

CHAPTER XVI

THE PERIOD OF SHAM-CONSTITUTIONALISM: THE DUALIST SYSTEM

As all great constitutional changes in Austria, the system of Dualism, too, was the result of a historical catastrophe. The dualistic system was born on the battlefield of Königgrätz, July 3, 1866, when Austrian absolutism definitely collapsed under the stroke of its more national and more liberal Prussian rival. The crisis of the Habsburg empire was so deep that it was compelled, in the Peace Treaty of Prague, to abdicate not only its claims toward the German empire but also, in spite of its successes on the Italian battlefields, to surrender Venetia to Italy. That was perhaps the greatest crisis and the most fatal turning point of the monarchy. Now locked out from the German imperial connection and having lost its Italian properties, the traditional *fata morgana* of the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved and the road was open to the historical mission of Austria which would have consisted in giving a home, shelter, and defense, the possibilities of a national development for all those smaller nations which lived in central Europe either in a complete isolation or divided from their co-nationals.

Unfortunately the political atmosphere was not propitious for a really creative policy. The masses became apathetic and cynical by the long absolutism. It makes almost a ghastly impression when we read that the very day when the news of the disaster at Königgrätz arrived at the imperial city, many thousands of Viennese were united in a dance in fancy costumes and they sang and drank merrily in the gardens of their jovial inns. Even the leading German bourgeoisie stood hesitatingly, and in frozen despair, at this fatal crisis. This attitude was symbolically characterized by Grillparzer in the pathetic question: "I am born as a German, am I still one?" and he shouted to the victorious Prussians: "You believe you have given birth to an empire, but you have only destroyed a people!"

The Magyars, too, saw only the problem of their own national state and they did not grasp seriously the consequences of the new situation and did not ask what would happen with the many countries and nations of the monarchy with which they were connected by the ties of the *Pragmatica Sanctio*. According to a tradition, when Francis Deák, the great liberal Hungarian leader, heard the first news of the Austrian defeat, he exclaimed, "We lost the war! . . . we are now victorious." Similarly in the Czechs flamed up again the con-

sciousness of the independence of their holy crown. The recent war events accentuated very much the patriotic feelings in both countries. The Hungarian Legion of General Klapka, supported by Bismarck, had made a common cause with the Prussian armies against the hated Austria and the Prussian proclamation to the peoples of "the glorious Czech Kingdom" poured new oil on the fire of Czech nationalism.

This situation was further endangered by the fact that the dynasty and the ruling circles still considered nothing else but the old problem of the Habsburg patrimonial power and their chief endeavor was not to establish a new and better balanced order in Austria but rather to prepare a war of revenge against the victorious Prussian rivals. That was the reason why after the defeat of Königgrätz Baron von Beust, the former Saxon antagonist of Bismarck, was nominated foreign minister of the monarchy. He abandoned the federalistic tendencies of Count Belcredi (for, after Schmerling, there was again a Slavophile political experiment) and opened the way for the dualistic compromise. To make a policy of revenge possible a compromise with the Magyars seemed inevitable.

The burning desire for revenge against Prussia, the uncertainty of the international situation, the untenableness of the Hungarian conditions, and the effective intervention of Empress Elizabeth (called the "beautiful Providence" by the Magyars), in favor of the Magyar standpoint were victorious over the resistance of the Emperor who at last accepted the restitution of the Constitution of 1848, the platform of Hungarian independence, the division of the empire into two countries, in a word, that whole program against which he carried on a bloody war and pressed during two decades the nations of the monarchy into the Procrustes-bed of the unifying and Germanizing absolutism. In opposition to this policy the dualistic constitution was a definite attempt to secure the leadership of the Germans in Austria and of the Magyars in Hungary. At the moment of its birth this new equilibrium was, at least temporarily, possible, for the German economic and cultural hegemony was still preponderant in Austria, whereas the Hungarian nobility was an almost absolute master of the political and municipal life. In spite of this fact in a true constitutional way the dualistic platform would never have gained a majority either in Austria or in Hungary. Only on the basis of a parliament emanating from the artificial machinations of the Curia-system, did the new constitution become a law in Austria. But even that pseudo-majority did not have an opportunity for fair discussion because it was put before a *fait accompli*. The whole dualistic compromise had already been practically settled by the Emperor—the Hungarian king—and the Magyar upper classes. The Austrian parliament was under the strict necessity of accepting the will of the Emperor. It is true that it was the loyal conception of Francis Deák that Hungary

