

**PART VI**  
**THE DANGER OF IRREDENTA**

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## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PROBLEM

Rudolf Kjellén, looking back on the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy, wrote the following conclusion :

A Great Power can endure without difficulty one Ireland, as England did, even three, as imperial Germany did (Poland, Alsace, Schleswig). Different is the case when a Great Power is composed of nothing else but Irelands, as was almost the history of Austro-Hungary. . . . .

This remark points without doubt to the immediate cause of the collapse of the empire, but we should not regard this process as an unavoidable historical necessity. As a matter of fact the monarchy has been surrounded with countries, the peoples of which were closely related in blood and language with the nations of the monarchy. Therefore all these peoples exercised an inevitable attraction on each other.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that the attraction of Germany for the Germans of Austria, that of Russia for the northern Slavs of the monarchy, that of the Serb kingdom for the Jugo-Slavs, that of Rumania for the Rumanians of Transylvania, that of Italy for the Italian settlements of the monarchy, aggravated the internal political situation, but from this fact we are not at all entitled to draw the conclusion that all these so-called irredentistic movements had the same significance or that the dissolution of the monarchy was unavoidable under the pressure of these forces.

If we analyze the irredentistic problems of the Dual Monarchy more carefully, we shall see that among them there was only one which could be regarded as insolvable in its essence: the Italian; whereas the solution of all the others was not at all a sociological or historical impossibility. On the contrary the key to the situation was in the hands of the monarchy and if it had seized the possibilities at the right time and if it had followed consequently a prudent policy for the satisfaction of the national interests of its peoples, the fate of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy would have taken an entirely different turn. Of course, I know that the adherents of a rigid mechanical determinism regard all discussions concerning a historical *fait accompli* as sterile and ridicule the question of whether a given, already accomplished, historical process could have taken a different turn, whether better and more fertile

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps in no country in the world was the connection between the inner and the foreign policy of the state so intimate and full of dangers as in the former Habsburg monarchy. On the theoretical foundation of this connection excellent remarks may be found in the book of Rudolf Goldscheid, *Das Verhältnis der Äussern Politik zur Innern* (Wien, 1914).

results could have been achieved by a more prudent and fair policy. Opposed to this materialistic point of view, I accept the theory of Renouvier, of the reversibility of the historical process, and regard the chief utility of all historical and sociological investigations to be to admonish us of the alternative possibilities of history.

Regarding the Habsburg drama from this point of view, we may note two opposite policies in dealing with the problems of the monarchy. One policy was represented by Eugene of Savoy, the great war lord and statesman, the benignant French genius of the monarchy, who clearly visualized as its chief task the expansion of Western culture and civilization toward the Balkans and the East, in territories in a backward state because of Turkish occupation. In order to attain this aim he urged at the peace negotiations of Passarović in 1718 the annexation of the liberated territories, especially parts of Bosnia and Serbia, Wallachia and Moldavia, to the monarchy. At a time when the national consciousness of these territories was almost entirely dormant and when the most elementary conditions of culture were still lacking, such an enlargement of the Habsburg empire, combined with an efficient economic and cultural policy, could have put an end to all those external complications which envenomed the history of the whole nineteenth century and could have facilitated immensely the peaceful national integration of these territories. This road was not closed to the monarchy even later. The Habsburg empire in the first half of the nineteenth century was in economics and culture at least a hundred years in advance of the Balkans and Eastern Europe. If this advantage had been utilized in a prudent way, if a system of national autonomy had been established for all the nations of the monarchy, and if the empire had been gradually transformed into a system of a free confederation of peoples, the monarchy could then have developed an irresistible attraction for the related nations living outside its territory. It was not written in the book of Destiny with a fatal inevitability that the Jugo-Slavs of the monarchy must gravitate in any case toward Belgrade, nor that the Rumanians of Transylvania must tend of necessity toward the center of Bucharest; under appropriate conditions just the opposite tendency could have been operative and the Serbs in the Serb kingdom could have gravitated toward Zagreb in order to attain Jugo-Slav unity or the Rumanians of the Rumanian kingdom could have tended toward Transylvania as the Piedmont of the united Rumanian national state. Not only the powerful German and the comparatively highly developed Magyar and Czech cultures could have exercised the influence of a magnet, but there began also to develop a very propitious Croatian, Serb, and Rumanian culture in territories of the Hungarian crown which under adequate constitutional conditions would have attracted their semi-barbarous co-nationals beyond the frontiers into the orbit of the monarchy. The Hun-

garian Serb town, Novi Sad was called for a long time the "Serb Athens" and it was said that the "brain of Transylvania migrated to Bucharest and Jaši." At the same time Zagreb was a real cultural center in a period when Belgrade was scarcely more than an oriental village.

As a matter of fact the road indicated by Eugene of Savoy never disappeared completely from the consciousness of the peoples and of the abler statesmen. That was the spirit which inspired the constitution of Kremsier, the reforms of Hohenwart-Schäffle, the plans of the Czech Austro-Slavism, the revival of Illyrism in the form of Trialism, which animated the political conception of Fischhof and Eötvös and even the anti-Habsburg confederation vision of Louis Kossuth. The kernel of all these plans and visions was the idea that the complicated national problems of the monarchy and of the Balkans could only be solved on the basis of a reasonable federalism which would have secured the peaceful expansion of the Western culture toward the backward countries but at the same time also the individual development of each nation and an appropriate unification of its ethnographic settlements. On the basis of this conception the monarchy should have assumed the rôle of a protector of the Christian Balkan peoples then languishing under the Turkish yoke, the rôle of an elder brother, endeavoring to promote with action and advice the future of its weaker and oppressed brothers.

Opposed to this policy never seriously tried in the monarchy was another idea, the conception of Metternich, the policy of the *status quo* and of the stabilization which regarded the national problems exclusively from the point of view of the legitimist dynasties. From the point of view of this policy the struggles of the Balkan Christian nations for emancipation against the Turks were revolutionary upheavals against the *status quo* of the legitimist powers and they tried, therefore, to conserve the Turkish rule which became entirely corrupt and obsolete. Metternich used to say:

The Porte is like a person who became incurably sick with a chronic disease. Her maintenance is an important thing for her friends and even for strangers because her death would be harmful for their interests. . . . The great powers, especially Austria, face as advisory physicians the task of prolonging as far as possible the life of the patient, her salvation being impossible. . . .

But in reality this policy was not so innocent as portrayed by the Chancellor and Freiherr von Stein, the great Prussian statesman, was perfectly right when he said of Metternich that "he oppresses the Greek in order to hinder the Russian movement and sharpens and directs the murderous knife of the Turks."<sup>2</sup> This policy in its later de-

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, *op. cit.*, II, 470, 625, 684.

velopment, in the hands of the weaker successors of the chancellor, became chiefly an instrument for the frustration of the growing efforts for Jugo-Slav unity. The system became more and more a playing off of the various Balkan nations against each other in order to avoid the unification of a Jugo-Slav state which would have menaced the fundamental thought of the Dualistic Constitution: the German-Magyar hegemony.

With the consequences of this policy we will deal later as the most fatal force which undermined the monarchy. At this juncture I would like only to emphasize that the extreme danger of this policy of the *status quo* and the cogent necessity of rebuilding the monarchy by utilizing the federative aspirations of its peoples became more and more a *communis opinio* not only in the eyes of the more objective foreign observers but also in the opinion of the more thoughtful politicians of Austria. At the beginning of the twentieth century an extensive literature arose which (however different may have been the individuality of its writers and their political tendencies) was based on the common thought that the system of the German-Magyar hegemony had become untenable, that the monarchy should be transformed in the spirit of a confederation in order to make it possible that the natural attraction between the Slavs and the Rumanians of the monarchy toward their brethren beyond the frontiers should lose its destructive character. In this manner the Habsburg monarchy, instead of becoming the Eastern and Southern bridge of the German imperialism, should have been transformed into a state organization of conciliation and separation between the Pan-German and Pan-Slav imperialistic tendencies.

Amid the tempests of the annexation crisis, when the final incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina put Europe on the verge of a world war, a Serb statesman, Stojan Protić, said with great clearness in the Parliament of Belgrade:

Between Austria-Hungary and the Balkan states peace and good neighborhood can only be established when the Danube monarchy decides to assume the rôle of an Eastern Switzerland. As long as it continues to play the rôle of a Great Power, it will be under the necessity of making new conquests in the Balkan peninsula. . . .

This opinion was corroborated from a retrospective point of view by one of the ablest diplomats of the former monarchy. Baron J. Szilassy in a courageous book has demonstrated that the annexation policy of Aehrenthal was the most fatal blow to the monarchy and that the system of dualism made the peaceful solution of its problems impossible. In this connection he made the following profound remark:

It should not be forgotten that if instead of the Dual System there had existed a large Danube Federation, several of the national Irredentas could have been appeased inside of its frontiers. I am thinking chiefly of the

Jugo-Slavs. Some of their distinguished statesmen have preconized this solution. . . . A well balanced federation would have created harmony, as history has shown in many examples. . . . This Danube Federation . . . would not have been forced to make a common cause with the German Empire, not yet satiated. . . . Rather it would have every reason to seek a close connection with the Western Powers, interested chiefly in the maintenance of their possessions. . . . Western Europe would have every interest in protecting this liberal federation against eventual desires for expansion of Russia or Germany. . . .<sup>3</sup>

But none of the active German or Hungarian statesmen of the monarchy visualized the gravity of the existing situation, with the only exception of Count Michael Károlyi, then leader of the Independent Party, who made a last effort to regalvanize the policy of Kossuth for a Danube Federation. For this scope he advocated universal suffrage and dismemberment of the *latifundia* in the internal policy and a rapprochement toward France and the Slavs in the external policy by terminating the Dualistic Constitution. Guided by these principles he went to Paris in 1913 and discussed the possibilities of such a new orientation with Messrs. Poincaré and Clemenceau. This latter remarked that the idea was excellent, but it came too late because Austro-Hungary was already too much engaged in the opposite direction.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie* (Bern, 1921), pp. 40-42.

<sup>4</sup> *Fighting the World*, pp. 78-80.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PSEUDO-IRREDENTAS

#### A. THE GERMAN SEPARATISM

If we regard more carefully the so-called irredentistic problems of the monarchy, we find that among them the German, the Czech, the Polish, and the Ruthenian were not real irredentas nor could they ever develop into such if a prudent and constructive policy had been followed.

As to German separatism, we have seen already in another connection that there never was a serious German irredentistic movement in Austria, that it signified rather a sentimental attachment to Germany or at best a sulky protestation against the growing influence of the Slavs which menaced German hegemony. But the force of the dynasty, of the army, and of the Church was so strong in Austria that a real German separatistic movement could not develop. We saw that the *Los von Rom* movement with outspoken anti-Habsburg tendencies ended in a complete fiasco and the Pan-German idea never had behind it a truly revolutionary movement. It is true that some of its leaders, for instance K. H. Wolf, spoke publicly of a *Germania Irredenta* and that enthusiastic young men began to sing seditious rhymes:

Wir schielen nicht, wir schauen  
Wir schauen unverwandt,  
Wir schauen voll Vertrauen  
Ins deutsche Vaterland. . . .<sup>1</sup>

But the entire movement remained always a rather sentimental or tactical protestation, the more as the leading circles of Berlin never sympathized with this tendency. The German official policy followed to the end the conception of Bismarck, who with his keen sense of reality understood very well that the union of the Austrian Germans with Germany would lead not only to a renewed armed conflict between the Habsburgs and the Hohenzollerns but that it would possibly also kindle a world war because the Slav peoples of Austria would develop the most exacerbated resistance to such a policy. This price would have been too high from the point of view of the German empire, the more so, since the Austrian Germans could render more precious services to the whole German nation outside of the German empire than inside without the Slavs or struggling with a disparate Slav minority. "The German Austrian," said Bismarck, "is justified to aspire for political

<sup>1</sup> We leer not, we look, we look steadily, we look trustingly to the German fatherland.



leadership and should safeguard the interests of Germandom in the Orient, serving as the tie of contact between Germans and Slavs by hindering their collision.”<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact Austria played more and more the rôle of a bridge between Germany and the Danube basin, and the Balkans. This German economic and cultural expansion was quite natural in consequence of the geographical position of Germany and of her technical and scientific superiority, and this tendency would have been even more prominent if the saber-rattling German imperialism and the anti-Slav dualistic system of the monarchy had not aroused more and more the antipathy and distrust of the Slav and if the wise maxim of Bismarck had been followed, according to which “he was not willing to sacrifice even the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier” for the Balkan policy of Austria.

One can say that until the World War and until the conception of a *Mittleuropa* which followed the first victories of the Central Powers, the official standpoint of the German empire remained the unaltered retention of the Habsburg monarchy. To the report of Prince Lichnowsky, already quoted (in which he gave an account of the symptoms of dissolution of the Austrian monarchy) the foreign secretary, Bernhard von Bülow, gave the following answer, better say, categorical instruction to the Prince (June, 1898) :

. . . . Our political interest, to which all platonic sympathies should be subordinated . . . . lies in the maintenance of Austro-Hungary in its present independence as a Great Power. This interest demands that we be on our guard to discourage disintegrating tendencies in Austria whether they come from the Czech, Polish, or German side. The German-Austrians should not remain in doubt that as long as their struggle for the German cause is animated by an effort to safeguard Germandom as a cement for the inner cohesion and further maintenance of the Austrian state in its present form, we follow their aspirations with the most complete sympathy. But at the same time they should know that as soon as this struggle has as its final aim the separation of the German provinces from Austria and with this a return to the *status quo* of before 1866, the German nationalists cannot count on the promotion of their plans from our side. . . .

#### B. THE CZECH SEPARATISM

In the same sense one could not speak of a Czech irredenta in the proper meaning of the term, because the essence of the Czech separatistic tendencies was the same as that of the Magyars: an effort for constitutional independence, the unification of the countries of the Czech crown under national government. There was no foreign point of attraction, the union with which could have been a really serious aim of the Czech policy. Not even the thought of a union with their kindred folk, the Slovaks of Hungary, was in their minds, until the

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Richard Charnatz, *Österreichs innere Geschichte* (Leipzig u. Berlin, 1918), II, 95.

