

CHAPTER II

THE CHIEF TENDENCY OF THE AUSTRIAN NATIONAL STRUGGLES: THE MOVE TOWARD NATIONAL EQUALITY

The struggle, which went on in Austria for more than half a century with growing ardor and bitterness and which led very often to the obstruction of the Parliament and many of the Diets, accompanied by political persecutions, street riots, military sieges, and imprisonments, assumed sometimes the forms of a chronic civil war. For instance, in 1895 the government of Count Badeni made an end to an absolutistic régime in Bohemia which lasted more than two years. During this time 7 journals were stopped, 17 associations dissolved, and 24 papers were put under daily censorship. One hundred and seventy-nine accused were put before exceptional tribunals and punishments of imprisonment were sentenced which totaled 278 years.¹

This struggle was in its deepest root the fight between two antagonistic principles and world views. The one was the point of view of the *beati possidentes* (those in power), tending to maintain the historical character of the state, the centralized bureaucratic empire under German hegemony. The other was the point of view of those outside the controlling power, of the oppressed or at least second-rank nations tending to remold the old Austria into a decentralized state of nationalities or of equal nations more or less on a confederative basis. Centralization under German hegemony or federalism, conscious of the fact that Austria possessed a Slav majority and therefore, willing to open a way to this majority will—these were the two antagonistic conceptions lying at the bottom of the kaleidoscopic national struggles of Austria.

Naturally this statement is far too abstract and schematic. The struggling masses and even their leaders very often had not a clear comprehension as to the nature and tendency of their fight because, in politics, the contending parties are led less by principles than by the conflicts of daily interests. It is quite clear that the Germans, full of the traditional conception of a German world-empire; or the Czechs, cherishing the brilliant memories of Hussitism and emphasizing more and more clearly the unity of the Crown of Wenceslaus; or the Polish nobility, regarding their nation as “the Christ of the Nations” and continuing the dream of the empire of Jagello from coast to coast; or the Italians, looking always wistfully toward the end of

¹ Richard Charnatz, *Österreichs äussere und innere Politik von 1895 bis 1914* (Leipzig u. Berlin, 1918), pp. 20–21.

the Italia Irredenta had quite another political idea and could use quite other means than for instance the Ruthenian, Rumanian, or Slovenian peasants with their undeveloped historical consciousness and small social differentiation.

But not only was the national consciousness and conception of the various nations radically different, but even inside of the single nations the ideology of the struggle assumed very changing colors according to the classes which appeared in the arena of political life. For instance, in the consciousness of the historical nobility, the national problem appeared in the first place as the struggle of the crowns in an endeavor to maintain the particular life and historical privileges of their countries under their political hegemony. For the bourgeois classes and especially for the intelligentsia the national problem signified first of all a growing participation in the administrative positions and in the economic advantages dependent on state power. The struggle for national rights was in their eyes identical with the claim that not strangers but the national intelligentsia should occupy the administrative positions, both large and small, and that "national" industry and commerce should enjoy the commissions of the state and its facilities in transportation and taxation. And, as this struggle of the second-rank nations was directed as a matter of fact primarily against the leading German bureaucracy and bourgeoisie, it was only natural that the leading classes reacted with a defensive nationalism against the aggressive nationalism of the rising nations. The "maintenance of the German character" of the endangered cities and regions became a passionate shibboleth arousing broad popular movements. That this so-called national struggle signified very often sheer financial efforts of a private character was conclusively demonstrated by the famous Kestranek affair, when this gentleman, the leader of a great German industrial concern, showed before a tribunal in Prague that a state minister and other influential official personages were mobilized against his industrial plant menacing it with an anti-trust legislation, with the lowering of the iron duties, and other important economic measures motivated by the sole purpose of extorting from it cheap raw material for a screw plant which a Czech member of Parliament intended to establish.²

Again quite different was the attitude of the small bourgeoisie. In their eyes the national struggle was above all a "struggle for the customer" in order to assure a national clientele for their shops, inns, and artisan enterprises. And when, in consequence of the repeated extension of suffrage, broader circles of small business men and artisans appeared in political life, national struggles assumed a particularly acute and demagogic accent. The "maintenance of the national

² Similar interesting facts will be found in Paul Samassa, *Der Völkerstreit im Habsburgerstaat* (Leipzig, 1910), p. 58.

