

CHAPTER IV  
DYNASTIC PATRIOTISM VERSUS  
NATIONAL PATRIOTISM

Looking over the general tendencies of the two systems, we must say that the Austrian system was entirely incapable of establishing any kind of a popular state consciousness, whereas the Hungarian civic education was overdoing Magyar national consciousness to the detriment of a spontaneous state consciousness of the non-Magyar nationalities. And the danger of the situation was even greater: the Magyar state consciousness in its robust exclusiveness denied not only the existence of the non-Magyar nationalities as corporate entities of the state, but at the same time denied more and more the very existence of a super-state regulating the joint affairs of Austria and Hungary. Under such conditions the loyalty toward the common sovereign, the dynastic patriotism of the patrimonial state became the only uniting tie between the two countries and the various nations. But this feeling became, as a matter of fact, weaker and weaker, an artificial flower in a time when the idea of the self-determination of the nations was growing. The artificial escutcheon of the dualistic state, on which a small dynastic weapon held together the larger weapons of the "anonymous Austria" and of the seemingly united Magyar national state, is almost a symbolical expression of the extreme weakness of the whole structure. The middle weapon, the dynastical patriotism of the Habsburgs, became more and more pale, losing its real driving-force. But not only this curious escutcheon, monument of a desperate statesmanship, the various national hymns too, this real emanation of the popular souls symbolized even more strikingly that Habsburg patriotism was incapable of checking the national patriotism. Let us compare some characteristic utterances of the imperial hymn with those of the national songs of the peoples. The famous Austrian Popular Hymn almost gives the impression of an occasional poem of a high-school teacher by its banal and rigid loyalty in spite of the wonderful music of Haydn

God save, God guard  
Our Emperor, our country!  
Powerful with the Faith's protection  
Shall he lead us with wise hand!  
The Crown of his Fathers  
Shall defend us from all enemies:  
Closely with the Throne of Habsburgs  
Austria's fate remains united.

## 448 DISSOLUTION OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY

How differently ring the national songs of the various nations!  
For instance the beginning of the Magyar anthem was this:

Unshaken to thy Fatherland  
Be loyal, O Magyar!  
It is thy cradle, it is thy grave  
Which nourishes thee and covers. . . . .

Or of the Rumanians:

Awaken, Rumanian, from thy deadly sleep  
Into which thou wert forced by barbarous tyrants!  
Now or never: create another fate for thyself  
To which even thy cruel enemies should bow!

Or of the Slovaks:

Up, ye Slovaks, still is living our true Slovak language,  
While our loyal hearts are beating truly for our nation.  
Living, living, yea and deathless is the Slovak spirit:  
Hell and lightning, Hell and lightning rage in vain against us.

Or of the Czechs:

Where is my Fatherland?  
The waters rumble in the fields  
The pinewoods roar on the rocks  
In the gardens bloom spring flowers  
'Tis a Paradise on earth  
And this is the beautiful country,  
The country of the Czechs, my Fatherland. . . . .

And of the Croats:

Flow Sava, flow Drava,  
Neither thou Danube lose thy strength!  
Whenever thou roarest, tell to the World  
That the Croat loves his nation  
Until his soil is not lit up by the sun,  
Until his oak forests are struck by the lightning,  
Until his body is covered by the grave,  
Until his heart no longer beats.

It is highly characteristic that the only nation of the monarchy which did not produce a national hymn in the proper sense was the first leading nation of the monarchy, the German. Why? Because the center of gravity of the German national consciousness, even for the Germans of the monarchy, was not the anational Austria but the German empire as a nation state. At the same time the German leading nation in Austria was so intimately connected with the Habsburg dynasty that the glory of the monarchy as a whole held back the expressions of a special German patriotism within the empire.

No wonder that the intensity of all these national feelings was stronger than the artificial suggestions of a receding dynastic pa-

triotism. And this growing trend of national feeling and consciousness was neither checked nor co-ordinated by any other moral synthesis. The Habsburg empire became more and more a conglomerate of various nationalistic feelings among peoples which did not know each other but which hated each other bitterly. The dynastic patriotism, the faith of some ten thousand officers, aristocrats, priests, bureaucrats, and industrial magnates was powerless against the popular enthusiasm of the exuberant national individualities. The state of the Habsburgs collapsed, in the final analysis, because it was unable to offer a real solidarity to its various nations by the help of a system of serious civic education. The more enlightened Habsburgs knew very well the fatal importance of this problem but they could not solve it. The means which were employed were far too mechanical and incoherent. Outside the army we have not a single example of a real type of civic education. Only Crown Prince Rudolf made an attempt in this direction by editing under his patronage a monumental work of many volumes under the title: "The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Writing and Pictures." But this enterprise had a very small influence in an atmosphere already envenomed by constitutional and national struggles.

