

CHAPTER XIII

REVOLUTION AND MILITARY ABSOLUTISM

The system of Emperor Francis developed by Metternich into its last consequences piled up an immense mass of discontent in the whole monarchy. This situation was the more dangerous as, since the beginning of the forties of the last century, the advance of mechanical industry in the manufacturing districts of the monarchy, especially in Bohemia, led to a serious crisis in economic life. A large part of the former handicraftmen could not suffer the competition of the big plants and they swelled the ranks of the proletariat. The seriousness of the social conditions was still more aggravated by the intensification of the difficulties of the bondsmen problem not yet solved. In many places the peasants refused to comply with feudal taxations and here and there serious upheavals arose which could be suppressed only by military force. The crisis in agriculture enhanced the danger of the industrial. The famine year of 1847 evened still more the tense social conditions. The rabble proletariat of Vienna attacked and plundered in several districts the baker-shops and the whole imperial city was full of alarming news. This misery was not restricted to the laboring-classes in a proper sense but choked the poor intelligentsia also. Especially the wretchedness of the university youths (particularly that of the Jewish students) created an intellectual strata full of revolutionary dissatisfaction. The exacerbation of the masses ran so high that some official reports of the epoch speak of the danger of communistic ideas. Against these revolutionary disaffections the police became impotent because their activity was so completely absorbed by the great policy, the "ramifications" and ferreting out of complots, which was at that time extended to the police control of the newly established Scientific Academy, that the system had not sufficient officials and soldiers to maintain internal order.

But Metternich would not make any concession even now in spite of the fact that the waves of the February Revolution of Paris aroused Austrian public opinion to the boiling-point. He contracted a loan of six million silver rubles from the Tsar for the renovation of his dilapidated "bulwarks" and announced in his official paper that Austria was sufficiently strong to defeat all revolutionary movements. But some days later bloody rebellions started at Vienna in the face of which the court did not dare to retain Metternich; and his system of forty years suddenly broke down accompanied by the jubilation of the people. Absolutism completely lost its head and accepted from one day to the next the entire independence of Hungary without hav-

ing a clear understanding of the significance of this new constitution, without making any serious effort to bring this new constitution into harmony with the other parts of the monarchy. Similarly it tried to appease the Czechs by the so-called Bohemian charter, by the far-reaching promises of an imperial decree which assured to the crown of Wenceslaus almost the same independence which it bestowed upon the crown of St. Stephen. Every act of the government showed the stamp of headlessness and insincerity: the catastrophical aggravation of the Italian problem and the fight for liberty carried on by King Charles Albert, shook the very foundations of the Old Austria and forced it to compromises with its own peoples. But instead of a serious effort to place the empire on a new democratic basis and to create a workable compromise among the evolutionary possibilities of its various nations and peoples living on such different cultural levels, from the first moment of the constitutional concessions the old absolutist militarism and police system lay in wait in order to annihilate the new liberties of the peoples and to restore the old autocracy.

The sins of the past continued to live not only in the fact that the petrified absolutism was entirely incapable of accommodating itself to the spirit of a constitutional life but also because another no less dangerous situation which consisted in the lack of organization and immaturity of the democratic public opinion. The absolutism of many centuries so completely choked all movements of the popular forces and eliminated so entirely all political criticism and civic education that those peasant, citizen, and intellectual elements which now appeared for the first time on the scene of public life were lacking in all political preparedness and in all systematic effort toward the realization of those great aims which they suddenly faced. They sought in confused, disordered, and purely sentimental ideological conceptions, not seldom in unrealizable dogmatic exaggerations, the way of solution instead of embracing the only possible task, to remold the old feudal absolutist state with the help of necessary compromises into a new form of constitution apt to guarantee the free development of all the nations of the monarchy. There was almost wholly wanting in the empire, except among the Germans, an educated and self-conscious bourgeois middle class which could have undertaken the work of reconstruction with hope. Nay, even this German middle class was almost blind toward this purpose for in its haughty German hegemonial consciousness it could not realize the Austrian problem, but it visualized only the unity of the German empire as it became manifest in the *Paulskirche* of Frankfurt among brilliant ideological declamations, but with little real political insight. At the other extreme there was the street, the pressure of the violent demagogic agitation, the politicians of the petty bourgeois coffee-houses and restaurants whom the system of Metternich had estranged from all reasonable political

thinking. As a sharp observer of the period said, "They feasted now in street demonstrations and hootings and howlings as they formerly revelled in roast chickens and the waltzes."