character" or "the reconquest of the old national settlements" were the slogans behind which the class interest of the small bourgeoisie took refuge. In this heated atmosphere, a great number of so-called national cultural associations arose for the "defense and organization" of the endangered national positions. These societies furnished social prestige, and frequently, remunerative jobs to the leaders of the small bourgeoisie who had an outstanding interest in the maintenance of the struggling attitude of their fellow-citizens by fomenting a kind of a fear complex of national aggression. When capitalism became stronger, and, when as its consequence, an industrial migration took place which concentrated the surplus population of the villages in the large industrial centers and created there important enclaves of foreign nationalities which as a matter of fact put forth the claim for schools and administration in their own language, this fear complex grew into an almost hysterical terror which denounced every movement or organization of the national minorities as political plots or "Pan-Slavistic" or similar dangerous schemes. How exaggerated and embittered this public mood had been, was curiously demonstrated by the fact that the pan-German circles of Vienna in the last decades of the previous century were seriously alarmed by the fear that the Imperial City might become Slavicized. The superficial observer, hearing only the political orations and the demagogic utterances in the national-cultural associations and witnessing very often the street riots and the bloody scuffling of the students and the inflamed articles of the leading newspapers, would have thought that one nation would be exterminated by the other or at least its former position would become precarious. Just the opposite was the truth. All these political troubles and harangues scarcely touched the masses of the two nations which worked side by side in complete peace and the traditional national settlements of which remained almost unaltered. For instance concerning the German-Czech situation where the so-called national struggle was the loudest, sometimes even desperate, the careful investigations of Professor Heinrich Rauchberg have demonstrated that the national forces, after the embittered fights of half a century, remained practically the same.³

Substantially different was the mood and attitude of the peasant masses concerning national problems. Both the constitutional point of view and the prospect of economic and administrative monopolies were foreign to their simple and very often primitive standard of living, but more important for them was the land problem in regions where the large estates of a foreign upper class checked them in their cultural and economic development. The national struggle, therefore, signified for them a desire for the expropriation of an alien system of

³ *Der Nationale Besitzstand in Böhmen* (Leipzig, 1905), I, 662.

feudalism. Besides with growing transportation and market economy the peasant masses also became more and more anxious to have popular education and administration in their national tongue.

Finally the appearance of the industrial working-class in economic life and the political struggles gave also a new color and accent to the national problems. The industrial workers of the cities regarded for a time disinterestedly the struggle of the feudal crowns and the fight of the bourgeoisie for administrative positions and economic advantages. These struggles not only did not interest them but they were even irritated by them because the proletariat had the impression that the national struggles signified for the middle classes a sort of "veiling ideology" as it was happily called:⁴ the bourgeoisie make national struggles intentionally more acute in order to divert the attention of the masses from economic and cultural issues. This point of view was not without foundation, but in the same ratio in which the working-classes had an increase in the participation of the cultural and political life of their country, they became more and more aware of the fact that the national problem was only another side of the social problem without the solution of which its emancipation could not be achieved. And as very often in many places it occurred that the working-masses were confronted with employers of a foreign tongue, especially with Germans and Jews, class antagonism often assumed the character of national antagonism. Otto Bauer was to a certain extent justified in saying that "national hatred is only a transformed class hatred."

But however many-sided and variegated the nature of national struggles may have been among the various nations and among their particular classes, the essence of the whole process cannot be doubted. Everywhere we witnessed the same tendency: each nation tried to secure its own individuality, and tried to develop its economic, cultural, and political forces in order to attain an *optimum* situation realizable under the given conditions. Baron Eötvös emphasized as the fundamental character of these struggles the fact that every nation feels its own essence, its own cultural and historical conception to be higher and more valuable than that of other nations. I would be inclined to challenge the correctness of this statement. At least one may ask whether the late imperialistic developments of nationalism do really emanate from the genuine sources of the national idea and not from the monopolistic interests of certain groups which were alien to the original conception of national aims? Be that as it may, the aspect of the national struggles in Austria makes it manifest that the program and purposes of the national struggles are in a constant flux and that

⁴ The political significance of this type of theory was vigorously demonstrated by Paul Szende in his "Enthüllung und Verhüllung: Der Kampf der Ideologien in der Geschichte," *Archiv für Geschichte des Sozialismus*, 1922.

their final limit is, if not domination as Eötvös asserted, at least *equality of rank*. Nations, as individuals cannot in the long run permit themselves to be treated as inferior persons. Even the most modest nation—to use an expression of Napoleon—feels in its knapsack its marshal baton, the idea of perfect national independence.