Perhaps no one understood more keenly the situation of the monarchy from the point of view of public education than Karl Möring, a great soldier, military engineer, statesman, and a careful student of the United States. In his famous anonymous book *Sibyllinische Bücher aus Österreich*, dedicated to Archduchess Sofia, mother of Emperor Francis Joseph, he wrote in 1848 the following prophetic lines:

Must oligarchy and bureaucracy push the monarchy from year to year nearer to the abyss until, standing on the verge and shaken by the slightest thrust, it loses its equilibrium and tumbles down? Such a curse would be terrible and would exclude any hope or possibility of reform. There exists one means still, but only one. It must be applied because it is a matter of life and death. And this only means is public opinion, this appeasing, equalizing, and harmonizing intermediary between people and Throne which translates freely the adversities of the state into the language of the truth and not into the jargon of the bureaucracy. It puts clear spectacles before the eyes of the Monarch and not those colored by the oligarchy or ground according to its needs. . . . Yea, public opinion, this tested Palladium of England, this trumpet of the wholesome voice of the people, it alone can be the Savior of Austria. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The diagnosis of Karl Möring remained true until the collapse. There never was in the monarchy a public opinion in the Western sense, only an agglomeration of group opinions, led by oligarchical interests.

<sup>1</sup> Hamburg, 1848, I, 153-54.

That the crucial problem of the existence of the monarchy was that of civic education was finally realized by the last Emperor himself when, in the desperate hours of the beginning dissolution, he made among others the following statement to the great pacifist and humanitarian, Professor F. W. Foerster, who, almost as a political physician, was called in July, 1917, to the deathbed of the agonizing empire:

My proclamation of amnesty has aroused much uneasiness and contradiction in some circles. . . . But it was my firm conviction for a long time that the hopelessly entangled situation of the Austrian people cried for a radical change, the tradition of narrow-mindedness and short-sightedness is so deeply rooted that we can be saved only by an entirely new disposition of mind. . . . I know that many thousands among my people have long been anxious for such a new beginning, but abroad they do not understand this, nay they do not surmise for what purpose we were united by Providence in this South-eastern corner of Europe: Austria is, as a matter of fact, neither a German nor a Slav state. Though the Germans were the founders of the Danube Monarchy, they are at the present time a minority surrounded and interspersed with many ascending peoples. . . . Under such circumstances they can remain the leaders of the younger cultures only if they are able to give the example of the highest culture . . . and to meet the newly evolving nations with love, esteem, and generosity. . . . Sins were committed on all sides; all the faults must now be corrected . . . therefore we must turn over a new leaf! . . . The unity of the state cannot be imposed by force—less than anywhere else—upon the nations of Austria . . . it must arise from the moral union of these peoples. . . . Already the youth should be influenced by this spirit: instead of the text-books on both sides which incite to racial hatred, rather such books should be created in which the great qualities and virtues of the Slavic race should be brought home to the German youth . . . and in the same way it should be honestly told to the Slavic youth what Germandom has contributed to the general culture and particularly to the young nations of the Slavic South-eastern world. . . .<sup>2</sup>

According to Foerster, the monarch spoke these words in great emotion and with strong emphasis. But this imperial lecture on civic education came too late—not to mention that there was no recipe for the Hungarian problem, the cornerstone of the whole system, in the program of the last Habsburg. He did not even dare to mention this other side of the situation. . . . The reasons for it are obvious.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Polzer-Hoditz, *op. cit.*, pp. 462-63.

## RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT



## RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Some general remarks may be added to the chief conclusions of this work concerning both the past and the future.

As to the historical meaning of the process of dissolution, the reader will perhaps share the impression which I experienced the more my investigations proceeded, namely, that the collapse of the Habsburg empire was not anything surprising but rather the long continuance of this amalgamation of peoples without a common state idea, based on the mutual hatred and distrust of the various nations. Manifestly their inner revolutionary forces were not sufficient, in time of peace, to get rid of the Habsburg yoke. Regarding the process as a whole, the most outstanding groups of causes which undermined the cohesion of the old patrimonial state were threefold:

1. The growing national consciousness of the various nations which could not find place for a true consolidation and adequate self-expression in the rigidity of the absolutistic structure, later not changed but only modified by the semi-absolutism of the Dualistic System under which neither a confederated constitution nor even a sound local national autonomy could be achieved.

2. The economic and social pressure of the feudal class rule, allied with a usurious kind of capitalism, which did not allow the productive forces of the various nations to be developed. Vienna was not only a natural economic leader but at the same time an economic exploiter of the weaker nations through her financial and administrative monopolies. The national exasperation of the peoples was strengthened by the feeling of being a kind of a colony for German capitalism. At the same time the hunger-belt of the latifundist system paralyzed to a large extent the beneficent influences of a united customs territory. A true division of labor among the various territories remained rudimentary whereas a new national middle class arose everywhere which felt its economic interests incompatible with the supremacy of big Viennese finance.

3. The lack of any serious kind of civic education. All the nations lived as moral and intellectual strangers to one another. Both the dynastic epic in Austria and the feudal in Hungary were incapable of creating a sufficiently strong and cohesive state idea. Finally these two fallacies pushed the two hegemonic nations into a fatal conflict, even more pernicious than that in which they were engaged with their lesser nationalities.

This growing dissolution and final collapse of the Habsburg empire was mainly the work of three factors: