

CHAPTER XVIII

A HISTORY OF CONFLICTING SENTIMENTS

One who looks over again dispassionately and without bias all those mass-psychological problems, the hopelessly incomplete picture of which I have tried to present on the preceding pages, will clearly understand that this special something which characterizes most of the history of the monarchy compared with the history of other states is the fact that we do not find a single common ideal or sentiment which could have united the peoples and nations of the monarchy in any political solidarity whatsoever. This history was not a common undertaking of the nations but mostly the struggle of the Habsburgs against the particular national consciousnesses and the struggle of these national consciousnesses among each other.

Regarding the problem of the existence of the monarchy from a mass-psychological point of view, its solution would have meant the establishment of a psychic synthesis which would have been capable of reconciling the special experiences and personal events of the various nations into a superior common unity, of building up a historical Pantheon in which the heroes of all the nations could have shaken hands with each other in the light of some new common ideals which could have reduced to a common denominator the antagonistic experiences and struggles of the various peoples of the monarchy. Such an ideal, however, was totally absent from the history of the Habsburgs and lived only in the consciousness of some few isolated, outstanding spirits who realized it almost personally in their own souls with a distinct sentimental and intellectual accent. Something was felt of this ideal by Joseph II and his enthusiastic collaborators, the Austrian and Hungarian lovers of the *Aufklärung*, and the same ideal in a clearer and more differentiated form later stood before the eyes of such heterogeneous but in this respect equally motivated personalities as for instance Dr. Fischhof, the German revolutionary; Baron Eötvös, the Hungarian state philosopher; Palacký, the Czech historian; Ludovit Gaj, the Illyrian apostle; Jancu, the Rumanian fighter for independence; or in a later generation, Hermann Bahr, the critic; Joseph Redlich, the historian; Karl Renner, the socialist; Baron Szilassy, the diplomat; Conrad von Hötzendorf, the warlord; and Masaryk, the "realist," to mention only some outstanding representatives of this type. All these men felt something of the international solidarity of the peoples of the monarchy and visualized very positively that out of these various energies something greater and

more brilliant, more many sided and humane, could have been formed than the exclusive ideal of the nation states.

Regarding from this point of view the process of dissolution of the former monarchy, it could be expressed in the following few words: *The Empire collapsed because the historic tradition of each nation stood in a hostile and hateful way against the historical experiences of the other nations.* The monarchy collapsed on the psychic fact that it could not solve the problem declared insoluble by a Hungarian statesman: it could not establish a reciprocity among the different experiences, sentiments, and ideals of the various nations. Nobody saw more clearly this delicate connection than Hermann Bahr who with the intuition of his visionary imagination wrote the following impressive words:

. . . . Elsewhere the descendent has an easy task in entering the heritage of the fathers because it contains a single will and a uniform sense. In us, however, shout a hundred voices of the past, the struggle of the fathers is not settled, each must decide it anew, each must choose among his fathers, each must for himself pass through the entire past again. For the past of our men has this in particular, that none of them was ever closed, nothing was fought out, the father recedes before his son, but in the grandson he goes ahead again, nobody is or feels secure, each feels himself divided, our men have too much inborn. Elsewhere one can confidently follow his fathers, we cannot do this because our fathers, disunited among themselves, make an appeal to our judgment. *Je ne puis vivre que selon mes morts*, ("I can only live according to my dead ones."), Barrès said. But we cannot live according to our dead ones because we would be torn apart since each of our dead ones tears in an opposite direction.¹

Indeed this was the problem, but not a single serious step was undertaken to solve it, because it became perfectly insolvable as we shall see. Under such circumstances only a purely mechanical solidarity, a kind of "vegetative symbiosis," could have been established among the various nations of the monarchy and every true sentimental, organic connection was lacking. If Renan is right in his famous definition which he gave concerning the concept of a nation—and he is right without doubt—: *Or l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup des choses en commun et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses*, then it is manifest that the history of the monarchy is the most opposite imaginable pole of such an evolution: *here the peoples did not do anything in common and they did not forget anything.*

¹ *Dalmatinische Reise* (Berlin, 1909), pp. 95–96.

PART III
THE CENTRIPETAL FORCES: THE EIGHT PILLARS
OF INTERNATIONALISM