That is the reason why the nations could not be satisfied and calmed by *ad hoc* advantages and transitory reforms. The difficulty of the national problem in Austria increased exactly to the same extent to which the various nations grew in economic strength, and in political and cultural rights. There can be no doubt that the weakest nation of Austria enjoyed in real life more rights and privileges than the strongest non-Magyar nation in Hungary. In spite of this fact the superficial observer might well have believed that in Hungary there was no national problem, whereas Austria ran from crisis to crisis in consequence of this problem. Paradoxical as it may seem, one may say without exaggeration that *the more the former claims were satisfied, the more the nations felt themselves oppressed*. For example, the national struggle of the Czechs became the loudest in those decades in which they built up their whole educational organization from the elementary schools to the universities and when they occupied many outstanding administrative and judicial positions. The more the former German ruling nation was put on the defensive, the more the Czechs and the other former servant-nations began to feel that their situation was shameful and the more their orators hurled philippics against foreign domination and oppression. In this relation only the situation of the Poles was an exceptional one. The former revolutionary nobles became the most loyal supporters of the Austrian state since, as a consequence of the Compromise of 1867, the Crown and the German bourgeoisie made an alliance with them. The Poles supported the new constitution with their votes, and as the price of their loyalty, they obtained an almost state-like independence in Galicia. Under the protection of this *de facto* home rule the Polish upper class could establish without hindrance its own administrative organization and cultural life and was checked very little in the exploitation of the other great ethnic element of Galicia, in the economic and political domination of the Ruthenians. The Poles of Galicia were perfectly aware of the fact that their condition was excellent compared with that of their brothers in Prussia and in Russia, and, therefore, they were willing to accept Austria “as a tolerable though transitory domicile” until the millennium of the Jagellonian state ideal should be achieved.

But all the other nations did not and could not obtain such a relative equilibrium. Foreign observers have often expressed the opinion that the chief cause of national unrest in Austria was due to the oppressive and Germanizing tendencies of the Germans. This judgment

needs at least a strong qualification. Disregarding the episode of the Bach system, we may safely say that there was no conscious Germanization in Austria, and the conception of a unified German nation as the ruler of a nation state was never a political idea as in Hungary where the hegemony of the Magyars was the fundamental dogma of political life. Both in the schools and in the administration the language of the various nations was acknowledged and the state was anxious to develop a bureaucratic class in every nation capable of carrying on state affairs in the maternal language of the population. Paragraph 19 of the fundamental law of 1867, which codified the principle of national equality, did not establish a revolutionary doctrine but rather emphasized a more or less acknowledged practice, saying:

All the nationalities of the State are equals in right and each of them has the inalienable right to maintain and to foster its own nationality.

The equal right of all the languages of the country in the schools, in administration, and in public life, is acknowledged by the State.

As a matter of fact never, not even in the time of the so-called liberal German rule, did we witness any effort to introduce German as the official language of the state or any attempt at the denationalization of the other peoples.

German constraint which the other nations of Austria felt more and more as an unsupportable burden was of a quite other nature. It was a haughty attitude of cultural predominance, the belief that the economic and cultural hegemony of the Germans was a historical necessity for all time. F. Kleinwaechter characterizes excellently this offensive attitude, so dangerous for the Germans too:

The Germans were accustomed to their hegemony based not so much on power as on their cultural superiority through centuries. They were the calm possessors and enjoyers. Such a position gives no opportunity for thinking of struggles. The Czech uprising came, from a historical point of view, with an amazing rapidity. But for those who lived in this period, it came not in a day. From the program of Palacký to the establishment of the Czech University in Prague was thirty-three years. It was a whole generation. For the German contemporaries, therefore, the evolution was very slow and one which only sharp eyes could discover. I spoke with old people who lived at the time when the Czech nation was a quite unimportant factor in political life and who now stood startled before the new developments. This may be understood more clearly when I mention that Prague, in which scarcely a single German word has been heard for many years, was, in the youth of my father, a completely German city. The political possessors of power are under the sway of a curious psychology. They believe that nothing can happen to them. More likely that the Heavens will collapse than that a change in the political powers should occur. The law of inertia dominates also the human soul.⁵

⁵ *Der Untergang, op. cit.*, pp. 139-40.