But there was also a third fatal heritage of the Metternich system which impeded, almost hopelessly, the efforts of the democratic public opinion of 1848 from establishing adequate reforms. This opinion was divided into as many parts as there were nations spread over the whole area of the empire, and none of the nations had the slightest idea of the aspirations of the other peoples living outside the narrow limits of its own territory. For instance when Count Stadion drew public attention for the first time to the deplorable state of the Ruthenians of Galicia in many political circles it was asserted that this people did not exist at all, and that they were purely the invention of the statesman to counterbalance Polish influence. In such an atmosphere, where the second greatest nation of Galicia was not even known, it might be expected that each people would regard the problem of the revolutionary upheaval from the narrow point of view of its local country. With the exception of some clear-sighted spirits, general public opinion did not realize that the monarchy was based on the co-operation of ten nations and many smaller nationalities but each nation was busy only with its own existence and problems. The ruling German nation was occupied chiefly with the problem of German unity and with plans to safeguard the German hegemony both in the Reich and in Austria against the growing pressure of the awakened Slav peoples. Though Emperor Francis, amid the storms of the Napoleonic Wars, took the title of an emperor of Austria in 1804 and, two years later under the pressure of the *Rheinbund*, he abdicated the German imperial sovereignty: the leading Germans of Austria remained still under the sway of the old unified conception and the central committee of the Viennese estates accepted, in April, 1848, a resolution in favor of the German character of Austria. Both the liberal nobility and the bourgeoisie cherished the plan to give to Lombardo-Venetia, to Hungary, and to Galicia an extended autonomy, retaining them only in a loose connection with the monarchy in order to maintain the German hegemony in Austria against the growing preponderance of the northern and southern Slavs. It is significant to observe that the Austrian Germans, from the first moment of their revolutionary awakening and relative liberty, felt their solidarity with their brothers in the German empire more clearly and intensely than their historical connection with the other peoples of the Habsburg monarchy. (Even then the idea of the *Anschluss* was far stronger than the idea of a confederation toward the east.)

The aspiration of the Magyars was even more manifest. The only idea by which they were dominated in the revolutionary period of 1848-49 was the idea of their total independence from Austria and

the effort to build up a unitary national state by the assimilation of all the nations living on Hungarian territory. It is similarly beyond doubt that the Italians felt nothing in common with the Habsburg empire and their chief desire was to get rid of the Habsburg yoke. The tendency of the Slav peoples of the monarchy was not so clear and precise. The great Slavic Congress in Prague (May, 1848) which was a reply to the German National Assembly in Frankfurt and which gathered almost all the Slav tribes of Europe, was so mixed in its composition, so heterogeneous in its political and social consciousness that there was no really unified conception or common point of view among them, the less so because the representatives of the various Slav nations had serious linguistic obstacles in the way of understanding each other, even if the anecdote may be untrue, often reported by German sources, that these Pan-Slavs, ardently remonstrating against German supremacy, were often constrained to use the German language as a vehicle of their deliberations. In spite of all these difficulties, in this memorable assembly which contained such diametrical antagonisms as the conservative Palacký, the great historian of the Czechs and Bakunin, the Russian revolutionary anarchist, two fundamental agreements grew out of the aspirations of the Slav peoples. The one was the dawning consciousness of the Slav solidarity, the feeling that the Slavs have a special historical mission in Europe; the other, that, in face of the growing military and cultural expansion of the Germans, the Slavs must defend the integrity of their national cultural evolution.

