

## CHAPTER V

### HUNGARY VERSUS AUSTRIA

As we have seen, the chief cause of the Dualistic System was the débâcle at Königgrätz and the longing of Habsburgs for revenge against triumphant Prussia. That is the reason why the new era inaugurated by Beust tried to appease Hungary at any price. Without a loyal and satisfied Hungary nothing could be undertaken for the restoration of Austrian hegemony. In order to achieve this aim the Emperor guaranteed the independence of Hungary in the spirit of the laws of 1848, restored the rule of the Magyar noble classes in the internal administration of their country, and delivered his former allies, the nationalities of Hungary, without any check or counterbalance to the will of the Magyar ruling classes. On the other hand the Dualistic Constitution, with the help of an artificial electoral system, secured the supremacy of the Germans in Austria who received at the same time, as a second gift of the Compromise of 1867, the "Constitution of December" on the basis of a parliamentarian government. As compensation for these concessions the German liberals accepted, though unwillingly, the Compromise which the Emperor concluded almost without their consultation with the Magyar ruling classes.

There can be no doubt that Austrian public opinion (not only the Slav but the German too) regarded the Dualistic Compromise with great dissatisfaction, and from the beginning serious voices arose which denounced the *Reichsteilungspakt* ("the Empire-Division Pact" as it was bitterly called) as shaking the very foundations of the monarchy. Later events demonstrated that this point of view was justified because the Compromise concealed in itself the germs of unavoidable crisis. The chief cause of this uncertain equilibrium was the fact that the new "constitutionalism" which the Compromise created, delivered the great majority of the peoples of the monarchy to the German bourgeoisie and bureaucracy on the one hand and to the Magyar feudalism on the other. In both countries the system from the beginning was only workable on the basis of a very restricted and artificial electoral law which was combined in Austria with the application of the ill-famed "paragraph 14" of the Constitution (giving to the crown practically an absolute power in all issues which could not be settled by parliament) and in Hungary with administrative corruption and use of armed force in the face of electoral difficulties. But what made the situation even more unbearable was the fact that both the Germans and the Magyars became more and more resentful against the Compromise which was the very basis of their hegemony in spite

of its beneficent economic results for the ruling classes of both countries, and in spite of the opulent monopolies which these classes enjoyed in the administration of their countries and in the leadership of the monarchy. As a matter of fact antipathy grew from year to year against the Compromise and its maintenance faced graver and graver difficulties.

The cause of this strange phenomenon was in the first place a historical one. The Compromise was born out of the spirit of mutual distrust. It was the result of an embarrassing situation. The Emperor needed the Magyars for the realization of his anti-Prussian policy whereas Hungary tortured, dismembered, and weakened by the absolutistic régime needed a breathing period for the regeneration of its economic and political forces before the old struggle for independence could be resumed. The two contracting parties, therefore, were animated by just opposite desires. The Emperor tried to maintain as far as possible the unity of his empire in his army, in the direction of the foreign policy, and in the main economic issues, whereas Francis Deák tried to develop, as far as possible, the entire independence of the Magyar state. The point of view of Deák was the traditional Magyar principle which beyond the community of the crown, established by the Pragmatic Sanction, was not willing to accept any kind of a common empire, or a common state life, or a common government. The very words of "emperor," "empire," "joint government," or "common parliament" sounded almost like an insult to Hungarian public opinion. On the other hand the Emperor, too, had a vivid recollection of the "rebellions" of the Magyar nobility, of its "disloyalties," of its conspiracies with foreign powers and, therefore, his primary effort was to maintain his royal privileges intact in the matter of his army and the foreign policy of the country and to safeguard the unity of the empire in the most important issues.

Out of this mutual distrust and of this half conscious, half unconscious mental reservation, there was born a very vague, very uncertain, very loosely defined law in which both parties sought for formulations which would sustain their hidden point of view. The Hungarian Law of 1867, XII, put an end to the unity of the former absolutistic monarchy (which as we saw was never completely achieved) and established two distinct states. One, the historical Hungary (the dismembered parts of which were again reunited), the other, Austria proper, called by some Austrian patriots with bitter irony, the "anonymous Austria" which did not even have a distinct name but was generally mentioned as "the other countries of His Majesty" or "the kingdoms and countries represented in the Central Parliament (Reichsrat)." These two distinct states had a completely separate parliament, administration, and judiciary system. Even the common sovereign (in Austria called Emperor and in Hungary King) had often

a different title according to the different historical past of the two states. (For instance Emperor Charles VI in Austria was King Charles III in Hungary; Emperor Charles I in Austria was King Charles IV in Hungary, etc.) But in spite of this the two states assumed a certain unity from the point of view of international relations because the community of the army and of the diplomatic representation was acknowledged as a corollary of the unity determined by the Pragmatic Sanction. On the basis of this conception there were established three governments: two open and one hidden; one Austrian, one Hungarian, and one common, consisting of the three joint state departments, War, Foreign Affairs, and Finance (as far as the budget of the common administration was concerned). There was also, properly speaking, a need for three parliaments. Again two open and one concealed; one Austrian, one Hungarian, and the so-called "Delegations" which were committees sent out by the Austrian and the Hungarian parliament on the basis of parity for the discussion of the joint affairs. The situation was made even more complicated by the fact that though the community of the international, commercial, and custom relations as well as that of the state bank were not acknowledged as joint affairs emanating from the Pragmatic Sanction, nevertheless they were regarded as affairs which should be settled by a common accord and, therefore, periodically (generally every ten years) new compromises were made between the two governments in order to establish the common principles of their handling.

