. Ernst, Petra–Haring, Sabine A.–Suppanz, Werner. Passagen, Wien, 2004. 263–281.

6 Dudeková, Gabriela, Család és túlélési stratégiák az I. világháborúban. Hosszú távú változások a szlovák társadalomban. In: *Világtörténet*, 37. [5.] (2015) 2. sz. 312–313.

7 Krumeich, Gerd, Kriegsgeschichte im Wandel. In: *„Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als*

memory of war was shaped and how it evolved. The radical transformation of family relations[8] and women as a separate topic[9] as well as women working in jobs that only men used to do[10] have also been explored. An important step on the road leading to women's emancipation was that women realized during the war that they were able to do well outside the walls of their home, too. Among the long-term effects of the war, we should mention the disintegration of the traditional family model, the changing roles of women, and its impact on modern society. Similarly, other key topics that came into the focus of attention were research on permanent and occasional prostitution,[11] and the radical changes in the relations of men and women on the whole.[12] The following statement holds true outside France as well: "The war radically disrupted the private lives of French families who were practically all affected by the departure of a loved one for the frontlines."[13]

The occasional love affairs that evolved during the war also constitute an independent topic — just like war propaganda and its impact.[14] An equally

Mensch..." Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkriegs. Hrsg. Hirschfeld, Gerhard–Krumeich, Gerd–Renz, Irina. Klartext, Essen, 1993. 11–24.

8 Donson, Andrew, *Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, Authority in Germany 1914–1918.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2010.

9 Daniel, Ute, Frauen. In: *Enzyklopädie Erster Weltkrieg: Aktualisierte und erweiterte Studienausgabe.* Hrsg. Krumeich, Gerd–Hirschfeld, Gerhard–Renz, Irina. UTB, Stuttgart, 2014. 116–134..

10 Daniel, Ute, Der Krieg der Frauen 1914–1918. Zu Innenansicht des Ersten Weltkriegs. In: *„Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als Mensch..." Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkriegs.* Hrsg. Hirschfeld, Gerhard–Krumeich, Gerd–Renz, Irina. Klartext, Essen, 1993. 131–149.; Lee Downs, Laura, War Work. In: *The Cambridge History of the First World War.* Vol. III. *Civil Society.* Ed. Winter, Jay. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge–New York, 2014. 72–95.

11 Grayzel, Susan R., Mothers, Marraines, and Prostitutes: Morale and Morality in First World War France. In: *The International History Review*, 19. (1997) 1. 66-82

12 Grayzel, Susan R., Men and Women at Home. In: *The Cambridge History of the First World War.* Vol. III. *Civil Society.* Ed.: Winter, Jay. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge–New York, 2014. 96–120.

13 Vidan-Naquet, Clémentine, Private life (France). https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/pdf/1914-1918-Online-private_life_france-2015-05-19.pdf. Date of downlowd: august 2017.

14 Welch, David, *Germany and Propaganda in World War I. Pacifism, Mobilization and Total War.* I. B. Tauris, New York –London, 2014.

intriguing question is the change and strengthening of the national conscience during the war,[15] the phenomenon when nationalisms become more intense and impatient, and in relation to that, the image of the enemy extended to entire nations based on stereotypes.[16] That is how the symbolic images of the Russian bear[17] and the German hydra appear in wartime private documents —in line with the official propaganda— as a collective enemy, while pity for the enemy (the Italians) can also be detected.[18]

At this stage of research, the above questions are among the most important issues of wartime studies. This historical research, which takes a much broader perspective than before, has elevated into focus sources of a personal nature, hence memoirs, diaries, letters, and the various narratives of contemporaries in general.

The investigation of private documents as historical sources is strongly motivated also by the fact that although more than one hundred years have gone by since the outbreak of World War I, the history of the everyday life in the "Great War" has still not been written down completely and will most likely never be. One would have to consider as many wars, sentiments, stories and personal experiences as there are people. "The experience of the world war crisis slowly submerged among the existential troubles of the individual, and there it deepened into a personal problem. The expression of this personalized complex is memoirs literature among others, which has been promoted by postmodern historiography."[19] This can produce results in directions that

15 Wilcox, Vanda, Encountering Italy: Military Service and National Identity during the First World War. In: *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 3. (2011) 2. 283–302.

16 „most of the populations participating in World War I already felt to some dagree a sense of national identity". 174. Mann, Michael, The role of nationalism in the two world wars. In: *Nationalism and War*. Eds. Hall, John A.–Malešević, Siniša. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2013. 172–196.

