

József Galántai

HUNGARY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR



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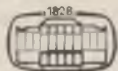
IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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HUNGARY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

BY
JÓZSEF GALÁNTAI



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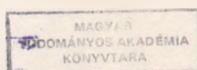
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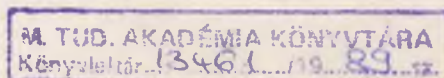
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INTRODUCTION

HUNGARY IN THE DUAL HABSBURG MONARCHY

The role which Hungary played, in a Europe split into two camps after the turn of the century and in World War I, was not one played by a state with an independent foreign policy and its own army. Hungary, which had full sovereignty in domestic affairs, was one of the constituent states of the Habsburg Monarchy (Austria-Hungary). The Monarchy was based on a dualist principle with a common army and pursuing a common foreign policy. Therefore, a book dealing with Hungary's participation in World War I must first of all treat the system of common foreign affairs and defense of the Dual Monarchy, as well as Hungary's role in the making and implementation of decisions concerning such matters.

THE SYSTEM OF COMMON AFFAIRS

According to the Compromise of 1867 relations between the two parts of the Monarchy were based on the principle of equal rights. Both parts were sovereign in domestic matters, with independent legislative and executive organs, i.e. their own Parliament and government. There was, however, a close structural link between them. In addition to having a common ruler, the so-called "common affairs" — foreign affairs, common defense, and common finances designed to deal with the expenses of the former two — drew the countries together. These three common affairs formed the basis of the dualist system. In addition, certain major economic matters were declared "of common interest" and handled accordingly. The common affairs proper and their control were rigorously regulated both by the Austrian and the Hungarian Compromise Act and only certain points were subject to eventual revision (e.g. the fixing of the proportion in which common expenses were to be shared; the recruitment proportion, etc.). As regards "affairs of common interest" of an economic nature, the basic Compromise Act only declared the common nature of these matters. It left their actual regulation to the

treaties to be concluded between the two parts of the Monarchy, as between two independent states, for fixed terms (customs and trade agreement, etc.).¹

According to most of the earlier Hungarian historical studies and articles the foreign policy of the Dual Monarchy was directed solely from Vienna. It is true that before the Compromise, Hungary, as part of the Habsburg Monarchy, had had no say in the Monarchy's foreign policy. After the Compromise, however, this situation changed: the planning and implementation of the foreign policy of the Dual Monarchy were done in cooperation with the Hungarian government and its social basis.

Earlier Austrian historians also wrote inconsistently about the factors which shaped the dualist foreign policy. According to certain authors it was the Hungarian leading circles which had the most decisive influence on shaping the foreign policy of the Monarchy. Whereas Spitzmüller, a contemporary politician, later rightly wrote: "The Hungarian influence on common affairs was an intensive, yet not a dominant one".²

Article 8 of the the Hungarian Compromise Act provided that the foreign affairs of "all the countries ruled by His Majesty" needed a common rule. The foreign minister's sphere of authority included affairs concerning diplomatic and trade representations as well as international treaties. The foreign minister, like other common ministers, was to be appointed by the sovereign alone, without any stipulation. The foreign minister was responsible to the sovereign, being accountable to the delegations elected by the Austrian and Hungarian Parliaments only for the budget voted to him. The governments in Vienna and Budapest were to "inform" their respective Parliaments about international treaties. Had the foreign policy amounted to this only, it would essentially have depended on the sovereign who appointed the foreign minister. The only influences on the latter could have been exerted via factors possibly shaping the sovereign's attitude. Article 8 of the Hungarian Compromise Act, however, also included an important stipulation: the foreign minister was to act "in agreement with and with the consent of the two governments". The stipulation implied not only preliminary discussion with the two governments but also the obligation to come to an agreement and to obtain their consent in advance.

The major foreign policy issues were discussed at common cabinet meetings or the crown council. The Compromise Act, which mentioned the common minis-

¹ The Hungarian Compromise Law (Corpus Juris No. XII of 1867) and the Austrian Compromise Law (Reichsgesetzblatt No. 146 of 1867), see in I. Zolger: *Der Staatsrechtliche Ausgleich zwischen Österreich und Ungarn*, Leipzig 1911.

² A. Spitzmüller-Harmersbach: *Franz Joseph und der Dualismus. Erinnerungen an Franz Joseph I.*, Berlin 1931, p. 105.

ters and ministries, did not regulate the activities and composition of the common cabinet.³ In addition to the common ministers, the meetings were regularly attended by the Austrian and Hungarian prime ministers, and occasionally by other ministers concerned with the issue discussed. It was the common foreign minister, or often the sovereign himself, who acted as chairman.

Although the common foreign minister was responsible only to the sovereign, and in a restricted way (in financial matters and concerning the observance of the laws laid down in the constitution) to the Delegations, the Hungarian premier could be summoned before Parliament to determine whether he had acted in the spirit of Article 8 of Law XII of 1867, i.e. whether the foreign minister (who could not be the member of either legislative body) had acted in agreement with him and with his consent. At a meeting of the Delegations, this was what Count Gyula Andrassy hinted at (after his retirement), when he said that the Hungarian prime minister was "directly responsible for what happened in foreign affairs".⁴

In this way the Hungarian Parliament could also discuss foreign policy issues, which it in fact did on occasions. Since it was the prime minister who represented in Parliament the foreign minister, or rather the policy he pursued, any question in connection with foreign affairs could be put to him in interpellation form. The debate on the reply to be given to the sovereign's speech, the budget debate, as well as the ratification of treaties concluded with foreign countries were all occasions to discuss foreign policy issues. These debates could be legally binding on the Hungarian government only, but for this very reason the common government could not disregard what was said.

The specific nature of the dualist system demanded that the Austrian and Hungarian ruling groups and strata and thus their governments, should find a foreign policy line which equally suited them all. Only a foreign policy based on real common interests could function properly, without serious troubles that would disturb the entire system.

The system of common defense was quite unlike the common foreign policy system. According to Article 11 of the Hungarian Compromise Act, "owing to His Majesty's constitutional prerogative as regards the domain of defense, everything pertinent to the unified command and inner structure of the entire army, including the Hungarian army as an integral part of all the armies*, is acknowledged to

³ *Protokolle*, pp. 2-3. The introductory study by Miklós Komjáthy.

⁴ *Delegáció*, November 14, 1882.

* "Hungarian army" does not mean here the Honvéd army, which was in fact a complement to the whole army. According to Hungarian legal practice of the time, although there was no separate Hungarian army within the common one, the contingents of the common army drafted in Hungary were regarded as the "Hungarian army".

be controlled by His Majesty". Thus the Hungarian constitutional organs had no say in the organization and command of the army. However, according to Article 12 "the country reserves itself the right of a new draft, the determination of the conditions and time of service of the recruits, as well as the measures concerning the stationing and provisioning of the troops...". This right gave the Hungarian constitutional bodies an opportunity, when drafting the soldiers of the common army and passing the Army Act, to try to extort concessions from the sovereign about the command and organization of the army. However, they never succeeded, obtaining at most some compensation in other fields. Thus for instance, when the first Army Law was passed (No. XL of 1868), the Hungarian government succeeded in passing at the same time the establishment and sphere of action of the Hungarian Honvéd army (Law XLI of 1868).⁵

The law invested the king with full sovereignty over the army, a right he would always insist on. As Baron Margutti, one of the sovereign's intimates, noted: the king considered the army the "most reliable basis" of the Monarchy.⁶ However, for troops and money he also had to obtain the agreement of the Hungarian and the Austrian Parliament. During the year following the Compromise, 40,000 of the 95,000 men recruited for the common army, were raised by the Hungarian crown lands. The Army Law of 1868 determined the strength of the common sea and land forces for the next ten years as 800,000 men, 329,632 of which were to be levied in the Hungarian crown lands.⁷ In the debate over the Compromise, Kálmán Tisza, then in opposition, pertinently pointed out the contradiction of this system: "Now, gentlemen, there might come a war which is diametrically opposed to the interests either of Hungary or of the sovereign's other provinces or countries... In case such a war is opposed to Hungary's interests it might happen that the Delegations will vote the expenses, but the Parliament will refuse to levy the troops and I do not think that common security will be ensured."⁸ In the last analysis, owing precisely to this contradictory structure of the common army, defense also could only function normally on the basis of common interests. Kálmán Tisza's above-mentioned remark was meant to show this. The common army could hardly be efficient in a fight which half of the Monarchy did not support. Thus, also in questions of defense, the dualist principle prevailed when it came to the employment of the army against an external enemy. However, it did not concern the structure and command of the common army, as these were royal prerogatives.

⁵ The ruler thought the number of the personnel of the Ministry of Defence set by the government's memorandum at 25 (including the minister down to the junior clerk) to be excessive and consented to 22 only. *OL K 26 79/1867*.

⁶ *Margutti*, p. 253.

⁷ *Corpus*, Law XII of 1868; Articles 11 and 13 of the Law XL of 1868.

⁸ *Képviselet*, March 21, 1867.

This was why the common army was a constant target, even of the fraction of the opposition supporting the Compromise of 1867.

The common finances, in the strictest sense, only covered the expenses of the common foreign affairs and defense. Other items of the budget were within the competence of the respective parliaments. The common budget was prepared by the common minister of finance "with the control of the two separate responsible ministries"; he then submitted it for approval to the Delegations whose most important task, according to the wording of the Hungarian law, was precisely the fixing of the common budget.

The two Delegations, each of which had 60 members, were elected for a year by the two Parliaments. 40 members of the Hungarian Delegation were sent by the House of Representatives and 20 by the Upper House. The Delegations held annual meetings alternately in Pest and Vienna. Otherwise they deliberated separately, communicated with each other in writing, and even the common ministers sent them their reports separately.

The Delegations could only call the common ministers to account if the latter violated the constitution. They could not control the policy the ministers pursued. Yet, in accordance with parliamentary tradition, the members of the Delegations regarded voting the budget for the common defense and foreign policy as a question of confidence. As a consequence, the common foreign minister, who desired a smooth arrangement, gave them a short account of his foreign policy. Thus there were foreign policy debates in the Delegations too, but only the budget had to be voted. The foreign policy debates of the Delegations had an influence on public opinion, which the common government could take into account, but they did not ensure the actual parliamentary control of foreign policy. The Delegations themselves began to play a more and more formal role. A member of the Hungarian Delegation during the period preceding the war characterized this institution well in his memoirs: "It was a beautiful, distinguished, gentlemanly amusement, but otherwise only a simple treadmill, which went like clockwork".⁹

The share of the budget from which the common expenses were to be met was only fixed provisionally. Both Parliaments elected a committee with the same number of members which worked out a proposal, and then submitted it to the Parliaments. If the two budget committees or the two Parliaments were unable to reach an agreement, the decision rested with the sovereign. In the beginning, Austria bore 70, and Hungary 30 per cent of the common budget. Later, as Hungary's economy strengthened this proportion was modified: in 1872 — when the frontier region, which until that time had been governed by Vienna, was reannexed and came under the Hungarian government's authority — the Hungarian 'quota'

⁹ B. Barabás: *Emlékirataim 1855–1929* (My Memoirs 1855–1929), Arad 1929, p. 117.

(the share of common expenses) was fixed at 31.4 per cent, in 1899 at 34.4, and in 1908 in 36.4 per cent.

The most important factor of the common economic affairs of the two parts of the Dual Monarchy, however, was not the financial, but the customs and trade union. Article 59 of the Law XII of 1867 expressed the readiness of the Hungarian Parliament to form a customs and trade policy alliance with the other half of the Monarchy. Every ten years, the governments were to work out and submit to the Parliaments concrete propositions concerning this alliance. At the same time a similar procedure was used to conclude agreements on the forms, rate and handling of indirect taxes, the development of the railway network, the monetary system, and money rates. Another major characteristic of the common economic affairs was that Hungary assumed a considerable part of the earlier Austrian public debt (30 million forints interest charges annually).

Consequently, the political and economic links between the two parts of the Monarchy became so close that they surpassed by far the usual system of relations between independent states. A clear example of this is that the customs and trade agreements concluded every ten years maintained the same common customs areas all along.

During the year 1868 there were debates in the highest government circles as to the new official name of the state. Finally, the sovereign's memorandum to Beust dated November 14, 1868 decreed that the expressions "Austro-Hungarian Monarchy" and "Austro-Hungarian Empire" were to be used. The official title of the sovereign was to be "Emperor of Austria and Apostolic King of Hungary", or "Emperor and King" for short.¹⁰ The Hungarian government accepted the titles which expressed the equality of the two states, but especially during the last few years of dualism, wished to state the fact that the Monarchy was a union of two separate states. Thus, they demanded that in international treaties "Die beiden Staaten der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie" should be used.¹¹

Both states of the Dual Monarchy were populated by many nationalities. At the Compromise, the Hungarian crown lands had a population of about 15 million, in 1910, the population was almost 21 million, 18.3 million of whom lived in Hungary, and 2.6 million in the autonomous province of Croatia.¹² According to the last official statistics (1910), various nationalities made up 45 per cent of the population of Hungary (16 per cent Romanians, 4 per cent South Slavs, 10 per cent Germans, 11 per cent Slovaks, 2.5 per cent Ukrainians and 1.5 per cent

¹⁰ E. Wertheimer: *Gróf Andrássy Gyula élete és kora* (The Life and Age of Count Gyula Andrássy), Budapest 1910, Vol. I, p. 530.

¹¹ *OL K 578 93/12/1915*.

¹² *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv 1910*, Budapest 1911, p. 12.

others). In Croatia approximately 90 per cent of the population was Slav, the Hungarians constituting 4 per cent.¹³ The population of the Austrian provinces numbered about 20 million at the Compromise, and 28 million in 1910.¹⁴ In 1910, 35.6 per cent of the population of the Austrian provinces was German, 23 per cent Czech, almost 18 per cent Polish, 12.5 per cent Ukrainian, 7 per cent South Slav, almost 3 per cent Italian and 1 per cent Romanian.¹⁵

THE BALKAN POLICY AND ALLIANCE WITH GERMANY

The Prussian–Austrian war of 1866 and especially the creation of the German empire in 1871 decided that Austria would not be part of united Germany. The foreign policy of the Dual Habsburg Monarchy, which was a consequence of the new political settlement in Europe and in the interest of both the Austrian and the Hungarian leading strata, now turned to the Balkans. In the Balkan peninsula, however, the Monarchy had to expect the rivalry of Russia. From the 1870's on, the tsar's government was again pursuing an active Balkan policy, which now had a new feature: it tried to get nearer to the Straits controlled by Turkey by supporting the liberation of the Slav peoples of the peninsula. Britain and France, in accordance with their usual policy, supported Turkey against Russia's action in the Balkans. Thus, the Monarchy had to pursue its Balkan policy in the midst of the strengthening independence movements of the Balkan people on the one hand, and the more and more active influence of the great powers on the other.

The 1878 Berlin conference solved the "Eastern crisis" of the second half of the 70's in a favourable way for the Monarchy: Russia's influence was limited and Austria–Hungary was allowed to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina for an undetermined period. In addition, they could keep a garrison stationed in the senjak of Novi Pazar, which separated Serbia from Montenegro.

The diplomacy of the period of the Berlin conference also favoured closer ties between the Monarchy and Germany, as the relations of both countries with their eastern neighbour deteriorated. In the autumn of 1878 the two countries concluded a secret alliance against Russia. It was only after almost ten years that the two governments issued an official declaration concerning this treaty.¹⁶ The entire text only became known after the war in the documents published by the Viennese Professor Pribram.¹⁷ Provision 1 of the treaty was that the contracting

¹³ *Magyar Statisztikai Közlemények*, Vol. 61, 1910 Census, Part 5, Budapest 1916, p. 116.

¹⁴ H. Hantsch: *Die Nationalitätenfrage im alten Österreich*, Wien 1953, p. 26.

¹⁵ *Kann*, Vol. 2, p. 390.

¹⁶ *Die grosse Politik*, Vol. 5, p. 288.

¹⁷ *Pribram*, pp. 8–9.

parties were to help each other with all their military might in the event one of them entered into a war with Russia, and they could only conclude peace together and in harmony with each other. According to provision 2, if one of the contracting parties was involved in a war with a country other than Russia, the other one would take a benevolent neutral attitude; but if Russia were to support this adversary by active cooperation or military measures of a threatening nature, provision 1 of the treaty was to be applied. According to provision 3, the treaty was valid for five years. If neither of the parties proposed modifying or cancelling the treaty before the time-limit, the treaty would be automatically renewed for three years. Provision 4 regulated the secret nature of the treaty. According to provision 5, the treaty was to be ratified by imperial approval.

This treaty was in force without any essential modification until the end of World War I. It was renewed on several occasions, and in 1902 provision 3 was modified: the treaty would be automatically renewed every three years if neither of the parties proposed its modification or cancellation.

In the beginning, the alliance with Germany was beneficial to the Monarchy as it increased its influence in the Balkans. The cable which Andrassy sent the sovereign from Gastein when he was sure that the treaty would be concluded is characteristic of the attitude of the Monarchy's leaders to the agreement: "I congratulate Your Majesty: the road to the East is now clear for the Monarchy".¹⁸

As soon as the alliance was concluded with Germany the Monarchy set about the realization of the possibilities that had opened up in the Balkans: it concluded a treaty of alliance with the Serb government which opened the way to economic and political influence.¹⁹ As to Montenegro, they won its favour by financial support.

Increasing the influence of the Monarchy in the Balkan was helped, at least for a time, by the Triple Alliance of 1882. This treaty, concluded among Germany, the Monarchy, and Italy was primarily aimed against France. There was no doubt that it was most favourable from Germany's point of view, as Germany had thus obtained allies against her main enemy. The treaty was advantageous for the Monarchy insofar as it guaranteed the neutrality of Italy in case of war against Russia.

The Triple Alliance was formally in force, after being renewed and completed several times,²⁰ until World War I and even until May 1915, the date when Italy

¹⁸ Berchtold mentioned it at the joint ministerial council on September 14, 1909. *ÖUA*, Vol. II, p. 463.

¹⁹ *Pribram*, pp. 18–20. Extended in 1889, see *ibid.*, pp. 57–59.

²⁰ For the renewals and additions, especially in the last one and a half decades of the alliance, see F. Fellner: *Der Dreibund. Europäische Diplomatie vor dem ersten Weltkrieg*, München–Wien 1960.

entered the war. However, it did not prove to be realistic, as in the last analysis it was unable to bridge the differences between the Monarchy and Italy.

The alliance with Germany and the Triple Alliance temporarily strengthened the Dual Monarchy's influence in the Balkans, as it ensured Germany's support and Italy's neutrality in a conflict with Russia. The Monarchy could now also act more vigorously in what had been formerly Russia's sphere of interest, i.e. the eastern zone of the peninsula. The strengthening of the Dual Monarchy and the isolation of Russia resulted in a rapprochement, also pressed by Bismarck, between Romania and the Monarchy. In 1883 the Dual Monarchy concluded an alliance treaty with Romania. According to this treaty the Monarchy would help Romania from whichever direction the latter was attacked (provision 1), while Romania would only give help to the Monarchy if it was attacked from a territory bordering on Romania (provision 2). This was obviously an alliance against Russia. The validity of the treaty was fixed in the same way as in the alliance with Germany (5 plus 3 years).²¹ On the same day the German government and on May 15, 1888 the Italian government made declarations of approval of the treaty.²² The treaty was renewed on several occasions (in 1892, 1896, 1902 and 1913). Although later this alliance did not prove to be a realistic one, in the 1880's it was a sign of the success of the Balkan policy conducted by the Dual Monarchy. In the 1880's the Monarchy gradually became the greatest influencing power in the Balkans, which was also shown by the events connected with Bulgaria.

From the creation of an independent Bulgaria, the Monarchy aimed at obtaining economic influence in that country. In the first half of the 1880's they gained the main licences for railway construction. Bulgaria had close economic ties with the Monarchy, even though it was nearer to Russia in its political orientation. In the second half of the 1880's, the diplomacy of the Monarchy succeeded in attracting a considerable part of the Bulgarian leading circles to the Dual Monarchy.²³

The direct effects of the foreign policy achievements of the 80's strengthened the position of power of the Monarchy. These years may be regarded as the golden age of the Dual Monarchy: they were characterized by relative domestic stability both in Austria and Hungary and considerable successes in the field of foreign policy. The Monarchy was in alliance with all its neighbours, except the great adversary, Russia, and even Britain was well disposed towards it. Its principal

²¹ *Pribram*, pp. 30–32.

²² *Die grosse Politik*, Vol. 3, pp. 281–283.; *Pribram*, pp. 33–34.

²³ The diary of István Burián, consul-general of the Monarchy to Sofia for the year 1889–1890, as well as his correspondence with the foreign minister, aptly reveal the Monarchy's influence in this country. *REZsL Burián*, items 2 and 79.

enemy was at the same time isolated. Under these favourable conditions the Monarchy was able to extend its influence over almost the entire Balkan peninsula, nearly completely superseding Russia. The advance of the Monarchy in the Balkans was not even restrained by the "Three Emperors' Alliance", initiated and favoured by Bismarck in the 70's, which would collapse in the second half of the eighties.

The foreign policy successes of the Dual Monarchy, however, were not lasting. The first negative signs were apparent as early as the beginning of the 90s: the conclusion of the Dual, and later of the Triple Alliance, hastened the rapprochement between France and Russia. The French-Russian alliance, concluded in the early 90s, was a serious defeat to the Monarchy's diplomacy. While Germany had serious conflicts with both France and Russia, the Monarchy only had differences with the latter. The Hungarian leading stratum had never had any economic or political differences with those of France, what is more, the traditional links between them rather favoured friendly relations.

Another sign of the deterioration of the foreign situation was that the differences between the Monarchy and Italy, restrained in the 80s, again became apparent in the early 90s.

The Central Powers could gain superiority, which could be exploited politically, over the Franco-Russian alliance, only if Britain joined them. Britain was manoeuvring between the two blocks and had not yet given up its "splendid isolation" policy. In the early 90's, owing to their colonial differences with France and Russia, the British were more inclined to support the Central Powers in their continental policy. From the mid-90s on, when the Germans announced their "world policy", Britain aligned itself more and more consistently on the side of the other block, creating, after the turn of the century, the Anglo-French and the Anglo-Russian Entente.

Thus, the position of Austria-Hungary changed radically within the system of relations of the great powers. Its main adversary, Russia, became a member of the alliance supported by England. Until then Britain had mostly supported the Monarchy in affairs concerning the Balkans: now the Monarchy, by becoming Germany's ally and paving the way for the latter to the east, lost this support.

In Hungarian leading circles there was a small group within the Party of Independence, led by Gábor Ugron and Lajos Holló, which was not satisfied with the new antagonism with Britain and the growing German influence. They were, however, unable to form a larger political group. This was hampered not only by the social and political relations inside Hungary, but also by the fact that no similar major trend existed in Austria.

At the turn of the century and after, it was not only the unfavourable turn of European power relations which endangered the positions the Monarchy gained

powers. As we have seen, this was not the first time that contradictory conclusions had been drawn from the situation.

Since the annexation crisis, the foreign policy leaders of the Dual Monarchy had followed one or another of two tendencies. According to one opinion, the interior and foreign affairs of the Monarchy were to be solved by a quick war against Serbia. The partisans of the other opinion did not want to expose the Monarchy in its critical situation to the unforeseeable consequences of such a war and thus wished to put it off. The latter view was Aerenthal's, who, with the sharp antagonism between Germany and Britain, wanted at all events to avoid a war against Serbia. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand was on similar opinion, thinking that such a war was to be avoided because it might lead to a military conflict between the Monarchy and Russia.³³ And, as we shall see, István Tisza followed congruous reasoning, when he stood out firmly against the war. He thought the intervention of Serbia and Russia were to be expected and also that of Romania, which could not be sufficiently counterbalanced.

All these principal considerations show that, besides planning a war against Serbia and maintaining its necessity, the leading circles of the Monarchy also recognized that the position of the Monarchy demanded avoiding the war. All these factors acted simultaneously, creating a hesitating and inconsistent foreign policy line after 1908, which resulted, at least until the end of the Balkan wars, in avoiding and postponing the decision concerning the war.

Putting off the war against Serbia several times, however, did not bring the desired result. It became more and more apparent that the passing of time did not improve, but rather diminished the Monarchy's chances in a "showdown" with Serbia, which claimed Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thus, while a few leading personalities continued to advocate putting off the war against Serbia, others were more inclined to start it. More and more the latter view prevailed in Francis Joseph's mind. Czernin wrote that the sovereign had said in his presence in the summer of 1913: "The Peace of Bucharest is untenable, and we are faced by a new war. God grant that it may be confined to the Balkans." A year later Francis Joseph declared before the Monarchy's envoy to Constantinople that the only way out of the present situation was war.³⁴ Redlich noted the words spoken by Count Hoyos, an influential official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, just before the outbreak of the war: "We do not wish and would not like to live like a sick man ... rather a quick death".³⁵

³³ Macartney, p. 751.

³⁴ Czernin, p. 7.; see also Albertini, Vol. II, p. 129.; Conrad, Vol. IV, p. 107.

³⁵ J. Redlich: *Schicksalsjahre Österreichs 1908-1919*, Vol. I, Graz-Köln 1953, p. 239.; Fellner, p. 393.

Count István Tisza, who had become more and more important as a Hungarian political leader since the turn of the century, and who had already been prime minister from 1903 to 1905, became premier for the second time in June 1913.

In 1912 fights concerning domestic politics considerably sharpened in Hungary. The mass demonstrations of the workers which were organized in the capital and other towns in the spring and autumn of 1912, were the largest the country had ever seen. The people were demanding democratization and universal suffrage. The parliamentary opposition, inflamed by the harshness with which the governing party treated it, was similar to the forces outside Parliament. The Tisza government which was established in 1913 relied on the so-called "National Party of Work" in Parliament, which had an absolute majority in the House of Representatives since the 1910 elections on the basis of the extremely narrow franchise law. The strongest opposition party in Parliament was the Party of Independence. This party had at the time of the 1910 elections and after dissolved into many different factions: the right wing led by Albert Apponyi and Ferenc Kossuth, and the left wing, the so-called Justh group, which represented the middle bourgeoisie and demanded an autonomous customs area and the Károlyi group which tried to get closer to the Justh group. In 1912 these groups were formally united under the presidency of Károlyi. Other significant party-groups formed in Parliament were the Constitutional Party led by Andrásy, and the Catholic People's Party. Apart from these, not counting the delegation of the Croatian Provincial Diet and the small group of national minority opposition representatives, there were also parties which were only represented by one or two mandates: Smallholders' Party (István Nagyatádi Szabó), the Democratic Party (Vilmos Vázsonyi), and Christian Socialists (Sándor Giesswein). As a consequence of the extraordinarily stingy franchise law, the worker strata were not represented at all in the House of Representatives. The representation of the petite bourgeoisie and the national minority masses virtually did not exist either. The House of Representatives consisted predominantly of people from the ruling classes and the middle classes. The House of Representatives which was elected in 1910, because the 1915 elections were cancelled due to the war, remained together until 1918.

In late 1912 an emergency law was enacted which would come into force in case of war or danger of war. Its enforcement gave the government an opportunity to put down ruthlessly any kind of inside opposition. Although the inner tension somewhat abated after the spring of 1913, the series of foreign policy failures the Monarchy suffered in the Balkans were added to the grave problems the government had to face at home. The Hungarian leading circles needed a man who would not hesitate to put down the mass movements at home and at the same time had

enough strength and authority to enforce his views concerning the policy to be conducted in the Balkans.

Count Tisza supported the continuation of the earlier conservative political norms, but at the same time he, who had shares in several capitalist undertakings and credit banks and owned huge estates, was sensitive to the radicalization of the agrarian movements and the large-scale mass political strikes of the working class. The lower classes hated him profoundly. Count Tisza frequently resorted to brute force against the upper-class parliamentary opposition as well, and more than once he had the aristocratic leaders of the opposition, who resorted to obstructionist tactics, thrown out by the ushers. Thus he was also hated in these circles of the opposition.

It was also with firmness and unflagging zeal that he acted not only against his inner opposition but also when he thought that the interests of the Hungarian leading circles he represented were prejudiced in the dualist partnership or in the dual alliance with Germany. He especially feared Francis Ferdinand's endeavours to do away with the dualist system and was firmly convinced at the same time that the interests of the Hungarian ruling classes could only be safeguarded by preserving and consolidating the authority of the Dual Monarchy allied to Germany. He would never flinch even when his views were not shared by the highest-placed Austrian or German leaders; such disagreements would never prevent him from firmly defending the Balkan position of the Monarchy and the alliance of Austria-Hungary with Germany. These he considered to be in the vital interest of the Hungarian ruling classes.

The other significant figure of the new Hungarian government formed by István Tisza in May 1913 was Count István Burián. He had worked in the administration of common affairs and had entered the foreign service while Gyula Andrássy, who had patronized him, was foreign minister. Later Burián worked under the auspices of Béni Kállay, whose successor he became in 1903 as the head of the common Ministry of Finance. It was in this capacity that, from 1907 on, he urged the annexation and later strove to stabilize the annexed province, with little success, however. He was considered one of the possible successors to Aehrenthal, but in the end he was not chosen for the post and even had to give up his post as common finance minister. In the Tisza government he became minister in attendance on the king's person and therefore he had to stay in Vienna.

The Tisza-Burián arrangement ensured that the Hungarian government was informed about foreign policy matters and could be present at decisions concerning such matters. Thus, in addition to such factors as the Austrian industrial and commercial circles, the Viennese government, the heir to the throne, the sovereign, the foreign minister and the German influence, the opinion of the Hungarian lead-

ing circles could not be ignored as a factor shaping the foreign policy of the Monarchy.

In Germany, Tisza's appointment as Hungarian prime minister was received with satisfaction. They saw in it a possibility to consolidate the Monarchy internally, which since Bismarck, Berlin had always envisaged within the framework of the dualist system. Francis Ferdinand was not satisfied; he regarded Tisza's appointment as a direct insult. Later at the second Konopiste meeting, Tisza was the subject of debate between Emperor William and Francis Ferdinand. The archduke was less hostile to Burián, he even received him in 1911, when the latter was still common finance minister. "For the first time in several years. He was most amiable", Burián wrote in his diary.³⁶

In the main questions of foreign policy, the Tisza-Burián government was on a common platform with the other factions interested in safeguarding and extending the power of the Monarchy. Vienna and Budapest were in harmony regarding the interpretation of the essence of the Serbian question. In tactical questions, however, there were serious differences, and Tisza's government, although considering military conflict with Serbia inevitable, stood for putting off such a conflict.

The Austrian and Hungarian leaders were in complete agreement over the relation of the Monarchy with its chief ally, Germany. Tisza therefore took energetic steps against such tendencies within the opposition which envisaged loosening the ties with Germany. A few years later he exposed his views about the German alliance in an unofficial letter. Although the letter dates from a later period, the considerations in it are the same which had been the basis of his actions in 1913-14: "I think that there are two roads open for Germany: alliance with Russia or alliance with us. The advantage of the first is Russia's greater military strength, its disadvantage is Russia's policy in western Asia and the Balkans, which hurts German interests. Germany can only count on Russia as an ally if it sacrifices its interests in these regions, but if it does, it is sure to get Russian support, and with it absolute security, and even a dominating position towards the west and south-west. If we demanded from Germany that it should give up its "Eastern plans" connected with its rightful claims in the field of world economy, we should drive it into Russia's arms and bring extreme peril upon ourselves, from which Britain will never save us. First, because it is not strong enough to do so, — no British-French aid can prevent a Russian-German alliance from ruining the Monarchy — and second, because Britain would be a much more disagreeable, selfish and aggressive partner than Germany."³⁷

³⁶ REZsL Burián, item 81. Diary entry on January 26, 1911.

³⁷ REZsL Tisza, item 15. Copy of the letter to Mihály Réz dated September 7, 1917.

In the months preceding the war, the Justh-Károlyi group of the Party of Independence, following in the steps of the Ugron-Holló camp, made an attempt to work out a new foreign policy line.³⁸ During the Balkan wars this group had given its support to the antiwar movement of the Social Democratic Party and later had stood out against the alliance with Germany. Károlyi's trip to Paris in the autumn of 1913, and his later talks with Poincaré, also expressed this attitude.³⁹ They also tried to establish contacts with Russia. "We ought to look for a way of a peaceful agreement with Russia", Károlyi wrote.⁴⁰ In early 1914 they planned to send a few MPs of the Party of Independence to Saint Petersburg.

In April 1914 Justh himself, who had earlier been a partisan of the alliance with Germany, made several declarations on his new foreign policy views: "We must try to realize the great interests of the nation within the framework of the Triple Alliance if possible. If this is not possible, and the antecedents show it is not, we must look for another alliance." Another remarkable declaration of his showed the same attitude: "I have never said that I am slavophile. Yet, I have criticized and will continue to criticize the Triple Alliance from the point of view of Hungary's interests. ... I am not dogmatically opposed to it, neither am I dogmatically supporting it. Now, however, it is Germany who keeps us on leading-strings."⁴¹

In May 1914, Károlyi and Lovászy argued similarly at the Delegation meeting. "I want a foreign policy" Károlyi said, "in which we have a free hand and are not sycophants of German imperialism ... we are simply an exponent of the German politics. We should draw nearer to France and Russia and thus enforce our Balkan interests." "No significant insurmountable obstacle prevents us from modifying our alliance system", said Lovászy.⁴²

The left wing press supported the Justh-Károlyi group. Ady, the poet, also criticized the alliance with Germany: "We like the civilized West, but we do not like and do not want the Germanic West, and we have better things to think of than Vienna, the junkers, and Pomerania".⁴³

³⁸ *Macartney*, p. 771.

³⁹ *Károlyi*, pp. 90—95. (Faith, pp. 48—50).

⁴⁰ *Pesti Hírlap*, October 29, 1913. (The article was originally published in a French journal.) Károlyi, *Válogatott írások és beszédek* (Selected Writings and Speeches), p. 42.

⁴¹ *A Nap*, April 7, 1914; and *Világ*, April 10, 1914, in I. Dolmányosi: Károlyi Mihály és a „szentpétervári út” (Mihály Károlyi and the “Petrograd Tour”), *Történelmi Szemle*, No. 2, 1963, pp. 171—172.

⁴² *Delegáció*, May 27 and 29, 1914.

⁴³ *Új Magyar Szemle*, May 1914, in Ady, Vol. III, p. 461.

The new foreign policy trend did not threaten the official policy, as it was isolated in Parliament and did not have the support of the masses behind it. Although the new tendency was unable to influence events, the parliamentary group led by Mihály Károlyi had its historical importance as an attempt at a new approach.

In the months preceding the war, the parliamentary opposition, with the exception of the Justh-Károlyi group, drew nearer to the government, unconditionally supporting it in the tightening of the alliance with Germany. At the May 1914 meetings of the Delegation, where Károlyi and Lovászy criticized the alliance with Germany, Apponyi, Rakovszky and Andrássy — in the name of the right wing of the Party of Independence, the Catholic People's Party and the Constitution Party, respectively — stood for the alliance with Germany and urged that the Monarchy should make preparations for war.⁴⁴

In the summer of 1914, instead of the journey to Russia he had originally planned, Károlyi and a few others went once more to Paris and from there, in late June, to America, in order to work out their policy in detail and to get further support. Károlyi's journey to the United States was a demonstration, although not to the extent that the originally planned trip to St. Petersburg would have been, since the United States was not part of the Entente block, but was a neutral state. The Hungarians living in the USA were more likely to be gained over by democratic views than by Károlyi's foreign policy program. Therefore Károlyi chose a representative of the Social Democratic Party, Zsigmond Kunfi, to accompany him on this journey, since the social democrats were stressing domestic transformation and universal suffrage. The journey brought hardly any practical result, but it did play a part in the evolution of the Károlyi camp and in the coordination of their policy with that of the Social Democratic Party.

DISAGREEMENTS IN THE BALKAN POLICY

The unfavourable outcome of the Balkan wars urged Germany, the Dual Monarchy, and the Austrian and Hungarian leading circles to settle their differences concerning some questions of their Balkan politics.

Against Russia and in the question of expansion to the south-east, Germany counted not only on the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy but on Romania as well. Dynastic relations and the considerable economic interests of the German monopoly capital were further factors which determined this policy. However, German politics and diplomacy were also influenced by the high command which gave Romania an important role in the military operations based on the Schlieffen

⁴⁴ *Delegáció*, May 26, 1914.

plan. Romania was to help the Monarchy contain the Russian troops until the German attack on France had finished. In this respect, even a relatively minor military force deployed against Russia had great importance, since by engaging the Russian forces on a wider front it could extend the period during which the German army could be deployed on the western front in almost full strength.

The Monarchy, however, had serious differences with Romania in economic and territorial questions (Bukovina, Transylvania). Therefore Romania, which had joined the Triple Alliance, drew more and more away from it. Before the Balkan wars, in spite of the hesitations of Bucharest, Romania was the only one among the small states of the Balkans which the Central Powers could count on in case of a conflict. Serbia and Montenegro turned more and more sharply against the Monarchy, while Bulgaria was under Russian and Greece under western influence. The Germans encouraged the Monarchy to make concessions to Romania in its economic policy and in the question of the national minorities. The Austrian leaders were more inclined to do this, while the leading Hungarian politicians wanted to satisfy the Italian claims, which were neglected by the Austrian political leaders. The Romanian question, just like the Italian one, was a frequent source of conflict between the Central Powers and a constant problem of internal diplomacy. After 1912, Romania drew further away from the Central Powers and nearer to the Entente and to Serbia in the Balkans. While Romania had not intervened in the first Balkan war, in which the peoples of the Balkans with the Entente Powers behind them fought against Turkey supported by the Central Powers, it took part in the second one. It fought on the side of Serbia, Greece, Turkey and Montenegro against Bulgaria, which this time received serious support from the Monarchy. Romania even obtained territorial gains in the Bucharest Peace of August 1913 and its policy in the Balkan wars showed clearly that the country was drawing away from the Triple Alliance. The members of the latter, however, reacted indifferently to this.

The Monarchy, whose leading circles had the intention of intervening in the war, wanted to prevent a Serbian double victory which would result in the extension of its territory. Germany, however, warned the Monarchy not to do so, thinking that such a great conflict was at the moment unfavourable from both the military and the diplomatic points of view. Later the foreign ministry in Vienna established the following memorandum: "During the great transformation in the Balkans in 1913-14, there were repeated divergences between Vienna and Berlin as to the interpretation of the situation. This hindered good cooperation between the Central Powers, temporarily created contradictions in their diplomatic activities and was harmful to their great common interests".⁴⁵

⁴⁵ *ÖUA*, Vol. VII, p. 979.

The Balkan wars, which changed the situation in the Balkans to the detriment of the Central Powers, made the coordination of the plans concerning the peninsula absolutely necessary. The changed situation created an objective basis for this. The Hungarian prime minister was also aware of the new possibility, as his two memoranda, which he addressed to the common government and to the sovereign, respectively, at the time the Bucharest peace was concluded, show.⁴⁶ On other occasion too, he exposed his attitude, particularly in the memorandum he wrote to the sovereign on March 15, 1914. He was of the opinion that in the Balkans the Central Powers should rely mainly on Bulgaria for the creation of an alliance of the Balkan peoples against Serbia and the Entente: "Together with Germany we should try to achieve a grouping of the Balkan states favourable for us. The first task would be to separate Romania and Greece from Serbia. Our aim should be that these two states reconciled with Bulgaria by extending the territory of the latter to the detriment of Serbia." Turkey should also be reconciled with Bulgaria.⁴⁷ Another reason for Tisza's urging this solution was that the Hungarian ruling classes had no conflicting interests with Bulgaria and thus it seemed possible that the Balkan positions could be strengthened without concessions having to be made to the only Balkan ally, Romania. This was important since, following the failure of the Balkan wars, Germany vigorously demanded that the Monarchy make concessions to Romania and the Romanian minority living in the Dual Monarchy. This question had been a main issue at the first Konopiste conference in October 1913.⁴⁸ Tisza also considered it important to keep Romania on the side of the Central Powers. After the second Balkan war he started negotiations with the leaders of the Romanian minority living in Hungary and especially in Transylvania, and even promised them concessions concerning cultural and parliamentary representation. This did not change the essence of the Romanian issue in Hungary, and thus could not have any major consequence in foreign policy. It was not from these measures that Tisza expected a change in Romanian politics, but from the alliance to be concluded with Bulgaria. With the minor concessions he made concerning minorities he wanted, on the one hand, to please Germany, and on the other (on account of the approaching war), to diminish the pressure of the Romanian issue in Hungary.

After the Balkan wars, the plan based on Bulgarian support was in fact a more realistic one, from the Central Powers' point of view, than the one based mainly on Romania, and it was particularly favourable for the Hungarian ruling strata. This is why Tisza took the initiative. As he wrote in his memorandum of March

⁴⁶ *ÖUA*, Vol. VII, pp. 112–114; 198–201.

⁴⁷ *ÖUA*, Vol. VII, pp. 974–979.

⁴⁸ *Fischer, Krieg*, p. 314.

1914: First agreement must be reached with the Germans, because "there can be no question of success if we do not have complete assurance of Germany's understanding, appreciation and support". Then, joint diplomatic actions will have to be taken: "It is high time to coordinate our intentions concerning Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece with those of Germany and to ensure the mutual support of our actions". But, he continued, "all this needs time. ... This is a tedious process, where any haste could prove to be our undoing". Yet, procrastination would be dangerous: "We have no time to lose. All we, who contribute to directing the politics of Austria-Hungary and Germany, should take upon ourselves the greatest responsibility if we did not start a deliberate, determined and unequivocal action in time".

Tisza was confident that in a few years time the Balkan situation would change in favour of the Monarchy and was also convinced that war with Serbia was only to be started later. His opinion differed from Conrad's, who not only during but also after the Balkan wars wished to start war against Serbia, since he thought that the chances of the Monarchy would get worse with the passing of time.⁴⁹ Conrad, like most of the leaders of the Monarchy at the time, also favoured orientation towards Bulgaria. During the last Konopiste conference (June 12-14, 1914), Francis Ferdinand also adopted this view.⁵⁰ Emperor Wilhelm, however, could not be won over to this policy. "At Konopiste", Burián wrote in his diary on June 17, "the conference did not bring much result: poor questions, insufficient answers as to Bulgaria and Romania — beating about the bush".⁵¹ On the next day Burián wrote Tisza that "constant pressure must continue to be exerted on the German cabinet so that it should force Romania to declare its intentions at last".⁵²

Thus, at the Konopiste conference the Monarchy was unable to make Emperor Wilhelm, distrustful of Bulgaria, accept its Balkan policy. Therefore, the Foreign Ministry began to prepare a memorandum expounding the Balkan policy of the Monarchy with the idea of sending it to the German cabinet and thus forcing the latter to adopt a clear stand against Romania. In his letter of June 22 to Tisza, Burián mentioned these preparations: "Berchtold is still only planning to start negotiations, but as he says, he is planning it seriously. Until now, the Germans have always avoided any discussion of this issue saying that they have trustworthy information about Romania's firm political stand. A memorandum is now being prepared here, its purpose will be to reveal to Berlin the absurdities of the

⁴⁹ *Conrad*, Vol. III, pp. 14, 731.

⁵⁰ *REZsL Tisza*, item 47, paper no. 66. Burián's letter of June 16.

⁵¹ *REZsL Burián*, item 81. Diary.

⁵² *REZsL Balogh*, package 2.

Romanian attitude, not only from the Austro-Hungarian, but also from the German point of view.”⁵³ The next day the Hungarian prime minister wrote to Berchtold himself, stressing once more that only Bulgaria could be the chief support of the Monarchy’s Balkan policy. By winning over Bulgaria it was possible to prevent the creation of a new Balkanic alliance under Russian auspices, and this was “the only means of forcing Romania to join the Triple Alliance”.⁵⁴ By June 24, the first draft of the memorandum was ready.⁵⁵

During the Balkan wars, besides the debate over the Romanian question, it was regarding the solution of the Serb issue that the long-existing differences between the Austrian and Hungarian leaders flared up once more. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand and other Austrian leaders, for example Conrad, planned the annexation of Serbia. The Hungarian leaders, however, were opposed to incorporating more South Slav masses into the Monarchy, and wanted a weakened and reduced Serbian state which would be dependent on the Monarchy. They thought that increasing the Slav element in the Monarchy would make the maintenance of the Austro-Hungarian dualist system increasingly difficult and that the increase of the Slav territories would result in a trialist system. These differences between the Austrian and Hungarian leaders had existed ever since the annexation crisis, and appeared with particular intensity during the Balkan wars, when the Monarchy was considering the possibility of war against Serbia.