could only accept a connection with a constitutional Austria, and really the German liberals received as a kind of a political present the December Constitution of 1867 which introduced a series of legal guaranties. But in reality no true constitutional life was possible on the basis of the purely artificial German majority, the less as paragraph 14 of the new constitution established the right of the Emperor to issue, in cases of emergency, decrees which were under the competence of the parliamentary representation. (This right was exercised between 1897 and 1904 in seventy-six cases.) Also in Hungary the situation was that of a pseudo-constitutional device because the masses of the nationalities and of the laboring-classes had never (as we shall see later in detail) an adequate share in political and municipal rights. Therefore, the compromise of 1867 and the dualistic system based on it, appeared before public opinion as the compromise of the Austrian Emperor with the Hungarian feudal classes which the liberal German high bourgeoisie accepted, though not without serious hesitations, in order to secure its own hegemony against the will of the Slav majority.

The Slavs of the monarchy knew very well from the beginning what dualism meant for them and though the new constitution was prepared in a rather hidden way, the Slavs expressed repeatedly their exasperation against the dualistic plans. Francis Palacký, the same Palacký who announced the Habsburg monarchy in 1848 as a historical necessity for the Slav peoples, on the first rumor of the dualistic *pourparlers* which had already begun before Königgrätz, declared in 1865 that "the day of the proclamation of the dualism will become with an unavoidable necessity at the same time the birthday of Pan-Slavism in its least desirable form." And he added, "We Slavs will face it with an honest suffering but without fear. We have existed before Austria, and we shall exist after it." The Slavs knew very clearly what they wished. Immediately after Königgrätz the so-called second Slav congress at Vienna made a decision in favor of a pentarchical constitution for the monarchy which set against the Hungarian conception of dualism a plan of federation among the five big national groups of the monarchy. And in the same month, when the draft of the dualist compromise was put before the Austrian parliament, a considerable number of Czech, Croat, Ruthenian, and Slovenian politicians under the leadership of Palacký and Rieger, the Czech leaders, made a pilgrimage to Moscow to express their belief before the public opinion of the world that after the triumph of dualism the Slavs had their only hope in Russia. The German Liberal "majority" of the Parliament soon remained alone, all the other nations deserted the assembly which they regarded as incompatible with their national liberties. Only later they came back when the "permanency" of the Dualistic system became manifest.

So the emigration of the Slav souls from the monarchy began early and the conviction grew that their fate could be alleviated only by an international complication. These feelings were strengthened not only by the romantic Pan-Slavism of the epoch, but the Czechs, exasperated by the dualistic system, soon found an effective protector in French public opinion. A series of enthusiastic and brilliant French writers became patrons of the Czech cause and their sympathy was not only due to the successors of the Hussites but it was also in accord with the French *Realpolitik* which knew very well that the German-Hungarian dualism against the Slavs must inevitably lead to a bulwark of a Pan-Germanist imperialism whereas a federalized monarchy would be incapable of carrying on any kind of an aggressive German policy.