What interests us most in this connection is the fact that the existence of historical Austria was not a really important issue for the peoples of the monarchy in these overflowing days of their revolutionary nationalism, but that each of them regarded its own national problems. These centrifugal forces were even more enhanced by the renaissance of the *Ländergeist*, the spirit of the old local particularisms of the various crownlands and countries. The diets showed everywhere a perfect indifference toward the problems of the whole empire. The few Austrian patriots regarded almost with terror this audacious trend of national and local patriotisms against the state, and one of them exclaimed—and his exclamation became a slogan: *Ein Königreich für einen Österreicher!* (“A kingdom for an Austrian.”)¹ This feeling was so strong even in German liberal circles that when the first rumors came that Marshal Radetzky, the imperial army chief, won decisive victories over the Italian troops (which was a victory of Austrian absolutism not only over feeble Italian liberty but also over the fresh freedom of the peoples of the monarchy) Francis Grillparzer,

¹ Richard Charmatz, *Österreichs innere Geschichte von 1848 bis 1895* (Leipzig u. Berlin, 1918), I, 10.

the leading poet of the epoch, glorified him as the hero of the Austrian unity in the following often quoted verses :

Glück auf mein Feldherr, führe den Streich!
 Nicht bloss um des Ruhmes Schimmer,
 In Deinem Lager ist Österreich,
 Wir andern sind einzelne Trümmer.
 (Good speed, my general, strike the blow!
 Not only for the splendor of glory,
 In thy camp is Austria,
 We others are only isolated ruins.)

The men did not perceive that the enthusiastic ode of the poet was in reality not the trumpet of victory but rather the epitaph of the Austrian state because it emphasized with an almost symbolical force the fatal fact that the army of the monarchy and the peoples of the monarchy were fighting for different ideas and that the unity of the empire remained a militaristic unity opposed to the antagonistic aims of its peoples. In any case the specter of the dissolution of the monarchy pressed very hard on the contemporaries.

Curiously enough, if one penetrates more deeply into the national and social structure of Austria during these years, one cannot share this boundless pessimism. There were still great and powerful forces in operation which could have saved the monarchy. The might and prestige of the imperial house based on the army and the bureaucracy were at that time not seriously attacked. Even Louis Kossuth the leader of the radical Hungarian opposition expressed his loyal expectations concerning the person of the young king, Francis Joseph. He and his followers did not think of a real severance of Hungary from the other parts of the monarchy and the *Pragmatica Sanctio* was not attacked. Only a complete constitutional freedom was claimed for the country. The non-Magyar population of Hungary were distinctly in favor of the maintenance of the imperial unity because they saw in it their only safeguard against the more and more vehement and intolerant attacks of Magyar chauvinism. At the same time the most influential elements of the Germans in Austria (in spite of some pan-Germanistic sentimentalism) stood firmly for the maintenance of Austria. And what is still more important: the large Slav majority of the monarchy was emphatically loyal to the Habsburgs because, in spite of a vague Pan-Slavism, it clearly felt that it needed a state which would and could guarantee its national development against both the German and Russian pressure. Not only Croats and Serbs defended with their blood the cause of the dynasty but even the leading elements of the Czechs were of the opinion that they were deeply interested in the safeguarding of the monarchy. In that memorable letter in which Francis Palacký, the generally accepted leader of the new Czech nationalism, repudiated the invitation of the Parliament of

Frankfurt, as a protest against German unity, intended to absorb the Slav nations, he gave a real program of a new Austria fit for the aspirations of her Slav peoples. He emphasized very distinctly the historical necessity of Austria as a shield and shelter for the smaller nations of the Danube basin (Slavs, Rumanians, Hungarians) against the growing pressure of a despotic Russian empire. "If the Austrian empire had not existed during past centuries, it ought to have been created in the very interest of Europe and of humanity."² Not for the destruction of Austria but for the remolding of the empire was the struggle of the Czechs and the Jugo-Slavs carried on almost until the outbreak of the World War. The conception of Palacký was corroborated by the Slav national convention at Prague with an imposing force in spite of the ideological chaos of this assembly. The Slav Congress elaborated a proclamation to the nations of Europe which delineated very strongly its standpoint concerning the Austrian problem. This manifesto emphasized the peaceful intention of all the Slavs and at the same time their right for self-determination and national independence. They were not hostile to the empire but they intended to remold the old monarchy into a confederation of nations equal in their rights, maintaining the necessary unity of the whole monarchy. They claimed especially the same constitutional position which the German and the Hungarian element possessed. The Congress made an appeal to the Hungarian government to do away with those revolting coercive measures which were directed against the Slavic tribes of Hungary, especially against the Serbs, Croats, and Slovaks.