At the two common cabinet meetings of May 2 and October 3, 1913, where the action to be taken against Serbia was discussed, the opposing interests clashed vehemently. At the May cabinet meeting the common finance minister said that “Serbia must cease to exist as an independent state ... the Serb people must be attached as people with equal rights to the Monarchy, where they will find a national and political home”. According to the minutes of the meeting the foreign minister “sympathized with the idea raised by the common finance minister”. The Hungarian premier definitely rejected the annexation of Serbia: “If Mr. Bilinski’s proposal is realized, the result will be trialism. The Slavs would be in majority, which would mean the end of Dualism”.⁵⁶

At the cabinet meeting of October 3, 1913, it was Conrad who stood out the most firmly for the annexation of Serbia. His stand was put down in the minutes: “He thinks that either Serbia joins us completely and loyally, similarly for instance to Bavaria which belongs to the German Empire, or open hostilities should be started, for which the most propitious moment is now.” Count Tisza had no

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, pp. 186–195.; *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 546.

⁵⁶ *ÖUA*, Vol. VI, pp. 331, 334.

objection to vigorous action which would be prepared diplomatically: "If vigorous protest is of no avail, an ultimatum should be sent in order that Serbia be subjugated diplomatically or perhaps militarily. In this case, there should be no hesitation and we must not let ourselves be stopped." He was opposed, however, to Conrad's idea of annexing Serbia: "The Royal Hungarian Premier is firmly opposed to incorporating Serbia in the Monarchy, as this is practically impossible and would make the whole of Europe stand on the side of Serbia. But it would also be disadvantageous for the Monarchy."⁵⁷

Thus, the divergences between the German, Austrian and Hungarian leading circles, which manifested themselves as differences over strategic and tactical details of the policy concerning the war to be fought in common, had not been cleared up by the time of the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand.

⁵⁷ *ÖUA*, Vol. VII, pp. 401-402.

THE JULY CRISIS AND THE BEGINNING OF WAR

THE DECISION OF WAR AGAINST SERBIA

THE SARAJEVO ASSASSINATION

In the summer of 1914, manoeuvres were held by the armed forces of the Monarchy in Bosnia, in the area of Tarcin, about 80 kilometers from the Serbian border. Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Monarchy and inspector general of the Austro-Hungarian army, attended the manoeuvres. Immediately afterwards, on June 28, he was to visit the capital of Bosnia.

Before the archduke and his wife left for the manoeuvres, Count Paar, who belonged to the sovereign's intimate circle, had said privately the following about the nature of the whole undertaking: "It should be clearly demonstrated that we are the masters in Bosnia. This is the purpose of the concentration of troops and of the archduke's and his wife's representative journey to Sarajevo. Serbia must learn from all this that she may never stretch her hand out over here."¹

On June 28, after the end of the manoeuvres, Francis Ferdinand went to Sarajevo, the capital of the province, with his wife and his suite. After an unsuccessful bomb attempt against him (committed by Nedjelko Chabrinović), he was shot to death by a Bosnian Serb student, Gavrilo Princip. The assailant also intended to shoot Army Corps General Potiorek, the governor of the province, who was travelling in the same carriage, but his bullet hit the archduke's wife instead.

The 19-year-old assailants were members of a secret society called "Young Bosnia", which was fighting for an independent federal state of the Southern Slav peoples.² The Serbian nationalist underground organization "Union or Death" (also called the "Black Hand"), which had been formed in 1911, had encouraged the assailants and supplied them with arms. The leader of the organization was the head of the espionage department of the Serbian general staff (Dragutin

¹ *Margutti*, p. 137.

² For the motives and antecedents of the assassination, see V. Dedijer: *The Road to Sarajevo*, New York 1966, Esp. chapter 10.

Dimitrijević), and its members were largely officers of the Serbian army. The organization aimed at unifying the Serbs, those living under the domination of the Monarchy and those beyond the Serb national unity, to establish a South Slav state under Serb leadership. The organization worked in the strictest secrecy.³ Even the Serb government was afraid of it, since the organization stood out against its policy, which it judged not to have been firm enough during and after the second Balkan war. The differences between the secret organization and the government became particularly profound in May and June 1914. The Serb government wished to avoid an immediate conflict with the Monarchy, since their troops were tied down in the newly acquired territories during the Balkan wars and Russia was not yet fully prepared. They knew very well in Belgrade that the French and Russian armies were not yet ready, and thus the Serb government had to reckon with the possibility that if a war with Austria-Hungary were to break out too early its supporters might not support a fight against an already fully prepared Germany. After settling the 1912-13 Balkan conflicts, the Serb government's policy aimed at relieving the tension with the Monarchy. In contrast, the secret organization wanted a bolder policy in order that Serbia could prepare herself better. The leaders of the organization reckoned that the Monarchy would be well obliged to swallow the pill, which would strengthen the anti-Monarchy movements inside and outside. It might be noted that immediately after the assassination not even the Russian ambassador in Vienna was thinking of the possibility of a military conflict: "We have reason to suppose that the policy of Austria-Hungary, at least in the immediate future, will take a more reserved and quieter turn".⁴ Later (in 1917), the Serb government liquidated the organization and had Dimitrijević executed.⁵

The news of the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife reached Vienna and Budapest early in the afternoon of the same day, June 28. Not many tears were shed over the personal fate of the archduke, who was not popular at all, not even in the fairly wide circle of the ruling strata. As Count Czernin, who sympathized with his politics, wrote in his memoirs: "Many there were who breathed more freely on hearing the news of his death. At the court in Vienna and in society at Budapest there was more joy than sorrow."⁶ The

³ For the statute of the organization, see H. Uebersberger: *Österreich zwischen Russland und Serbien*, Köln-Graz 1958, p. 240.

⁴ *Internac., Bez.*, Series I, Vol. 4, p. 39.

⁵ On the Trial of the Salonica, see Uebersberger, *op. cit.*, part II; Dedijer, *op. cit.*, chapter 7.

⁶ Czernin, p. 56.

French and American consuls general in Budapest sent similar reports of the atmosphere in the Hungarian capital on June 30.⁷ The bourgeois press, however, was already instigating against Serbia, and the leading politicians were pondering how to strike back.⁸

THE VIENNA DECISIONS

Conrad von Hötzendorff, the chief of staff, heard about the assassination on his tour of inspection in Zagreb. He wrote in his memoirs: "I at once saw clearly the importance of the blow and also what had to follow. The Sarajevo assassination was the last link in a long chain. It was not an act committed by a few fanatics, but the result of well-organized action. It was Serbia's declaration of war on Austria-Hungary. And the only possible answer to it was war."⁹ In his view, the assassination had to be interpreted as a Serbian declaration of war which had to be followed by immediate mobilization and attack without any diplomatic measures. Conrad took into consideration the fact that the Serbian army was concentrated in the southern area, next to the Bulgarian border. At the same time the Bosnian-Herzegovinan garrison — a select corps of war strength¹⁰ — as well as the approximately 22,000 soldiers of the two army corps which had been deployed in the manoeuvres were ready to break into Serbia. The troops that would arrive as a result of the mobilization could also be sent to fight immediately. Conrad thought that Serbia, taken by surprise, could be overrun rapidly and the Great Powers presented with a *fait accompli*. After that diplomacy could take over and settle the more serious complications. Conrad, like other military leaders of the Monarchy, underestimated the force of the Serb resistance. According to the military attaché in Belgrade, Serbia would only be able to deploy 100,000 effective soldiers against Austria. "With six Austro-Hungarian army corps," he said at the time, "we shall defeat Serbia and occupy its whole territory in four weeks".¹¹

Upon the sovereign's telegraphed order Conrad arrived in Vienna on the morning of the 29th. The same day he met Count Berchtold, the minister of foreign affairs, who, on hearing about the assassination the previous night, had left his Buchlau castle and returned to Vienna. The foreign minister and the chief of general staff agreed in their judgement of the situation that had arisen following the

⁷ For the report of the French consul, see O. Eöttevényi: *Ferenc Ferdinánd* (Francis Ferdinand), Budapest 1934, p. 365.; The report of the consul-general of the United States, see *May*, Vol. I, p. 48.

⁸ *Hallgarten*, Vol. II, p. 478.

⁹ *Conrad*, Vol. IV, pp. 17–18.

¹⁰ *Világháború*, Vol. IV, p. 17.

¹¹ *Margutti*, p. 423.

assassination, but disagreed as to the nature of the concrete steps to be taken. "Count Berchtold was also of the opinion", Conrad wrote in his memoirs, "that the moment had come to solve the Serbian problem, and he wished to talk to His Majesty about it. First, however, we had to wait for the result of the inquiry."¹²

The sovereign shared Berchtold's view, but first he wanted to know the stand of the German emperor and government. Thus, both the sovereign and the foreign minister were thinking of military action similar to the chief of general staff, but unlike him, considered a preliminary inquiry and diplomatic preparation necessary and, above all, wanted to get the Germans' approval. Berchtold expounded his view to the German ambassador in Vienna as early as June 30. On the same day, Tschirschky reported about this to the chancellor in Berlin: "Count Berchtold has told me today that everything points to the fact that the threads of the plot which led to the archduke's assassination converge in Belgrade... The minister spoke very seriously about the Serb conspiracy." The ambassador added: "Trustworthy people often voice here their wish that accounts with Serbia should be settled for good. First, claims should be made on Serbia, and if these are not accepted, energetic steps should be taken."¹³ The common Minister of Defence Krobatin, who had arrived back in Vienna from his tour of inspection in South Tirol, supported Conrad.¹⁴ The Austrian prime minister, Count Stürgkh mainly put forward reasons of internal policy: the relations of the Austrian Slavs with the South Slav movement outside the Monarchy can only be severed by a war against Serbia, and if this does not take place, there will be dangerous consequences.¹⁵

THE ATTITUDE OF COUNT ISTVÁN TISZA

The Hungarian prime minister heard the news of the assassination on his Geszt estate on the afternoon of Sunday, June 28.¹⁶ The next day he arrived in Budapest, and on the 30th he travelled to Vienna where he went to see the emperor to offer him the condolences of the Hungarian government. During this visit they did not talk about any political questions. The assassination and the voices of the war-mongers did not divert Tisza from his earlier view that the time had not yet come

¹² *Conrad*, Vol. IV, p. 35.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 58.

¹³ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, pp. 10-11.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 58-59.

¹⁴ *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 559.

¹⁵ Macchio's note of his conversation with Count Stürgkh on the eve of the assassination in Vienna. *Valiani*, p. 787.

¹⁶ Of all the members of government only the justice minister was in the capital that day, who telephoned Tisza the moment he got the news. *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 4-5.

for a war against Serbia and that the Monarchy must wait for the possibility of a more favourable grouping of forces in the Balkan. As he wrote a few years later: "After the Sarajevo assassination I did not even dream that it would result in war".¹⁷ He heard about Berchtold's plan from the foreign minister himself, but told him immediately that he did not agree with it. Berchtold put down Tisza's arguments in his unpublished memoirs: "The Serb government must be given time to prove its loyalty. It is also worth considering whether the international situation would not be more favourable for the Monarchy later. The minister mentioned in particular Bulgaria, which would be suitable to later become our foothold in the Balkans."¹⁸ He visited Head of Department Count Forgách in the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During a part of their conversation Count Hoyos was present, who was chief of cabinet at the ministry. In his memoirs Hoyos recalled that Tisza concerning the plan for belligerent action, declared: "I myself do not participate in it!"¹⁹ After the talks with Berchtold, Tisza instructed Burián,²⁰ then hastily returned to Budapest, since he could not allow himself too long an absence in the given situation. On the following day, July 1, he addressed a handwritten memorandum to the sovereign: "Only after my audience did I have the possibility to speak to Count Berchtold and learn of his intention to take the opportunity of the Sarajevo atrocity for a showdown with Serbia. I did not conceal from Count Berchtold that I should consider this a fatal mistake and should on no account take the responsibility... Firstly, we do not yet have sufficient reason to call Serbia to account... Secondly, I consider highly unfavourable the present moment when we have already more or less lost Romania without getting any substitute for her and when the only country we can count on, i.e. Bulgaria, is exhausted. In the present situation in the Balkan, finding a suitable *casus belli* is the least of my cares. When the time comes for attacking, we shall be able to do so on any number of pretexts. First, however, we should endeavour to bring about a diplomatic constellation in which the distribution of forces is less unfavourable for us."²¹

Thus Tisza was considering the probability of a war with Serbia in the near future, but judged the given situation unfavourable for it. In case of war against Serbia and Russia he also expected a Romanian invasion of Transylvania, and that border was not equipped for defence. The talks he had had with the leaders of the Transylvanian Romanians a few months earlier had been unsuccessful, and in case of an attack he also feared a revolt. He only saw one possibility to guard

¹⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 346.

¹⁸ Quoted by *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 560.

¹⁹ *Fellner*, p. 411.

²⁰ Burián put down in his diary on June 30: "Here Tisza ... Berchtold was incited — to imprudent ideas against Serbia." *REZsL Burián*, item 5. Diary.

²¹ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 248.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 62–63.

against all this: to conclude an alliance with Bulgaria and thus keeping Romania at bay, prevent her from attacking Transylvania. Concluding an alliance with Bulgaria, however, needed time, and this was why he did not want to provoke war with Serbia at the moment. The memorandum is not the only proof that it was the Romanian question which was significant in Tisza's resistance. He also declared his views to Berchtold, who informed Conrad, since the latter did not have any direct talks with the Hungarian prime minister: "Tisza is opposed to the war, he fears a Romanian attack against Transylvania".²²

THE BERLIN DECISION

Count Berchtold and the sovereign noted Tisza's proposal, but did not let it disturb the steps they intended to take. The investigation of the assassination started in Sarajevo. It was expected to prove that the responsibility lay with the Serb authorities and government, so that the action against Serbia could be justified. In the meantime the support of the German emperor and government had to be secured. The final version of the memorandum concerning the Balkan policy, which had been more or less ready before the assassination, was drawn up on July 1. It envisaged orientation toward Bulgaria in addition to Romania, and wanted Germany to make this accepted by Romania. Berchtold's man of confidence, Count Hoyos, personally took it to Kaiser Wilhelm on July 4 together with Francis Joseph's letter: "My government must in the future strive to isolate and diminish Serbia ... We can no more think of reconciling the differences between us and Serbia. The state of Serbia should be eliminated as a political factor in the Balkans."²³ In his talks with the German chancellor and the deputy Foreign Minister, Count Hoyos explained that the words "diminish" and "eliminate" applied to the repartition of Serbia by her neighbours. Hoyos also mentioned that they were planning an immediate attack. He was convinced that the crisis which arose due to the murder of the heir to the throne must be developed into a war against Serbia by the Monarchy.²⁴

Tisza knew of the memorandum, which outlined the Balkan policy to be followed by the Monarchy in the spirit of his previous propositions. He also knew the text of the sovereign's letter, and had even suggested a change in it in order to reduce the sharpness of the wording.²⁵ As we will later see he did not, however,

²² *Conrad*, Vol. IV, p. 40.

²³ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, pp. 253-261.

²⁴ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, p. 35.; *Fellner*, pp. 397, 401, 413.

²⁵ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 316.

accept Hoyos' verbal explanation. Francis Joseph received the chief of the general staff on July 5, i.e. before the Germans' answer had arrived. This was the first time they had met since the archduke's assassination. Conrad related his plan of an immediate attack of Serbia. The sovereign asked him: "Are you certain of the German support?" Conrad replied with a question: "If the answer is that Germany is standing by us, will we make war against Serbia?" To which the sovereign answered: "In that case, yes".²⁶

Even before the memorandum was sent, Berchtold and the emperor had reason to think that vigorous action would now get support in Berlin. In the first few days following the assassination the German ambassador in Vienna had played the part of a moderator. So had the German deputy Foreign Minister, Zimmermann, who headed the ministry in the early summer, while Jagow was on holiday. He had not yet received instructions concerning the new situation.²⁷ In a few days, however, the wind changed completely in the German Foreign Ministry. On July 2, Berchtold talked to Tschirschky, who was already going on another strain: "The ambassador ... assured me that in his opinion only vigorous action against Serbia could have a successful effect".²⁸ On the previous day, July 1, Hoyos had talked to Friedrich Naumann, who had been in Vienna since June 26, and who told him that Germany was prepared for war. Naumann was well informed.²⁹ However, none of these statements was official, and the leaders in Vienna asked the opinion of the German emperor and the chancellor.

Count Szögyény-Marich, the ambassador of the Dual Monarchy in Berlin, handed the memorandum and the sovereign's letter, which Count Hoyos had brought to Berlin, over to the kaiser at noon on July 5. He reported on the kaiser's answer in his telegram of the same day: "If we really deem it necessary to take war action against Serbia, he, the Kaiser, would be sorry if we did not take the present opportunity, which is highly favourable for us. As to Romania, he would take care that King Carol and his counsellors should observe a correct attitude... no doubt, Russia's attitude would be hostile anyhow, but he had been prepared for that for years, and even if it came to a war between Austria-Hungary and Russia, we could be convinced that Germany would stand by our side with her accustomed faithfulness as an ally."³⁰ Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg and deputy Foreign Minister Zimmermann expressed the same opinion when Szögyény-Marich and Hoyos visited them the next day. "The Chancellor", the ambassador writes,

²⁶ *Conrad*, Vol. IV, p. 36.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 83.

²⁷ *Albertini*, Vol. II, p. 137.

²⁸ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 277.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 74.

²⁹ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 235.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 60-61.; *Fischer, Krieg*, p. 686.; *Fellner*, pp. 397-398.

³⁰ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 307.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 84.

"just like his master, the Kaiser, thinks that the most radical and expedient solution of our difficulties in the Balkan would be an immediate action against Serbia. From the international point of view as well he considers the present moment more suitable than a later occasion."³¹

After answering the Viennese propositions favourably, Berlin was urging Vienna more and more to start the action. The German military and political leaders were of the opinion that the time was now ripe. The army was ready, while the Russian and French armies were not yet fully prepared.³² German diplomacy was also hoping that Great Britain would remain neutral. The German leaders knew very well that Great Britain was the main enemy of their *Weltpolitik*, and that the clash between the two rivals would take place sooner or later. Now, however, they thought it possible to conduct a continental war first. The antagonism between Germany and Russia had deepened after the Balkan wars, thus the Germans tried to relieve the tension with Britain. In the months preceding July 1914 the tension had in fact been relieved, while the Anglo-Russian conflict deepened on account of Persia.³³

The Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Berlin relates at the time that the kaiser as well as all competent factors "urge us most energetically not to miss our chance and take vigorous action against Serbia..., from their own point of view too, the German government considers the present moment politically the most suitable".³⁴ The mentality of the leading German circles is shown perhaps the most clearly by the confidential diplomatic dispatch which the German Foreign Minister, Jagow, sent to the German ambassador in London: "Russia is not yet prepared. France and Britain do not want war now either. In all competent views Russia will be fully prepared in a few years' time. By then, she will have attained superiority by the number of her troops, and she will have developed her Baltic fleet and strategic railway lines. In the meantime, our group will have weakened... I do not want a preventive war, but if an occasion presents itself for fighting, we must not miss it."³⁵

Tschirschky, the ambassador in Vienna was also instructed to encourage and press for action against Serbia. This is not only proved by the correspondence between the ambassador and the Foreign Ministry, and by the reports of the Viennese politicians who had talks with the ambassador, but Tschirschky himself spoke of it after the outbreak of the war. Andrassy writes in his memoirs: "When

³¹ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 320.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 93. Hoyos's notes of recollection, see *Fellner*, pp. 413-415.

³² *Deutschland*, Vol. I, pp. 121-122.

³³ *Hallgarten*, Vol. II, p. 413.; *Deutschland*, Vol. I, p. 143.

³⁴ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, pp. 407-408.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 150-151.

³⁵ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, p. 100.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 207-208.

we raised the Serb issue, Ambassador Tschirschky, as he later told me, tried to urge us to take energetic steps and intimated that Austria-Hungary would lose esteem in Berlin as an ally if she were unable to solve the Serb problem. The German emperor and his chancellor were of the opinion that swift military action would be the most suitable."³⁶

On July 5 Tisza heard about the support of the kaiser and government.³⁷ In spite of this, he held on, though in a modified form, to his view that war should be delayed, since the moment was not propitious. The Hungarian prime minister saw very well that it was Germany which was now urging the Monarchy to attack Serbia, but he also saw that the German official circles had not yet adopted the planned bulgarophile policy of the Monarchy. In their verbal declarations about the memorandum and Francis Joseph's accompanying letter both Wilhelm II and the chancellor had said, for the first time that they did not object to the Monarchy's interest, but at the same time emphasized that no action should be taken against Romania. Thus from Tisza's point of view, who advocated the alliance with Bulgaria not with a view to join action against Serbia, but in order to keep Romania in check, the danger of Romanian attack still subsisted. He saw no reason for changing his earlier attitude considerably.

Just as it would not be right to narrow down the German attitude to "giving a blank check", it would also be an error not to see Vienna's large degree of independence in the decision in spite of German pressure. In the July crisis the leaders of the Monarchy were not acting only under German influence, but above all according to their own political interests. But as we saw earlier, in the estimation of its "own interest" two tendencies appeared in the leadership of the Monarchy in every belligerent crisis during the critical years before the war. One pushed for an immediate war against Serbia, the other, although it had reflected on the necessity of such a war, wanted to avoid the Serb war for the time being, afraid that a general European conflict could result from it. These two tendencies also appeared in the July crisis, when Conrad was once again the laconic representative of the first viewpoint, Tisza represented the second. In the earlier crisis the tendency to postpone war was greater, but in the July crisis the undertaking of a war which could spread throughout Europe was believed to be expedient, and in this the Germans' intervention was decisive. As a consequence of the German statement and incitement to war, the tendency in Vienna, which represented the postponement of war, was driven back, and the decision to undertake war became dominant. This is well illustrated by the further course of the debate which saw the Hungarian prime minister opposed to the other leading politicians of the Monarchy.

³⁶ *Andrássy*, p. 45.

³⁷ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 329.

On July 7 a common cabinet meeting was convoked in Vienna to discuss the diplomatic action to be taken against Serbia. Just before the cabinet meeting, Hoyos had reported to Berchtold, Stürgkh, Tisza, and Tschirschky about his journey to Berlin and about his having explained there that they were planning the repartition of Serbia among her neighbours. The Hungarian prime minister protested against this, and Berchtold also admitted that this could only have been Hoyos' personal opinion.³⁸ Tisza being already conscious of the German attitude suspected the possibility of war, although maintaining his view that it would be more fortunate to put it off to a later date. At the cabinet meeting he said³⁹ that "he was considering the possibility of war action to be conducted against Serbia more probable today than he would have thought immediately after the Sarajevo assassination," but "he himself was of the opinion that war should not necessarily follow at this very moment". The members of the cabinet did not agree with this. They agreed that first diplomatic action should be taken, and military action would follow only if this was rejected. While Tisza wanted "firm claims", but not unacceptable ones, the others said that "we should make such farfetched claims on Serbia that their rejection might be expected, and in view of this, a radical solution involving military action should be prepared". Since no agreement was reached in this question, Tisza "wished to emphasize that if his view were not taken into consideration, he would be obliged to draw the consequences for himself". No resolution could be taken, due to the opposing views concerning the aim to be achieved, regarding the points or text of the claims.

The Hungarian prime minister's attitude now differed from what he thought previously. He now considered vigorous diplomatic action, perhaps even an ultimatum, but not an unacceptable one, necessary. Since this could also lead to war and he knew about the plan to partition Serbia, he emphasized at the cabinet meeting that "the territory of Serbia should be reduced, but, if only with regard to Russia, she must not be completely annihilated. As Hungarian prime minister he would never allow the Monarchy to annex part of Serbia". The joint cabinet council accepted his view. No agreement was reached however in the main question. Thus in another memorandum sent to the sovereign on the next day, Tisza repeated his reservations: "As to a war we shall have provoked, we would probably have to fight it under highly unfavourable circumstances, while by putting off the showdown to a later date and by profiting diplomatically from the interval, we might succeed in improving the proportion of forces". He also considered the

³⁸ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, p. 35.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 115.

³⁹ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, pp. 345-351.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 104-112.

possibility of war. But in that case "a declaration should be made at the right moment, and in the right form, that we do not want either to annihilate or annex Serbia. After a successful war Serbia could be diminished in area by the cession of some of the conquered districts (i.e. in the Balkan wars — J. G.), to Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, but we ourselves should ask at most merely certain important boundary modifications. To be sure, we could claim a war indemnity, which would give us the chance to keep a firm hand on Serbia for a long time."⁴⁰ It is obvious that there the old-fashioned policy of the Hungarian government manifested itself: should the Slav element continue to increase within the empire, the Dual Monarchy could not be maintained.

The Hungarian prime minister was still primarily worrying about the possibility of a Romanian attack: "We would have to regard the Romanian army," he wrote in his memoirs, "as belonging to the enemy camp". It is his handwritten note attached to the memorandum which shows most clearly that this was the central point on Tisza's mind. In this he examines the military bearings of a "war against Russia, Serbia and Romania" on the basis of the data furnished by the general staff. According to his calculation, such force would have to be sent to the Russian front that the rest would just be able to contain the Serb army "while we would not be able to put up serious resistance against the advancing Romanian army". If the Russians cannot be defeated quickly, and thus part of the army transferred to fight against the Serbs and Romanians, "the Romanian army will enter Transylvania, there will be insurrections in the regions inhabited by Romanians, and our army fighting against Serbia will be attacked on the flank and in the rear. The certain defeat of that army will open the way for the enemy towards Budapest and Vienna, and decide the entire campaign."⁴¹

Berchtold received Tisza's memorandum on the same day. At 3.30 p.m. on this day, July 8, Tschirschky, the German ambassador came to see him and told him that Berlin was expecting the Monarchy to take energetic action against Serbia and would not understand if it did not take place. Tschirschky also said that in Berlin they considered it impossible that Romania should take a hostile stand, and that in any case, the German emperor had already got in touch with the king of Romania. Berchtold deemed the new German pressure and the German course of action concerning Romania so important that he immediately informed the Hungarian prime minister about it: "Tschirschky has just left, after informing me that he has received a telegram in which his Imperial Master directed him to declare here most emphatically that Berlin expects the Monarchy to act against Serbia and that it would not be understood in Germany if we should

⁴⁰ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, pp. 371–374.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 128–131.

⁴¹ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 374.

let this opportunity go by without striking a blow".⁴² Berchtold also acquainted the Hungarian prime minister with the information he had received concerning Romania. The foreign minister was expecting Tisza to change his opinion under the influence of this information, so he asked him in his letter to cable him in Ischl the next day. Because he was going to see the sovereign the following day, and since he had to hand over to him the memorandum of the Hungarian prime minister, he would have liked to learn about its invalidation from its author. More importantly he needed this for in the Foreign Ministry they had just begun to prepare an unacceptable ultimatum. On July 8 Burián noted in his diary: "In the evening, conference in the Foreign Ministry in the presence of the chief counsellors and the Chief of the General Staff Conrad. Subject: the course of action to be taken regarding Serbia. Instead of insistence on war — which they all support with the exception of István Tisza — an ultimatum, with claims that Serbia will very probably refuse to meet."⁴³

How did the Hungarian prime minister react to Berchtold's highly significant letter of July 8? Sidney B. Fay wrote in his work published in the 20s that "Tisza was apparently unmoved by this, and did not telegraph as requested." In his work on Berchtold, Hugo Hantsch is more cautious: "We know nothing of Tisza's reaction to Berchtold's letter".⁴⁴ Among the posthumous papers of Tisza, which have recently become accessible for research, can be found Berchtold's famous letter in the original. Next to it can be found the answer, unknown in the literature concerning the war crisis. Due to the importance of this text it is worth citing in full:

"Lieber Freund!*

Es freut mich sehr, daß Deutschland sich so hitzig in's Zeug legt, ich kann mich aber durch die deutsche Directive nicht beeinflussen und von dem Wege verdrängen lassen, welchen ich von unserem Standpunkte für den richtigen halte. An Energie und Entschiedenheit läßt ja dieser Vorgang nichts zu wünschen übrig.

Allerdings ist in Berlin der kolossale Fehler gemacht worden, daß Hoyos die Idee eines sofortigen Angriffs auf Serbien und der Vernichtung dieses Staates zur Sprache brachte, obwohl er wissen mußte, daß dies weit über das Maß des Allerhöchsten Handschreibens und desjenigen geht, was auch ich mitzumachen geneigt bin.

Nach diesem unbefugten Säbelrasseln scheint jetzt mein Standpunkt zurücktan-

⁴² *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 370.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 128.

⁴³ *REZsL Burián*, item 5. Diary.

⁴⁴ *Fay*, Vol. II, p. 234.; *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 586.

zen und Schwäche zu sein, und ist es natürlich, daß dies keinen günstigen Eindruck in Berlin macht. — Es wäre also dringend notwendig in Berlin mitzuteilen, daß Hoyos ganz eigene Faust gesprochen und die verantwortlichen Faktoren nie zu einem solchen Entschlusse gekommen waren. Natürlich will ich mich nicht an Tschirschky wenden — das schiene, als wenn wir nicht an einem Strange ziehen würden —, aber ich bitte Dich sehr, ihm volle Aufklärung darüber zu geben, daß ich von Anfang an entschieden gegen den diplomatisch unvorbereiteten Angriff Stellung genommen hatte.

Jedenfalls wäre es sehr wichtig, die Antwort König Carols auf den Kaiserlichen Brief so bald als möglich zu erfahren. Ich erwarte es mit gespanntem Interesse, und würde mich angenehm täuschen, wenn er wirklich ganz ehrlich und klar ausfallen würde. — Vederemo!

Telegrafire über Ischl und gib mir Bescheid, wann ich nach Wien gehen soll.

Ganz der Deine

Tisza"⁴⁵

“*Dear Friend!

I am very happy to see that Germany has so very passionately set about doing the thing, but I cannot be influenced by the German directives, I cannot be deviated from the road which, on the basis of our standpoint, I find correct. I shall not go into details for you know already that, as regards energy and determination, this tendency does not leave much to be desired.

In any case, the colossal mistake that Hoyos mentioned, the idea of immediate attack against Serbia and the destruction of that state was made in Berlin, though he should have had to know that it well exceeds the limits of the Kaiser's letter and also of the thing I myself am willing to participate in.

After this unauthorized sabre-rattling it might look to you as if my standpoint was retracting and weak and, naturally, it does not make positive impression on Berlin. — As a consequence, it would be very urgent to inform Berlin, that Hoyos made the statement on his own account and that the responsible parties would never have had arrived at such a decision.

It goes without saying, that I do not intend to turn to Tschirschky as this would suggest as if I were not in one and in the very same camp with him. But I beg you to inform him fully about the fact that, from the very beginning, I have always been against an attack diplomatically unprepared.

Anyway, it would be of great importance to get acquainted with King Charles' answer to the letter of the Kaiser as soon as possible. I am looking forward to it with eager interest and would be positively disappointed if it really proved to be honest and clear. — Vederemo!

Cable through Ischl and tell me when to go to Vienna.

Sincerely yours,

Tisza"

⁴⁵ REZsL Balogh, package 2.

It becomes clear from the answer that, on the one hand, in spite of the new German pressure Tisza refused to change his attitude and, on the other, and this is at least as significant, he attached great importance to the Romanian answer, i.e. to the elucidation of the issue of Romania's attitude. In his letter of July 10 Berchtold noted that he had received Tisza's letter and also that he had informed Tschirschky, at an earlier date, of the differences between them, as well as of the common cabinet meeting.⁴⁶ On the same day he wrote yet another letter saying that Tschirschky had again come to see him and modified his statement of July 8, since he was not quite sure himself whether the step the German emperor intended to take towards the king of Romania had already taken place or was only going to.⁴⁷

At its meeting of July 9 the Hungarian government acknowledged and approved the prime minister's attitude and "authorized him to enforce the influence which was the Hungarian Ministry's due according to Para 8 Article XII of the Act of 1867 according to the principles and in the directions he had proposed".⁴⁸

Thus we see that the facts disprove the view which was fairly widespread both in Hungarian and foreign literature, that Tisza was resistant because he was not sure of the attitude the Germans would adopt. From July 6 on, the German attitude was quite clear and yet Tisza persisted in his stand. At the cabinet meeting on July 7 and in his letter of July 9 he expressed his displeasure at the affair having already been discussed in Berlin. This largely unfounded earlier view can still be encountered in Vol. 10 of *Historia Mundi*, a highly important work on universal history published in 1961. Here we can read that Tisza hesitated in the question of war because in case of an attack against Serbia he expected a conflict with Russia, but "was not sure whether Germany would meet her obligations towards her allies in such a conflict".⁴⁹

The essential point in Tisza's behaviour was that he would have liked to put off the war, which he deemed necessary, until a more favourable grouping was established in the Balkans, in which Bulgaria would play a major role. He thought that as long as Bulgaria was not yet standing firmly on the side of the Central Powers a Romanian attack was possible, or at least, the neutralization of Romania would require enormous sacrifices. The Hungarian government would not be able to ignore the German and Austrian pressure. At the Konopiste conference which was held a few weeks before the war crisis, it had also been agreed that pressure should be put on the Hungarian premier that he made concessions

⁴⁶ REZsL Tisza, item 47, papers 35-36.

⁴⁷ REZsL Tisza, item 47, paper 37.

⁴⁸ Min. tan. jkv, (July 9, 1914, point 1), p. 59.

⁴⁹ *Historia Mundi*, Vol. X, Bern-München 1961, p. 143.

in the Romanian question. Berchtold himself had also agreed with this.⁵⁰ Following the meeting of Konopiste, Tisza was of the opinion that it was on the Germans that pressure had to be exerted so that they would settle the Romanian issue and agree to the policy of alliance with Bulgaria. The German politicians, however, were noncommittal. In such circumstances the Hungarian prime minister counted on an attack from Romania, whose consequences he judged disastrous. This was why he opposed the war.

THE CHANGE IN TISZA'S ATTITUDE

Between July 10 and 14 the attitude of the Hungarian Prime Minister changed. On the 10th, Tschirschky reported that Berchtold had complained about Tisza who was hampering energetic action.⁵¹ But already on the previous day Burián, who mediated between the foreign minister and the Hungarian prime minister, had gone to Budapest and succeeded in getting their attitudes slightly nearer to each other's.

In those days Burián was for accepting the policy of Vienna. It is remarkable that in a letter written several years later, on November 25, 1925, to Berchtold, Count Forgách wrote the following: "It was not you who influenced Tisza to sharpen his tone but only Burián, whom he always heeded".⁵² The Viennese politicians realized that Burián's opinion was different from his prime minister's, and included him in the negotiations. It was in the evening of July 8 that he took part for the first time in an important discussion.⁵³ We have already quoted his diary note concerning it. Tisza had no reason to object to Burián's inclusion in the talks, and it is not impossible that he had wanted it himself. Officially, Burián — even if his opinion differed from Tisza's in the question of war — could not act differently from his prime minister, since at this moment he was a member of the Hungarian government. At the same time, his participation in the talks made it possible for Tisza to be much better informed since he trusted Burián's reports.

The change in the prime minister's attitude began to shape itself on July 10. It is shown by his asking Burián on that day to press Berchtold to urge the British government and public opinion, "so that, when it comes to that, they may ac-

⁵⁰ R. Kiszling: Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand. *Der Donauraum*, No. 5/1963, pp. 277-278.; *Albertini*, Vol. II, pp. 533-534.; *Dokumente*, Vol. I, p. 60.

⁵¹ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, p. 50.

⁵² *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 585.

⁵³ *Hantsch*, Vol. II, pp. 570, 585.

knowledge that our action is justified and necessary and use their influence to localize the war". Another fact showing the change was that on the same day he instructed the ban of Croatia to collect material "that would shed light upon Serbia's machinations against us and prove the acts or omissions of the Serbian official circles directed against us".⁵⁴

On July 11, a conference was held in Vienna about the text of the note to be prepared. The Hungarian premier was represented by Burián, who informed him about the meeting in a telegram on the same day. "Today's meeting was concerned with the terms to be used, about which some progress was made." He also reported that the prime minister's proposal to send a note first, and an ultimatum only in case the note was not accepted, was rejected unanimously, everybody insisting on a "single action", in the manner of an "ultimatum".⁵⁵ The prime minister acknowledged this with acquiescence. Thus on July 11, Berchtold, too, was able to tell Tschirschky that since the previous day Tisza's attitude concerning the note to be sent to Serbia had approached his own.⁵⁶ On the next day Burián was received by the sovereign in audience, and informed Tisza about this in a telegram. "He (i.e. the sovereign — J. G.) considers it highly important that the difference between your opinion and that of the others, which His Majesty does not think essential, should be settled as soon as possible ... His Majesty wishes our claims to be formulated so that no loophole be possible." And in his diary he wrote: "My general impression about the Sovereign's mood: He feels that the showdown is necessary in spite of the difficult situation, since it will never become any easier."⁵⁷ On July 13 Tschirschky could already report that Berchtold was hoping that on the next morning he would be able to arrive at an agreement with Tisza concerning the contents and deadline of the ultimatum.⁵⁸

In fact, by the 14th Tisza had become a different man. He was in Vienna on that day. He was coming to the conference that had been fixed several days earlier and where the claims to be sent to Serbia were to be formulated, since no agreement had been reached in this question at the cabinet meeting of July 7.

In addition to Berchtold and Tisza, Stürgkh and Burián also attended the conference of July 14. There was complete unity of opinion. Agreement was reached not only concerning the clauses of the claims, of which several were unacceptable, but also the form: it was to be in the nature of an ultimatum with a very short, 48-hour expiry. They also agreed to wait on delivering the note

⁵⁴ *REZsL Tisza*, item 20, paper 86.; *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 15.

⁵⁵ *REZsL Burián*, item 41, book of telegrammes.

⁵⁶ *Geiss*, Vol. I, No. 72.

⁵⁷ *REZsL Burián*, item 41, book of telegrammes; item 5. Diary.

⁵⁸ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, p. 60.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 155–156.

until Poincaré, the president of the French Republic, had finished his visit to Petrograd. A few days later Count Hoyos said about the result of the conference to the German chargé d'affaires in Vienna: "The claims are such that it is impossible for any state which has the least amount of self-respect and dignity to accept them".⁵⁹ After the conference Berchtold reported to the sovereign: "We have reached complete agreement as to the claims to be made towards Serbia... The text of the note to be sent to Belgrade which we have agreed upon today is such that the possibility of war should be counted on". Berchtold also informed the sovereign about Tisza's insistence that, prior to delivering the ultimatum, the common cabinet adopt a decision saying that "through the war against Serbia the Monarchy — except for certain readjustments of the border — does not wish to raise territorial claims".⁶⁰ Berchtold also stressed to Tschirschky the "welcome" result of the conference: "Tisza agreed, and even formulated certain points more sharply than we did".⁶¹

Following the conference to prepare the text of the ultimatum, the prime minister also went to see Tschirschky: "I have found it hard to decide to advise in favour of war," he said according to the ambassador's report, "but I am now firmly convinced of its necessity and shall apply all my strength for the greatness of the Monarchy". Tschirschky's report also mentions that Tisza went on to tell him that "Serbia must accept all the claims unconditionally," and added, "the note will be so formulated that its acceptance will be practically out of the question". On the margin of this report the German emperor wrote about the Hungarian prime minister: "He is a man after all".⁶²

In a private letter written on July 16, Count Forgách also informed the ambassador in Rome about the complete unity of opinion which reigned among the leaders of the Monarchy: "All the competent factors of the Monarchy now show a rare unity of opinion and conviction".⁶³

LATER INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CHANGE IN TISZA'S ATTITUDE

During the years of the war these inside differences of opinion were wrapped in the utmost secrecy. However, the most important Austro-Hungarian and German documents concerning the July crisis were published as early as the year following the war. In 1919, the Foreign Ministry of the Austrian Republic pub-

⁵⁹ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, pp. 114–115.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 210.

⁶⁰ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, pp. 447–448.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 161.

⁶¹ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, p. 76.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 165.

⁶² *Dokumente*, Vol. I, pp. 74–75.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 164–165.

⁶³ *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 592.

lished, as a complement to the Red Book, which had appeared after the outbreak of the war, the documents pertaining to the antecedents of the ultimatum, among them Tisza's memorandums of July 1 and 8 as well as his remarks at the common cabinet meetings. The publication also appeared in Hungarian translation in the same year.⁶⁴ The collection of German documents concerning the war crisis, edited by Kautsky, also appeared in 1919.⁶⁵

In the same year there appeared the first interpretations of Austrian, German and Hungarian historians — by Gooss, Kautsky and Fraknói, respectively.⁶⁶ While Gooss and Kautsky only described the facts about Tisza's conduct, Fraknói gave an interpretation. In his view the documents proved Tisza's peace policy both before and after the outbreak of the war, but he did not leave his office out of consideration for the sovereign.⁶⁷ The historical books and articles written by Hungarian writers after World War I were preoccupied with Tisza's policy during the crisis, but in general they studied the question following Fraknói; with a view to denying his "responsibility for the war". The more objective foreign works, however, for lack of sufficient sources, could not give a satisfactory reason for the change in Tisza's attitude: "We do not know with certainty", wrote Sidney B. Fay in this respect.⁶⁸

As we have seen, we must reject the interpretation which explains Tisza's earlier attitude of reserve with his ignorance of the German attitude or with his cautiousness due to Vienna's plans to annex Serbia. The sources also disprove the explanation that it was against his better judgement or to the German demands that he yielded to the pressure of the situation or even, as Fraknói writes, to the sovereign's decision. The documents show that the prime minister did not simply yield to pressure against his better judgement, but his earlier conviction really changed in these days. Later on he himself would also explain that after the first few days of the crisis he had recognized the necessity of immediate war and that was why he ranged himself with the others. This makes the debate over whether he ought to have resigned or not an artificial problem, which was a favourite subject of the

⁶⁴ *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges 1914. Ergänzungen und Nachträge zum österreich-ungarischen Rotbuch*, Wien 1919; For the relevant Hungarian edition see *Tisza és a világháború. Az Osztrák Köztársaság Külügyi Hivatala által közzétett diplomáciai okiratok az 1914 évi háború előzményeiről* (Tisza and the World War. Diplomatic Documents Published by the Foreign Office of the Austrian Republic about the Precedents of the 1914 War), Budapest 1919.

⁶⁵ *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Charlottenburg 1919, Vols I-IV.

⁶⁶ R. Gooss: *Das Wiener Kabinett und die Entstehung des Weltkrieges*, Wien 1919; K. Kautsky: *Wie der Weltkrieg entstand*, Berlin 1919; W. Fraknoi: *Die ungarische Regierung und die Entstehung des Weltkrieges*, Wien 1919.

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁸ Fay, Vol. II, p. 241.

Hungarian literature of the 1920's. The question to be answered is what factors and considerations had led Tisza to change his earlier attitude after July 10?

