

CHAPTER IV

NATIONAL AWAKENING

After the suppression of feudal nationalism it seemed for a long time that the Habsburgs would be triumphant in their work of unification and centralization. Dynastical administration extended everywhere, the recalcitrant feudal nobility was replaced by a servile, courtly one and a policy of mercantilism tried to give to the country an economic uniformity. This relative peace and consolidation was only a seeming one. Beginning approximately with the end of the eighteenth century a new social force appears which, originating from small rivulets, became in several decades the torrent of a powerful stream which undermined more and more the spirit and institutions of the dynastico-patrimonial state. This force was the modern national feeling in the name of which each nation of the monarchy, great and small, laid claim to self-expression and local administration, and, several of them, to an independent state life. This new nationalism, in antagonism with the feudal one, was based on broad popular forces, on the millions of the small bourgeoisie, of the peasantry, and of the industrial workers.

A. THE IDEALISTIC INTERPRETATION

Whence did this new type of a democratic and social nationalism originate? We used to hear two antagonistic answers to this question. One was constructed in the spirit of historical idealism, the other in that of historical materialism. The first lays the chief stress on the intellectual and moral forces. Nationalism is nothing else than a growing realization of the consciousness of the human soul which can reach its completeness only in a national existence fulfilling the work which the World-Spirit assigned to every national individuality. All the great representatives of democratic nationalism stood on this platform. Mazzini, Fichte, Palacký, Kossuth, Gaj, Kollár, Obradović, and others regarded nationalism as an irresistible historical force which tries to unify into a moral intellectual and political organization a whole nation previously divided by accident or dynastical domination. These great prophets of nationalism always emphasized the creative forces of spiritual interests. *Mens agit at molem*. In order to attain its liberty and independence, each nation must, above all, cultivate its spiritual and moral forces. As Mazzini said, in his prophetic mysticism to his *Europa Giovane* (1834): "Each nation has its own task by the fulfilling of which it contributes to the general mission of humanity. This mission constitutes its nationality. Nationality is a

holy thing. . . .” Based on these and similar moral values, the founders of nationalism attributed a paramount importance to the reconstruction of the historical consciousness of the nation and to the achievements of its language, art, and literature. “Should we achieve a national theater,” sighed the great poet of Germany, Schiller, “we would become also a nation.” Economic and military considerations were only means and instruments in the elaboration of the national ideal.

B. THE MATERIALISTIC INTERPRETATION AND
“THE NATIONS WITHOUT HISTORY”

Opposed to this idealistic interpretation, were the thinkers of a later age who did not live through the first heroic period of the national struggles or who regarded with a cooler criticism the results and the methods of the national idea, and its consequent shift into an aggressive imperialism. They opposed these purely idealistic constructions, which they felt sentimental and insincere, and tried to give a preponderately economic and materialistic interpretation to the nationalistic phenomenon. The school of Marx and Engels qualified the spiritual and moral structure of the national movement as sheer “ideology” which must be explained by the fact of economic production and distribution of wealth. The significance of this point of view is very great and has a special merit in the elucidation of the process by which the “nations without history” attained a national consciousness. Nations without history were called by Frederick Engels, and after him by Otto Bauer who elaborated most completely the economic background and mass-psychology of this movement, those peoples which like the Slovenians, the Ruthenians, the Jugo-Slavs under the Turkish conquests, or the Czechs under Austrian absolutism had lost their former nobility, either because their leading classes were exterminated or because they were assimilated by a new aristocracy. These nations remained, through the lack of an intellectual leading class, “nations without history,” they did not have a conscious rôle in the respective countries, but, purely as peasant and bondsmen masses, they continued throughout centuries a stagnant, vegetative life as passive instruments of a foreign nobility. They became not real nations but simple *Bedientenvölker*, servant-peoples, the language of which lived only as a despised dialect in the backyard slum quarters of the landlords. According to this point of view the main problem of nationality is the awakening of these unhistorical peoples, which, in consequence of the new economic and social order, began to participate more and more as conscious factors in the life of the state and society. The national ideology is chiefly a result of this great economic and political change. The formerly oppressed slaves adopt simply the national ideology of those nations which ruled formerly over them and demand participation in the states as equal factors.

This point of view contains undoubtedly important elements of reality but seems to me too schematic and simplified. The truth is that the same process of national awakening is also to be witnessed in the so-called historical nations, that is, in those which continued an unbroken national existence during centuries. The truth is that the modern national idea is not a simple continuance of feudal nationalism but the result of more general and complicated causes. This process went on also among peoples who had an old historical consciousness, like the Germans, the Italians, and the Hungarians. On the other hand, the so-called nations without history did not lose entirely their historical individuality.

Unable to enter into the full discussion of this controversy, I would only emphasize my point of view, that national awakening was a general movement in all parts of Central and Eastern Europe from the beginning of the eighteenth century and, therefore, its causes must also be general, dominating the whole political and social atmosphere. (In the large nation states of Western Europe, the problem of nationality did not become so preponderant as in Middle and Eastern Europe for, in the former countries, a superior culture of one kind or another was successful in assimilating all the foreign elements in an age which was determined not by national but by feudal and religious antagonisms. But even here the problem of nationality arises everywhere where national assimilation did not become complete and where local particularisms continued to exist, as in the Celtic fringe of England.)