This constitutional construction, very complicated in itself, became confused by the loose stipulation of the law, already mentioned, in such a manner that even Hungarian jurists were debating for generations concerning the jural nature of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, whether it should be regarded as a "personal" or a "real" union between the two countries. As a matter of fact the Austrian and the Hungarian points of view diverged even more radically because important differences arose in the text of the Austrian and the Magyar law regulating the Compromise. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Austrian interpretation of the law saw the establishment of a common state power in the Compromise whereas the Magyar emphasized the absolute distinctness of the Hungarian state and the entirely transitory character of the joint affairs for the period in which the Pragmatic Sanction was in force. This uncertainty was still more aggravated by the traditional spirit of the Magyar ruling classes which, continuing the feudal spirit of the politics of *gravamina* and disregarding the economic, social, and international conditions of the Compromise, studied always with the ardor of an attorney the loose and contradictory expressions of the legal text from which they could extract and demonstrate all the theses which were in favor with their momentary standpoint. And whereas the founders of the Compromise,

Francis Deák and Count Julius Andrássy, remained loyal to the spirit of the Compromise and repudiated the idea of a purely "personal union" between the two countries and emphasized the necessity of a military and economic co-operation with the nations of Austria beyond the community of the person of the Monarch, the legal interpretation of the next generation made the discovery that the Compromise acknowledged the possibility of an independent Magyar army and that the Compromise was exclusively an act of the Hungarian nation and of the Crown and, therefore, could be changed in disregard of the will of the nations of Austria which should not be considered as contracting parties in the Dualistic Constitution.

The confusion of the situation was still more accentuated by the institution of the Delegations, already mentioned. It is quite evident that for the control and direction of the military and foreign policy of a great empire the necessity arose that all the nations could have discussed among themselves the most important problems of their political co-operation. But for this some kind of a central parliament would have been essential. As a matter of fact the Austrians at the beginning contemplated the institution of the Delegation from this point of view. This conception, however, broke down in consequence of the constitutional intransigence of the Magyars who would not even hear of a common state organ because they maintained the fiction that there was no common empire or super-state in the monarchy. To what hair-splitting argument this point of view was leading is almost comically shown by the following announcement of Count Goluchowski, a foreign minister of the monarchy, manifestly made under Magyar pressure in 1907:

I don't know a common state because such a common state does not exist. . . . But what I know is the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which on the basis of the Pragmatic Sanction, stands as an organic whole in relation to foreign countries, quite apart from the institutions which regulate the co-operation of the two states of the monarchy.

That this non-existing common state could exact at any moment millions of the treasure of their nations and could drive hundreds of thousands to the slaughtering bench in case of war, such considerations did not interest the high priests of this constitutional dogmatism. For them it was a matter of no importance that the military and foreign policy of the country should be directed by the real interests of all the nations concerned; but it was a very grave problem that the fiction of the absolute independence of the Hungarian state should be maintained. That was the reason why the two Delegations of the two parliaments were not allowed to discuss their common problems in a joint meeting, but were compelled to exchange only written messages; and if they could not agree, they met only for a common vote under the obligation of abstaining from any debate. It, there-

fore, entirely justified the ironical criticism pronounced by a German liberal deputy during the discussion of the Compromise bill in the Austrian parliament, when he said:

. . . . I cannot imagine a stranger spectacle from a parliamentary point of view than that which these Delegations offer. This project is capable of only one further improvement, namely, to propose an amendment that the Assembly should meet in the dark and then everything would go on easily and smoothly. . . . For an Assembly which meets in silence and votes in silence is nothing more than a voting machine. . . . As a matter of fact, this new political construction reminds me of a child's game, familiar to our youth, in which one makes his presence known by a low piping. . . .