In his declaration sent to Henrik Marczali in January 1918 Tisza, six months after leaving office, gave the following explanation: "I was obliged to see from the results of the inquiry establishing the complicity of the Serb government and from the unbelievably provocative, scornful and disparaging remarks made by Pašić, the Serb diplomats and the entire Serbian press against the Monarchy, that we had to take action against Serbia".⁶⁹ About nine months after the letter to Marczali, just a few weeks before his death, he again gave a similar explanation for the change in his attitude. In October 1918, on the verge of disaster, he wished to justify himself by acquainting the public with his conduct during the July crisis and his role in the ultimatum. The sovereign gave his consent,⁷⁰ and Tisza announced his intention to the House of Representatives on October 17: "I shall come back to this question with documents in my hands. I already have the authorization."⁷¹ The next day, he sent his memorandum of July 8, as well as the extracts of the minutes of the July 19 cabinet meeting pertaining to his remarks there, to the sovereign. To this he added a draft entitled "The outlines of my foreign policy". The latter shows that Tisza wanted to prove that he had at first been opposed to war, but when the "complicity of the Serb government in the assassination" had come to light, and "the Serbian press as well as responsible Serb sources" had provoked the Monarchy, an ultimatum had to be sent. Even after this, however, he had only wanted a "defensive" war, and that was why he wanted the cabinet to pass a resolution excluding the annexation of Serbia.⁷²

The basic documents, however, refute Tisza's self-justifying explanation. During the very days when his attitude changed, the confidential telegram of Counsellor Wiesner from Sarajevo, which was expected for the conference of the 14th, was received in Vienna on July 13. Tisza was also informed about its content. But the telegram said the opposite of what had been expected: "Nothing proves," it ran, "not even suggests, that the Serb government was aware of the preparations for the attempt, or of the acquisition of arms. We have much more data indicating that we must exclude this presumption."⁷³ Historical literature dealing with the problem of "war responsibility" dealt very much with Wiesner's report. We are now referring to the counsellor's report from a single point of view, and this is hardly disputable: in Vienna they knew (and this applies to Tisza, too)

⁶⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 346-347.

⁷⁰ According to Gusztáv Gratz at his audience of October 15. *Magyar Szemle*, Vol. V, January-April 1929, p. 378.

⁷¹ *Képviselőház*, October 17, 1918.

⁷² *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 365. (The full text see *Magyar Szemle*, op. cit., p. 379.)

⁷³ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 436.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 154-155.

that the crime had not been committed by official Serbia, but rather against its will. This is what Andrassy, who had also been urging for action against Serbia at the time, wrote in his memoirs regarding this: "The Sarajevo inquiry did not furnish any grounds for suspecting the Serb government of participation in the preparation of the assassination".⁷⁴

Thus, contrary to his later affirmation, after July 10 Tisza knew that the investigation had not established the complicity of the Serb government in the assassination. It is true that the unofficial Serbian papers were carrying on sharp polemics with those of the Monarchy, but no provocative tone could be observed on the part of the Serbian official circles or any "responsible source". Thus we see that the change in Tisza's attitude could not have been caused by what he later gave as the reason.

THE CAUSE OF THE CHANGE

The Austrian and German diplomatic papers show that after July 10 the position of Romania and the changed attitude of the Germans towards the Romanian—Bulgarian question were clear enough, and that Romania could thus be expected to remain neutral even without compensation. In the same days the Germans, after Wilhelm II and his chancellor having assented to the Monarchy's bulgarophile policy in their verbal declarations made on July 5 and 6, respectively, before the envoys of the Monarchy, at last took concrete steps with a view to concluding an alliance with Bulgaria. On July 12 the German ambassador in Vienna said that the German emperor had already taken steps in the spirit of this policy toward both Romania and Bulgaria.⁷⁵ This turn of the German policy was also reflected by the kaiser's answer to the memorandum delivered on July 5. In this document, which arrived in Vienna on July 11, the kaiser again assured the Monarchy of his support in an action against Serbia. He also gave his consent to the inclusion of Bulgaria in the Triple Alliance and indicated that he had already instructed his ambassadors to that effect, although he stressed the important role of Romania in the new Balkan policy too.⁷⁶ The agreement concerning the German loan to Bulgaria was also born at that time.⁷⁷ Now Tisza could make his mind easier about his earlier main worry. Like the others, he expected quick success and considered it enough if Romania did not intervene in the begin-

⁷⁴ *Andrassy*, p. 98.

⁷⁵ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 407.

⁷⁶ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 443.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 137–138.

⁷⁷ *Hallgarten*, Vol. II, p. 488.

ning. He never thought that the war could last for several years, believing that only the first few weeks would be difficult when the Monarchy alone would have to contain the Russian forces. It was for that period that he wanted to make sure of Romania's neutrality. Later on the German forces, after their victory on the western front, would be deployed in the east, and the quick victory over Russia and the entry of Bulgaria would then solve the Romanian problem definitely. In this sense, Tisza registered the assurance of Romanian non-intervention, as well as the abandoning of the earlier German claims concerning compensation in Transylvania, as the victory of his policy, and this is what played the decisive part in the change of his policy. As long as he had reason to fear a Romanian attack, Tisza refused to consent to the war against Serbia and Russia in the summer of 1914, and even refused to "buy" the neutrality of Romania at the cost of sacrifices. This was the essence of his policy during the war crisis.

It is also remarkable that the fortification of the Transylvanian border against neutral Romania was a precondition of his consent to war action. As he wrote in a later letter: "The formal assurance and promise I received in this respect were the conditions of my consenting to the whole action".⁷⁸ He considered the military reinforcement of the border a further guarantee of his policy, which aimed at securing the neutrality of Romania through force and not through concessions.

As the Romanian question seemed to have been solved, Tisza took a different view of the evaluations of the power balance, and consequently, also of the pressure exerted on him from all sides: not only by Germany, but by the Viennese leaders and the sovereign as well. In a letter to Tschirschky a few months later he himself referred to this circumstance: "We made the Belgrade *démarche* upon the definite encouragement of the German government and upon their declaration that they considered the present situation suitable for the impending showdown". Czernin writes similarly of the role played by the Germans at the time.⁷⁹ At the beginning of the July crisis Tisza was always saying that the power balance would be more favourable later. At this time the Hungarian prime minister had to admit that his calculations concerning the future had been wrong. Even if it were possible to bring about a more favourable distribution of forces in the Balkans in a few years, in the meantime a great shift would take place in the relations of the Great Powers to the detriment of the Central Powers. Tisza mentioned in his memorandum of July 8 that he had asked the chief of the general staff about the future development of military relations, and Conrad had replied that in the next few

⁷⁸ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 223.

⁷⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 267.; *Czernin*, pp. 12-13.

years they would shift "rather to our disadvantage".⁸⁰ In his memorandum of July 8 Tisza interpreted this statement so that "this shift will not be too significant, and it can be redressed by the favourable turn of the Balkan situation".⁸¹ He had, however, misunderstood Conrad's cautious answer, who obviously found an opportunity to correct it later. In fact, the chief of the general staff mentioned in his memoirs that he had stressed the word "disadvantage" and not the word "rather".⁸² Tisza may also have received information, directly or indirectly, concerning the probable development of the power relations of the Great Powers from the German general staff. The attitude of the German general staff is also shown by the remark made by the Chief of Staff Moltke in the first days of the war: "I know for sure that Russia, France and Great Britain have agreed to start a war against Germany in 1917. We may consider it fortunate that the Sarajevo assassination has made the mine laid by these three powers explode at a moment when Russia has not yet finished her preparations and the French army is in a state of transition. It would have been very difficult for Germany to succeed against these three states if had they been fully prepared."⁸³

Tisza was primarily thinking in terms of the Balkans, and saw the whole of European politics as a reflection of the Balkan question. Already in his memorandum of March 15, 1914, he wrote: "I am convinced that the two neighbours of Germany are carefully preparing for war, but will not start it until they succeed in rallying the Balkanic peoples against us. In this way they would be able to attack the Monarchy from three sides, tying down most of our forces on the eastern and southern borders. Thus, the center of interest in European politics, from the German point of view as well is in the Balkans."⁸⁴ This Balkan point of view was justified as long as the Romanian question was so prominent. After overcoming that problem, however, Tisza could no longer avoid revising and modifying his attitude on the basis of the probable development of the power relations. After the outbreak of the war he often said, quite in the manner of the German generals, that the summer of 1914 was more favourable than a later date would have been. "Already the noose had been thrown around our necks," he wrote in a letter dated August 26, "with which they would have strangled us at a favourable moment, unless we cut it now."⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Tisza and Conrad discussed this topic at the joint ministerial council on July 7, too, which Conrad also mentioned in his memoirs (*Conrad*, Vol. IV, p. 129.). The protocol of the ministerial council only noted that there was a lengthy debate on the question of the balance of forces but it was not recorded due to its confidential nature.

⁸¹ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 372.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 129.

⁸² *Conrad*, Vol. IV, p. 55.

⁸³ *Dokumente*, Vol. IV, p. 157.

⁸⁴ *ÖUA*, Vol. VII, p. 575.

⁸⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 90.

Several years later Count Czernin's interpretation of the Hungarian premier's initial attitude was as a whole correct: "In 1914 Tisza was opposed to the war, but not out of some kind of pacifist feeling, which was rather alien to his personality, but because he would have liked to conclude an alliance with Bulgaria before the decisive step was taken. This was why he wished to delay the final solution of the Serb question."⁸⁶

We can hardly agree with the criticism Hugo Hantsch formulates in his monograph on Berchtold. The fault he finds with Tisza is not that he finally sided with those who decided on the war, but that he delayed the war against Serbia for two weeks, although, as he writes, "had they taken action quickly, it would have been possible to localize the war."⁸⁷ Hantsch's train of thought is based on the principle that the war of the Monarchy against Serbia was justified and vitally necessary. It is not in "defence" of Tisza that we must refute Hantsch's criticism, but because it conceals the essence of the Balkan policy adopted by the Monarchy. Furthermore, we have no reason to presume that in case of an immediate attack on Serbia her allies and protectors would have left her alone and thus the war would have been localized. It is true that Tisza only joined the camp of those supporting war later. He was right when he wrote, still as prime minister, to the new Sovereign Charles on April 29, 1917: "I was the very last among all the responsible counsellors of His Majesty the Emperor and King Francis Joseph to consent to the ultimatum to Serbia".⁸⁸ Tisza's policy of war, after his attitude had changed, cannot be justified by the fact that he was the last to accept the ultimatum. It would be ridiculous, however, to condemn him just for this reason as against all the others.

⁸⁶ Czernin, *Emlékeim*, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Hantsch, Vol. II, pp. 563-611.

⁸⁸ Tisza, Vol. VI, p. 260.

ULTIMATUM AND WAR

THE BELGRADE DÉMARCHE

The cabinet meeting of July 19 accepted the final form of the note drawn up on the 14th and, on the Hungarian prime minister's request, passed a resolution declaring that the Monarchy "does not intend to annex the Kingdom of Serbia".⁸⁹ This resolution naturally did not settle the old debate between the Austrian and Hungarian leaders. Tisza may have forced the joint cabinet to take this stand, but he himself, like everyone, knew very well that the actual solution would depend on power relations. "What will really happen after a, let us hope victorious, war is, just between ourselves, another question," Count Forgách wrote to the ambassador in Rome on July 16, expressing very well the mentality prevailing at the Ballhausplatz.⁹⁰

The sovereign signed the ultimatum-like claims on July 21 without making any change in them. He remarked, however: "It is very sharp, especially points 5 and 6".⁹¹ The note was immediately sent to Berlin.⁹² The German emperor noted on the margin of the Belgrade ambassador's report concerning the delivery of the note: "Good! I no longer expected Vienna to do this!"⁹³

Baron Giesl, the ambassador of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Belgrade handed over the note to the Serb government at 6 p.m. July 23. He told them that the answer was expected within 48 hours, and if there was no answer or it was not satisfactory he would immediately leave Belgrade together with the embassy staff. Although the non-acceptance of the note itself only entailed the breaking-off of diplomatic relations and the declaration of war was sent in a separate note, more exactly a telegram, the content of the first note and the attendant

⁸⁹ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 514.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 227.

⁹⁰ Quoted from the documents in the legacy of Ambassador Mérey by *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 593.

⁹¹ *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 603.

⁹² *Fischer, Krieg*, p. 698.

⁹³ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, p. 173.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 347.

circumstances gave it the character of an ultimatum. For this reason, the diplomacy and press of the time, as well as historical literature regard the note as an ultimatum, although formally it was not one.

In the introduction, the note, written in French, reminded the Serb government of its declaration of March 31, 1909. It was then that the government had accepted the annexation of Bosnia and bound itself to "change the direction of its present policy against Austria-Hungary". This, however, the note went on, had not happened. The Serb government had tolerated and fomented the Greater Serbia movement, and this had resulted in the assassination of June 28. Thus, the note made the government responsible not only for the assassination, but for the entire Greater Serbia movement, and demanded the liquidation of the latter: The Serb government was to publish a declaration in the July 28 issue of their "Official Journal" condemning the movement and declaring all its members guilty. The text to be published was given word for word. The declaration was also to be sent to the army in the form of a royal order of the day. In addition, the note listed ten claims. Point 5 demanded that the Greater Serbia movement be suppressed in the territory of Serbia itself by representatives of the Monarchy, and point 6, that the inquiry concerning the assassination be conducted by delegates of the Monarchy in Serbian territory. No sovereign state could accept these two claims. The appendix of the note summed up the evidence from the assassination leading to Serbia.⁹⁴

Foreign Minister Berchtold instructed the ambassador to accept only an answer "agreeing unconditionally".⁹⁵ Tisza made a declaration to the press after the delivery of the ultimatum, and he too emphasized that there was no room for bargaining or discussion. On July 24 he sent a telegram to Vienna: "In case of an unsatisfactory Serbian answer, immediate mobilization would be absolutely necessary". On the next day he sent a memorandum to the sovereign to the same effect: "The slightest hesitation or weakness would be harmful to the general esteem of the Monarchy's power and efficiency."⁹⁶

The note could not be accepted "unconditionally". Its delivery brought to light Vienna's bellicosity, until then concealed. In diplomatic circles it was evident that such a step could only have been taken with the agreement and support of Berlin. For that matter, the next day German Foreign Minister Jagow openly declared in front of the French ambassador in Berlin that he agreed with the note.⁹⁷ On

⁹⁴ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, pp. 515–517.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 233–236.

⁹⁵ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 517.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 237.

⁹⁶ *Pesti Hírlap*, July 24, 1914.; *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 656 and p. 735.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 331, 398–399.

⁹⁷ For the report of the ambassador, see *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 371–372.

hearing the news of the *démarche*, the Russian government decided that four military zones (Odessa, Kiev, Moscow and Kazan) as well as the Baltic and Black Sea fleets had to be mobilized, although the tsar had not issued the order yet. Regarding France, it was obvious that she could not remain neutral in case of a German-Russian war. However, the military and political leaders of both countries thought it more expedient to settle the crisis without military action. They were preparing for the clash, but were not yet ready and preferred delaying the war for a few years. Therefore they advised the Serb government to accept the claims.

British diplomacy wanted to mediate between the two Great Powers which were the most directly interested in the conflict, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Russia. They advised, like France and Russia, extending the 48-hour expiry. In this way there would be a possibility, as the British foreign secretary said to the German ambassador, to mediate.⁹⁸ Germany refused to intervene, and Vienna refused to extend the time limit.

British diplomacy was slow in dispelling the illusions of Berlin and Vienna about Britain's neutrality, although France and Russia were pressing them to do so. (It was only after the rupture of diplomatic relations between the Monarchy and Serbia that the English diplomacy explicitly declared to the Austro-Hungarian and German governments that she would participate in a continental war.)

The Serb government would have liked to avoid war. Not only because Russia, France and Britain were advising them to do so, but also because the Serbian army was exhausted after the two Balkan wars, and the acquisition of the newly gained territories was still in progress. Furthermore, relations with Bulgaria had deteriorated, and thus they were threatened by the possibility of war on two fronts. In these circumstances, the Serb answer — completed before the expiry of the ultimatum — was highly compliant. It accepted most of the claims, and even made concessions concerning those it did not accept.⁹⁹

A few minutes before 5 p.m. on July 25 Serbian Prime Minister Pašić himself took the answer to Baron Giesl at the Austro-Hungarian embassy and then returned to his office. The ambassador read the reply note and stated that it was "no satisfactory reply". He immediately sent a note to Pašić: "I desire to state formally that from the moment this letter reaches Your Excellency the rupture in the diplomatic relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary will have the character of a *fait accompli*".¹⁰⁰ The members of the embassy immediately left

⁹⁸ The report of the ambassador on July 24, see *Geiss*, Vol. I, pp. 348–349.

⁹⁹ The text of the Serb answer, see in *Diplomatic*, Vol. I, pp. 77–81 and Vol. II, pp. 1472–1476.

¹⁰⁰ *Diplomatic*, Vol. II, p. 1476.

Belgrade. Giesl informed Berchtold about this in a telegram sent from Zimony.¹⁰¹ Berchtold requested the Serbian ambassador in Vienna to leave.¹⁰² On the evening of the 25th Giesl also rang up Tisza from Zimony, and the next morning, as he travelled through the Hungarian capital, informed him personally.¹⁰³

THE WAR BETWEEN THE MONARCHY AND SERBIA

In spite of the compliance of the Serb reply, the breaking off of diplomatic relations made it clear for European public opinion that Vienna was looking for a pretext to start war. Berlin was urging for further measures, for the immediate beginning of military operations. Already on July 25 the ambassador of the Monarchy in Berlin wired: "Here any delay in the beginning of military operations is considered dangerous, as other powers may intervene. We are emphatically advised to act fast and present the world with a fait accompli."¹⁰⁴

At the moment of the ultimatum's delivery the army of the Monarchy had not yet been mobilized, although the transport of troops to the Russian and Serbian borders had already been going on for some time. On July 12, the German foreign minister had cautioned the ambassador of Vienna, calling to his attention the fact that the Russian and Serb governments were aware of these movements of troops.¹⁰⁵ The order of partial mobilization against Serbia was issued in the evening of the 25th, stating that the first mobilization day would be July 28. They expected the question of Russia's intervention or non-intervention to be clarified by then which was highly important due to the particular system of mobilization. Before the war the system of mobilization of the Monarchy had been planned for three eventualities: for a "B" (Balkan) war, i.e. a campaign against Serbia and Montenegro; for an "R" (Russian) war, and for a "B-R" war to be waged on two fronts. According to the corresponding plan of mobilization, the latter was to be effectuated in three groups. To the "A" echelon ("A-Staffel") belonged a little more than three-fifths of the forces to be mobilized. This group would in any case be deployed against Russia in a period of about 18 days. The next group was the "minimum Balkan group" ("Minimalgruppe Balkan"), and included slightly less than one-fifth of the troops mobilized. This group was to be deployed against the Southern Slav kingdoms, and its force was established to keep those in check.

¹⁰¹ *Diplomatic*, Vol. I, p. 77.

¹⁰² *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 734.

¹⁰³ *REZsL Tisza*, item 22, papers 9-11.

¹⁰⁴ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 704.; *Geiss*, Vol. II, p. 394.

¹⁰⁵ *Dokumente*, Vol. I, p. 58.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 154.

This group was not suited for attack due to both their number and their equipment. The third group was the "B" echelon ("B-Staffel"), which included about one-fifth of the forces to be mobilized. In case of an "R" or "B-R" war, this group was to be deployed against Russia, but only after the "A" echelon; i.e. its mobilization was to start only on the 18th day of the general mobilization, because until then the railways were to be used for the transport of the "A" echelon. In case of a "B" war, however, the "B" echelon was to be mobilized immediately against Serbia together with the minimum Balkan group, and their joint deployment was to take fourteen days.¹⁰⁶

The weakness of this system was that in case of a "B" war, when the "B" echelon was to be mobilized against Serbia together with the Balkan group (partial mobilization which in fact happened), a smooth switchover to a "B-R" war would take several weeks. If it had to be done earlier, it would cause serious problems. On the one hand, the trains transporting the "B" echelon southward would be needed by the "A" echelon to be transported in the northeastern direction, and on the other, once the southward movement of the "B" echelon had begun, it would have to be completed, and it was from the south that the "B" echelon would have to be transferred to the north after the deployment of the "A" echelon. The consequence of all this was that the mobilization of the "A" echelon would slow down, and the "B" echelon would arrive late in the north. It was for this very reason that Vienna would have liked to clarify the situation concerning Russia before actual mobilization began. In military circles there were even talks of delaying the mobilization against Serbia until the attitude of Russia became clear, or mobilizing simultaneously against Russia. The politicians, Tisza among them, rejected both possibilities. If they were to mobilize against Russia simultaneously with mobilizing against Serbia, they themselves would provoke the extension of the war. "My impression as of now is that the attitude of Russia is highly uncertain," Tisza wrote to Burián on July 28, and so the clearing of the question did not need to be precipitated. In his letter written on the next day he wrote that, from the Russian point of view it was true that she could not abandon Serbia, but also that the circumstances were not too favourable for her for a great war. Therefore, it would be a fatal mistake to delay the mobilization against Serbia until the attitude of Russia became clear. Because, if her attitude were not to become clear, and still the Monarchy was waiting for it, it would no longer be able to take action against Serbia. "It is of vital importance for us," Tisza wrote to Burián on July 28, "that without bothering about the uncertain attitude of Russia we should defeat Serbia by our numerical superiority."¹⁰⁷ Vienna rejected the

¹⁰⁶ *Conrad*, Vol. IV, pp. 299-300.; *Krieg*, Vol. I, pp. 6-8.

¹⁰⁷ *REZsL Tisza*, item 20, papers 90-91.; *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 10.

possibility of delaying the mobilization, and since the attitude of Russia did not become clear by July 28, when mobilization for a "B" war began. This, as we have seen, meant partial mobilization, involving the minimum Balkan group and the "B" echelon, i.e. approximately two-fifths of all the forces that could be mobilized. In addition, another army corps was mobilized for the reserve. In the morning of the day of mobilization, July 28, Count Berchtold informed the Serb government in a telegram: "Austria-Hungary considers herself from now on to be in a state of war with Serbia".¹⁰⁸ During the same night, the Danube fleet and the artillery of Zimony were already bombarding Belgrade. On the next day the sovereign's proclamation dated July 28 was issued: "I have considered everything, and I have taken everything into account".

Mobilization in Serbia began in the early afternoon on the day the reply note was delivered. The Serb government and military leadership were afraid that Belgrade, lying next to the border, would be attacked immediately after the rupture of diplomatic relations. Therefore the government at once transferred its seat to Niš in the more secure central part of the country.

For a few days the armed conflict was limited to a fight between the Monarchy and Serbia. But, at the same time, preparations were being made for mobilization in Germany, Russia and France, and the British navy was ordered to military bases.

According to the German war plan, quick mobilization was of particular importance. The plan foresaw that the German forces would swoop down on France and then turn against Russia. Thus, the operations had to begin in France. However, the German government wanted to delay the general mobilization and the start of the actual operations until Russia had been mobilized. In this way they could more likely count on the support of the German Social Democratic Party and on the English neutrality as well. On July 29 the tsar issued the order for the partial mobilization that had been decided on the 24th. Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, however, thought that if Germany replied to this by general mobilization, Great Britain would regard it as taking the initiative which would diminish the chances of the British government remaining neutral.¹⁰⁹

German government circles started to waver slightly in their resolution when they realized that their calculations concerning the neutrality of Great Britain and the possibility of Italian support had been wrong. On July 29, British Foreign Secretary Grey told Lichnowsky, the German ambassador in London, that Great Britain would not remain neutral in case of a war in Europe.¹¹⁰ The British gov-

¹⁰⁸ *Diplomatic*, Vol. I, p. 116.

¹⁰⁹ *Geiss*, Vol. II, p. 276.

¹¹⁰ The ambassador's report, see *Geiss*, Vol. II, pp. 277-279. He also discusses it in his memoirs: K. M. Lichnowsky: *Auf dem Wege zum Abgrund*, Dresden 1927, Vol. I, p. 46.

ernment, he said, could stay neutral as long as the conflict was limited to Austria-Hungary and Russia, but not if Germany and France became involved. The fact that Italy would by no means intervene on the side of the Central Powers had come to the Germans' knowledge on the previous day. Great Britain continued to suggest mediating. There was still no general mobilization in Russia which Germany wanted to use as a pretext for her own action. In such circumstances the conditions for immediate war action no longer seemed as favourable as before to the German government circles. Hoping the situation would improve they were now willing to accept the proposal of the British government to mediate.¹¹¹ On July 30 they asked Vienna whether they would take part in diplomatic talks.¹¹² Berchtold, Conrad, Krobatin and the sovereign thought this was no longer possible.¹¹³ Berchtold hastily called a common cabinet meeting for the next day, July 31, but there too the proposal of mediation was rejected,¹¹⁴ with Tisza's understanding.

WORLD WAR

In the meantime the German government had come back to its former attitude, in which the high command had always persisted. On the morning of July 31 the ambassador reported from Petrograd that general mobilization had been ordered in Russia. An hour after receiving the news, the "threatening danger of war" (*Kriegsgefahrzustand*) was proclaimed in Berlin.

The tsar's government was firmly determined not to let their old rival, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, get an advantage in the fight for influence over the Balkan peninsula by conquering Serbia. The tsar issued the order for partial mobilization on July 29, i.e. the day following the declaration of war by Austria-Hungary. General mobilization was decided on the 30th, after the military operations of the Monarchy had begun, and proclaimed on July 31, simultaneously with the proclamation of the German *Kriegsgefahrzustand* and with the general mobilization order of the Monarchy.

The order for general mobilization in the Monarchy was issued on July 31, and August 4 was fixed as the first mobilization day. They wanted to take advantage of this short interval to regroup the transport media which were to be used by the "B" echelon.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Fischer, *Krieg*, p. 716.

¹¹² The chancellor's telegram to the German ambassador to Vienna, see Geiss, Vol. II, pp. 289-290; 380-381.

¹¹³ Hantsch, Vol. II, pp. 634-645.

¹¹⁴ ÖUA, Vol. VIII, p. 977.; Geiss, Vol. II, p. 443.

¹¹⁵ Krieg, Vol. I, p. 20.

Since the German ultimatum demanding the suspension of general mobilization was rejected by Russia, on August 1 general mobilization was ordered in Germany, and the German government declared war on Russia.

On August 1, in reply to mobilization in Germany, the French forces were also mobilized. In Belgium, mobilization had been ordered on the previous day. The German government, alleging that French soldiers and airplanes had violated the frontier, declared war on France on August 3. On the previous day an ultimatum had been delivered to Belgium, with a 24 hour expiry, demanding an unopposed passage for German troops across the country, refusal of which would be regarded as hostile action. Belgium refused the German claim, and in the night of August 3 the German forces invaded the country. After the German declaration of war on August 4, Belgium also declared war on Germany.

On August 4, the British government gave an ultimatum, expiring at 11 p.m. the same day, to Germany, demanding the respect of Belgium's neutrality. As no reply came, Great Britain also entered the war against Germany.

On August 5, the Monarchy declared war on Russia, and Montenegro on the Monarchy. On August 6, came Serbia's declaration of war against Germany, on the 8th Germany declared war on Montenegro, on the 12th France and Great Britain on Austria-Hungary, and on the 27th the Monarchy on Belgium.

On one side stood the Central Powers: Germany and Austria-Hungary. On August 2, Turkey concluded a secret treaty of alliance with Germany, thus joining the Central Powers, and three months later entered the war.

The other group of the belligerents consisted of the Triple Entente including Great Britain, France and Russia, as well as of the states which joined them: Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro.

As early as August 23, Japan, breaking off diplomatic relations with Germany, also announced its joining the Entente block. Japan wanted to take advantage of the war in Europe and seize the German positions in the Far East, to build up a colonial empire in Asia and penetrate into China. By joining the Allies, she secured the co-operation of her Russian and British rivals.

At the outbreak of the war several countries concerned remained neutral and only joined the armed struggle later.

The United States entered the war only in 1917, but her economy served the Entente and primarily Great Britain from the beginning. American public opinion, apart from a minority, sympathized with the Entente but did not want to intervene.¹¹⁶ For the United States the best solution was if the balance between the European Great Powers was not upset,¹¹⁷ and for this reason her intervention was not desirable.

¹¹⁶ Zeman, *Diplomatic*, p. 169.

¹¹⁷ For this, see *House*, Vol. I, p. 324.

Their earlier treaties made Italy and Romania belong to the block of the Central Powers, but since they had serious differences with Austria-Hungary, they remained neutral in the beginning. Later they entered the war on the Entente side in 1915 and 1916, respectively.

The Balkan states which had stayed away from the conflict in the beginning also became involved later. Bulgaria entered the war in 1915 on the side of the Central Powers, and Greece in 1917 on the side of the Allies.

In 1916, Portugal also entered the war on the side of the Entente.

A few smaller countries of Europe remained neutral during the whole war. These neutral countries either traded with both sides, as e.g. Switzerland, or with only one. Sweden supplied Germany, Norway the Entente.

In the last years of the war several Central and South American as well as Asian countries also entered the war on the Entente side. They played hardly any military role, but their entry showed the great superiority of the Entente's reserves.

THE HUNGARIAN UPPER CIRCLES AND THE WAR

The publicity campaign for war against Serbia had begun with the special issues of the newspapers reporting on the assassination, and only became wilder in what followed. In early July the social democratic paper *Népszava* termed it "devilish turmoil" and "vampiric bloodlust".¹¹⁸

In the first few weeks of the crisis, the parliamentary opposition — the Constitution Party led by Andrássy, the Catholic People's Party, and the right wing of the Party of Independence led by Apponyi — expressed the views of the Hungarian ruling classes better than the organs of the government party. Tisza, who was still opposed to an open conflict, put a restraint on his own party. After the biting tone of the first days following the assassination, the government made the governmental papers moderate their tone slightly. As the French consul general in Budapest reported on July 11: "The tone of the Government newspapers has been lowered, first by one note, then by two, so that it is at the present moment almost optimistic".¹¹⁹ The paper, *Az Újság*, which supported the government, wrote on July 1 that "a collectivity cannot be made responsible on account of a few depraved lunatics".¹²⁰ Then on July 10 it published an article entitled "Patience": "If we were to ask the people of the Monarchy whether they want war, or the martial warmongering policy, we are sure that only a negligible number

¹¹⁸ *Népszava*, July 1, 1914.

¹¹⁹ *Diplomatic*, Vol. I, p. 559.

¹²⁰ *Az Újság*, July 1, 1914. „És most?" (What Now?).

of them would answer 'yes'". But the French consul general was right in thinking that it was not the moderate papers which expressed the true atmosphere: "Their dictated optimism found no echo, the oscillations of the stock exchange, a barometer which we must always take into consideration, are definite proof of this".

Andrássy's paper *Magyar Hírlap*, although having no evidence, wrote already in its extra of June 28 that the assassination had been directed from Belgrade. On June 30, the paper again emphasized this. In the same issue Andrássy himself made a declaration, although a slightly more moderate one, to the press: "If it is proved to have been a conspiracy, vigorous action must be taken". On July 3, *Magyar Hírlap* wrote the following: "Let us not doubt that we have no choice. Either we save our face, or we are lost". In the next few weeks, the paper was continually urging for severe measures against Serbia. On July 18 it sharply criticized the government for not having done anything until then. "We are afraid that this attitude will be overconsidered and overdelayed."

The newspapers of the Catholic People's Party wrote in a tone similar to Andrássy's paper. The June 30 issue of *Alkotmány*, referring to a source in London, drew attention to Belgrade in connection with the assassination. On July 2 it opened fire on the Great Serb propaganda. Unreliable and misleading articles were published in the July 14 and 15 issues on foreign power relations. After the rupture of diplomatic relations, on July 26, *Alkotmány* wrote: "History has put the master's cane in the Monarchy's hands. We must teach Serbia, we must make justice, we must punish her for her crimes."

The organs of the Party of Independence, except for Mihály Károlyi's paper, used a similar tone. Apponyi, the leader of the right wing majority of the party, was already following Andrássy entirely in politics. "Enough of patience!" wrote his paper, *Budapest*, adding that the Monarchy must be ready to "assert its right against Serbia with military means... This war must be fought sooner or later... The Belgrade issue must be cleared with a strong hand, and for good."¹²¹

The bellicose attitude of these opposition parties which even surpassed that of the government party was also manifest in Parliament. On June 30 they were as yet cautious: "We must get to know the dark forces which were at play," Apponyi said. Andrássy remarked: "We are also surrounded by serious and powerful natural enemies".¹²² On July 8, a sharper tone was already used in the interpellations. According to Andrássy, the government had been "indulgent" toward the Serb nationalist movement. Rakovszky, the leading spokesman of the Catholic People's Party urged for an "energetic note" to be sent to Belgrade. Apponyi thought that the heir to the Monarchy had not been buried with sufficient pomp. Tisza's answer

¹²¹ *Budapest*, July 5, 15, 17, 1914.

¹²² *Képviselőház*, July 30, 1914.

was as yet still calm.¹²³ A week later, however, when the prime minister had got rid of his tactical worries, the parliamentary picture changed, too. On July 15 the leaders of the opposition again interpellated. Szmrecsányi, the spokesman of the Catholic People's Party demanded reprisals against Belgrade and urged "manly action showing self-respect"¹²⁴. Count Tisza, too, was now speaking in a similar tone: "I believe that war is a very sad *ultima ratio*... of which, however, we must naturally be capable, and which we must also be able to want..."¹²⁵ The press of the government party also returned to the combative tone it had used in the first days of the crisis.

On July 22 the leaders of the parliamentary opposition, in order to support the ultimatum to be delivered the next day, of which they were aware, demanded even more energetically in the House of Representatives that action be taken against Serbia. The leaders of the opposition assured Tisza and the government of their support of the war. "If the great turning point were to come", said Rakovszky, "I would not watch the political enemy, but would watch the Prime Minister of the country and say that at that moment he must not leave his office." On July 24, when the delivery of the ultimatum was announced in Parliament, Andrassy declared on behalf of the allied opposition parties: "In spite of the great difference which separates it from the Hungarian government, which difference, unfortunately, subsists, the opposition will wholly fulfil its patriotic duty". When the declaration of war on Serbia was announced, Count Apponyi addressed the assembly in the name of the opposition parties. "We, too, can only have a single word in answer to the beginning of this action, the word which is on the tip of everyone's tongue: At last."¹²⁶ The haute bourgeoisie and the landowner's opposition offered and concluded *Treuga Dei* with the government for the common cause of the war. Tisza could write with satisfaction in late July: "...the tigers have turned into quiet, gentle, and polite, but boring little boys".¹²⁷

THE MIDDLE BOURGEOIS OPPOSITION TRENDS AND THE WAR

The policy of the Justh-Károlyi group, the left wing of the Independence Party which represented, among others, the interests of the middle classes, during the war crisis followed their earlier attitude. Prior to the assassination of the arch-

¹²³ *Képviselőház*, July 8, 1914.

¹²⁴ *Képviselőház*, July 15, 1914.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Képviselőház*, July 28, 1914.

¹²⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. V, p. XXXIX.

duke, Count Mihály Károlyi had spent several weeks in Paris looking for contacts and support for his Entente-oriented foreign policy. Then, on the very day of June 28 he started out on a North American tour with a similar purpose. He arrived back in Europe a month later at the outbreak of the war. In France he was interned as a citizen of a hostile country. The social democrat Zsigmond Kunfi, who had accompanied Károlyi to the United States, landed in the neutral Netherlands: thus, he was able to continue his journey immediately, returning to Hungary already in August.¹²⁸ The French authorities later lifted Károlyi's internment and allowed him to go home. He arrived back to Hungary on October 1, when the war was already raging. At that time he did not dissociate himself from all the other parties supporting the war. Soon, however, in the second year of the war, he again began to assert his earlier anti-German policy and was the first to voice pacifist ideas in Parliament. All this suggests that the break in his foreign policy, which contained many positive elements, was but a temporary one, after the outbreak of the war. In his memoirs Mihály Károlyi explained this by the fact that at his arrival home he was confronted with a *fait accompli*, and although he reproached Apponyi, he could not attack him openly.¹²⁹ This may explain Károlyi's personal view, but not the break in the policy of the entire group. The policy of the Justh-Károlyi group in Hungary, and particularly the direction of their paper *Magyarország* (Hungary), shows that the cause of the change was certainly not due only to the leader's stay abroad.

In the first few days following the assassination, *Magyarország* criticized, as before, the foreign policy of the Monarchy. "The unreasonable and unfortunate foreign policy has made the whole world around us hostile to the Monarchy."¹³⁰ On July 4 was published an editorial by Károlyi, who was abroad, entitled "Stalemate", in which he again took a stand against the German orientation of the official foreign policy: "By throwing ourselves entirely into Germany's arms we have put ourselves in a situation which is called stalemate in chess. We are not in checkmate, but any move by us will mean checkmate."¹³¹ The critical tone was typical of the further issues of the paper, too. It obviously did not agree with the impending war, but real resolution was lacking. No "Great Wall" separated the right and left wings of the Independence Party from each other, and the firm pro-war stand of the right wing was already having an influence on the left wing.

The paper also expressed its disagreement with the war when the declaration of war was handed over to Serbia: "The entire note with its firmness and rudeness

¹²⁸ *Népszava*, August 19, 24, 1914.

¹²⁹ Károlyi, p. 145. (Faith, p. 59.)

¹³⁰ *Magyarország*, July 1, 1914. „A dinasztia politikája” (The Policy of the Dynasty).

¹³¹ *Magyarország*, July 4, 1914, in Károlyi, *Válogatott*, p. 55.

and the formidable severity of the claims it includes gives the impression, and cannot give any other impression, that the Monarchy wants to settle her account with Serbia. We might say that the Monarchy wants war... Even if the war is victorious, we are going to pay the price with a nation's greatest treasure, human life, the life of the young... We are not, we cannot be, enthusiastic about the war." Instead of protest, however, it suggested acquiescence and compromise: "We have got involved in it, now we shall stand the test bravely — as Andrassy had said in the name of the united parties of the opposition — for the honour and vital interest of the nation".¹³² After this, *Magyarország* joined the war choir. Its issue of August 2 already termed the fight "something sacred".

It was not by chance that the policy of the left wing of the Party of Independence changed in favour of the war. Their foreign-policy orientation differed from the right's, but they also approved of the strengthening of the power of the Monarchy, only in a different foreign policy combination, and wanted to reorganize the empire on the basis of personal union.¹³³ Thus, they considered the war that had broken out to be in the "vital interest" of the empire, and therefore supported it.

The Peasant Party led by István Nagyatádi Szabó, which represented the rich peasants, and Vázsonyi's Democratic Party representing the lower middle classes and the petit bourgeoisie of the capital showed a similar attitude after the war had begun. Andrassy and Apponyi, when speaking on behalf of the joint opposition, spoke in their name as well. Later on, too, they continued to support the war in their speeches in Parliament.

It was the small group of bourgeois radicals, mainly intellectuals, which represented in Hungary the most progressive middle-class attitude. They turned against the increasing militarism and imperialist policy. "We are in favour of all international endeavours", they said in their program, "which aim at limiting and ultimately abolishing the militarist spirit now prevailing, which gravely damages the productive capacity of the people... In foreign policy we want to adopt, instead of the adventurist, imperialist and militarist ventures, a peace policy."¹³⁴ Oszkár Jászi expected that the law of economic integration between the states would triumph and the hands of the militarist groups countering it would be tied by the working-class. "The anti-militarist attitude of the world proletariat is a hopeful sign of a new era..." he wrote in 1911. "No longer can the peoples be led to be butchered, no longer can organized workers be made to kill one another for the sake of Caesarian glories." And in his book written a year later he expected

¹³² *Magyarország*, July 25, 1914.

¹³³ *Károlyi*, pp. 164–165.

¹³⁴ For the program, see Gy. Mérei: *A magyar politikai pártok programjai 1867–1918* (The Programmes of the Hungarian Political Parties 1867–1918), Budapest 1960, pp. 317–318.

the organized working-class not only to stop the war adventures but also to create a European federation.¹³⁵

In the days of the war crisis Jászi, like the majority of bourgeois radicals, raised a protest against the impending war: "It is not true that there are partisans of the Serbian war among the working and thinking people of Hungary. Except for the feudal and banking interests, and apart from a few bona fide dissenters, public opinion in Hungary is for peace."¹³⁶ After the outbreak of the war, however, the tone of the bourgeois radical press also changed to support the war. A few journalists even held extreme views.

A decisive factor in the change of the bourgeois radicals' attitude was that no matter how sharply they criticized the policy of the Hungarian ruling classes in several areas, they identified themselves with it in several essential points. Safeguarding the integrity and the territorial unity of Hungary was, although in a more liberal form, also one of the fundamental points of the radicals' policy. When the war had begun, they thought that this was at stake, and that was why they supported the war.

Jászi did not start glorifying the war, but he too regarded it as a life-and-death struggle from the Hungarians' point of view. In November, when he again took up his pen, this was the very reason he gave for abandoning his earlier attitude of constantly criticizing the official policy: "Progress primarily means criticism, but in the period of a life-and-death struggle emotions must not be appeased or divided in the spirit of criticism. This is why many a progressive Hungarian journalists have fallen silent now."¹³⁷

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE WAR

In the years, and even the decades, preceding the war, the various congresses of the International had constantly called attention to the danger of war. The congresses held in Brussels in 1891, in Zurich in 1893, in London in 1896, and in Paris in 1900 had pointed out the increasing militarism and invited to fight against it.

The 1907 Stuttgart congress dealt with the question of militarism and military conflicts more concretely: If there is a menace of war, it is the duty of the working-class and its parliamentary representatives to do their best in the interested countries to prevent the outbreak of the war by the means which seem to them the

¹³⁵ *Világ*, August 2, 1911; O. Jászi: *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* (The Formation of National States and the Nationality Question), Budapest 1912, p. 532.

¹³⁶ *Világ*, July 19, 1914. „Háború vagy béke” (War or Peace).

¹³⁷ *Világ*, November 10, 1914. „Magyarország demokratizálása felé” (Towards Democratizing Hungary).

most expedient. This resolution was renewed at the Copenhagen congress in 1910 and at the special congress held in Basle in 1912.¹³⁸

In the first few days which followed the assassination of the archduke the Social Democratic Party of Hungary, like the other socialist parties of the Monarchy, acted in the spirit of the earlier resolutions of the International and set itself bravely against the warmongers and the war hysteria. The editorial in the June 30 issue of *Népszava*, condemning individual terrorism alien to the socialist movement, pointed out: "The Sarajevo assassination was provoked by Austro-Hungarian imperialism. It was the occupation of Bosnia which started this imperialist policy whose last stage, for the moment, had been the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo... The archduke was a champion of Austro-Hungarian imperialism, and in him, the assassin's bullet aimed at imperialism itself... It was an answer to the heavy national oppression to which the Serbs of southern Hungary, Bosnia and Austria are subjected." The next day the events of Bosnia were again dealt with in the editorial, which condemned the assassination, but also condemned warmongering, the pogroms against the Serbs of Bosnia and the proclamation of martial law. "Socialism will not become intoxicated with blood and will not forget that human life is the greatest treasure of mankind." The next day there was again an editorial speaking out against the pogroms and warmongering: "We protest against all war adventures". And *Népszava* went on to suggest a revolutionary perspective: "Perhaps the managers of our fate have become such fools that they themselves want to hasten the coming of the time when the peoples themselves will tidy up the black-and-yellow lunatic asylum!" On July 3 the editorial again protested against the terror in Bosnia and the warmongers. Similar articles appeared in the Hungarian-language socialist newspapers published in the country and in the socialist papers of the national minorities.

In those days, the party put protest against the war at the center of its propaganda activity. Later, although there was no change in principle, anti-war propaganda became secondary and the Sarajevo affair was relegated to the inside pages of *Népszava*. From July 4 to 21, the editorials were mostly concerned with the fight for franchise. It was in those days that the authorities drew up the electoral register based on the new law of 1913. The new law enfranchised approximately 25,000 workers for the following year's election. The party leaders at the time considered it their principal duty to mobilize the future voters of the working-class to register, but other factors also played a part. After the first few days the tone of the government press had become more moderate, and the prime min-

¹³⁸ J. Kuczinsky: *Der Ausbruch des ersten Weltkrieges und die deutsche Sozialdemokratie*, Berlin 1957, p. 181.

ister had made a reassuring declaration. The party leadership may also have been influenced by the fact that in the other countries of the Monarchy the social democratic parties had not begun any anti-war mass action either. Not even the German Social Democratic Party took any steps to mobilize the masses. After the first few days of July, the Austrian and German socialist press also dealt less with the question raised by the Sarajevo events.¹³⁹

Meanwhile secret talks went on between the Austro-Hungarian and the German governments, and the ultimatum was drawn up in Vienna. A day before the delivery of the note, on July 22, it became known in Hungarian political circles that the government was preparing a *démarche* against Serbia. Then, similarly to the period of late June-early July, the social democratic press renewed its propaganda campaign against the war. Again there were protesting editorials in *Népszava*. On July 22 a fierce article appeared in the paper which even mentioned the possibility of a general strike: "It seems that the moment of decision is really approaching... The mighty of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy should take into consideration that the Hungarian proletariat will also know how to act if the furies of war are let loose."¹⁴⁰ (On August 3, after the beginning of the war, the common minister of defence asked the Hungarian prime minister to start proceedings against the paper for this article. Tisza, however, saying that *Népszava* had changed its tone in the meantime and was already publishing "patriotic and loyal articles", thought it better not to start the proceedings.¹⁴¹)

The July 23 editorial of *Népszava* opposed the idea of international working class solidarity to the nationalistic instigation to war: "What reason has the Hungarian working class, what reason has the Hungarian worker or peasant to go and kill his Serb brothers?... We must not allow the working masses to be carried away by the war fever. We must profess bravely and openly: the working people of Hungary do not want and will not tolerate bloodshed."