17 Kulcsár, Beáta, „Az 1914/15-iki harcunk az orosszal". Foris Géza háborús visszaemlékezései. In: *Pro Minoritate*, 23. (2014) 2. 62., 70.; In the Trenches: A First World War Diary by Pierre Minault. Eds. Minault, Sylvain. In: *Not Even Past*, 5. (2014) 18.

18 Katona, Csaba, „Poor Dago! What have you sinned against us, and what have we sinned against you?" The War Diary of László Kókay. In: *From the Front. Zibaldone della Grande Guerra*. A cura di Artico, Tancredi. Roma, 2017 [Tempus. La Forme della Memoria, 10.] 205.

19 Egy jó magyar katona. Vitéz Balogh Sándor feljegyzései a Nagy Háborúból. Ed.:

used to be nearly indisputable before such as the question whether the war was unanimously and enthusiastically welcomed in the individual countries or not.[20]

Thus one should be able to cope with the natural polyphony of the history of World War I even if those working with private documents "…know that one cannot compile a single 'true' story —say from hundreds of WWI memoirs— by correcting or substituting the blurred or missing details from other sources".[21] History writing has long surpassed the view according to which literature and historiography diverge completely: "In written texts, there has traditionally existed a division between literature, which was labelled as 'fictional' and therefore 'false', and history, which was seen as 'factual', 'documentary' and, hence, 'true.'"[22]

Diaries, private correspondence, autobiographies, and memoirs, just like the results gained from oral history, capture the viewpoint of the individual as the documents of individual and personal remembrance. The worldview of their authors, and often the changes thereof, unfolds before the eyes of the researcher. We can have a look into the (permanent or occasional) social network, relations and value system of the individual. At the same time, we can interpret the information thus obtained in a broader context. It is not surprising that WWI diary and memoir literature is burgeoning in the Euro-Atlantic region: in the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria and so on. Private documents of this kind are published in print or online one after the other, placing the above outlined issues into focus, examining how soldiers and those in the background experienced the war and mainly,

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Kovács, Imre Attila. In: *Harctér és hadifogolytábor. Bakanaplók a Nagy Háborúból.* Tornyai János Múzeum és Közművelődési Központ–Emlékpont, Hódmezővásárhely, 2017 [Emlékpont Könyvek, 6.] 11.

20 Linden, Marcel, van den–Mergner, Gottfried, Kriegsbegeisterung und mentale Kriegsvorbereitung. In: *Kriegsbegeisterung und mentale Kriegsvorbereitung (Interdisziplinäre Studien).* Hrsg. Linden, Marcel, van den– Mergner, Gottfried. Duncker & Humblo, Berlin 1991. 9-23.

21 Egy jó magyar katona. Vitéz Balogh Sándor feljegyzései a Nagy Háborúból. Ed.: Kovács, Imre Attila. In: *Harctér és hadifogolytábor. Bakanaplók a Nagy Háborúból.* Tornyai János Múzeum és Közművelődési Központ–Emlékpont, Hódmezővásárhely, 2017 [Emlékpont Könyvek, 6.] 12.

22 Polic, Vanja, The Texture of Everiday Life. In: *Brno Studies in English*, 37. (2011) 2. 160.

its impact. In the following I will examine this question in the Hungarian context: does the Hungarian research on WWI diary and memoir literature fit into this international trend?

At this point, we should take a look at the Hungarian professional literature that has been published recently on the subject. The core research entitled *Naplók, emlékiratok annotált bibliográfiája* [The Annotated Bibliography of Diaries and Memoirs] is hallmarked by the name of György Kövér, who published a volume of studies dealing with ego documents in 2014. The aim of this research was to compile a register of diaries from the 18th–20th centuries, preserved in manuscript in Hungarian public collections.[23] Within the enormous international literary production related to the centenary, many have been inspired by the extraordinarily successful digital projects that have made available hundreds of diaries and masses of letters written by soldiers and other private sources. It is enough to cite one example to demonstrate how general the international embeddedness and acceptance of the above is. The portal *Europeana 1914–1918* set the objective of summarizing as many wartime documents as possible and making them digitally available. This huge quantity of documents includes numerous private documents as well. In fact, one of the goals was to make documents and sources of historical value in the possession of private individuals available for international scholars just as much as for citizens interested in the past.[24] All of the above has compelled numerous authors to begin examining the history of the everyday life —of soldiers and hinterlands— during the war.[25]

Our study has been greatly aided by the work of the French Philippe Lejeune.[26] He was the one who established the following categories of private documents

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23 Kövér, György, Én-azonosság az ego-dokumentumokban. Napló, önéletírás, levelezés. In: *Soproni Szemle*, 64. (2011) 3. sz. 219–242.