Even more clear and significant for the moral atmosphere of the Slavs was a memorandum, drafted by the Congress, to the Emperor to inform him of the real aspirations and desires of the Slavs. The aim of this memorandum remained in many respects the foundation of the Slav policy also for the future. This document emphasized the fact that the system of centralization could only keep together the loose masses of the various nationalities of the monarchy by the means of absolutism, whereas the real future of Austria and its rôle as a great power depended on whether it could guarantee to the Slav nations of the monarchy, hitherto oppressed, a real autonomy for national development. The only constitution which could secure this aim would be one which remolded the centralized monarchy into a federative state.³

In this historical constellation Francis Joseph, 18 years old, occupied the throne (1848–1916) in consequence of a court complot which eliminated the feeble-minded Ferdinand. The young Emperor himself attached to his name Francis the name of his great popular

² Dr. Alfred Fischel, *Der Panslavismus bis zum Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart u. Berlin, 1919), p. 254.

³ Alfred Fischel, *op. cit.*, pp. 284 ff.

predecessor Joseph, and there were people who saw in this fact an almost symbolical action because according to their judgment the long reign of Francis Joseph was a curious mixture of the reactionary principles of Emperor Francis and of the revolutionary methods of Emperor Joseph. This point of view is not without a certain truth but it seems to me that what was really Francisist in his system was spontaneous, emanating from the very character of the sovereign, whereas its Josephinian elements were rather superficial, artificial compromises forced on the Emperor by the necessities of a given situation. But however unstable and changing his method of government may have been, there remained always constant and unaltered in his profound distrust of his peoples, of the constitution, of democracy, and his conviction that the only real foundation of his rule must be his army and his attachment to the feudal aristocracy.

It was a real misfortune for the whole monarchy that the young Emperor with his eager energy for work, his vivid sense of administrative duty (he might be called without exaggeration the first *Hofrat* of his monarchy, so fervent for bureaucratic work, so amazing in his *Kabinettsfleiss*, and so lacking in any real broad conceptions), occupied his throne under the terrifying experiences of a world-revolution when he saw his power vacillating amid the menacing clamor of the street, when twice he witnessed the flight of the imperial court from Vienna, and always stood under the sway of his rigid generals, Windischgrätz, Jelačić, and Radetzky, who were rooted deeply in the ideas of the old autocracy. It is no wonder under such conditions that the youthful emperor did not realize the one fatal problem of the monarchy which consisted in giving free opportunities for the development of so many fragmentary peoples between the two millstones of German and Russian imperialism. He visualized only the old problem of the Habsburg *Hausmacht*, how to augment its international splendor, how to overcome its Prussian rival, and enhance its influence in the Balkans against the Russian protector of the Slav nations.

The great fatal problem of the monarchy, the problem of nationality, appeared to him still in the old narrow-minded conception of Metternich in the spirit of the *divide et impera*. In spite of all his real and seeming concessions which he made to the necessities of the changing historical situation, he remained rigidly attached to a system of centralization until the end, disregarding the fundamental national claims.⁴ This attitude was not motivated by any national bias, he did

⁴ The Emperor never took the idea of a national compromise between the Czechs and the Germans seriously. In his new important work (*Kaiser Franz Joseph von Österreich*, Berlin, 1928), Joseph Redlich narrates that it was a widely accepted public opinion among the Austrian parliamentarians that the Emperor did not favor such a compromise because, according to a statement of his daughter, Archduchess Marie Valerie, "if Germans and Czechs should make a compromise, the situation would become the same as in Hungary—the Emperor would lose his power there too."

not hate the various non-German nations of his monarchy, nor did he particularly love the Germans whose language was the vehicle of his army and bureaucracy. On the contrary every conscious manifestation of German nationalism disgusted and alarmed him because he feared a gravitation toward his later ally and, subconsciously always, his hated rival, the Hohenzollern. But he remained unaltered, a rigid autocrat in all the questions pertaining to the interests of his imperial will. In his state ministers he always saw a kind of court lackeys and he said repeatedly to Conrad von Hötzendorf when he was the Chief of the General Staff: "Believe me, the Monarchy cannot be ruled in a constitutional manner." And he was perfectly right in this because, with those two systems with which he experimented during his long reign, with the system of the rigid centralization, and later with the dualist system based on the German-Magyar hegemony, an honest constitutional government was really out of the question.