Indeed, in this Assembly there could not be a serious control of the common affairs of the monarchy. Convoked only occasionally, the 60-60 delegates of the two parliaments constituted an artificial, aristocratic atmosphere easily controlled by the governments and the court. In the great majority of cases the Delegations constituted only a parliamentary show-window beyond which the will of the Crown and of his confidant, the foreign minister (who was at the same time the minister of the Imperial House) had practically no check at all. As a matter of fact public opinion was generally entirely apathetic concerning the debates on international relations, the same public opinion which was seized by a fit of paroxysm at news of an electoral scandal or the report of a scuffle in a university hall between students of various nationalities. There was scarcely a man besides the foreign minister and some of his intimate counselors who would have been interested in international relations. Nay, the politicians regarded these problems with a kind of holy terror because it was well known that the Emperor took these matters very seriously and anyone would lose his chances of becoming a state minister if he should dare to intrude into the private reservation of the Crown. On the other hand neither did the press have a serious foreign service but its reporters only trimmed up the official communications and information received from the *Ballhausplatz* (Foreign Office). A distinguished Austrian writer on foreign policy (one of those white ravens who studied seriously international relations) narrated to me that he was always the target of irony and was regarded as an incorrigible snob because he dared to have independent opinions on foreign problems. . . . Besides, the nations were so absorbed by the nationality struggles and the Socialists by the affairs of their own class that the political parties lived under a false perspective: they overestimated the significance of the domestic policy and underestimated in a quite disproportionate way that of the foreign policy. At the same time the attention of the Hungarian public opinion was entirely absorbed by the fight for the Magyar army and state bank.

Only in such a political atmosphere could it have happened that the World War was determined by the decision of five gentlemen without the least participation of the nations of the monarchy; that the very organ of foreign policy was convoked only in the fourth year of the war and, therefore, the war was conducted without any efficacious parliamentary control; that the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was perhaps the only warring power in which even the most outstanding state ministers had no idea concerning the most important facts of the foreign policy. What kind of a constitutional control could have existed in a monarchy in which members of the cabinet themselves did not even surmise that Count Czernin announced as early as 1917 the position of the Central Powers as a hopeless one in a report addressed to the Emperor? The minister of finance of Austria during the war, Dr. Spitzmüller, wrote concerning it the following confession:

What should one say to the fact that we, state ministers of important departments, did not have the least idea of such a report? I learn only now in December, 1918, that in April, 1917, one of the Central Powers explained to another that things could not go on any longer and that an end must be made. This was not communicated at all to the minister of finance, to the minister of public alimentation, to the minister of commerce, to the minister of agriculture. . . . That is horrifying.<sup>1</sup>

The conception that the Austro-Hungarian monarchy did not form any real unity and, therefore, could not have any real common organs led sometimes to absurd conclusions. For instance the officials of the joint ministries were joint officials of the two countries but they could not be regarded either as officials of Austria or officials of Hungary nor those of Austria-Hungary because the Magyar doctrine repudiated even the allusion to a super-state. This doctrine was the source of practical complications too. When Bosnia-Herzegovina was annexed, this unhappy province hung in the air from a constitutional point of view because it did not belong in reality either to Austria or to Hungary, but was only administered as by a legal fiction through the joint state department of finance. The historical right of the Hungarian Holy Crown to this province was theoretically acknowledged but it was regarded, as that of Dalmatia, as actually dormant. This constitutional subtlety, in the eyes of the Magyar nationalists a case of tremendous importance, was the more remarkable, almost mysterious, as the Magyar ruling classes did only lip-service to it because the very idea of a unification of these provinces with Croatia-Slavonia seemed to them an extreme danger, menacing by a Jugo-Slav integration the very foundations of the Dualistic Constitution.

Similar susceptibilities made the solution of the problem of the escutcheon of the monarchy impossible almost to the end of the Com-

<sup>1</sup> A destructive criticism of the situation may be found in Dr. Spitzmüller's, *Der Politische Zusammenbruch und die Anschlussfrage* (Wien, 1919).

promise. In the joint army the old Austrian eagle was applied but that emblem shocked the historical sensitiveness of the Magyars and led repeatedly to scandals and conflicts. On the other hand a new escutcheon could not be found because the Magyar point of view repudiated all state community. Only during the convulsions of the World War was a shrewd statesmanship able to settle the intricacies of the problem, and its solution is almost a symbolical expression of the fragile relations of the two countries.<sup>2</sup>

But what undermined and discredited the Dualistic Constitution finally was not so much the ambiguity of its jural construction as its economic arrangements, according to which the participation in the expenses of the joint budget (the percentage of the mutual contribution for the maintenance of the army and of the foreign administration), the so-called *Quota*, was discussed and determined periodically every ten years by the Delegations. Similarly the most important economic affairs which were regarded as matters of common interest to both states (custom regulation, international commercial treaties, and the Austro-Hungarian bank) were submitted to periodical regulations by the parliaments of the two states. If in the question of the *Quota* the Delegations could not agree, the controversy was decided by the Emperor-King.