24 http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu

25 Katona, Csaba–Kovács, Eleonóra, A személyes emlékezet dokumentumai. In: *Turul* 87. (2014) 2. sz. 41–47.; Katona, Csaba–Kovács, Eleonóra, A személyes emlékezet forrásai. In: *A történelem segédtudományai I. Genealógia* 3. Eds.: Kollega Tarsoly, István–Kovács, Eleonóra–Vitek, Gábor. Tarsoly, Budapest, 2015. 157–179.

26 Pl.: Lejeune, Philippe, *On Autobiography*. Ed. Eakin, Paul John. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis,1989 [Theory and History of Literature, 52.]; Lejuene, Philippe, *On Diary*. Eds. Popkin, Jeremy D.–Rak, Julie. Biographical Research Center by The University Of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2009.

according to genres: memoirs, biography, personal novel, autobiographical poem, journal/diary, self-portrait or essay.[27]

Despite the above, many still find it strange that the historical approach has left its conventional stream of event-, military- and diplomacy-centred history. Nevertheless, it is this approach that is capable of surpassing the canonized narratives of the national histories —inexorably opposed to each other due to the static position of winners and losers— and their frames. Relying on personal sources, this approach discusses the war and its consequences from a fresh socio-historical angle. Naturally, private sources had been surrounded by some sort of interest ever since their creation. In Hungary, the first such publications appeared already during the war.[28] In addition to the lack of interest on behalf of historians, the belatedness of their more thorough investigation can be put down to the fact that the majority of these diaries and memoirs were (or are still) in private possession, so they could not really be exploited by historians.

However, as this dropback seems to be disappearing with time, the spread of modern mass communication tools and the interest generated by the centenary, a surprisingly high number of such sources have come to the fore – as it has been pointed out recently by Ferenc Pollmann among others: "… a remarkable number of contemporaneous documents —surprising even the professionals— have survived and been discovered, either as a cherished family relic or by chance. These war journals, memoirs, letters, postcards and miscellaneous objects all prove that despite the hundred years elapsed, despite the Second World War, and despite the long decades of forced oblivion, the Hungarians have not forgotten about the acts of the one-time soldiers of the Great War."[29]

As Ferenc Pollmann has also noted, it cannot be put down to chance only that such sources are discovered by the dozen. At a time of extraordinary wartime

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27 Lejeune, Philippe, The Autobiographical Contract. In: *French Literary Theory Today: A Reader*. Ed. Todorov, Tzvetan, Cambridge, University Press, Cambridge 1982. 194. Franciául: Lejeune, Philippe. *Le pacte autobiographique*. Seuil, Paris, 1975.

28 Szőts, Zoltán Oszkár, Volt egyszer egy évforduló – válogatás az utóbbi két év első világháborús szakirodalmából. In: *Múltunk*, 61. (2016) 2. sz. 122.

29 Pollmann, Ferenc, Előszó. In: *A pokol tornácán. Imre Gábor kadét doberdói naplója*. Ed.: Pintér, Tamás. Nagy Háború Kutatásáért Közhasznú Alapítvány, Budapest, 2016. [Nagy Háború Könyvek] 6.

conditions, relations and interactions, many began to write who otherwise would not have been inclined to do so. On the other hand, the "Great War" became a shared experience because nearly everyone was involved. In this sense, the thorough examination of the huge number of private documents is a method suitable for the observation of community trends that go beyond the individual level. The experiences of the predecessors were incorporated into the community conscience by the others. With that the experiences were placed into new frames of interpretation again and again depending on how big the interest shown in them was and how easy it was to identify with their content. In this sense, this is an act of remembrance: the community does not let go of the deceased, but keeps them in the community through commemoration and takes them along into the present. Thus commemoration is an emotional bond and a cultural education, a conscious relationship with the past. This is what makes cultural memory superior to bequest."[30]

Thus diaries and recollections (i.e. the narratives of everyday life and individual destinies) serve as the mirror of the big whole. To some extent, they are similar to literature presenting war topics. They surpass the individual, and become part of the collective memory: "…they become group narratives that […] make it possible for both the narrator and the listener to identify with the community emotionally; the individual can enter the world of tradition, thus acquiring a stable identity."[31] Besides family traditions, this is the reason why these diaries and letters written by soldiers have survived after so many years and have been carefully preserved.