Not only was the hatred of the Czechs aroused under the injustices of the dualist constitution against Austria but even in the ranks of the hyper-loyal southern Slavs a growing distrust became manifest in consequence of the fact that simultaneously with the Austro-Hungarian compromise, a new Hungarian-Croat compromise was forced on the Croatian nation which, according to southern Slav public opinion, made a constitutional development of the Croats and Serbs impossible. Thus the Austrian and the Hungarian pseudo-constitution was completed with a Croatian pseudo-constitution which got an artificial majority only with the help of a packed diet in Zagreb. From this time Croatian public life was always in an open or hidden state of absolutism which under the twenty years régime (1882–1903) of Count Khuen Héderváry applied the worst methods of the Habsburg *divide et impera* system, fomenting national hatred among the nearly related Croats and Serbs.

Among the Slavs of the monarchy only the Poles became real beneficiaries of the dualistic system because the Austrian government urgently needed their help to get a workable majority in the Austrian parliament in order to renew the economic and military compromise with Hungary every ten years. In order to secure their assistance Galicia gained, if not a jural, at least a *de facto* state independence: the Polish *Szlachta* (the noble class) got an almost unlimited opportunity for the development of Polish cultural life and for the economic and political exploitation of the Ruthenian half of the country. In this manner the dualistic constitution—according to the plastic expression of Professor Schücking—created two *privileged* nations (the German and the Magyar) two *mediatized* nations¹ (the Polish and the Croatian, which in spite of its pseudo-constitution, still had a sufficiently extended local autonomy). In face of these aristocratic nations

¹ Mediatized is the term applied in the old German public law to those territories which stood not directly under the control of the empire but only indirectly through the intermediary of their feudal lords.

the other nations of the monarchy played only the rôle of third-class peoples which did not even have a proper name in the constitutional frame but figured as a somewhat confused conglomeration under the anonymous title *die im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreiche und Länder* (kingdoms and countries represented in the parliament).

But not only the Slavs felt as a heavy burden the pressure of the dualistic system; the nations of first rank themselves entered with very mixed feelings into this marriage of political interest. The liberal Germans, the most cultured element of the monarchy in those times, distrusted from the beginning the dualistic system. The more thoughtful elements of the Austrian-Germanhood understood very well indeed, that they won only a pyrrhic victory in the dualistic compromise. Ignatz Plener, one of the outstanding leaders of the German liberals, called the new constitution a monarchy on short notice (*Monarchie auf Kündigung*) and another liberal talked of the *Königgrätz of the parliamentary system* thinking of the anti-democratic institution of the so-called Delegations. And the compromise was not yet settled when in an anonymous and sensational booklet a "German-Austrian" predicted the dissolution of Austria as a consequence of the dualist constitution. For the very moment in which all the other nations would be surrendered to the Magyars in the eastern half of the monarchy, the bloody events of the Revolution of 1848 would repeat themselves: against the unjust supremacy of the Magyars not only the nations of Hungary would rebel but also the Czechs, the Poles, and the southern Slavs, who would demand the same constitutional independence as the Magyar upper classes possess. Under such conditions the historical necessity of Austria would become a senseless slogan. On the contrary the life and peace of the nations and states of Europe would depend on the dissolution of Austria.

And two years after the toiling through of the dualistic system Adolf Fischhof, the great independent political thinker previously quoted, called by his contemporaries the sage of Emmersdorf, with the whole force of his political wisdom, admonished the leading circles of the dangers of the dualistic policy. He wrote:

None of the great nationalities of Austria could secure in itself the existence of the monarchy but each of them can endanger the Empire by its resistance. Every one can act destructively but *to proceed constructively can be done only with all united*. . . .

The existence of Austria could only be based on the principle of justice.

It is therefore a vital interest for a state of nationalities to spare the feelings of its peoples, and to keep away from them everything which would give the impression of a domination of strangers, and it would be advisable to comply with their desires as far as its own safety permits. The state therefore must give them the guarantee that one nation will not

be subordinated to the other but each will be coordinated in order that they should not march as parties against one another but as allies side by side in a common cause, for national unity in a Nation State is the harmony among nations in a Nationality State.