C. A COMBINED INTERPRETATION

To understand and to interpret modern nationalism in its vital essence as the chief factor in the dissolution of the Habsburg empire, we must investigate with equal care both the social-economic and the spiritual side of the problem. Henry Bergson has admirably shown that an exclusively materialistic interpretation of the soul is not a faithful description of the facts but rather their mutilation. "Our consciousness is undoubtedly affixed to a brain but it does not follow from this that the brain decides all the details of the consciousness or that the consciousness would be a sheer function of the brain."¹ The same is also true concerning the social world. Though we can more or less accurately describe and analyze all the economic and social antecedents and concomitants of the national movement, we cannot say that these antecedents and concomitants explain the whole phenomenon. When, therefore, in the following treatment I shall try to disentangle the process to show the various historical elements—both economic and spiritual—the reader should not forget that all these divisions are purely artificial; and, in reality, in the souls of strug-

¹ "L'Âme et le Corps," in *Le Matérialisme Actuel* (Paris, 1926), p. 17.

gling men, all these factors co-operated together to make the national movements irresistible.

Broadly speaking we had two different types in the nationalistic movements of the monarchy. One was a movement for the building-up of a complete national state advocated by the more advanced peoples of the monarchy who had a clear and continuous historical consciousness. Such was the aspiration of the Hungarians, of the Italians, of the Czechs, of the Poles, and of the Croats. On the other hand the smaller or less-developed national elements of the monarchy, scarcely awakened from the feudal torpor, were less ambitious in their desires and for a long time they would have been satisfied if a kind of national and administrative autonomy had been given to them. Such was the attitude, almost until the beginning of the war, of the Slovaks, the Ruthenians, the Slovenians, the Rumanians, and the German minorities of Hungary.

However different the concrete manifestations of the various national programs may have been, there was still a common element in them. All these peoples aspired toward a national self-expression, toward the possibility of developing their own culture and language, and of having an opportunity to speak their own idioms in the schools, the churches, the administration, and before the tribunals. That is what I used to call the "minimum program" of all national struggles. This national program is manifestly the precondition for all further economic and cultural development. Regarding the first manifestation of the national movements in the Balkans, Émile de Laveleye, the brilliant Belgian sociologist, wrote the following prophetic lines:

In provinces where half-animal men are living, let us establish schools, let us construct a railway, and tolerate a printing-press. Twenty years later national feeling will be born. After two generations it will explode, if you try to suppress it. In this manner the national question is born out of the very nature of civilization.

The national problem indeed is only another aspect of social self-expression and emancipation. That is what many foreign observers, especially from homogeneous national regions or from America (where the foreign national minorities are living under conditions and motivations just the opposite to those from which they fled to the new world), are often unable to understand. I heard repeatedly opinions of very distinguished foreigners according to which the struggling national minorities were regarded as prisoners of an anachronistic sentimentalism because, instead of promoting their far more important economic, social, and cultural interest, they were always shouting their national grievances and their linguistic and historical aspirations. This and similar accusations were a total misrepresentation of the real situation, and one of the chief causes of the dissolution of the monarchy was the fact that the so-called progressive and liberal pub-

lic opinion of the leading nations of the monarchy nourished the same opinions as these distinguished foreigners. They forgot that an oppressed nationality which fights continuously for its national self-expression, for its language, school, and administration, cannot have an adequate interest in the so-called higher problems of civilization.

Bernard Shaw once used in this connection the powerful picture that a persecuted nationality impeded in its development is a cancer-patient: he is unable to think even for a single moment of anything but his inflammation. Similarly in the consciousness of an oppressed nationality, the petty problems of the daily national existence occupy a disproportionate share, and the process of a wholesome economic and political differentiation cannot start as long as the most imperative national needs are not satisfied. This situation leads it to a pathological overestimation of all the national considerations. National oppression signifies a kind of psychic obstruction which impedes both individual and social development.

Such really became the situation in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the best energies of all the nations were consumed in seemingly useless national and constitutional struggles instead of economic and cultural achievements so bitterly needed by all the population.

D. POLITICAL CENTRALIZATION AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

The process of national awakening was initiated by the Habsburgs themselves though indirectly and unintentionally. In their fight against feudalism and particularism the "enlightened absolutism" of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, as we saw in our historical introduction, clearly felt the necessity of protecting the great masses of peasant population against misery and exploitation. With their eyes turned toward the great Western models and on the Prussia of Frederick the Great, they were convinced that the power of the modern state could be based only on the financial and military efficiency of the whole people. Therefore, they tried to mitigate the burden of the feudal oligarchy and the first steps were taken toward the emancipation of the serfs. At the same time they introduced the first comprehensive system of elementary education. In an economic order which began to eliminate barter economy, which endeavored to supplant the pastures with cultivated lands, which introduced new methods in agriculture, cattle-breeding, forestry, and other useful arts, the old type of illiterate bondsman became an anachronism and a new, more rational, and self-conscious type of peasantry was wanted. This could be achieved only in a system of elementary education in the mother tongue. The school policy of Maria Theresa and Joseph II was perfectly conscious of this necessity. The imperial educational policy had only a Germanizing tendency concerning the inner administration of the country, but the linguistic necessities of the population

were everywhere recognized. Generally speaking, we may say that enlightened absolutism made the first serious and comprehensive attack against feudal Latinity under which the national languages became servant languages whereas the Latin remained the social and diplomatic language of the nobility. At the same time the imperial policy was very anxious to educate a sufficient number of officials from all the various nations of the empire because a German administration could only be maintained in the central organs, whereas in the local administration the use of the maternal language of the people was inevitable.