Researchers studying the private history of World War I are thus in a fortunate position when it comes to unravelling the emotional and spiritual conditions of the individuals. Handled with appropriate criticism, the huge quantity of sources about private life can open up the way to understanding the individual life stories. It is quite evident that the more widespread literacy is, the more written materials are produced and the easier it is to capture a topic based on

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30 Assmann, Jan, *Das Kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und Politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen.* C. H. Beck, München, 2007. 33.; Assmann, Jan, Communicative and Cultural Memory. In: *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook.* Eds. Erll, Astrid–Nünning, Ansgar. De Gruyter, Berlin–New York, 2008 [Media and Cultural Memory, 8.]. 109–118.

31 Gyáni, Gábor, Kollektív emlékezet és nemzeti identitás. In: Gyáni, Gábor, *Emlékezés, emlékezet és a történelem elbeszélése.* Napvilág, Budapest, 2000. 89.

these kinds of sources. The affinity to keep diaries and write memoirs, which was already typical of the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, became even stronger between 1914 and 1918. "As mushrooms sprout in the forest after rainfall, so do battlefield diaries in the bloodshed. Everybody keeps a diary out there." [32] This was a period when people felt compelled to write down what happened to them and to the people living around them, or later on, to note down their lasting memories.

War situations are always like that: when life gets off its normal track, logically, it generates events different from everyday norms. If this kind of situation evolves and is there to stay for years when most layers of the population are literate and alphabetization is high, it is quite natural that diaries and private documents are produced in great quantities. It is true for most authors that "… in addition to the desire to commemorate, they must have also been spurred by the effort to maintain their memory and literacy in a totally different cultural environment". [33]

 In that light, it should not be overlooked that besides the battlefield diaries, those living in the hinterland also turned to writing in these probing times: hence women, who often did not receive enough attention in times of war (and peace, for that matter). The volume of private documents that publishes the World War I diaries of Laura Lengyel Dánielné, Ervin Bauer, József Erdélyi, Ilona Hoffmann Jenőné Lénárd and Géza Lackó made sure to include female authors as well. [34]

Naturally, there are other —trivial— motivations for writing: boredom and processing. Having said that, we are not implying that these were the only reasons for keeping diaries — even if the authors were not conscious of the fact that they were actually processing their experiences in that way. A perfect illustration of that is the few clumsy lines of poetry fabricated by Sándor Zádori (1887–1965), a soldier originating from a poor peasant family from

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32 Berend, Miklós, *Berend Miklós hadi önkénytes honvéd törzsorvos Harctéri naplója. Adatok a magyar honvédség, főkép az 5. h. huszárezred történetéből.* Singer és Wolfner, Budapest, 1916. 6.

33 Aszalai Kálmán emlékei a Nagy Háborúból. Ed.: Nagy, Gyöngyi.. In: *Harctér és hadifogolytábor. Bakanaplók a Nagy Háborúból.* Tornyai János Múzeum és Közművelődési Központ–Emlékpont, Hódmezővásárhely, 2017 [Emlékpont Könyvek, 6.] 104.

34 „…az irodalmat úgyis megette a fene" – *Naplók az első világháború idejéből.* Ed.: Molnár, Eszter Edina. Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, Budapest 2015.

Hódmezővásárhely, which he jotted down in the camp of Scandiano located in Emilia-Reggio Province[35]: "I'm so bored there's nothing to do/I've decided to write a poem for you" (rough translation).[36]

In the case of battlefield diaries, the starting point is the peculiar situation of their author (as it has been mentioned already), which inevitably determines the topics discussed in the diary. Because even if the author is not strictly interested in them, military events, information about the troops, troop movements and camp life all crop up in the descriptions. It depended on the narrator's personality type, character, fields of interest, education and so on in what manner and to what extent the text described the details of (military or other) events. Regarding battlefield diaries, another crucial factor was the extent to which the war situation allowed for continuous diary keeping, or writing as such. Those who had less time or opportunity to write focused on the essentials and detailed only those aspects that mattered the most to them. Concerning time spent on the front, it was decisive how much the author had to worry about his own and his diary's safety; whether his superiors frowned on his writing, for they could even retaliate for his activity. Thus it was also decisive how overtly the author could write in his diary.

Although the battlefield and frontline diaries focus predominantly on the events of the military arena, they can also contain reflections about civil life circumstances, or internal, spiritual happenings. Generally speaking, diaries can be thematic due to their author's field of interest, and battlefield diaries belong to this category as their creation was motivated by an unprecedented and extremely tense situation. The content noted down by the particular authors depended on a number of factors just as the content of general diaries is determined by the authors' personal interests, well-informedness, education, the context, their state of mind, the general atmosphere and so on. That is why Peter Burke's observations are so essential: "Neither memories, nor histories seem objective any longer. In both cases historians are learning to take account

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35 For example: *Grande Guerra L'Emilia-Romagna tre fronte e retrovia*. A cura di Carrattieri, Mirco–De Maria, Carlo–Gorgolini, Luca–Montella, Fabio. Bradypus, Bologna, 2014.