World War, a realizable program. The state independence of the Czech historical territories in Austria and a moderate autonomy for the Slovaks inside the Hungarian crown would have satisfied both the Czechs and the Slovaks completely if such a constitutional reform would have been carried on at the right time.<sup>3</sup> The Czech separatism, therefore, signified just the same thing as the Magyar: the guaranty of the independence of the state in the spirit of the historical right. This was clearly felt by the leader of Hungarian independence, by Louis Kossuth himself, who, in his devastating criticism against the Dualistic Compromise, wrote among others the following statement:

Bohemia, from the point of view of historical justice, has the same right to regard itself as a distinct autonomous state as Hungary; even, if possible, it would have more right because it is a fact that Bohemia had already been a flourishing state for centuries, when we Hungarians were not yet in Europe.<sup>4</sup>

One might even say that Czech separatism was far less dangerous from the point of view of the monarchy than the Magyar. For the Czechs, from the first awakening of the democratic national spirit until the dissolution of the monarchy, were not disinclined to accept the plan that the future independent Bohemia would become a part of a federal state and they would have willingly participated in a central parliament including all the nations of the monarchy as equal members. Just the opposite was the Magyar point of view, even that of the loyal dualistic circles, namely, that Hungary could not accept any state community or super-national central organ with the other nations of the monarchy.

And if, in spite of this, the danger of Pan-Slavism had always irritated the German and the Magyar leading elements and if it became a fashion to denounce Czech national aspirations as a result of Russian propaganda, that was the result of this unfortunate policy which by the German-Magyar hegemony, by the Magyar policy of assimilation, and the brutal handling of the Jugo-Slav problem always offended the Slav nations of the monarchy, especially the very developed

<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of a conscious national movement in the nineteenth century a serious literary and cultural movement was started among the Slovaks of Hungary under the leadership of Stur, Hurban, and Hodža for the elaboration of the Slovak language and culture distinct from the Czech. If instead of the policy of a forcible Magyarization this movement would not have been hindered, but protected by the Hungarian government, it is very probable that the gap between the Slovaks and the Czechs would have assumed proportions hostile to any efforts for unification. National culture and autonomy of the Slovak territory could have become a powerful bulwark against the Czech influence the more as the historical atmosphere, the national temperament, and the social customs of the Slovaks were nearer to the Magyars than to the Czechs whose nationalism, hussitism, and business efficiency is still a factor for misunderstanding, even hatred among the two kindred peoples. (A good analysis for this situation was given by R. W. Seton-Watson in his book, *The New Slovakia*, Praha, 1924.)

<sup>4</sup> *Writings of Louis Kossuth*, VII, 367-68. In Hungarian.

constitutional and cultural conscience of the Czechs. We have seen already that the claims for national autonomy of the Czechs were never satisfied, nay, that the most solemn pledges of the Emperor were broken in order to maintain unaltered the German-Magyar hegemony. Under such circumstances it was quite natural that the Czechs fixed their eyes more and more on the big Russian brother when they saw that they could not guarantee their national independence in a peaceful, constitutional way and that only a new catastrophe, a new Königgrätz could solve their problem. But this feeling of solidarity never was a serious irredenta, because it could not be such. A union with Russia was an impossibility from a geographic, an ethnographic, and a cultural point of view. The Czechs were separated from their remote Russian brothers by the national settlements of the Poles and the Ruthenians, peoples with which the Czechs had no real cultural connection. Besides the Czech culture was entirely a Western one, penetrated by the ideals of Humanism, the Reformation, and democracy. There was, therefore, no serious possibility for a union with Tsarist Russia and that romantic Pan-Slavistic plan which talked of a union of the smaller Slav nations under Russian hegemony from the future center of Constantinople was not only then a Utopia but it will probably remain such for centuries.

Under such circumstances the flirting of the Czech intelligentsia with Pan-Slavism, their pilgrimages to Russia, their enthusiastic cultural connections with Russian intellectual life, and the growing emphasis of Slav solidarity did not signify a possible or serious irredentistic movement but rather a tactical and also a sentimental position. It signified the magic charm of the Slav world-empire to the youthful spirits; it signified the canalization of the national exasperation into the sea of Pan-Slavism; it signified the attraction of national affinity, the possibility of imposing threats for Czech politicians against the Viennese court and government; it signified the moral and material protection of Czech intelligentsia by the Russian pan-Slavistic literary and scientific associations; and, finally, it signified the propaganda of the Russian emissaries who promised the guaranty of a brilliant Czech future when the day of last judgment, the *dies irae, dies illa*, between Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism comes.

Of course, the more things became envenomed in Austria, in Hungary, and in the Balkans, the less was the prospect probable that the aspirations of the northern and southern Slavs for their independent states would be realized within the frontiers of the monarchy. And the more all Europe was segregated into two military camps which by a system of alliances and counter-alliances prepared feverishly for the final fray, the more important became the card of sentimental and cultural Pan-Slavism in the hands of the leading Russian circles for utilizing the hatred of the Slavs of the monarchy against the countries

which refused to accept them as equal partners in their constitutional life.

We have seen that this propagandistic effort of Russian imperialism was to a large extent successful during the war and became one of the chief causes of the dissolution of the monarchy. This process however was not a fatal, unavoidable one. On the contrary, we have shown already in our historical analysis that the most serious and influential elements of the Czechs, beginning with their great leader, Palacký, embraced quite sincerely the point of view that Austria should be maintained on the basis of the equality of their peoples. This conception was enlarged by several northern and southern Slav political writers to a doctrine called *Austro-Slavism* which opposed the sentimental romanticism of Pan-Slavism with the distinct national individuality of the Slav peoples and advocated the maintenance of a democratized and federalized Austria as a natural bulwark for the free development of the smaller Slav peoples. The most consequent exponent of this tendency was the brilliant political thinker of the Czechs, Karel Havlíček (1821–56). He put the consciousness of his nation above the Slav solidarity. The Slav peoples are distinct national individualities as, for instance, the French and Spanish. The Austrian monarchy could become the supreme protector of the Czech and the Illyrian nationality. He emphasized the fact that the Slavs have four fatherlands and the idea of a general Slav patriotism was as vague as the idea of cosmopolitanism. "I am not a Slav, I am a Czech," he used to say and urged the Austrian government to defend also the Ruthenians against the oppressive tendencies of the Poles. After the revolutionary collapse in 1850, he admonished the ruling circles that an Austria protecting the Slavs would be capable of drawing also the Jugo-Slavs into its sphere of influence and of acquiring, by the way of a spontaneous gravitation, the largest part of the Turkish inheritance which would be an excellent change for the Italian territories, maintainable only by armed force.

This spirit of Austro-Slavism was sometimes called a hypocrisy or a purely tactical chess game, but it represented without doubt a sincere and natural tendency. The Czechs had no serious interest in fostering a policy of irredentism if they could have an opportunity of developing their own national state inside the monarchy. As a matter of fact, until the dissolution of the empire there were never lacking influential and authoritative voices which emphasized the necessity of such a solution. Not only the small group of Professor Masaryk, called the Czech Realists, sought peace and compromise with the other nations of the monarchy but even the leader of the younger Czech nationalists, Karel Kramář, though he was a leading man of the Russian solidarity, emphasized the possibility of a Czech compromise if they could build up their own national state as the Magyars did.

Nay, even after the World War, after the creation of an independent Czecho-Slovak state, in 1926, the same Kramař upheld retrospectively the correctness of this point of view which was desirous of solving the Slav problems without arousing catastrophes, a point of view advocated even during the World War by several Austro-Slav politicians. In regard to such plans Kramař wrote:

Was not a prudent and honest Austrian policy possible, such a one as our men since Palacký and Havliček have advocated, because they wished sincerely the continuation of Austria, a policy which would have made also the Serbs friends of Austria by becoming so just toward them that they would not aspire for a state beyond the frontiers and would estimate as superfluous the arousing of a catastrophe which might have ultimately also a sinister outcome for the Serbs and the Slavs . . . .?

The Czech statesmen gave an affirmative answer to this question. Naturally, for obtaining this aim quite a different policy, a different public morality and above all a different civic education would have been necessary.

#### C. THE POLISH SEPARATISM

That the problem of irredentism is not directed by a special mystical affinity and that it is not inevitable that a people in the minority must ogle beyond the frontiers or foment irredentistic plots but that the tendency of the national minorities is determined by the "law of the least social and national resistance," was clearly proved by the history of the Polish national minority of the monarchy. The Poles were for a long period the most restless and unreliable elements of the monarchy. Metternich regarded them with complete distrust. "The 'Polonism,'" he said, "is only a formula, a slogan, beyond which the revolution is hidden in its crudest form, it is the revolution itself." Indeed, as a matter of fact both in 1846 and 1863 the revolutionary dissatisfaction of the Poles flared up violently. But the situation changed when the Viennese government assumed a conciliatory attitude and when, abandoning the policy of German centralization, a complete national autonomy was granted to the Poles in Galicia. Especially the Compromise of 1867 made the influence of the Poles in the monarchy very conspicuous since, for the maintenance of the dualistic system the Austrian governments needed the votes of the Polish Club in the Viennese parliament. In consequence of the new equilibrium the Poles became the pampered children of the leading circles, the *Zunge an der Wage*, and they were allowed to build up an almost national state in Galicia which was often victorious over the Central administration. The Poles were not hindered in establishing their administrative, cultural, and economic organizations, nay, the Viennese government tacitly tolerated the continuous effort of the Polish nobility to curb under their yoke the Ruthenian peasant masses, almost half of the population of Galicia. Whereas the Poles of Prussia sighed under

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the heavy burden of the Germanizing policy and of the system of forcible expropriation and whereas the autocratic brutality of Russian Tsarism strangled the Polish minority, Austria became the envied province of Polish liberty and independence. The Austrian Poles, or to speak more correctly, the Polish nobility (because there was an enormous gulf between the Polish landlords and the wretched peasantry) began to feel themselves comfortable and became the most loyal subjects of His Majesty and the most important offices and diplomatic positions of the monarchy were intrusted to them. Since they had their own national autonomy and the possibilities of a free cultural development, not the slightest revolutionary ripple or irredentistic agitation was to be observed among them. On the contrary, their co-nationals under Prussian and Russian oppression began to extol the Galician conditions as a model state where, especially in the city of Cracow, a powerful center of Polish literature, science and art arose. Of course, the Austrian Poles continued to cherish the dream of the re-establishment of the former historical unity of the Polish state but this seeming Utopia had not the least sentiment against Austria and, therefore, the Polish nobility could develop unchecked their national aspirations. They were not only undisturbed in this but their attitude was rather sympathetic from the point of view of the ruling elements who understood that in the case of unification Austria would have a powerful attraction for all the Poles. Furthermore the Poles were so satisfied with their constitutional situation in Austria that when on the Austro-German side plans were made according to which Galicia should receive a complete autonomy analogous to that which Croatia had toward Hungary (in order that by the absence of the Poles, a German majority could be secured in the Austrian parliament) such plans aroused not the least sympathy among the Poles who enjoyed and utilized their power in the monarchy.

During the World War, too, strong sympathies were manifested for the monarchy which could have exercised a considerable force in favor of the Central Powers if the reminiscences of the Prussian policy in Posen had not pressed on a part of the Poles and if the monarchy and Germany had not been so short-sighted and hesitating in their Polish policy, but had accepted openly and determinedly the program of a united Poland as an independent state of the Habsburg empire. But the dualistic system in Austria and the Prussian policy in Germany made such a policy unworkable. Later the adventure in the Ukraine, as we have already seen, made the Poles enemies of the monarchy. Leon Bilinski, the Polish statesman who was several times Austrian and joint minister of finance and who became for a period minister of the newly created Polish state, wrote his memoirs before his death still in a loyal spirit to the Habsburgs and came to the conclusion that the dissolution of the monarchy was due to three facts:

to the incapacity of the Habsburg to conclude the Austro-Polish solution, to the megalomania of the German government on the occasion of the peace negotiations in 1917, and to the fatal nationality policy of Hungary.<sup>5</sup>

#### D. THE RUTHENIAN IRREDENTISM

The Ruthenian separatism shows the same tendencies as the Polish, though in another direction. The Ruthenian population of Austria was for a long time famous for its loyal dynastical attitude. They were called the "Tyrolians of the East" or the "Galician Piedmont" because the Ruthenian settlements of Austria began to exercise a certain attraction on their Ukrainian brothers of the same racial stock who were languishing under the yoke of the Russian autocracy and forceful assimilation. This Ruthenian minority was regarded for some time as a good balance against the revolutionary Polish nobility. At the same time the development of a special Ruthenian culture was favored and protected in Vienna as a bulwark against undermining endeavors of Russian imperialism.

This attitude, however, of this loyal people was changed radically after Galicia was surrendered to the Polish nobility which interfered with the national and political rights of the Ruthenian minority. This Polish-Ruthenian antagonism, made even more acute by the economic and social pressure of the big Polish estates, proved to be an efficient instrument in the hands of Russian Pan-Slavism for fostering irredentistic tendencies in Galicia and Bukowina. Indeed, Pan-Slavism was successful in arousing a pro-Russian feeling in some regions of the Ruthenian peasantry. The Ruthenian people in its cultural backwardness (in Bukowina 54 per cent and in Galicia 41 per cent of the population over ten years were illiterate) and in its social misery did not know that their Ukraine brothers in Russia were even more oppressed than they and that the rôle of the Polish nobility was played there by the Russians. Russian Pan-Slavism made its propaganda not only by the "rolling of rubles" and manipulating the feelings of the people, exasperated by social and political abuses, but also by utilizing the deep religious mysticism of the people which instinctively resented the papal union of its clergy and on which the old orthodox religion had a great sentimental appeal. Therefore, in certain regions the political propaganda was administered under a semi-religious disguise and the Tsar became a kind of divine protector for the persecuted Ruthenians of Austria.

This Pan-Slav propaganda was carried on almost openly without being counterbalanced by any effort for a reasonable civic education. On the contrary, the Poles, knowing the low cultural standard and the unorganized state of the Ruthenian peasantry, did not take this move-

<sup>5</sup> *Reminiscences and Documents* (Warsaw, 1924-25). In Polish.

ment seriously but even fostered it because it counterbalanced the political influence of the Ruthenians loyal to Austria, their really serious opponents, and at the same time they could extol themselves as guardians of the Austrian state idea against the "treacherous Ruthenians." This political play was so ruthless and hypocritical that in the younger Ruthenian generation a revolutionary spirit arose, which led to the killing of the governor of Galicia, Count Potocki, by a Ruthenian student in 1898. Though a part of the Viennese circles knew very well the nature of the problem and the ambiguous rôle of the Polish nobility, the government did not dare to interfere with it, according to its policy of *Fortwursteln* ("bungling along in the old groove"). For in order to extirpate the Ruthenian irredenta certain fundamental reforms were needed, among them the elimination of Polish supremacy, a courageous agrarian reform, complete religious equality, all things with which Vienna could not experiment the less so because these necessary reforms would have again created a Polish separatism, would have irritated the Roman Catholic church, the pillar of the empire, and what was the most important, they would have endangered the Dualistic Constitution itself which rested partly on the shoulders of the Poles. Under these conditions it was quite natural that the dynasty and its government chose rather the seemingly harmless, rather sentimental irredentism of the peaceful, weak, and unorganized Ruthenian subjects and abdicated from the "Eastern Tyrolians" to the benefit of the Polish *Szlachta*.