This constitutional mechanism led to absurd results from the point of view of the monarchy. It was always uncertain how long Hungary would be inclined to maintain the common economic relations which were not acknowledged as obligations following from the Pragmatic Sanction but as purely matters of a provisional contract. There could be no doubt that from year to year Magyar public opinion was less disposed to continue these economic connections. In this manner every ten years the economic foundation of the monarchy was called into question, and with this the very existence of the empire. For in case of the dissolution of the customs union, the commercial policy, and the currency, the community of the army and of the diplomatic relations themselves would have lost their sense and possibility in consequence of the growing antagonism of economic interests. But not only the feeling of nervous incertitude aggravated the political atmosphere but whenever the *Quota* or other economic negotiations were

<sup>2</sup>The new escutcheon was a triple one. The Austrian and the Hungarian escutcheons stood beside each other but separate. Between these two, connecting their peripheries, stood a small escutcheon, that of the Imperial House. Under the escutcheons winds a ribbon on which the motto, borrowed from the Pragmatic Sanction: *Indivisibiliter ac inseparabiliter*. This ingenious construction tries to demonstrate that the two states were somehow connected but there was still no common state because the Crown on the Imperial escutcheon (in consequence of its smallness) was situated lower than the Crowns on the escutcheons of the respective states. In this manner the able author of this constitutional mystery saved the community of the Monarchy, the inviolability of the hereditary right of the Monarch, and the complete independence of Hungary.

renewed between the two countries, the two contracting parties stood always as unscrupulous brokers, each against the other. Both, in order to acquire more advantages in those economic controversies, agitated its whole press and all their economic organizations with a view to portraying its economic situation in the most gloomy and sinister colors imaginable and to make the other partner appear as a cruel Shylock. Instead of determining the ratio of the mutual contributions on the basis of constant objective criteria (for example the population, the results of taxation, and of the savings accounts, etc.) with the help of a pre-established measure, all such transactions were carried on by both partners in the spirit of a demagogic propaganda and left behind them a great amount of bitterness and distrust. Indeed this system of a *Monarchie auf Kündigung* (a "monarchy at short notice") as it was ironically called was perhaps more detrimental to the Dualistic Constitution than all its other weaknesses. The Austrian governments under the difficulties of the Compromise negotiations tried, by concessions given to the various nations, to save the stranded ship of the dualistic system whereas the Magyar Parliament in the feeling of its national unity could generally secure more advantages in the dualistic bargains. The Emperor, who had an instinctive horror of democracy and did not dare to shake the foundation of the system, tried to satisfy as far as possible the will of Budapest against Vienna, enfeebled by nationalistic struggles. Of course, from a Magyar point of view, his concessions were never adequate while from the Austrian point of view they were exaggerated and, therefore, his prestige and popularity was damaged from both sides. And when he decided the controversies concerning the Quota (according to the Compromise it was his duty to determine the Quota when the Delegations failed to agree) he appeared partial to one of the parties. It became a fashion in Austria talk of "the absolutism of the Magyar king against the Emperor of Austria."

Under such circumstances the schism between the two countries became deeper and deeper. Karl Renner, one of the keenest observers of the situation, announced the bankruptcy of the Compromise because it became a constitutional absurdity, being an *Organgemeinschaft ohne Willensgemeinschaft* ("a community of organs without a community of will"). Not only the Slavs hated the dualistic system but also the leaders of the German liberalism regarded it with growing distrust. Ten years after the conclusion of the Compromise, Heinrich Friedjung, the influential Austrian historian, wrote the following statement:

In all public localities and in every social circle the decay of the state is openly discussed and provinces are divided among the neighboring states. . . . This evil is due to the fact that we simply do not know to which



state we belong and to what principles we owe loyalty. . . . Are we at all Austrian citizens? The official terminology knows an Austria-Hungary but no Austria. . . .

On the other hand some Christian Socialists also began to attack bitterly the Compromise and denounced it in their popular demagogy as an alliance of Magyar feudalism with Jewish capitalism. And if the Germans, the chief usufructuaries of the dualistic system besides the Magyars, became so inimical to it, it is easy to imagine what the feelings of the Slavs were toward it, those Slavs who regarded the Compromise from the beginning as an attempt against their constitutional liberties and who remained the ardent followers of Palacký, who coined the very phrase "Dualism means Pan-Slavism."

Not only the Germans and the Slavs, but the Magyars too, who were regarded as the first beneficiaries of the Compromise, turned more and more from the achievements of Deák and Andrassy, nay they became the most accentuated of the centrifugal forces of the monarchy. The truth is that the Compromise never had a majority in Hungary. That the nationalities had no use for it, is quite evident as the dualistic system meant an exclusive Magyar domination in the country. But the Magyar masses too, the small peasantry and the bulk of the artisans combined with a large strata of the intelligentsia, opposed the new system from the beginning, largely on a historical and sentimental basis because they expected nothing good from Habsburg militarism and absolutism even though it now assumed a semi-constitutional form. Only the more wealthy elements of society, the big landed proprietors, the rich capitalists, the higher bureaucracy, and the leading staff of the intelligentsia acknowledged the Compromise as a historical necessity for the country. Professor Szekfü himself, the historian of the present Hungarian counter-revolution, a supporter of the Habsburgs, a naïve admirer of the German-Magyar supremacy and of the Compromise has demonstrated that the dualistic system was from the first moment of its foundation bitterly opposed by the masses and it could be maintained only by a systematic corruption of public life and with the help of a restricted and brutally controlled electorate.<sup>3</sup>

From the beginning of the eighties of the last century, there became more and more manifest those forces which tended to loosen and finally to burst asunder the connection between Austria and Hungary. These endeavors started as a matter of fact from the camp of the traditional ideology of independence represented by men who regarded themselves as followers of the policy of Louis Kossuth. But this party, in consequence of the restricted suffrage and the corrupted electoral machine, was such a small minority in the political arena