This dynastical patriarchalism created a new generation of bondsmen whose cultural and economic knowledge grew more intensive, and who began to read books in their mother-tongues, who were administered more frequently by their own co-nationals, and who enjoyed the protection of the imperial power against the abuses of the feudal rule. This process of evolution had inevitably a national reaction. The serfs began to think more critically concerning their own situation. The economic and political pressure of feudal society was felt as a national exploitation. The Czech, the Slovak, the Rumanian, the Ruthenian, and the other masses of bondsmen identified the system of feudal oppression with the national oppression exercised by the German, Hungarian, or Polish upper classes. The rebellions of the serfs very often took on a national hue. On the other hand the fear and hatred of the privileged classes against the revolting serfs assumed the form of national prejudice.

In this way the educational and the cultural policy of enlightened absolutism aroused in all parts of the monarchy a certain amount of national consciousness among the backward peoples who began to awake from their nationless dream. This general awakening of national consciousness became a powerful instrument in the hands of absolutism in counterbalancing with it the influence of the more powerful nations of the monarchy by playing up the national aspirations of the oppressed peoples. There began the conscious policy of a Machiavellistic *divide et impera* based on the national divisions of the country. This tendency was so manifest that Ludwig Gumplowicz coined the word, *Konkurrenznationalität* ("a nationality of competition"), as an invention of the absolutistic statesmanship to maintain the autocratic equilibrium.² *Aula est pro nobis* ("The Court is with us!")

² This policy of *divide et impera*, however, was not an invention of the Habsburgs but seems to be very deeply rooted in some sad instincts of our human nature. In ancient Rome "it was an economic principle to foster rather than to suppress dissensions inside of slavery. In the same spirit Plato and Aristotle had already warned . . . not to gather slaves of the same nationality in order not to bring about local alliances and perhaps plots. . . ." (Quoted after Mommsen by Francis Oppenheimer, *Der Staat* [Jena, 1926], p. 477). And curiously enough, I was recently told by a German foreman of a big automobile plant of Detroit that for avoiding strikes they always divide their workers in such a way that in each section workers of various nationalities should co-operate.

shouted joyfully one of the leaders of the Illyrian movement directed against Hungarian independence as an expression of the protection which the movement enjoyed from Vienna. This connection between absolutism and national awakening of the Slavs was so conspicuous that it troubled even the clear sight of Marx and Engels who, misunderstanding the real nature of the movement, considered it exclusively as a machination of the Viennese reaction against the liberal and revolutionary Hungarian nobility.

The imperial power, however, was soon frightened by the ghost which it awakened because the national movement proved to be a double-edged sword. It was not only an instrument of the *divide et impera* policy, but it became more and more a conscious and irresistible endeavor of all the nations to build up a constitutional type of national government. This tendency could not be reconciled with an absolutist centralized power and that is the reason that, after the short episode of the enlightened absolutism, the system of Metternich and its successors fought national democracy as bitterly as constitutional liberalism. On the other hand, the growing force of dynastical German centralization aroused inevitably a semi-national resistance of those feudal elements which the Habsburg administration menaced in their governmental independence and social privileges.³

All these developments, however, were only a prologue in the history of the national consciousness. The movement gets a quicker tempo and a more powerful repercussion only in the period when, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the capitalistic process of production infiltrated more and more into the economic structure of the monarchy. The eighteenth century knew only a capitalized home industry or the combination of individual artisanships in bigger plants, whereas in the nineteenth century the first results of industrial revolution based on the new technical inventions appear. The small artisanship of former times could not generally compete with the big industrial plants and a concentration of factory labor in the towns began. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was only one steam engine in Austria, in 1841 there were more than 230 with 3,000 horsepower. In 1852 we find 670 steam engines with nearly 10,000 horsepower. At the same time various labor-saving machines were introduced intensifying very much average production. This process, though far more slowly, also went on in Hungary, where another more important factor revolutionized the old economy of the country. It was a transition from cattle-breeding to agriculture, followed by a restriction of barter economy, the extension of the town markets, by the growth of industry, and the arising of an intellectual middle class. Parallel to these changes a fundamental transformation of the system

³ See the historical part of this book, pp. 65, 72-73.

of communication occurred. The old feudal primitive roads based on compulsory labor were replaced by more solidly built ones, and from the thirties of the last century there began the epoch of the creation of railroads giving an entirely new cohesion to a society in which the countryside was more and more counterbalanced by the influence of the urban agglomerations.

Under the sway of all these circumstances a new, more conscious, and energetic type of citizenship arose. The new nationally motivated middle class attacked the old institutions and aspired for a nation state, or at least for national local autonomy based on the principles of modern democracy. Parallel to this process the social unrest of the peasantry grew more and more dangerous because a higher type of agriculture and a more developed civic consciousness was entirely incompatible with the old institutions of bondage.