On July 23 the ultimatum of the Monarchy was delivered. On the next day the editorial of *Népszava* called those who had defied fate "criminals deserving to be put in the pillory" and bravely stressed, opposing the whole choir of the bourgeois press, that "this ultimatum was sent, but we did not send it". The dictate delivered to Belgrade "involves terrible dangers for the peoples of the Monarchy, because the claims it makes on Serbia cannot be practically met and are formulated like orders in the form of an ultimatum with a 48-hour expiry".¹⁴² On the next day

¹³⁹ J. Jemnitz: A béke utolsó hónapja és az Internacionálé összeomlása (The Last Month of Peace and the Collapse of the International), *Századok*, Nos 5-6/1964, pp. 1133-1134.

¹⁴⁰ *MMTVD*, Vols 4/B., pp. 13-14.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17.

in an article entitled "We do not want war", *Népszava* called the parliamentary meeting which unanimously voted the ultimatum a "meeting of shame", and again linked, even if more cautiously this time, the perspective of war with the possibility of a social revolution: "Behind the Serbian campaign there lurks the possibility of war with Russia, and behind that, the specter of world war. The Serbian war may entail such unpredictable and uncalculable disasters which might overthrow huge empires or explode in a world crisis of such dimensions that it will be a question not only of individual countries and ruling classes, but of the entire social system of today."

The brave theoretical anti-war attitude of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary was not accompanied, in the days following the delivery of the ultimatum, by the mobilization of the masses and anti-war demonstrations and after July 25 its attitude changed. On July 25 diplomatic relations were broken off between the Monarchy and Serbia, then on the 28th war was declared and the armed conflict started on the Serbian border. In these days the leaders of the Social Democratic Party, since the emergency law entitled the government to punish anti-war propaganda by banning the socialist papers, confiscating their printing press or suppressing the party itself, changed the tone of the party organs. Already after the appearance of the editorial of July 22 Tisza had warned the editors that if they did not change their stand, he would ban the paper "as soon as the government disposes of the suitable means to do so"¹⁴³ — i.e. as soon as it was invested with special power. After this, *Népszava* stopped instigating against the war, which would have entailed its banning, but it was still manifest in the articles that they were only yielding to force, that they did not approve of the war, but were obeying orders. The editorial of the July 26 issue still struck a protesting note: "Today the voice of the social democrats is the only voice in the country which even in the last moment cries out in protest against the war". But the editorial calls the readers' attention to the fact that the emergency law will render criticism impossible, and that the paper will only be able to express its opinion openly again when the law ceases to be in effect. "This war brings with it the entire weight of the emergency law and all criticism must now fall silent for a time as against the sound of the guns and the force of the bayonets... But these hard times of affliction will also pass and then we shall again tell our opinion frankly and bluntly about all that has happened and is happening."¹⁴⁴

On July 27 the anti-war stand of the paper still manifested itself in the desire it expressed to settle the conflict without bloodshed. On the 28th the paper hoped that the conflict of the two countries would not entail a world war.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

The July 28 issue of *Népszava* published the declaration of war and the appeal of the social democratic leaders to the organized workers, saying that the press and the institutions were "to be maintained at any price... After the war, there will be a new situation and new tasks waiting for us. The circumstances in which we shall have to fight for the economic and political liberation of the proletariat will be different. Therefore, we must not drop any of our present arms, lest we have to begin everything at the beginning."¹⁴⁵ The Slovak and Romanian executive committees of the party addressed a similar appeal to the organized workers.¹⁴⁶ The idea of maintaining the legal organization reappeared in the circular issued by the Ironworkers' Trade Union on July 25: "You should avoid any step which, according to the official laws that have come into force, would give an opportunity to the authorities to take proceedings against either the union or individual members". Thus, as it appears from the circular, the trade union management recognized the possibility that the union would be suspended, and they asked their members to be aware of the fact.¹⁴⁷

After the extension of the war between the Monarchy and Serbia into a world war, when the Monarchy was facing its main enemy, tsarist Russia, and when even the German social democrats had found justification for the war, the organs of the Hungarian social democrats, like the bourgeois press, also started using a chauvinist tone.

The only difference between the socialist and the bourgeois press in Hungary at the time was that the former was demanding that food prices be officially established and that in general, rising costs be checked. The party leadership issued an appeal for a collection to be made to support the families of organized workers who had been called up.

The Social Democratic Party, referring to the "suspension of class struggle", put the trade unions in the service of the continuous functioning and growth of the war economy. In mid-August, *Népszava* wrote that a "truce" had been established in the fight between workers and capitalists for the duration of the war.¹⁴⁸ A similar thought could be read in *Typographia*: "Even class conflicts have faded for a moment".¹⁴⁹ "Class struggle has ceased in Hungary too", wrote *Szakszervezeti Értesítő* in October 1914, "nobody is thinking of going on strike." And a month later: "The war has abolished class struggle... Rich and poor, employers and workers are fighting together. Those who have stayed at home now put up

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁴⁹ *Typographia*, August 14, 1914. „Szervezetünk és a háború” (Our Organization and the War).

with anything without a word." Then in January we read: "Our trade unions have suspended their economic struggle, although they have been provoked on several occasions with cuts in wages and ill-treatment". *Népszava* was urging increased production: "The campaigns have to be won not only in the battlefield, but also at home, in the field of work and economy... Work is the campaign conducted by those at home against the enemy."¹⁵⁰ It was in conformity with these statements that Samu Jászai, a leader of the trade union movement, wrote in his book published after the war: "In the first years of the war the government was pleased with the trade unions. It availed itself of their co-operation in various matters and the trade unions, although not prepared for the war, soon rose to the occasion... the trade unions helped work in the factories and workshops go on smoothly."¹⁵¹

It hardly justifies the war policy of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary that most parties of the 2nd International (including the models of the Hungarian party, the German and Austrian social democrats) showed the same attitude. There were socialist parties which remained faithful to the principles and policy of internationalism in the belligerent countries, i.e. the Serb socialists, the Polish-Lithuanian left wing socialists, the independent Labour Party of England, a part of the Russian Mensheviks, and the Russian Bolsheviks. The socialist parties of the neutral countries also remained faithful to their anti-war attitude: the parties of the Netherlands and of the Scandinavian countries, the Bulgarian "Tesniaks", and the Italian, Romanian and Swiss socialists.¹⁵²

THE NATIONALITIES OF HUNGARY AND THE WAR

Before the war, the national movements of the minorities living in Hungary had aimed at attaining territorial autonomy. Croatia, however, which had territorial autonomy, wanted equal status with Hungary in the Monarchy. It was during the war that the minorities both in Austria and in Hungary gradually switched over to a policy of independence from the Dual Monarchy, thus starting a new phase in their movement.

At the beginning of the war, the official leaders of the minorities in Hungary, the representatives of the national minority parties, as well as the Serb and Greek Orthodox Church dignitaries declared themselves loyal to the Monarchy. After the assassination, the bishops of the Serb Orthodox Church of Hungary asked

¹⁵⁰ *MMTVD*, Vols 4/B., pp. 35-36.

¹⁵¹ *Jászai*, p. 7.

¹⁵² *Jemnitz*, pp. 25-28, 33-34.; *Vadász*, p. 12.

Tisza to express their loyalty to the sovereign. The Serb and Romanian prelates made similar declarations even after the war had broken out. In Parliament, the Slovak Nándor Juriga showed the greatest zeal in declaring their loyalty to the government: "As the representative of the Slovak people living in Hungary," he said a few months after the outbreak of the war, "I shall vote with the greatest willingness all the sacrifices which these momentous times demand of all the national minorities living in this country."¹⁵³

These declarations did not express the thoughts of the masses of national minorities, although they did manage to bring the war propaganda home to part of the Slovak and Croat population.

The minister of the interior's report made in late August better shows the views of the Serb population, especially of the intellectuals: "The foreign policy of the Kingdom of Serbia has greatly increased the national self-consciousness of the population of Pančova and its environs. The Serb population of the town ... with its intelligentsia and press leading the way, consistently serve a single purpose, which is to cherish their national pride, the consciousness of their relationship with their brothers living in the Kingdom of Serbia... The Serb intellectuals of the town, who have until now had lively relations with the patriotic bourgeoisie of the town, have now completely withdrawn and cut themselves off from the others, and the common people are following their example." With a view to all this, the minister of the interior asked for, and was granted, the financial support of the government to increase the number of the Pančova gendarmerie.¹⁵⁴

Tisza thought that an invasion would entail open revolts in the areas inhabited by the nationalities. In the memorandum he sent to Francis Joseph on July 8 he wrote that this might be possible in Transylvania. He feared the same could happen in the southern regions, too. He proved to be right in both cases, first when the Serbian army invaded Syrmia (Szerémség) for a short time in the autumn of 1914 and later when the Romanian army invaded eastern and southern Transylvania in late 1916. Although he never spoke of it in public, Tisza knew very well the real feelings of the nationality population, which also manifested itself in the behaviour of the Serb and Romanian soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army, many of whom surrendered when they had an opportunity to do so. After processing the casualty lists, the director of the Statistical Office reported to the prime minister in April 1915: "Only the Romanian- and Serb-speaking troops fall into captivity in numbers considerably surpassing their proportion within the population".¹⁵⁵

The official declarations made by the nationality leaders did not reflect clearly

¹⁵³ *Képviselőház*, April 26, 1915.

¹⁵⁴ *Min. tan. jkv*, August 31, 1914, pp. 86-87.

¹⁵⁵ *OL K 467*, documents of 1915.

the policy of their own bourgeoisie, but the pro-war statements were not due only to the pressure of the authorities. Certain circles of the national bourgeoisies, especially the Slovaks and Croatians, hoped that by supporting the war they might obtain the rights they desired. This, however, only constituted one feature of their policy, which was in the foreground at the beginning of the war. They also considered the possibility of the Monarchy's defeat, in which case they would safeguard their interests in other ways, perhaps by the secession of the national territories. This program was also formulated in the initial stage of the war by the emigré politicians. In this respect, in addition to the well-known activities of the Czech emigrés and the Croatian Supilo, mention should be made of Octavian Goga's activities abroad, as well as of the attitude of Slovak and Fiumese Italian leaders at the very beginning of the war.¹⁵⁶ These programs cannot be regarded as the program of the bourgeoisies of the nationalities living in Hungary, but later they would gradually become so under the impact of the defeats suffered by the Monarchy. The impressive several-volume work on the world war published by the government of the Austrian Republic between the two wars put the beginning of the "national revolutions" of the peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy to late 1914–early 1915 and linked it to the moral impact of the great defeats suffered at the time.¹⁵⁷

THE WAR MOOD

The reference made by Count Berchtold, the common foreign minister of the Monarchy, to the "favourable public opinion about our policy" in his telegram dated July 15 was not unjustified.¹⁵⁸ It was not unwarranted either when Tisza wrote to his younger brother on August 4 that "the atmosphere prevailing in the whole Monarchy is very good".¹⁵⁹ The "good spirits" were principally due to the fact that various false ideas, mainly chauvinism, confused the thoughts of the people. As poet Endre Ady wrote: "Thought started out drunk for the horrid, bloody nuptials".¹⁶⁰

"The instigation", wrote *Népszava* on July 23, still taking a stand against the war, "has not been successful. Regular harassment awakens the bloodlust of the masses. The press in the service of the warmongers speaks of patriotism, of the Hungarian nation and of ancient glories. Daily instigation to war is beginning to

¹⁵⁶ *OL K 578*, Cat. nos 468, 407.

¹⁵⁷ *Krieg*, Vol. II, p. 27.

¹⁵⁸ *Tisza és a világháború* (Tisza and the World War), Budapest 1919, op. cit. (see note 64), p. 66.

¹⁵⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 40–41.

¹⁶⁰ His poem entitled „Emlékezés egy nyár éjszakára” (Remembering a Summer Night).

bear fruit: people suppress their natural repulsion and gradually get accustomed to the idea of bloodshed.”

Another important factor in bringing about the war psychosis was that for about half a century the Monarchy had not taken part in a major war. The misleading or ignorant reports of the high command fostered the belief that the fight would just be a short and easy march, and so did the German emperor's sentence addressed to the soldiers going to the front, which has become a household saying: “By the time the leaves fall from the trees, you will be back”. Most people had no idea what a modern war could mean, where masses of destructive weapons are produced and sent to the front, and even (although in World War I to a small extent only) used behind the front.

When the war broke out, it was primarily chauvinist instigation which created confusion in the minds of the masses. During the whole war, chauvinism remained the most important ideological means of justifying the war. Religious ideas also played a major part, the various churches supported the war. The most influential Hungarian Church, the Catholic prelates and clergy played a highly important part. The clergy was preaching patience and resignation. As Bishop Prohászka said: “Let us accept these hard times with great faith and without complaining”.¹⁶¹

The primate's declarations about the war greatly influenced, especially in the beginning, the believers. Following the declaration of war, Primate János Csernoch said in a speech delivered in the Upper House: “It is our right and duty to extinguish the fire-brand burning on the borders of our country, to get satisfaction for the violation of law and order and to avenge the shedding of innocent blood”. His first pastoral after the outbreak of the war was written in the same tone: “The aims the war serves are absolutely sacred and are based on undeniable and indisputable right and justice”.¹⁶² The other prelates' attitudes were similar. “Soldiers!”, said the archbishop of Zagreb to those going to the front in the first days of the war, “God is calling you into war, God, the eternal truth is calling you...”¹⁶³ The propaganda activities of the various churches naturally differed from one another in the choice and grouping of the arguments, but the essence was the same: to justify and support the war.¹⁶⁴ Only the attitude of the Orthodox churches differed considerably, which also reflected to a certain extent the reticence of the Serb and Romanian nationalities.

¹⁶¹ *Népújság*, September 13, 1914; September 20, 1914.

¹⁶² *Főrendiházi Napló*, July 28, 1914; *Népújság*, August 9, 1914; *EPL*, Cat. C. 1022/1915.

¹⁶³ *Alkotmány*, August 5, 1914.

¹⁶⁴ *Debreceni Protestáns Lap*, August 1, 1914; *Evangelikus Egyházi Értesítő*, October 31, 1914; *Egyenlőség*, August 9, 1914; *Unitárius Közlöny*, September, 1914.

The Hungarian Parliament, whose meeting of July 28, the day of the declaration of war, had been adjourned, first met after the outbreak of the war on November 25. Prior to the session, an agreement had been reached by the government and the opposition that in order to avoid clashes at the by-elections, only the parties which had until then represented the constituencies in question would put candidates.¹⁶⁵ The session, which lasted for two weeks, took place in the spirit of the *Treuga Dei*. The spokesmen of both the government and the opposition politely avoided the questions which might have resulted in conflicts. On the first day the governmental majority invalidated its earlier resolutions concerning the expulsion of certain members belonging to the opposition.¹⁶⁶ Tisza wanted the majority to treat the opposition "properly" and had the questions discussed earlier postponed, since the opposition "would be inhibited from criticizing them due to most respectable patriotic reasons". By postponing these debates, the opposition "will be able to exercise its criticism at a time when the members of the House are no more hampered or inhibited in any way by the war now going on".¹⁶⁷ It was the first time in many years that the opposition voted all the propositions of the government without discussion. Only Géza Polonyi, an Independence Party MP, made a few remarks in his usual polite manner, "begging for" some information.

The prime minister's report on the use of the Hungarian army and territorial troops outside Hungary was a good opportunity for Tisza and the opposition to make declarations in the spirit of unity. "This struggle," said the prime minister, "has put a stop to party strife, it has put a stop to the class struggle, relegated the nationality conflicts into the background, and given rise to splendid manifestations of unity and mutual love both at home and in the battlefield. It will be impossible for it to disappear without a trace in the history of the Hungarian people and in our future development."

After the prime minister, Mihály Károlyi rose to speak. Since his earlier views were known, his speech was heard with great interest. Károlyi did not break the unity of parliamentary opinion: "As regards the war," he said, "we have but one aim now, which is that this war should end successfully. We want to unite and offer the country not only all material, but all moral forces, too, so that it be armed both financially and morally to fight against the enemy." He read his party's declaration: "For the duration of the war the Independence and '48 Party has suspend-

¹⁶⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 83, 87-88.

¹⁶⁶ *Képviselőház*, November 25, 1914.

¹⁶⁷ *Képviselőház*, November 28, 1914.

ed the internal struggle and uses every effort to make all the forces of the nation unite in order to gain the victory."¹⁶⁸

Count Andrássy spoke to the same effect on behalf of the Constitution Party, and Sándor Simonyi-Semadam, the Catholic People's Party. Vázsonyi and Nagyatádi also spoke in support of the war measures.

The 1914 autumn session of the Parliament showed that the various tendencies were all uniformly supporting the war government. A few speakers, however, primarily Tivadar Batthyány (a deputy belonging to Mihály Károlyi's circle) and István Nagyatádi Szabó, voiced the discontent of the population due to the inflation. During the parliamentary session, the social democratic press also demanded that the Parliament take socio-political measures in connection with the war situation, and again stressed the necessity of the reform of the franchise system.¹⁶⁹

The bills presented during the first war session of the Parliament, both the socio-political ones (like the war aid), and the amendment of the emergency law, were all voted unanimously by Parliament.

¹⁶⁸ *Képviselőház*, November 30, 1914.

¹⁶⁹ *MMTYD* 4/B., pp. 60–62.

THE REORGANISATION OF THE BELLIGERENT HINTERLAND

During the accelerating armament and preparation for war after the turn of the century all the governments of the European powers prepared to place the hinterland at the disposal of military interests. These preparations were made under the impression that the war would be a short one lasting only a few weeks or months, and thus proved insufficient during the protracted war, they were only a starting point. The changing nature of state functions during the war were also characterized by these preparations. The two basic types of this character change can be separated by examining the arrangements made before the war. One of the solutions sought to guarantee the special belligerent functions of the state in such a way that a part of the jurisdiction of civil government, and later during the war an ever increasing part of it, was surrendered to the army. Such measures characterized the German preparations and later during the war years the increasing intervention by the supreme command into civil government almost led to a military dictatorship in the last period of the fight. The best example of the other basic type was the British solution. The British government ensured the ever increasing role of the state during the war. The government completely reserved its rights over the Britain military commands' jurisdiction during the whole of the war. The complicated dualist state system of Austria-Hungary was unusual in this respect as well. While the Austrian half of the empire adhered to the German type in its preparations, the Hungarian preliminary arrangements were similar to the British type.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EMERGENCY LAW IN THE CASE OF WAR

Austria-Hungary's increasing problems in the Balkans, especially the worsening strife with Serbia, increasingly inferred the possibility of a belligerent conflict. In regard to this the Austrian government and supreme command had already in 1906 worked out those exceptional measures, which in case of war would be

taken in the Austrian half of the empire. These printed secret documents (Nos. 7-25) were sent to those concerned (*Orientierungsbehelf über Ausnahmsverfügungen im Kriegsfall für die in Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreiche und Länder*). Later in 1909 and then again in 1912 it was reworked and expanded.¹⁷⁰ This proviso came into effect in Austria in 1914 at the beginning of the war. The substance of the Austrian exceptional measures was that in case of war the orders of an otherwise civil government would be ceded for the most part to the body which would be established at that time (*Kriegsüberwachungsamt*), which would work under the command of the *Armeeoberkommando*, and would be under military direction. Thus, in war one part of civil administration, that is jurisdiction, was to be taken by the army.¹⁷¹

After the *Orientierungsbehelf* was made the common minister of defence mentioned the Hungarian prime minister that it would be desirable if they worked out a similar arrangement for exceptional measures in Hungary as well. In September 1906, Wekerle, the Hungarian prime minister and the minister of defence disclosed: "The government is beginning the work and the minister of the interior is organizing a conference with the participation of the ministers concerned".¹⁷²

As a result of the conference Andrassy, the minister of the interior, in his official communication of March 6, 1907 addressed to the prime minister, disapproved of a similar system in Hungary: "In regard to the situation of civil rights in Hungary we must tread carefully, and also I believe that in our country special power should be entrusted not to the army but to civil authority, i.e. the responsible government. Any other law would not be passed by the House of Representatives."¹⁷³ Andrassy thought it especially unacceptable that the *Kriegüberwachungsamt's* jurisdiction should extend to Hungary. However, the common minister of defence planned exactly this.¹⁷⁴ In addition to this the Hungarian minister of the interior thought it perilous to take on the Austrian exceptional measures because on the basis of it civil rule, both political and police, in the crown lands and town areas which fell in the path of the advance and provision of the army, were to be authorized by the military commander-in-chief. If the Austrian system became effective in Hungary then in the case of a war against Serbia the power in Croatia and the southern part of Hungary would fall into the hands of the command of the common army.

The members of the Hungarian government shared the worries of the minister

¹⁷⁰ OL K 578, Cat. no. 39.

¹⁷¹ Redlich, p. 94.

¹⁷² OL K 578, Cat. no. 22. (4).

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Redlich, p. 125.

of the interior, and because of the international situation they did not hurry. However, the annexation crisis got the legislative body started.

Now, toward the end of 1908, the minister of justice of the Hungarian government also made his position public: "That at war-times certain extraordinary measures be taken is, I think, entirely justified and right. But for these measures to be as radical as suggested by the data made available to me about the planned measures in Austria is, in my opinion, inadmissible under the present administrative conditions."¹⁷⁵ The main objection of the minister of justice echoed Andrassy's concerns: in war-times, a part of the civil administration would be conferred upon the military command in Austria. Should Hungary follow suit, then the high command of the common armed forces might gain a hold over civilian administration in Hungary, and, in turn, "the other country's legal institutions which are opposite ours would officially come into effect, even if only in part".¹⁷⁶

The use of a common army in a war could only be successful if the Hungarian government, rather the Parliament, voted Hungary's share of expenditure and recruits. In the dualist system this was one of the guarantees that a joint army would only take action as an extension of a foreign policy of common interest. The Hungarian government, rather the Parliament, had guaranteed also if the common army was used for domestic policy aims: according to the Compromise Law, the government, rather the Parliament, maintained the billeting law for itself. Thus the stationing of joint army units on Hungarian territory was only possible with the previous permission of the Hungarian government, and the legal concentration of troops of the joint army for domestic "civil" aims in Hungary was only possible with the endorsement of the Hungarian government. As a consequence of all this there were legal guarantees that a joint army could not be used for settling the inner debates of the leading strata of Austria and Hungary. In case of war or even of belligerent danger they inserted into the Hungarian legal system that the joint army command should exercise laws which were otherwise in the area of civil rule (the earlier legal guarantees being invalidated for the duration of war or threatening danger). The common army's inner organization belonged under the emperor's jurisdiction, despite the fact that the mixed composition of its permanent staff was mainly Austrian in its origin, language, and chief body of officers. If the army command practised civil functions in Hungary then obviously they would be carried out according to Austrian "legal institutions".

The Balkan policy, which the Hungarian government represented, was of the sort which revived the possibility of war and thus they thought it necessary and important to prepare legal regulations similar to the common minister of defence's,

¹⁷⁵ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 22. (4).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

which dealt with the necessity of exceptional measures in case of war. They proposed making a different structure for the Hungarian exceptional measures from the Austrians. The substance of the proposal made by the minister of justice was that "special power in Hungary should not be the same as the Austrian such that the common army command received rights pertaining civil rule, but civil authority, that is the Hungarian government, must be invested with special powers. The government itself should be authorized to enforce military procedural law in civil administration. The government must appoint commissioners who, working with the common army commanders stationed in Hungary, will make the necessary arrangements. In this way the government must extend its jurisdiction so that in the case of war it will in civil affairs deal with military methods."

The members of the government accepted the principle of the minister of justice, and it later became the basis of the Hungarian emergency law. Because of the Dualist structure during the war in Hungary the channels of parliamentary governing were carried out in a different way from the other European countries. The characteristic structure of the exceptional measures in Hungary during the time of crisis impeded the practice of military dictatorship, but facilitated the fact that the government itself could adopt such a dictatorship.

After the acceptance of the minister of justice's proposal the Hungarian government established the basic principles of the exceptional measures, and in the interest of drafting the Ministry of Interior's bill in a detailed way they called a "preliminary conference" on February 11, 1909 in which the delegates of the ministers responsible took part. The February conference sat during the peak of the annexation crisis, at the time when an ultimatum was sent to Serbia and the preparations for mobilization were in process. In such a situation, and because the basic principle already existed, they could draft the bill very quickly, and the work of the "preliminary conference" was finished in the middle of March with the drawing up of the proposed bill.¹⁷⁷ The bill came before the cabinet meeting immediately, which accepted it with a few amendments, expanding the jurisdiction of special governmental power in many different ways at the March 22, 1909 sitting. On the following day they submitted it to the emperor asking him for preliminary approval to put it forward in Parliament. Wekerle, not waiting for the bill to be passed nor for imperial approval, ordered the competent ministers to draw up those draft orders which the government would issue if the special power law passed and became valid.

¹⁷⁷ *A háború esetére Magyarországra szóló kivételes intézkedések kérdésében tartott előértekezletekről felvett jegyzőkönyvek* (Protocols of the Preliminary Conferences Held in the Matter of the Preparation of the Exceptional Measures for Hungary in Case of War), Budapest 1909, see *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 22. (9).

However, the annexation crisis was solved without war, Serbia fulfilled the wishes of the ultimatum. The creation of the emergency law was therefore not so urgent, and because the common minister of defence did not like the government's plan, the emperor, accepting his advice, in his ordinance of April 3 — with the justification that it was not satisfactory from a military point of view — ordered the government to rework it and confer with the common minister of defence.¹⁷⁸ Thus the whole question was taken off the agenda.

At the end of 1910 the government's attention again turned to the half completed work. The provincial diet of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had a heterogeneous autonomous government, also drew up in March 1910, on the basis of the Austrian model, the exceptional measures to be used in case of war. A similar legislation would have been more justified in Hungary and the fact that it did not appear became more striking.

On December 24, 1910 the common minister of defence sent to the Hungarian prime minister his comments on the text of the bill which was accepted in March 1909. But the minister of justice of the Party of Work government approved the ideas of his predecessor, who had been in the coalition government, and considered the comments of the minister of defence unacceptable, and thus played for time. With the outbreak of the Balkan war the affair was once again urgent. From October 7 until October 16, 1912 the deputies of the competent ministries held a council in the Ministry of Defence, but according to the minister of justice's proposal they did not take the observations of the minister of defence as their starting point, but instead the draft of the March 1909 "preliminary conference". They proposed that the government should accept the bill with a few modifications. The cabinet council assented to the plan. On November 19 royal authorization to put forward the proposal in Parliament was already in the government's hands.

In the November 3, 1912 session of the House of Representatives the prime minister introduced the bill regarding the exceptional measures to be used in case of war, with a short preamble. The greater part of the preamble deserves attention: "Not only from a military mobilization viewpoint is it necessary that exceptional measures be taken. This is also of great importance from the viewpoint of the civilian population, the whole country, economic life, legal security, personal security and security of property, which are threatened by all wars with most serious dangers and losses, and these exceptional measures must aim if possible at alleviating the above mentioned dangers and losses by defending the legal system and civil security situations with increasingly effective methods."¹⁷⁹ The minister of defence introduced proposals concerning war services and horse and vehicle ser-

¹⁷⁸ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 22. (7).

¹⁷⁹ *Képviseletőház, Irom.*, 1910–1918, No. 633.

vices.¹⁸⁰ The House now reported the business urgent and in the first days of December they passed the bill. The Upper House also finished very quickly and the emperor sanctioned it at once.

The Hungarian government implemented its stand: special power which was valid in case of war remained completely in the hands of the government, the military authorities did not receive authorization to take over administrative functions. The military authorities of the common army could not even violate this principle by requisitioning because in the law about the war services adequate guarantees were included. According to this law the war services, including the given immediate services for it, were specified by the civil authorities. The military authorities could as a rule only turn to the government; only in "urgent cases" could they go to the country or town administration and only in "exceptional cases" to the village administration. They could not by any means demand anything from the services (Article 27 of Law LXVIII of 1912). Of course the functioning of this system was doubtful in more serious, or rather critical, situations. Legislation was also aware of this and wanted to bridge the probable differences, indeed even the conflicts, between the civil and military authorities by extending the commissary institute (Article 4 of Law LXIII of 1912). During the war years the practice of special powers caused much friction and many quarrels between the Hungarian government and the high command of the common army stationed in Hungary, but as a rule the principal position of the Hungarian government was valid: special belligerent power was concentrated in the government's hands.

THE EMERGENCY LAW COMES INTO FORCE

The enactment of Law LXIII of 1912 "On Emergency Measures to be Taken in Case of War" played a fundamental role in the adaptation of political life and of the administration to the war situation. On the basis of the law a series of decrees were passed creating and then improving the mechanism set up in the back areas serving the war. The system of emergency conditions was needed not only in order to ensure the service of the fighting troops, but also to prevent the manifestation of the social forces opposed to the organizers of the war.

The Law of 1912 declared that "in time of war, and also, if it is necessary, during a period of military preparations ordered for reasons of a menace of war, the government ministry may recur to the special powers defined in this law according to the measure of necessity and with the responsibility of all its members" (Article 1). The Law obliged the government to make the special measures it took

¹⁸⁰ *Képviseelőház*, November 30, 1912.

public, in decrees, and to declare these decrees subsequently to Parliament (Article 2). The law authorized the government to appoint commissioners for the execution of the regular and special administrative measures. The government commissioners could use the units of the gendarmerie, the police and the frontier-guards for services "outside their normal sphere of activity" (Article 4). The government could also order recourse to the gendarmerie in the territories of the towns. It could annul the resolutions of the administrative organs of self-government (i.e. the municipal authorities; Article 5), control the mail services, the telegraph, and the telephone (Article 8). It could limit or suspend the functioning of any association, and prohibit meetings of political character. Those who participated in a meeting held in spite of the prohibition could be sent to prison for two months (Articles 9 and 10). The government could order censoring of the press by compelling the daily papers to present the deposit copies three hours before distribution (Article 11). Martial law could be introduced (Article 12). The government was also authorized to modify the penal code, for example in a sense that the instigators of strikes could be imprisoned for five, and strikers themselves for three years (Article 20), etc.¹⁸¹

Thus, the Act of 1912 gave the government ample powers to put an end to relatively liberal conditions in case of war. During the war, the Law of 1912 was several times amended by Parliament on the demand of the government, which further increased the possibilities of governing without restriction. The complementary law passed in November 1914 authorized the government, with retroactive effect as from the beginning of the war, to introduce the system of internment (Article 10, Law I of 1914). Another complementary law was passed in 1915 which, among others, legitimated the diminishing of the level of education in schools in war conditions (Article 5, Law XIII of 1915). The amendment of 1916 qualified the slightest violation of the emergency law an offence which could be punished with six months' imprisonment (Article 6, Law IV of 1916).

The government exercised the authority with which the emergency laws invested it after the rupture of diplomatic relations with Serbia, and took several measures after July 26, some of them general and some particularly in force in the nationality regions next to the southern and eastern borders. It ordered the control of mail services and the censorship of the press throughout the country. The right of public meeting and assembly was limited in the counties inhabited by Romanians and Serbs. Martial law was introduced in these regions, the gendarmerie could be used in the towns, etc.¹⁸²

Tisza announced these first measures in Parliament on July 28, remarking that "it is our duty to maintain and ensure order and calm in the country and to take

¹⁸¹ *Corpus*, Law LXIII of 1912.

¹⁸² For the relevant order, see *Képviseelőház, Irom.*, No. 1100.

every government measure which seems necessary for assuring the efficient operation of the army".¹⁸³

Later, the number of emergency measures only increased. On August 1 a decree was issued extending the earlier measures valid in the border countries to the whole country. The possibility of deploying the gendarmerie was extended to all towns. The limitation of the right of public meeting and assembly was also extended to the whole country. Martial law, originally in force in the southern regions, was first extended to the counties inhabited by Ukrainians, later, from August 14 on, to the territories of the Aranyosmarót, Pozsony and Szeged law courts.¹⁸⁴ Several periodicals of the nationalities were banned. The *Kassai Munkás* had the same fate. Internment was extensively applied.¹⁸⁵

In the beginning, the emergency measures aimed primarily at intimidating and restraining the liberties of certain nationalities. Later they were increasingly applied in other fields as well.

During the four years of the war, the prime minister reported to Parliament on the emergency measures on eight occasions: twice in 1914, 1915 and 1916, and once in 1917 and 1918.¹⁸⁶ In January 1916 the administrative and legal committee of the Parliament drafted, on the basis of the prime minister's earlier reports, a summary report on the emergency measures taken in 1914 and 1915.¹⁸⁷ The report shows that in the first two years of the war the government had taken extensive measures to transform the conditions of the hinterland. Beyond the regulations already mentioned it had limited travelling and changing residence within the country. Associations and societies were controlled by the authorities, "with a preventive purpose, by controlling and restricting the activities of institutions which might have a role in shaping the climate of opinion as well as law and order". In addition to laying down the rules of summary jurisdiction, some rules of procedure in connection with less serious offences were also modified. Trials by jury were limited, and the powers of law courts were extended. The much more severe military criminal jurisdiction could often be applied to civilians. Since the press followed the instructions, the report ran, "only in a few cases was it necessary to ban the publication and distribution of domestic periodicals".¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ *Képviselőház*, July 28, 1914.

¹⁸⁴ *Orders* 5735/1914 M. E. sz., 6082/1914 M. E. sz. in *Képviselőház, Irom.*, 1109.

¹⁸⁵ *Min. tan. jkv*, August 3, 1914, p. 84.; February 20, 1915, p. 122.

¹⁸⁶ *Képviselőház, Irom.*, 1100, 1109, 1158, 1196, 1269, 1324, 1420, 1436.

¹⁸⁷ *Képviselőház, Irom.*, 1252.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

The system of emergency measures was internally linked to the introduction of war economy and to the militarization of the national economy. The governments of the Dual Monarchy had dealt with the possibility of war for several years and had taken some preliminary steps; however, the Monarchy was not prepared for a lasting conflict either militarily or economically. Regarding internal and administrative affairs, a complete system of measures had been worked out. In the field of economy, however, the preliminary measures were much less extensive and only took into consideration a short war.

The law of 1912 on emergency measures also authorized the government to regulate and control economic life. Pursuant to Article 7, the organs of local self-government could, on the government's initiative, fix the maximum prices of staple foodstuffs. The Law of 1912 "On War Services" (Law LXVIII of 1912), passed at the same time as the emergency law, made possible even wider state control over the economy during the war. The Act provided that in a period of mobilization or war the government could demand personal and material services of the civilian population to meet the demands of the army. Able-bodied men up to the age of fifty could be obliged to compulsory labour for military purposes (Article 4). During this time they were subject to military criminal and disciplinary procedure (Article 9). Owners of factories and industrial plants were liable to produce goods corresponding to military demands or to hand over their factories together with the entire staff (Article 18). The Act also regulated compulsory delivery for the army. Another law (Law LXIX of 1912) regulated the delivery of horses and vehicles.

These acts passed before the war did not prove sufficient, and thus during the war the legislation continually extended the regulating role of the state over the economy, for example in the amendment of the Act of Emergency Measures which we have already mentioned in another respect. Complementing Article 7 of Law LXIX of 1912, and Law L of 1914 which further developed, authorized the government to fix centrally the maximum prices of "means of sustenance and other primary consumer goods" (Article 1), furthermore to ordain the declaration, and even the delivery, of surplus reserves of such goods (Articles 2 and 3). The Act enabled the government to ordain the handing over of any factory producing goods of prime necessity, i.e. not only those supplying the army (Article 4). Compulsory labour could be ordered not only for military type of work, but any work of "public utility", to which women could also be compelled (Article 5). The amendment of 1915 (Law XIII of 1915) extended the rights of the government concerning the declaration of reserve stocks. Article 1 of the amendment of the

Act on War Services, passed in 1916 (Law VI of 1916) raised the age limit of those liable to compulsory labour to 55 years.

There were other laws, too, passed partly before and partly during the war, which gave the government ample authority to regulate the economy extensively during the war. The state control of the economy, even if limiting to a certain extent the circulation and free action of capital, did not hamper, but rather favoured, the increase of profits for monopolies and banks. The state-monopolistic tendencies, which had been present everywhere before the war, strengthened with the militarization of the economy. The same process could be observed in all belligerent countries, and even in the developed neutral countries. It was in Germany that state control of the economy was the most extensive, but it was quite extensive in both countries of the Monarchy as well. The report of the Hungarian Trade Bank made in 1915 also indicates the measures taken by the Hungarian state to this effect: "The entirety of our economic life has been transformed into war economy... The most delicate and most flexible internal functioning of the economic system, the scope of individual enterprise until now, is becoming more and more dependent on state supervision and sober control."¹⁸⁹

The first few months following the outbreak of the war were characterized by considerable economic confusion. Industrial production, especially that of consumer goods, diminished. Thus, in spite of the great number of people called up, unemployment was a serious problem in the first few months. "The labour supply in general exceeded the demand ten times."¹⁹⁰ Already in the autumn of 1914 many basic goods were lacking. "Already in November," wrote Jászai, "the usury of basic consumer goods was unbearable."¹⁹¹ In the first month of the war Tisza was still reluctant to fix the prices officially. He was afraid that "fixed maximum prices will in fact immediately become minimum prices, because the official price-list legitimates high prices". Therefore he advised the leading officials of towns to organize the market.¹⁹² This procedure, however, could only be successful if at least minimum supply of markets could be ensured and if there was no hoarding. But both these conditions were lacking, and in November, Tisza also tried fixing the maximum prices. All this resulted in serious provisionment troubles during the first winter, especially in the north-eastern and southern parts of the country, in the towns situated near the operational areas. In February 1915 the municipalities or mayors of certain towns asked the prime minister by wire to take steps immediately. On February 22 Tisza warned the lord lieutenants of the counties to use the

¹⁸⁹ *A Pesti Magyar Kereskedelmi Bank százéves története* (A History of the 100 Years of the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest), Budapest 1941, p. 146.

¹⁹⁰ *Szterényi-Ladányi*, p. 64.

¹⁹¹ *Jászai*, p. 217.

¹⁹² *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 37.

reserves "economically", since "we have no more reserve supplies at our disposal", and only in this way could the bread supply be ensured until the next harvest.¹⁹³ He promised that the government would also try to do away with the black market. All this brought little help. Therefore, for the sake of more systematic consumption of supplies the government ordered in the spring of 1915 the general use of flour coupons, which was the first step towards the introduction of rationing.

In his book published after the war, János Teleszky, the finance minister of the Tisza government characterized the autumn months of 1914 as "the first shock of the economy brought about by the outbreak of the war". Later, industry switched over to war production, and in many branches production increased, owing to the war boom, and also to state intervention. The period which followed the shock of the first few months, and which lasted until about mid-1916, Teleszky writes, "was characterized by the adaptation of the economy to the war as well as by its growth due to the initial inflation which was hardly even suspected apart from a few initiated". The whole system of war economy was entirely completed in this period.¹⁹⁴ Gratz used a similar periodization: "In the first phase, which lasted from the beginning of the war to the beginning of the winter of 1914-1915, the troubles of the economy due to the war manifested themselves with elementary force". Later on, these gradually disappeared before the spring of 1915. "In the spring of 1915 when on the one hand, production geared up to full steam and on the other, the supply of the army became normal due to the continuity of the orders, a new period began during which the economies of Austria and Hungary seemed to be flourishing." This period lasted until 1916. The year of 1916 was already that of "increasing insufficiencies".¹⁹⁵

More rational use of the raw material supply also demanded the extension of war economy. Since the Central Powers were under a blockade which was becoming more and more efficient, there was soon a shortage of raw materials. "In the second year of the war production increased, but there was already an incipient shortage of raw materials, especially of wool and cotton."¹⁹⁶ Following the German model the state encouraged the creation of central organs in the major industries for inventory keeping and purchasing the stocks for the industry in question and for the transaction of the war contracts. This system was also expected to put an end to the abuses connected with the war contracts; serious cases of abuse came to light as early as 1915.¹⁹⁷ These centers functioned on a shareholding basis. The

¹⁹³ *OL K 467*, 42/1915, 44/1915.; *Tisza*, Vol. III, p. 126.

¹⁹⁴ *Teleszky*, pp. 323-346.

¹⁹⁵ *Gratz-Schüller*, pp. 189, 194, 197.

¹⁹⁶ F. Eckhart: *A magyar közgazdaság száz éve, 1841-1941* (A Hundred Years of the Hungarian Economy, 1841-1941), Budapest 1941, p. 189.

¹⁹⁷ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 161.

capital was furnished by the state and the finance-capital jointly. One of the major centers, the Haditermény Rt. (War Produce Co.) monopolized the purchase of grain crops. The sugar, metal, textile, etc. centers had a similar role, all of them yielding big profits for the founders. In addition to the centers, several committees were also established, as e.g. the National Economic Committee which was in charge of requisitioning.¹⁹⁸

In order to ensure the undisturbed functioning of the war economy as well as an obedient and cheap labour force, the workers of 263 companies were placed under military supervision by the end of October 1915.¹⁹⁹

In spite of the rising prices, wages did not generally rise in the first year of the war. In the beginning they even decreased in certain branches and certain factories. In vain did the Ironworkers' Trade Union protest that obliging the workers to work in specified factories meant diminishing wages and that "in the above-mentioned factories (the Schlick-Nicholson and the Langfelder Factories — J.G.) the requisitioned workers' lot was even worse than the bad working conditions usual in those factories".²⁰⁰ In the spring of 1915 the trade unions and the social democratic press protested against the treatment which even exceeded the severity of the war services act, but with very little success.²⁰¹ In an embittered article published in the *Cipőfelsőrészkesztők Szaklapja* in the summer of 1915 we can read: "Wages are not rising, but even sagging. Food prices have risen by 100 and 200 per cent. With the same wages we can now buy only half, or even less, of what we could buy earlier... We cannot bear this any longer!"²⁰²

The big banks, together with the state, established several new factories and credit banks. Thus e.g. the Pig-Farming and Meat-Trading Co. was founded jointly by the Trade Bank, the Credit Bank and the state. The War Credit Institute Co. was guaranteed by the treasury.²⁰³ The Central Corporation of Banking Companies was also founded jointly by the banks and the state.

The war meant a great financial burden. According to the quota in force, Hungary had to contribute 36.4 per cent of the costs of maintenance of the army. This meant a sum of nearly a hundred thousand crowns in the first three months of the war. Already in the first year the military expenses multiplied, especially after Italy's entry into the war, when the expenses of the navy also rose considerably.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸ *Képviselőház, Irom.*, no. 1252.

¹⁹⁹ *Szterényi-Ladányi*, p. 75.

²⁰⁰ *MMTVD 4/B.*, p. 81.

²⁰¹ *Ifjűmunkás*, March 1, 1915. „Háborúban szabad a nyúzás” (There Is War, Exploit as You Please); *Élelmzési Munkás*, March 4, 1915. „Vigasztalan állapotok” (Miserable Conditions), etc.

²⁰² *MMTVD 4/B.*, pp. 114–115.

²⁰³ *Min. tan. jkv.*, October 9, 1914, p. 96.

²⁰⁴ *Min. tan. jkv.*, August 1, 1914, p. 73.; December 8, 1915, p. 200.

The government partly covered these huge surplus expenses by issuing paper money, i.e. by starting inflation. At the end of 1915 the amount of paper money in circulation was already double the amount at the outbreak of the war.²⁰⁵ In addition, the government also tried to cover the expenses by external and internal state loans. Among the latter, war bonds were the most important. The first ones were issued in November 1914, and they were followed by others every six months. Through inflation and war loans, the bulk of the financial burdens of the war was directly shifted to everyday working people.