Under the sway of the same illusion Emperor Francis Joseph, when he visited Prague in 1868, made the characteristic remark: "Prague makes a completely German impression."

This haughty and naïve belief in the unalterable mission of German hegemony, which was further strengthened and developed by the example of the German empire of a united national character, made the creation of a political atmosphere propitious for the fair discussion and solution of the national problems almost impossible. A dangerous situation because the more Austria progressed in its industrial development and the more democratic concessions to the masses became inevitable by the extension of the suffrage, the more as a matter of fact the old German character of Austria crumbled, the more grew the claims of the non-German nations for cultural and administrative self-expression. This natural and unavoidable process, however, was only realized by a small élite of the Germans. The great majority lived in the unshakeableness of their Pan-German hegemony or regarded the national problems from the narrow, local point of view of their crownlands. One could truthfully say that the political leaders of the Austrian-Germans (with the exception of the Socialists and some isolated political thinkers) were unable to grasp until the collapse of the monarchy the fact that the old hegemony of the Germans was coming into a more and more acute antagonism with the very facts of the economic and cultural evolution, and that, therefore, the state could only be maintained by a prudent progression toward federalism, which, as Albert Schäffle said, besides the *unitas in necessariis* would have opened the way for every nation in the realization of its political and cultural life. The reader will remember that Palacký, the great leader of the Czechs, offered the plan in the constitutional committee at Kremsier of dividing the Czech and the German settlements from an administrative point of view in the Bohemian and Moravian territories in order to make a compromise easier. This measure could have eliminated most of the antagonisms between the two tribes and would have made it possible for the German minority to avoid all dangers of future oppression by a complete national autonomy. But in those times the Germans still felt themselves the masters of the situation and opposed the division of the traditional crownlands giving to them an uncontested hegemonial position. This claim became later the chief war cry of the Germans when they assumed the defensive as a minority but at this time the Czechs felt themselves already sufficiently strong to meet the struggle against the *Länderzerreissung* (the dismemberment of the Czech crown) and for the restitution of the historical unity of the Czech territories. Something similar happened in 1871 on the occasion of the so-called Hohenwart-Schäffle experiment when the government succeeded in making a reasonable compromise with the Czechs in the spirit of a very moderate federalism.⁶

⁶ See pp. 113-14 of the present book.

This plan of reform could have been a real turning-point in the history of the monarchy. Without doubt it was not yet a scheme of federalism but, by the satisfaction of the historical claims of the Czechs for the constitutional unity and independence of their country, it would have opened the way for the remolding of the artificial scheme of Dualism into the voluntary co-operation of all the peoples of the monarchy. This, however, was exactly the thing which the two hegemonic nations of the monarchy abhorred the most and they left no attack and no intrigue unutilized in order to induce the emperor to break his word given to the Czechs, to overthrow the Compromise, and to offend gravely by a harsh declaration the whole Czech public opinion.

This haughtiness brought the Germans later into a more and more difficult position. As we saw above, the hegemonic nations refused for a long time to learn the language of their former servants and lackeys, whereas the Czech youth and the youth of the other nationalities eagerly learned the German language as an indispensable condition in their administrative career, for the German language, though not a state language in the official sense, played a preponderant rôle in the so-called inner administration of the country. In consequence of this behavior, the German intelligentsia remained in its majority unilingual whereas the Czech became bilingual. The result was that later when, due to the cultural and political progress of the Czechs, the government of Count Badeni issued in 1897 his famous decree concerning the use of languages in the German-Czech territories, according to which after 1901 each official would be compelled to have perfect command of both languages in speaking and writing, this measure, undoubtedly just and fair in itself, evoked a paroxysm of indignation among the Germans. It came to street riots and to ultra-chauvinistic manifestations and made the system of Parliamentary obstructionism almost chronic, because today the Czechs, tomorrow the Germans (according to the changing tendency of the governmental policy) impeded the legislative procedures not only by long-winded speeches and repeated calling of the roll but very often by automobile horns, by destruction of the seats, by the casting of books and documents, and often by brutal wrestling.