This attitude was the more fatal for in spite of the first chaotic movements in the early days of the revolution of 1848, the more careful observers could distinctly see that this vast popular movement was not only directed toward the destruction of the old régime but that it also contained powerful constructive forces. So even Hungary, the country of rigid feudalism, also, under the leadership of a very able and enthusiastic group of her revolutionized nobility, undertook the first decisive steps toward the elimination of the feudal privileges and the rebuilding of the country on a democratic platform. It is true that in the most important question, in the problem of nationality this new liberal public opinion completely misunderstood the real spirit of the epoch, but by a prudent, humane, and loyal policy, the Habsburgs could doubtless have been successful in adjusting Hungarian democracy amid the newly liberated co-operation of the other nations. For the very leaders of the Hungarian movement for independence in September, 1848, knocked at the door of the Austrian popular assembly inviting it to undertake the rôle of mediator in the fatal controversy between the Emperor and the Hungarian nation. But far more than this happened. The parliament of the Austrian people, which the military reactionary rulers after the second Viennese rebellion had interned at Kremsier, a little remote Moravian town, recovering from the feverish revolutionary dreams, undertook the task with remarkable energy and sagacity of giving a new constitution to the peoples of Austria. After the absolute rule of many centuries the nations of the Austrian half of the monarchy met for the first time in order to discuss face to face their mutual national and cultural problems and to find a solution for all. The antagonisms were very great and, at the beginning, the spirit of the old distrust dominated. The rigid centralism of the Germans and the radical federalism of the Czechs clashed vehemently. The plan of the Czech lead-

er, Palacký, was to rebuild the monarchy entirely on the basis of the principle of nationality and to divide the whole monarchy into a German-Austria, a Czech-Austria, a Polish-Austria, an Illyrian-Austria, an Italian-Austria, and a Jugo-Slav-Austria, and also to form separate territories for the Magyars and the Rumanians. (It is worth while to notice at this juncture that this platform of the Czechs was later radically changed when they accepted the old feudal basis of the historical right, claiming the integrity of the whole territory of the former crown of Wenceslaus without taking into account the diversity of the nationalities living in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia.) This plan hurt not only the German centralist consciousness but the very developed traditional feeling for independence of the single countries. The Tyroleans, for instance, had already previously emphasized that they must have a proper government and would have nothing to do with the Viennese ministry.⁵ Similarly the Poles refused vehemently the idea of dividing Galicia into a Polish and a Ruthenian territory. The Istrian and the Dalmatian particularism clashed and the antagonism was very great between Carinthia and Carniola, while the historical individuality of Vorarlberg, Salzburg, and Görz revolted energetically against all plans of territorial dismemberment.

Under such auspices the chances for a compromise looked very unfavorable. But the natural wisdom of the various peoples soon became victorious. The parliamentary reporter of the constitutional committee understood the dangers of the situation very sharply and he admonished the representative in a powerful speech that in the present controversy, only those dragon teeth are shooting up which Metternich had sown during his long régime. Now the liberated nations must get rid of this spirit and, as the great principle of national equality appeared in world-history, it should not be transformed into the emancipation of the Slavs. If it is true that the German was previously the master and the Slav the servant, this proposition can only be accepted with the qualification that the former government was German and enslaved both nations. Those who transmit the hatred of the Slavs against government and bureaucracy to the German people continue in the old policy of *divide et impera* of Metternich. The constitutional committee also emphasized the dangers which a radical annihilation of the old constitutional frames would have caused (as Palacký proposed it) and offered a solution which would avoid centralization, the death of the single provinces, but at the same time a loose federation which would make all central government impossible.