36 Olasz fogságban. Zádori Sándor első világháborús hadifogoly naplója. Ed.: Bernátsky, Ferenc. In: *Harctér és hadifogolytábor. Bakanaplók a Nagy Háborúból*. Tornyai János Múzeum és Közművelődési Központ–Emlékpont, Hódmezővásárhely, 2017 [Emlékpont Könyvek, 6.] 168.

of conscious or unconscious selection, interpretation and distortion. In both cases they are coming to see the process of selection, interpretation and distortion as conditioned, or at least influenced, by social groups. It is not the work of individuals alone."[37] This consideration is also raised by the notes of Sándor Kövér, György Kövér's father from 1914. Later on he wrote that they had been dated in the year of the outbreak of the war (and of his school leaving exam), but as György Kövér pointed it out, this statement was ripened by the time elapsed because "leafing through the notes of those times […] we cannot find any direct references to the war at first sight." [38]

Most readers usually attribute great authenticity to diaries – perhaps also due to their "frankness", as illustrated by the above example – , even more so, than to memoirs, which (re-)interpret the events in retrospect. This confidence is based on the fact that the narrative of the events experienced is written down by the author immediately, or close to them in time, which implies that the text is the bearer of truth. However, this should incite researchers to be even more critical of these sources. On the one hand, if that is indeed the case and the diary was written on the basis of immediate, or at least recent, reflections, the individual emotions and fresh impressions did not have enough time for a more nuanced interpretation. The diary records the experiences of the author in a raw and on-the-spot form; its author does not have the means to consider the events with a cooler head and in possession of supplementary information. On the other hand, in memoirs, the narrator "weighs" the events in light of what happened to him and around him, which might entail that he explains, re-interprets, or *horribile dictu* "modifies" the chain of events. Thus diaries "create a perpetually changing identity from day to day while autobiographies attempt to reconstruct a coherent life story looking back from a given point in time". [39]

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37 Burke, Peter, History as Social Memory. In: Burke, Peter: *Varieties of Cultural History*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1997. 44.

38 Kövér, György, Az érettségi éve: 1914. Napló és önéletírás metszéspontjai. In: *Személyes idő – történelmi idő*. Eds.: Mayer, László–Tilcsik, György. Hajnal István Kör Társadalomtörténeti Egyesület–Vas Megyei Levéltár, Szombathely, 2006. [Rendi társadalom – polgári társadalom, 17.]. 216.

39 Kövér, György, Én-azonosság az ego-dokumentumokban. Napló, önéletírás, levelezés. In: *Soproni Szemle*, 64. (2011) 3. sz. 221.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that there are some diaries that were very much written in a conscious, cold-headed manner, whose authenticity is questioned precisely by the audience they were destined for. There is a broad-ranging scale from diaries written strictly for private purposes to works written clearly for outsiders. Therefore the reading of diary entries requires intense source criticism with an eye to that aspect as well.

Pál Pritz has distinguished four basic types of diaries, though warning that "… with these four categories, we have not yet arranged the infinite mass of diaries into a strict system. For in many cases, the diary in question can be assigned to not only one, but several categories to a varying extent".[40] Accordingly, "one of them includes those cases where the author of the diary certainly wants to make his voice heard in the cacophony narrating the past. This is true even if he does not intend his diary for the general public upon making his entries. The other category contains those diaries whose authors were driven by the desire to express themselves (as well). This desire is particularly well-detectable in cases when making such written records carried a substantial risk because a diary could become a corpus delicti if found by the wrong persons. Yet diaries were created in such situations as well. If there is an imminent danger of being found out, a shrewd author may —and will— blend his true message in the amalgam of fake narrative elements. In such cases, it is crucial that the historian reading the diary as a contemporaneous source should dissect the various layers of the narrative with an expert hand. The third category includes those diaries which —or certain elements of which— can be understood only bearing in mind that the author (as the relative of the memorialist) writes with the intention of self-justification. As such, he (or she) will consciously construct the text. In other words, the author will divert the narrative from the experienced reality of the past (be it of the morning or afternoon of the same day) on purpose. The fourth category includes those cases where the author keeps a diary (on paper or even on the computer) in order to safeguard his or her mental health, or to suffer the least possible damage. The frequent unevenness of these diaries, the hardly justifiable, excessive description of certain periods while leaving much more important facts, happenings, and periods without reflections is largely related to that."[41]

40 Pritz, Pál, Napló és történelem. In: *Múltunk*, 62. (2017) 1. sz. 5.
41 Pritz, Pál, Napló és történelem. In: *Múltunk*, 62. (2017) 1. sz. 4–5.