<sup>3</sup> *Three Generations*, pp. 327-39.

that it did not signify a real danger to the Dualistic Constitution, protected by the big landed and financial interests. The real danger from the point of view of the Compromise arose only at that time when the ideology of independence and the hatred of Austria began to permeate even those parties and circles which stood on the basis of the Compromise as very influential elements in the higher nobility, bureaucracy, and local administration. Of course these exponents of the new ideology of independence (represented especially by Count Albert Apponyi and his followers) did not take this idea very seriously and they never dreamed of a separation from Austria or from the Habsburgs (for the big landed interests in Hungary were entirely solidary with the Habsburgs because the ruling class clearly understood that a real struggle for independence would have meant such a tension of democratic forces as would have inevitably led to a distribution of the landed estates and a local self-government for the nationalities), but they flirted more and more with the idea of the "expansion and development of the Compromise" in order to secure new privileges in the army and in the diplomatic representation of the state.

In this manner many factors contributed to the reviving of the idea of independence and of the traditional *Kurucz* feeling of the country. A demagogic propaganda was carried on which denounced the joint army and the common institutions of the monarchy as an emanation of the bad spirit of "cursed Vienna." Certain social and economic changes forced public opinion in the same direction: the proletarianization of large strata of small artisans who succumbed because of the competition of Austrian capitalism; the dominant position of the big Austrian finance in Hungary which retained a great part of the Hungarian industry as their vassals; the development of a large intellectual middle class in Hungary which could not find employment in the public offices, and the weakened position of one part of the Hungarian nobility which collapsed under the system of economic liberalism and was extremely desirous of getting new administrative, diplomatic, and military sinecures by the restriction of the joint institutions and by the development of the Magyar state ideal.

This tendency toward independence was further strengthened by the general current of civic education in Hungary under the sway of which two generations grew up which regarded the whole co-operation among the various nations of the monarchy with a kind of megalomania: they underestimated the rôle of Austria and especially that of the Slavs, whereas they overestimated the importance of the Magyars and disregarded entirely the Hungarian nationalities as a negligible quantity.

But there was also another factor which perhaps more than those already mentioned made the movement for independence more acute.

That was the antiquated electoral system of Hungary which was becoming less and less representative of the real interests of the country. Properly speaking, only those classes and strata were represented in parliament who stood for the Compromise or who opposed it bitterly on a historical and sentimental basis. On the other hand those classes and masses, the fundamental interests of which were not concentrated around the Dualistic Constitution but for which the agrarian policy or the social policy or the nationality policy had a paramount importance, the Magyar "dwarfish" peasantry, the agrarian proletariat, the industrial working-class, and the nationality masses were hermetically excluded from the Hungarian Parliament either by law or by the corrupt electoral practices.

This situation had a further danger from the point of view of the wholesome development of the monarchy. The ideology of independence became—more or less consciously—a kind of a *Verdrängungsideo-logie* ("an ideology of repression") against all efforts which endangered the interests of the ruling classes. Every historical society exercises a half-conscious, half-unconscious selection concerning those problems the discussion of which it considers advantageous or agreeable from the point of view of the dominant interests. This almost sociological law resulted in Hungary in the disproportionate predominance of the so-called "national problems" and of the *fine fleur* of these problems, of the constitutional and army problems to the detriment of the more serious economic and social considerations. Anyone who was anxious for a career or desirous of laurels turned toward those more dignified problems. On the contrary the agrarian problem, the *morbis latifundii*, the social problems of the working-classes, a new point of view in the nationality problem aroused the distrust and antipathy of the most respectable citizens. Under such circumstances it is only natural that as the demands of the agricultural laborers became louder, as the big landowners were molested by agricultural strikes, as the urban proletariat became a misunderstood and terrifying factor in Hungarian society (Socialism was treated for decades as exclusively a matter of police administration), and as the underground rumor of the nationalities became more audible, the "national problems" proved to be an excellent instrument for canalizing the economic and social unrest of the masses against Austria and for presenting the bill of the lower classes to Vienna and to the Habsburgs instead of to the feudal nobility. That was one of the reasons why important elements in the aristocracy embraced more and more the program of independence, and even the government of His Majesty accepted doctrines which stood in flagrant opposition to the fundamental ideas of the Dualistic Constitution.