And though every year, the natural development of economic and cultural life made, as a matter of fact, the relation among political powers less and less advantageous for the Germans (for they had already an almost mature national culture, whereas the non-German masses were building their own step by step), their leading elements disliked to face this situation and shoulder its political consequences. Instead of this they forged artificial plans in order to maintain their hegemony, opposed more and more by the facts of real life. So for in-

stance in 1882 they delineated in the so-called "Linzer Program," a picture of an Austria being with Hungary in a purely personal union (the community of the person of the sovereign) whereas inside of Austria, Galicia, Dalmatia, and Bukowina would have obtained a far-reaching autonomy in order to establish in this restricted Austria a compact German majority over the Slavs. Naturally such a plan could not be carried out even in the time of limited Austrian suffrage in a Parliamentary way, and the keener Austrian politicians realized the dangers of such a procedure. But this same unhappy project, as was already mentioned, reappeared during the early successes of the World War when, in the claims of the so-called *Belange*, the German bourgeoisie would have liked to utilize the suspension of the constitution for the refoundation of the German hegemony. So little had the German bourgeoisie learned even in the last hour from the national struggles of a century and there can be scarcely a doubt that the Crown itself under the Great German influences would have been favorable to such a coup d'état if the sudden outbreak of the Russian Revolution had not terrified the young Emperor and a part of his entourage. This change in the Habsburg attitude was quite openly complained of by a German writer of the Reich during the war in the following characteristic utterance:

The hopes of the Germans for the carrying on of their intentions were again frustrated by their greatest enemy, democracy. In the moment in which it was determined in Vienna with regard to the Russian Revolution to convoke Parliament and to transfer to it the revision of the constitution, any chance for the accomplishment of the German claims disappeared at least temporarily. . . .⁷

This statement was perfectly true from the point of view of German domination, from the point of view of the dogma of German hegemony. Really, democracy was the greatest enemy of the Germans because the gradual emancipation of the Slav masses was irreconcilable with the rule of the Germans. That is the reason why every enlargement of the suffrage both under Hohenwart and Taaffe and later in consequence of universal suffrage "Slavicized" Austria necessarily and inevitably and undermined more and more the fragile edifice of the Dualistic Constitution. And the evil was not the process itself, as superficial observers announced it, not even from the point of view of the well-understood interests of the Germans. The real evil which shattered the intellectual and moral forces of the monarchy was the fact that this very natural process was undirected, the growing national forces were uncanalized by any statesmanlike conception either in internal or external policy. With the exception of Kremsier and the Hohenwart experiment the national problem was never treated as

⁷ Wilhelm Schüssler, *Das Verfassungsproblem im Habsburgerreich* (Stuttgart und Wien, 1918), p. 194.

the most fundamental problem of Austria but only as a matter of tactics. The chief political task never was how, out of the decaying feudal castle a comfortable, modern home could be created for all the peoples of Austria but rather how this unhygienic slum could be further rented with the help of superficial and cheap alterations.⁸ The government dared not introduce any reform principle because the smallest issue of a national character would cause its ruin. For instance in 1895 the coalitional government of Prince Windischgrätz fell because it tried to introduce some parallel classes beside the Germans in the mother-tongue of the population in the high school of the small Slovenian city of Cilli. Very often not even compromises of an objective nature (for instance the establishment of a national office or school) were made by the government, but it distributed jobs and economic concessions among the influential personages of the various nations who were capable of mitigating the momentary troubles of the government in the Parliament or the Diets by their personal influence.

A further great difficulty in solving the national problems of Austria was the system of the crownlands, this feudal and plutocratic self-government of the local territories, which came into acute conflict both with the economic and the national claims because they separated from each other peoples and regions which were already unified in culture, economic life, or national affinity. These anti-democratic structures envenomed further the development of the nations by the fact that the spirit of local patriotism pressed upon them which did not see or recognize the general interests of the state. In these crownlands each nation which constituted a majority tried to dominate the nations in the minority and to maintain for itself certain administrative, cultural, and economic privileges. That is the reason that these crownlands became the hotbed of national struggles and rivalries. Whereas in the Parliament of the empire, in the atmosphere of the metropolis, and in the presence of the representatives of all nations, sometimes a tendency toward justice and mutual consideration could be observed, in the atmosphere of the crownlands, in the surroundings of local interests, and of local notabilities the rule of national demagoguery was almost unchecked. The nations in the majority, for instance the Czechs and the Poles, held rigidly to the maintenance of the autonomy of their crownlands and the Germans also in those territories where they formed a majority. On the other hand the minority nations, as the Germans in the countries of the Crown of Wenceslaus or the Slovenians and the Italians in their respective crownlands, demanded a territorial autonomy on the basis of the division of the national settlements. National autonomy on the one side and a struggle

⁸ Compare with pp. 115-17 of the present book.

against the dismemberment of the country on the other side were the two contending ideologies according to the minority and the majority interests.