One must not forget that it is not without precedent that some people would write memoirs on the basis of their diary, so blended genres also occur. A prime illustration of that is the work entitled *Utaim* —also touching upon World War I— written by Kornél Bőle (1887–1961), a Dominican friar.[42] At the same time, it is also a possibility that with time, memoirs turn into a diary when the author catches up with the present. An example of that is the writing of Lajos Haan (1818–1891), Lutheran minister, historian and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences,[43] or to cite a piece of recently published literature: the source written by György Nagy, a nobleman from Jászárokszállás (1706–1770).[44]

It is important to note that diaries always record personal convictions even if their authors have a clear or overt intention to justify themselves or influence their eventual readership. As pointed out by Pál Pritz, recollections and memoirs all belong to this category. It is a specificity of diaries and memoirs that the narrator and the protagonist are the same even if the author does not want to put himself or herself in the limelight. The starting point is always the events that happened to the author — it is a different matter how and why he or she filters his or her message either immediately, or later on. The author of the diary or of the memoirs usually argues, analyses, records facts and opinions with a view to justifying his or her own narrative, and this is especially true for memoirs.

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42 Domonkos Rendtörténeti Gyűjtemény Levéltára [Archives of the Dominican Order's History Collection],

  Vasvár. Bőle Kornél hagyatéka. Gilányi Magdolna: „Krisztusért jártam mindenben követésgben" – Bőle Kornél OP: Utaim. In: *Turul* 88. (2015) 1. sz. 16–21.

43 Országos Széchényi Könyvtár [National Széchényi Library], Budapest. QUart. Hung. 1952. Haan Lajos naplója; Papp, János: *Haan Lajos naplója. Részletek*. Rózsa Ferenc Gimnázium és Szakközépiskola, Békéscsaba, 1971 [Bibliotheca Bekesiensis, 6.]; Demmel, József–Katona, Csaba: *Slovenský kňaz, maďarský historik. Listy a denník Ľudovíta Haana*. Historický ústav Filozofického výskumného centra Maďarskej akadémie vied–Výskumný ústav Slovákov v Maďarsku, Békéscsaba–Budapest. [Kor/ridor Knihy, 9.].

44 *Nemes Nagy György jászsági naplója, 1759–1769 (1820)*. Ed.: Csikós, Gábor. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Megyei Levéltára, Szolnok, 2017. [A Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Megyei Levéltára Közleményei, 15.].

It is up to the author's intents whether he or she strongly focuses on his or her own life path, or adopting the role of an eyewitness, he or she chronicles the events happening around him or her. There is one more simple explanation regarding intentions: when the author simply "…wishes to leave a mark with his or her diary, to create the memory of the situations experienced by him or her".[45] Let me invoke the famous thesis of Pierre Bourdieu regarding biographies: namely, life is a story, and it is also the totality of the events in relation to individual existence, so it can be conceived of as a story and also as the narration of a story.[46]

Finally, let me say a few words about Hungarian publications specifically. Although it would be premature to draw the balance at this point as it is only 2017, and I am certain that First-World-War private documents will continue to be published abundantly even after the closing year of the centenary, a few observations can already be stated. First of all, it is a pleasure to see such a high number of volumes having appeared in print.[47] In this respect, we should absolutely mention the outstanding efforts of the Public Benefit Foundation for Research on the Great War (in Hungarian: *Nagy Háború*

45 Eöry, Eleonóra, Főszolgabírói mulatságok. Társasági élet és szórakozás Olchváry Pál naplójában. In: Aetas, 23. (2008) 3. sz. 65.

46 Bourdeiau, Pierre, L'illusion biographique . In: *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 62. (1986). 1. 69.