Under such circumstances the position of the former feudal elements became precarious. The peasantry assailed their estates and manorial rights, the new middle class in the towns their political privileges and their apathy concerning the new democratic national interests. Already at the end of the eighteenth century vehement complaints were launched against the anti-national attitude of the Czech nobility.⁴

Since the time of Joseph II a similarly hostile literature arose in Hungary against the nobility, chastising its indolence, its parasitic nature, and its remoteness from the aims of the country. This antagonism between the working-elements and the nobility became in the course of the nineteenth century even more accentuated and Alexander Petöfi, the greatest lyrical genius of the period in a satirical poem with the refrain: "I am a Hungarian nobleman" attacked the anachronistic, exploiting, and useless qualities of the feudal classes. But the better and more far-sighted elements of the nobility understood the danger which menaced them, that the continuance of the system of bondage would eliminate them completely from the life of the new society and at the same time give opportunity to the Viennese government and the dynasty to carry on the liberation of the serfs in a manner which would end also the constitutional independence of the country. (A similar method indeed was applied by Russian Tsarism against the recalcitrant Polish nobility: the forcible expropriation of their estates meant at the same time the grave for Polish independence for a long period.) Not only this social pressure, but the whole moral and mental atmosphere of the epoch brought it about that a clever and gifted élite of the noble classes adopted enthusiastically the idea both of national independence and social-political reforms. Everywhere we find a minority of noblemen who accepted the national

⁴ Alfred von Skene, *Entstehen und Entwicklung der slawish nationalen Bewegung in Böhmen und Mähren im XIX Jahrhundert* (Wien, 1893), pp. 53-59.

and political theories of the French Revolution. This process was particularly conspicuous in Hungary, the only country in the monarchy which maintained to a certain extent its own historical constitution. At the same time a bourgeois class in the proper sense was almost entirely lacking and, therefore, the liberal elements of the "gentry" became the leaders both of national and political emancipation.

From the many instances I wish only to quote two, which demonstrate how clearly the new revolutionary nobility comprehended the absolute necessity for uniting nationalism with democracy. Baron Wesselényi, one of the most gifted leaders of the national opposition, advocated the liberation of the bondsmen with this significant argument:

The government [he meant the Austrian government] will not carry on this measure. Putting a deceitful mask on its horrid face, it extracts the fat of nine million people and is now awaiting the uprising of these nine millions and would like to undertake the rôle of liberator. . . . If this would happen, woe to us because we shall be debased slaves instead of free men. . . .

The same point of view was emphasized by Louis Kossuth in 1846: "The soil of the people must be freed in the whole country and at the same time . . . lest the nobility will be put to the scythe and this moment will be simultaneously the fatal day of Magyar nationality. . . ." We witness a curious mixture of aspirations and ideologies. The old privileged elements began to accept the social and democratic claims of the period, while the awakened peasant masses and the new *intelligentsia* adopted the national aims of the former feudal resurrections. One might say: the people entered into the crowns and gave a new color and a new intensity to the previous struggles for constitutional independence.

Another important feature of the new situation was the growth of an industrial proletariat in Austria and its beginning in Hungary too. This new class concentrated in the bigger cities was less dependent in its ideology on the historical traditions of the privileged elements. Its ideology was far more social and revolutionary than national. In spite of this, as a part of the surplus population of the villages, this class, too, had a warm feeling for its native language and customs. In its general radicalism it was inclined to support the claims for a national independence and equality. As a matter of fact the industrial proletariat became a very important element of national struggles. The concentration in the towns, an unavoidable consequence of the capitalistic system, caused an intense migratory movement in the whole monarchy. Great masses of population, which the feudal agricultural system could not employ, gathered in the manufacturing towns and often altered to a large extent their former ethnic composition. For instance in Austria, some of the former cities of

a German character lost their homogeneity and important Slav minorities arose. The same process in Hungary rather favored Magyarization because the Magyars with a greater mental elasticity and more oppressed by the latifundist system, became the chief elements of the industrial migratory movement.

Generally speaking, we may assert as a sociological law that the neighboring population of the villages had a tendency to assimilate the urban agglomerations or, as I used to say, the "sea assimilates the islands." Of course this process was often checked and counterbalanced where the ruling class, controlling the state, had carried on a conscious policy of assimilation, putting into the more important industrial centers, state offices, schools, and factories with a national staff (as it happened in Galicia, from the Polish side and in Hungary from the Magyar); nevertheless, it was everywhere the concomitant phenomenon of capitalism that important ethnographic changes occurred in consequence of the migratory movement of the workers. There arose new, more or less compact, national minorities or many urban agglomerations got a new ethnic majority. As a matter of fact, these new immigrants proposed claims for schools and administration in their own tongues. These quite natural aspirations aroused the uneasiness of the former ruling national groups.⁵ This antagonism became an important factor in political struggles. The defense of the old national character on the one hand and the establishment of a new school system and administration fit for the new linguistic needs on the other, determined the very essence of national struggles even in regions where national minorities did not aspire to a constitutional state independence.

The social and political facts herewith enumerated seem to legitimize the point of view particularly emphasized by the socialist writers that "the national problem is only the other side of the social problem." It is quite evident that any effort for the extension of political rights, for the heightening of the cultural level of the masses and for the improving of their economic conditions must inevitably have their national repercussions. National feeling grows in equal ratio with political and economic power. There is really no difficulty in grouping these economic and political facts in such a manner that national movements would appear as a sheer reflex or superstructure of these factors. Those, however, who penetrate more deeply into these connections will not be satisfied with this purely economic construction, rather, they will be obliged to acknowledge the autonomous and inde-

⁵ This attitude of a distrustful and suspicious nationalism found an expression in the fact that Vienna, the Imperial City, never tolerated public Czech theatrical performances though there was within her territory a considerable Czech minority. This was not an open prohibition; it was only confidentially intimated to the theaters that such performances were not desirable.

pendent work of spiritual and moral forces in the evolution of national consciousness.