One of the best connoisseurs of this system, the later Austrian chancellor, Karl Renner, characterized it as follows:

The crownlands are the inner foe of the Habsburg monarchy. They and no others are the real fostering soil of the *Irredenta*, they create the desperate minorities and the cruel majorities. But just because the crownlands give hope to their national majorities for national domination, are the majorities of all the crownlands and, therefore, that of the Parliament, too, attached to them, the Germans not excepted! The Germans in Northern Bohemia suffocate under the pressure of the Bohemian crown and cry for help, but the Germans in the Alpine countries will remain citizens of Styria, Carinthia, and Tyrol. As long as this spirit of a past epoch, the idol of the country unity, is not buried, we cannot dream of national peace. . . .⁹

The situation became indeed insupportable and the various crownlands with mixed nationalities became paralyzed by the obstruction in their Diets. The picture became more and more the picture of anarchy and the crownland system was compared by a foreign observer in a witty way with "cages in which wild animals wrestle with each other" (Schüssler).

The situation was still more complicated and envenomed by the fact that not only the non-German nations faced the Germans with hostility but often also acute struggles arose among the so-called oppressed nations. This observation leads us to the darkest point of the national struggles both in Austria and in Hungary. Namely we see that the same nations, which carried on the most exacerbated fights through generations against foreign oppression and the system of a forcible assimilation and which denounced this system as wicked and immoral before the public opinion of the whole world, did not hesitate to apply this same system when the wheel of history turned and they gained the ruling position. The Magyars for instance who struggled for centuries against the Austrian policy of assimilation, when they "got into the saddle" had no scruples against the application of the same methods not only toward the nationalities of the country which they regarded as inferior but also against the Croats, the national distinctness of whom was at least theoretically acknowledged. The Poles who threw the force of their indignation against the cruel system of Russian oppression refused to recognize the national independence of the Ruthenians, and brutally exercised against them Polish supremacy. The Italians, too, who themselves experienced all the sufferings of foreign oppression vindicated on their own account a ruling position over the big majority of the Croats in Dalmatia. The

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

hatred and rivalry between the closely related Croats and Serbs was for a long time an easy means of domination for Magyar absolutism in Croatia-Slavonia.

We find everywhere the same spectacle: the political morality of an oppressed nation changes completely when it attains a ruling position. The former claim for national equality easily drops into a claim for national supremacy. At the beginning of the struggle we ordinarily hear the vindication of national autonomy. Later when they become a majority they assert the political unity of the country against the former rulers now in a minority. When they acquire still more power, they begin to lay plans for the reconquest of territories for which they have a so-called historical claim but from which they were ousted by foreign rule. From here it is only a step to a naked imperialism when a victorious nation announces as its cultural and historical mission the occupation of the settlements of weaker foreign nations.

It is evident that we face here a very deep problem which demonstrates that the solution of the national struggle is in its essence a moral issue. As in Eastern and Middle Europe it is impossible to dismember the states so as to establish everywhere united national territories but there will always remain in most of the states national minorities: these problems could only be solved in a wholesome and permanent way if the nation having a majority would be animated by a spirit of justice. Without such a moral attitude all technical or jurial solution is useless. I scarcely know a more important task in civic education than to inculcate into the souls of future citizens this elementary idea of national justice in states where an ethnographically mixed population is living. Unfortunately, among the so-called statesmen only very few realize that without a new ethical orientation national problems remain practically unsolvable. So in the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Only isolated thinkers, like a Fischhof, a Schäffle, a Deák, an Eötvös, a Palacký, and a few others were animated by this higher moral conception. A real historical monument of this new kind of political morality was erected by Albert Schäffle who, when his plan of compromise with the Czechs was undone by the intrigues of the German and Magyar upper classes, wrote the following memorable passage in a letter to the Emperor in which he resigned from his ministry: "Following the general moral law, according to which we should not treat others in a manner which we ourselves would dislike, my conscience does not permit me to have any share in the carrying on of a plan laid down by the state council."¹⁰ (Schäffle refers here to a plan excogitated by the beneficiaries of the dualistic system which made any compromise impossible for the Czechs and maintained the Magyar-German hegemony unaltered.) This incident