The new nationalistic current began with an exuberance of the

old constitutional slogans and with a demagogic propaganda against the "cursed common institutions" which they portrayed as treason against the independence of the country. It was for decades the chief occupation of the leading politicians to explore the remotest corners of the Compromise in order to demonstrate that the old independence of the nation was surrendered or that important national privileges were forgotten or disregarded. As a consequence of this attitude there were endless and exasperating debates in parliament concerning the colors of the *porte-épée* and of the flags, the displaying of the emblems and escutcheons, the use of the army language, the singing of the imperial hymn, and the tactless behavior of some of the army leaders. Hypnotized by these and similar attacks, Magyar public opinion demanded more and more passionately the introduction of the Magyar language into the Hungarian regiments and later the establishment of an independent Hungarian army. At the same time the movement for independence was carried on also in the economic field and the Party of Independence spread continuous propaganda in favor of the economic separation of the country from Austria by the erection of customs barriers and by the establishment of an independent national bank. Every new draft of a bill concerning the necessary development of the joint army became a source of vehement scandals in parliament, lasting sometimes for several years. It became customary for the opposition to demand so-called "national attainments," from the government as a kind of compensation for the passing of the army budget and the granting of the new contingent of the recruits. But these so-called national attainments concerning the independence of the country and the Magyarization of the army were confronted by the prerogatives of the Crown, jealously safeguarded by the Emperor in all matters regarding the internal organization and direction of the army and, therefore, the relation became more and more envenomed between the King and the Hungarian parliament. Even the modest concessions made by the King to the chauvinistic opposition could not relieve the situation. On the contrary they were only as oil on the burning flame of national enthusiasm. For instance a long and embittered fight was carried on to change the title of the joint army from Imperial-Royal Army to Imperial *and* Royal Army. When finally in 1889 this magic word for the placation of the national feeling was granted, it proved to be inefficient. In the absence of any other economic, cultural, or social-political food, public opinion threw itself with a more and more rabid exasperation into the national and constitutional problems and exciting scandals arose between the Habsburg army, the Austrian *soldatesca* and the *Kurucz* gentry, the small bourgeoisie and intelligentsia. Such and similar affairs always connected with the imperial hymn, the *Gott erhalte*, or the Austrian flag

abounded and envenomed the whole moral and political atmosphere of the country. (Affairs Janszky, Nessi, Ugron, etc.)

Under the pressure of this public opinion the opposition began a more and more turbulent fight against the government, and a series of obstructions were launched in parliament whenever new army bills were introduced. As a result of these obstructions the parliament, this famous united, efficient Hungarian parliament, was paralyzed and the country was plunged into a state of so-called *Ex Lex*: the government had no legal authority for exacting taxes and for enrolling recruits. This situation became, in 1904, so acute that the then Premier, Count Stephen Tisza, by a sudden coup openly violated the rules of parliament in order to secure the acceptance of the army bill. But the forceful measure of the Premier did not help. The opposition, both the Party of Independence and those on the basis of the Compromise, demolished all the furniture on the floor of the House and attacked with the broken pieces the Parliamentarian Guard established by Tisza. The Premier, in order to restore normal conditions, appealed to the "nation" because he was convinced that the usual electoral machine would function without difficulty. But the nationalistic public opinion of the country was so exasperated that the calculations of Tisza failed. The elections in 1905 led to the fall of his party and the so-called "national coalition" of the opposition gained a majority, and inside of this majority the Party of Independence, under the leadership of Louis Kossuth's son, Francis, became the most powerful party of the new parliament. Thereafter the antagonism between the Crown and the constitutional opposition became even more embittered. In this critical situation the "most constitutional Monarch" made an extra-parliamentarian experiment and the Minister of Interior of this "illegal" Cabinet, Joseph Kristóffy, menaced the rebellious ruling classes with the promise, made to a deputation of the Social-Democratic Party, of a universal, secret ballot. Kristóffy maintained that the real cause of the conflict between the King and the nation should be sought in the fact that the parliament did not represent the real will of the country because its laboring elements were excluded from the Constitution. There was only antagonism between the Crown and the privileged classes whereas the working-people of the country and the King would understand each other without difficulty.<sup>4</sup>

This new doctrine, the renewal of the spirit of Josephinism, shook the very foundations of Hungarian public life. The national coalition, the county administration, and the whole oligarchical structure of the country announced a struggle of life and death against the illegal government and those who participated in its administration.

<sup>4</sup> Compare pp. 111-12, 182-83.

The situation became almost revolutionary and "the most constitutional King" appointed a plenipotentiary royal commissary and dissolved parliament by armed force (February, 1906). And now the country witnessed a spectacle which astonished European public opinion. The people of the entire country saw and suffered without protest the destruction of their time-honored Constitution. It became manifest that behind this Hungarian parliament, glorified as strong, united, and strictly national as compared with the despised Austrian, there were practically no public forces. Not even a single mass-meeting, a single placard, or a single popular proclamation protested against the new era of the "Viennese absolutism." On the contrary the working-masses and nationalities regarded with malicious joy the impotent struggle of the national oligarchy.