E. THE SPIRITUAL FORCES

Digging more deeply into the sources of national movements and analyzing in more detail the world of ideas of those prophets who initiated the national revolutions, we will find that these great precursors were generally very remote from the economic and class interests of the period, but they tried to give a new synthesis for all the manifestations of national life. For instance, one of the greatest geniuses of the national awakening, the prophet of Hungarian self-realization, Count Stephen Széchenyi, though an eminently practical man full of plans for the economic reconstruction of his backward country, did not comprehend the motive of individual profit in his feverish efforts, but all his powerful schemes and projects were only an expression of the ideal to give national content and consciousness to a country weakened in its soul by feudal particularism and foreign domination. One might say that the national idea was a center of spiritual forces toward which gravitated all individual efforts. If we study the intellectual and moral struggles of the heroic period of nationalism, we distinctly recognize that we face not only the introduction of a new method of economic production, but at the same time the establishment of a new scale of moral values.

This whole conception was animated by a new philosophy of history. The ideas of Humanism, one of the chief structures of the new consciousness, were earlier than the changes in the economic system. Especially the influence of Herder, the great German philosopher, was decisive on the awakening peoples of the monarchy, in the first place in the Slavs who called him *praeceptor Slavorum*. Under the influence of the "Law of Nature," emphasizing the born rights of the individual guaranteed by pure "Reason," the German thinker attacked the old patrimonial conception of the state and regarded the peoples as the real factors of the historical process. In opposition to the unifying and centralizing plans of Joseph II, he advanced with great force and powerful suggestiveness the ideal of independent national evolution. He shouted to the old nationless patrimonial world:

Has a people something more precious than the language of its fathers? In it resides its whole intellectual wealth of tradition, history, religion, maxims of life, all its heart and soul. To take away the language of such a people or to debase it means to take its only immortal property. . . . The best culture of a people cannot be enforced by a foreign language, it flourishes the most beautifully and, I would say, exclusively on its own soil, in its inherited and hereditary idiom.

These new spiritual constructions found further elucidations or continuations from the side of the historical school of Savigny and in the German romanticism. Savigny rejected the theory regarding

law as a simple act of the state, but he considered it as an emanation of the soul of the people exactly in the same manner as language, art, and customs. At the same time the German romanticists glorified the intuitive creative forces of the people building up in an organic and semi-conscious way a new system of spiritual values. "Each significant and independent nation," said Frederick Schlegel, an outstanding figure of the school, in a lecture delivered at Vienna in 1812, "has a right to possess its own and peculiar literature and it is the worst barbarism which oppresses the language of a people."⁶

These and similar elements of thought were naturally eagerly received by those peoples who began to feel their national individuality. In the center of this consciousness, as a supreme symbol, stood the idea of the national "mission," the conviction that the respective peoples have their special missions in the history of the world attributed to them by fate. This idea, too, was already clearly expressed by Herder who emphasized repeatedly the particular nature of the Slavs, distinct from that of the Germans, glorifying the "Slav spirit," as opposed to the conquering desire of the Germans, as the spirit of democracy, pacifism, and self-government. Each nation began to formulate its own rôle in history. The Magyars emphasized the struggle against the Turks, defending Christianity, as their national mission; the Poles felt themselves as exponents of Western culture against the barbarism of Russian Tsarism; the Croats regarded themselves as pioneers of Roman Catholicism against Byzantism; the Rumanians claimed the honor of being the continuers of the Roman Dacia; the Czechs kindled their national enthusiasm by the memory of Huss, as the beginner of continental reformation.

We find everywhere a curious searching for historical ancestors. Every nation tried to reconstruct its past as the most glorious, like a lost Paradise. This almost frantic desire for "time-honored glory" received sometimes a comical touch. So, for instance, some Slovenian writers made an attempt, though without any historical foundation, to introduce cruel warlike traits into the history of their peaceful nation. One of their popular historians wrote before the World War as follows:

It was said that the Slovenians are a tame and mild people. That is not true. They think erroneously who speak of a meek Slovenian people. We read that the Slovenians have destroyed such a big city as Cilli. The Germans and the Furlans were horrified by the Slovenians. They tried repeatedly to push back the Slovenians, but our neighbors were rather unsuccessful in this. The enraged Slovenians drove them back cleverly, then they attacked them and robbed extensively in Bavaria and Northern Italy. . . .⁷

⁶ Interesting data will be found concerning the spiritual awakening of the Slavs in the book of Alfred Fischel, *Der Panславismus bis zum Weltkrieg*, pp. 24 ff.

⁷ Robert Braun, "The Development of the Slovenian National Idea," *Huszadik Század*, April, 1917. In Hungarian.

One can imagine if the weakest of the peoples "without history" sought so passionately after its past, how enthusiastically the greater and more conscious nations began to investigate their history and to search after what a Magyar poet called "ancestors, ancestors, you glorious ancestors, you great ancestors, you tempests shaking the whole world. . . ." All the peoples began to discover the forgotten documents of their literature, art, music, and popular customs. Happy was the nation which could show a time-honored document of its past spiritual achievements. This thirst for old literary glory was so overwhelming that some ardent apostles of the national splendor did not fear even falsifications. So, for instance, the Czech, W. Hanka and his companions manufactured old documents and smuggled them into a historical building in order to demonstrate that the Czechs possessed already a powerful epic poetry in a period when their mighty German neighbors slept in barbarity. Another of their "discoveries" was an even more daring falsification relative to the archaeological history and customs of the Slavs. And though several of the most authoritative Slav scientists have demonstrated the apocryphal nature of these "historical documents," they had, in spite of this, a tremendous influence in the awakening of the Czech consciousness.