The irredentistic movement of the Ruthenians of Hungary was even more naïve and sentimental. The social and cultural background was even darker than in Austria. Illiteracy, slow starvation, the pressure of the big estates and of the feudal administration, ruthless usury, the alliance of the Greek Catholic church with the corrupt county potentates were a propitious field for Pan-Slavistic propaganda, which, under the disguise of orthodox Greek oriental religion, was administered as a species of social narcotics. As a matter of fact this wretched people had no idea of the political motives of the Pan-Slav propaganda but embraced enthusiastically the traditional religion of Russia, exciting its religious imagination and at the same time offering to the poor peasants sacred books in their own language in a surrounding where the Magyarization policy of the schools and of the administration left the intellectual longings of the people unsatisfied.

Immediately before the World War a sensational process was enacted against the so-called schismatic Ruthenians who tried to secede from the Greek Catholic church and to join the Greek Oriental church of Hungary. Though this aspiration was perfectly legitimate from a jural point of view, the Greek Catholic church denounced it as a plot of high treason fomented by the Pan-Slav agitation. This process carried on at Mármarosziget, a town of Northeastern Hungary,



aroused an international excitement because some leading figures of the Russian Pan-Slav movement were also involved in it. The better part of the Hungarian intelligentsia saw with despair the dark, medieval atmosphere of the whole process fomented by a greedy clergy who feared that the religious secession of the Ruthenian peasantry would diminish their ecclesiastical incomes. It became manifest that though the Russian propaganda played without doubt a certain part in this tragic religious hysteria of the Ruthenian people, it was mainly a result of their cultural isolation, economic misery and of the abuses of the local administration. A Hungarian attorney for the defense of the accused peasants wrote:

The chief lesson for us of the Ruthenian schismatic movement is that the religious persecution arranged by the Greek Catholic clergy, allied with the local administration [the people of the villages were surrounded by gendarmerie, then heavily fined because they performed secretly during the night those religious exercises forbidden by the authorities], created the possibilities of a Russian religious propaganda. That this religious propaganda found, curiously enough through America where the emigrated Hungarian Ruthenians narrated their sufferings to their co-nationals, the Ruthenian schismatics, this is in its final result only a painful episode of the Hungarian democracy.

It is quite natural that in this atmosphere the Russian religious propaganda should begin to assume a national color too and that the Ruthenian peasant, persecuted in his religious life,<sup>6</sup> should regard more and more the mystic personality of the Tsar as his liberator from the ecclesiastical and administrative yoke which he felt in his naïve consciousness simply as a Magyar yoke. . . .

<sup>6</sup> The superstitious, but at the same time extremely popular character of the Greek Orthodox religion which makes its priests in the culturally backward provinces almost magicians or primitive "medicine-men" had a great influence in the "nationalistic propaganda" (A. Bonkáló, *The Slavs* [Budapest, 1915], pp. 22-27. In Hungarian).

## CHAPTER III

### THE TRUE IRREDENTAS

As for real irredentas, in the proper sense, meaning the effort of a national minority to secede from the community of the state and to unite with another, to that of their co-nationals, there were only three in the monarchy: the Italian, the Rumanian, and the Jugo-Slav. Of these, only the first was a problem insoluble in its essence.

#### A. THE ITALIAN IRREDENTA

Since the formation of the Italian unity, it was inevitable that the Italian kingdom should exercise a great and irresistible influence on the Italian minority of Austria. (A population of about seven and a half hundred thousands before the World War.) This minority lived partly scattered, partly as compact settlements in southern Tyrol, in the southwestern parts of Görz and in the western regions of Istria. The attraction of the Italian territories toward Italy was quite natural, though it did not perhaps permeate the deepest strata of the population. The spell of an old historical culture, the community of the historic traditions, the desire for an economic and cultural unity would have manifested itself to a certain degree even in case Austria had signified a higher culture and a greater freedom. However, it did not signify this, but foreign rule, the obstacle to a richer cultural development, and the absence of a free local autonomy. And combined with these were the terrible memories of the Austrian *soldatesca* in their mother-country. Add to all this the continuous propaganda of Italian imperialism and of nationalistic romanticism for the Tyrol-ese and Triestene irredenta and for the *mare nostrum*. One should not forget that Garibaldi had already conquered southern Tyrol in 1866, and though he was unable to hold the provinces, this memory was kindling enthusiasm in Italian public opinion.

Under such circumstances the Italian territories meant a debit item for Austria, a source of internal strife and external complications which heightened the dangers of the other irredentas. A really enlightened Austrian policy therefore would have been a final conciliation with Italy by the cessation of its closed national settlements. As a recompense for this policy Austria could have easily obtained the agreement to declare the harbors of Trieste and Fiume free cities, *porto franco*, international centers for the trade. This solution would have been the most advantageous both from the Austrian and Italian point of view because the hinterland of these harbors was mostly Slav and Magyar. This policy would have been without doubt a perfectly

workable one if carried on tactfully with a prudent appreciation of the difficulties of the Italian policy. Before the catastrophe of Königgrätz the Italian government made a formal proposition to Austria for the purchase of the province of Venezia and at the same time for Italian Tyrol it offered recompensation for the Habsburgs in another direction. The proposition was refused without any consideration.<sup>1</sup> Even during the World War there were serious endeavors to maintain the neutrality of Italy by pursuing this road.

The present-day imperialistic state, however, in consequence of its very nature and of the dogma of "the prestige of a Great Power and of national honor" could not follow such a policy of "abdication" even if such would be highly beneficial for the immense majority of the population of both countries. Instead of this, both parties prepared for a policy of catastrophe through which the people of Austria-Hungary finally lost their harbors and the German Tyrolese territory. The crime of this policy was the greater because the leading circles of Austria were perfectly aware of the fatal gravity of the Italian irredenta. One for instance who reads the book of Alois Ritter von Haymerle, a colonel of the general staff, written in 1879 under the title, *Italicae Res*, will see that the Austrian officer has unveiled all the details of the Italian intrigues. Haymerle has shown that this current was not restricted to a few romantic dreamers but embraced broad circles of society and enjoyed the secret protection of the government. At national festivals it was a custom to carry the flags of Trieste and Trentino covered with a mourning veil; the whole country was permeated with the organizations of the "Italia Irredenta"; on the maps used in the public schools, the political frontier facing Austria was drawn through the Brenner and southern Tyrol was designated as *Provincia del Trentino*; the patriotic irredentistic festivals were often frequented by high officials of the state, and by the members of Parliament and of the army leadership. Witnessing such and similar currents, the Austrian staff officers did not even mention a plan of compromise but his final conclusion was simply an appeal to the right of arms.

As a matter of fact this rigid conception of the right of conquest determined Austrian policy until the end. This policy was the more light-minded and short-sighted because at the same time no serious step was taken to satisfy the just claims of the Italian minority which could have appeased somewhat the tension between the two countries. The demand of an autonomy for southern Tyrol was frustrated by the German bureaucracy and chauvinism. Similarly without result remained the desire of the Italian minority for the creation of a university in the Italian tongue, a privilege enjoyed for a long time by other

<sup>1</sup> V. Bibl, *op. cit.*, II, 288.

nations of the monarchy which were less conspicuous in culture and national traditions. But the Austrian government was frightened by this plan because it feared (and not without reason) that under the envenomed conditions such a university would strengthen the irredentistic current. For this reason the cause of the Italian university was postponed and finally a half-measure was adopted to establish an Italian faculty connected with the German university of Innsbruck (the southern bulwark of the Germans) instead of the Italian scheme to create a university in Trieste, the real center of Italian life in Austria. The result of this tactlessness was a real battle between Italian and German students in the *Aula* of the university of Innsbruck which had a bloody continuation in the streets (1909). After this calamity the Italian faculty was transferred to Vienna but there the German-Italian fight broke out even more violently. The cause of an Italian university died and the result was only this, that it poured new oil on the fire of Italian irredenta: "instead of a university the Italian students received cudgels and revolvers. . . ."

The inflammatory acuteness of the Austrian-Italian relations was further accentuated at the occasion of the Triestine festivals in 1882 when Austria held an exposition to the memory of the fact that Trieste belonged for five hundred years to the Habsburg monarchy. During these festivals, the police detected three attempts with bombs against the members of the dynasty and the Emperor himself. The organizer of one of these plots, Oberdank, was sentenced to death by a tribunal and became, thereafter, an Italian national martyr, a real symbol of the Italian irredentistic movement.

The relation, envenomed more and more between the two countries, was not improved but rather aggravated by the conclusion of the so-called Triple Alliance (1882) which was the true expression of the immoral policy of imperialism in not considering the real feeling of the people. Italy, under the patronage of Bismarck, entered into the Alliance of Germany and Austro-Hungary in order to manifest its dissatisfaction against the Tunis policy of France. This treaty, the text of which was not then published, signified the worst continuation of a Machivellian policy between the new allied powers, Italy and Austria, which were rightly called the "strangest allies of the world" because they made incessant war preparations against each other, they erected fortifications on their respective frontiers, and the hatred of the Italians and the Austrians was systematically kindled. This spirit of animosity exploded already during the Annexation Crisis when the whole Italian political world assumed a passionately hostile attitude against the Austrian "ally" for its "robbery" in the Balkans and asked for compensations on the irredentist territories. The exacerbation of Italian public opinion was so great that Prime Minister Giolitti could scarcely pacify it and was himself compelled to play,

almost unhidden, irredentistic tunes, speaking in Parliament of "premature impatience."

The Italian irredentism became more and more ruthless. For instance, General Asinari, commander of the Corps of Milano at the occasion of the inauguration festivity of the flag of a new cavalry regiment at Brescia, renewed in a speech the memory of the Austrian terror which reigned in this city half a century earlier and expressed the hope that Destiny would allow him some day to lead his soldiers against the traditional enemy. . . . At Udine a doll representing the features of Francis Joseph was fabricated and was burned by the mob. . . . At the same time the irredentistic literature became more and more violent. Under the title *La Preparazione*, a military-political periodical was started with the program of preparation for the future irredentistic war. And while the governments talked always officially of the "best," of the most cordial relations between the Allies, the propaganda of Gabriele d'Annunzio gained thousands and thousands for the irredentistic ideal and his book *La Nave* engraved the desire of the reconquest of the "Italian Sea" in the heart of the masses.

Meanwhile the turning of Italy toward the Entente became manifest and even an Italian-Slav rapprochement was skilfully arranged under French protection which had an open tendency against the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. It is quite natural that in this tense atmosphere the Austrian war party, too, made desperate efforts. In the first place, Conrad von Hötzendorf, who became chief of the staff in 1906, was quite aware that the Austrian-Italian relation was near to explosion and urged a preventive war against the Italians because he came to the right conclusion that things were rapidly tending toward an Italian-Jugo-Slav-Russian coalition against the Habsburg monarchy. That is the reason why Conrad advised, in 1911, when Italy had serious difficulties in Tripoli, an attack on the "ally," that is to say, to administer this "stab in the back" which, according to the Austrian terminology, Italy performed against her ally during the World War.

#### B. THE RUMANIAN IRREDENTA

The nature of the Rumanian irredenta differed substantially from the Italian. Speaking in round numbers, three and a quarter million Rumanians lived in the territory of the Habsburg monarchy (the bulk of whom, about three millions, were in Hungary) and six millions in the Rumanian kingdom. Therefore the Rumanian irredenta was not a small minority, as was the Italian, compared with the whole nation, but it was a very conspicuous settlement, the population of which liked to regard themselves as the successors of the Roman inhabitants of Dacia. The tradition of this Dacian affinity heightened very much the

national consciousness of the Rumanians of Transylvania and the doctrine of the Daco-Rumanian origin became the chief ideology of the irredentistic thought and of the endeavor to unite all the Rumanian territories. Though the historical foundations of this doctrine are hotly debated, it is probable that a part of the Rumanians of Transylvania belonged to the oldest elements of the country and the history of Transylvania was always a Magyar-Rumanian history. The Transylvanian and the Hungarian Rumanians had, therefore, all reason to regard Hungary as their native land.<sup>2</sup> (The Rumanians of Bukowina, numbering about 250,000, we can omit in the consideration of the irredentistic situation, because they lived in an almost complete separation from the Rumanian settlements of Hungary, as there was no direct railway connection between Bukowina and Transylvania. The interest of the Rumanians of Bukowina was absorbed in the Rumanian-Ruthenian antagonism and, therefore, their rôle in the irredentistic current was an insignificant one.)

There were also other reasons which would have made it possible that a Rumanian irredenta should not develop or that it should take quite another direction, that it should gravitate not toward the Rumanian kingdom but toward Transylvania. Namely, the Habsburg monarchy compared with the Rumanian kingdom, which not until the beginning of the sixties of the last century adopted the forms of Western civilization, could have exercised a mighty economic and cultural attraction upon all the Rumanians if it could have secured the unimpeded national development of the Rumanians inside its own frontiers. Besides, the real kernel of the Rumanian culture was first developed in Transylvania where some far-sighted Hungarian princes promoted intentionally the linguistic and ecclesiastic culture of the Rumanian race. Under such circumstances it would have been a comparatively easy task to maintain the cultural and economic hegemony of the Rumanians of Transylvania over those in the kingdom. At the same time the Rumanians of Transylvania surpassed in discipline, administration, Western culture, and moral restraint the bulk of the Rumanian population in the kingdom, which was corrupted by the Phanariot rule, by those Greeks who under Turkish patronage governed the country in an Asiatic spirit. Another cause which could have turned the line of irredentistic tendency was the traditional loyalty of the Transylvania Rumanians to the Habsburg dynasty, the better exponents of which often protected them from the abuses of Magyar feudalism.

For all these reasons, if the monarchy had been capable of satisfying at the right time the national needs of its peoples in the spirit of a reasonable federalism, Transylvania would have become a Pied-

<sup>2</sup> Compare pp. 306-7 of this book.

mont of the Rumanians which, with its more advanced culture and liberty, could have exercised a powerful attraction upon her connationals beyond the frontiers. As a matter of fact such a Rumanian irredenta, *tending toward the monarchy* manifested itself for centuries. Already, Michael the Courageous, a Rumanian prince (1593–1601), made an effort to unite their territories with the empire of Rudolf II and similar endeavors were renewed during the seventeenth century, desiring to unite all the Rumanians under Habsburg rule.<sup>3</sup> The fear of the isolated Rumanian race before the growing Pan-Slav tendencies was also operative in the same direction. In 1848, some Rumanian leaders made the proposition to the German national assembly in Frankfurt that all the Rumanian settlements should be united in an autonomous country intimately connected with Austria. In the revolutionary period the Rumanians were ardent supporters of the Habsburg and almost until the collapse of the monarchy they stood in close connection with Vienna and their loyalty toward the dynasty was uncontested. One of their ablest political thinkers, Aurel C. Popovici, a leader of the Rumanian national party of Hungary who fled to Austria in order to avoid imprisonment in consequence of a pamphlet which he wrote against the policy of Magyarization, published as late as 1906 a sensational book under the title *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Grossösterreich* (“the United States of Greater Austria”) in which he advocated the federalization of the monarchy in an entirely loyal spirit toward the Habsburg. He tried to demonstrate that only a constitution based on the equality of the nations of the empire could save it and at the same time make it the center of attraction for the East and South.

All these facts, which could be easily supplemented by others, demonstrate sufficiently that the irredentistic movement tending toward Bucharest, which since the end of the nineteenth century alarmed more and more Austrian and Hungarian public opinion, was not at all an inevitable one but the result of an erroneous internal policy. A fatal irredenta directed against the Habsburg state was the less unavoidable because, since 1866, there were Hohenzollerns on the Rumanian throne who, in accordance with their education and traditions, were in harmony with the idea of a German–Hungarian–Rumanian alliance which was regarded by them as a bulwark against the growing waves of the Moscovite Pan-Slavism. As a matter of fact both King Charles and King Ferdinand were sincere supporters of this policy and did their best to check the Rumanian irredenta in Transylvania and to find a *modus vivendi* with the Habsburg monarchy.

That this policy of conciliation proved to be impossible, nay, that the irredentistic current grew rapidly in Transylvania was a conse-

<sup>3</sup> F. Kleinwächter, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

quence of the unhappy nationality policy of Hungary which by the Magyarization of the schools, by the vexatious control of the Rumanian church, and by the ousting of the Rumanian intelligentsia from the state life and local administration fostered the centrifugal tendencies of the Rumanian citizens. This irredenta was in the beginning rather sentimental and literary, but it assumed more and more political forms. A considerable part of the Rumanian intelligentsia of Hungary which could not find an appropriate livelihood at home or which came into collision with the Magyar juries, began to migrate to the Rumanian kingdom and became there a nucleus of an irredentistic campaign.

Immediately before the outbreak of the World War, the symptoms which indicated the growing acuteness of the Rumanian irredenta became more numerous. A Rumanian deputy in the Hungarian parliament, Vajda-Voevod, one of the most influential leaders of the Rumanians in Transylvania, wrote in 1913 in the October issue of the *Österreichische Rundschau* (the magazine of the leading Viennese circles) a passionate accusation against the Magyar chauvinistic policy, summoning Archduke Francis Ferdinand to carry on "the pacification of the Mongolia of Europe." In his vehement article the Rumanian leader denounced in detail the whole policy of artificial Magyarization.

These and similar complaints, a great part of which could not be refuted, heightened the exasperation of the Rumanian irredenta the more since a new wave of political persecution arose. At the same time the movement began to infiltrate also into the popular masses. The riot of Kismajtény and the criminal trial of Szatmár which followed it (1914) aroused a new current of ill-feeling. But something still more alarming happened in the same year. The Vicar-General of the bishopric of Hajdudorog, which was created for the Magyarization of the Rumanian uniates, became the victim of an infernal machine sent by unknown criminals by post. The detonation of this machine wounded seriously several priests of the diocese.

Such events made the antagonism between the two nations more and more acute and the *Liga Culturale* of Bucharest held a series of protest meetings in several cities of Rumania against the oppression of their brothers in Hungary. This current had such a violent repercussion that it began to alarm seriously even the so-called Great Policy of the monarchy. Immediately before the outbreak of the World War, Conrad von Hötzendorf, chief of the staff, declared in 1913 that Rumania must be regarded as lost to the Triple Alliance in consequence of the exasperation which the Magyar chauvinistic policy aroused among the Rumanians. Count Czernin, then minister at Bucharest and later foreign minister, admonished Vienna repeatedly that the nationality policy of Hungary must be changed because oth-



erwise Rumania would secede to the Entente. As a matter of fact the secret treaty between Rumania and the Triple Alliance was never published because the Rumanian government knew very well that it would have been swept away by the indignation of Rumanian public opinion. In one of his reports Count Czernin quoted a declaration of King Charles according to which "as things stand at the moment, Rumania in a war could not go with the monarchy. . . ."

The danger of the Rumanian problem in Transylvania began also to frighten the Berlin circles. When Emperor Wilhelm visited Archduke Ferdinand at Konopischt, this problem was one of the chief points of their conversation. The heir apparent attacked passionately the policy of Count Tisza in Transylvania and complained that the Hungarian Premier did not keep his previous promises made to him at Schönbrunn concerning the pacification of the Rumanians. The Archduke urged the Emperor to convince Count Tisza of the necessity of the revision of the Hungarian nationality policy (June, 1914). As a matter of fact the German ambassador at Vienna, von Tschirschky, was charged to admonish Count Tisza on every possible occasion of the urgency of a change in his policy toward the Rumanians. The Emperor told the Archduke that Count Tisza should always be addressed with the words: *Herr, gedenke der Rumänen* ("Sir remember the Rumanians!"). Under these difficulties Count Tisza had previously begun negotiations with the leaders of the Rumanians of Hungary, but the political atmosphere was already so envenomed and the point of view of the Hungarian Premier was so biased by his feudal attitude that he was incapable of settling any compromise. He was always under the sway of the rigidity of his general political conception in which the people did not exist as a conscious factor of public life. In this manner he saw in the Rumanian problem only some dissatisfied bishops and bank-directors and was convinced that this grave question could be solved by giving certain privileges to the gentlemen-like elements of the Rumanians, disregarding the social and economic grievances of the masses. He used to call the Rumanian problem "treading on the corns" of the Rumanian intelligentsia and admonished Magyar public opinion to discontinue the impolite practices, hurting in social life the sensitiveness of the Rumanians. In this way the most serious problem of the country, an almost cancerous disease of the social and political body appeared before the almighty leader as an "aching corn."

Both Vienna and Berlin followed with excited interest this new policy of Count Tisza. On one occasion the German Emperor tried personally to soften the Hungarian leader and to calm him with the assertion that "the Kingdom of Rumania did not demand a 'great action' on the part of the Hungarian government, but only concessions in smaller issues concerning the schools and local administration."

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At the same time the Emperor tried to play on another string by which he hoped to overcome the resistance of Count Tisza. According to a report of von Treutler:

His Majesty drew the attention of the Hungarian statesman also to the point that Hungary had every reason to stand firmly with the Germans against the Slav wave and pointed out that the best guaranty in the face of this danger would be a German Austria and a Magyar Hungary standing as firm pillars of the dual monarchy. . . . Count Tisza answered with enthusiastic agreement. . . .<sup>4</sup>

That means that in March, 1914, the German Emperor and the most influential statesman of the Habsburg monarchy were in complete accord as to the maintenance of the Dualistic Constitution and of that anti-Slav policy which made the gravest irredentistic problem of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the problem of Jugo-Slav unity insoluble and which caused ultimately the catastrophe of Sarajevo.

<sup>4</sup>*Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette.* Vol. XXXIX, Nos. 15,715, 15,716, 15,735, 15,736, 15,737.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE JUGO-SLAV IRREDENTA AND THE ROAD TOWARD THE WAR

Even that most dangerous irredenta which finally gave rise to the World War and destroyed the monarchy, the Jugo-Slav irredenta itself, cannot be regarded as an insolvable problem in its very nature, a problem which must have inevitably led to the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy. On the contrary, the chief factors of the Jugo-Slav situation would have made it possible to have the unavoidable tendency of the Jugo-Slav peoples toward national unity take a course propitious to the monarchy since national integration could have been achieved not from Belgrade but from Zagreb or Sarajevo.

As a matter of fact the Jugo-Slav irredenta, in one way or another, was really an unavoidable sociological necessity but the conditions and the process of its achievement depended to a large extent on the policy followed in this question. The whole history of the nineteenth century is a demonstration of a sociological law, according to which among masses of the same nationality, living under different sovereignties, there develops, with the rise of economic and cultural life, an irresistible current tending toward the unification of the whole national body into one single economic and political organization. The whole process of Jugo-Slav unity was in its essence the same as that of Italian or German unity. At the end of the nineteenth century, every careful observer could see that the tendency toward Jugo-Slav unity had become an inevitable mass-psychological necessity. The intrigues and rivalries of the great powers could retard or accelerate this process but they were not its real causes. Anyone with the slightest historical or sociological sense will repudiate *a limine* this naïve propagandistic point of view which holds that Jugo-Slav unity was the result of the undermining influence of Russian Pan-Slavism and of the diplomatic intrigues of the Entente, though both factors without doubt, have intensively ripened and accelerated the historical process.

#### A. THE DISPERSION OF THE JUGO-SLAV FORCES

The majority of the Jugo-Slav peoples of Europe, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, lived under foreign domination. The Austrian Slovenians under German, the Serb immigrants of Hungary under Magyar,<sup>1</sup> the Dalmatian Slavs under Italian, the Slavs of the

<sup>1</sup> Under the Turkish rule there was a slow, but continuous infiltration of Serb elements into the southern parts of Hungary. The largest wave of this immigration came in 1690 when about 40,000 Serb families under the leadership of the patriarch of Ipek were colonized by the imperial authorities in the counties of Pozsega, Szerém, and in Bácska. Emperor Leopold I bestowed upon them wide privileges which made their settlements almost a small state in the state.

Balkans under Turkish rule as subject peoples, without the leadership of a national historical class, without a state life or local self-government. Only the Croats were successful in safeguarding their state life and historical continuity to a certain extent.

The wars of the Habsburg monarchy against the Turks naturally aroused also the Balkan Slavs, languishing under Turkish exploitation, and threw into these peoples the sparks which kindled the Slav consciousness, leading after half a century of struggling for independence, in the peace of San Stefano (1878), to the acknowledgment of an independent Serb state. At the same time the independence of the small principality of Montenegro was also recognized by which Serb national life and culture acquired two new centers in the Balkans. From this moment, as a matter of fact, the Serbian state became the natural leader and continuer of the movement which tended toward the elimination of Turkish feudalism from Old Serbia and Macedonia, a movement which in the Balkan Wars of 1912, obtained in the main its aim parallel with the exuberant development of Serb national consciousness. During the decades of the national struggles there developed a vigorous Serb middle class and intelligentsia which absorbed eagerly the revolutionary ideas of the West and which, with a southern impetuosity and a ruthless cruelty acquired in the guerilla warfare with the Turks, embraced the program of entire Jugo-Slav unity. By this the Southern Slav world achieved two powerful centers of attraction: one in Zagreb, in the capital of the Croatian kingdom belonging to the Crown of St. Stephen; the other in Belgrade, in the capital of the independent Serbian kingdom.

These two centers necessarily exercised a great influence on the totality of the Southern Slav peoples, who were divided among six distinct state territories and inside these among a number of distinct provinces. These artificially divided parts of a common national body led for a long time a different economic and cultural life and the feeling of the local particularisms remained for an extended period stronger than the feeling of national unity. But all that which promoted in these national fragments the economic and cultural development augmented from year to year the natural cohesion among them, the consciousness of the ethnographic solidarity and the hatred of the foreign rule.

The comprehension of the nature of the whole process will be facilitated by the following table which shows the Jugo-Slav population of the various countries, distinguishing the Catholic Slavs (Croats, Slovenians) from the Orthodox Serbs. Though the statistical figures from the Balkan territories before the war were not entirely reliable, we can accept the calculations of R. W. Seton-Watson as an approximately correct estimate of the Jugo-Slav forces before the establishment of Jugo-Slav unity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Analyzed in detail in his book, *The Southern Slav Question* (London, 1911).

Tables XVII and XVIII show that more than twice as many Jugo-Slavs lived in the monarchy than outside of it, around the newly developed Serb centers, and, therefore, by the sheer force of numbers, according to the law of mass attraction, an irredentist movement toward the monarchy would have had a greater probability than a tendency toward secession from the monarchy. But beside the numerical conditions there have been even more powerful forces at work which could have changed the line of irredentism in favor of the monarchy. Thus, above all, the majority of the Jugo-Slav peoples living under Habsburg rule had a tremendous advantage over the Jugo-Slavs of the

TABLE XVII

## JUGO-SLAVS INSIDE THE HABSBERG MONARCHY (IN ROUND NUMBERS)

I. In Austria (Carniola, Carinthia, Styria, Istria, Dalmatia)	
a) Slovenes . . . . .	1,400,000
b) Croats . . . . .	700,000
c) Serbs . . . . .	100,000
II. In Hungary	
a) Croats . . . . .	300,000
b) Serbs . . . . .	500,000
III. In Croatia-Slavonia	
a) Croats . . . . .	1,750,000
b) Serbs . . . . .	650,000
IV. In Bosnia-Herzegovina	
a) Croats . . . . .	400,000
b) Serbs . . . . .	850,000
c) Mohammedan Serbo-Croats . . . . .	650,000
Total . . . . .	7,300,000

TABLE XVIII

## JUGO-SLAVS OUTSIDE THE HABSBERG MONARCHY

I. In Serbia . . . . .	2,600,000
II. In Montenegro . . . . .	300,000
III. In Turkey . . . . .	400,000
Total . . . . .	3,300,000

Balkans in economic organization, in general culture, and in administrative efficiency. Let us suppose that the monarchy, by the help of a Federal Constitution, had bestowed complete cultural autonomy and national independence upon its seven million Jugo-Slav citizens, that they could develop without any hindrance in national force, culture, and economic life. Would it have been a utopian dream to suppose that this Society of Nations around the Danube, counting fifty-one million population and in which, besides Vienna, Budapest, and Prague, Zagreb would have been the most important economic center of the Federation, would have exercised an irresistible attraction for those three million Balkan-Jugo-Slavs who were in dire need of a cultural, economic, and scientific leadership?