Such a supra-national state would also be in the well-comprehended interest of the Germans. And the great prophet admonished his contemporaries to regard the example of Switzerland. He recalled the truth, already announced by some German liberals several decades previously, that Switzerland is a republican Austria in miniature whereas Austria is a monarchistic Switzerland enlarged. But what a difference in the inner social and cultural life of the two countries!

However, in addition to considerations of the inner policy, international points of view demanded also the up-to-date remolding of the Monarchy not in the spirit of force and constraint of the Dualistic system, but according to the principles of a popular federalism which alone could achieve peace among the nations. The real mission of the monarchy would be toward the East. This mission could not be accomplished by a centralized Austria. Every growth in power of such a monarchy at the lower Danube or toward the southern Slavs could only paralyze the more advanced nations living in it, without giving an advantage to the uncultured peoples with which it would come in contact. The situation would be quite different when the monarchy would become federalized and would thus give the opportunity to the peoples outside the monarchy to join their kindred nations already living within its boundaries. Never was the Austrian problem presented with such lucidity to public opinion, and the axiomatic proposition of Fischhof, “. . . . *centralization only makes the nations centrifugal; let us decentralize and they will become centripetal*,” may be regarded as the veritable key to the Habsburg problem. The neglect of these principles, in the last analysis, ruined the monarchy.²

Not only in the ruling German nation were mighty currents opposed to dualism, but also in Hungarian public opinion (though the leading classes of Hungary enjoyed most of the advantages of the new system) there was a growing party which abhorred from the beginning the dualistic constitution as unfit for the complete independence of the Hungarian state. However, not only national chauvinism fostered this conviction but there were far-sighted men who feared the artificial nature of the dualistic system. The great leader of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, Louis Kossuth himself, made an ardent protest from the solitude of his exiled life against the new constitution which would inevitably arouse the wrath and hatred of the Slavs against the two privileged nations. At the same time he repeatedly

² This prophetic book, *Österreich und die Bürgschaften seines Bestandes* (Wien, 1869), should be read by all the students of the Habsburg problem.

admonished Hungarian public opinion that Hungary's independence from Austria would remain a dead letter as long as the Hungarians would not guarantee equal freedom to all the other nations living with them. This chief dilemma of the Hungarian national policy will be treated elsewhere. I would only emphasize at this juncture that from year to year it became more difficult to maintain this constitution and every critical observer could clearly see that it could be maintained only by a corrupt and restricted electoral system, by open ballot, and by terroristic procedures in the administrative and military machine. Nay, at the beginning of our century this anachronistic sham parliamentary system itself proved to be incapable of safeguarding the dualistic order. When a majority came into the Hungarian parliament with a program to give a more ample sphere to the Hungarian national army the sovereign, called by the servile press of the country the "most constitutional Emperor of Europe," did not hesitate to dissolve the legislature by armed force (February, 1906). It became manifest that the dualistic system could be maintained only by open absolutism against the overwhelming majority of the people of the monarchy. The pyramid on its head became more and more unstable and not only the base but the apex as well began to revolt against the system. The ruling Magyars attacked it even more vehemently than the Slavs outside the constitution.

The psychology of this strange phenomenon (which became one of the deepest causes of the dissolution of the monarchy) will be analyzed later. Here I wish only to observe that there were from the beginning keen observers in the surroundings of the Emperor who foresaw the catastrophe which the dualist constitution would bring into the monarchy and who made a desperate effort to put the decaying pyramid on a new basis. This endeavor was further corroborated by the conviction that the German unity in the Reich could influence in a dangerous manner the German people of Austria. Victor Bibl writes:

It became a conviction of most members of the dynasty that it was to the very interest of the existence of the monarchy to divide the Germans in two halves and to commit their tribe in the Sudets [mountains between Prussia and Bohemia] to the reliable custody of a Bohemian-Czech state. In this manner the possession of the Bohemian countries should appear by their Slavization less desirable to the Hohenzollern state.