There are many, both in Austria and in Hungary, who regard this date of 1906 as of decisive importance in the whole history of the monarchy and are of the opinion that, if the Emperor had then introduced universal suffrage by a royal decree and had opened the door (as he did later in Austria) for the free political expression of the working-classes and the nationalities of Hungary, the monarchy could have evolved along the line of Federalism, which would have substantially mitigated the international tension and would have even checked the outbreak of the World War. Those however who take into consideration that the irridentist propoganda against the monarchy was at this time already very advanced and who realize that the masses, excluded from the Constitution for centuries and lacking even the most elementary civic education, could not be made in a few years self-conscious factors in a complicated and gigantic political transformation (as this of the remolding of the Dualistic Constitution into a Federalistic one), those will be entitled to doubt whether the last decade would have been a sufficient period for the salvation of the monarchy. Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that the Monarch committed grave faults in the handling of this most critical situation. It became manifest that he utilized the promise of universal suffrage as a sheer bugbear against the Magyar upper classes and as soon as the Magyar coalition abandoned its claims against his army prerogatives, he called it into the government and accepted the falsification of universal suffrage (giving his previous sanction<sup>5</sup> to the electoral bill of Count Julius Andrassy, based on the principle of an oligarchical plurality and of open voting) in order to obtain, as a kind of compensation for his royal favor, the assistance of the Magyar ruling classes in the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1908). This behavior of the Crown contributed very much to the final moral

<sup>5</sup> This "previous sanction" was a Hungarian curiosity according to which no bill could be introduced by the cabinet before the legislature without the "previous sanction" of the king. This institution functioned like an "absolutistic check" because no premier would have dared a conflict with the monarch.

disintegration of the monarchy because it exacerbated not only the working-classes but also it showed clearly to the nationalities that they could not hope for any improvement of their situation from internal reforms.

As a matter of fact this cynical pact of the ruling classes and the Crown did not lead to a real consolidation and the struggle for "national concessions" in the army became recrudescant. The opposition again tried to restrict the royal prerogatives, the government again made some concessions (the so-called "Resolution Crisis" in 1912) but the Emperor repudiated brutally the new "rebellion" and the end of the powerless struggle of the opposition was once more that Vienna needed "the strong hand" of Count Tisza who, as in 1904, and now in 1912, rushed through the army bill by the violation of the rules of parliament, casting out by armed force the renitent deputies.

These tumultuous incidents (one of the deputies shot at Count Tisza with his revolver in parliament) made it obvious to all clear-headed observers that Hungarian parliamentarism had become merely an instrument of Habsburg absolutism because the principle of majority, in the name of which Count Tisza broke down with armed force the obstruction of the opposition, was manifestly only a pretext under a constitution which excluded the overwhelming majority of the nation from the suffrage and which terrorized the minority possessing the suffrage by the system of open ballot, corruption, and the mobilization of the army. Perceiving the danger of this situation, about fifty Hungarian publicists and politicians addressed a memorandum to foreign public opinion drawing the attention of European progressive thought to the international peril of the renewed absolutism.<sup>6</sup> At the same time the more far-sighted elements of Vienna emphasized repeatedly the entire bankruptcy of the Magyar parliamentary system. But the Crown and the official circles regarded things apathetically since Tisza secured for them with his "strong hand" 300,000 more recruits and 400 million Crowns more for military expenses. Though new promises were made for parliamentary reform, it was continually frustrated by the ruling class and in May, 1912, Count Tisza choked in blood the manifestation of the working-class at Budapest. Even during the tempest of the World War and in spite of the unheard of sacrifices of the Hungarian peasantry and working-classes, the cause of electoral reform could not make any real progress. Count Tisza, in the blindness of his class standpoint, made the following declaration before the correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*:

Not the people demands, with us, the suffrage but the politicians. The Hungarian soldier in the trenches does not care about the suffrage; he is only longing for a leave of two weeks in order to till his lot; he doesn't think of the suffrage but only of his folks and the Fatherland. . . . We have become unworthy of these brave soldiers. . . .

<sup>6</sup> *Die Krise der Ungarischen Verfassung* (Budapest, 1912).

How this mightiest statesman of the monarchy, under the sway of his traditional point of view, was incapable of understanding the general world-situation was characteristically demonstrated by a declaration of his made to the editor of his official German paper (*Pester Lloyd*), who admonished him of the extreme importance of the electoral problem. Count Tisza emphasized the fact that such a problem did not exist in Hungary and that he himself, who knew thoroughly the moral attitude of the period, "dared to prophesy" that after the war a new *Biedermeier* epoch (so the extremely peaceful, narrow-minded, philistine attitude was called before the Revolution of 1848) would be born all around the world and the soldiers would be happy if, after their terrible sufferings, they could return to their work and their families.

Not only in the field of the constitutional and military problems did Magyar nationalism grow more and more acute, but also in the economic sphere. Louder and louder became its claims for a customs union independent of Austria, for a national bank, and for a Magyar foreign economic representation. From year to year it became more difficult to maintain the former economic unity. In 1902 the Sugar Convention at Brussels was already separately signed by Austria and Hungary as by distinct parties. The economic Compromise of 1907 faced such difficulties that well-informed public opinion both in Austria and in Hungary regarded this Compromise as the last one between the two countries and was convinced that Hungary would soon assume complete economic independence. The causes and psychology of this growing tendency for economic independence, we have already analyzed in another connection. At this juncture I wish only to allude to the fact that the ideology of independence was also considerably strengthened by certain foreign events, such as, for instance, the separation of Norway from Sweden, which had a great repercussion upon Magyar nationalism, while the erection of a Washington Memorial in Budapest by the American Magyars was enthusiastically appreciated as a symbol of independence.