Moreover, the Habsburg monarchy would not have been under the necessity of hastening the work of integration, but could prepare it at leisure, slowly and cautiously, acquiring step by step new sympa-

thies and affinities. For, as a matter of fact, as has been mentioned, the consciousness of national solidarity grew comparatively slowly among the Jugo-Slav tribes. At the beginning they faced each other like foreigners with a distrustful attitude. The Croats and Slovenians of the monarchy in their Roman Catholic creed, brought up in the spirit of Western Roman culture, utilizing the Latin alphabet, belonging to the natural blood circulation of Vienna and Budapest, regarded themselves for a long period as distinct from and superior to their Serb kindred folk who formed the southwestern projection of the Byzantine culture, following the orthodoxy of the Greek Oriental religion, utilizing the Cyrillic alphabet and on whom the incessant Komitadjis fought and the bloody struggles against the Turks during centuries impressed a somewhat barbarous, Asiatic color. On the other hand, the Serb minority felt distrustful toward the Croat-Slovenian majority which it considered as vassals of Vienna and Budapest. Under such conditions it was quite natural that the Western majority did not care very much in the beginning for their poor Balkan relatives but it cherished the political ideal of the so-called Illyrism, the conception of which was the restoration of the unity of the three countries of the former Croatian crown. This Illyrism had no hatred at all against the Habsburgs, nay, it was the most decided affirmation of their empire which proved to be, through the powerful propaganda of Ljudovít Gaj, the most efficient ideological force by which Vienna gained the armed support of the Jugo-Slavs against the Magyar fight for independence. . . .<sup>3</sup> But even later, through almost three generations, the Croats played the rôle of the most loyal citizens of the Habsburgs, their regiments fought strenuously for the monarchy even during the World War, and the majority of the Catholic Jugo-Slavs followed the tradition of their great national leader, the Banus Jelačić, who wished to unite his race under the rule of the Habsburgs. Even as late as May 30, 1917, a resolution of the Jugo-Slav club vindicated without ambiguity the unification of all the Jugo-Slavs of the monarchy inside its frontiers.

But not only among the Catholic Southern Slavs of the empire but even in the Serb kingdom there were not lacking currents and aspirations which were in favor of a movement of unification tending toward the Habsburg monarchy. At the very beginning of the nineteenth century Kara Georg, the leader of the Serb national struggle against the Turks, asked repeatedly for the protection of Emperor Francis and declared himself willing to accept the Austrian suzerainty.<sup>4</sup> Similar endeavors continued in recent times also. A Serb Premier himself, Dr. Vladán Georgiević, narrated in the columns of a Viennese

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 96, 261-62, 310, 368 of the present book.

<sup>4</sup> For details see Alfred Fischel, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

newspaper, his proposition made to Aehrenthal, then Foreign Minister of the monarchy, in which he offered the willingness of Serbia to enter into the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, claiming in return only such a degree of independence as was possessed by Bavaria inside the German empire. But the Austrian statesman was not willing to give any consideration to this plan.<sup>5</sup> Immediately before the World War, in 1912, Nicolas Pašić, the Serb Premier, was also very anxious to build up a far-reaching economic approachment and asked Professor Masaryk, the present President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, then a leading member of the Czech opposition, to present his plan to Count Berchtold, the Foreign Minister of the monarchy. But this unfortunate statesman was not inclined to discuss the matter with the Czech scholar because in a typically Austrian spirit, he believed that "Masaryk wanted to create a commission and we are not here to help people to commissions. . . ." A similar intervention of Joseph Redlich and of Dr. I. M. Baernreither, a member of the Upper House, was equally unsuccessful.

#### B. THE ORIGINS OF THE JUGO-SLAV IRREDENTA

Confronting such and similar facts, it is not only not natural but it asks urgently for explanation of the cause of that vehement Jugo-Slav irredenta which getting a hold not only over the Serbs but over large masses of the Croatian and Dalmatian younger generations,<sup>6</sup> led directly to the dissolution of the monarchy. Whoever is desirous of obtaining an accurate answer to this question must read the detailed history of the movement for Jugo-Slav unity as it was described by R. W. Seton-Watson, P. Südland, and above all by Hermann Wendel.<sup>7</sup> Here I must restrict myself to the emphasis of some of the most salient facts which had the greatest influence in the formation of an irredentistic movement directed against the monarchy.

In this connection, before all, the oppressed conditions of the Jugo-Slav territories of the monarchy must be pointed out. The greatest political fault was the scandalous direction of the all-important Croat problem, the most outstanding events of which have been already described in another chapter.<sup>8</sup> Out of a country which could have become the natural Piedmont of the Jugo-Slavs the ruling classes of the monarchy made a dissatisfied province and later, in the immoral

<sup>5</sup> F. Kleinwaechter, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>6</sup> In July, 1917, the organ of the loyal Habsburgist Party in Croatia (the so-called Frank Party) emphasized the fact that 90 per cent of the Croatian intellectuals were following the "chimera of Jugoslavia."

<sup>7</sup> The books of R. W. Seton-Watson and of Hermann Wendel have been already quoted. The Austrian standpoint was elucidated by Südland, *Die Südslavische Frage und der Weltkrieg* (Wien, 1918).

<sup>8</sup> See pp. 366-75 of this book.

hands of Count Khuen Héderváry, a kind of a Balkan colony which could only be ruled by armed force and absolutism, accompanied by riots, student upheavals and, after Khuen, by attempts against the lives of the exponents of the system. Already in 1871 it had become manifest that the new era was on a bad track. In the so-called "Plot of Ogulin," a widely spread conspiracy was detected which could only be suppressed by considerable military force. At the same time the Slovenian minority was consequently hampered in its cultural progress, whereas Dalmatia, this brilliant center of old Slav culture, played the rôle of the Cinderella of the monarchy, where for a long period a dwarfish Italian minority ruled over a population 98 per cent of which was Jugo-Slav. Besides, Dalmatia was neglected both economically and culturally. About three hundred villages had no schools and in some regions the number of illiterates surpassed 90 per cent. The whole situation could be best characterized by the unique fact already mentioned that the capital of Dalmatia had no direct railway communication with Austria to which it belonged and Zara could only be reached by sea or by carriage.

These and similar evils could only be cured by an independent and self-determining state but the unification of the Jugo-Slav territories broke down before the barrier of the Dualistic Constitution of the German-Magyar hegemony. On the one hand, Hungary claimed a historical right over Dalmatia and later also over the occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina, but at the same time it was rigidly opposed to any effort tending toward the unification of the Jugo-Slav territories of the monarchy because this aspiration would have meant the end of the dualistic system, the breakdown of the German-Magyar hegemony. The Hungarian anti-Slav attitude found a staunch ally in the higher German bourgeoisie, especially in the leading financial circles, for which the dualistic system signified unassailable monopolies in all parts of the monarchy. This alliance became adamant by the protection of the German imperialism, for which a federalized Habsburg monarchy, led by a Slav majority, would have become valueless.

This attitude of the Magyar upper classes against Jugo-Slav unity remained unaltered even during the World War and gives a key to the understanding of Count Stephen Tisza's position which was often misrepresented by official propaganda and superficial foreign observers. When Count Tisza, the most steadfast and class-conscious defender of the big landed interests of the monarchy, tried to avoid the war with Serbia,<sup>9</sup> his policy was not the outcome of a desire for peace

<sup>9</sup> It must also be noted that his resistance against the catastrophe-policy of Vienna was very platonic and lukewarm. The truth is, rightly emphasized by Count Theodore Batthyány, a state minister and one of the best informed men of the war period, in his recent memoirs (published in Hungarian in 1927), that Tisza could have impeded the outbreak of the World War if he would have refused to accept the constitutional responsibility for the ultimatum sent to Serbia. Why? Because the



or of moderation. Tisza did not have any "pacifistic bias" at all. He was as convinced as all the other leading statesmen of the monarchy that a war with Russia was inevitable. Already in 1889 in a public speech he declared that the European war was imminent and urged the country to prepare for it.<sup>10</sup> As already mentioned, he twice broke violently the rules of the Hungarian Parliament in order to make the

old Emperor—at least at the beginning—seems to have received unwillingly the plan of the war party. The hatred of the majority of the peoples of Austria against the war adventure was manifest. Therefore, an energetic resistance on the part of the "solid" Hungary through her most powerful statesman, the Magyar "superman" would have been sufficient to counterbalance the influence of the Viennese war party. But Tisza alleviated his conscience by purely verbal arguments. Later he became the most ardent supporter of the war party, helped to make the ultimatum unacceptable for Serbia, moved for the refusal of Sir Grey's conciliation plan (July 31, 1914), and already two weeks earlier went to the German ambassador emphasizing the necessity of the war. (The revocation of his former standpoint earned for him the enthusiastic marginal remark of the German Emperor: *Na, doch mal ein Mann!* "Now, there's a man for you!"). This conversion of Count Tisza, of the "strong man" of the monarchy, "the ablest and most striking political figure" of the period, became a riddle for many foreign students and must remain such for all those who try to explain the decisions of the leading statesmen exclusively on the basis of individual psychology instead of analyzing the general mass-psychological situation. The key for the solution of this "problem" lies in the fact that Tisza, like all other Hungarian premiers, could never dare to oppose the will of the Emperor or that of the dominant court-groups at Vienna. The dangers of such a resistance would have been too great, due to the fact that there was never a real majority public opinion behind the Magyar premier who represented not the country, but only the ruling oligarchy maintaining the Dualistic System. (See the analysis of this system on pp. 357 ff. of the present book.) In the case of conflict (as the case of 1906-7 clearly showed) Vienna could always mobilize against the ruling classes the overwhelming majority of the country, the Magyar proletariat and the nationalities, promising them universal suffrage. And universal suffrage with secret ballot would have meant immediately the end of the latifundist system and the Magyar supremacy in the monarchy, two things which represented the deepest aspirations of the Magyar feudal classes whose uncontested leader Count Tisza was. Therefore the position of a Hungarian premier was not like that of the premier of England, backed by majority public opinion and practically independent of the Crown, but of a royal commissary, an exponent of the feudal interests, entirely dependent on the will of the king. That was the situation when Count Tisza saw in those critical weeks that his memoranda were repudiated in a rather harsh way by the monarch and when he saw the growing war passion of the ruling militaristic and diplomatic circles. His resistance broke completely, *laudabiliter se subiecit*. The tragedy of Hungary was sealed.

But this was only his derivative sin, the consequence of his whole system, which by the rigidity of its feudal economic structure, by the disrespect of the Nationality Law, by the maintenance of the corrupt electoral law made the racial problems of the monarchy insolvable and led directly to the explosion of the Yugoslav irredenta. Therefore, one of his greatest admirers, but a man of independence and a broader conception, Mr. Glaise-Horstenau, is right in calling him "the grave digger of his beloved thousand-year-old fatherland" (*op. cit.*, p. 112).

Exactly the same thing happened with the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina which was the beginning of the apocalyptic ride of the monarchy. Again a Magyar statesman, Count Julius Andrassy, was chiefly responsible for it. Now we know from the reminiscences of his son (Count Julius Andrassy, *The Antecedents of the World War*, I, 20-21, in Hungarian) that the founder of the Dualistic System opposed very energetically this scheme. Later, he became its leading protagonist. Again the Hungarian premier was an instrument of Habsburg expansion and was unable to maintain his original standpoint.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Redlich, *Kaiser Franz Joseph*, p. 406.

Army Bill accepted which the military circles demanded from him as a necessity for the future war. His attitude toward international relations was a strictly Machiavellian one. He wrote to the Emperor in his first memorandum for the maintenance of peace (July 1, 1914) the characteristic words: "In face of the present Balkan situation it would be my smallest concern to find an apt *casus belli*. When the time comes for the striking of the first blow, it is easy to construct from the various questions a case for war. But before this we must create a diplomatic constellation which will make the relations between the powers less unfavorable for us."<sup>11</sup> His famous *politique de longue main* was not a peace policy, but the preparation of a new military alliance for the future war.<sup>12</sup> His "moderation" was determined by two chief considerations: In case of a defeat, the whole monarchy would be lost; in case of a victory, the annexation of the Jugo-Slav territories of the Balkans would be demanded by all those military and diplomatic circles which were aware of the fact that without the unification of the Jugo-Slav tribes, the irredentistic danger would continue and envenom as before the whole atmosphere of the monarchy. But annexation and unification would have signified Trialism or Federalism, the end of the German and Magyar hegemony. And exactly this was the most dreaded thing for the beneficiaries of the big landed interests. Count Tisza upheld this leading point of view until the last. When Serbia and Montenegro were occupied by the victorious Central Powers and some leading Viennese circles, influenced by Conrad, were for a final annexation of them in order to solve the Jugo-Slav problem by a radical operation, Count Tisza bitterly opposed this policy. And doing this he was motivated again not by a feeling of moderation of justice toward the Serbian state, or by cautiousness to avoid further international complication, but by the perfectly clear vision that the unification of the Jugo-Slavs would lead immediately to the federalization of the monarchy. He favored, therefore, the mutilation of Serbia by a strategic correction of its frontiers, by giving parts of it to its rival neighbors, he favored a policy of complete economic domination over the defeated state. Generally speaking, his point of view was the continuation and petrification of the *status quo*, the maintenance of Serbia in its position of a state embryo, incapable of any serious independent economic and political life. When, after the defeat, he insulted, as it was shown, the Serb leaders at Sarajevo, he was animated by the same fears and hates toward the Jugo-Slav world. Therefore, the whole attitude of the powerful Hungarian statesman during the World War was completely in harmony with his fundamental dogma of the Dualistic Constitution, but his plan, if successful, would have perpetu-

<sup>11</sup> *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges 1914* (Wien, 1919), I, 17.

<sup>12</sup> S. B. Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, II, 191-92.

ated the tension in the Balkans and the irredentas in the monarchy. The war would have meant only a breathing space for new and more vehement convulsions. The other bulwark of the Dualistic Constitution, the old Emperor himself, shared completely this point of view of Magyar feudalism and regarded it as an axiom that Jugo-Slav unification must be crushed. In an autographed letter written to William II immediately after the catastrophe of Sarajevo, he advocated the plan of a Balkan League which "will only be possible if Serbia . . . is eliminated as a political factor in the Balkans."<sup>13</sup>

Under the pre-war conditions just analyzed, the Jugo-Slav problem of the monarchy became more and more inflamed because it is in the nature of irredentism that such a tendency grows in a direct ratio with the economic and cultural development of the respective territories. This situation was further aggravated by the fatal foreign policy of the monarchy which, seeing a mortal danger in the Jugo-Slav aspiration for unification, was by necessity animated by the purpose of checking the Serbian kingdom in its independent economic and political development and of retaining it in its rôle of an abortive state embryo. This unfortunate attitude, which later threw the Serbs and large masses of the other Jugo-Slavs into the arms of the Russian propaganda, found already a symbolical expression in 1876 when, during the fight of the Serbs and Montenegrinians for independence against the Turkish rule, Magyar public opinion broke out in clamorous manifestations for the Turks. A sword of honor was sent from Budapest to the Turkish generalissimus and Svetozar Miletić, the popular leader of the Serbs of Hungary and member of the Hungarian parliament, was imprisoned for several years because he tried to organize a Serbian volunteer troop in Hungary in order to help their Balkan brothers in their struggle against Turkish absolutism. Svetozar Miletić became insane in prison and his tragic figure constituted one of those sentimental barriers which separated the Serbs from the ruling dualistic system.