But as always under the rule of Francis Joseph, a new emergency in the external policy was needed to enforce a new turn to the internal policy. In February, 1871, fourteen days after the proclamation of the German empire, Francis Joseph appointed Count Hohenwart as his premier, who, with the co-operation of Albert Schäffle, the brilliant German economist and sociologist, tried to take a definite step toward the federalization of the monarchy. Since the German hegemony was

definitely lost for Austria after the final triumph of Prussia, Habsburg renewed his Slav sympathies. To prepare for this achievement, the electoral law was extended. The government lowered the property qualification for the franchise and, with the help of the so-called *Zehnguldenmänner* (the ten-florin men), the way was open toward political assertion to new masses of citizens, with the clear understanding that the enlargement of the franchise was equivalent to the destruction of the German hegemony. For the beginning the chief endeavor was the reconciliation of the Czechs, and indeed Schäffle was successful in making a compromise in his famous *Fundamentalartikel* with the Czech leaders as a result of which the Emperor, in his solemn decree, promised to the Bohemian Diet to lay down the coronation oath as a symbol of the acknowledgment of the rights of the Czech crown. And the ninth point of the articles delineated these rights in the following manner:

All the affairs pertaining to the Kingdom of Bohemia which will not be declared as common among all the kingdoms and countries of the empire belong in principle to the legislation of the Bohemian Diet and will be administered by the Bohemian authorities.

At the same time a draft of a nationality law was presented to the diet guaranteeing the full equality of the German and Czech people in the kingdom. It was announced as a cardinal proposition that in the future only such officials and judges as speak and write both languages will be appointed. And lest the national equality should not remain a dead letter, provision was made that the diet should be divided into national sections.

These fundamental thoughts carried out in detail and combined with an appropriate revision of the dualistic compromise would have signified without any doubt a new period in the history of the monarchy. By them the door would have been opened toward the federalization of the empire under the maintenance of the community of those affairs which touched the common interests of all the nations. But the Germans were so much imbued with the thought of their hegemony and they felt the planned bilinguist administration to be such a burden that they considered the reform plans of the government an attack on themselves; the Fundamental Articles were called "Destructive Articles" and Vienna was stirred to an almost revolutionary mood. This current alone would not have been sufficiently powerful to oust Hohenwart but at the same time the Hungarian leaders, trembling for the Dualistic System and allied to Beust, made such a vehement resistance against the new constitutional scheme that the Emperor lost heart and abandoned the whole plan of reconciliation by dismissing the Hohenwart cabinet. In vain Schäffle demonstrated in the conference, presided over by the Emperor, how modest and cautious his issues were,

and how remote they were from the Swiss or American plan of confederation. Even a faint approach toward a mild scheme of federalization aroused the nervous indignation of the privileged nations.³ So, ultimately, the Prussian victory over the French gave a final stabilization to the Dualistic Constitution and Count Michael Károlyi is right in his assertion that the System of Dualism was the consequence of two battles: *Königgrätz* laid the foundation for it; *Sedan* consolidated it.⁴

This short-lived Hohenwart-Schäffle intermezzo was the only serious and broad-minded attempt, since Kremsier until the dissolution of the monarchy, which, in the petty atmosphere of the Habsburg policy, without principles and without moral scruples, showed a real path toward the solution of the national problem. Its failure was a fatal misfortune for the monarchy not only because it did not attain its purpose but because the Emperor with his light-minded promises drove the Czechs to exasperation and strengthened their anti-dynastic feelings. From this moment until the last hour of the monarchy the sheer struggle of interests among the various nations made a real constitutional life impossible because every nation felt it more important to gain for itself the so-called "national advantages" (the establishment of new schools and universities or the acquisition of administrative jobs) than to defend the common constitution. On the contrary, the nations were not unwilling that the Emperor should apply paragraph 14, his right for emergency decrees, by neglecting parliament, supposing that they would get for their indulgence certain national recompensations. As a matter of fact the general tendency of evolution could not have been other than to strengthen the power of the Slav majority to the detriment of the former German hegemony. The economic development of the various nations, their cultural expansion, and every extension of the franchise necessarily broke a stone each time from the citadel of the German hegemony. This inevitable process led toward Pan-Germanistic and anti-Semitic mass currents, the more so as the German liberal party during its long government sacrificed entirely the social interests of the big masses to the leading financial groups, mostly Jewish, a tendency which resulted in the formation of a Christian socialist anti-Semitic party under the energetic leadership of Karl Lueger, the later mayor of Vienna (1897–1910).