Not only past glory but recent historical events as well contributed to the consolidation of the national consciousness of the oppressed people. The Illyrian state, established by Napoleon in 1809 (combining the southern Slav territories detached from Austria into a national commonwealth by which the great Emperor utilized skillfully the dawning national consciousness of the Croats and the Slavonians in order to separate them completely from Austria), though it constituted only an experiment shorter than a decade, left an inextinguishable memory in the soul of the people.⁸

Later the "Repeal" movement of the Irish kindled the fantasy of the struggling nations of the monarchy. Especially the Czech patriots regarded O'Connell as their ideal and a club under the name "Repeal" was established. At the same time the Irish movement proved to be an excellent method of propaganda for the Czechs in a time when censorship made all political action impossible. So, for instance, Karel Havlíček, a popular leader of the Czech national movement, had a daily column in his paper under the heading "The Irish Repeal Movement" in which he described from day to day the situation of the unhappy island and the growing force of the national movement. Austrian censorship did not recognize that the Czech publicist was picturing under the Irish disguise the national and constitutional efforts of the Czechs and that his hatred toward the oppres-

⁸ A good description of the Illyrian experiment will be found in Herman Wendel, *Aus dem südslavischen Risorgimento* (Gotha, 1921).

sors of the Irish people was not directed against the English landlords but against Austrian despotism.

The example of those neighboring nations, too, which were more successful in their national propaganda or in the building up of their nation states as the Germans, the Italians, and the Magyars, exercised a powerful influence on the aspirations of the less happy peoples. So the victory of the Crown of St. Stephen over the united Austrian state, in the stipulation of Francis Deák in the Compromise of 1867, gave a new impetus to the national efforts of the Czechs who tried to imitate the Hungarian example even in details. At the same time a kind of a national inferiority complex arose in those smaller peoples who could not achieve any serious result in their national aspirations. So, for instance, Francis Prešeren, the noted Slovenian poet, wrote as late as the first half of the nineteenth century the following characteristic lines:

In our country they generally speak German,
The Lords and the Ladies who command us;
But Slovenian speak they who serve them.

This glorification of the past made the spirits more daring and, in order to escape the difficulties and the grievances of the present, they fixed their hopeful eyes toward the future. In each of the awakening nations we find a group of exalted prophets and visionaries who, with a real creative imagination, tried to construct for their struggling nations a promising ideal of future achievements. These men felt sometimes with a terrifying lucidity the evolutionary tendencies and elaborated schemes which in their own time were almost lacking any reality in the economic and political facts. The so-called *Realpolitiker* would have called them naïve dreamers, and such they were indeed from the point of view of an immediate realization. But they accomplished a really creative and constructive work because they delineated the first symbols for a national unity. The words of Stephen Széchenyi, "Hungary was not, it will become," gave an analogous impetus to two Hungarian generations to the famous dictum *Italia farà da se*.

Before the eyes of Ludjevit Gaj, the great Illyrian apostle, already in 1835 the picture of Jugo-Slav unity was complete in a time when all the political, economic, and linguistic preconditions of such a unity were entirely lacking and when the Turkish yoke oppressed several units of the future nation. He described this strange and startling apparition with poetical colors. He saw the virgin Europe holding a lyre at her breast. This lyre is Illyria, the triangle between Skutari, Varna, and Villach. Gaj complains that the strings give a false melody. Carinthia, Carniola, Styria, Dalmatia, Bosnia, and Bulgaria lack painfully in harmony. But Gaj was not satisfied with the poetic

picture. In order to illustrate his vision, he drew a map which puts geographically the frontiers of the new Illyria. This map coincides approximately with those changes which the World War brought. How seemingly useless a play it is for the rationalist to draw maps of territories whose inhabitants scarcely know anything of the existence of each other! And still there is a kind of political magic in such jokes. The irredentist movements always gave rise to maps which showed a dreamed of, but non-existing reality. Men not inclined to abstract reasoning visualize at once things unthinkable. Young students regarded such maps with feverish eyes in the hours of nightly conspiracies. And this dream of national unity remained not an isolated dream of the prophet. It developed more and more into a mass vision. Already in 1840 at the occasion of a splendid ball in Zagreb, Croatian ladies pinned to their bosoms a star on whose points the names of the Jugo-Slav tribes of the Dalmatians, Croatians, Montenegrins, Slavonians, Bulgarians, and Serbs were engraved. In the center of the star the following words were to be read: "God help us to union!"⁹

The enthusiastic plunging into the past awoke also another movement of fundamental importance in the history of uprising. The maternal tongue became almost sacred, the mysterious vehicle of all the national endeavors. The contemporaries regarded it with shame and astonishment that this great treasure became humiliated and debased by the general use of Latin, and later German. The native language of the Magyars, the Slavs, and the Rumanians, became a servant tongue, the language of peasants and small shopkeepers. The leading elements of society spoke Latin, German, or French. Therefore, the popular languages remained in a very backward condition. Their vocabulary was languishing. They were incapable of expressing modern nuances, the terms of the new economic and jural life, the more refined feelings and abstractions of the human soul. This anachronism of the traditional language was still further accentuated by the fact that, in consequence of political divisions and obstacles in communication, the language was divided in many dialects which became more and more strange to each other. In this manner there was a growing gap between the various branches of the same nation. This process was progressing especially among the Slavs. The Czechs, the Moravians, the Slovaks, or the Slovenians, the Croats, and the Serbs began already to feel themselves as distinct national individualities.