Indeed, the compromise delineated in this manner was successful and the Parliament of Kremsier adopted a solution along the middle line reconciling the centralist and the federalist ideals. It main-

⁵ Viktor Bibl, *op. cit.*, II, 179-80.

tained the historical kingdoms and countries but it divided the larger territories into *Kreise* (districts) the establishment of which was arranged according to the ethnographical settlements of the peoples. In the administration of the individual countries local governors were planned responsible to the particular representative bodies in order to secure a true self-government against the possible abuses of the central power. The principle of national equality was pronounced as the basic institution of the new constitution and provisions were made that, in territories where mixed nationalities lived, tribunals should be erected on the footing of equality for the settlement of all disputes concerning national issues.

Unfortunately the limits of the present work make it impossible to outline in detail this remarkable draft of a constitution though its significance from the point of view of the history of ideas is considerable and at the same time a powerful argument for the force and fertility of the democratic principle. Behold! after three hundred years of absolutism and militaristic centralization, in spite of the envenomed past, it sufficed to bring these peoples together and to secure for them the right of free discussion and a new spirit and a new will was triumphant over the old spirit infested by feudalism and absolutism. *Here for the first time a consequent and logically consistent attempt was made to rebuild a large empire on the basis of a supra-national unity and to codify the great principle of national equality in all the walks of public life.* In this manner the first freely elected representative body of Austria solved or at least brought nearer to solution a problem which the periods of absolutism did not even distinguish. Particularly imposing is the clear-sightedness with which the makers of the constitution realized the basic importance of the principle of self-government for the solution of the national problem. The speakers of the national assembly emphasized continuously that France, in spite of her repeated revolutions, could not be regarded as a free country because she had no municipal liberties. *Free local government is the basis of the free state!* At the same time the work of Kremsier remains a memorable document of that high spirit of humanism which animated the generation of 1848, both the Germans and the Slavs. And it is no exaggeration when Joseph Redlich, the keenest analyst of this constitutional draft, asserts that "*measured both by moral and intellectual standards this document is the only great political monument of the common will for the State which in imperial Austria the peoples have created through their own representatives. . . .*"

But Francis Joseph and his councilors did not care for the work of Kremsier, they did not care for those mighty popular energies which were manifested by it. The cynical words of Prince Windischgrätz which he uttered according to tradition when he heard that the

popular representation refused to give to his Emperor the old title "by God's grace": "If they will not hear from God's grace then they must hear from cannons' grace" may be true or later invented, they express at all events the spirit and practice of the military counter-revolution. That was the reason why the constitutional assembly of Kremsier was dissolved by armed force when absolutism became sufficiently reinforced by the conquest of Vienna, by the Italian victories of Radetzky and by the armed occupation of the Hungarian capital. And, though after Kremsier they made a new experiment with an arbitrary sham constitution which restored the full power of the centralistic system, they simultaneously continued with great energy their campaign for the military subjugation of the rebellious peoples and the supreme aim was quite manifest: the complete restoration of the old régime. Already under the feeble-minded Ferdinand, there began the work of the "pacification" of Hungary, the armed struggle against a constitution to which the Emperor himself gave sanction and the perfidious game with the Jugo-Slavs exasperated by the Magyarizing policy of the Hungarian government. Jel-lačić, the Croat Ban, became the obedient instrument of the Viennese camarilla for the destruction of the Hungarian constitution and the world witnessed a very stupendous political drama of which it was said by a contemporary: "The King of Croatia declared war on the King of Hungary and the Emperor of Austria remained neutral and these three monarchs were one and the same person." This treacherous game, which, after the victory of Radetzky at Custozza threw away its mask definitely, drove the Hungarians into despair and, when the new arbitrary constitution abolished quite openly the independence of the country, the national assembly accepted the proposition of Louis Kossuth and dethroned the Habsburg dynasty at Debreczen (April 11, 1849) exactly in the same manner as more than a century before, the Diet of Rákóczi had done. The declaration of independence adopted by the national assembly is a long enumeration of the historical crimes of the Habsburgs committed against the constitutional and personal liberties of the Hungarian people. They are accused of plotting

with the enemies of the country, with robbers and rebels for the suppression of the Hungarian nation; of attacking the legally sanctioned constitution by armed force; of dismembering the territorial integrity of the country which they had sworn to maintain; of employing foreign military power for the murdering of their own subjects, and for the annihilation of their legal freedom.