The lack of any constructive aim in the national policy found a cynical expression in a saying of Count Taaffe who, during fifteen years, was the leading exponent of a policy of slow Slavization that

³ The details of this significant episode were stated with great moral sincerity by A. E. F. Schäffle himself, *Aus Meinem Leben* (Berlin, 1904), two volumes.

⁴ *Fighting the World* (New York, 1925).

“all the nationalities should be maintained in the same well-tempered dissatisfaction.” This was the new addition to the old policy of the *divide et impera* in the era of sham constitutionalism. But the most dangerous consequences of this sham constitutionalism became manifest in the direction of the foreign policy, which, closed from all popular opinion and true parliamentary control, put the nations of the monarchy before a *fait accompli* in the most important issues. Among these diplomatic chess moves nothing was more fatal than the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1878) and its final annexation (1908) which made the dual monarchy the most hated enemy in the opinion of the southern Slav peoples. By this policy the Habsburg monarchy became *an openly anti-Slav power* and this change found immediately its diplomatic expression in the defensive alliance concluded between Austria-Hungary and Germany (1879) which in four years was extended to the Triple Alliance. This policy which later the Serb custom war, initiated by the big landed interests of the monarchy, and the artificial establishment of the impotent Albanian buffer state, envenomed still further, made the Habsburg monarchy the chief obstacle of the Jugo-Slav efforts for unification. The haughty and imprudent words of Count Andrassy after the Congress of Berlin: “The doors of the Orient are now opened for your Majesty,” clanged in the ears of the Jugo-Slavs like an insult and aroused the jealousy of Russian absolutism. Immediately after this “diplomatic triumph” of the Hungarian statesman, the acute eyes of Adolph Fischhof detected the real significance of this event which he compared with the catastrophe of Königgrätz. He wrote:

Andrassy is our political Benedek [the general who lost the battle against the Prussians]. Covered by the fog of his preoccupation, as his unfortunate compatriot by the fog of Chlum, he was enveloped and attacked by the enemy in the rear, without even divining it. And this diplomatic defeat is far more menacing than the former military disaster; for this diminished only our power, but the latter endangers our existence.⁵

And to the extent that the dissatisfaction of the Slav peoples of the monarchy and of the Hungarian nationalities grew, it was further nourished in the same measure by this general excitement which the anti-Slav foreign policy of the monarchy aroused. I shall devote a separate chapter to a more detailed analysis of this connection because this fatal convergence of the outer and inner policy in the southern Slav question which foreshadowed its terrible dangers during the last three decades of the monarchy led with inevitable logic to the catastrophe of Sarajevo and to the World War. Francis Joseph

⁵ Quoted by Joseph Redlich in *Kaiser Franz Joseph*, p. 351.

was undoubtedly not entirely unconscious of these dangers, for the war party of the monarchy under the energetic leadership of Conrad von Hötzendorf often alarmed him with the desperate accentuation of the necessity of a preventive war with Serbia and Italy. These same circles admonished the Emperor that the military coercion of the enemies of the monarchy alone would not suffice if, at the same time, the monarchy would not receive a new constitution in the spirit of federalization. But the Emperor was incapable of deciding himself either for war or for any important constitutional issue though he considered a future conflict inevitable. He could not realize the extreme gravity of the southern Slav question for Austria and the growing dissatisfaction of all the nations with the dualistic constitution. The crowned bureaucrat and enthusiastic officer became too old to comprehend the real vital issues of his peoples. In this manner *Schönbrunn*, the residence of the senile Emperor and his court, came in a more and more vehement conflict with *Belvedere*, the residence of the heir apparent, Francis Ferdinand.