¹⁰ *Aus Meinem Leben* (Berlin, 1905), II, 57.

and some other episodes from the history of the monarchy, for instance, the Constitution of Kremsier, the publicistic work of Dr. Fischhof for peace and justice, the humanitarian Slavism of Palacký, and the nationality policy of Deák and Eötvös, animated by a spirit of fair compromise, could have been worthy topics for a civic education eager to inculcate a more humane spirit of justice into the peoples of the monarchy. But I do not know a single textbook or popular writing which fostered this more moral conception of nationality. Civic education was imbued with quite another spirit as we shall see later in detail. The entire lack of a spirit of political fair play was the chief reason why the national problem could not be solved. But such an attitude could only have been the result of a highly developed system of local autonomy. For the national problem is not only a moral but at the same time a "cellular" problem. The centralized, bureaucratic state cannot establish national peace, not even theoretically, because the most important connections of the national struggles are those which are attached to the daily life of the common man. Only a very intense municipal and county self-government could have brought the citizens of the various nations into a peaceful co-operation. But such a real popular self-government was entirely absent in Austria. Under these circumstances, the spirit of the crownlands swallowed the spirit of the state which existed only in the weak endeavors of the leading bureaucrats. In the lack of real co-operation among the nations the problems of the empire became so complicated that not even the leading statesmen could grasp them. Therefore it is not a rhetorical formula but the expression of reality when one of the most venerable Austrian statesmen of the last decades, Premier Wladimir Beck, sighed because of the pitiful rôle of an Austrian premier who should overcome difficulties such as "eight nations, seventeen countries, twenty Parliamentary bodies, twenty-seven Parliamentary parties, two complicated world views, the intricate relation with Hungary and the cultural differences of eight and a half degrees of latitude and longitude. . . ."

If we look over again all these great and many-sided obstacles, we must be really surprised seeing those considerable results which the growing culture and democracy, the quick development of industrialism, and the more European atmosphere of the Viennese *Reichsrat* achieved on the field of the national problem. In spite of parliamentary obstruction, passive resistance of various nations, absolutistic measures, press confiscations, patriotic *Bummels* (provocative promenades of the German students on the main street of Prague) followed by the not less patriotic street riots of the Czech nationalists and in spite of the growing demagogy of the daily press and the patriotic associations, Austria made from year to year a considerable step toward the national equality of all its various nations, each of

which attained an honorable minimum of cultural existence, and some of them, as the Czechs and the Poles, a high cultural standing even from a more Western point of view. The most fundamental administrative and cultural necessities of the various nations were, almost everywhere, satisfied in the mother-tongue of the masses. Even a nation which played a rather stepchild rôle in Austria, as the Ruthenians, ruthlessly oppressed by Polish feudalism, progressed considerably in the last decades both from the administrative and the cultural point of view. An impartial observer writes:

In Eastern Galicia the Ukrainian language was accepted as the official language, there arose every year new elementary schools and high schools with instruction in the Ukrainian language and in the University of Lemberg were created Ukraine chairs. Many cultural institutions and scientific and literary associations were inaugurated. The number of the Ukrainian officials grew from year to year. In the economic field also they achieved great results.¹¹

But not only in the field of the national daily work (*Kleinarbeit*) but also in institutions of a more general importance the Austria of the last decades achieved substantial progress. The system of the "National Cadasters" (the national division of the electorate), advocated so strenuously by the socialists, was introduced into Moravia and Bukowina and the bifurcation of the cultural offices began in Bohemia. And, if the World War had not broken out, in the crownlands too the anachronistic electoral system of the Curias would have been replaced by universal suffrage. This really revolutionary measure in the best sense would have eliminated the feudal and oligarchic monopolies and brought into direct connection the various nations in the Diets. We would have witnessed, it is reasonable to believe, the revival of the spirit of Kremsier.