47 Without being exhaustive: *Tevan Rezső katonatiszt első világháborús naplója*. Ed.: Balogh, István. Tevan Alapítvány, Budapest 2012; *Egy magyar úr a XX. században. Nagy Ákos tartalékos tüzér főhadnagy első világháborús emlékezései és családi levelezése, 1914–1918.* Ed.: Buzinkay, Géza. Corvina, Budapest, 2014.; Bartók, László, *Egy hadfi naplója.* Ed.: Cieger, András. Corvina, Budapest, 2015; Kozma, Miklós, *Egy csapattiszt naplója, 1914–1918.* Ed.: Csillag, István. Méry Ratio, Kisebbségekért–Pro Minoritate Alapítvány, Šamorín–Budapest, 2014 [Pro Minoritate Könyvek, 2.]; *Egy hadapród naplója az első világborúból.* Ed.: Kutas, Ferenc. Szarvasi Krónika Alapítvány Kuratóriuma, Szarvas, 2012 [A Szarvasi Krónika Kiskönyvtára, 17.]; Liffa, Aurél, *Pécstől Isonzóig. Napló, 1914. szeptember 1.–1916. május 22.* Püski, Budapest, 2012; *Koczka József naplója.* Forum, Újvidék, 2í14; *Búcsú a Monarchiától. Berzeviczy Albert naplója (1914–1920).* Ed.: Gali, Máté. Helikon, Budapest, 2015; Hermann, Antal, *A hadak útján, 1914–1918.* Ed.: Pollmann, Ferenc. HM Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum, Budapest, 2017; *Harctér és hadifogolytábor. Bakanaplók a Nagy Háborúból.* Tornyai János Múzeum és Közművelődési Központ–Emlékpont, Hódmezővásárhely, 2017 [Emlékpont Könyvek, 6.].

Kutatásáért Közhasznú Alapítvány). They have been publishing a multitude of private documents in sequels for years online, on their website, i.e. on the most accessible social media surface (the diaries/memoirs of Zoltán Dér, Gábor Imre, Gyula Vágovits, Kornél Szojka, Gyula Kemény, László Kókay, Gergely B. Sárközy and György Kovács[48]), but in the past years, they have published several sources of this kind in print as well.[49] What is more, they have also made some international accomplishments.

At the same time, a brilliant volume by Péter Bihari must also be mentioned here,[50] in which "each chapter is accompanied by some kind of a personal story taken from memoirs, diaries or press reports".[51] It is not by accident that the comprehensive work of Zoltán Oszkár Szőts, which has been repeatedly cited above, and which reviewed the latest Hungarian literature on the First World War, dedicated a separate chapter to source publications, emphasizing that thanks to private documents, "we may acquire new perspectives for the assessment of the social and mentality history of Hungary at the time of the World War".[52]

It is also a reason for pleasure that in the Hungarian publication of First-World-War diaries and memoirs, we can discover the phenomenon pointed out by the above-cited Gabriela Dudeková. According to her, "it is no longer the reaction of intellectuals and artists (the 'lost generation') to the events and consequences of the war that is in the centre of attention, but what changes the war generated in the behaviour and loyalty of the 'citizens of the street.'"[53]

48 http://nagyhaboru.blog.hu/

49 *A pokol tornácán. Imre Gábor kadét doberdói naplója*. Ed.: Pintér, Tamás. Nagy Háború Kutatásáért Közhasznú Alapítvány, Budapest, 2016. [Nagy Háború Könyvek]; *Mesék a Nagy Háborúból. Kovács György harctéri naplója*. Eds.: Babos, Krisztina–Pintér, Tamás. Nagy Háború Kutatásáért Közhasznú Alapítvány, Budapest, 2016 [Nagy Háború Könyvek].

50 Bihari, Péter, *1914. A nagy háború száz éve. Személyes történetek*. Pesti Kalligram, Budapest, 2014.

51 Szőts, Zoltán Oszkár, Volt egyszer egy évforduló – válogatás az utóbbi két év első világháborús szakirodalmából. In: *Múltunk*, 61. (2016) 2. sz. 144.

52 Szőts, Zoltán Oszkár, Volt egyszer egy évforduló – válogatás az utóbbi két év első világháborús szakirodalmából. In: *Múltunk*, 61. (2016) 2. sz. 139.

53 Dudeková, Gabriela, Család és túlélési stratégiák az I. világháborúban. Hosszú távú változások a szlovák társadalomban. In: *Világtörténet*, 37. [5.] (2015) 2. sz. 312–313.

Thus in the copious production of the past years, the writings of persons originating from lower social strata could also carve out a place for themselves, through which "…besides the discourse of the elite, the interpretation of the past offered by the poor layers of society is also present in the First-World-War commemorative culture of Hungary".[54] What is more, we are also aware of the battlefield diary of an individual in a peculiar social position: Gypsy primas Béla Munczy (1896?–1938) from Sopron.[55] In addition to what has been noted by Gergely Romsics, i.e. that "we feel that their writings are more naturalist and less consistent than the records of the officers or generals, while often being more interesting or entertaining",[56] the polyphonic nature of this approach is also a most welcome development.