The long reign of the Emperor, covering the lifetime of three generations, became a veritable fate of the monarchy. In the last decade of his life he was transformed into a rigid dualistic state-machine incapable of understanding or even of hearing any new or opposite political conception. The word of Trialism (a tendency to remold the dualistic monarchy into a trialistic structure by building up a Jugo-Slav state) was not even allowed to be mentioned in his presence. Similarly the dissatisfaction of the Hungarian nationalities were entirely disregarded among his intimates and it was assumed that they were perfectly happy. Generally speaking all disagreeable news were consistently held back from him. He never had an intimate conversation aside from the highest members of the aristocracy and of the military staff. He regarded his ministers as lackeys of a higher rank with whom he had intercourse only under the strictest formalities. His hostility and contempt for the press, which he regarded as a dirty business, was proverbial. In the last years of his life his entourage held him so strictly under its sway that sometimes (as I know from a reliable source) extra copies of the newspapers he read were printed lest the true news should excite his majestic nerves. And the older he became the more the hereditary qualities of absolutism became manifest as against the superficially acquired qualities of constitutionalism. General Baron von Margutti, who worked in his cabinet, noted many intimate traits of that rigid Spanish atmosphere which surrounded the Emperor.⁶ When he was compelled to abandon the Lombardy, even in those hours of the catastrophe he did not forget to secure the

⁶ *Kaiser Franz Joseph. Persönliche Erinnerungen.* (Wien, Leipzig, 1924).

right to appoint during his lifetime the cavaliers of the Iron Crown, the symbol of the lost province. If he wore the uniforms of his foreign regiments, he applied meticulous care that they should correspond to the latest prescriptions. This scrupulousness sometimes approached the comic. For instance, when his daughter Gisela, the Bavarian princess, appeared at the imperial table, the Emperor wore the star of the Bavarian order of Saint Hubertus and he expected his staff to wear their Bavarian distinctions. This mentality was manifestly very remote from reality and the deep necessities of modern life. His one-sidedness was further augmented by his greatly developed susceptibility against the disagreeable reminiscences of the past and by his almost inhuman rigidity toward the sufferings of common beings. A short story narrated by the private secretary of Francis Ferdinand in his memoirs throws a gleam of light on the whole psychology of the Emperor. A colonel who lost his leg at Königgrätz came before him for an audience asking for an official appointment, being incapable of providing for his large family with his modest pension. The Emperor received him gracefully and asked him where he lost his leg. The colonel answered, "In the battle of Königgrätz," to which the Emperor rudely remarked, "Well! sir. We lost that campaign and you will be remunerated for it!" A man of such a moral atmosphere, how could he understand and rightly measure the sentiments and aspirations of the subjugated national minorities?

But the quality which made his individuality entirely unfit to understand and appreciate the real character of all mass problems was his rigidly anti-democratic personality. The people and the middle classes were entirely alien to him as men of a minor rank and only of incidental importance. The following episode, reported by the same author, speaks more than volumes about the true atmosphere of his period and about his so-called correctly constitutional attitude so much vaunted during his life by the leading articles of the newspapers of his realm. According to the court etiquette Doctor Kerzl, his physician in ordinary during many decades was required to wear a frock coat on every occasion in which he met his imperial patient. One night the Emperor had a serious catarrh and suffered under great respiration troubles. His old lackey ran very anxiously for Dr. Kerzl. The doctor in his excitement took only his lounging coat and ran to the Emperor. But the patient as soon as he observed his doctor, though scarcely capable of taking his breath and with a face almost blue from the coughing-fit, with a final effort made a rejecting gesture toward his physician and shouted the single word, "*Frack!*" (frock coat).⁷ In

⁷ Paul Nikitsch-Boulles, *Vor dem Sturm. Erinnerungen an Erzherzog Thronfolger Franz Ferdinand* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 47-48.