The facts which demonstrated the growing force of the separatistic movements in all fields of social and political life gradually became more numerous. In 1900 at the occasion of themorganatic marriage of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the Hungarian parliament made a declaration according to which "the Pragmatic Sanction did not establish a common order of heredity to the throne with Austria"; in 1903 Count Tisza called the Austrian premier in the Hungarian parliament a "distinguished foreigner," whose dilettante declarations had no political significance; in 1909 Count Albert Apponyi, then minister of public education, issued a decree which in all textbooks, maps, and globes supplanted the expression of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy by that of "Hungary and Austria"; somewhat later under



the auspices of the same minister a historical textbook was written in which the Habsburg dynasty was portrayed as a foreign conqueror, a Germanizing power sucking the fat of the country. . . .

This antagonism grew during the war into a real frenzy. Magyar public opinion accused Austria of utilizing the Magyar soldiers as cannon fodder instead of its own treacherous nationalities. Austria on the other hand accused Hungary of promoting famine in the monarchy by its selfish policy of alimentation. As a matter of fact the Hungarian government introduced so many limitations of circulation inside the customs union during the war that the economic unity of the two countries became *de facto* illusionary. This, however, did not impede the Austrians from smuggling out of Hungary in torpedo boats great quantities of corn which led to parliamentary scandals. And the more desperate the war situation became the more grew the hatred and animosity between the two countries. It was a usual topic in the Austrian newspapers that the dualistic system had become for them a nuisance, the maintenance of which would not be worth while after the war. On the other hand the Magyar newspapers kindled by an extreme demagogy the flame of the traditional hatred of Vienna. For instance, *Az Est*, the most widely circulating and influential Magyar daily wrote in August, 1918, in such terms: "We do not care in the least how Austria helps herself nor with what wire she fastens her body. . . ." Or, on another occasion: "For the present moment it is entirely irrelevant for us what advice the preservation instinct dictates to this country in order to lengthen its life. . . . And if Austria is compelled to undergo an operation, it is entirely her own affair. . . ." It is characteristic that this newspaper wrote no less than twelve leaders in such a tenor during this month, which is the more significant because it always followed servilely the fluctuations of public opinion.

From all these it becomes patent that the whole edifice of the Compromise, both in its spirit and its practice, began to crack and crash and that the antagonism between the two hegemonic nations, nay between the Hungarian King and the Austrian Emperor, was even greater than the conflict between the hegemonic nations and the second rank nations. The centrifugal forces broke out more and more ruthlessly in the whole field. And to make the dissolution even more chaotic, to the constitutional conflict between Austria and Hungary was added a second one which, by the foreign complications aroused by it, gave later the final death-thrust to the old monarchy, paralyzed by the hydra of internal struggles. This conflict was the Hungarian-Croatian conflict.

## CHAPTER VI

### CROATIA VERSUS HUNGARY

It has often been said, and with full justification, that the relation of Croatia-Slavonia to Hungary showed in its essence, though in smaller proportions, still with even greater consequences, the same dangers and difficulties as the relation between the two leading states of the Monarchy. The Hungarian-Croatian relation, however, in contrast to the Austro-Hungarian, was for centuries quiet and undisturbed. Since the beginning of the twelfth century and since the death of the last independent Croatian King, Croatia entered into a union with the Crown of St. Stephen, the jural nature of which is not very well known to us. It is probable that it was one of those loose feudal connections which the nobilities of two countries established for the more efficient defense of their mutual interests. Geographical proximity, the fear of the smaller state of international complications, the identity of the economic and social structure, and expanding commercial relations made this connection advantageous from the point of view of both parties. Generally speaking, it was maintained without serious difficulties, according to our historical reminiscences, until the first decades of the nineteenth century. The Croatian nobility became simply a part of the Hungarian *una eademque nobilitas* and the exclusive use of the Latin language between them eliminated all national antagonism. State activities in the proper sense were, before the arrival of the modern period, very restricted whereas the local administration of the counties gave the nobility of the respective regions almost the independence possessed by a small state. Both nobilities kept their bondsmen aloof from all rights and the fear of riots became as much of a factor in political cohesion between them as did later the growing threat of the Turks and the fight against them. The Turkish advance changed the Croatian settlements substantially, pushing them back toward the north, securing a hegemonic position to the Hungarian state and to its administrative organization throughout the whole kingdom. In the period of the enlightened absolutism the unifying policy of the Habsburgs brought the Croat nobility more and more into a union with the Magyars, and with them they made common cause against the reforms of Joseph II and later against the ideas of the French Revolution which terrified and exasperated the Croatian estates not less than those of the Magyars. It became a fashion that the Croat nobles, in order to demonstrate their solidarity with the Magyars, wore Magyar apparel and also in other respects the relation between the two noble classes seemed to be very cordial.