And however great the wrongs against the weaker nations may still have been and however much the sins of the past pressed upon the peoples of Austria, there can be no doubt that the Austrian half of the dual monarchy made gigantic efforts toward the solution of the national problems, and it was not an exaggeration when certain Austrian scholars emphasized the fact that never in the history of the world was the principle of national equality in a great empire and under so many different nations carried so far as in former Austria. And the best expert and theorist of the Austrian national struggles, the later socialist chancellor of the Austrian Republic, Dr. Renner, was fully entitled to write an article for an English magazine under the resigned title "Stifled Germs." As a matter of fact the first foundations of a state based on national equality were laid down in these tempestuous decades.

¹¹ Jacob Rappaport, "Die Nationalitätenfrage in Polen," *Jahrbuch für Soziologie* (Karlsruhe, 1927), Vol. III.

Superficial observers did not realize the meaning of this process. They saw only the continuous crises in Parliament and the Diets, they were aware only of the street manifestations and riots which accompanied the travail of the popular chaos for national emancipation. These observers turned away from the "Austrian anarchy" with a contemptuous gesture and regarded with admiration the other half of the monarchy, Hungary, showing the example of a state advancing toward national unity. Here they did not see dissatisfied nations but they were impressed by a unified, conscious, national will. The glorifiers of the Magyar hegemony became more and more numerous. Only a few keen students of the Austro-Hungarian reality perceived the fact that this so-called Magyar hegemony would become the gravedigger of the monarchy because this was the *rocher de bronze* on which every effort for the federalization of the monarchy broke down. For the advance of Austria in the direction of national equality, without an adequate reform of the general constitution, had an inevitably destroying influence on the state. It is quite evident that the growing culture and consciousness of the non-German nations enhanced unavoidably their aspirations toward a constitution which, on the ruins of the Dualistic system, would have secured the political *Ebenbürtigkeit* (equal dignity) among the various nations. The legal fiction of the unitary Magyar state made such an evolution impossible.¹² Why and how the next chapter will demonstrate.

¹²The fundamental antagonism between the development of the nationality problem in Austria and Hungary was sharply stated in the essay by Friedrich Tezner, "Das staatsrechtliche und politische Problem der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie," *Archiv des öffentlichen Rechts*, 1913. The same problem aroused the gravest apprehensions of Crown Prince Rudolph.

CHAPTER III

THE CHIEF TENDENCY OF THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL STRUGGLES: THE MOVE TOWARD A UNIFIED NATIONAL STATE

The general process of the origins and dynamics of the national struggles, delineated in the foregoing chapter, is further corroborated by the Hungarian example, however different this evolution may have been in its concrete manifestations, colors, and rhythm. Though it is a favorite dogma of the official historiography in Hungary to demonstrate the continuity of the Magyar national consciousness through a thousand years and to force the modern national ideology of the nineteenth century on St. Stephen, the first king of Hungary, on the feudal warfare of the Middle Ages, on the civil wars of throne-pretenders, and on the feudal rebellions against the Habsburgs, there can be no doubt that the modern national idea, the effort toward the unification of the masses akin in language and culture and toward economic and administrative unity, was absent from Hungarian history until the end of the eighteenth century as completely as from the history of the other Central European peoples.

Having scrutinized all those movements of the past which were described until the end of the eighteenth century under national captions by the historians of the noble classes (for in Hungary with very few exceptions the whole study of history was biased by the ideology of the ruling classes in the absence of a bourgeois class in a Western sense) I could easily demonstrate in my book already quoted that all these movements were influenced by economic, class and religious considerations but never by a national conception because in those epochs all the factors were lacking which created later the national movement. In want of an urban culture, a more intensive communication, press and school, national currents could not become manifest for the unification of the country in a common law and culture. The atmosphere of the society in Hungary continued, far into the nineteenth century, to be the spirit of the famous *Opus Tripartitum* codified by Stephen Verböczy, one of the most rapacious oligarchs of the epoch, in the second decade of the sixteenth century. This law book made the upper and lower nobility, the so-called *una eademque nobilitas*, the exclusive beneficiary of all private and public rights. It laid down the conception of "Hungarian liberty," the chief pillars of which were the non-taxation of the nobility, its exclusive right to have landed property, the monopoly of all administrative offices, and the right of resistance of the Crown if it should offend feudal privileges. As a prod-