#### C. THE DANGER-SPOT, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

But the most important issue which fomented irredentistic feelings among the Jugo-Slavs was the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878. Extensive and controversial literature has been written concerning this expansion of the monarchy but its sense and meaning is quite clear. The fatal decision had two chief motives. One was the old desire for conquest of the Habsburg imperialism which, after so many humiliations, became again victorious and could recompense itself with an important province for its losses in Italy. If anyone should deny this motive, I would simply allude to an interesting docu-

<sup>13</sup> *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges 1914*, I, Teil, p. 3.

ment which sheds sufficient light on the real purposes of the leading circles. Even at the end of 1913, that is, half a year before the catastrophe, this Habsburg empire, pressed by so many unsolved problems and preparing for new wars under the dreadful burdens of its irredentas, continued feverish diplomatic negotiations for acquiring colonies in the territories of the then vacillating Turkish sovereignty, in Cilicia, a province in Asia Minor. Obviously, they did not yet have sufficient irredentas and they were anxious to supplement them with an Asiatic one, and to excite the Turkish world, too, against their empire. Count Berchtold had no such scruples when he declared before the German ambassador that "especially in the circles of Hungarian parliamentarians there is a keen desire to get an economic footing in Asia Minor."<sup>14</sup> The booty of Bosnia was not enough to satisfy the appetite of dualistic imperialism.

The other cause for the war of occupation against Bosnia-Herzegovina was the growing desire to check the natural extension of the Serb state and of Jugo-Slav unity. The Serbs have interpreted the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in this manner from the beginning and the wrath of national paroxysm shook the whole Jugo-Slav world in the Balkans, a paroxysm skilfully utilized by Russian propaganda in fomenting the conviction that against the mortal enemy, Austria, Serbia can trust only a Pan-Slav protectorate. The Jugo-Slav world considered the new provinces conquered by Austria as the oldest center of its national culture and, therefore, the Habsburg occupation was regarded as the projected arm of the German imperialism for the frustration of Jugo-Slav unity. From this moment the Serbs became implacable enemies of the monarchy and the occupation of the new provinces, imagined by Count Julius Andrásy, then foreign minister and author of the project, as a simple *Parademarsch* (a march in dress parade), became a very bloody adventure involving great and serious losses in life and property. After it an extremely envenomed press campaign was started against the monarchy both in Serbia and in foreign countries, exciting also public opinion inside the monarchy. This anti-Austrian feeling broke out in 1882 in a stubborn and widely spread riot in certain regions of southern Dalmatia and of the occupied provinces (the so-called "upheaval of Crivoscie"), the suppression of which cost a real warfare of nine months during which the Delegations were repeatedly convoked and an extra appropriation of thirty million florins were granted for the pacification of the "riotous provinces." The dual monarchy was compelled to mobilize an armed force of nearly a hundred thousand men against the Jugo-Slavs and its victory was filled with bad forebodings because regular military enrolments could not be carried on for long years and the immediate

<sup>14</sup> *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinete*, Vol. XXXVII, Part II, Nos. 15,045, 15,048, 15,052, 15,054, 15,057, 15,069, 15,070, 15,072, 15,079, 15,100.

effect of the military expedition was that nearly 10,000 men emigrated from the monarchy to the territory of Montenegro.

This incident aggravated very much the acuteness of the Jugo-Slav problem, during which the Joint Minister of Finance, Szlávy, acknowledged publicly in the Delegations that the very idea of the occupation of the provinces was to drive a wedge into Pan-Slavism. This policy could have been defended as an act of prospective self-defense from the point of view of a higher cultural mission if, at the same time, it had made the way free toward the national and economic development of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the unification and self-government of the Jugo-Slav territories of the monarchy. But just the opposite happened. The monarchy took under its control, without any far-reaching conception, the new provinces, simply as a capitalistic colony. In consequence of the Austro-Hungarian rivalry, already analyzed, not even the constitutional position of the occupied territories could be determined. Bosnia-Herzegovina was put under a military commander, under the protection of whom an intense economic activity was started but not from the point of view of the interests of the inhabitants but from that of the capitalistic colonial enterprises. The province was administered by German, Magyar, and Polish-Jewish officials who did not have the least idea of the real needs of the population. Bosnia-Herzegovina remained the classic country of illiteracy (90 per cent!) and the government based its power, primarily, on the Mohammedan feudalism which continued its rule over the Christian Slav bondsmen. The old Habsburg practices were renewed and the Joint Finance Minister, Kállay, the head of the civil government, was anxious to promote artificially a specific "Bosnian nationalism" against the Jugo-Slav tendencies toward unification. Besides, the system of spies was far more virulent than in the other parts of the monarchy and the pressure of the government on the public schools was so exacerbating that student strikes were not infrequent and the high school of Mostar was closed for a whole year (1913).

This system aroused the most vehement form of Jugo-Slav irredentism in the new province. The Balkanic atmosphere; the Southern romanticism, not reckoning with real facts; the confused revolutionary propaganda of half-educated young men, systematically exploited by the Pan-Slavistic agents; the brutal terror of the military absolutism piled high the popular passions which exploded at Sarajevo. But even previously, in 1910, a Serb student fired at General Varešanin, the military commander of the province. The attempt was unsuccessful and the student committed suicide. According to a widely spread rumor the general kicked the corpse of the unfortunate youth. Perhaps this story was only invented but it became one of those legends which created the type of the Jugo-Slav revolutionaries from which also the murderer of Archduke Ferdinand was recruited. (We

must not forget that the catastrophe of Sarajevo was the seventh attempt in four years directed against the representatives of the monarchy by exalted young men!) This revolutionary type united within itself, in a strange and awful way, the national idealism of a Mazzini with the violence of a Bakunin and a nebulous ideology of Communism. Many members of this revolutionary generation studied in the West and some were in direct connection with Trotsky and the Russian *émigrés*.

One of the most terrifying products of this feverish and envenomed public atmosphere was the widely diffused conviction which I heard personally from serious Jugo-Slav intellectuals concerning the brothels of Sarajevo. These ill-famed places were generally known in the military circles of the monarchy, both by their number and their quality. The Austrian authorities showed probably a cynical indulgence toward them but scarcely a greater one than in the other great military garrisons of the monarchy. Jugo-Slav public opinion, however, shared by many from the middle class, was that the brothels were an intentional creation of the Austrian policy in order to envenom the blood and the morals of the native population by the lust of the colonizing foreigners. A more dreadful accusation was perhaps never formulated against foreign invaders!

These morbid conditions, growing worse year by year, were not bettered by the final annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina which was forced through by Aehrenthal in 1908 among many diplomatic blunders. This unfortunate and thoroughly unmotivated diplomatic coup (for the annexation did not make any *de facto* change in the situation of the provinces, whereas *de jure* it made the Habsburg imperialism more odious) resulted in drawing the circle of the Entente more tightly around the monarchy and in inciting speeches in the Serb *Skupština* against it.

#### D. THE ATTITUDE OF THE DANUBE MONARCHY TOWARD SERBIA AND THE PIG WAR

Besides Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the third and most important current of the Jugo-Slav irredenta was born in the Serbian kingdom. This robust peasant people, full of life, scarcely liberated from the Turkish yoke of many centuries, raised in a medieval warlike atmosphere, proud of its democratic constitution, unaccustomed to feudal pressure, a classic type of an independent, self-conscious small peasantry, naturally felt most clearly its national aims and the obstacles to the unification of its race. At the same time the terrible situation of the Christian population in Macedonia, the eternal fights against the Turks, and among the various armed bands hired by foreign imperialism or Balkan interests was a powerful incentive toward unity and elimination of foreign rule. Year by year, 2,000 political

murders were committed on the average in Macedonia, a country with less than three million inhabitants. And in these statistics the rapines, ravishments, and arsons were not included. In this bloody chaos the Serbs felt themselves the most interested.<sup>15</sup> The young nation was exasperated by the situation of its kindred folks within the frontiers of the Habsburg monarchy, and felt continually on its own body the lashes of Viennese policy. Instead of playing the rôle of a protector and educator toward its young neighbor, Austria regarded it from the beginning as an undesirable competitor, the material and political growth of which must be checked at any cost. Foreign Minister Count Kálnoky (1881–1895) informed his Minister in Belgrade that “he did not count on Serbia adhering to us for love; she will have to do so from fear and material interests and these I consider as far more reliable motives than the changing feelings of such half-wild peoples. . . .”<sup>16</sup>

This unhappy principle remained to the end the ruling idea of official policy in spite of some diplomatic enunciations in a milder tone. King Milan, the tyrannous Obrenović, became a real vassal of the Viennese court who under the protection of Austrian arms continued his fatal policy against his own people (1882–1889). King Milan saw more and more clearly that his position was becoming precarious against the growing national consciousness of his people. On one occasion he ran to Vienna in order to convince the leading circles of the uncertainty of his crown. Concerning this episode, Crown Prince Rudolf wrote the following reminiscence and his words throw much light on the Balkan policies of the Habsburg monarchy. The Crown Prince narrates that in the Foreign Ministry the Serb King was told that:

He should not see everything so black but should continue calmly his previous course without provoking a public scandal. This is easy to say, thought the poor king to himself, and openly declared both before the Emperor and Count Kálnoky that only two roads were open for him: either to turn and to throw himself into the arms of the Russian Pan-Slavistic policy or to remain a good Austrian and take up a struggle against his own people. For such a course, however, it would be necessary that on the frontiers Austrian troops should be concentrated.

Meanwhile the situation became so acute in Serbia that King Milan made concrete propositions in Vienna concerning the annexation of Serbia by the Habsburg monarchy (1885).<sup>17</sup> It is a startling fact that a sovereign asked for the incorporation of his country,

<sup>15</sup> The moral and political impossibility of the *status quo* was stated by René Pinon in, *L'Europe et l'Empire Ottoman. Les Aspects Actuels de la Question d'Orient* (Paris, 1908), pp. 152–54.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted after Corti by R. W. Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo: A Study into the Origins of the Great War* (London, 1925), p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> Bibl, *op. cit.*, II, 424.

against the will of his people, by a foreign and hated empire and it demonstrated the extreme envenomed state of the Jugo-Slav problem. As a matter of fact, the system of Milan could only rule Serbia by means of an Asiatic absolutism, delivering the little state completely both economically and politically to Austria. This policy poured fresh oil on the fire of Pan-Slavism and Jugo-Slav irredentism. In the seething atmosphere of political imprisonments and murders a new generation was rising, intoxicated by the most radical socialistic and anarchistic ideas of the West and regarding the history of Italian unity as a symbol: Italy too had sighed in former times under the yoke of the Habsburgs. . . . The conception of a new Serbia, of a Piedmont of the Jugo-Slav world conquered the souls of the youth. . . . At the same time these young men who began to attend frequently foreign universities rejected more and more the antiquated conception of a Serb, Croat, and Slavonian patriotism and under the influence of the Western ideas, especially under the sway of the mighty personality of Professor Masaryk at the University of Prague, the consciousness of Jugo-Slav unity was further developed.

In 1903, three events of great importance indicated that this new public spirit stirred already the very masses of the Jugo-Slav world. The Macedonian uprising against the Turkish rule, the murder of King Alexander, the son of Milan, and of his wife by the military revolution at Belgrade (which broke out in consequence of the enforcing of an absolutistic constitution) and the fall of the corrupt and hated system of Count Khuen in Croatia were manifestations that the Jugo-Slav revolution all around was progressing. . . . Under its new, very democratic constitution and influenced more and more by the Pan-Slavistic agitation, Serbia came into increased conflict with the monarchy. The most statesmanlike moderation and the introduction of deep organic reforms would have been necessary in the dual monarchy in order to avoid the eruption of the Jugo-Slav crisis. But just the opposite course was followed. Under the pressure of the overwhelming feudal interests, the Austro-Hungarian government started a light-minded and pernicious customs war, the so-called Pig War, with Serbia (1906).<sup>18</sup>

There is not the least doubt that this frivolous and brutal economic policy, detrimental not only to Serbia, but also to the great majority of the Austro-Hungarian population, was "the chief cause"

<sup>18</sup> The most important literature on the customs war crisis is in the following:

Von einem aufrichtigen Freunde der Österreichischen Landwirtschaft: *Der Serbische Handelsvertrag, ein Sieg der Agrarier* (Wien, 1908).

Alfred Simitsch, Reichsritter von Hohenblum, *Materialien zur Vorbereitung des Österreich-Ungarischen Handelsvertrages mit Serbien* (Wien, 1903).

Otto von Zwiedineck, *Die handelspolitischen Beziehungen Serbiens zu Österreich-Ungarn*, Harms, *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, Band 6.

Karl Renner, *Die Aera Hohenblum. Der Ruin unserer Staats- und Volkswirtschaft* (Wien, 1913).



which made Serbia the irreconcilable enemy of the Habsburg monarchy. The responsibility for the World War lies to a great extent on those circles which provoked this customs war, a real class war, against the interests of the Serb producers and Austro-Hungarian consumers. Since 1882 the monarchy had had a fairly liberal commercial treaty with Serbia which made a comparatively close economic relation possible between the two countries. Before 1905, 60 per cent of the grain and 95 per cent of the cattle imported by the monarchy came from Serbia, whereas 87 per cent of the Serbian imports were furnished by the monarchy.

As early as 1903 this highly beneficial commercial treaty was attacked in an impetuous way by the big landed interests both in Hungary and in Austria. Count Stephen Tisza and Ritter von Hohenblum were the chief champions who favored the exclusion of Serbian agricultural imports, especially cattle, from the monarchy. This agitation, backed by the all-powerful political influence of the big estates, made it impossible to renew the commercial treaty with Serbia in 1906. The Austro-Hungarian government presented almost impossible conditions to Serbia: they were not to bring in live cattle and at the same time were obliged to buy all materials for railway construction and all war munitions from the monarchy. This cruel and narrow-minded policy was motivated not only by the traditional anti-Slav feeling of the monarchy and the rapacious agrarian interests, but it had also two other motives. The one was to put Serbia under pressure to recede from the Serb-Bulgarian customs-union treaty, already unanimously accepted by the parliament of Sofia at the end of 1905. The other, to induce the Serb government to give an order for twenty-six million francs to be expended in cannon manufacture to the Austrian Skoda plant. And though Serbia withdrew from the customs union and gave other signs of its conciliatory spirit, the pressure of the agrarian interests both in the Austrian and the Hungarian parliaments was so ruthless that the Foreign Minister was compelled to abandon the successful negotiations with Serbia. And when, in 1908, a new provisional solution was inaugurated, though the international atmosphere was already full of dangers, the agrarian circles of the monarchy, led by Ritter von Hohenblum, Count Tisza, Count Berchtold, and Count Stürgkh, started an envenomed propaganda against the liquidation of the customs war; and in Austria the government was menaced with the threat of concentrating peasant masses around the Viennese parliament. This infamous policy made the prices of meat at Vienna so excessive that public opinion of the cities demanded the importation of meat from Argentina. At the same time it aroused a degree of hatred and exasperation in Serbia, the like of which was only surpassed in the crisis of annexation.