118 DISSOLUTION OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY

this single word we realize the pulsation of the whole atmosphere of absolutism and at the same time the feeling, not without grandeur, of that grace-of-God origin which defies death rather than transgress the rule of Spanish etiquette.⁸

⁸ Since the completion of my manuscript three monographs were published on Francis Joseph by Eugene S. Bagger (New York, 1927), by Joseph Redlich (already quoted) and by Karl Tschuppik (Hellerau, 1929). These important and very different contributions, both in conception and personal attitude, did not alter my understanding and evaluation of the rule of Francis Joseph in the main things. The trait which mostly strikes the reader in the biographies of Redlich and Tschuppik is the fact that the Kaiser became so much a governmental institution and organ that his personality almost disappears. In spite of the monumental and comprehensive quality of Redlich's work and in spite of the journalistic acuteness of Tschuppik, one scarcely feels a human being behind his "state-life"—without conceptions, without principles, entirely devoted to the traditional dynastic interests. And this presentation is not the fault of the authors, but it rather clearly expresses the pathological rigidity which the "Habsburg structure" has assumed in its last true representative. And when Bagger tried to humanize this figure with the help of more intimate anecdotes and reminiscences, one has the feeling that in spite of the method of the psychology of Adler which he sometimes brilliantly applies (see the relation of the Kaiser to his tragic brother Maximilian) the picture of his intimate character does not become clearer, but sometimes assumes an almost grotesque, inhuman, and sinister quality which he scarcely possessed.

CHAPTER XVII

DAMNOSA HEREDITAS

Perhaps on some pages of the previous analyses the reader may have the feeling that, in the reconstruction of the historical atmosphere, I was too much impressed by my personal experiences during the catastrophe of the monarchy and projected them in an undue manner upon the remoter past. In proving my point of view I shall now adduce two crown witnesses in a true sense: the two heirs apparent of the monarchy, Rudolph and Francis Ferdinand, both tragic heroes of those historical forces which were developed from the products of the envenomed methods of the Habsburg polity.

The details and true causes of the love-tragedy of Mayerling (which put an end to the young life of Crown Prince Rudolph) are still not sufficiently elucidated and are contradictory. This fact itself is highly symptomatic. The spirit of the secret police was so strong in the monarchy, the publicity of the press so weak, and the prestige and the will of the court so feared that an event of such enormous consequences which shook public opinion in the monarchy and all around the world could be veiled until the end and held back from a historical criticism. But the fact that such a keen spirit and well-intentioned will as the late royal son had, perished amid the joys of a crude revelry or after it, or in a common suicide with his mistress, or by a foreign hand: this fact alone shows very clearly how a personality of a greater caliber was without a sphere of activity and without creative hope in the vast realm of the Habsburgs, and how he was abandoned to his disorderly passions.

Crown Prince Rudolph, the intimate friend of liberal publicists, scholars, and politicians, was a typical *libre penseur* of the last decades of the nineteenth century who considered a wealthy bourgeois class as the real foundation of the state, who sympathized with the Jews, and who had a certain aversion against the Slavs as supporters, in those times, of a clerical policy. He was an ardent enemy of feudal aristocracy because he realized that this class was becoming more and more a parasite caste, performing no serious work in the interest of the state. As every Habsburg, he laid the utmost stress on his army and was a passionate antagonist of the Hungarian aspirations for independence, though he liked the Magyars and he felt comfortable in the society of Magyar aristocracy. In the time of the vehement manifestations in consequence of the Hentzi affair (when Magyar nationalistic feeling was very tumultuous) in 1886, he advised a military demonstration against Hungary. The Hungarian problem as a social