The constitutional accent of the rebellion of Rákóczi and the revolution of Kossuth was the same, but whereas the former did not surpass the limits of feudal rebellion the latter was no longer the private affair of some malcontent feudal lords and of a wretched serfdom attached to them, but a distinctly national and democratic movement in

which not only the liberal wing of the nobility but also the new middle classes and the whole peasantry, liberated from the yoke of feudalism, took up arms for the defense of their young freedom. That is the reason why Vienna was incapable of suppressing it as it formerly suppressed the rebellions of the feudal exiles and the *kurucz* forces. The Habsburg power, victorious over revolutionary Vienna and Prague, was incapable of conquering the Hungarian revolution in defense of the Constitution of 1848. The later dualistic structure of the monarchy was an expression of this historical fact. But in 1848 the dynasty was not inclined to any just compromise though before the dethronement of the Habsburgs very influential Hungarian circles were in favor of an honest peace but Prince Windischgrätz haughtily refused the representatives of the Hungarian national assembly with the words which became fatal: *Mit Rebellen unterhandle ich nicht!* ("I will not negotiate with rebels!") Therefore later when the Hungarian armies became victorious the dynasty had no other choice than the unheard of humiliation of asking for the assistance of the Russian Tsar who sent a mighty army for the pacification of Hungary. General Görgey, the great Hungarian war-leader, acknowledging the futility of the struggle and in order to save the last remaining force of the unhappy country, surrendered not into the hands of the Austrians, but into those of the Russian general Paskiewicz, who, as the Hungarian tradition tells, announced proudly to the Tsar: "Hungary lies at the feet of your Majesty."

But Habsburg proved to be not only a ferocious enemy; it was a cruel conqueror thirsty for revenge at the same time. The same terrible method which the victorious Austrian army applied in Lombardia and Venetia when the Habsburg foreign rule was again restored by terror tribunals, by war taxes, by the imprisonment of thousands of suspicious men, and by the most carefully selected brutalities (General Haynau, called the "Hyena of Brescia," whipped the women in the open streets): the same method was introduced, as so often in the past, into unhappy Hungary unconquered by the Austrians. The bloody hangman of the Italian people, General Haynau was sent to Hungary to create order there. Indeed, the "punishments" inflicted by the conquerors were so without parallel that the Russian Tsar and his chief of staff felt themselves impelled to ask in Vienna for the mitigation of their measures. And this system was not the accident of some officers breaking away from discipline but the deliberate policy of Prince Schwarzenberg, the Austrian premier who when he was advised to follow a policy of grace and conciliation toward Hungary, repudiated the offer with the following remarks: "That sounds all right but before all we wish to hang a few." No, the Viennese camarilla wanted to establish a terrifying example, and on the anniversary of the same day that the Viennese populace killed the war minister, Latour, thirteen Hungarian generals were executed in Arad (nine of

them on the gallows). Their only crime was that they defended the constitution to which they had sworn in the name of the King. A great number of other officers were given heavy penalties in jail. According to Hungarian tradition, which was held three generations, the various terror tribunals handed down 114 death sentences and imprisonment was resorted to in 1,765 cases. The later official historians have tried to mitigate the poignant memory of these horrors by affirming that the young emperor had no knowledge of these judicial murders but later investigations demonstrated that Francis Joseph had previous information of the execution of the Hungarian generals.