Following this episode the Serb people regarded the Habsburg

empire not only as a national enemy but as the promoter of a plan of trying to starve the whole country, which at the beginning of the customs war had no commercial possibilities except in the Austrian markets. At the same time this was the period when the pressure of Hungarian absolutism on Croatia was the most vexatious. It is no wonder that the Serbian and the Croatian disaffection met each other and that the consciousness of Jugo-Slav national unity was further developed as a symbol of national independence and economic progress. It is quite natural that this hypertense situation was ruthlessly and demagogically exploited by the growing Pan-Slavistic propaganda against the dual monarchy. The governments in Belgrade and Cetinje became more and more obedient instruments of the Russian diplomacy. At the same time the various Serb literary and cultural societies assumed increasingly a political color for the unification of the Jugo-Slavs. Whereas, the earlier association of this kind, as the *Zora* ("Aurora," founded at Vienna in 1863) or the *Omladina* ("Youth," founded in 1866 in Novisad) maintained more or less their legal and peaceful character, the *Narodna Obrana* ("Society of National Defense"), established in 1909 after the Bosnia Crisis, employed more and more provocative hues. Finally, a secret society was started in 1911, the so-called "Black Hand" or "Union or Death," which under the leadership of the demoniac personality, Dragutin Dimitrijević (in 1913 he became head of the Intelligence Bureau of the Serb General Staff), frankly accepted the methods of murder and terrorism as the unique means for unification and liberation. The Serbian government made unsuccessful (probably not quite seriously meant) efforts to check or suppress its activities which made the revolutionary fever more and more acute and led directly to the murder-plot of Sarajevo.

This growing danger did not escape the attention of the more thoughtful statesmen and observers. Conrad von Hötzendorf saw quite clearly that conditions were becoming unbearable. Under the sway of these pessimistic prospects, after 1906, when he became the Chief of the Staff, he urged constantly and passionately a preventive war against Serbia,<sup>19</sup> but also a radical solution of the Jugo-Slav problem through the unification of all Slav territories, giving them a complete autonomy. It became manifest that without the solution of this problem, the Jugo-Slav irredenta would explode and lead to world complications, a world war, the chances for the success of which would become worse from year to year in consequence of the advance of the French and English policy in creating the Entente against imperi-

<sup>19</sup> "Not counting the period 1906-1912 . . . it may be noted that in the seventeen months from January 1, 1913, to July 1, 1914, the chief of staff had, according to his own statements, urged war against Serbia no less than twenty-five times" (S. B. Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, II, 224). And the reader should not forget that Conrad was not an isolated maniac but the exponent of the all-powerful military and diplomatic leading circles!

alistic Germany. And when, in 1912, the Balkan War inflamed the national consciousness of the Serbs still more and the armed interference of the monarchy seemed to be inevitable, Conrad von Hötzen-dorf, who became for the second time Chief of Staff, urged passionately the military solution of the Jugo-Slav problem. He declared in one of his memorandums that "the union of the southern Slavs is one of those nation-moving phenomena which cannot be denied or artificially prevented," the only question to consider was whether this union should be created under the protection of the monarchy or against it. This statement of the Chief of Staff was almost a verbal repetition of a diagnosis made a year earlier by an English observer, by R. W. Seton-Watson, who, in his book on the Jugo-Slav problem, said:

The movement in favor of Croato-Serb unity has many obstacles to surmount. . . . But as surely as Germany and Italy have won their liberty and unity, so surely will it be won by the Croato-Serb race. The real problem is the manner of its achievement: and here we are at once faced by two alternatives. Unity can be obtained either inside or outside the Habsburg monarchy, either by the latter's aid and under its auspices, or in defiance of its opposition. . . . Upon Austria's choice of alternatives depends the future of the Habsburg monarchy. . . .

And though the number of those who recognized the fatal importance of the Jugo-Slav problem grew continually and though, as we have seen, the later victim of this problem, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, urged desperately its solution, not only nothing happened in this direction but the national consciousness of the Slavs of the monarchy was constantly irritated, whereas against Serbia the traditional hostile policy was continued. In the same year in which the victorious arms of the Balkan Slavs swept out the corrupt Turkish rule, heightening almost disproportionately the national consciousness of the Southern Slavs, in Croatia the system of open absolutism envenomed public opinion and led to repeated political attempts against the life of the hated exponents of this rule. And when the bullet of a young fanatic directed against the detested banus, "the Royal Commissary" of the Budapest government, failed to hit its target but killed instead a high employee accompanying the banus (June, 1912), an enthusiastic Austrian patriot, Theodore von Sosnosky wrote the following diagnosis of the situation:

As long as the present system continues, as long as the Croatian Banus is not the representative of the Croatian people but the exponent of the Hungarian government . . . the system of political murders cannot be eliminated. . . . Therefore, it is unspeakably silly to describe this attempt as the individual deed of a single man as the official press tried to cause it to be believed. . . . On the contrary it was a typical symptom, an early flash of lightning from heavy thunder clouds which are gathering menacingly in the southeastern part of the monarchy. . . .<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Die Politik im Habsburger Reiche* (Berlin, 1913), II, 366-67.

Golden words, which were equally true of the later attempts and especially of the catastrophe of Sarajevo.

The official circles of the monarchy, however, did not learn anything. No one dared to attack the holy dogma of the Dualistic Constitution but the whole statesmanship of the empire was exhausted in a diplomacy which tried to impede Serbia in its natural development. During the Balkan War the monarchy mobilized and the military circles would have liked to interfere in order to break down the victorious Serb Piedmont. . . . For this purpose a disgusting legend was officially propagated concerning the terrible mutilation of the Austrian consul in Prizren, Mr. Prochaska. Not a single word of this rumor was true as it was simply intended as a means of propaganda for the contemplated war. And when, under the pressure of the Great Powers, the armed interference of the monarchy was prevented, Bulgaria was encouraged by the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy to the second Balkan War against Serbia. After the failure of this experiment, the dual monarchy was successful in carrying out, under the disguise of the Albanian national independence, a feeling quite rudimentary at that time, the establishment of an impotent Albanian buffer state serving as a barrier between Serbia and the sea (in order that the economic dependence of Serbia should be maintained) and as a naval base for Austrian and Italian imperialism. The cup of despair was filled for Serbia. She could use no other solution than a war against the hated dual monarchy under the protection of her big Russian brother. And Count Polzer-Hoditz, the chief of the Cabinet of the late Emperor Carl, the last Habsburg, after demonstrating long and copiously the innocence of the monarchy in the World War comes, as a kind of Freudian outburst after a long "Verdrängung," to the following confession:

Nobody thought of revising our Balkan policy for this would have involved a complete change also in the inner policy. The understanding that the hatred of Serbia and Rumania . . . was caused by ourselves, by our custom policy, that the Southern Slavs did not want anything else than to unite themselves and to get an outlet to the sea, that by our unfortunate Albanian policy we have closed the last valve and therefore an explosion became inevitable: this understanding was never attained by the ruling elements. . . .<sup>21</sup>

#### E. THE GROWING DANGER OF THE WAR

In this manner a mass-psychological situation was created inside the monarchy and on its frontiers which forced the dualistic system, step by step, toward explosion, making the struggle between Habsburg imperialism and Russian Pan-Slavism more imminent from year to year. It became almost a political dogma that this life and death

<sup>21</sup> Arthur Graf Polzer-Hoditz, *Kaiser Karl* (Wien, 1928), p. 246.

struggle was totally inevitable and in the last decades the leading military circles in both camps prepared feverishly for the final clash. And it was really inevitable in the sense that nothing serious was undertaken for the solution of a vital problem, the colossal gravity of which was clearly felt by all intelligent observers, both national and foreign, as the immediate cause of the approaching historical catastrophe. This conviction was expressed with an almost cruel lucidity by the German ambassador at Vienna, von Tschirschky, in a report addressed to the chancellor of the empire, Bethmann-Hollweg, November 18, 1912. The ambassador made an analysis of public opinion of the non-Slav political and military circles at Vienna and summarized his observations as follows: "We are tumbling into the war" (to which the German Emperor made the marginal note: "Drifting!"). The ambassador emphasized that this war would be very popular in this camp if it should be utilized for the solution of the Jugo-Slav problem in accordance with the German point of view. The general staff and the feudal circles were extremely depressed and ashamed that the monarchy did not dare to draw the conclusions of the situation.

They see with astonishment and anguish the sudden [It was "sudden" only for the official circles!] swelling of the Slav wave and on all lips is fluttering the anxious question, what will happen to Austria? The Germans are disheartened. One of their leaders told me recently in the House of Lords: "That is the end of the Germans in Austria." [Marginal remark of Emperor William II: *Kopf hoch!*]. They will lose all influence in the monarchy and I ask myself if they will not be compelled to secede. . . .

Later the ambassador called attention to the fact that it was becoming more and more difficult to retain the seven million Jugo-Slavs inside the boundaries of the monarchy. "A new Lombardo-Venezia has been born in the southeastern part of the empire, an irredenta which must unavoidably fall beyond the frontiers to the new great, independent Serb state. . . ." The ambassador asserted that the ruling circles scarcely believed that the Slav regiments could be utilized against Serbia in the case of war and the pessimism of many is so great that they think that "after the dissolution of Turkey, Austro-Hungary will be next." (Marginal remark of the Emperor: "*So was!*") The ambassador stated with despair that after the Balkan victories the religious difference among the Jugo-Slavs will no longer be a serious obstacle for their national unity. Von Tschirschky summarized his conclusions in the following weighty and characteristic words:

The idea of a united Empire, the feeling of solidarity disappears more and more. . . . The picture which the internal structure of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy shows at the present time is not a cheerful one, also not cheerful from the point of view of the German ally. It would require

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great wisdom and energy of the central government [Marginal remark of William II: *Mit Blut und Eisen sind die Kerle noch zu kurieren* ("By blood and iron the fellows can still be cured.")] to maintain the centrifugal forces of the strongly developing Slav peoples serviceable for the purpose of the state and to carry on further a policy of a great power beside the German ally. . . .<sup>22</sup>

But from where could this wisdom and energy have emanated in the period of the dissolution and approaching catastrophe, when these qualities were totally lacking for half a century under circumstances far more propitious for the monarchy? It may well be doubted whether, after the victorious Balkan War of the Southern Slavs, any amount of wisdom and energy would have been useful so completely had the monarchy lost the confidence and esteem of the Jugo-Slavs and its other nationalities. Under such circumstances and under the growing pressure of the Pan-Slavistic current only the road to war remained open.

Regarding things from this perspective, only the roughest outline of which have I been able to give, the problem of responsibility for the World War gains another sense and significance. This immense literature which has been developed around this question is, according to my opinion, in its largest part worthless because in a naïve and childish way it seeks only individual responsibilities in such events which were not the work of individual men but the results of old institutions, of heavy national and social sins. These naïve historians (who are to a large extent the so-called "war criminals" themselves) investigate only the calendar date of the outburst of the world crisis and they forget that if the catastrophe had not broken out in 1914, it could have exploded (always under the hypothesis of *rebus hic stantibus*, under the existing national and social complications) some years later, as it was already near to explosion in 1887 and 1912.<sup>23</sup> No diplomatic *finesses*, no Kellogg Pact, or treaties of amity could have avoided this explosion whose real roots were in the social, economic, and national structure both of Russia and of the Dual Monarchy. The point where the feudal, pseudo-constitutional political structure of the former monarchy, clinging desperately to its dualistic monopolies, impeding the development of the overwhelming majority of its population and partly also, that of the neighboring states, came into conflict with the Pan-Slavistic, militaristic currents of the Czarist autocracy longing for Constantinople and the half sentimental, half imperialistic "lib-

<sup>22</sup> *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette*, XXXIII, No. 12,402.

<sup>23</sup> How the peace of Europe in the two decades before the World War was repeatedly saved by the firmness of the German diplomacy against the sturdy war passion of Austria, was aptly shown by Alfred Frankenfeld in his *Österreichs Spiel mit dem Kriege* (Dresden, 1928).

eration" of the Slav brothers . . . here was the real danger spot of Europe for three generations. All the other factors, the English-German capitalistic rivalries, the lust for revenge in France, the Italian irredentism, the sabre-rattling dementia of the Kaiser, his pathological *Alarmlasenkatarrh* were only of second importance in the undermining of Europe. No artificial diplomatic arrangements (Europe was full of them for three generations) could have avoided the world catastrophe, but only a radical cure of social and political reforms: the elimination of the feudal system in Austria-Hungary, its federalization, a free trade policy toward the neighboring nations. And at the same time the breakdown of the Czarist absolutism, a democratic and liberal Duma, and the agrarian reform of Stolypin, carried on at least two decades earlier than they were initiated. . . . But even with an autocratic Russia another European equilibrium would have been possible. Imagine that the negotiations of Lord Haldane (in 1912) had been successful in establishing a solid compromise between Great Britain and Germany and imagine an Austro-Hungarian monarchy which would have become, on the basis of a democratic confederation, a real fatherland for all its peoples and one can hardly see how the unscrupulous propaganda of Russian Tsarism could have thrown Europe into the wholesale slaughter of its most cultured nations.

But the growing irredentistic movements of the monarchy not only made the internal tension among the peoples unbearable but they strengthened at the same time, as a result of interference, the Russian Pan-Slavistic parties which covered their imperialistic aims by the partly true, partly false ideology of the liberation of the Slav brothers. One should not forget that the natural reactionary alliance among the three emperors, among the German, the Austrian, and the Russian autocrats was not dissolved by their personal rivalry but under the pressure of a widely spread national public opinion which demanded from the Tsar a more energetic defense of the oppressed conationals. We must remember that as late as 1905 a personal treaty was made between the German Kaiser and the Tsar but the Russian autocrat could not get the treaty accepted by the ruling circles who were under the sway of nationalistic public opinion.