A domain where there is still room for improvement (to the extent possible) is the presentation of Hungarian First-World-War diaries and memoirs embedded into context and their insertion into the framework of international history. This is partly a matter of funds (note the difficulties of translation), and partly, it requires a special openness on behalf of the receiving community. Nevertheless, there are some positive examples that can be mentioned: the Doberdo battlefield diary of László Kókay (1897–1972), a volunteer from Szeged is partially accessible in English[57] and fully available in Italian.[58] The volume that comprises this diary, a publication entitled *From the Front.*

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54 Aszalai Kálmán emlékei a Nagy Háborúból Ed.: Nagy, Gyöngyi. In: *Harctér és hadifogolytábor. Bakanaplók a Nagy Háborúból.* Tornyai János Múzeum és Közművelődési Központ–Emlékpont, Hódmezővásárhely, 2017 [Emlékpont Könyvek, 6.] 104.

55 D. Szakács, Anita, Munczy Béla cigányprímás első világháborús frontnaplói (1916–1917). In: *Cigánysors. A cigányság történeti múltja és jelene II*. Ed.: Márfi, Attila. Emberháza Alapítvány–Erdős Kamill Cigánymúzeum–Cigány Kulturális és Közművelődési Egyesület, Pécs, 2009. 91–95.; D. Szakács, Anita: Egy cigányprímás naplói az első világháború borzalmairól. In: *Múlt-kor*, 3. september 2009. [date of downlowd: july 2017].

56 Romsics, Gergely, Az első világháborús magyar emlékezetkultúra. In: *Magyarország az első világháborúban*. Ed.: Romsics, Ignác. Kossuth, 2010. 179–196.

57 Katona, Csaba, „Poor Dago! What have you sinned against us, and what have we sinned against you?" The War Diary of László Kókay. In: *From the Front. Zibaldone della Grande Guerra*. A cura di Artico, Tancredi. Roma, 2017 [Tempus. La Forme della Memoria, 10.] 159–208.

58 Kókay, László, *Diario di un fante di Szeged a San Martino del Carso*. A cura di: Simonit, Gianfranco. Gruppo Speleologico Carsico, 2017.

Zibaldone is also exemplary because it publishes the frontline diaries of soldiers of different nations: partly in their original language, and partly in English, as a vehicular language. In other words, front experiences are presented in an international comparison, which can also enhance the readers' understanding of the fact: soldiers were subject to the same miseries, troubles and sufferings on all sides of the trenches. And this allows for a general, humanist perspective on the war in contrast with the earlier domineering nationalist interpretations. Far from offering an exhaustive list, the above go to show what a plethora of hitherto unexplored sources await scholars interested in researching the "Great War". They also set an example with the diverse perspectives they take on the topic of the war. Private documents also carry the potential to make the events of the "Great War" known to broader groups of the society, and instead of offering a bird's eye view of this era, they allow us to bring closer the understanding of the contemporaneous issues more efficiently to the man of today.

For the figures, the descriptions of military operations, and the analyses of trials often conceal —partly or entirely— the human tragedies, individual destinies and thoughts behind them. However, if we evoke the war years through the impressions of specific persons, figures, columns and troops are replaced by individuals and personalities who had emotions and passions. It is the stories and lives of specific individuals that those interested can learn about through these private documents, while they also present how these life paths were broken in two. The "anonymous" characters of large-scale narratives thus get back their identity, which was blurred by the historical perspective, and again, they "will" have a name, a face and an individual destiny. For it is easier to identify with a specific person whose appearance and customs we seem to be familiar with, and in this way, it is easier to understand the given period and everyday life during the war —both on the frontline and in the hinterland— because "…the variety of the conceptions of history can refute the homogeneity of the present implications of the past events". [59]

At the same time, generalizing and oversimplifying approaches such as "the enemy", "the army", "the Romanians", "the Russians", "the Hungarians" and so on may by pushed into the background. For instance, the Italian propaganda kept

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59 Nagy, Zoltán, A két világháború közti magyarság emlékezetkultúrája: Bethlen Gábor. In: *Nyelv- és Irodalomtudományi Közlemények*, 54. (2010) 1. sz. 11.

referring to the Austrians as "the centuries-old enemy".[60] Instead of unilateral and adversary nationalist narratives churning up nationalistic feelings and not responding to each other, this is how the commonly experienced history of the devastating war, and its polyphonic approach drawing on dialogue, criticism and empathy can come to the fore. Letting this opportunity go unexploited would be squandering it away.

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60 Wilcox, Vanda, Encountering Italy: Military Service and National Identity during the First World War. In: *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 3. (2011) 2. 290.

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The Great War and Its Aftermath in East-Central Europe

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