But the revenging arm of Haynau and his men struck not only the rebels of the army but all those who were in contact with political life in that stormy period. Bishops and ministers encountered harsh imprisonment and several leaders of the Hungarian revolution were hung in effigy. And on the same day when the martyrs of Arad ended their lives, there was executed in Pest one of the most excellent and most moderate Hungarian statesmen, the premier of the first Hungarian constitutional government, Count Louis Batthyány. Thus the whole monarchy was pacified by the old Spanish methods of blood and iron. The jovial people of Vienna, the successors of the Hussites in Prague, the Italian patriots, and the Magyar "rebels," all succumbed to the bloody arms of the Habsburgs. No wonder that these events profoundly impressed the public opinion of all those peoples who suffered by these terrible methods. That is the reason why I try the patience of the reader with an enumeration of all these details. *For these facts are not only facts of the past in the Habsburg drama but they were direct causes of the process of dissolution.* These bloody facts created such a psychological state among the masses, for instance, in Hungary, that it influenced most powerfully the whole political life of the country. The slogan of the *accursed Austria-Vienna* remained always a kindling symbol in the imagination of the masses. "Vienna" remained always equivalent to the wailings of the Protestant galley slaves, to the insurrections choked in blood, and above all to the constitution stolen by the help of the Russian bayonets. In the face of this emotional complex all rational argumentation broke down. Habsburg remained hated and abhorred even when he tried to give rights and liberties to the people. *Timeo Danaos . . .* "We accept nothing from the *Viennese camarilla*, not even the good." That feeling was so intense that ten years after the catastrophe when Count Stephen Széchenyi, the great conservative statesman, was placed with broken spirit in a Viennese asylum shortly before his tragic suicide, he gave in his diary to Francis Joseph the epithet of "the apostolic usurper" and he called the gallows the "pillars of Francis Joseph."⁶ And even

⁶ *The Literary Legacy of Döbling of Count Stephan Széchenyi*. Edited by Dr. Árpád Károlyi (Budapest, 1921), II, 40, 84, 86. In Hungarian.

in the last decade of the monarchy when attending public meetings, I often observed that the memory of "the thirteen of Arad" swayed the masses as the wind does the standing grain. That is what many Austrian and Hungarian statesmen never realized. They did not understand how insignificant demagogues could excite the feeling of the masses into paroxysms against institutions which, as the free-trade policy or the Austro-Hungarian bank, could serve the very interests of the Hungarian majority too. They did not understand because they always used rationalistic methods and they did not know that the masses are led more by old memories and semiconscious ancestral sentiments than by the rational calculations of economic motives. All political dissatisfaction and all social discontent could be easily directed against Vienna in such manner. And I think I am quite safe in believing that the same mental processes were going on in the soul of the Czech, of the Polish, and of the Italian masses. What Arad was to the Hungarian, the scaffold of Prague was to the Czech, the jail of Spielberg was to the Italian, and the bloody parade of Tarnow was to the Pole.

CHAPTER XIV

THE STABILIZATION OF ABSOLUTISM: THE SYSTEM BACH

After the "settlement" of the Italian and the Hungarian difficulties the system sat more and more haughtily in the saddle of absolutism; it could do so with a reassuring complacency since in the face of its reinforced military power, its Prussian rival got himself into a position of humiliation. The struggle of Premier Prince Schwarzenberg for German hegemony was temporarily successful: the old loose *Bundestag* was re-established. Though without the title of a German emperor, Habsburg became again at least seemingly the leading power of Germany. There was no further obstacle to a new reign of the old absolutism. The second enlarged edition of the Metternich system began which culminated in the so-called "system Bach," named after the Minister of Interior, Alexander Bach, who from a champion of the March revolution transformed himself into the incarnation of the new reactionary system. The Bach system agreed with the system of Metternich on three substantial points. One was the Germanizing centralization which now was extended without any check to Hungary. Bach shrewdly constructed his ill-famed *Verwirkungstheorie* according to which Hungary has forfeited her former constitutional liberty in consequence of the Revolution. The country with complete disregard for its historical evolution and for its local municipal life was divided into quite mechanical administrative districts which got all their directions from the imperial government. At the same time a veritable army of German and Germanized Czech officials flooded the country, called in the popular language the "Bach hussars," and received by the public opinion of the country with distrust and hatred. "A swarm of locusts covers the country to eat it up," said the contemporaries. And though the system was equally served by many hundreds, nay, thousands of the nobility trembling for their jobs, it remained until the end a strange and hostile power in the country.

The second point in which the old absolutism continued was the extension of the former police and spy system over the whole country and was pushed so far that the very chief of the system, Alexander Bach, came under police control. The extent of the police system may be sufficiently characterized by the following episode, narrated by Heinrich Friedjung, the historian of the epoch: Once the archbishop of Vienna made a reproachful remark to the head of the police, concerning the moral conduct of the officers of the gendarmes, of whom many lived in concubinage; to which the chief of police replied that