#### F. THE SOCIOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

From this point of view the responsibility for the war falls, in the first place, upon the Dual Monarchy which by its antiquated dualistic constitution and by the narrow-minded economic and nationality policy disseminated during generations the germs of the world conflagration. A personal responsibility can only be established in the sense of placing the blame upon those statesmen who hastened the date of its outbreak. In this respect it can easily be demonstrated

that the leading generals and diplomats of the monarchy tried at any price to utilize the catastrophe of Sarajevo for a war with Serbia and possibly with Russia. They did this not because they were a bit more warlike or imperialistic than their colleagues in the camp of the Entente but because they considered the war as inevitable and, seeing the feverish war preparations of their antagonists, they came to the conclusion (perfectly legitimate under the condition of the national and social *rebus hic stantibus*) that every additional year could only increase, to their detriment, the chances of a future war. That was why Conrad von Hötzendorf urged, since 1906, a preventive war against Italy and Serbia; why he told at the outbreak of the World War that "in 1909 the war would have been a game with open cards, in 1913 it would still have been a game with chances, in 1914 it had become a game of *va banque*, but there was no other alternative"; why Premier Count Stürgkh said in that fatal Crown council which determined, July 7, 1914, the destiny of the monarchy: "It must come to decisive action; a purely diplomatic victory will not suffice us. . . . If, from international points of view, the course of a previous diplomatic action must be entered upon, it must be carried on with the firm intention that this action can only finish with a war."<sup>24</sup> That is the reason why the ultimatum to Serbia was purposely so conceived that Serbia would not be able to accept it; why a previous jural opinion from Professor Hold was demanded as to what legal pretext could be found if Serbia should submit; why the offer of the Tsar to present the conflict to the tribunal at the Hague was rejected; why they watched carefully that all foreign interference for the maintenance of peace should be eluded under diplomatic evasions; why the consent of the hesitating old Emperor, Francis Joseph, was forced by the false announcement of the battle at Temes-Kubin which really never occurred; why this petrified monarch himself calmed the war party at the time of the Annexation Crisis with the memorable words: "This war will come by itself, unaided. . . ."; and why in the final crisis he said with resignation: "If the Monarchy must perish it should at least perish with decency. . . ." And that is also why the whole official and semi-official press, both feudal and capitalistic, agitated unscrupulously for war;<sup>25</sup> why in Budapest officially paid and arranged demonstrations were made in order to arouse enthusiasm for the Serbian War;<sup>26</sup> why even so cultured a gentleman as Count Albert Apponyi

<sup>24</sup> *Diplomatische Aktenstücke*, Part I, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> See for details Heinrich Kanner's *Kaiserliche Katastrophenpolitik* (Wien, 1922), pp. 59, 122, 325.

<sup>26</sup> One of the best-informed and most reliable journalists of the pre-war period writes me: "I could observe it for many days how the scum of the population, for a daily payment, shouted on the streets of Budapest for war against Serbia. Realizing my responsibility, I can assert that in Budapest masses organized and paid by the police demanded the war."



greeted the Serbian war in the Hungarian parliament with an enthusiastic "At last!"; and finally why Count Moltke, the Chief of the German Staff shared the point of view of Conrad, that "all retardation would mean the lessening of our chances," and as late as July 31, 1914, reminded Conrad of the seriousness of the warlike will of the Central Powers.

These and similar facts, which might easily be extended, demonstrate that the Austro-Hungarian monarchy did not wish to postpone the war. And this wish was motivated by no frenzied imperialism but by the conviction that its internal situation had become unbearable because it could not solve its own problems; because it came into conflict more and more with the will of its people; because in the atmosphere of the continual attempts against the lives of the exponents of the state, the leading circles of the monarchy lost their heads (how characteristic, for instance, that William II was urged not to come to Vienna to attend the funeral of Francis Ferdinand for, according to reliable information, his life would not be secure in the imperial city on account of Jugo-Slav plotters!); because its military and diplomatic experts were convinced that, if a few more years should be granted to Russia for the repairing of its loss in blood and treasure caused by the Japanese defeat, the chances of war would have become desperate for the dual monarchy.

This series of facts and not sheer diplomatic machinations leads us toward a better understanding of the problem as to the "immediate" cause of the war (which, I repeat, is a problem different from that of "war guilt" and must be sought in the sins of omission and commission of the national and social policy followed for a century). From this point of view, Dr. Heinrich Kanner, based on the memoirs of Conrad von Hötzendorf, has shown with clear and strong argument the preponderant importance in the outbreak of the war of the "secret military convention," convened by the chiefs of the German and Austrian Staffs under the auspices of the two Monarchs and the other responsible factors in 1909, in which the former strictly defensive alliance contracted by Bismarck was extended into an offensive alliance between the two states in case Austria should find it necessary to start a preventive war against Serbia.<sup>27</sup> It may be doubted whether this agreement can be called a "military convention" in the strict sense, as Mr. Kanner has done, but there can be no reasonable doubt that the existence of such a "binding agreement" influenced profoundly the attitude of the Austrian war party. One should not forget that Bismarck, as long as he was in office, always resisted strenuously the Austrian efforts (in 1882 and 1887) to extend the *casus foederis* to the case of an offensive war also, because, according to his own words, he feared the "desire for war" (*Kriegslust*) and the "light-minded-

<sup>27</sup> *Der Schlüssel zur Kriegsschuldfrage* (München, 1926).

ness" of the Austrians and was not willing "to pay them a premium for a pretext of their quarrels with Russia" (*eine Prämie auf das Händelsuchen mit Russland*). When, however, Bismarck was no longer in power, and when in Austria the foreign policy was directed by Aehrenthal, a chief exponent of the so-called "active" policy, and when Conrad von Hötzendorf, the apostle of the preventive war, was put at the head of the Staff, there was no longer any obstacle to the remolding of the defensive alliance into an offensive one. Beginning with 1909 the Habsburg monarchy could count on the assistance of its powerful ally even in case it found it necessary to start a war itself. It may be doubtful whether Germany really acted under the stipulations of this agreement but it cannot be doubtful that the World War was born under the shadow of it and the daring advance of the Austrian war party would be unimaginable without this psychological motive. (The military agreement was later supplemented almost yearly by written or oral negotiations.)

This fatal military convention or "binding agreement" was the expression of the conviction of the leading circles that the situation of the dual monarchy had become untenable and could only be saved by the daring operation of a preventive war. In this saving of the monarchy the German empire was naturally deeply interested not only on behalf of the *Nibelungentreue* but also in consequence of the fact that its policy in Asia Minor and in Africa aroused against it the jealous antagonism of the other imperialisms. After having repeatedly refused the English offers for a solid compromise, after the unhappy policy "of the loud mouth" and of the pose of a continuous "sabre rattling," Germany stood perfectly isolated in Europe, bound to Austria for life and death. What the genius of Bismarck could avoid, the policy of his successors precipitated: Germany was compelled to follow its fatal ally into its leap to death. It did this not from the motive of a frenzied imperialism but under the stress of the system of the balance of power. Its situation was clearly analyzed by an objective German historian, Wolfgang Windelband in the following weighty statement: "If Germany had not wished to acquiesce in the destruction of its power—and a spontaneous yielding would have been the symptom of the most dangerous internal rottenness—it was obliged to maintain its alliance with Austro-Hungary because the possibility of a more advantageous one was lacking in consequence of its own sin. Very sharply did the change in the situation become manifest: Germany was dependent on Austro-Hungary and was therefore compelled to accept its interests. . . ."<sup>28</sup> This was the real motive of the German participation, the motive of the balance of power, and not the alleged indignation against the Serbian criminal maneuvers. How hypo-

<sup>28</sup> *Die Auswärtige Politik der Grossmächte in der Neuzeit*. Zweite, durchgesehene Auflage. (Stuttgart und Berlin, 1925), p. 411.

critical this argument was, has been vigorously stated by Prince Lichnowsky, the last German imperial ambassador to London, in the following note made in January, 1915:

Has not the Italian unity arisen by perfectly similar means and does not the same thing which happened between 1848 and 1866 in Italy repeat itself with the Jugo-Slavs? There in the Lombardo-Venetian provinces the Austrians tried to crush the national movement by violence, sword, and gallows . . . the Italians, too, utilized bombs and daggers for political aims and laid violent hands on the Divine Right and even on the Holy Father! Did we, therefore, refuse to make an alliance with Italy or did we declare war against Italy because Orsini threw a bomb at Napoleon? Is not the foundation of Italy exactly as "revolutionary" as the tendencies of the Great Serbian movement directed against Austria? . . . Why must the German people rush into a World War in order to crush the Jugo-Slav movement for unity?<sup>29</sup>

#### G. THE "PERSONAL WAR GUILT"

In the honest and serious literature on the so-called "war guilt" problem one of the most outstanding is, without any doubt, the recent book of Professor Fay, already referred to, who made a comprehensive and admirable effort to disentangle all the various currents leading to the World War. He was successful in demolishing the propagandistic legend of the exclusive war-guilt of the Central Powers. The great importance of this work imposes the duty on the author of the present book to make his standpoint clear concerning certain points in which he disagrees with the presentation of Professor Fay. In his noble ardor for justice he follows too much the present swing of the pendulum of public opinion when he does not see, that the Central Powers, *though they alone did not cause the World War, they determined the date of its outbreak.* His attitude is decidedly pro-German and sometimes biased by some inaccurate private information.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Published in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, November 8, 1927, from the memoirs of Prince Lichnowsky: *Auf dem Wege zum Abgrund*. The Italian situation in 1859 and the Serbian in 1914 have so general and striking resemblances that one has the impression that we here face a sociologically determined typology of the crisis for national unification.

<sup>30</sup> For instance, Herr Leopold Mandl, for two decades the semi-official mouth-piece of the Ballplatz and the organizer of a press campaign against Serbia, is called by him the "Austrian historian." Mr. Wendel is qualified as a "pro-Serb German writer" which he really is. But at the same time none of the fanatic anti-Serb pamphletists whom he quotes abundantly is qualified by him as an anti-Serb German writer. Dr. Kanner, one of the most acute students of war-responsibility, is called the editor of the former *Viennese Socialist Daily*. Probably Dr. Kanner was characterized before him in this way by the German nationalists in order to portray him as a rabid Communist. The truth is that Dr. Kanner has published a solid liberal bourgeois daily (*Die Zeit*). Whereas he quotes the worthless German anti-Freemason pamphletists and the Viennese propagandistic journal of the Soviets to the discredit of the existing Balkan governments, he does not even mention the great historical work of the leading authority, Professor Bibl, who though a staunch supporter of the German cause, shows that Austria could not postpone the war at the time given.

It seems to me that the great number of facts given by Professor Fay alone show abundantly and conclusively that the leading Viennese circles by all kinds of Machiavellian means precipitated the war because, according to Conrad, the position of Austria would have become more untenable from year to year in the case of a warlike complication. They knew that with the completion of those military reforms which were going on in Russia and France, and with the growth of the anti-Austrian irredentistic propaganda the odds for Austria in a later war would have become practically null. The only power which could have crushed, as it did several times in the past, the war will of Austria, was Germany. But the Germans—to quote Professor Fay—“made the grave mistake of putting the situation outside of their control into the hands of a man as reckless and unscrupulous as Berchtold. They committed themselves to a leap in the dark. They soon found themselves involved in actions which they did not approve . . . . but they could not seriously object and protest . . . . because they had pledged their support to Austria in advance, and any hesitation on their part would only weaken the Triple Alliance at a critical moment when it most needed to be strong. . . .” (II, 223). So a *carte blanche* was given to Germany (*ibid.*, p. 255) which was practically equivalent to a declaration of war. It is true that Germany got the ultimatum of Austria less than twenty-four hours before the Austrian Minister was to present it at Belgrade, but (according to Professor Fay) “even if Bethmann and Jagow had been informed of the text earlier, it is not to be assumed that they would have modified or stopped it” (*ibid.*, p. 267). That is absolutely sure, because previously the *carte blanche* was given to Austria.

But it is not sufficiently clear why the German military circles who several times in the past stopped the light-mindedness of Austria became at once so meek and indulgent. The only explanation is that they saw that Austria was headed for catastrophe and that they agreed with Conrad that this was the last possibility for Austria, their only ally, to risk a war to save its existence which was more endangered from year to year. Only those social and political factors which we analyzed in this book can really explain the motives of both Austria and Germany.

Therefore it is quite evident that *Austria fixed the date of the conflict and Germany did not stop her ally*. Here lies the primordial responsibility of Austria, motivated not by personal crimes of her statesmen, but by the social and national sins of the whole system. And here lies the responsibility of Germany which was rather an omission than a commission. From this point of view the vexed problem of the war-guilt assumes almost a mathematical simplicity. Is it true or not that after the catastrophe of Sarajevo none of the Entente Powers had any motive to start a war in 1914? The whole world opinion

was so terrified by the crime that to attack the ramshackle empire *at this time* was a mass-psychological impossibility. But it was a good opportunity for Austria to utilize the general indignation of the world to crush the stormy center of Serbia. (That was the leading point of view not only of Vienna, but of Berlin too!) Then I ask further is it true or not that Austria without a German backing was not in the position to begin a war? A small logical experiment will suffice to decide this question. Let us suppose that in the last critical week a single telegram would have been sent from Berlin to Vienna with the following short text: "Germany cannot promise any participation in a war as long as all the diplomatic means are not exhausted to settle a fair compromise." I do not say that this course was open for Austria without the complete collapse of her prestige on the Balkan. But I do say that under such a step of Berlin no ultimatum could have been sent from Vienna. The War would have been stopped for a few years!

This is the simple truth both from a logical and a historical point of view. And besides all the facts which I enumerated there is also the direct testimony of the late General Max Hoffmann, one of the ablest German military leaders who in his memoirs, recently published, made the following sincere and outspoken statement:

"To be sure, we could have ducked our heads again in the summer of 1914; then the Entente would not have struck until 1917, since they were prepared only for this period. In this sense we began the war, that is true. . . ." ("Natürlich hätten wir uns auch im Sommer 1914 wieder ducken können, dann hätte die Entente erst 1917 losgeschlagen, denn zu diesem Termine waren sie erst fertig. Insofern haben wir den Krieg angefangen, das stimmt. . . ." )<sup>31</sup>

In these few words the whole war-philosophy of the Central Powers at the outburst of the war is vigorously stated. And this philosophy was perfectly sane under the clausula of *rebus hic stantibus*. Only deep organic reforms could have avoided the war and for these reforms there was no more time.

<sup>31</sup> *Die Aufzeichnungen des Generalmajors Hoffmann* (Berlin, 1929), I, 155.

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**PART VII**  
**CONSCIOUS EFFORTS IN CIVIC EDUCATION**