Under such conditions the creation of a united literary language and the supplementation of it by new words from the old antiquated treasury of the language, or *per analogiam*, from foreign languages, became one of the most important national tasks. This movement called the "reformation of language" augmented very considerably

⁹ Szilágyi and collaborators, *The History of the Hungarian Nation* (Budapest, 1895-98, IX, 455). In Hungarian.

the sentimental ardor of the awakened national consciousnesses. At the same time it gave a reliable psychological basis for the new economic and political constructions. Without such a language fit for all the walks of national life, modern society would be as unimaginable as without railway, telegraph, or the new credit organization. Now this mighty movement of the reformation and unification of the language, which shook the awakened peoples of the monarchy with an almost religious enthusiasm, was not a sheer reflex of economic transformations, but a parallel and independent achievement of great creative individualities who undertook the difficult task at a time when it was unpopular and unremunerative both from an economic and from a moral point of view. The following statement of the Hungarian historian, Acsády, gives a vivid description of the whole situation and the same things occurred also with small local differences among the other nations of the monarchy: "The gaining of ground of the German and the Latin languages evoked depression, even despair in the nobler souls." They said, terrified, that the Magyar language, which was not developed scientifically and whose rules were unstated, will deteriorate sooner or later. "But slowly, almost unrecognized, there began the glorious process of the reconstruction of the national language." The Magyar language continued to live in the poetry of the people, in its proverbs, and tales, the products of the old literature. It was in the state of recuperation as was the nation itself. Though it was ousted from the castles of the great lords (like the Hungarian dance and popular music which were replaced for the middle classes by the minuet, the gavotte, and by foreign music), it had a modest existence in the dwellings of the lower nobility and of the working-masses. But it lived and became stronger and began the work of reconquering the Latinized and Germanized leading strata. At that time the language of the people was outside the bulwark of the constitution. "There were not only two nations but two Magyar languages: the language of the noble society full of foreign words which was scarcely understood by the peasant, and the popular Magyar tongue in its virginal purity and limitless capacity for development, looked down upon by the lord with pitiful smile."¹⁰

Only so can we understand the seriousness of a movement in which many today, in the period of a naïve overestimation of the economic factor, see nothing else than a kind of romantic sentimentalism. This movement, with an emphatical ardor, began to study the language of the people and its memories, especially its popular songs, tales, and legends. A real fever caught the contemporaries for popular poetry, music, dances, and customs. The movement at the beginning was rather literary but it assumed more and more political colors. A group of talented and enthusiastic investigators was formed among

¹⁰ Acsády, *op. cit.*, II, 525.

all the peoples of the monarchy who demonstrated the unity and solidarity of the national language in spite of the variegated diversity of dialects.

A romantic type of historicism influenced the souls in the same direction. It was a delightful task for the contemporaries to investigate the memories of remote periods demonstrating the continuity of national feeling and thought. These researches were not always accompanied by an adequate criticism. So, for instance, an enthusiastic Magyar scholar "demonstrated" that, properly speaking, Adam, the first man, was a Magyar. Vuk Karadžić, the first apostle of the great Serb idea, who placed this conception in opposition to the great Croat vision of Gaj, on the basis of "historical" investigations stated the fact that the Serbs were "the greatest people of the planet," that their culture was five thousand years old, and that it included the whole world history. Jesus, too, with his apostles, was a Serb. And Karadžić proclaimed the cultural unity of his race in an epoch when the leaders of the Serb nation, outside of the frontiers of the monarchy, Kara Georg and Miloš Obrenović were illiterate peasants.

Besides the memories of the past, the poetical creations of the present, too, emphasized the glory and solidarity of the awakened nations. We, the children of a more critical and sophisticated period, are scarcely able to understand how this naïve, fantastic poetry, thirsty for glory, and full of megalomania could inflame with enthusiasm the best spirits of the epoch. One of the most representative products of this literature is the creation of the Slovak poet, Jan Kollár, who in 1824 published a series of sonnets under the title, *The Daughter of Slava*. The reception of the poems was so enthusiastic that the poet added new sonnets to the collection. A love idyll gives occasion to the author to combine his personal feelings with passionate outbursts concerning the past, present, and the future of the Slav peoples. Then he flings a score of anathema against the Magyars and the treacherous Germans and denounces the injustices committed against his people. If the various branches of the Slav race were of metal, he would make a unique statue of them. From Russia the head, from Poland the breast, from Bohemia the arms, and from Serbia the legs. Before such a colossus Europe would kneel down. In his later sonnets he described the Slav paradise and the Slav hell. In more than a hundred sonnets he honors the great saints, heroes, kings, and intellectual leaders of the Slavs. A same amount of sonnets chastises the enemies, the debasers of the Slavs and among these several of his compatriots.¹¹ Rare granules of true lyrical élan swim here in the monotonous sea of dry archaeological and historical facts, and the descriptions of the poet flow sometimes into an unconscious petty bourgeois comic, for instance when in the Slav paradise, the happy ladies drink heavenly cof-

¹¹ For a detailed analysis of the poem see Fischel, *op. cit.*, pp. 102 ff.

fee, whereas in hell the poor criminals walk on pointed pins. . . . In spite of this, the dreadful poem proved to be one of the chief stimulants of the period because it was a poetical *revanche* for a national inferiority complex of many centuries and it was an unheard of pleasure to conquer this inferiority at least in poetical tropes.

Not only language, literature, and history, but also seemingly dry scientific researches were capable of stimulating the national ardor of the contemporaries. There was a tendency to seek for relatives and allies among the European peoples. Especially in the history of the Slav movements the idea of a numerical supremacy played an important rôle. Once a French revolutionary kindled the enthusiasm of a hesitating mass by pointing out its numerical force, shouting to them: *Numérotez vous!* Some of the Slav leaders understood very well the sense of safety which their great number offers to the combatants, and they often played on the chords of statistics. So, for instance, the Slav ethnography of Šafařík, published in 1842, was the first systematic description of the Slav tribes and their settlements. His detailed calculations, estimating at seventy-nine million the whole number of Slavs in the world and at seventeen million in the boundaries of the monarchy, contributed very much to the awakening of Slav consciousness and to the conviction that, in spite of all suppression and adverse circumstances, the Slavs must only wait because their cause is based on an almost biological foundation.

Besides the factors already noted there is also another which played a preponderant rôle in the awakening and strengthening of national consciousness. That is a kind of "fighting ideology" which called the awaking nations into array against the older and more powerful nationalisms which surrounded them and by which they were oppressed. This fighting ideology heightened very much the intensity of national consciousness, and found symbolic expressions in popular poetry. For instance, the so-called *Kurucz* songs reverberated all the despair and hatred of the Hungarian people against German militarism and German taxation at a time when national feeling, in a modern sense was still dormant. Let us quote only one characteristic example:

Magyar, trust not the Germans,
No matter how or what they protest;
Naught is the parchment they give thee,
'Though it be as large as thy round cloak,
And though they set a seal on it
As big as the brim of the moon,
Spite of all, it lacks all *virtus* (trustworthiness),
Confound them, Jesus Christus!¹²

¹² I took this translation from the book of Arminius Vámbéry, *Hungary in Ancient, Medieval and Modern Times* (7th ed.; London), p. 366.

On the other hand the Croatian youths sang veritable war songs against the oppression of the Magyars, when, at the middle of the nineteenth century, the tension became great between the Croatian and the Magyar claims. One of the most characteristic of these fighting songs is the following: "Who is born as a Slav is born as a hero. He should swing the Slav flag and gird his sword and mount his horse. Behold the black, wild Tartar has attacked us and trampled our nation with his feet. Let us wash our honor with the blood of the enemy. Each one should cleave a head and our suffering will have an end." The Tartar meant naturally the Hungarians of Turan origin in this song of hatred.

Besides this naïve outburst of popular passion, journalism, and political oratory, too, made national consciousness more acute. Already in 1816 a Czech scholar summarized in a series of lectures, the grievances of his people:

Are not the Germans born in this country and those who join them favored in this country in a hundred important issues? Is not German the language in which all the higher sciences are treated in this country? And more than this, are not the prominent people of this country, the rich and the prosperous all, born Germans or foreigners or at least such persons who abandoned long ago the Czech language and customs and can be counted among the Germans? Does the Czech-speaking part of the people not live generally in a state of pitiful poverty and oppression?¹³

All the main points of national struggle which filled the whole history of the nineteenth century were here already clearly stated as accusations against the German rule. The improvisations of political oratory gave a new impetus to national consciousness and antagonism. When Francis Deák in the diet of 1840 accused the Croats of Pan-Slavistic plots, Gaj used the following exciting trope against him: "The Magyars are an island in the Slav ocean. I did not create this ocean, nor turned up its waves. But you should be cautious that they should not close over your head and destroy you. . . ." This survey of the factors of the national awakening, however, would not be complete if I omitted mentioning the enormous influence of "foreign intellectual and moral help" in the elaboration of national consciousness. The benevolent attitude of many distinguished French scholars (beginning with Cyprien Robert, through Saint-René Taillandier, Henry Martin, E. Denis, and Louis Leger, to Louis Eisenmann and others) toward the Czech efforts for independence heightened and strengthened Czech-Slovak national feeling. Similarly, the ardent sympathy of H. W. Steed and R. W. Seton-Watson for the oppressed Hungarian nationalities did more for the growth of their national feeling than the propaganda of their political leaders. And the philippic of Björnstjerne Björnson, the great Norwegian poet, against

¹³ Skene, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-40.

the policy of Magyarization of Count Albert Apponyi aroused more indignation in the hearts of the oppressed nationalities than the policy of assimilation itself. The moment of "prestige" in international relations (due to the inferiority complex of the backward nations) is even greater than in the interindividual field.

All these factors had a great effect on the acuteness of national consciousness. Though the founders of the national movement were right in their assertion that the national aspiration of a nation is not to the detriment of the others, nay, it can only promote the general interests of mankind, nevertheless, all national awakenings appear in history as a struggle against other nations. This antagonism between theory and practice has two causes. The one is that all troubling of the national *status quo* hurts old monopolistic positions of privileged groups. And these groups identify their own interests with the interests of the country. The other is that, behind all national efforts, there is a hidden imperialistic tendency if it is not checked by a sufficient political counterpoise, or by a clean moral restraint. All nations struggling for equality at the beginning easily become fighters for domination later, and from the oppressed they become the oppressors. What destroyed the Habsburg monarchy was the crossing of these two tendencies. It was the blind resistance of the privileged nations against the new forces and the exaggerated claims of the formerly oppressed when they became sufficiently powerful to reverse the situation. Then they aspired not for equality but for domination over the former rulers. Behind the dissolution of the monarchy there was a deep moral crisis which could have been avoided only by a civic education in the best sense. In the absence of this, the monarchy was doomed to perish. The dynamics of this process will be described in the next part.

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PART V
THE DYNAMICS OF THE CENTRIFUGAL FORCES