In spite of the war boom, agricultural production gradually decreased in the first years of the war. The large-scale drafting and the destruction of the animal and horse stock had a considerable influence on extensive agriculture, since there was a shortage of manpower and draught animals. The Monarchy needed about a hundred million quintals of corn annually. In the five years preceding the war, there had been an average annual surplus of 4.600.000 quintals. In 1914, however, there was a bad harvest, and the yield only covered nine-tenths of the domestic demand. This is why there were difficulties of supply already during the first winter. The results of 1915 were even worse: two-fifths of the demand was already lacking. As to the yield of 1916, it could only cover 63 per cent of the demand.²⁰⁶ They tried to reduce the manpower shortage by putting prisoners of war to work. There was a good opportunity to do this in the summer of 1915, when the Monarchy took many prisoners on the eastern front. Mechanization also increased, although on a limited scale only: due to the war conditions, the industry was producing fewer and fewer agricultural machines. Exploiting the productive capacity of the soil did not help, but rather hurt the outlook of agriculture. After the rationing of flour, bread rationing started in December 1915.

²⁰⁵ S. Popovics: *A pénz sorsa a világháborúban* (The Fate of Money in the World War), Budapest 1926.

²⁰⁶ Gratz-Schüller, pp. 40-46.

CHAPTER 2

THE STRUGGLE IN 1914-1916

THE YEAR OF FAILURES

The first year of the war, more exactly the period lasting from the summer of 1914 to the spring of 1915, was characterized by the failures of the Central Powers.

THE STRATEGIC PLANS

The basic principles of the joint strategic plan of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had been laid down by German Chief of Staff Alfred von Schlieffen after the turn of the century. The basic idea was that in case of a war waged simultaneously against France and Russia, Germany would mobilize quicker than all the other great European powers and would thus be the first to have a strong and ready army on the front. The mobilization of Russia would take several weeks or even months. Seven out of the eight German armies would immediately attack France, one of them defending the borders fortified by the French and the other six invading France from Luxemburg and Belgium, occupying Paris, and thus encircling the French army deployed on the German border. Schlieffen also expected part of the French troops to be tied down by a simultaneous Italian attack. All this would take a mere few weeks, which would make it impossible for France's allies to come to her aid. While operations would be going on in France relatively few hostile forces would appear on the eastern front, since the Russian army could only be mobilized slowly. Schlieffen considered that a single German army and the armies of the Monarchy, mobilized faster than the Russians, would suffice to contain the latter. After a quick victory had been won on the western front, the German armies would be transferred to the east, and the war would end with a concentrated attack by the German and Austro-Hungarian forces.

Schlieffen's successor, Helmuth von Moltke did not modify the essential character of the strategic plan, but, since he had to deal with a quicker mobilization by France and could not hope for an Italian offensive tying down several French di-

visions, he intended two German armies (the 6th and the 7th) to be deployed on the German–French border and five (from 1st to 5th) to encircle the French army. He also shortened the flank slightly, leaving the Netherlands out of the deployment.

The strategic plan of the Monarchy was subordinated and organically linked to the German one. Its makers had to accept Schlieffen's conception, the reasons for which were laconically stated by the former chief of staff later, in 1912: "The fate of Austria will also be decided at the Seine, and not at the Bug".¹ The Monarchy was also preparing for a war on two fronts: against Russia and Serbia. One-fifth of the troops mobilized would fight against the Serb army, while four-fifths would mount an attack in Galicia in order to disrupt and slow down the deployment of the Russian army. Later, when the German armies arrived, the two forces would start a general attack together. After the defeat of Russia, or after at least the decisive battles had taken place, a considerable part of the forces would be transferred to the southern front and invade Serbia. Conrad considered it of decisive importance that twenty German divisions should arrive from the western front by the 35th day of the Russian mobilization at the latest, otherwise the Monarchy would not be able to contain the Russian troops. Moltke, however, never gave him any assurance. At their last meeting, in May 1914, he said that operations on the western front would last approximately six weeks.²

The strategic plan of the Entente envisaged the deployment of almost six million trained soldiers by the time mobilization was complete, as against approximately four million trained soldiers of the Central Powers. (The further recruitment possibilities of the Entente also exceeded those of the Central Powers. This was also shown by the fact that already at the first mobilization, in addition to those sent to the front, four million additional men were mobilized, while the Central Powers only mobilized 2.5 million additional men. During the war the Entente recruited 42,189,000 soldiers, while the Central Powers only levied slightly more than half of this, 22,850,000.³)

The strategic plan of the Entente required that Russia should mobilize and start an attack as soon as possible, in order to relieve the western front.⁴ The Central Powers, however, expected this to happen only after the completion of the mobilization in Russia, about six weeks after the declaration of war. The Austro–Hungarian general staff were surprised when the Russian troops mounted an offensive before the mobilization was completed.⁵

¹ G. Ritter: *Der Schlieffenplan. Kritik eines Mythos*, München 1956, p. 186.

² Conrad, Vol. I, p. 396.; *Deutschland*, Vol. I, p. 113.

³ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, pp. 811–812.; *Concise*, p. 39.; *Deutschland*, Vol. I, p. 306.

⁴ *Concise*, pp. 29, 142.; Barbara W. Tuchmann: *The Guns of August*, New York 1962, p. 57.

⁵ Margutti, p. 432.

The Austro-Hungarian army, due to the dualist nature of the Monarchy, did not have a uniform structure.⁶ Seven-eighths of the forces belonged to the common army, nearly half of these troops being provided by the Hungarian crown lands. In addition to, and separate from the common army there were the *Honvéd* (Hungarian national) army in the Hungarian crown lands, and the *Landwehr* in the hereditary lands, both comprised of infantry, cavalry and artillery units. These made up one-eighths of the infantry and cavalry forces. The *Honvéd* army and the *Landwehr* were of approximately the same strength. The *Landwehr* infantry exceeded the *Honvéd* infantry, but the cavalry proportions were inverse.⁷ In war, these forces were complemented with the territorial troops of the *Honvéd* army and the *Landsturm* troops of the *Landwehr*.

On the regimental level the three kinds of forces (common army; *Honvéd* army and territorial troops; *Landwehr* and *Landsturm*) were quite separate from one another and did not mix. Regarding recruitment of the common army, the Monarchy was divided into 112 military districts (47 of which were in the Hungarian crown lands, 4 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the rest in the hereditary lands). Apart from a few exceptions, the soldiers of the different formations were always recruited from the same district. On the same model, but independent from it, the Cisleithan and Transleithan regions of the Monarchy were also divided into military replacement districts for the recruitment of the *Honvéd* and *Landwehr* regiments, respectively. In this way the common, the *Honvéd*, and the *Landwehr* regiments were separated from each other. Not even in the brigades and divisions did the three forces mix. The army corps, however, comprised divisions of all three formations, and consequently not only the supreme command (*Armeoberkommando*, or *AOK* in short), but also the army and army corps commands were uniform. This ensured that from the operational point of view the command of the three specific parts of the armed forces was uniform. Another fact ensuring unity was that the internal organization of the regiments was also practically the same. The regiments of the common forces were grouped in 33 infantry and 8 cavalry divisions, the *Honvéd* regiments in 8 infantry and 2 cavalry divisions, and the *Landwehr* regiments in 8 infantry divisions. These made up 16 army corps (Army Corps I to XVI), which in turn made up six armies (1st to 6th). Before the war, the peace effectives of the armed forces were 450,000. By mobilizing those aged between 22–32 who had been on leave, as well as the reserve, the effectives

⁶ The naval fleet and the air forces are not discussed here, only the land army, as they had no significance concerning the participation of Hungary. On these, see *Krieg*, Vol. I, pp. 8–9.

⁷ For the data the calculations are based on, see *Világháború*, Vol. I, p. 208.

were brought up to war strength and included approximately 1.5 million troops. These made up the armed forces of the Monarchy trained and organized in peacetime, which were immediately sent to the southern front (the 5th, 6th and 2nd Armies) and to the northern front (the 1st, 3rd and 4th Armies; later the majority of the 2nd Army was also dispatched here).

Mobilization, however, involved a much larger number. In case of a war on two fronts, the Monarchy had no trained and organized reserve forces left. Therefore, the 21-year-olds, who had not yet been trained, were immediately called up, so that a reserve could be created. Furthermore, the 33- and 34-year-olds were also mobilized, who had been trained, but had already been discharged from the reserve of the common, the *Honvéd* and the *Landwehr* forces. These were organized into territorial and *Landsturm* regiments, also for the reserve.⁸ One result was that the Monarchy, since the best forces had been sent to the front immediately, was only able to replace the serious initial losses by less efficient forces. Another result was that the organization, into new formations for the most part, for the reserve of about 1.5 million soldiers, in addition to those sent to the front, interfered considerably with the mobilization of the troops for front-service and with reinforcement, which meant a serious burden for the military command in the hinterland.

Thus, already at the beginning of the war the Monarchy called in over three million men, several hundred thousand more in the next few months, almost half of them from the Hungarian crown lands.⁹ (In spite of the serious losses, the armed forces of the Monarchy numbered about 4–5 million troops during the whole war, due to the constant replacements.) 2 or 3 million of these were constantly on the fronts.¹⁰ Since the losses, wounded, and POWs, exceeded four million,¹¹ the permanent great strength of the forces of the Monarchy was due to the fact that a total of 8 to 11 million people (calculations differ) were called to arms during the war.¹² At least 3,800,000 of them were from the Hungarian crown lands. The Monarchy was one of the countries which recruited troops in the greatest proportion as compared to the population (17 per cent). Only in Germany was the proportion higher (20 per cent), and it was similar in Italy (16 per cent) and Russia (15 per cent).¹³ In Hungary the proportion was somewhat higher than in Austria and came close to the proportion in Germany.

⁸ *Krieg*, Vol. I, p. 80.

⁹ *Julier*, pp. 296–297.

¹⁰ F. Franek: *The Entwicklung der öst.-ung. Wehrmacht in den ersten Kriegsjahren. Ergänzungsheft 5 zum Werk „Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg“*, Wien 1933, p. 15.

¹¹ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, pp. 46–47.

¹² *Józsa*, p. 24.

¹³ *Gratz-Schüller*, pp. 150–151.

THE FIRST FIGHTS

The operations of World War I started on a secondary front with the clash between the Monarchy and Serbia. The Monarchy partly mobilized three out of its six armies, the 5th and 6th Armies (i.e. the minimum Balkan group) and the 2nd Army (B-echelon), against Serbia. The 5th Army consisted of two army corps: the VIIIth Army Corps recruited in Bohemia and the XIIIth Army Corps recruited in Croatia. The latter included one common and one Croatian *Honvéd* division. The 6th Army comprised the XVth Bosnian Army Corps and the XVIth Dalmatian Army Corps. The 40th Budapest Honvéd Infantry Division was also part of the 6th Army, but it was independent of the two corps. About 70 per cent of the 2nd Army, which in itself represented a strength slightly exceeding that of the 5th and 6th Armies together, was recruited in Hungary. The 2nd Army included the XVth Army Corps both of whose common divisions were recruited in Budapest, and the VIIth Army Corps, one of whose divisions was recruited in Nagyvárad and the other in Temesvár. In addition to these two corps it also included the 23rd Honvéd Infantry Division of Szeged, and the 7th Common Cavalry Division of Eszék. Thus, approximately two thirds of the Balkan forces deployed against Serbia, which totalled about 500,000 troops, were recruited in Hungary and Croatia.¹⁴

The mobilization and transportation southward of the 2nd, as well as of the 5th and 6th Armies started on July 28. A few days later, however, the war broke out, and general mobilization was ordered. According to the preliminary plans, the 2nd Army now had to be sent to the Russian front. Such a possibility had not been foreseen before the war. It had been envisaged that it might perhaps be necessary to switch over from a "B" war to a "B-R" war, but not that this should take place in a mere few days, when the mobilization of the B-echelon had not been completed. The mobilization and deployment plan of the "B" war had been worked out so that the 2nd Army, taking part in the offensive (the majority of the B-echelon) could be taken out and mobilized against Russia relatively easily in case of a switchover to a "B-R" war. In this case, the minimum Balkan forces would remain in the south and take up a defensive position, while the B-echelon would be transported to the northern front, after the A-echelon had been deployed there. But there were no plans as to what would happen if the "R" war broke out while mobilization was going on for a "B" war. In this case the high command decided that mobilization for the "B" war, which had already started, would be completed, i.e. the entire B-echelon would be transported to the south, and its further fate would be decided later. The German general staff accepted

¹⁴ *Krieg*, Vol. I, pp. 63-68.

this with some anxiety, since in this way only three-fifths of the Austro-Hungarian forces were to be deployed against Russia instead of the four-fifths originally planned.¹⁵

Following this, the high command started to consider more seriously the idea, which had arisen earlier, that before transferring the 2nd Army to the north, they would use it for a quick offensive against Serbia. Already in the night of July 28 Burián had wired Tisza: "Chief of staff secretly announced in recent discussions ... that if Russia does not take action against us by August 1, the Serbian war would start at full force, and after defeating Serbia in a quick offensive we would turn against Russia".¹⁶ The supreme command expected mobilization in Russia to last six weeks and believed that there would be sufficient time for these forces to get there. An essential factor of the decision was that they wanted to improve the morale of the troops to be deployed against Russia with a victory over Serbia, which was necessary as the army of the Monarchy was recruited, in correspondence with the nationality composition of the country itself, mostly from among the nationalities.¹⁷ Tisza was also of the opinion that the operations should begin with an attack on Serbia. At the common cabinet meeting of August 8 he said that this would improve the unfavourable foreign policy relations in the Balkan. "The situation would immediately change in our favour if we dealt Serbia a smashing blow."¹⁸ Finally the high command decided that the majority of the 2nd Army (the IVth and VIIth Army Corps) would take part in the Serbian offensive, while its other units (the IXth Army Corps and the divisions which did not belong to any army corps) would immediately be transferred to the north to reinforce the troops deployed there. Tisza was optimistic following the decision that the war would start with a Balkan offensive. On August 9 he wrote to Berchtold: "The overall situation in the Balkans looks better than I thought... It seems to me that the outlines of a solution of the Balkan problem, including Greece, have become clearer."¹⁹

In the first Drina battle, from August 12 to 25, the Monarchy attacked with a force of about 200,000 soldiers and 400 cannons. The 5th and 6th Armies crossed the Drina river and penetrated into Serbia. Those units of the 2nd Army deployed near the Sava river which were not transferred to Russia, diverted some Serbian forces and after crossing the river at Sabac also took part in the offensive. As a

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁶ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 32.

¹⁷ On problems due to the multinational composition, see G. E. Rothenberg: *The Habsburg Army and the Nationality Problem in the Nineteenth Century, 1915-1914*, *Austrian History Yearbook*, No. 1/1967, esp. p. 85.

¹⁸ *Protokolle*, p. 161.

¹⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 54.

result of a Serb counterattack, however, Potiorek, the commander-in-chief of the Balkan forces of the Monarchy, ordered retreat on the eighth day of the offensive, ordering the troops to keep the bridgeheads. The final result of the battle was utter defeat of the forces of the Monarchy, since even the bridgeheads had to be given up. From the strategic point of view the failure did not have great importance, and the losses were not too serious, the dead and the wounded included 600 officers and 22 to 23 thousand privates²⁰, but its moral effect was much greater. Burián wrote in despair in his diary on August 21: "What horrible moral effect in the Balkan states, in Italy and Romania... When will our victories arrive at last?"²¹ On August 23 Tisza addressed a particularly confidential handwritten memorandum to the sovereign in which he attributed the failure to "erroneous leadership", and expressed his wish that the military command would be improved, since "the repetition of the same errors on the main front would have disastrous consequences".²² On the following day he wrote to his brother: "We should not have begun the offensive... it would have been better not to start the whole thing".²³ In fact, the failure of the first Serbian campaign had a great impact on the further operations conducted by the Monarchy. On the one hand it demoralized the troops, and on the other, it made the high command change the original strategic and operational plans. The prestige of the Monarchy had to be re-established quickly, and so, instead of taking up a defensive position, the high command prepared a new offensive against Serbia. Although in late August the entire 2nd Army was transferred to the eastern front, considerable troops were brought to reinforce the 5th and 6th Armies with a view to preparing a new attack. This contributed to the defeat suffered on the eastern front. Tisza could now judge more correctly the strength of the Serb resistance and the strategic possibilities of the Monarchy. As opposed to the bold plans of the AOK he was of the opinion that the unsuccessful attack should not be repeated. "The right thing is," he wrote to Berchtold on August 24, "to search for a solution in the north... If we can defeat the Russians, Bulgaria will be certain to take our side and then we shall be able to crush the Serbs with our southern forces which we shall have kept intact."²⁴

In the first few weeks of the war the main front was the western one, where decisive battles were being fought. The right wing of the German army, which was to encircle the French, marched through Belgium and pushed forward as far as the Marne river by the first days of September. In the large and bloody battle

²⁰ *Krieg*, Vol. I, p. 152.

²¹ *REZsL Burián*, item 5. Diary 1913-1914.

²² *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 76-77.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84-85.

of the Marne, however, the French army and the British Expeditionary Force stopped and even drove back the German forces. The quick crushing blow planned by the Germans did not succeed. On September 14 Erich von Falkenhayn superseded Moltke as German chief of staff.²⁵

The Central Powers' preliminary war plan envisaged that the manoeuvres of one German army in the north of the eastern front and the attack of four-fifths of the forces of the Monarchy in the southern part of the front would disturb and delay mobilization in Russia and thus ensure the undisturbed conduct of operations on the western front.

In eastern Prussia the German 8th Army, whose command had been handed over to Hindenburg, won a considerable victory in the battle of Tannenberg. At the same time, on August 23, the Monarchy started its attack on the Galician border. Four armies took part in the campaign: the 1st, 3rd and 4th Armies, as well as the 2nd Army whose transfer had been completed by late August.

Two-fifths of the over one million troops engaged in the fight against Russia had been recruited in the Hungarian crown lands. They included: the Vth Army Corps (with three common divisions) in the 1st Army; two Honvéd infantry divisions, one Honvéd cavalry division and a common cavalry division in the 3rd Army; the VIth Army Corps (with two common and one Honvéd infantry divisions) and another common cavalry division in the 4th Army; and finally the IVth and VIIth Army Corps (with two divisions each) as well as three more divisions in the 2nd Army.²⁶

Contrary to estimations, a considerable part of the Russian forces had already been mobilized, was prepared for the attack, and started a counterattack. "The number of Russian troops on the front," wrote Tisza in an informatory letter, "exceeded by almost fifty per cent the number estimated by the German and Austro-Hungarian *Generalstab*."²⁷ Nevertheless, in the first few days of this Galician campaign, which lasted from August 23 to September 11, the Monarchy won several victories on the left flank.²⁸ In the last analysis, however, its forces suffered a crushing defeat on the right flank (at Lemberg and Przemyśl), in the region of Rawa Ruska. The number of casualties and prisoners amounted to approximately 300,000.²⁹ They were obliged to retreat behind the line of the

²⁵ The change was kept secret for a time. *Deutschland*, Vol. I, p. 320.

²⁶ *Krieg*, Vol. I, pp. 69–79.

²⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 143.

²⁸ The VIth Army Corps belonging to the 4th Army and recruited in Hungary was fighting successfully there. Z. Czékus: *Az 1914-es évi világháború összefoglaló történelme* (A Concise History of the World War of 1914), Budapest 1930, p. 105.

²⁹ *Krieg*, Vol. I, p. 319.

Dunajec river and the North-Eastern Carpathians, surrendering Bukovina and the eastern part of Galicia, and abandoning the beleaguered fortress of Przemyśl.

This new military failure of the Monarchy had a great impact on the neighbouring neutral countries. It hastened Italy's and Romania's turning against the Monarchy and at the same time made it impossible for Bulgaria to enter the war. For this very reason, the Monarchy badly needed some military successes, but could no longer hope for them on the eastern front.

On September 8 the forces of the Monarchy crossed the Drina river and started a new offensive against Serbia. This attack gave hopes of success at first. They even occupied Belgrade for a few days in late November and early December. Finally, however, in mid-December, the offensive ended with a new retreat. The casualties (the dead, the wounded, and the sick) amounted to 200,000, and over 75,000 more were captured or disappeared.³⁰ "I am ashamed even to go out in the street," wrote Fürstenberg, the envoy of the Monarchy in Madrid, to Berchtold.³¹ At the same time, the Monarchy inflicted extremely heavy losses on the Serb army, which was now unable to sustain another offensive of this size. The Monarchy was able to repeat it, but for the time being, this could not take place.

SERIOUS DEFEATS SUFFERED BY THE MONARCHY ON THE EASTERN FRONT

While fierce fighting was going on at the western and southern fronts, the Russian army started a large-scale offensive in October. Their attack, starting from the Warsaw region and going towards Berlin and then towards Cracow, became more and more vigorous. In order to stop it, the Central Powers had to throw in all the reserves at their disposal. In mid-November, the Germans settled down for trench warfare on the western front, and transferred a considerable part of their forces to the east. The Monarchy could not redeploy the forces which were taking part in the Serbian campaign, but did not send any reinforcement there either, directing all reserves to the Russian front. In November, the reinforced German and Austro-Hungarian forces stopped the Russian advance towards Berlin and Cracow. In order to achieve this the Monarchy was forced to withdraw some forces from the Carpathian region, thus weakening the southernmost wing of the eastern front. The Russian high command took advantage of this and started an attack there in December. Violent fighting developed, especially near Limanowa and in the North-Eastern Carpathians, before the Austro-Hungarian

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 759.

³¹ Fürstenberg to Berchtold on January 4, 1915. *May*, Vol. I, p. 102.

army was at last able to stop the Russian offensive. Several Hungarian units fought hard battles here. Three Hungarian hussar divisions were particularly engaged: the 5th and 11th Honvéd and the 10th Common (Budapest) Hussar Divisions.³²

In the defensive fights which went on from October to December on the north-eastern front, the Monarchy again suffered enormous losses which exceeded those of August and September. Until the end of the year, the total number of casualties (including prisoners of war and the missing) suffered by the Monarchy on the eastern front, not counting the sick, was 800,000.³³

From the military point of view it was advisable for the forces of the Monarchy to defend themselves until spring in trench fights against the Russian army, which was better prepared for winter fighting. The further neutralization of Italy and Romania, however, required victories. Archduke Frederick, commander in chief, wrote to the sovereign on January 5: "The situation demands quick action, and first and foremost a victory over Russia".³⁴

It was in these circumstances that the decision of a winter offensive in the Carpathian mountains was made. The direct goal was the deliverance of Przemyśl. The high command wanted to restore quickly the tarnished reputation of the Monarchy and forestall an Italian or Romanian attack. German military and political leaders were at first reluctant to accept Conrad's plan. Many German leaders were of the opinion that they could only attain their goals in one direction, and therefore separate peace ought to be concluded with Russia. Falkenhayn finally agreed to Conrad's planned offensive, because he also thought that it would restore the Monarchy's reputation and ensure its further fighting readiness.³⁵ The Austro-Hungarian high command wanted to extort the success of the campaign by sending huge masses of soldiers into action. In early 1915, there were 18 infantry and 6 cavalry divisions in the Bukovina-Gorlice front-line. By April 1915, an additional 28 infantry and two and a half cavalry divisions were deployed there, approximately a million people more.³⁶

The battle of the Carpathians lasted from late January to mid-April 1915. The first unsuccessful attack started on January 25, the second on February 10. The failed attempts and the growing famine worked together to brake the defenders of Przemyśl. On March 22 the fortress surrendered, and 120,000 people fell into captivity. Following this, the Russian army started a counterattack. Many soldiers

³² On this see, Julier: *Limanowa*, Budapest 1937.

³³ *Világháború*, Vol. VII, p. 656.

³⁴ *Krieg*, Vol. II, p. 95.

³⁵ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, pp. 66-70.

³⁶ *Krieg*, Vol. II, pp. 268-270.

recruited from among the nationalities, often entire units, gave themselves up; e.g. the 28th Prague Regiment changed sides in early April.³⁷ The Monarchy was only able to stop the Russian offensive with the greatest difficulties, by relying increasingly on the Hungarian regiments which consequently suffered enormous losses. From January 1 to the end of April the Monarchy lost nearly 800,000 soldiers in the battle of the Carpathians.³⁸

The war, which had been going on for nine months now, became for the Monarchy a series of failures.

SPECIAL MEASURES AGAINST THE SERBS AND UKRAINIANS

After the outbreak of the war, and even more so after the defeats suffered from the Serb and Russian armies, the Serb and Ukrainian minorities living in the Monarchy were greatly oppressed. The greatest part of the Hungarian territories inhabited by Serbs and Ukrainians also belonged to the military zone, which was under the management of the supreme command. The Hungarian government, exercising its special powers, also took some harsh measures.

In November 1912, a secret codicil marked "Cs-1" had been added to the service regulation of the gendarmerie. This codicil summed up the duties of the gendarmerie concerning the prevention of espionage.³⁹ Article 11 ordained that "persons under acute suspicion of espionage should be detained on the day of mobilization". "Suspicion of espionage" was used in such a wide sense that it could be applied to almost any person belonging to the nationalities living near the border.

The arrests started on July 25. In a few days, they reached such enormous proportions that on August 2 the minister of the interior modified Article 11 of the secret regulation by a circular: only those persons were to be arrested who "really had a harmful influence on our preparations for the mobilization", while those under suspicion were to be reported to the police of the municipal authorities, but were not to be detained.⁴⁰ Mass arrests went on, however, on various other pretexts. Thus e.g. people suspected of being members of the Narodna Odbrana were arrested without any other reason. Many of them were not set free even later.⁴¹ Internment also attained mass proportions.

³⁷ R. Plaschka: Zur Vorgeschichte des Überganges von Einheiten des Infanterieregiments Nr. 28. an der russischen Front 1915, *Festschrift Hantsch*, pp. 455-463.

³⁸ *Krieg*, Vol. II, p. 270.; *Julier*, p. 105.

³⁹ The booklet marked "Cs-1" see, *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 95.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 78-79.

The measures taken against the Serb population of the southern regions were in some cases just local atrocities, mostly, however, they were based on central directives. On the day after the rupture of diplomatic relations with Serbia, the prime minister instructed the lord lieutenants: "I call your attention with particular emphasis to the attitude to be taken towards the non-Hungarian population ... We must show them our strength." In his letter of September 5 to the government commissioner of the territories inhabited by Serbs, Tisza advised moderation in connection with local excesses, demanding at the same time "relentless severity against the criminals," and actions to be taken "without much ado".⁴²

The emergency measures were in force in Croatia too, where they were mostly used against the Serb population. The authorities turned first of all against the Serb Sokol associations functioning in Croatia. Even before the outbreak of the war, on July 14, the Minister of Defence Krobatin had informed Tisza that in Croatia-Slavonia "the Serb Sokol associations and popes were the main agitators of the Great Serb revolutionary movement".⁴³ When the war broke out, the members and leaders of the Sokol were arrested. Not even the immunity of MPs was respected. Krobatin had already mentioned in his letter that "some of the MPs are positively agitators and promoters of revolutionary propaganda". Now several Croatian Serb MPs were arrested on various pretexts. E.g. Srdjan Budisavljević, a member of the Zagreb provincial diet and as its delegate, a Hungarian MP, was detained on the pretext that he was the president of the Krajiska district center of the Sokol associations.⁴⁴ Later Tisza intervened for him because "he is being calumniated for a trifle", he wrote.⁴⁵

Before the war, the Hungarian government had not been very interested in the domestic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Now, however, Tisza attached great importance to the fact that the Serb population of Hungary and Croatia was closely attached to the Bosnian Serb population.⁴⁶ One of the basic principles of Tisza's policy was that the annexation of Serbia and the union of the Serb population living in the Monarchy were out of the question. Therefore not only the links of the Serbs of Hungary, Croatia and Bosnia with Serbia demanded a counter-action, but also their aspirations at unity within the Monarchy. At the beginning of the war Tisza wanted the expected gains of the Monarchy to be distributed according to the dualist principle. He even included in his plans Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were treated as separate provinces. If Austria gained some

⁴² *REZsL Tisza*, item 21, paper 389.; *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 123.

⁴³ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 25.

⁴⁴ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 215.; *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 134.

⁴⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 10–11, etc.

⁴⁶ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 147.

Polish regions, Bosnia and Herzegovina could become Hungarian crown provinces. This idea was one of the reasons why the Hungarian government paid special attention to Bosnia during the war.

Even in the state of emergency, the Serbs of Hungary, Croatia, and Bosnia found ways to express their sympathy with the war waged by Serbia. The minister of the interior, as we have seen, made mention of this fact at the cabinet meeting held in late August 1914. Another proof was furnished by the documents captured later, at the occupation of Serbia, especially by the Belgrade archives of the Narodna Odbrana. These show that many of the Austro-Hungarian soldiers of Serb nationality captured by the Serbian troops asked to be admitted to the Serbian army. 21 Hungarian Serb soldiers figured in the lists. Many young men who had not been enlisted yet fled to Serbia (there are 29 names in the list, most of them from Újvidék), and joined the Serbian army as volunteers. The list of the Narodna Odbrana contains the names of 13 persons, who deserted from the army of the Monarchy to the Serbian army.⁴⁷

The measures taken against the Serb civil population also gave rise to some disagreements between the Hungarian government and the commanders of the common army units stationed in southern Hungary. As we have already seen, the Austrian emergency law invested the military authorities with far-reaching rights against the civil population, while the Hungarian one extended the rights of the government agencies, but did not invest the military authorities with governmental rights. The commanding officers of the common units stationed in Hungary, especially in the territories qualified as "military zones", often behaved as if they were in Austria, i.e. according to the Austrian emergency measures. This provoked protests from the Hungarian authorities. Already in late August Tisza sent a telegram to Burián, in Vienna, saying: "Excesses committed by military commanders disregarding government and authorities are increasing... Please do everything possible by all means to stop this madness... I shall be obliged to see His Majesty and make this a matter of principle."⁴⁸ In these frictions the government was trying to preserve its sovereignty; at the same time it was obvious, however, that the military proceedings were more serious even than the special civil proceedings permitted by the emergency law.

A characteristic example of such a friction took place at Zombor. In early September 1914 soldiers and civilians demanded in a chauvinistic demonstration the

⁴⁷ For more details see, J. Galántai: „A háborús állam.” A „kivételes hatalom” kodifikálása és alkalmazása 1914–1916-ban (The State During Wartime. The Codification and Adaptation of the “Extraordinary Powers” in 1914–1916). In: *A magyar polgári államrendszerek* (The Bourgeois State Systems in Hungary), Budapest 1981.

⁴⁸ *REZsL Burián*, item 41, book of telegrammes 1913–1914.

removal of Cyrillic notices from shops. One Serb shopkeeper refused to do so, and, fleeing the insults of the mob, ran into his house and shot at the demonstrators. The civil authorities arrested him. The joint military command of Zombor demanded his extradition, threatening the public prosecutor and the police commissioner with arrest. At this, the latter gave in. Tisza heard about the matter from the mayor's report, and wanted to ask for a severe inquiry against the Zombor military command. They, however, had acted quickly: the shopkeeper had been sentenced to death by court martial and the sentence had been carried out straight away. In addition, the court martial designated twelve hostages among the Serb intellectuals and landowners of Zombor, saying that "if the population revolted against the military proceedings and hampered the functioning of the militia with its treacherous behaviour, the hostages will be arrested and immediately executed by the military authorities".⁴⁹ On September 15 Tisza addressed a lengthy memorandum concerning this and other similar matters to the commander in chief, Archduke Frederick himself. He wrote that in the question of competence "the situation had really become intolerable" between the military authorities and the Hungarian government agencies. He was therefore asking for vigorous action. A few days later Tisza thanked the archduke for the quick action, but at the same time lodged similar complaints concerning Carpathian Ukraine.⁵⁰

In Carpathian Ukraine, already in the first few weeks, the Hungarian authorities took several serious measures according to the emergency law. Later, the offensive of the Russian army and its repulse were followed by the cruel reprisal of the military authorities. During the winter campaign Carpathian Ukraine was in the hands of the Austro-Hungarian army. In March 1915 the high command extended summary jurisdiction to the counties of Liptó, Szepes, Sáros, Abaúj-Torna, Zemplén, Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros, as well as the city of Miskolc.⁵¹

THE NATIONALITY POLICY TOWARDS SLOVAKS AND CROATS

With the Slovaks and Croats, if only for military reasons, the government tried to avoid any actions that could give rise to agitation. At the beginning of the war they counted on the Croatian regiments and Slovak soldiers as reliable troops.

In the first weeks of the war the Hungarian prime minister was trying to restrain the chauvinistic tone of the Hungarian papers of Upper Hungary.⁵² In late August

⁴⁹ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 148, 152.

⁵⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 135-142, 150, 153-155.

⁵¹ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 143.

⁵² See his letter of August 26 to the government commissioners in the Felvidék (Upper Hungary), *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 42.

he gave a satisfactory answer to the complaints lodged by Slovak politician Matus Dula, and on September 10 he spoke in support of allowing the banned daily *Slovenský Denník* to appear again.⁵³ But in this area as well, the liberal tone was to change soon.

Following the autumn defeats of the Monarchy a Czechoslovak movement began to take shape among the emigrés. The Hungarian government showed concern not so much for Masaryk's camp as for the movement of the Slovak emigrés in Russia.⁵⁴ It was even more disquieting for the government that as a result of the defeats the idea of Czechoslovak unity within the Monarchy was gaining ground among the Slovaks. The Hungarian government had already considered this problem a year before the war. At that time it had received several indications that this trend was gaining strength among the Slovak population. In his report of June 26, 1913, addressed to the prime minister and marked "Confidential! Into his own hands!", the lord lieutenant of Trencsén county had also warned that this movement was supported from Bohemia by economic means: "The small banks and savings banks fed by Czech money ... give credit to the people even at a time when money is lacking all over the world".⁵⁵ In November 1913 the government drew up a 23-page memorandum for domestic use entitled "The Problems Concerning the Slovak Nationality Living in Hungary". The summary characterized all Slovak trends, not only all the tendencies of the Turócszentmárton group, but also the clerical party trend called *Hlinka*, as well as the most recent radical group rallying round the review *Prúdy*, as aspiring at Czechoslovak unity: "The Slovak national movement has hardly any factor which is not backed by Bohemian-Moravian agitation, culture, and money. Movements founded purely upon the racial strength of the Slovaks themselves can hardly be encountered today, which is certainly the result of long years of steady work done by the Czechs... Owing to the strong Czech influence the idea of the racial separatism of the Slovaks is being completely relegated to the background."⁵⁶

Following the military defeats suffered by the Monarchy, the Czechoslovak tendency grew stronger among the Slovaks. Now Tisza was urging the authorities and the local forces to act with more determination. In February 1915 he intervened over the minister of justice, because he considered the steps taken too lenient.⁵⁷ However, he could not prevent the Slovak national movement from gaining ground. The editorial in the July 31, 1915 issue of *Národné Noviny*, the paper of the Slovak National Party published in Turócszentmárton, raised, cautiously but

⁵³ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 109, 130.

⁵⁴ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 407.

⁵⁵ *REZsL Tisza*, item 18.

⁵⁶ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 10.

⁵⁷ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 166.

explicitly, the issue of dismissing the idea of the Hungarian national state. The Hungarian government attached great importance to this.⁵⁸ But there were reports coming from the AOK, too: "The Slovaks constitute, at present, an element faithful to the dynasty and the state", but the ideas of a Czechoslovak union had "spread among the Slovaks too", and the war conditions were highly suitable for the government to take "the necessary preventive measures". Tisza sent a seemingly self-confident reply: after taking office, his government had "severed all ties leading from Upper Hungary to Bohemia and Moravia".⁵⁹ A mere few weeks earlier, however, he himself had written to the minister of the interior: "It would be advisable ... to try to get some more information on the contacts between Czechs and Slovaks".⁶⁰ In order to be able to claim his nationality policy, based on the principle of a single political nation, as successful and realistic Tisza concealed from the AOK, and Vienna in general, his difficulties with the nationalities. He wrote in detail about this to the AOK on November 17, 1915, and sent a copy of his note to the heir to the throne, Archduke Charles.⁶¹

In Croatia, in the first few months of the war the government was occupied with the reprisals and preventive measures taken against the Serbs. Quite soon, however, difficulties arose in connection with the Croats as well. Among the Croats, the Great Croat tendency was gaining more and more ground. The ban of Croatia, Baron Ivan Skerlec, who adjusted himself to the policy of the Hungarian government, was constantly signalling this fact from late 1914 on.⁶² The Hungarian prime minister also gave account of the size of the movement. "Quite a lot of Croatians," he wrote to Leó Lánczy on February 15, 1915, "have trialist Great Croat delusions."⁶³

The idea of a South Slav union led by the Croats within the Monarchy, which would at the same time entail the transformation of the Dual Monarchy into a trialist one, was not a new idea. It was after the outbreak of the war, however, that it became widespread in Croatia. At first the strengthening of this trend did not effect the military efficiency of Croatia, on the contrary, precisely because of this "austrophil" and at the same time Croat nationalist tendency, the morale of the Croatian regiments was among the best. The commander of the Zagreb Army Corps for this reason even supported the movement.⁶⁴ This led to serious disagree-

⁵⁸ *REZsL Tisza*, item 16.

⁵⁹ *OL K 26*, 1915-XII. res-450 (5807). October 18, 1915.

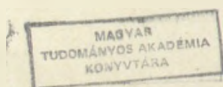
⁶⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 181. September 26, 1916.

⁶¹ *OL K 26*, 1915-XII. res-5763.

⁶² *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 1.; *Tisza*, Vol. III, p. 179., etc.

⁶³ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 114-115.

⁶⁴ The high command would only begin to mistrust the XIIIth Croat Army Corps in the summer of 1917. R. Kiszling: *Das Nationalitätenproblem in Habsburgs Wehrmacht 1848-1918, Donauraum*, No. 2/1959, p. 90.



ments between the ban of Croatia, who followed the policy of the Hungarian government, and the Zagreb military commander. In February 1915 this infuriated Tisza so much that he wrote to Burián, who had just been appointed common foreign minister: "I shall be obliged to ask for the removal of the Zagreb military commander and for his successor to be categorically forbidden any contact with the opposition".⁶⁵

There were other factors, too, which favoured the strengthening of the Great Croat movement after the outbreak of the war. Before the war, the provincial government of the ban relied on the Croatian-Serb coalition, forcing Frank's Croatian Party of Rights into opposition. Owing to the highly restricted franchise and the electoral system, the Croatian-Serb coalition got the majority in the provincial diet. However, this governmental basis had become highly unstable already during the Balkan wars, since the Serb wing of the coalition could not be relied on. Károly Khuen-Héderváry, whom Tisza regarded as a specialist in Croatian affairs, wrote to the prime minister on August 7, 1913 regarding Croatia, the Balkan events had "dispelled many an illusion. The traditional disagreement between Croats and Serbs is being revived."⁶⁶ After the beginning of the war against Serbia, and especially after the atrocities committed against the Serb population, the government could no more rely on the Croatian Serb politicians who had, until then, supported the provincial regime. But the Croats, who supported the ban, were only in majority in coalition with the Serbs. Because of this the former basis of the regime was upset. Frank's opposition party with its trialist aspirations came increasingly to the foreground and became ever stronger.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the Hungarian government, i.e. the ban, no longer had a reliable political basis in Croatia. In these circumstances the ban tried to gain some support by making minor concessions. Thus in the summer of 1915, he supported the Croatian idea that on the occasion of the large-scale manifestation of homage planned for September 2, a separate Croatian delegation should be sent to Vienna. Tisza, however, for fear that this might favour the Great Croat tendency, insisted on sending a joint delegation. He succeeded in having his way, and rebuked the ban, who was one of his men of confidence, in a fulminatory letter: "It will come to no good if you try at every moment to assert here the worries of a few Croatians about your attitudes instead of settling them of your own authority, by persuasion and reassurance if possible, or, if not, with determination. You yourself must have the leading and directing role, and not let yourself be pushed."⁶⁸ In his later letters, too, he often reproached

⁶⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 99.

⁶⁶ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 10.

⁶⁷ *Zeman*, pp. 57-58.

⁶⁸ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 128.

the ban for similar cases of indulgence and urged him to adopt a harsher attitude.⁶⁹

The increasing severity of the Hungarian government's Croatian policy was also due to a certain extent to fear of the influence of the Croatian emigrés. The Croatian movement which demanded separation from Austria-Hungary found its first supporters among the Croats living in the United States. Already on July 4, 1914, the Pittsburgh Croatian paper *Hrvatski Glasnik* had outlined, in connection with the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, a program based on the idea of the death of the Monarchy and the creation of an independent Croatian kingdom.⁷⁰ Later, the center of the movement shifted to Italy, where the leading role was played by the members of the Croatian diet who had left the country, Fran Supilo and Hinko Hinković, and the former mayor of Spalato (Split), Ante Trumbić. The Hungarian authorities made extensive investigations of Supilo in order to isolate him from those inside the country.⁷¹ Reprisal against the Croatian emigrés was one of the main reasons for the enactment of the law "On the Financial Responsibility of Traitors to the Country" (Article XVIII of the Act of 1915).

Another movement, that of the Italian emigrés in Fiume, was launched at the beginning of the war and envisaged the annexation of Fiume and Istria to Italy.⁷²

THE NEUTRALIZATION OF ITALY AND ROMANIA

Already at the common cabinet meeting of July 7, Berchtold had mentioned that in case of war against Serbia he expected Italy and Romania to formulate some compensation claims, but he was of the opinion that the Monarchy should not start any preliminary negotiations, but act according to plans and wait for the announcement of any demands of compensation.⁷³

In mid-July and after, on several occasions the Italian foreign minister stated the position of his government to the ministers of Austria-Hungary and Germany in Rome. According to Article VII of the Triple Alliance Treaty, in case of any temporary or permanent territorial gain by the Monarchy, Italy was entitled to compensation, or else she would have to prevent such a gain. Through the German minister in Vienna, the German foreign minister advised the Monarchy to try to reach a preliminary agreement with Italy.⁷⁴ Berchtold, however, informed his

⁶⁹ E. g.: *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 206-207.

⁷⁰ *OL K 26*, 1914-XXV. 7669.

⁷¹ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 204.

⁷² *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 268.

⁷³ *ÖUA*, Vol. VIII, p. 343.; *Geiss*, Vol. I, p. 105.

⁷⁴ *Zeman*, *Diplomatic*, p. 6.

Italian allies about the step the Monarchy was to take only two hours before the delivery of the ultimatum. On July 24 the Italian foreign minister instructed his ministers in Vienna and Berlin to forward the stand of the Italian government according to which this step "ought not to have been taken without the previous consent of her allies".⁷⁵ Regarding the future, Article VII had to be applied.⁷⁶ This attitude of the Italian government only applied, as yet, to the conflict between the Monarchy and Serbia: the Monarchy should be prevented from making territorial gains, or Italy compensated, but at the same time Italy had no interest in defending Serbia. This Italian policy would essentially be the same if Russia and Germany entered the war between the Monarchy and Serbia. The Italian government issued its declaration of neutrality on August 2.

After the declaration of neutrality first France, then Britain entered the war, and it became evident that Italy, on account of her long shoreline and the weakness of her fleet, would not in any case be able to fight against Great Britain. Thus, it was out of the question for the now neutral Italy to enter the war on the side of the Central Powers. It was even more in her interest, however, to enter it on the other side. This is the explanation for the German and the Austro-Hungarian governments' acquiescence in the neutrality of Italy, and for the fact that the parties did not consider the Triple Alliance Treaty denounced, since it still served the interests of all of them. But because of this para VII of the treaty remained in force, too. The Italian government first announced its concrete demands for compensation following the declaration of neutrality, first unofficially, through its diplomats in Bucharest. They demanded as compensation for the Monarchy's territorial gains in the Balkans, the surrender of Trentino, a part of South Tirol. The Germans advised the Monarchy to comply with the claim, and did not conceal their attitude from Rome either. The Austro-Hungarian common cabinet discussed the matter on August 8 and refused to meet the demand. Tisza also spoke against satisfying the Italian claims. He had fears that such a concession might entail similar claims on the part of Romania.⁷⁷ According to the decision of the common cabinet, they would not refuse the Italian claims openly, but agree to informal talks "until a decision is reached in France and Russia".⁷⁸ The Monarchy was playing for time.⁷⁹ They continued the same policy even after the defeats of August, although the Germans were pressing for a favourable answer. On August 26 Tisza sent a message to Berchtold advising him not by any means to promise to surrender Trentino,

⁷⁵ Valiani, p. 790. (See also: *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1966. 3, p. 116.)

⁷⁶ Provision VII of the convention of the Triple Alliance on the liabilities of compensation was published by the Italian press in 1903.

⁷⁷ May, Vol. I, p. 174.

⁷⁸ *Protokolle*, p. 166.

⁷⁹ Also see the resolution of the joint ministerial council on August 19, *Protokolle*, p. 172.

and as for the Germans, to "leave this subject out of all further talks".⁸⁰ Later, at the common cabinet meeting of September 7 he also considered it necessary to start negotiations concerning some Albanian concessions for the sake of neutralizing Italy.⁸¹ Before these could take place, however, Italy, taking advantage of the Monarchy's second attempt to invade Serbia, occupied Valona, the southern part of Albania. The Monarchy, though it had to withdraw from Serbia, reluctantly acknowledged this. In December 1914, however, the Italian government officially announced its claim to Trentino in return for its neutrality. Following the further military defeats suffered by the Monarchy, the claim was extended to the whole of South Tirol as well as to the northern coast of the Adriatic. Italy not only tried to obtain the territories inhabited by Italians from Austria without war, but also tried to achieve her aims in the Balkans from a neutral position. She gave her policy more weight by signing an agreement with Romania on September 23, according to which they would co-ordinate their policies towards the two groups of belligerent countries.⁸² Although the member countries of the Triple Alliance finally managed to settle the issue of the Balkan compensations (Italy took possession of Valona and the southern part of Albania), no agreement was reached concerning the surrender of the territories inhabited by Italians in Austria.

The Romanian politicians did not consider their hands tied by their alliance with the Monarchy. The alliance was a secret one, and the king of Romania gave official information to the prime ministers, who were also bound by the obligation of secrecy. On August 3, however, he called the ministers and the leaders of the parliamentary parties, and informed them of the text of the treaty of alliance. The meeting took a stand for neutrality.⁸³ As a consequence, on August 3 the Romanian government made a declaration of neutrality similar to the Italians'. The Monarchy and her allies acknowledged this.⁸⁴ In Bucharest, the king was perhaps the only one to take Romania's alliance with the Central Powers seriously. The future behaviour of Romania was dependent on the development of war. The Hungarian prime minister knew this very well. In the beginning, he expected a favourable solution from the quick military victories: "Only the successes we achieve in the battlefield will give us absolute certainty," he wrote on August 12.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 89.

⁸¹ *Protokolle*, pp. 174-175.

⁸² *Hantsch*, Vol. II, pp. 674-675.; *May*, Vol. I, p. 181.

⁸³ *May*, Vol. I, pp. 207-209.

⁸⁴ R. Kiszling: Rumäniens und Bulgariens Politik bei Ausbruch des ersten Weltkrieges, *Festschrift Hantsch*, p. 445.

⁸⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 66.

But instead of the expected successes, failures came. To make matters worse, King Carol died in October and was succeeded by his nephew, King Ferdinand, although sympathizing with Germany, did not consider himself as much bound to his allies as his predecessor, and his wife, a British princess and the granddaughter of Tsar Alexander II, also oriented him toward the Entente. The Romanian politicians, who were still following the Italian example, soon made it evident that if the Monarchy wanted to ensure the further neutrality of Romania, they had to surrender part of the territories inhabited by Romanians. On September 7 Czernin, the ambassador of the Monarchy in Bucharest, wired to Vienna that he had received a serious offer from leading Romanian personalities: if they guaranteed the political autonomy of Transylvania and surrendered part of Bukovina (Suceava and environs), Romania would not take the side of Russia, and would even actively support the Monarchy.⁸⁶ Tisza was immediately informed, and he at once gave a negative answer to Czernin: "We will hold out until greater German forces arrive on this front".⁸⁷ Conrad was of the same opinion then, and was opposed to a positive answer. Following this, however, the situation on the Russian front deteriorated almost hour by hour, and just three days later, after learning from Burián that the Germans were also pressing for a positive answer,⁸⁸ Tisza sent a wire to Berchtold and Conrad saying that he agreed to surrendering Suceava on condition that Romania should give active support to the Central Powers. He did not speak of the autonomy of Transylvania, which was equivalent from this point of view to a negative answer.⁸⁹ Now Conrad also accepted the plan to surrender Suceava.⁹⁰ This concession, however, was obviously not enough for Romania, and especially the Germans started to urge Tisza to make concessions concerning Transylvania. On September 13 Tisza refused Tschirschky's intervention, and on the 15th he did the same with German Foreign Minister Jagow.⁹¹ The only change when compared to his telegram of September 10 was that he no longer made the surrender of the Suceava region dependent on active support on the part of Romania, but thought that it might be offered as a compensation for any territorial gain acquired by the Monarchy.⁹² Thus, the Romanian issue came more and more to the foreground, and on September 20 it was discussed at the common cabinet meeting. Here, Tisza was opposed to the surrender of any further territories, and rejected the

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁸⁸ REZsL Burián, item 41, book of telegrammes 1913–1914. Entry on September 14.

⁸⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 129.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 132. See also the entry on September 11 in Burián's book of telegrammes.

⁹¹ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 133, 142.

⁹² See the entry on September 14 in Burián's book of telegrammes.

proposal of giving political autonomy to the Romanians living in Hungary. He was willing to make concessions, he said, in church and educational questions, and was ready to talk about this in Budapest with a representative of the king and government of Romania.⁹³

The difference between the Romanian claims and the concessions proposed by the Monarchy was irreconcilable. According to unofficial statements made in Bucharest, Romania would be willing to declare war on Russia in defence of Transylvania and Bukovina, i.e. if these provinces were ceded. In his wire of September 26 to Berchtold and Czernin, Tisza protested against even listening to such a proposition.⁹⁴ In early October, it was also with regard to Romania that he wished to reinforce the right flank of the front in the Carpathian Ukraine.⁹⁵ The AOK, however, quite to the contrary, concentrated more to the west in order to contain the advancing main body of the Russian army, and even transferred the majority of General Pflanzer's 42 Transylvanian battalions there, Tisza protested, but with limited success.⁹⁶

Meanwhile the German pressure grew stronger, and simultaneously, Czernin was also impatient for steps to be taken concerning Transylvania and the Romanians of Hungary. On October 4 Tschirschky informed Tisza that Popovici had declared in Berlin that the appointment of a Romanian minister into the Hungarian government would satisfy the Romanians of Transylvania, and Berlin would support such a solution. Two days later Tisza gave an answer rejecting this proposal. As he wrote, the leaders of the Romanians of Transylvania would not be satisfied with it either.⁹⁷ As a consequence of the increasing successes of the Russian offensive the Germans again tried to press Tisza. The German leaders were now making plans for the open action of Turkey, which they would have liked to combine with Romania's entry into the war. The intervention of these two countries would greatly ease the Russian pressure by forcing the Russians to transfer considerable forces to the Turkish and Romanian fronts. And in that case, the offensive in the west could go on. The German high command now saw this as the only possibility to win the war and thought that it was the inflexible Romanian policy of the Hungarian government which prevented them from realizing their plan. This explains why Tschirschky, as Burián informed Tisza, was "beginning to speak in a very disagreeable tone, making allusions even to jeopardizing our relations and similar exaggerations".⁹⁸ Then on November 4

⁹³ *Protokolle*, pp. 180–181.

⁹⁴ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 155–156, 159–165, 180.

⁹⁵ *REZsL Burián*, item 83, book of telegrammes 1914–1915.; *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 180, 191.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Entries on October 20–22 in the book of telegrammes; *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 223.

⁹⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 190, 197–198.

⁹⁸ *REZsL Burián*, item 43. Telephone call on November 3.

the German ambassador sent a sharp letter to Berchtold, reproaching him for the "separate Hungarian policy" which prevented the Romanian action and thus jeopardized the entire war. Berchtold immediately sent Tisza a copy of Tschirschky's letter.⁹⁹ The Hungarian prime minister did not beat about the bush either. On November 5 he wrote directly to Tschirschky, in his habitual harsh style, that the war against Serbia was begun on the "direct encouragement" of the German government, since the latter had declared the moment convenient for it. Consequently, the responsibility lay with Germany. As to the concessions, he was taking certain steps "at the request of the German government", but did not expect much of them. The Russians should be defeated, this was the only thing that would have an influence on the Romanians.¹⁰⁰ A few days later Tisza made public the concessions he was prepared to make. The Germans, however, did not find these enough and continued to press him for more. On November 13 Hindenburg wired Tisza, but the latter's answer was still negative.¹⁰¹ Bethmann-Hollweg and Jagow sent Count Monts to Vienna and Budapest. The purpose of his visit was, as Burián reported on November 15, "the co-operation of Romania being the only thing that could restore the balance, to set forth emphatically that everything possible should be done to achieve this".¹⁰² Then Tisza decided to go to Germany himself. On November 18 Burián noted in his diary in connection with Tisza's planned journey: "Main purpose: to straighten out the misunderstandings concerning Romania".¹⁰³ From November 19 to 23 Tisza had talks in Germany with Zimmermann, Bethmann-Hollweg, Jagow, and Falkenhayn. According to his own summary report, the prime minister had achieved his purpose; his attitude was understood and acknowledged.¹⁰⁴ He informed Czernin to this effect in his letter of November 26; they had managed to coordinate their views, and it was to be hoped that the idea of further concessions could now be dismissed.¹⁰⁵ The Romanian issue was in fact temporarily dropped. This was partly due to the fact that on November 12 Turkey entered the war, and the autumn offensive against Serbia promised to be successful.

By mid-December, however, the Serbian offensive had proved to be an utter failure. At the same time, the situation on the northeastern front was invariably

⁹⁹ *REZsL Tisza*, item 47, paper 12.

¹⁰⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 267-268.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 305-306.

¹⁰² *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 2.

¹⁰³ *REZsL Burián*, item 5. Diary 1913-1914.

¹⁰⁴ *REZsL Tisza*, item 21, paper 147. Title of the report on December 5: „Meine Besprechung in Berlin und in deutschen Hauptquartier. (Nach unmittelbar nach denselben gemachten Aufzeichnungen.)“

¹⁰⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 320-321.

critical. Thus, at the end of December the question of neutralizing Italy and Romania arose again, and in extremely unfavourable circumstances.

Under the new German pressure and especially because of the military failures Count Berchtold, the foreign minister of the Monarchy, who at the beginning of the war had opposed Italy's territorial claims, now started to waver. Seeing no other solution, he was inclined to ensure the neutrality of Italy and Romania by ceding them certain territories of the Monarchy. He was primarily thinking of Trentino in South Tirol and of Bukovina, but the possibility of surrendering the whole of South Tirol as well as Istria to Italy, and the Banat (in Hungary) to Romania also arose. In early January he was considering ceding Trentino, which the Germans explicitly wanted.¹⁰⁶ Finally, on January 9 Berchtold advised Francis Joseph to surrender Trentino, but the sovereign refused the proposal.¹⁰⁷

Tisza took a strong line against Berchtold. Conrad and Stürgkh, who were also opposed to surrendering any territory to Italy, supported him with all their power.¹⁰⁸ The Hungarian prime minister made use of his right to take part in the management of foreign affairs, to which para 8 of Article XII of the Act of 1867 empowered him. He also acquiesced in compensating Italy in the Balkans, but was opposed to surrendering territories belonging to the Monarchy. Although the territories in question belonged to Austria, the possibility of ceding Romanian territories belonging to Hungary also arose during the talks. Thus, by opposing the surrender of Trentino, the Hungarian prime minister was in fact defending the integrity of the Hungarian crown lands as well.

After rejecting the possibility of concessions, the neutrality of Italy and Romania could only be ensured by large-scale military successes. Tisza supported Conrad's plans for a winter campaign. Originally Tisza had wished to restore the prestige of the Monarchy by another campaign against Serbia, but the Germans did not agree to withdrawing forces from the eastern front.¹⁰⁹ Thus Conrad and Tisza succeeded in getting the plan of the winter campaign accepted instead of giving concessions. It was the two of them who brought about the fall of the wavering Berchtold in early January 1915. In his letter of January 5th Tisza wrote to Burián that he was sorry not to have raised the personal issue during his last stay in Vienna (on January 2).¹¹⁰ On January 10 he again went to Vienna, with the explicit purpose of obtaining Berchtold's resignation. "The drawbacks of his worrying and wavering personality were becoming so manifest that it was

¹⁰⁶ See Burián's letter of information, *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 11–13.

¹⁰⁷ *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 705.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 706.

¹⁰⁹ *REZsL Burián*, item 42.; *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 370.

¹¹⁰ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 10.

impossible for me to put the matter off any longer", he wrote a few days later in his report on Berchtold's resignation.¹¹¹ On January 13 Burián, Tisza's man of confidence and a member of his government until then, became minister of foreign affairs.¹¹² He categorically refused the territorial claims of Italy, and at the end of January traveled to Berlin where he expounded his policy to Zimmermann, Bethmann-Hollweg, Falkenhayn, and Wilhelm II, who were all urging for concessions.¹¹³ And on February 3, at the meeting of the common cabinet, counting on the success of the winter campaign, he said: "He who gains time, gains a lot... We have time to think things over, which is good for us as well as for Italy".¹¹⁴

The sharpening of the Italian issue was not the only reason Tisza wanted Berchtold to leave. He had lost confidence in him since early November, because the foreign minister had not sufficiently involved him in discussing foreign policy issues. In early November, Berchtold had not informed Tisza suitably about the American attempt of mediation, i.e. about Colonel House's proposal. The prime minister first called attention to this through Burián.¹¹⁵ Berchtold alleged discretion as a reason, which, however, did not satisfy Tisza, who protested sharply in his letter of November 4: "The strict discretion and secrecy binding the foreign minister cannot apply to the Hungarian prime minister. I am also responsible for our foreign policy and as the representative of the Hungarian state it is my duty to exercise my lawful influence over it. I can cooperate only with a foreign minister who I can be absolutely sure withholds nothing from me."¹¹⁶ Tisza had always made a point of being informed on foreign affairs and, in general, of being consulted in everything. This was his due, and in this he was adamant. Burián's appointment satisfied him in this respect.

The Hungarian prime minister had no right to interfere in the military command of the war, since this was the sovereign's prerogative. At the beginning of the war, however, Tisza had secured the promise that he would be informed about the most important military decisions and that he could express his opinion regarding them both to the sovereign and directly to the high command. In this respect he was even in connection with the German high command.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 30-31.

¹¹² Tisza was also considered but he regarded the post of the Hungarian prime minister as more important. *May*, Vol. I, p. 188.

¹¹³ His summarizing notes of January 27, see *REZsL Burián*, item 69. For his policy concerning Italy see more details in his memoirs, *Burián*, pp. 19-51.

¹¹⁴ *Protokolle*, pp. 195-196.

¹¹⁵ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 10.; and *REZsL Burián*, item 41.

¹¹⁶ *REZsL Tisza*, item 25, paper 88., published in *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 121-122. Here the date is incorrectly given as September 4.

¹¹⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 48-49, 76-77, 98-99, 120-121, 180-181.

No Hungarian prime minister had ever played such a great role in the management of the Monarchy as Tisza now did.¹¹⁸ The foreign minister was not only his friend, but their views were similar in every major question. Tisza did not appoint a new minister in attendance on the king's person to replace Burián, but he himself acted as such on the occasion of his frequent visits to Vienna. He laid stress on continuing to coordinate his policy with Conrad. On January 16 he wrote him a length letter expounding that military and foreign policy issues were inseparable, and especially that only a military success could ensure the neutrality of Italy and Romania. In his answer of January 19, the chief of staff expressed his agreement with this, which Tisza gladly acknowledged.¹¹⁹ Tisza was now very sure of himself. "After many sleepless nights," he wrote to Pál Beöthy on January 25, "at last I believe that the worst is over. The military situation is developing and this will have its diplomatic consequences."¹²⁰

THE NATIONALITY POLICY TOWARDS ROMANIANS

In the first year of the war, the policy of the Tisza government towards the Romanian minority was in part influenced by the desire to keep Romania neutral. When the war had broken out, criminal proceedings had been started against the paper *Romanul*, published in Arad, because it had written that the Romanians were serving as cannon-fodder for the Monarchy. At the intervention of the Romanian Greek Orthodox bishop of Arad, however, Tisza suspended the proceedings. "We shall draw a curtain of oblivion over these events," he answered the bishop.¹²¹ At the same time, his attitude towards the Serbian papers was completely different: "The special means that are at our disposal must be used," he wrote to the lord lieutenant in Újvidék, "towards any paper objectionable either for publishing unlicensed news or for unpatriotic behaviour".¹²² The different attitudes to the press are explained not by the difference in the behaviour of the Serb and Romanian minorities, but by the fact that Serbia was a hostile neighbour, while Romania, it was hoped, would remain neutral.

The policy of the Hungarian government towards the Romanian nationality in Hungary, since it affected the attitude of Romania, had been occupying the German and Austro-Hungarian politicians ever since the Treaty of Bucharest. This was one of the factors which had urged the Tisza government in late 1913 and

¹¹⁸ *Hantsch*, Vol. II, p. 726.

¹¹⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 35-38, 57-61.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 41.

early 1914 to have discussions with the ecclesiastic and political leaders of the Romanians of Hungary. The Romanian National Party committee was not satisfied with the limited concessions made by Tisza (recognition of the Romanian national party, use of their mother tongue on the lowest degrees, at court and in the administration, state help to Romanian industrial enterprises, possibility of education in the mother tongue in the state elementary schools, possibility to teach the mother tongue in the higher classes of parish schools, greater freedom of the press and of the right of assembly).¹²³ Tisza tried in vain to influence the leaders of the Romanian national party through the more loyal prelates.¹²⁴ The negotiations were broken off. The Hungarian upper-class opposition found even this too much. In the Delegations debate Andrassy disapproved of the prime minister even having negotiated at all with the Romanian leaders.¹²⁵

In the autumn of 1914 Tisza wanted to take up the thread of the negotiations broken off in January. Learning from the earlier failure, he now did not seek any formal agreement. He set forth his new concessions in a letter addressed to the most distinguished Romanian prelate, the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Archbishop Ion Meşianu. He sent copies of his letter to the other Romanian prelates, planning to publish them later together with the favourable answers. He even tried to extract positive declarations from Romanian politicians.¹²⁶ In his letter to Meşianu Tisza spoke of the negotiations conducted in January, which he "had to break off without attaining the goal", and where no agreement had been reached, since the Romanians had "not found the limits outlined in my published statement satisfactory". Then came the essential part of the letter: "I believe that today we can go further without prejudicing the Hungarian state of nation. We may envisage a reform of the public education act which would take into account the desires of our fellow citizens whose mother tongue is not Hungarian. We may legally give free scope to the use of the mother tongue in direct contacts with the state authorities, and at last, we may modify certain election arrangements so that the political representation of the Romanians living in Hungary may be more equitable. Thus, all those major problems would be solved, which in the past, stood in the way of a complete agreement."¹²⁷ Meşianu sent his answer to Tisza on September 23, welcoming the prime minister's initiative.¹²⁸ The other Romanian prelates did the same. This was enough for making the letters public.

¹²³ *Gratz*, Vol. II, pp. 279–280.

¹²⁴ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 157.

¹²⁵ *Delegáció*, May 26, 1914.

¹²⁶ *REZsL Tisza*, item 22.; *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 272–288.

¹²⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 272–274.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

On September 24 Tisza informed the lord lieutenants of the counties inhabited by Romanians about the exchange of letters, which "will be published as soon as possible," and asked them to exert their influence so that "distinguished Romanian personalities make declarations of approval and thanks and express the same hopes which are present in the metropolitan's letter. The attitude of the Romanian press is of particular importance."¹²⁹

The prime minister had thus prepared everything, but was delaying making things public. On September 27, 29, 30, and on October 4 he answered Czernin's urging letters that he would like to wait until success was achieved on the Russian front, failing which the entire action would do more harm than good, as it would become obvious that his hand was forced.¹³⁰ His delay was, also due to the fact that the sovereign agreed with him, of which he was informed by Burián on October 7: "Yesterday the sovereign, speaking of Romania, made the spontaneous remark that it would hardly be expedient to make your exchange of letters with the metropolitan public now, because it would seem to have taken place under the pressure of the Russian danger."¹³¹ After the death of the pro-German king of Romania on October 10, Tisza's advances would have seemed even more to have been made under pressure, therefore Tisza shelved the whole affair. "They must not think," he wrote to one of his friends, László Hosszú, the Uniate bishop of Szamosújvár, "that my compliance was due to any kind of fear."¹³²

The fortunes of war, however, continued not to favour the Central Powers, which made the Germans increase their demands that the Hungarian government should take action. Finally, on November 8, three days after the above mentioned letter sent to Tschirschky, Tisza made the exchange of letters public. At the same time the government issued a decree allowing the use of the Romanian national colour together with the Hungarian ones. The Romanians condemned for political reasons were granted amnesty by the sovereign. The government had no difficulty in obtaining favourable declarations from the Romanian prelates and the politicians, but the leaders of the Romanian national party were silent.

In the November 8 issue of the social democratic *Népszava*, an editorial entitled "Hurrah for Universal Suffrage!" commented on the event, saying that it was a good beginning, but it should be extended to all the nationalities and social reforms were also needed. To obtain this, universal suffrage was the most important goal. The paper of the Slovak committee of the Social Democratic Party desired

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 279–280.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 165–166, 172–174, 175, 189.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 284.

above all that the concessions made to the Romanians be extended to the Slovaks as well.¹³³

Many members of the upper-class opposition did not like Tisza's concessions. Apponyi protested the most vehemently. After the publication of the correspondence he even went to Vienna to protest. Already on November 14, however, Burián informed Tisza that Berchtold had made the count acquainted with the German aspects of the matter, "which did not leave Apponyi unimpressed".¹³⁴

After the publication of the letters the government showed increased liberalism in handling the affairs of the Romanian minority. All this, however, had hardly any influence on the development of the issue. There were more and more indications that the mood and behaviour of the Romanian population of Transylvania were changing in a direction which was unfavourable for the Hungarians. The defeats suffered by the Monarchy strengthened the conviction of the Romanian intellectuals that the moment had arrived for Romanian unity. The government commissioner appointed to help the Nagyszeben commander of the XIIth Army Corps stationed in Transylvania, who was the lord lieutenant of Torda-Aranyos county, wrote in a summary report he had made for the army corps' command in early January 1915: "In case of an eventual Romanian invasion we should primarily fear not a revolt of the population, but the officers and troops of Romanian nationality, who will turn against us if they can. Aspiration to a Greater Romania is very strong among the population, and especially among the intelligentsia, and all Romanians, without exception, would be serving this ideology." The AOK and the Hungarian government also received the government commissioner's report. Both bodies dissociated themselves from this view, though for different reasons. According to the AOK, the government commissioner's memorandum cast a slur on the "honour" of the staff of officers. Tisza disapproved of the government commissioner having discussed the mood of the civil population with the soldiers at all. And he found the basic content of the memorandum too pessimistic.¹³⁵

An unmistakable sign of the mood prevailing among the Romanians of Transylvania and Hungary was the escape of many Romanians doing military service, or of military age, into neutral Romania. This tendency started to assume considerable proportions in late 1914. Until November 1914, according to the data obtained by the government, 405 soldiers had deserted their units in Transylvania, while from January to July 1915, 669 deserters were captured in the single gendarmerie district of Nagyszeben (this being, of course, the number of unsuccessful attempts of desertion only).¹³⁶ In Romania, the fugitives were helped to settle down. News

¹³³ *Robotnicke novini*, November 19, 1914.

¹³⁴ REZsL Burián, item 83, book of telegraphmes 1914-1915.

¹³⁵ OL K 28, 1915-XII. res-450/297.; REZsL Tisza, item 16.

¹³⁶ OL K 578, Cat. no. 242.

of this spread quickly in Transylvania, encouraging more and more soldiers to desert. In January 1915 the command of the XIIth Army Corps asked the Hungarian government to put a ban on the news concerning the settlements and especially not to allow the Romanian-language newspapers published in Transylvania to give any further information. Tisza saw to the matter himself. On February 10 he sent a written note to the minister of justice asking him to meet the wish of the military command. The attorney general's offices, which were charged with the censorship of the press received the prohibitive order on February 16. At the same time the government greatly promoted the publication and circulation of real or false news concerning the anti-Russian attitude of Romania.¹³⁷

The activity of Octavian Goga may serve to illustrate the road of the Romanians of Transylvania during the war, from demanding equal rights and autonomy as a nation to separation. When the war broke out, Goga, a Transylvanian Romanian poet and one of the leaders of the Romanian National Party, went to Romania, where he propagated the idea of the union of Transylvania with Romania in the name of the Romanians of Transylvania. At its extraordinary session of December 1914 the Romanian "Ligă Culturală" proclaimed itself the national organ of all Romanians and even changed its name. The "Ligă Natională" considered the political union of the Romanians its main task. Some Romanians of Transylvania and Bukovina, who had fled to Romania at the outbreak of the war, were also elected members of the new management. László Lukaciu (Lukács), the rector of Lacfalú in Szatmár county, a wellknown figure of the movement of the Romanians of Transylvania, was elected chairman, and Octavian Goga treasurer of the new executive committee. The Hungarian papers wrote about this, disapprovingly, of course. This event did not cause Tisza to change his liberal policy towards the Romanian minority which he had elaborated with a view to neutralizing Romania and satisfying the Germans. On January 3 he wrote to the minister of religion and education in a letter marked "Confidential": "I myself should wish to avoid at present any reprisal which would lend to this incident of secondary importance a significance surpassing its real value". With a view to avoiding political action, canonical proceedings were started against Lucaciu by his bishop.¹³⁸ The minister of justice only instructed the attorney general of Marosvásárhely to collect information concerning Lucaciu and Goga.¹³⁹

The movement of the Romanians of Transylvania linked to Goga's name was, as to its nature, the nationalistic movement of a minority for its independence, while the reaction of the Hungarian government and press was the expression of

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, Cat. no. 172, 165.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, Cat. no. 272.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, Cat. no. 165.

the hegemonic nation's nationalism. At the same time, during World War I conditions were maturing for the development of the fight against all kinds of national oppression on an international basis. The great Hungarian poet of the time, democrat Endre Ady also arrived at the idea of internationalism as a consequence of what he called the horrible "blood storm" of the war, and it was from that platform that he criticized Goga's attitude, without, however, making the slightest concession to the Hungarian nationalistic spirit. He criticized Goga, not because the latter stood out against Hungarian nationalism, but because he did so from the platform of another nationalism: "It grieves me, in addition to so many other griefs," he wrote in the journal *Világ* in January 1915, "that Octavian Goga wants to become the Romanian Déroulède." About himself he wrote that he continued to believe in the glorious idea of internationalism even in these hardest of times.¹⁴⁰

The government had official texts denouncing Goga and Lucaciu published in the Romanian papers of Transylvania, but they had more and more difficulty with these papers. *Romanul*, published in Arad and considered to be the central paper of the Romanian National Party, gave the censors plenty of headaches. In this particular situation the government considered it more important that the paper should continue to be published than the editors, who would have liked to stop its publication as early as December, as a protest against censorship.¹⁴¹ In March 1915, the Transylvanian attorney general's offices, which were charged with censoring the Romanian papers, were again instructed by the minister of justice to "try not to hinder too much the functioning of Romanian papers published in Hungary" in spite of the strict censorship.¹⁴² In his letters to the various lord lieutenants Tisza, too, often advised more severe censoring, but not the obstruction of publication.¹⁴³ This press policy was in harmony with the government's policy towards the Romanian national minority, since the suspension of the papers would not have shown the wish to reach an agreement, but on the contrary, a turn in the Romanian policy.

¹⁴⁰ Üzenet román barátomnak (Message to my Romanian friend). *Világ*, 1915. jan. 24. in Ady Vol. III, p. 476.

¹⁴¹ It is revealed in the report by the prosecutor of Arad written on May 15, 1915. *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 205.

¹⁴² *OL K 178*, Cat. no. 174.

¹⁴³ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 155–156, 224–225.

PACIFIST TRENDS IN HUNGARY
AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

By the spring of 1915 almost every family in Hungary was directly affected by the losses. The unfulfilled promise of quick victories, the prolongation of the war, and later the serious defeats cooled the chauvinistic mood. The events had a sobering effect on the population.

Already early in the war the chauvinistic articles of *Népszava* had met the disapproval of some readers. This was manifest in the letters to the editor and in the editorials, intended to be answers to the letters, published in early October.¹⁴⁴ It was probably as a reaction to these protests, made by working class readers, that on October 17 *Népszava* wrote about "the Russian soldier's honesty," adding that "the legend of the Russians' barbarism and cruelty is slowly vanishing" and that "the Russian soldier is a tough yet honest and chivalrous opponent". A similar essay was published at about the same time in the bourgeois radical paper *Huszadik Század*.¹⁴⁵

In the spring of 1915, the peasant stratum's wish for peace was also becoming more pronounced. This was why Nagyatádi stressed in Parliament that the war had been a decision of the upper classes: "We smallholders were of the opinion at the beginning of the war that Serbia was not worth the sacrifice of a single Hungarian soldier's life. But when Mr. Prime Minister introduced the ultimatum addressed to Serbia and the leader of the opposition declared that he was afraid that the government would still retire after all this, and when the entire Hungarian Parliament agreed on the necessity of settling accounts with Serbia, then we smallholders fell silent and let the decisions be made by those who we supposed knew the situation better and knew what needed to be done." His speech left no doubt, however, that he was still fully supporting the war government: "We shall do our best that this fight be victorious and that the energy and enthusiasm we have put into it until now be increased in the future..."¹⁴⁶

Religio, the journal of the Catholic clergy also wrote in the spring of 1915 that the question which was incessantly raised by the religious masses was "why Almighty God, our charitable God, allowed this terrible world war". At the same time, however, the paper refused in the firmest terms the mere thought that the Church might remain neutral in this war: "Only a correspondent unfit for service, of an insidious masonic paper, could ask God, in his blasphemous article, to

¹⁴⁴ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 36-39.

¹⁴⁵ *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 41.; *Huszadik Század*, July-December, 1914, pp. 278-281.

¹⁴⁶ *Képviselőház*, April 26, 1915.

remain neutral".¹⁴⁷ In 1915, two cheap books were published, written for the masses by two leading Catholic prelates, Primate János Csernoch [*Egyház és háború* (The Church and the War)] and the bishop of Székesfehérvár, Ottokár Prohászka [*A háború lelke* (The Soul of War)]. Both urged the readers to support the war of the Monarchy.

Owing to the sobering effect of the military defeats, the first serious losses and the internal difficulties caused by the switch-over to war economy, the pacifist feelings and mood had reached such proportions by the beginning of 1915 that it could no longer be neglected. The Social Democratic Party leadership was compelled to moderate the tone of its papers. This, however, did not essentially affect its pro-war policy. The press propaganda of the party was still brandishing arguments in support of the war, only the tone was different. Instead of "crushing" tsarism, they now spoke of the necessity of "defence" against the Russian invasion. "There is no social democrat," *Népszava* wrote in April 1915, "who would wish to live under Sazonov or Goromikin's domination and the tsar's protection — i.e. the knout. As long as, and when, we are threatened by this danger, we shall... (here the censor erased a few words — J.G.) put up with the horrors of war."¹⁴⁸ "Defending the fatherland" was now the main argument in support of the war. The first theoretical writings justifying the war also date from this period. Ernő Garami's article in the first issue of the journal *Szocializmus* (Socialism) to be published during the war, in May 1915, deserves attention: "The specter of a Russian invasion has forced the socialist parties of Austria and Hungary to consider the defence of the country the most vital of all interests... I am convinced that if we Hungarian socialists did not vote the war expenses against the Russian invasion it was not due to our attitude, but only because we do not have the right to vote."¹⁴⁹ Among the arguments in favour of the "defence of the country", there appeared an idea in the socialist press: to conclude peace on the basis of the *status quo*.

The attitude of the Hungarian social democratic leaders toward working-class movements of other countries and their reaction to steps taken by the parties of neutral countries in favour of union, show hesitation and inclination to pacifism of the Hungarian party leadership, but also its essential immutability.¹⁵⁰ It is also manifest from the articles published in *Népszava* that the party leadership was aware of the anti-war movements in both hostile and allied countries, as well as of the neutral socialists' attempts at mediation and at reviving the International.

¹⁴⁷ *Religio*, May 1915, p. 327.; February 1915, p. 134.

¹⁴⁸ *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 77.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 92–97.

¹⁵⁰ *Jemnitz*, pp. 38–41, 68–69.

In the spring of 1915 János Vanczák went to Switzerland, where he could learn about this first hand.¹⁵¹

Népszava dealt on several occasions with the Italian socialists' pacifist fight for their country's remaining neutral in the war.¹⁵² Since maintaining the neutrality of Italy suited the Monarchy well, these articles met with the censors' approval. *Népszava* also wrote about the peace movements of the hostile countries several times and approvingly, but was tight-lipped about similar movements in the countries on the Monarchy's side. It did, however, write about Liebknecht's attitude, his vote against the war loans on December 2, and about the socialist fraction of the Reichstag condemning him for it.¹⁵³

Népszava also reported, although not with approval, on the first (unsuccessful) attempts at mediation of the neutral (Italian and Swiss) socialist parties,¹⁵⁴ as well as on the new attempts made by the Scandinavian parties.¹⁵⁵ At the meeting of the social democratic parties of the Monarchy held in Vienna in early December 1914, however, the Austrian, Hungarian and Czech parties present refused to attend the conference planned by the Scandinavian parties, and even took a stand against starting a peace action, for it would "give the impression that we are weak".¹⁵⁶

On the eve of the Copenhagen conference two editorials appeared in *Népszava*. These stressed the peoples' desire for peace, but also the "minimum war program of the Monarchy: that the Monarchy must preserve its territorial integrity, and that, since it had identified war with this goal, the war was justified".¹⁵⁷ No parties supporting the war were present at the Copenhagen conference of January 16–17, 1915, which was thus a failure. Following this, both the February conference of the socialist parties of the Entente countries held in London and the April meeting of the Central Powers' socialist parties in Vienna issued a declaration in support of the war and considered the revival of the International premature.¹⁵⁸

Thus, as we have seen, the desire for peace was manifest as early as the spring of 1915. The Social Democratic Party of Hungary also reported on the pacifist trend in its press and at other political forums. *Népszava* dropped its chauvinistic tone, although the basic attitude of the paper was not yet pacifist. Since the social democratic propaganda remained essentially pro-war, the government did not

¹⁵¹ J. Kende: Adalékok az MSzDP nemzetközi kapcsolatainak alakulásához 1914–1917 (On the International Relations of the Hungarian SDP), *Párttörténeti Közlemények*, p. 114.

¹⁵² *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 65–66.

¹⁵³ *Népszava*, December 8, 1914.; February 18, 1915.

¹⁵⁴ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 65–66.

¹⁵⁵ *Népszava*, November 25, 1914.

¹⁵⁶ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 66–67. (Police report)

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 70–74.

¹⁵⁸ *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 76.; *Jemnitz*, pp. 67–80.

obstruct it, but due to their reports on the pacifist mood the papers often appeared with blank spaces due to censoring. For the same reason, the military command no longer considered sending *Népszava* to the front very desirable. Thus the paper's distribution on the front was restricted, but this was done, according to the August 1915 instruction of the common minister of defence "quietly", in order to avoid "complications".¹⁵⁹

THE 1915 SPRING SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, "THE HEROES' RIGHT TO VOTE"

The increasingly pacifist mood and the failures of the military and political leadership made the parties of the opposition change slightly their parliamentary tactics. They took a common stand, but there were already considerable differences between the various tendencies. The parliamentary session held from April 19 to May 26 reflected this very well.

All parties in the House of Representatives supported the new bill on compulsory military service which extended the age limits from the earlier 19 and 42 (Article XX of the Act of 1886) to 18 and 50 (Article XI of the Act of 1915). The spokesmen of the Constitutional Party and the Catholic People's Party supported the bill without reservation. As to the Independence Party, it wished to increase the fighting spirit by extending suffrage as well: "One of the first and most important lessons to be drawn from the war is," said an Independence Party MP, "that Hungarian legislation must cast off the ungenerosity which has characterized its dealing with the question of suffrage until now... equality before the law is a major factor of the fighting morals".¹⁶⁰ In addition to the extension of suffrage, the party supported the economic independence of the country and the setting up of an independent army. The Independence Party, although it continued to support the government's war policy, put forward its earlier claims. The tone of their interventions was in close connection with the change of mood of the country. This was well illustrated by Apponyi's intervention, who gave the following explanation for reviving the party's attitude of opposition: "We must leave no doubt in the voters and in the large masses behind the voters, who have put their confidence in us, ... that when the time of political struggle comes again we will continue our fight for the plenitude of our national life with the same undiminished energy as before".¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 110.

¹⁶⁰ *Képviselet*, April 26, 1915. Speech by Samu Bakonyi.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, May 5.

The oppositionist tone of the Independence Party was meant for the strata which supported it and which worried about the war. The party still took a uniform stand, but while Apponyi was opposing the government for purely tactical reasons, Károlyi was voicing their earlier claims more sharply. The government submitted a proposal that the Austrian regiments which were to have been completed from Galicia and Bukovina, now occupied by the Russians, should be complemented from Hungary. Mihály Károlyi rejected this proposal in the name of the Independence Party as the violation of Hungarian sovereignty, "protesting most firmly against it".¹⁶² On the other hand, Andrassy, and with him, the other opposition parties, supported the government proposal. The entire Independence Party voted against it, but its right wing, led by Apponyi, did not want to deepen the conflict with the government. For the time being they supported Károlyi's action, but were in reality nearer to the more moderate Constitution Party member, Andrassy.

The proposal concerning "the heroes' right to vote" was drawn up by the right wing of the parliamentary opposition. It was intended, on the one hand, to improve the fighting spirit and on the other, to counterbalance the movements demanding universal suffrage which again started to revive. The proposal, which was submitted by the Catholic People's Party MP István Rakovszky, envisaged an amendment to the franchise act, granting the right to vote to all men over 20 who had been in front service during the war. "The acceptance of my proposal," Rakovszky said, "would have a great moral effect ... on the soldiers ... such encouragement would be the mightiest weapon we could give the troops." He drew the line between his proposal and the idea of universal suffrage. "There is no reason for any worry here. If we accept this proposal, the number of those who get the vote will not be too great."¹⁶³

Immediately after Rakovszky, István Tisza rose to speak. With a sophistry that was often to be derided later, and constantly interrupted by the shouts of the opposition, he asked the House to refuse to discuss the proposal. He said that "impartial analysis" had led him to conclude that "the right to vote is not a reward". Thus, in granting it, "the point of view of public interest is decisive... The idea of granting the soldiers the vote leads to universal suffrage... I consider the introduction of universal suffrage in Hungary a national disaster."¹⁶⁴ In the midst of the indignant clamouring of the opposition the government majority rejected the discussion of the proposal. The greatest majority of the opposition, like the prime minister, did not want to introduce universal suffrage, but thought

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, April 26.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, April 29.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

that with a view to the mood prevailing in the country, some concession had to be granted.

Tisza's formal refusal to discuss the proposal infuriated the more moderate wing of the opposition, which was evident in the budget debate that took place in the next few days. According to a long-established custom, the discussion of the finance bill was regarded in Parliament as a vote of confidence. The opposition voted against the proposal. The leaders of the Constitution Party and the Catholic People's Party, as well as the Independence Party leader Apponyi, gave as a reason, politely apologizing, the mood of their electors and of the country in general. Mihály Károlyi, however, delivered an impassioned speech. Conveying the changed attitude of the masses outside Parliament, and understanding the importance of the change, he demanded that the people's democratic rights be extended: "Mr. Prime Minister does not understand, that great developments ... are taking place ... a state which does not understand the spirit of the age, a state which does not understand that it is faced with new people and new ideas, that new ideals have to be created, and that it can no longer continue to march on the old track, will not be able to survive." He demanded that the government, and especially Tisza, resign for the sake of the war, since, as he said, the prime minister's formal opposition to the necessary internal changes reduced the intensity of the war effort.¹⁶⁵

In the spring of 1915, the opposition did not take a pacifist stand in Parliament. With the "heroes' right to vote" and the "national program" they wanted to find an outler for the pacifist mood. It was also because of the lack of success in the war that they wanted the Hungarian government to resign. In the following weeks, as a consequence of the Italian developments, the demand that the government, or at least Tisza, should resign became more concrete and expressed the wish of the entire opposition.

In the spring of 1915 Mihály Károlyi took a more critical stand than the other leaders of the opposition, but this attitude did not essentially differ from the others'. He did not yet speak out against the war; however, it would be only about six months later that he would suggest a peace initiative. In his memoirs, he writes the following about his policy at the time: "The main direction ... of my policy at the end of 1914 was that Hungary should not agree to the great financial and human sacrifices they demanded of her without some compensation in the social and national fields".¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, May 3, 1915.

¹⁶⁶ *Károlyi*, p. 154.

The defeats suffered during the Carpathian winter campaign forced the leaders of the Monarchy, Tisza and Conrad as well, to try to reach an agreement with Italy by making territorial concessions. From the end of February on, when the second offensive also proved to be a failure, the Germans were also urging for this. To make the distressing step easier for the Monarchy they promised some border adjustments in Silesia in exchange. On February 27 the Prussian council of ministers even passed a resolution to this effect.¹⁶⁷

The foreign minister, Burián, noted in his diary the new wave of German pressure on March 1: "Tschirschky informs us of the new German pressure, which is unfortunately justified this time". Two days later he wrote: "The Italian claim now seems impossible to reject, because the situation on the front is bad".¹⁶⁸

Understandably, Tisza was greatly worried in these days. He had to consider the grave consequences of the failure of the winter campaign. "Danger of an Italian-Romanian-Russian pact," he noted on March 3.¹⁶⁹ But the stake was even higher: the attack on the Dardanelles had begun, and if it were to be successful, it could mean Greece starting hostile action and Bulgarian staying away from the war. The entire diplomatic and military situation in the Balkans had become highly dangerous for the Monarchy, since even the Serb army might get reinforcement and start to attack. The Hungarian prime minister thought the solution was to give way to the Italians, but by no means to the Romanians. On March 5 he wrote to Burián: "If we only have to satisfy Italy, and only yield Trentino, that will be a blow to us, but if we have to yield more and especially if we have to give in to Romania, that will be disaster".¹⁷⁰

On March 5 the foreign minister and the two prime ministers agreed upon the territorial offer they would make, to which the sovereign consented on the next day.¹⁷¹ On March 8 a common cabinet meeting was held. They decided to surrender Trentino, but to leave execution until after the war.¹⁷² On the next day, Burián submitted the proposal to the Italian government. After the serious losses of the Monarchy, the Italian government was no longer satisfied by the moderate offer of the Monarchy and the proposed delay of execution. On March 29 they asked for the whole of South Tirol, the Adriatic coast from the Italian border to Trieste,

¹⁶⁷ E. Zechlin: Das „schlesische Angebot“ und die italienische Kriegsgefahr 1915, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, Stuttgart 1963, p. 633.

¹⁶⁸ REZsL Burián, item 84, Diary 1915.

¹⁶⁹ Tisza, Vol. III, p. 143.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁷¹ REZsL Burián, item 84, Diary 1915.

¹⁷² *Protokolle*, pp. 216-232.

and several Dalmatian islands. The leaders of the Monarchy found this too much.¹⁷³ Later, however, they consented to a frontier readjustment at the Isonzo. But this was not enough any longer: Italian politics had taken a different course in the meantime.

In April, the Italian government negotiated in London with the representatives of the Entente governments. The negotiations resulted in a treaty, which was signed on April 26. According to the Treaty of London Italy would enter the war within a month. In return, the British, French, and Russian governments recognized Italy's right to the whole of South Tirol as far as the Brenner, Trieste and its environs, Gorizia and Istria (§ 4), to the northern part of Dalmatia and the majority of the Dalmatian islands (§ 5), as well as to Valona and the island of Saseno (§ 6). The treaty recognized Italy's protectorate over Albania (§ 7) and the Dodecanese islands, which Italy had partly acquired from Turkey in 1911. Italy was also promised a share from the partitioning of Turkey as well as from the colonies of Germany.¹⁷⁴

From mid-April on Tisza was certain that Italian action was imminent. He supposed that Romania, too, would simultaneously enter the war. It was obvious to him that the war could not be won in such circumstances. Now his program was defensive fighting and the conclusion of peace. On April 16 he wrote a letter to Conrad suggesting that defensive fighting be carried on both on the Russian and the French fronts, because in this way the forces thus released would be able to fend off the Italian and Romanian attacks. Thus the Central Powers would be able to firmly defend themselves. Fighting simultaneously on four fronts, however, was impossible, therefore peace had to be concluded. He spoke about his worries more openly in the letter he wrote to Burián on April 17: "I am not a nervous sort of person, but now I am forced to feel the full weight of the moment. It is the existence of the Monarchy in the strictest sense which is at stake."¹⁷⁵ In his answer of April 23 Conrad evaded discussing the military aspects of the question. This made Tisza even more worried and as a consequence he once more raised the question of concluding peace in the letter he wrote to Burián on April 27: "If we see that we cannot come to an agreement with the Italians, we should make a peace proposal to the Entente before they start an attack". The proposal could be made by the intermediary of the king of Denmark or of Spain. Since Conrad did not give a decisive answer to the question, Tisza drew up a memorandum on May 1, which he sent to the foreign minister, the chief of the staff, and the

¹⁷³ Tisza also shared this view. *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 226–227.

¹⁷⁴ The secret agreement of London was first published by *Izvestia* on February 28, 1917. Its text can be found in various publications, e. g.: *Czernin*, pp. 307–311.

¹⁷⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 244–245, 248.

German government. In this he again proposed that all dispensable forces (German forces, too) should be withdrawn from the Russian and French fronts for the defence of the Italian and Romanian borders of the Monarchy.¹⁷⁶ This idea had never occurred to the German military and political leaders. Like at the beginning of the July crisis, the Hungarian prime minister was mainly worried about the grave consequences of a possible Romanian offensive. As at that time he had wished to delay the war for this reason, now he wanted to settle for a defensive fight and even to conclude peace. It becomes clear from his letter of May 5 to Burián that even in the intensification of the Italian issue he saw the danger of a Romanian attack: "An Italian and Romanian attack would be terribly dangerous. Please take the necessary military precautions for a possible Romanian attack as well. From a general point of view, too, this is even more important than the defence of the Italian border. A Romanian invasion would cut off our vital forces more quickly than an Italian one. And consider also the effect on the Balkans."¹⁷⁷

On May 3 the Italian government withdrew from the Triple Alliance. They did not yet declare war, but the Central Powers, who knew nothing of the Treaty of London, considered the withdrawal an introduction to a declaration of war. In early May there was a turn in the fortunes of war with the Gorlice breakthrough, but it was too late; it had no effect on Italy. The decision made in Vienna on May 4 to negotiate with Italy about meeting all the Italian claims was in vain. On May 9 an offer was made which went much further than all previous ones, but it could not change Italy's attitude.¹⁷⁸ The Germans put the blame for the diplomatic failure on the Monarchy, while the Austrians reproached the Germans for having encouraged the Italian claims. All this caused considerable friction within the central alliance. The Germans and the Austro-Hungarian press interpreted the Italian events in such different ways that the common foreign minister had to ask the government of the Monarchy not to let the papers publish the articles of the German newspapers, "as in this question the Germans have taken a stand different from ours". On May 19 the responsible department of the Hungarian prime minister's office even prohibited the publication in full of the speech which the German chancellor delivered on the subject: "The text of the German Imperial Chancellor's speech concerning the Italian issue may only be published as it has appeared in today's papers in the capital. The publication of further details concerning the speech is to be avoided even if they should appear in German papers."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 255, 260, 268-272.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

¹⁷⁸ *Valiani*, p. 811.; *May*, Vol. I, p. 194.

¹⁷⁹ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 154.

April 1915 constituted the lowest ebb yet in the war. Two months later, when the Gorlice breakthrough at last brought success on the eastern front, Tisza seemed relieved when he looked back on this period in his letter to the chairman of the House: "If they (i.e. the Italians and after them the Romanians — J. G.) had attacked in April, we would have been threatened from all directions at once".¹⁸⁰

The Hungarian parliamentary opposition was also worried in April and May. They had already come into conflict with the government in the question of the "heroes' right to vote", and now they were blaming the foreign policy management and especially Tisza for the Italian developments. When Italy denounced the Triple Alliance, they interpellated and asked for explanations, which the prime minister refused to give: "I cannot make any binding statement", he answered to their urging.¹⁸¹ For the opposition the neutrality of Italy and Romania were not linked so closely to each other as for Tisza. They also opposed the surrender of Hungarian territories, but thought at the same time that concessions had to be made to Italy and blamed the government for realizing this too late. It was especially the Independence Party which stressed the importance of Italo-Hungarian friendship. One of their representatives established contact with the Italian foreign minister, to which the government tacitly agreed.¹⁸² Andrassy was also for making concessions. In his interpellation of May 17 he set himself against the idea that the territorial concessions which had been promised to Italy should only be considered a momentary tactical step. He himself said that he intended them to constitute "the firm basis of a lasting friendship".

The opposition, which had already expressed its reservations concerning the domestic policy of the government, now proposed (not openly, though) the government's resignation. They suggested forming a "concentration cabinet" which would unite all political forces with a view to achieving more success in the war and surmounting the internal and external difficulties. On May 18 the leaders of the opposition, Apponyi, Károlyi, and Batthyány from the Independence Party, Rakovszky and Aladár Zichy from the Catholic People's Party, and Vázsonyi from the Democratic Party, held a meeting in Andrassy's home. In his memoirs, Batthyány wrote about the project they elaborated: "A government should be formed from all parties represented in Parliament. Count István Tisza would naturally be a member of the government as the leader of the parliamentary majority. For prime minister, however, we recommended choosing a statesman who had not been so involved in war politics as István Tisza".¹⁸³ They discussed their

¹⁸⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 1.

¹⁸¹ *Képviselőház*, May 12, 1915.

¹⁸² *Károlyi*, pp. 163–168. (Faith, pp. 71–73.); *Batthyány*, Vol. I, pp. 125–127.

¹⁸³ *Batthyány*, Vol. I, pp. 128–129.

plan with the prime minister, and then with the king. Tisza, backed by the sovereign, was willing to admit members of the opposition in the government, but insisted on remaining prime minister. The opposition could not accept this solution.¹⁸⁴

On May 23 the Italian government declared war on the Monarchy. (It only entered the war against Germany in August 1916.) At the moment of the declaration of war, the Monarchy had 128 battalions stationed at the Italian border, most of which were militia-type units. After the declaration of war, the VIIth Army Corps was transferred there, and later the 5th Army as well.

In the Hungarian Parliament the prime minister announced the latest developments on May 26. The opposition, which formerly criticized the government, now fell silent. They assured the government of their support in the war against the new enemy as well. The leaders of the Independence Party, Apponyi and Károlyi, also spoke to this effect. This strengthened the position of Tisza's government. At the same time, the Károlyi wing of the Independence Party continued to demand the resignation of the government even after Italy's entry into the war, but their action had lost its momentum. In their memorandum to the foreign minister they explained that the government's departure would perhaps prevent Romania from intervening.¹⁸⁵

Romania had not yet followed the example of Italy, which was due to several factors. At the beginning of the war, in September and also in October, Russia had urged Romania to enter the war, because this would have considerably hindered the Monarchy in disturbing the mobilization and deployment of the Russian forces. As it appears from the instructions received by Ambassador Sazonov, the Russians wanted to extend the left wing of the Russian army offensive by an attack of the Romanian troops in Bukovina and Transylvania.¹⁸⁶ By tying down a division or two of the defence forces of the Monarchy, the Romanians might perhaps have helped the Russian army on the offensive to achieve a quick victory. In the summer of 1915, however, the military considerations were already completely different. Extending the frontline would not suit the retreating Russian army, and the gain in military strength due to the Romanian army would not have been in proportion with the extension of the frontline. The Russian army now wanted to prepare for defensive war on a shorter frontline.

¹⁸⁴ Tisza's letter to Apponyi see *Tisza*, Vol. III, p. 309. Apponyi's refusal see *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 2.

¹⁸⁵ *Batthyány*, Vol. I, pp. 125-127.

¹⁸⁶ *Internac. Bez.*, Series II, Vol. 6/1, pp. 201, 207, 216.

While a great number of basic sources have already revealed and elaborated the policy of the Entente towards Germany, the sources concerning the development of the British and French war aims towards the Monarchy have been open only a short time. There are only a few elaborations as well. Arthur May, history professor at the University of Rochester, who has dealt with the subject in the 60's was right when he wrote: "Any attempts therefore, to reconstruct official Entente currents of thought on the Habsburg Monarchy can only be of a tantalizing tentative character".¹⁸⁷

In the autumn of 1914 it seemed obvious to the leading political circles of the Entente that the beginning of the war had been successful, and victory did not seem too distant either. The first diplomatic contacts for co-ordinating the war aims began between the British, French, and Russian governments in September.

The talks were preceded by an agreement signed on September 5, in which all three Entente governments committed themselves not to conclude separate peace and to determine together the terms of peace to be concluded with the Central Powers. This agreement inspired the Entente governments to expose their views and to try to agree on the aims they wanted to achieve in the war. The first step was made by Sazonov, the tsar's foreign minister, less than ten days after the agreement had been concluded. On September 14 he unofficially exposed the war aims of Russia concerning Germany and the Monarchy to the French and British ambassadors (Paléologue and Buchanan, respectively) in Petrograd. Later, when Turkey entered the war, he completed his argumentation with the Russian aims concerning Turkey. The answer the French and British governments gave him (also unofficially) threw light on the French and British war aims.¹⁸⁸

The British government was primarily concerned with strengthening and extending Great Britain's colonial monopoly. They wanted to force Germany back to the continent, getting the greatest share of her colonies as well as a part of Turkey. In order to preserve their colonial monopoly they favoured a balance among the continental powers, and were thus partisans of the European *status quo*. They wanted a Germany restricted to the continent, yet not too weak, so that she be able to counterbalance France, therefore they wished to restrict France's claims to the Rhineland. For the same reason they did not want the Habsburg Monarchy to become too weak either, so that it should counterbalance tsarist Russia in Europe. Leading British politicians often maintained in public that they were defending the rights and wishing the autonomy of small nations. This

¹⁸⁷ May, Vol. I, pp. 250-252.

¹⁸⁸ *Internac. Bez.*, Series II, Vol. 6/1, pp. 167, 193-194, 243-244, 251, 253-254, 293, 304-305.

was the central thought of Prime Minister Asquith's speech of November 9, 1914 as well (the "Guildhall speech"). It was only of Belgium and Serbia that they spoke in a concrete and unambiguous form, and, more cautiously, of Polish unity and autonomy.¹⁸⁹ Beyond this, only very vague statements were made concerning the Monarchy. A few leading statesmen were already envisaging the separation of territories other than the Polish-inhabited ones, which would not however jeopardize the existence of the Monarchy. In the first year of the war it was perhaps Churchill, then first lord of the admiralty who went furthest when speaking of the liberation of nations living in the Habsburg prison. He was concretely thinking of the separation of regions inhabited by Poles, Ukrainians, South Slavs, and Italians, but at the same time he rejected the idea of Czechoslovak independence, which was linked to the complete dismembering of the Monarchy.¹⁹⁰

France also wanted to increase the number of her colonies through the partition of Turkey and the German colonies, but it was evident that she could only come second in this race behind England. Therefore, her main target was the continent and it was in this way that she wished to obtain the leading role. France wanted not only to deprive Germany of her colonies and fleet as Britain did, but also to weaken her as much as possible. The French wanted to obtain or to take under their influence territories inhabited by Germans as far as the Rhine. In the discussion he had with the tsar on November 21, 1914, the French ambassador to Russia mentioned that France could not content herself with regaining possession of Alsace-Lorraine, but must extend her hegemony in the Rhineland.¹⁹¹ France wanted a peace which would make it impossible for Germany to pursue a hegemonist policy on the continent. In Eastern Europe, the aims of France were at that time essentially the same as those of Britain, i.e. that Austria-Hungary should not become too weak, so that it could continue to counteract the European plans of Russia. Moreover, in the first year of the war, it was mainly French politicians who wanted to detach Austria-Hungary from Germany with a separate peace.¹⁹² It was with regret that Izvolsky, the Russian ambassador in Paris who wanted to make the Russian war aims concerning the Monarchy accepted, reported to his government on October 30 that French Foreign Minister Delcassé was speaking in very vague and elusive terms about the war aims regarding the Monarchy: "Delcassé's declarations concerning the future of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy are particularly hesitant".¹⁹³ Among the French politicians it was perhaps Briand, the Minister of Justice who went the furthest in the first

¹⁸⁹ *Fest*, pp. 20-21.

¹⁹⁰ *May*, Vol. I, pp. 251-252.

¹⁹¹ *Renouvin*, p. 132.

¹⁹² *Fest*, p. 25.

¹⁹³ *Internac. Bez.*, Series II, Vol. 6/1, p. 305.

year of the war as concerned the Monarchy. In late 1914 he was of the opinion that it was possible to end the war quickly if the Anglo-French coalition attacked the Monarchy in the Balkans and induced the Slav peoples to revolt. This idea obviously took into account the possibility of the disintegration of the Monarchy. Later, after October 1915, as prime minister and foreign minister he would insist on the freedom of the Southern Slav peoples as one of the war aims of France. Furthermore, he was the first statesman of the Entente to receive Beneš, who represented the idea of Czechoslovak independence and thus of the break-up of the Monarchy, without, however, committing himself to that policy.¹⁹⁴

The Russian government declared themselves disinterested in the repartition of the German colonies, since the latter did not interfere with their Asian sphere of interest. In addition they showed no interest regarding the western border of Germany.¹⁹⁵ On the other hand, they wanted to be the first to get their share of Turkey, and put in a claim for the Dardanelles and Constantinople. In the west they wished to extend the frontier of the Russian empire by acquiring the Polish territories belonging to Germany and Austria-Hungary. They planned to create a unified Polish province within the Russian empire. In his proclamation of August 15, 1914, the tsar promised the Poles "self-determination", after a victorious war. Some wanted to fulfil this promise by granting the Poles autonomy, the official decision, however, was put off until after the war.¹⁹⁶ The tsar's government wanted to enlarge Serbia considerably by annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Northern Albania to it. As to Transylvania, they thought that Hungary and Romania should come to an agreement. By thus increasing the weight of the Slav element within the weakened Monarchy, with its territory also reduced, they wanted to transform Austria-Hungary into an Austrian-Czechoslovak-Hungarian tripartite state.¹⁹⁷

On December 21 and 28, 1914, Serb Prime Minister Pašić officially outlined his country's territorial claims to the Russian government: the acquisition from the Dual Monarchy of all territories inhabited by the "Serb-Croatian people", including a wide southern zone to be cut off from Hungary, necessary also for the defence of Belgrade, as well as Dalmatia and Istria. Part of the latter might be ceded to Italy if she entered the war immediately on the Entente side. After the repulse of the second Austro-Hungarian offensive including the recapture of Belgrade, in December 1914 the prime minister declared the liberation and union of the oppressed Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes to be the main target of the war.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ *May*, Vol. I, p. 260.

¹⁹⁵ *Renouvin*, pp. 132-133.

¹⁹⁶ *Szokolai*, p. 18.

¹⁹⁷ *Internac. Bez.*, Series II, Vol. 6/1, p. 194.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 274-275.; *May*, Vol. I, p. 275.; *Zeman, Diplomatic*, pp. 15-18.

Great Britain and France tried to restrain tsarist Russia's East-European and Balkanic plans. In March 1915 Great Britain bound herself to support the Russian claims concerning the Straits, which was a condition of the attack at Gallipoli, but she had another reason, too, to encourage Italy and Romania to enter the war: to counteract a possible Russian invasion in the Balkans. Britain and France wished that not only Russia and Serbia, in close co-operation with her, should stand to gain by weakening the Monarchy, but Romania and Italy should also become more powerful. In this way the balance of power could be maintained against Russia in Eastern Europe and in the Balkans. Italy's entry into the war following the Treaty of London meant the victory of the Anglo-French policy over the Russian one, since the treaty gave part of the territories which Russia intended to annex to Serbia (Dalmatia, Albania) and to Italy. It was for similar reasons that Britain and France were urging Romania's entry into the war in the spring of 1915. They also prompted Greece to enter, one of the main reasons being that they wanted to counteract the Russian claims to the regions of the Straits by Greek demands.

THE EMIGRÉS AND THE ENTENTE

As we have seen, freedom for the dependent nations had been included in the Entente politicians' vocabulary from the beginning. They had always been aware that it would be necessary to detach certain territories from the Monarchy on the basis of national principle. In certain respects, this became an international agreement in the Treaty of London concluded in April 1915. At the same time, Great Britain and France wanted to preserve the Habsburg Monarchy as an adversary of Russia. The leading Russian politicians aimed at considerably weakening the Monarchy, but they also took care not to force the disintegration of the entire political system. It was of decisive importance from this point of view that in the early years of the war not even the most far-fetched plans of the official circles envisaged Czechoslovak independence, since it meant the complete disintegration of the former state. "Arguably," — wrote May, — "Austria-Hungary could have been deprived of Galicia and other peripheral areas and still have remained a considerable factor in the high politics of Europe. But if Bohemia and the Hungarian counties of Slovak habitation were lost the Monarchy would cease to count for much, and therein lies the supreme importance of the Czechoslovak question and Entente attitudes on it."¹⁹⁹

The Entente Powers supported the politicians who had emigrated from the Monarchy, because by helping them they could weaken the enemy and sustain

¹⁹⁹ *May*, Vol. I, pp. 262-263.

public opinion in their own countries towards their own war aims. The Entente and the emigré politicians found a common goal primarily in their desire for the military defeat of the Monarchy. The emigré politicians, however, desired not only the military defeat of the Monarchy, but the disintegration of its entire political system and the creation of new states in Central and South-Eastern Europe. In this respect, however, the aims of the emigrés and of the Entente did not agree in the early years of the war. Masaryk and Beneš, who were deputies at the Czech provincial diet and at the Reichsrat of Vienna, emigrated and started to spread propaganda for an independent Czechoslovak state. They wanted the Entente Powers to include this claim among their war aims, but in the first years of the war their attempt was unsuccessful. Although Masaryk and Beneš oriented themselves towards the western powers of the Entente (in February 1916 the Czechoslovak National Council was established in Paris) the British and French official circles at first rejected the far-reaching plans of the Czech emigrés. The Russian government favoured the union of Czechs and Slovaks, but considered it more expedient if Czechoslovakia remained within the Habsburg Monarchy transformed on a trialist basis. In that event the tsar's policy might exert an influence on the Monarchy through its Slav member-state. "The Allies", Masaryk wrote in his memoirs, "hesitated to bind themselves to break up Austria-Hungary entirely or to promise freedom to the Austro-Hungarian peoples."²⁰⁰ The majority of the Czech politicians at home were also in favour of an austrophil policy, and wished to attain their national goals within the Monarchy, through the transformation of it into a federal state.

In the beginning, the creation of an independent state uniting the Southern Slav peoples was not among the aims of the Entente Powers. Russian policy wanted a strong Serbia, but a Serbia which would be obliged to depend on Russia. A state uniting all the South Slav nations would have constituted too strong and too independent a formation to be expected to orient itself towards Russia alone. British and French policy, however, did not wish Serbia relying primarily on Russia to become too strong either, therefore they envisaged that Italy should also acquire some Slav territories in the Balkans. When considering how to counterbalance Serbia, and also Russia, the western Entente Powers even thought of strengthening Croatia, and perhaps giving it independence. All this was reflected in the Treaty of London.

In these months the idea of an independent South Slav state, one that would unite not only the Serbs, was beginning to take shape independently of the plans of the Entente Powers. A partisan of this idea was Supilo, a member of the Zagreb provincial diet, who emigrated at the outbreak of the war. The idea of the South

²⁰⁰ Th. G. Masaryk: *The making of a State*, London 1927, p. 127.

Slav peoples' federation was advocated by Trumbić, a member of the Dalmatian provincial diet and of the Vienna Reichsrat, who had emigrated from Dalmatia, and by the famous sculptor Ivan Meštrović, who had also chosen emigration. Their policy did not correspond to that of the majority of Croatian politicians at home, who, like the Czech politicians, were partisans of an Austrophil federalist policy. The South Slav emigrés first gathered in Italy. After Italy's entry into the war, since in the Treaty of London Rome claimed certain Southern Slav regions of the Monarchy, there was growing disagreement between the South Slav emigrés and the Italian government. London became the centre of the South Slav emigrés, who in May 1915 set up the Yugoslav Committee headed by Trumbić.²⁰¹ A few Serb politicians supported the aspirations for a Southern Slav federation, but most of them at that time preferred the creation of a centralized Great Serb state, the idea of which was represented by Pašić. It was only from the end of 1915 on, when they themselves were also forced to emigrate after the occupation of Serbia, that the Serb politicians tended to adopt the idea of a Yugoslav state. There were serious differences even among those politicians who wished to establish an independent state of the South Slav peoples. Supilo intended the Croatian bourgeoisie to play the leading role, while the Serb politicians wanted Serbia to dominate.

The plans of Czechoslovak independence and of South Slav union advocated by the emigrés found partisans among the influential British and French political writers, although the leading Entente politicians were not yet supporting them. In Britain, these ideas were particularly propagated by the excellent journalist Wickham Steed and historian and political writer Seton-Watson, in France, by the journalists of *Le Temps* and *Le Matin*, as well as Auguste Gauvain, the "general of the pen", and the influential Sorbonne professor Ernest Denis.²⁰²

For the time being there was no possibility to realize the long-term plans of either the Entente circles or the emigrés. After the spring of 1915, the fortunes of the war temporarily favoured the Central Powers.

THE BALANCE OF THE FIRST YEAR

The first year of the war, more exactly the first ten months, were full of failures for the Central Powers. The failures on land were accompanied by defeat on the seas, since the naval superiority of the Entente was indisputable. At the beginning of the war the naval forces of the Entente had a tonnage of three million (Great

²⁰¹ Mamatey, p. 25.

²⁰² H. Hanak: *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary During the First World War*, London 1962, pp. 62-134.; *May*, Vol. I, pp. 245-247.

Britain two million, France 670,000, Russia 334,000), while the tonnage of the Central Powers only amounted to 1.2 million (Germany 965,000, Austria-Hungary 235,000).²⁰³ The Central Powers were under almost complete sea blockade and could only rely on their continental resources. The blockade against the Monarchy was placed in the Straits of Otranto, preventing its vessels going out onto the Mediterranean. However, they could sail in relative safety along the Monarchy's own shores and among the Dalmatian islands. The blockade was of extreme importance, since the planned quick victory did not come and the Central Powers had to face a long war. In a protracting war the amount of exploitable reserves at their disposal could become decisive.

In the first year of the war the Entente Powers achieved their purpose only to some extent: they prevented the invasion of France and deployed their forces, thus making it possible to exploit their reserves, and obliged the Central Powers to wage war simultaneously on three fronts. Nothing was decided, however. The possibilities were still so far-reaching on both sides that the outcome of the war remained an open question.

In the first year of the war the countries of the Central Powers suffered strategic defeats, but from the point of view of further warfare the importance of these was minor for Germany, but major for the Monarchy. The German army did not reach its strategic purpose, the invasion of France; it had, however, occupied Belgium and the northern part of France. The failure of the strategic plan was concealed by several strategic successes and a victorious advance, therefore the effect on the troops and the hinterland was limited. On the eastern front it could also be considered an achievement that the operations took place not in Germany but in a territory which had belonged to Russia before the war. The Germans won several battles and took a great number of POWs. If we add to all this that it was the German army and the German hinterland which were the best prepared for the war, we can understand that even after the first year of the war Germany represented the greatest, and a practically intact, military force among the belligerent countries.

The balance was quite different for the Monarchy after the first great clashes. The Austro-Hungarian army not only did not attain the strategic purpose, but suffered serious military defeats on both fronts. Almost half of its forces which were mobilized originally (i.e. of its best forces) had been destroyed. The number of casualties and captives exceeded two million.²⁰⁴ The serious losses and defeats had an increased effect on the troops and the country owing to the multi-national composition of the Monarchy. The morale of the troops recruited among the

²⁰³ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, p. 812.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

ethnic groups fell considerably under the influence of the defeats. In addition, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece, neutral at the beginning, made their attitude depend on the turn of military operations, and Italy had actually entered the war. Thus, the failures and defeats suffered by the Monarchy had grave political consequences, and considerable economic problems also arose.

Already in the summer of 1915 the Hungarian cabinet judged the financial and economic burdens created by the war to be heavy. At the cabinet meeting of June 5 the minister of finance deemed it necessary that the economic burdens of the war "should be discussed at a common ministerial conference, and even, if necessary, in the crown council under the presidency of His Imperial and Apostolic Majesty... The joint ministerial conference should decide, within the limits of reason and taking into consideration our military and economic strength, how long we can remain at war... We think it undeniable that until now, from the economic and financial points of view, the war has weighed much more on the two countries of the Monarchy than on any of the belligerent countries, because, compared to our economic strength our military efforts are much more considerable than those of the other belligerents."²⁰⁵

On June 18, however, at the common cabinet meeting the military leaders demanded an amount of fresh logistics for the army which exceeded by far those existing. Tisza spoke of the difficulties this entailed, that "he agrees with Baron Conrad that a strong army is of the greatest importance for the state, but even the most indispensable costs will create financial problems". "The King's Hungarian Prime Minister states," we can read in the minutes, "that considering the reserves in men and supplies, the war can safely be continued for eight months at the present extent."²⁰⁶

The violent battles were destroying the strength of the enemy too. It was only at the cost of extremely heavy losses that the Russian and Serb armies won their victories over the Monarchy. Therefore, they were not sufficiently prepared to ward off another powerful offensive after the first year of the war. The Monarchy, on the other hand, still had reserves, and could hope for a change in the fortunes of war by using these reserves together with the support of the still highly effective army of its German ally.

In order to prepare the new offensives of the Monarchy, first of all the huge losses in life had to be replaced. At its meeting held on February 20, 1915, the Hungarian government discussed the question of the urgent filling of the diminished ranks of the army. "The replacement needed amounts of 175 per cent. To put it in figures, this means that only for the infantry we have already sent approximate-

²⁰⁵ *Min. tan. jkv*, June 5, 1915, p. 147.

²⁰⁶ *Protokolle*, pp. 247-361.

ly 1,200,000 men to the frontline as replacements." The cabinet meeting consented to the new replacements as well as to sending troops from Hungary to complete certain Cisleithanian regiments.²⁰⁷ This decision was confirmed by legislation (Article XII of the Act of 1915). The main reason given was that soldiers had to be recruited to a greater extent from among the peasants than from the industrial population. Since Austria was an industrially more developed country, this fact was reflected in the disproportions of recruitment. It is true that manpower was less indispensable in the villages, since in the beginning there was redundancy there. Also, peasant labour was easier to replace by prisoners of war and compulsory labour than industrial workers, which needed more qualification and experience. Thus, the number of troops levied by Hungary had always been slightly higher than the troops raised by Austria. Later, owing to the replacements, the disproportion only grew. According to the combined casualty lists drawn up before March 1915, the proportion of soldiers from Hungary among the casualties corresponded on the whole to the proportion of the population.²⁰⁸ A few months later, however, Tisza also called attention at a cabinet meeting to "the great disproportion, which is becoming more and more apparent, between Austria and Hungary regarding the burdens of war to be carried". But he agreed to the new replacements which would further increase the disproportion.²⁰⁹

During the whole war, the Monarchy raised approximately 8 million troops, 43.43 per cent of which were from Hungary, while the population of Hungary constituted 40.95 per cent of the entire population of the Monarchy. 42.06 per cent of the dead, 40.43 per cent of the wounded and 42.26 per cent of the captives had been recruited in Hungary.²¹⁰

One consequence of the increasing replacements was that the ethnic groups began to be mixed within the various regiments. According to the previous system each regiment was recruited in a specific area, as a consequence of which the various regiments were relatively homogeneous from the ethnic point of view. Naturally, in the regiments recruited from regions inhabited by several nationalities there had always been a mixture of ethnic groups, but this had been an exception at first. Since the majority of the Czech regiments were considered unreliable after the Carpathian fights, the high command started the mixing with these by interchanging the reserve battalions of the Czech and Hungarian regiments of the common army. This, however, caused problems already during the training of the replacement troops. The training was directed by high-ranking Hungarian

²⁰⁷ *Min. tan. jkv*, February 20, 1915, p. 125.

²⁰⁸ The report of the director of the Statistical Office to the prime minister, *OL K 467*, 1915.

²⁰⁹ *Min. tan. jkv*, September 24, 1915, p. 180.

²¹⁰ *Gratz-Schüller*, pp. 153, 161, 163, 164.; *Józsa*, pp. 35-36.

officers in the Czech towns and by high-ranking Czech officers in the Hungarian towns. On April 22 Tisza wrote to the minister of national defence that because of this, "lesser of greater incidents succeeded one another". On July 2 and 13 he even wrote to the common minister of war about this matter.²¹¹ Mixing, however, continued to be increasingly practised, because regiments recruited from other nationalities were also declared unreliable. After the winter campaign, the Romanian replacement troops had also become unreliable.²¹² By early 1917 the mixing of ethnic groups within the regiments had become so extensive that the composition of the units, which had originally been homogeneous from the ethnic point of view, was impossible to determine.²¹³

The mixing of the nationalities, which later continued within the battalions and was practised down to the level of companies and squadrons, proved to be a double-edged weapon. The original purpose was to consolidate the unreliable units, but the effect was rather the opposite. Archduke Joseph wrote in his diary: "It is no good to mix all the nationalities in the troops: the men do not understand one another, they do not even understand what their officers are saying, they cannot talk to anybody and, left to themselves, they are only rapt in their own thoughts amidst all the horrors and dangers of the war. In this way they surrender to vice and become traitors. They corrupt the good regiments... By mixing Hungarians among the 'unreliable' troops, these do not become better or more reliable... And thus the AOK makes anarchists from them, too."²¹⁴

The unsolved problem of the nationalities could not be kept out of the army. "The nationality problems which were not solved outside the army could not be solved inside it either."²¹⁵

²¹¹ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 256-257; Vol. IV, pp. 3-4, 16.

²¹² *Cramon*, p. 9.

²¹³ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 141.

²¹⁴ *József*, Vol. 4, pp. 183-184.

²¹⁵ *Rothenberg*, *op. cit.* (note 17), p. 87.

THE YEAR OF SUCCESSES

Two strategic tendencies emerged within the Entente high command about how to achieve further successes. The partisans of the first tendency wanted to decide the war by starting a large-scale offensive on the western front, while the others were in favour of a general offensive to be launched on several fronts simultaneously. For the latter, a possibility had to be found for the western Entente countries to send supplies to the ill-equipped Russian army and also for Russian troops and food to be sent to reinforce the western front. The connecting routes, however, were cut off. Opening them was the purpose of the offensive which aimed at occupying the Turkish Straits, whose idea had come from and was encouraged by Kitchener, the British secretary of state for war, and Churchill, the first lord of the admiralty.²¹⁶ In case of success, the attack could result, in addition to linking the western and eastern forces of the Entente, in the elimination of Turkey, the maintenance of Bulgaria's neutrality, and the reinforcement of the Serbian front. The British and French fleet started the attack by bombing, then in 1915 they landed at the mouths of the Straits, in the Gallipoli peninsula. Although the number of the expeditionary force had been raised to 200,000, they were unable to penetrate further. Thus, no connection could be established between the eastern and western fronts which would have made it possible to transport armaments or troops from one front to the other. The northern route, around the Scandinavian peninsula, could not supplant the southern one, and was also highly dangerous due to German submarines. The interpretations of the failure of the Gallipoli campaign by the Entente historians were contradictory. According to some, it had been doomed to failure from the outset, since it drew away the forces from the more important western front, while others were of the opinion that it could have been successful if greater force had been used. One thing is certain: the failure at Gallipoli made the fortunes of war turn.

²¹⁶ *Concise*, p. 196.

The tsar's army won the military victories of the first year at the price of great losses. It was easier for the huge empire to make up for the loss in men than for the material losses. Among all the great powers, the supply routes of the Russian army were the worst. Without improving the supply routes, the Russian army was hardly able to make another great effort, i.e. to start an offensive or ward off a large-scale enemy attack. Suitable and sufficient equipment could only reach the Russian front if the Dardanelles were opened. This, however, needed some time even in the case that the Straits could be occupied. It was from these obvious facts that the military commanders of the Central Powers started when working out their further strategic plans.

Germany set up and sent to the eastern front new divisions, while continuing the trench fight on the western front. The Monarchy also prepared itself for a defensive fight on the new Italian front. It did not have to fear an attack from the weakened Serbian army on the other southern front, and could thus send the new divisions, which were mobilized after the extension of the military age, to the eastern front. The war economy was still able to ensure the outfit of the new regiments and replacements, as well as the military equipment needed.

The joint German and Austro-Hungarian attack had been well prepared. The Russian command expected the offensive to take place in Bukovina. In fact, it started northeast of Bukovina, at the village of Gorlice. On May 2 the German 11th Army and the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army, facing the Russian 3rd Army, considerably weakened in the earlier fights, broke through the front. On the entire eastern front, the Russian forces had numerical superiority: 1.8 million Russian soldiers were facing the 1.3 million troops of the Central Powers. But on the stretch where the breakthrough took place the Central Powers were highly superior in number: 357,000 against 219,000 Russians. Even greater was the superiority of the artillery: against 334 heavy and 1,272 light guns, the Russians only had 4 heavy and 675 light guns. The Central Powers had 96 trench mortars while the Russians had none. Only the number of machine guns was approximately the same. In addition, the German 11th and the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army had sufficient ammunition, while the Russian 3rd Army was short of it.²¹⁷ Although the broad outlines of the operational plan had been worked out by Conrad, it was the commander of the German 11th Army, Mackensen, who took over the supreme command of the troops taking part in the campaign. The offensive was advancing well, and the German and Austro-Hungarian forces made the most of the successful breakthrough. They recaptured Przemyśl on July 3, and Lemberg

²¹⁷ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, p. 76.

on July 22. Then the offensive was extended on the eastern front and entered into a new phase: Warsaw was seized on August 4 and 5, and as the last stage of the campaign, Brest-Litovsk on August 25. It was only at the end of August that the retreating Russian army, which had to give up huge territories, could stop the Central Powers' advance on a straightened shorter frontline. On September 8, the tsar himself took over the supreme command from the discredited Grand Duke Nicholas.

A great victory — at a high price: the Monarchy lost another half a million men in casualties and prisoners.²¹⁸ However, the Russian army's loss was at least double,²¹⁹ and in addition, it had to withdraw from the Polish territories belonging to Russia. These territories were now occupied by the Germans for the most part, but the southeastern regions, with a population of 4.5 million, were seized by the Monarchy.²²⁰

For the Monarchy, the moral effect was even more important than the military victory. This was the first success after a whole series of defeats. As Cramon, a German general assigned to the AOK, wrote in his memoirs: "Only somebody who has lived through the profound depression following the Carpathian campaign can really understand what Gorlice meant: liberation from an almost unbearable pressure, relief from the greatest worries, renewed confidence, and the sudden hope of victory".²²¹

The offensive could not be continued, because the defeat did not break the Russian army. They strengthened their defence and in early September even started some local counter-attacks.²²² The Central Powers were unable to deploy new forces, since the Entente started an attack on the western front and reinforcements also had to be sent to the Italian front.

The Italian army took advantage of the Monarchy's forces being tied down on the eastern front, and from the end of May on — while preparing for trench fighting in the Alps, where the Monarchy disposed of an efficient system of defence — started a successful offensive with forces considerably superior to those of the Monarchy north of the Adriatic. Crossing the frontier, by June 22 they reached the Isonzo river, where the defences of the Monarchy had already been built up. There began the grim battles of the Isonzo. The first one lasted from June 23 to July 7, in this, the defence action of the Monarchy was successful.

²¹⁸ *Krieg*, Vol. II, p. 729.

²¹⁹ The number of captured Russian soldiers is estimated at one million (*Concise*, p. 154.) and at 750,000 (*Deutschland*, Vol. II, p. 80.).

²²⁰ *May*, Vol. I, p. 158. Warsaw became the center of the German zone, and Lublin that of the Austro-Hungarian.

²²¹ *Cramon*, p. 15.

²²² *Krieg*, Vol. III, pp. 97-98, 133-134.

The Italian command wanted to force a breakthrough at all costs, and threw in even greater forces during the second battle of the Isonzo (July 18 to August 10). The Italian high command planned that after breaking through the Isonzo line the army would turn northward and advance as far as the Drava, and from there start an offensive in the direction of Vienna.²²³ For further successful resistance, the Monarchy needed considerable reinforcements. These were in fact ensured by stopping the offensive on the eastern front, and in this way, the Austro-Hungarian army had sufficient forces of defence in the third (October 18 to November 4) and fourth (November 10 to December 14) battles of the Isonzo. In the final months of 1915, 800,000 Austro-Hungarian soldiers were defending the Monarchy against Italy, ensuring for the time being a balance of forces.²²⁴ Some smaller German units, mountain riflemen's units of a strength corresponding to a division,²²⁵ also took part in the fight against Italy, in spite of the fact that the state of war between Germany and Italy only started later. After attacking the Monarchy, Italy stopped supplying Germany even through Switzerland.²²⁶ Thus, from Germany's point of view, delaying the state of war was not particularly favourable, but the participation of German forces in the Isonzo battles could also be interpreted as a sign of the military weakness of the Monarchy. This was one of the reasons why the publication of news concerning the German participation was prohibited in Hungary. According to the instruction received by the press on July 11: "It is strictly forbidden to report news concerning the co-operation of German troops against the Italians".²²⁷

THE PLAN OF CONCENTRATION AGAINST ROMANIA

At the same time Italy entered the war, Romania was expected to enter. Particular attention was now paid to neutralizing her as far as possible. The press order of May 22 is indicative of this: "The Italian issue being by nature connected to the Romanian one... you should strictly refrain from reporting news which might unfavourably influence Romanian public opinion. Newspapers must not deal with questions concerning the future behaviour of Romania."²²⁸ Immediately after Italy's entry, when the Gorlice breakthrough had just started, but it was not yet clear that it would be a complete success, Tisza urged a "vigorous offensive

²²³ L. Jedlicka: *Italians Eintritt in den ersten Weltkrieg. Donauraum*, 1965. 3, pp. 137-138.

²²⁴ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, p. 86.

²²⁵ *Concise*, p. 162.

²²⁶ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, pp. 86-99.

²²⁷ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 216.

²²⁸ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 207.

against the Italians", in order to keep Romania neutral. In his view, this could ensure the balance in the Balkans, since achieving quick success against Italy would mean that Bulgaria's defection had no longer to be feared. In that case Romania, kept in check by the Bulgarian forces as well as the Austro-Hungarian forces in Bukovina and southern Galicia, could not enter the war.²²⁹ However, the German and Austro-Hungarian high commands were not planning any offensive against the Italians as yet. They wanted to take advantage of the Gorlice breakthrough and restore the balance of forces on the Russian front.

The success on the Russian front, whose full importance was manifest by mid-July, brought about a tactical change in Tisza's Romanian policy. He thought that after neutralizing Romania the time had now come to clear the issue radically, i.e. to ask the question: on whose side was Romania standing?

Already at the beginning of the war, when he was supporting the policy of Romania's neutralization, Tisza had explained to Berchtold his idea that the position of Romania would have to be cleared later. There would be no possibility to do so, he wrote, until a successful offensive in Russia, but certainly "after the first decisive victory". He raised similar thoughts, in a more concrete form earlier, in his letter to Burián written on February 25, 1915: "If, after defeating the Russians, we concentrate considerable forces in the southeast and before tying them down in any direction we clear the situation first in Sofia then in Bucharest, success will not fail to come".²³⁰ After the Gorlice breakthrough he was encouraged to raise his proposal to Erzberger, the leader of the German Catholic Centre Party, to whom he talked on July 4. As he informed Burián on the next day, Erzberger, "as concerns Romania, indicated that the German military were of the opinion that in the event the military situation continued to advance, i.e. when we can use the troops which have become superfluous on the Russian front, we should call Romania to account and clear the issue".²³¹ The information Erzberger gave Tisza was not exact. In mid-June Tisza went to Germany, where he found, contrary to what he had heard from Erzberger, that the Germans wished to influence Romania by new concessions.²³² This, however, did not divert the Hungarian prime minister from his plan.

In mid-June Tisza was already seriously expounding to the leaders of the Monarchy his idea of power policy concerning Romania, and on June 30 he sent a memorandum about this to the chief of general staff. He knew already that the

²²⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 302-303.

²³⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 80; Vol. III, p. 68.

²³¹ *Tisza*, Vol. III, p. 337.

²³² His notes on his German tour, *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 380-381. His account to Czernin, *Ibid.*, pp. 384-387.

two general staffs were planning offensives on the French and Italian fronts after the eastern campaign. Therefore he now suggested that after the offensive on the eastern front, before despatching the forces to the French and Italian fronts, the troops should first be concentrated on the Romanian frontier and the tension increased by demanding passage for arms to be transported to Turkey. Romania would either have to join the Central Powers or she would be attacked. Bulgaria would join the offensive, which would be quickly finished. "The practical question is whether the military situation permits us to assign to this task sufficient forces (200,000 or 300,000 men?) in the shortest possible time." It becomes clear from the following that Tisza was almost certain that the concentration of troops would be enough in itself and no campaign would have to be started, because Romania would yield. If, however, it did not yield, military success could be achieved very fast, and the western and southern offensives would hardly have to be delayed.²³³

Tisza persuaded Burián to adopt his view. The foreign minister noted in his diary on June 28: "Military means must now be sought to solve the problem of ammunition, not by threats but by pressure and influence, by the presence of military forces on the northern Romanian border." On July 9 he wrote: "As soon as we have available troops, we should display them on the Romanian border, and then inquire emphatically about the intentions of Romania". Two days later: "Concentration of troops on the Romanian border to be discussed with the Chancellor".²³⁴

Conrad's answer to Tisza's memorandum must have been evasive, because on July 11 the Hungarian prime minister sent him another note concerning this issue. He stressed that the moment for the action had not yet come, since the troops on the Russian front would only be released when the offensive was finished, but it was nearing, and therefore the plan he had proposed ought to be elaborated. "The question is the following: which is more expedient, to dispatch these troops immediately to the west and southwest, or to use them first for clearing the Romanian question?"²³⁵ On July 11, Tisza sent the sovereign copies of his two memorandums previously sent to Conrad, asking the sovereign to support him and help win the two general staffs as well as Kaiser Wilhem II to the cause. "The more I think about the question," he wrote to the sovereign, "the more I am convinced that this is the only way which is expedient and that we would miss an opportunity if we sent the troops which are released to the west and southwest

²³³ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 159, 165-167, 365-366.; and *HHSIA Kab.*, parcel 20.

²³⁴ *REZsL Burián*, item 84. Diary 1915.

²³⁵ *HHSIA Kab.*, parcel 20. He wrote to Conrad on this matter again on July 14, *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 10.

without carrying out this task." He exposed similar ideas in his letter to Czernin on July 24.²³⁶

The Austro-Hungarian and German general staffs did not favour the plan of concentration of forces and offensive against Romania. The neutrality of Romania seemed to be assured after the victories on the eastern front. However, some important social factors in the country, especially the League circle, were still urging for entering the war against the Monarchy even in the changed military situation. The Romanian government adopted a policy of wait and see and was now insisting on neutrality.

The German politicians did not consider it advantageous, from a political point of view, if Romania entered the war after the great victories over the Russians. They would have liked to conclude separate peace with Russia on condition the latter recognized the German conquests.²³⁷ If Romania entered the war, they would have to demand the surrender not only of the Polish territories, but of Bessarabia as well, which would make agreement even more difficult. Although the Russians refused to sign a separate peace treaty right after the retreat, it was obvious that they had become incapable to act for a long time. Therefore, the German and Austro-Hungarian high commands also favoured a standstill in the east, in order to be able to deploy their forces on the other fronts undisturbed. A military action against Romania did not fit into this strategy. In addition, they thought that the use of power policy in the case of Romania was superfluous, because they thought that Romanian domestic policy might take a favourable turn. Czernin also wrote in August that the fall of Braşianu was to be expected, in which case he would be replaced by Marghiloman, who was oriented towards the Central Powers.²³⁸

In such circumstances both Tisza and Burián dropped the plan of military concentration against Romania. They desired instead that an offensive be conducted against Serbia before the attacks on the French and Italian fronts started. The general staffs were also considering this possibility, since a connection had to be established with Turkey. If Bulgaria joined the attack on Serbia, the success of the offensive would certainly establish the connection. Burián's diary note of August 15 makes it clear that it was in these days that the German high command decided on the offensive against Serbia, by means of which they wanted to establish a connection with Turkey.²³⁹

²³⁶ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 10.; *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 27–28.

²³⁷ *Fischer*, pp. 280–281.

²³⁸ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 118–123.

²³⁹ *REZsL Burián*, item 84. Diary 1915.

BULGARIA'S ENTRY INTO THE WAR AND THE OCCUPATION OF SERBIA

In the spring of 1916, when the Gallipoli campaign began, there was much diplomatic fighting concerning Bulgaria. Bulgaria had closer links with the Central Powers than with the Entente, but she had not yet taken a definite stand. The Entente's failure at the Dardanelles and the victories of the Central Powers on the eastern front were decisive. Four weeks after the Gorlice breakthrough an agreement was reached, according to which Bulgaria would join the offensive against Serbia and would be granted territories.²⁴⁰ The Entente forces retreating from the Dardanelles, hoping to keep Bulgaria neutral, were landed at Salonica with the silent agreement of the still neutral Greek government. This, in case of an attack against Serbia, Bulgaria would have to fight on two fronts. The Entente forces at Salonica (150,000 soldiers), however, played only a minor role and thus no diplomatic success was achieved with this action.

On September 4, as Burián wired Tisza on the next day, "our agreement with Bulgaria became complete".²⁴¹ Bulgaria also reached an agreement with Turkey, and received the territories she was claiming. Following this, on September 26 a military treaty was signed by Bulgaria, Germany, and the Monarchy concerning a joint offensive against Serbia.

The new offensive against Serbia started in early October. Under the command Mackensen, ten German and four Austro-Hungarian divisions of the German 11th Army and the Monarchy's 3rd Army attacked from the north and west the six Serbian divisions stationed there. In the night of October 13, two Bulgarian armies with six divisions started an offensive in the east against the four Serbian divisions facing them.²⁴² The superiority of the Artillery exceeded the numerical superiority. The armies of the Central Powers, in great superiority, occupied the whole of Serbia in two months. The Serb army's casualties amounted to 100,000, and 160,000 Serb soldiers were taken POW. The remaining army, a considerable number, about 150,000 troops, which had managed to get out of the encirclement and reach the Adriatic, was transferred to the island of Corfu, belonging to Greece, by the allies of Serbia.²⁴³ Later, these forces fought at the Salonica bridgehead, and constituted the kernel of the Serb army which was to play an important part within the Allied Balkan forces at the end of the war.

In early 1916 the Monarchy occupied Montenegro, as well as most of Albania. Montenegro asked for peace on January 13 and had to accept unconditional

²⁴⁰ *Krieg*, Vol. III, p. 6.

²⁴¹ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 153.

²⁴² On the campaign, see *Krieg*, Vol. III, pp. 187-337.

²⁴³ *Concise*, p. 225.

surrender.²⁴⁴ The Bulgarian army forced the Anglo-French troops, which had left their Salonica base to come to the aid of the Serb army, back to Greece. The Balkans fell into the hands of the Central Powers. However, Italy had gained a foothold in Albania, the French-British expeditionary force in Greece, and guerilla fighting developed in occupied Serbia and Montenegro. It was only in Albania that the Austro-Hungarian troops were received with more or less sympathy, because they drove out the Serbian and Montenegrin invaders from there. (Montenegro and Serbia took control of the northern and middle part of Albania in June 1915, after Italy had occupied her southern areas.)²⁴⁵

Conrad wanted to go on with the operations, but the German general staff refused. There was a controversy between the two chiefs of general staff, and it was the weaker one who had to give way. The German general staff were making preparations for a decisive attack on the western front, for which as many forces as possible were needed. On February 21, 1916 the Germans in fact started their offensive at Verdun.

In this period, the Turkish army, which had now become possible — to be supplied with arms and ammunition through the Balkans, was also achieving successes. After defending successfully the Straits with the help of the Germans, in November they drove back by a hundred kilometers the British troops advancing towards Baghdad.²⁴⁶

In the second year of the war the German submarines sunk a great number of ships: in 1915, from April to December they scuttled 597 ships with a total tonnage of 1,072,123.²⁴⁷ The fleet did not dare go out on the open sea, but the high command had great hopes in the U-boats which were being constructed at a quick pace.

After the summer offensive in Russia, but even more so after Bulgaria's entry into the war and the autumn Serbian offensive, the Hungarian government was no longer afraid of Romania. Tisza's original idea became reality, namely that Romania's desertion of the Monarchy was to be counteracted not by concessions but by concluding an alliance with Bulgaria. "Neither she, nor Greece will ever take action against us," Tisza wrote at the outbreak of the war against Serbia, "if we can count on a united Bulgarian-Turkish force to act as our rear-guard. This is the key to the whole situation."²⁴⁸ The Romanian policy of the Hungarian prime minister now seemed to have been justified. In this letter to Czernin

²⁴⁴ *Krieg*, Vol. IV, p. 58.

²⁴⁵ *May*, Vol. I, pp. 116-117.

²⁴⁶ *Concise*, pp. 195-196.

²⁴⁷ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, p. 97.

²⁴⁸ A letter written to Burián on July 28, 1914. *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 10.

dated September 9 he proudly recalled that it was he who had been at the origin of the new Balkan policy in March 1914 and that it was no fault of his that the first practical steps could only be taken after the assassination, when the Germans had also given their consent. Now, however, this problem had been settled.²⁴⁹ He no longer wished Romania to join the Central Powers. "It would definitely be the best," he wrote to Pál Beöthy on August 30, "if they remained neutral to the end and emerged from this great crisis without territorial gains and with their reputation and prestige impaired."²⁵⁰

In late October Czernin again put forward Tisza's proposal and advised that they should force Romania to take a stand. The Hungarian prime minister now rejected this: "The best thing for us is if Romania stays neutral till the end".²⁵¹

The neutralization of Romania was now no longer linked to the earlier domestic policy of neutralization, i.e. promising concessions for the Romanian minority living in Hungary and Transylvania respectively and a relatively more liberal treatment of the Romanian minority in general.

The change in the policy toward the Romanian minority is well illustrated by the banning of the paper *Románul* published in Arad. Earlier, as we have seen, the censors of the Romanian papers had been instructed by the minister of justice that the papers were by no means to be suppressed. On March 5, 1916, however, Tisza himself wrote to the minister of justice and, ruthlessly rebuking the censor of *Románul*, the royal prosecutor of Arad, ("he is unable to fulfil his duties intelligently"), most forcefully asked for the suppression of the paper, since it "goes on most impudently with its campaign aimed at impairing the fighting spirit of Romanians". Two days later the minister of interior banned the paper "owing to its content jeopardizing the interests of warfare".²⁵²

THE CENTRAL POWERS AND THE WAR AIMS

At the beginning of September 1914, when the German leaders were expecting the immediate collapse of France, the chancellor drew up a plan of the aims to be attained for the intention of his colleagues. This plan centred around the "Mitteleuropa" project: "By means of a customs agreement, a Central European economic union is to be established including France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Denmark, Austria-Hungary, Poland, and perhaps Italy, Sweden, and Norway.

²⁴⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 154-156.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

²⁵² *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 205, 271.; and *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 9.

This union, although it will have no common constitutional organ and its members will be apparently equal, must in fact function under German leadership and consolidate Germany's economic domination over Central Europe."²⁵³ The Chancellor's conception was relatively moderate in comparison to the aims of the most extreme German imperialist circles.

The period between the spring of 1915 and the spring of 1916 constituted the most successful year for the Central Powers from the military point of view. In this period the German leaders were taking steps to realize the *Mitteuropa* plan. Chief of General Staff Falkenhayn was urging its realization more and more forcefully from late August 1915 on.²⁵⁴ First of all, however, Germany's main ally, Austria-Hungary had to be persuaded to accept the project of a Central European union. And this was not so simple. It would have been the task of the German liberals to propagate the project on a large scale among Germany's own allies. It was especially Naumann's book entitled *Mitteuropa*, published in early October 1915, which attracted attention. Its Hungarian translation appeared in the same year. Naumann exposed fairly openly the Germans' plans concerning their allies. He was propagating the idea of a Central European economic, military, and political union led by Germany, to whom her allies in the war would be subordinated, which would be strong enough to realize more far-reaching aims as well. "We are fixing our eyes at least on the Central European region which extends from the North and the Baltic Seas to the Alps, the Adriatic, and the Southern edge of the Danube valley... You should look in this region as a whole, a brother country divided in many parts, a defensive alliance and a single economic unit. All historical particularism should be obliterated here by the war to a point where this region will be able to bear the thought of union."²⁵⁵ This planned Central Europe would have a common army.²⁵⁶ In fact, the far superior German forces would have been completed by the Austrian, Hungarian, Slav, and Romanian troops. Furthermore, Naumann was planning a uniform customs and monetary system as well as a uniform economic system, hardly concealing that German monopoly capital would be playing the major role: "It is the German economic system which has to become more and more general in Central Europe in the future. In this way, the military defensive alliance will become an intimate community."²⁵⁷ Thus, the kernel of the *Mitteuropa* project was the far-reaching unification of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Naumann entertained the hopes of the Hungarian ruling classes

²⁵³ Fischer, p. 112.

²⁵⁴ P. R. Sweet: Germany, Austria-Hungary and *Mitteuropa*, *Festschrift Benedikt*, pp. 180-181.

²⁵⁵ Naumann, pp. 2-3.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

that instead of ailing Austria, they would find support in Prussian militarism: "In its present extension, the Hungarian state could only survive as an independent political factor with the support of a non-Slav great power. This is what will link the Hungarians of all tendencies so closely to the German empire. They know very well that Austria cannot defend them against Russia."²⁵⁸

Thus, according to the Mitteleuropa project, Austria-Hungary would be linked to Germany within some kind of apparently federal system. This central core would be surrounded by a system of formally external satellite states. The latter would include not only occupied Belgium and Poland, but also Germany's allies, Bulgaria and Turkey. The partisans of the "allddeutsch" idea, on the other hand, wanted no satellites, but the direct annexation of the largest territories possible both in the east and west. Their program differed from Naumann's in the ways they proposed for the realization of the conquests, but this made Naumann's project seem more liberal.

The annexation plans of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy partly coincided with Germany's. Vienna also asserted a right to the recently occupied Polish territories. Already at the beginning of the war Berchtold had mentioned in Berlin the Austro-Hungarian stand concerning the Polish issue, but he met with such flat refusal that he was obliged to retreat. "We should not insist on the matter," Tisza had advised the foreign minister at the time, "we had better not enter into a disagreeable dispute with the Germans because of the Poles."²⁵⁹ After the occupation of the Polish territories belonging to Russia, the discussion could no longer be avoided, and a rivalry started between the two allies, which was finally settled in the autumn of 1916, as we shall see, to Germany's advantage.

The war aims of the Monarchy centred around a project concerning the Balkans: their main aspiration was that as a result of the war, the Monarchy should become the most influential power in the Balkans. For this, they first had to solve the Serb issue by liquidating the Great Serb movement. This policy was backed by all leading factors of the Monarchy, but there was considerable disagreement as to the mode of realization. Some of the Viennese politicians were planning far-reaching annexations. It was particularly Conrad who favoured the annexation policy in the Balkans. He was considering the annexation not only of Serbia, but also of Montenegro and perhaps even Albania.²⁶⁰

For some of the Austrian leaders the annexation plans were linked to aspirations at centralism, for others, with the idea of transforming the Monarchy into a trialist

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁵⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 84.

²⁶⁰ H. Rumpler: *Die Kriegsziele Österreich-Ungarns auf dem Balkan 1915-1916*, *Festschrift Hantsch*, p. 466.

or federal state. Some leaders wanted to establish a South Slav formation under Croat leadership within the Monarchy. Others thought that Poland, including the Russian-Polish territories and Galicia, might become a third country within the empire.²⁶¹ Most of the leading Austrian politicians, however, rejected both the trialist and the centralist conceptions, because they considered any deviation from the dualist system impracticable. The sovereign, who was usually very cautious, but after the Gorlice breakthrough had great hopes concerning the future of the Monarchy, also insisted on dualism.²⁶²

Even if the war had been won, the expansionist designs of the Monarchy could hardly have found realization against the more powerful German imperialism which knew no bounds. Even the pro-German Andrassy would characterize later in his memoirs the relation between Germany and the Monarchy as one in which the latter "gave the impression of a sulky and powerless old servant who, however, obeys blindly and has no free will any longer".²⁶³ The most eminent Austrian leaders rejected the Mitteleuropa project. The "Pan-German" movement, however, supported it, and Friedjung became its chief propagator.²⁶⁴

THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE WAR AIMS

The Hungarian leaders wanted to settle the question of the territories conquered by the Monarchy on the basis of the dualist principle. "The fate of any province, whether we acquire it through this war or through any other one," the prime minister said in Parliament in late 1915 amidst general acclamation, "can only be decided with Hungary's agreement and consent... This does not mean that we should share the province in question among ourselves, but that we should decide on its fate, as well as the conditions and modes of its attachment to the Monarchy by mutual agreement."²⁶⁵

The leading Hungarian politicians had reservations about Vienna's annexation plans, since the latter entailed the transformation of the inner system of the Monarchy. Tisza and the majority of the governing party wished to extend the power of the Monarchy by the creation of a system of dependent countries (Serbia, Poland) and to achieve a more advantageous balance of power within the empire by maintaining the dualist system.

²⁶¹ Szokolai, p. 29.

²⁶² Margutti, p. 447.

²⁶³ Andrassy, p. 131.

²⁶⁴ Kann, Vol. II, p. 257.; *Sweet, op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

²⁶⁵ *Képviseletőház*, December 1, 1915.

Before the outbreak of the war the leading circles of the Monarchy had often discussed the aims in the Balkans, but no complete understanding had been reached about a new arrangement. Not even the resolution of the common cabinet meeting forbidding the annexation of Serbia succeeded in creating complete unity or reconciling the divergences.

The concrete aims of a war against Russia had not been discussed before the war. Directly after the beginning of the war, in early August 1914, the leaders were expecting an immediate victory on the eastern front, therefore the government circles of Vienna and Budapest started to discuss the aims concerning Russia. They agreed that the Polish territories belonging to Russia should, in one way or another, be attached to the Monarchy.

Burián's diary note of August 7 makes it clear that in Vienna two conceptions emerged about how to attach to the Monarchy the newly gained Polish territories. One envisaged an Austrian-Hungarian-Polish trialist system in which each component would have a population of about twenty million. The other one was the idea of "enlarged dualism", according to which the newly gained Polish territories would be attached to Austria, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, perhaps together with Dalmatia, directly to Hungary. A week later Burián wrote in his diary: "serious hesitations between dualism and trialism". Then, on August 16, he sent a telegram to Tisza that Stürgkh and Berchtold also wished to maintain the dualist system and avoid plain trialism, but the greatest confusion reigned as to the system to be created. On August 19 he wrote in his diary: "General opinion is not for a trialist, but a dualist system. In fact, dualism also causes many problems, but fewer than trialism."²⁸⁶

It was on August 11, 1914, that Tisza first exposed his ideas in an informatory letter to Burián: The basic principle should be "the maintenance of dualism and of parity. The Hungarian nation will never renounce its right to be a factor equal to the totality of the other states under the common sovereign's crown, which shall never gain ascendancy over it." As for Serbia, already at the common cabinet meeting of July 19 the Hungarian prime minister had exposed his view that it should be firmly attached to the Monarchy, but by no means annexed. From the letter to Burián we see that he would have liked a similar solution in respect to Poland as well; "the simplest solution would be to establish a separate Polish kingdom," he wrote. He did not consider this practicable, however, since if Congressional Poland were granted an independent status, German influence would make its attachment to the Monarchy uncertain and would even exercise attraction on Galicia. Therefore, Tisza was also planning the annexation of the Polish territories conquered from Russia, stressing that "the Polish territories to be annexed

²⁸⁶ *REZsL Burián*, item 5. Diary 1913-1914.; item 41, of telegrammes 1913-1914.

to the Monarchy should become a component of the state of Austria while the dualist and parity system of the Monarchy is maintained... This is the only solution which is acceptable from the Hungarian nation's point of view." To counterbalance the growth of Cisleithania by the annexation of the Polish territories, it would be absolutely necessary to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina directly to Hungary. He also thought of attaching Dalmatia to Hungary, but added: "This, however, requires consideration. I think that Croatia-Slavonia and Bosnia give us enough trouble..."²⁶⁷

The prime minister only considered this statement indicative at the time. Burián should act accordingly "in the course of confidential talks", as Tisza wrote to him, but should not give the impression of "selling the skin before you have killed the bear". At the semi-official common ministerial meeting held at Berchtold's on August 20, too, he opposed making any official declaration concerning the Polish issue.²⁶⁸ And in fact, raising this issue was practically out of the question for about a year following the events of August, since it was only in the summer and autumn of 1915 that the Polish and Serbian territories were occupied by the Central Powers. When, following the military occupation of the territories, these questions were put on the agenda, Tisza took a stand corresponding to the one he had exposed in his letter of August 1914 to Burián. Thus, this document may be considered to be the basis of his war program.

During the year of defeats too, Tisza in principle maintained the views he had exposed in the letter to Burián. "Although this matter is out of season now," he wrote to Forgách, head of department in the ministry for foreign affairs, in late August, "if ever anything comes out of it, the new province (i.e. the Polish territories to be conquered from Russia — J. G.) should be closely attached, if possible, to the Austrian state". It is true that "Berlin has poured cold water on us concerning this issue," but "it does not follow that we should not realize this in case of a favourable outcome of the war".²⁶⁹ And on August 27, 1914 he instructed Burián to collect all "geographical, demographical, and economic" material concerning Russia and the Balkans "in spite of all our uncertainties about the future" so that "we might survey in due time all the aspects of the territories in question which might be interesting from the state's point of view".²⁷⁰ Three days later, on August 30, he wrote to Burián: "if we are victorious (in the Galician campaign — J. G.)... in addition to concluding peace immediately we should try to persuade the Germans to impose relatively moderate conditions". As to the Monarchy, "complete domination over the Balkans and the greatest possible

²⁶⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 61-64.

²⁶⁸ *Szokolai*, pp. 33-34.

²⁶⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. II, p. 98.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

financial compensation would be the most important for us". And two days later: "You misunderstood my letter, my moderate peace conditions are not so very anodyne either. I want facts which would transform the Balkans in correspondence with our interests."²⁷¹ Following this, the military situation grew considerably worse, and therefore Tisza regularly came back to the question of war aims in his letters to Burián not as a topical question, but in the hope of a better future. Preserving the basic ideas of the letter of August 11, he would time and again complete them with new details. On September 10, for instance, he was considering the question of Albania: "As for Albania, I am getting more and more convinced that in case of a favourable outcome of the war a strong, Christian North Albania (adjacent to the Monarchy) should be established which will fall in our sphere of interest, then Central Albania can be ruled by an Islamic sovereign, and in the south, the Italian and Greek aspirations should be realized as circumstances permit": On October 6 he raised the question of reparations, which should be divided between the Monarchy and Germany.²⁷²

After October 1914 the military situation became even worse, and as a result, Tisza's letter to Burián no longer dealt with the possible war aims. Nor was there any change in the first few months following Burián's appointment as foreign minister. And in late April and early May 1915, the worst period for the Monarchy from the military and diplomatic points of view, Tisza was of the opinion that if the situation did not improve on the Russian front and Italy and Romania started an attack simultaneously, there was nothing to do but conclude peace even at the price of sacrifices.²⁷³

Following the victories of the summer of 1915 Tisza again thought more and more of the war aims. The letter he wrote to Pál Beöthy, the president of the House of Representatives, on August 30, 1915 is highly noteworthy. In connection with the Polish issue he wrote the following: "There is one thing I can assure you about: neither the dualist structure of the Monarchy nor the parity status of Hungary is in danger".²⁷⁴ It was in October 1915 that the Hungarian government discussed for the first time the war aims. Tisza explained his earlier ideas, which were approved by the government. They unanimously agreed that the dualist system had to be maintained and that the war gains had to be realized on that basis. Only Finance Minister János Teleszky said that, although he too was in favour of this, he did not think this was feasible. "All other nationalities in the Monarchy will put the

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 110–111, 113.

²⁷² *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 131, 190–191.

²⁷³ See his memorandum on May 1, 1915 to the foreign minister and the chief of staff of the Monarchy. *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 268–272.

²⁷⁴ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 148.

blame on the Hungarians if they do not reach their particular goals, and in this respect the Poles will be in the same camp as the South Slavs as well as the Czechs and even the Austrian centralists." Tisza's answer was full of self-assurance: "The finance minister was right when qualifying his own attitude as too pessimistic ... It has become clear in the discussions we have had so far that both the Austrian and the common government are in favour of maintaining the dualist system." The government presented a memorandum to the common cabinet saying that with a view to maintaining parity, it claimed the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Dalmatia to Hungary if the Russian Polish territories were annexed to Austria.²⁷⁵

It was due to the aspiration to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina to Hungary that in the autumn of 1915, when the Monarchy was grappling with grave problems of provision, Tisza turned a deaf ear to Austria, but was willing to offer powerful assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"It is our duty," he wrote to the minister of agriculture, "not only to yield the relatively slight amounts which are absolutely necessary for the prevention of famine, but to handle this question with warmth and all our might so that they should become convinced of our sympathy and active interest... Great national interests are at stake, and it would be an error, more fatal than crime, to forget this when handling the issue."²⁷⁶

The common cabinet discussed the Polish and South Slav issues on October 6, 1915. Tisza presented the memorandum and expounded in detail the attitude of the Hungarian government. No decision was made. The participants wished to maintain the dualist system, but the Austrian leaders by no means envisaged this by strengthening the parity of the Hungarian component. They did not agree with Tisza's plans concerning the South Slav regions.²⁷⁷

The Viennese leaders' insistence on maintaining the dualist state was also shown by the fact that after several decades of discussions, in October 1915 the issue of the arms of the Monarchy, and later, in 1916, that of the flag, was solved by a royal manuscript according to the dualist principle.²⁷⁸ This was also how the common foreign minister interpreted the significance of this fact: "The way the issue of the insignia has been settled," he wrote to the Hungarian prime minister on October 21, "allows for no misinterpretation and precludes any non-dualist formation".²⁷⁹ From then on, the arms of the Dual Monarchy consisted of two

²⁷⁵ *Min. tan. jkv*, October 2, 1915, pp. 189–197.

²⁷⁶ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 267–268.

²⁷⁷ *Protokolle*, pp. 285–314.

²⁷⁸ *Budapesti Közlöny*, October 12, 1915. On the preceding debates see *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 41–74.

²⁷⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 202.

coats-of-arms placed side by side: the combined arms of the hereditary lands with the Imperial crown and the arms of the Hungarian Kingdom with the royal crown. The problem of the flag was also solved: the black-and-yellow and red-white-green colours figured in it in equal proportion. The new coat-of-arms was put on the common war flag, which had red, white, and red horizontal stripes.²⁸⁰

In the question of the war aims, the opinion of the leaders of the opposition and of several leaders of the governing party differed from that of the government. This became evident in the autumn of 1915 when Tisza discussed the foreign policy issues with them. Andrásy was inclined to favour a trialist formation to be established with the Poles.²⁸¹ He also wanted to win the Germans over to this idea behind Tisza's back and even had talks with them to this effect when he went to Berlin in early October 1915. Tisza heard about this, and wired Burián to instruct the ambassador of the Monarchy, Prince Hohenlohe, "to make everybody understand that dualism and parity are *noli me tangere*". Burián immediately complied with Tisza's request.²⁸² There was no complete agreement in the South Slav policy either. For example István Bethlen, who at that time belonged to Apponyi's and Andrásy's circle, was a partisan of the South Slavs' union within Hungary, an idea which he later expounded in Parliament.²⁸³ Bethlen represented the chauvinistic tendency in the policy towards the nationalities. And it was with a view to enforcing these chauvinistic views that he wanted to put the South Slavs completely under the control of the Hungarian government.

The Hungarian government continued to reject the complete annexation of Serbia even after the occupation of the country, although it now regarded the resolution of July 19, 1914 as outworn. Tisza had already mentioned this in his letter to Burián dated October 6, 1914: "As to Serbia, I now only want to say that we could still not agree to annexing a larger territory, at the same time, however, the present war has taught us that we must acquire the region between the lower Drina and the Sava with a frontier that will be suitable for the purposes of both defence and attack".²⁸⁴ After the occupation of Serbia, on December 4, 1915, he expounded the attitude of the Hungarian government in a lengthy memorandum to the sovereign: the territory of Serbia was to be considerably reduced in favour of Bulgaria, Albania, and the Monarchy. Montenegro should also surrender some territories to Albania and the Monarchy, and it should be cut off from the sea. The two states thus carved up "should not be annexed, but be attached to the Mon-

²⁸⁰ Later the Hungarian government protested because the Austrian coat of arms was slightly higher on the new common coat of arms. *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 88, base no. 81.

²⁸¹ *Andrásy*, p. 107.; *Képviselőház*, December 7, 1915.

²⁸² *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 201–202.

²⁸³ *Képviselőház*, March 3, 1917.

²⁸⁴ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 10.; with omission published in *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 190–192.

archy economically and militarily with consideration to their economic interests".²⁸⁵ The Hungarian prime minister sent copies of his memorandum to the heir to the throne and the foreign minister, too.²⁸⁶ Conrad still favoured complete annexation, and wanted to solve the South Slav issue within the Monarchy. He had also prepared his proposal concerning this question. On December 30, Tisza sent a long letter refuting Conrad's arguments to the common minister of defence. He also sent a copy of his letter to the heir to the throne, and the other two common ministers.²⁸⁷

The opinion of the common Foreign Minister, Burián, differed from Tisza's in this question. "I am taking a middle course," he wrote in his diary on January 7, "but am rather inclined to think it necessary to annex Serbia." The reason becomes clear from his diary note made a month earlier (on December 3): "It is inexpedient to include the Serbs, it is even more inexpedient to leave them out, since in the first case they will be more under our control". Burián practically wanted to attach Serbia, after its annexation, to Hungary: "Direct connection with Hungary, without a centre, with direct government, but without political rights".²⁸⁸

At the common cabinet meeting of January 7, 1916 there was a heated debate about this question, but no decision was made.²⁸⁹ The anti-annexation resolution of July 1914 remained formally in force. Tisza now interpreted it differently, but he also referred to it in order to prevent complete annexation: "The Hungarian government," he wrote to Burián on January 26, 1916, "will never consent to its modification".²⁹⁰ In the Polish question, too, he persisted in his earlier attitude.²⁹¹

Tisza defended the dualist principle not only in the question of the distribution and attachment to the Monarchy of the territorial gains, but also in that of economic expansion. "If the foreign ministry is planning some large-scale economic action abroad," he wrote to Burián in the spring of 1916, "it will have to conduct the negotiations directly and at par with both the Viennese and Budapest banking institutions. ... This is quite natural in connection with all economic issue, but increasingly so as concerns the Balkans, where our banks already play a far from negligible part."²⁹²

²⁸⁵ *HHSStA. Kab.*, parcel 20.; with omission published in *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 296–301.

²⁸⁶ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 295, 301–302

²⁸⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 336–345.; *HHSStA. Kab.*, parcel 20.

²⁸⁸ *REZsL Burián*, item 84. Diary 1915.; item 85. Diary 1916.

²⁸⁹ *Protokolle*, pp. 352–380.

²⁹⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 398.

²⁹¹ His letter to Burián on March 1, 1916. *Tisza*, Vol. V, p. 58.

²⁹² *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 59–60.

The German Mitteleuropa plan met with the approval of certain circles of the Hungarian ruling classes and of a few representatives of the various political trends; most Hungarians, however, rejected it. Tisza was also opposed to it. In March 1915 he wrote to József Vészi, the editor-in-chief of the *Pester Lloyd*, in connection with the publicity concerning Naumann's project: "Economic union is a delicate matter, which does have drawbacks. The greatest reserve is needed, especially after the ill-advised greed with which certain persons (Riedl, etc.) have dealt with the issue. Nobody has more esteem for our allies than I, but they do have a habit of trying to take a mile when one gives them an inch."²⁹³

Most leaders of the National Federation of Industrialists (GYOSZ) also rejected the project, some of them, however, were in favour of it. Ferenc Chorin, the chairman of the federation, spoke in favour of the customs union. Wekerle also supported it.²⁹⁴ It was mostly the agrarian circles rallying around Andrassy and Apponyi who supported the Mitteleuropa project.²⁹⁵ Furthermore, it met with approval in those branches of industry which expected the customs union to extend their possibilities of purchasing raw materials and broadening their markets, for example the milling, hemp, linen, leather, and electric energy industries. A Central European customs union could have been favourable for certain branches of Hungarian agriculture, and perhaps certain industries as well, since it would have meant the extension of the domestic market, and even, in case of a favourable customs policy, monopoly. According to the German project, Hungary would have to develop mainly her agriculture, and certain branches of her industry. This would have entailed, at the same time, the decline of the most important industrial sectors. This was why the most powerful manufacturers protested against the project. On the whole not even the agrarians supported it, although it was among them that the project found the greatest number of followers. Almost all of Hungary's agricultural exports went to Austria. Thus, the Monarchy provided a sufficiently large market for Hungarian agriculture, at most certain branches would have needed additional markets.²⁹⁶

In late 1915, Apponyi, encouraged by the military successes of the Central Powers, sketched the outlines of a large-scale plan connected with the Mitteleuropa project in Parliament: "I can see great perspectives open up... I can see how this Central European alliance will strengthen, how the Balkan peninsula

²⁹³ Tisza, Vol. III, p. 140.

²⁹⁴ Irinyi, pp. 40-41.; Gratz, Vol. II, p. 329.

²⁹⁵ Andrassy, pp. 114, 117.

²⁹⁶ Gratz-Schüller, *Äussere*, pp. 7-8.; Irinyi, p. 30.

will be attached to it, not by conquest, but by common interest, and how its influence will extend over the whole of Central Asia, a region which, together with the territories of Central Europe, will constitute a hegemonic combination. For me, when I look further into the future, this combination means the beginning of the restoration of the western cultural community... We know very well that there is no Hungarian universe, we know very well that we cannot live in isolation, and we are most willing to take part in the establishment and support of power combinations which ensure our own existence as a nation... We shall gladly play a part, at least I myself am convinced of it, in the realization of these great perspectives."²⁹⁷

The Mitteleuropa plan had several partisans among the bourgeois radicals. Their leader Oszkár Jászi also supported it in the beginning. The outbreak of the world war had, on the one hand, dispelled the illusions that gradual economic integration and the growing influence of the organized working class made European development tend toward the establishment of a United States of Europe which would prevent wars. On the other hand, however, it seemed to Jászi that the expected results of the world war would now really make possible the integration of all continental Europe, ranging from the borders of Great Britain to those of Russia, under German leadership. He considered this perspective a positive one, and it was within this frame that he shaped his ideas and plans concerning a Central European federation. He supported accepting the German hegemony not only because he already regarded it as the only realistic way of the economic and political integration of Europe, but also because he was convinced that this would favour democratic development and economic welfare in Hungary as well as in all Europe. "A uniform market, traffic, and trade would greatly increase the possibilities of production, which would be a great service for consumers and generally help the democratic trends. The large-scale integration of economic markets would offer production and democracy possibilities of development that have not even been thought of."²⁹⁸ In 1917 Jászi already rejected this view, and saw in Germany's policy the strengthening of the reactionary forces and not of the democratic ones. In his later memoirs he wrote that in 1915-16 he had been a partisan of a 'Mitteleuropa' led by Germany, but instead of Naumann's project, he had adopted the idea of a democratic and pacifist collaboration of peoples dependent on one another by virtue of geographic and economic circumstances. He had thought this collaboration necessary as long as tsarist Russia existed. After the fall of the latter he had turned against the idea of a Central European alliance.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ *Képviselőház*, December 9, 1915.

²⁹⁸ *Világ*, January 30, 1916. Quoted by *Irinyi*, p. 30.

²⁹⁹ *Jászi*, pp. 2-3.

At first the social democratic press set itself sharply against the Mitteleuropa project.³⁰⁰ Later, in early 1916, the leaders and theoreticians of the bourgeois radicals and social democrats organized several debates on the issue.³⁰¹ It then became clear that several radical leaders, Pál Szende first of all, were firmly opposed to the project against even Jászi, while some social democrats felt drawn to the idea of a Central European federation under German leadership. Ervin Szabó was also in favour of the project.³⁰² However, the majority of the social democratic leaders — Kunfi, Jászai, Buchinger, Jenő Varga, Weltner, Rónai, Ágoston, etc. — rejected it.³⁰³ The poet Endre Ady also found a way to express his anti-German attitude once more.³⁰⁴

The German political and economic leaders did not want to wait on the realization of the Mitteleuropa idea until a far-away future. They urged, first through social organs, then also through government circles, the economic rapprochement and customs union of Germany and the Monarchy. On March 26, a conference, though an unofficial one, was held in Berlin about this question. Gusztáv Gratz represented the Hungarian side, who explained that “the Hungarian economic circles also wish a rapprochement with Germany up to the point beyond which we would not go without jeopardizing our political sovereignty and vital economic interests”.³⁰⁵ This attitude did not suit the Germans. In mid-April 1915, Austrian and Hungarian economic leaders discussed the question of a central European economic rapprochement. “Please show the utmost reserve not only toward the Germans, but toward the Austrians as well,” Tisza wrote to Wekerle, who attended the meeting.³⁰⁶

On June 28, 1915, the Österreichisch-Deutscher Wirtschaftsverband, which had been established shortly before the war, called a meeting in Vienna.³⁰⁷ This too was about the economic rapprochement of the two countries. It was especially the German party which expected a lot from this conference. The participants included not only Naumann, the chief propagator of the Mitteleuropa project, but also the vice-chairman of the Reichstag. From among the well-known leaders of German economic life, Riesser, the chairman of the Hansa alliance, and Sorge, the director of the Krupp Works, were also present. Hungary was also represent-

³⁰⁰ *Népszava*, September 10, 1915.; *Világ szabadság*, September 25, 1915.

³⁰¹ *Szocializmus*, March 1916.; *Huszádik Század*, January–July 1916.

³⁰² *Irinyi*, pp. 101–104.

³⁰³ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 203–207.; *Irinyi*, p. 107 sqq.

³⁰⁴ A föltámadt Jókai (Resurrected Jókai), *Nyugat*, May 16, 1916. in Ady, Vol. III, p. 508.

³⁰⁵ *OL K* 467, 131/1915.

³⁰⁶ *Tisza*, Vol. III, p. 251.

³⁰⁷ On the circumstances of its formation, see *Fischer*, p. 21.

ed by important personalities: Ferenc Chorin, Baron Kornfeld, Miksa Fenyő, Pál Szende, Gusztáv Gratz, etc.

The views of the Hungarians, as Gratz wrote in his report, "differed greatly". Gratz, like Tisza, was opposed to the customs union, and so were the most influential Hungarian circles. The Hungarian delegates held a separate conference before the meeting. As they did not want to make contradictory interventions at the meeting, Gusztáv Gratz was charged with expounding their worries. "In Hungary," Gratz said at the meeting, "the economic importance of the industries which are worried about a too far-reaching rapprochement, is greater than that of the industries which can hope to gain advantages from the rapprochement". Gratz's report on his speech, which he sent to the prime minister, is worth quoting at greater length: "The efforts at economic rapprochement, however, must stop at the point where their realization would only be possible by giving up the right of the individual states to self-determination or by the sacrifice of vital economic interests ... The theory that industry should gravitate towards the most appropriate sites, and that we should renounce on the artificial development of industry in areas where the conditions of industrial production are not favourable, is only justified within the boundaries of a single state ... If we were to extend the theory of the most favourable site to the whole area of Germany, Austria, and Hungary together, this would mean that the economic growth of Hungary, where the conditions of industrial production are the least favourable, would degenerate to a level inferior even to the present stage, and the other two states would surpass us at a geometrical ratio. We, however, do not wish to play such a secondary role within the great German-Austrian-Hungarian community of interests. Hungarian industry has always tried to protect itself not only against German, but also against Austrian industry, which works in more favourable conditions, through certain intermediate protective tariffs ... I greatly regret that other points of view have dominated in today's discussions and that certain speakers have interpreted agreement in matters of trade policy in such a wide sense that they again arrive at the idea of a common German-Austrian-Hungarian customs frontier."

First Riesser, then Naumann took a stand against Gusztáv Gratz. Naumann tried to work on the Hungarian great capitalists' fear of the national minorities: "It is possible that tomorrow other nations will demand for themselves what the Hungarians are demanding today. It is much better if an industry finds a site for itself where conditions are the most favourable. It is possible that in this way certain Hungarian industries will go to ruin, but it is also possible that some new ones, e.g. a strong wood-working industry, will develop." In connection with this Gratz noted in his report: "The great majority of those who attended the conference generally consider the question of Hungary's industrial development as if it

were an issue of completely secondary importance. Thus, we cannot expect these circles to take our interests into careful consideration.”³⁰⁸

Tisza approved of Gratz’s attitude: “What happened there,” he wrote to Gratz, “bore out the worries I have felt about the whole movement since the beginning, and the only thing I regret is that your attitude, a very correct one, was not firmer against the tendencies threatening our political and economic independence”.³⁰⁹ A few days later the premier heard that Wekerle, who, unlike him, was a partisan of the customs union, was going to Berlin. Fearing that Wekerle might counteract the effect of Gratz’s speech, Tisza summoned him with a view to influencing him: “Considering,” he wrote to Wekerle on July 9, “that the unpleasant incidents connected with our economic relations with the German empire have recently multiplied, I should be very glad if I could see you before your trip to Berlin in order to discuss this question”.³¹⁰

In the autumn of 1915 the Germans were urging more and more for closer economic links. On November 10 and 11, Bethmann-Hollweg and Burián had talks, but with no result.³¹¹ The reluctance of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy caused the German leaders no small worry, and the German government decided to take an official step. On November 13, 1915, Foreign Minister Jagow sent a memorandum to the Austro-Hungarian government about the necessity to extend the treaty of alliance and, within this, to establish closer economic links and even a customs union.³¹² Before the official reply was formulated, on November 17 the Austrian and Hungarian industrialists held a confidential meeting in the Vienna “Industrieller Club” which rallied the leaders of heavy industry. Szterényi and Baernreither were the most inclined to a favourable reception of the German wishes, the others, however, rejected them.³¹³ On November 19, they had a joint discussion with the Germans, which was published in the press. It must have become evident to the Germans as well that the government had put up excessive claims, and so some of them tried to raise the idea of a customs alliance instead of a customs union. The Monarchy, however, only agreed to the establishment of a mutually favourable customs system.³¹⁴ Tisza’s attitude was also unchanged: “We do wish a preferential system,” he wrote to Burián on November 20, “but only consider it realizable if it is accepted by foreign countries so that the separate trade

³⁰⁸ *OL K 467*, 131/1915.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 11.

³¹¹ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, p. 215.

³¹² On Jagow’s memorandum, see *Fischer*, p. 256.

³¹³ See the report probably compiled by Gratz who participated. *OL K 255*. Presidential. Economic compromise 1906–1917.

³¹⁴ The report on the Vienna talks on November 17–20. See also *REZsL Tisza*, item 44.

policies of the two great powers can be maintained". To Tisza's satisfaction, the Austrian industrial circles also took a stand against the customs alliance at the Austro-Hungarian-German economic talks which were held in Vienna on November 17-20.³¹⁵ Following the Vienna talks, the official reply of the Monarchy, dated November 22, was "brief and reserved".³¹⁶

Having achieved nothing with the Hungarian government or the leaders of the economy, either the Germans tried collaborating with pro-German members of the Hungarian opposition (Andrássy and Apponyi). Since several members of the Austrian Reichsrat also supported the plans envisaging the closest possible contacts between the Monarchy and Germany, the German leaders also tried to influence the Hungarian politicians through these members. These Reichsrat members drew up a project which they wanted to have approved by certain members of the Hungarian parliamentary opposition. Tisza learnt about this with great indignation and wrote to Burián at once.³¹⁷ He also wrote to Albert Berzevitzy, then president of the Hungarian Academy, who had also been approached in the matter and who was on good terms with Andrássy and Apponyi: "They want to make the Monarchy their vassal. Anybody with the slightest trace of Hungarian national pride must reject any such Zumutung (I can find no Hungarian word for it) with indignation."³¹⁸ Thus, the official talks between the German and Austro-Hungarian governments were postponed, and only started in late April 1916. Even then, however, it was decided that the issues would be studied by special committees.³¹⁹

SETTLING IN OCCUPIED SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

Serbia, which was occupied in the autumn of 1915, was put under military administration. The Morava river became the boundary line of the Austro-Hungarian and the Bulgarian occupation zones. The chief aim of the Hungarian government was that the military government, when dealing with political and economic questions, should act in accordance with the Hungarian government's intentions. They also encouraged the economic experts to take action in Serbia. On October 30, Tisza wrote to Leó Lánczy, the chairman of the Trade Bank: "I should very much desire that some of our best industrialists should go and

³¹⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 273, 291.

³¹⁶ *Gratz-Schüller, Äussere*, p. 12.

³¹⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 347.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

³¹⁹ *Gratz-Schüller, Äussere*, pp. 45-50.

inspect the northern and southern occupied territories," because, although the government intended to send suitable persons there to study the economic conditions, "no bureaucratic procedure could replace the personal involvement of the interested industrialists themselves".³²⁰

The Hungarian prime minister also went into the details of the policy concerning the occupation of Serbia: "The Hungarian government," he said in Parliament, "is of the opinion that if only from the language point of view, it is much more expedient if the Russian-Polish territories are administered primarily by an Austrian staff. It has also declared, on the other hand, that should Serbian territories be occupied, primarily Hungarian administrative personnel would have to be employed there for the same reason... When organizing the military government in Serbia, it should also become clear that these territories mainly fall into the sphere of interest of the Hungarian nation, and this, I think, should be manifest in the organization of administration as well as in the future treatment of Hungarian citizens by the same administration not only in the interest of Hungary, but in that of the whole Monarchy."³²¹

This policy of the Hungarian government was contrary to the plans of the chief of staff and of the AOK. Conrad intended the military government to be an introduction to annexation and the establishment, within the Monarchy, of a South Slav union under Croat leadership. Therefore, he wanted to use the military government to thwart the political and economic aspirations of the Hungarian government. In the beginning the only thing the Hungarian prime minister was able to achieve was that one of his own men, Lajos Thallóczy, a head of department in the common Ministry of Finance, became the civil commissioner of the common civil government in Serbia (*Landeszeivilkommissar für Serbien*). Thallóczy, who took office in Belgrade in January 1916, tried to make Tisza's ideas prevail, but with not much success. "The officials," he wrote in his report dated February 8, "are engaged without any method. They are consistent in one thing: anyone who is Hungarian is politely shown the door."³²² Having achieved nothing, he lost interest, and asked to be transferred to Albania. Tisza, however, persuaded him to go on: "Hold out, do not start discussions of principle about your sphere of authority if you are not obliged to, and try to be as useful and improve the situation as much as possible". Burián wrote to Thallóczy to a similar effect, and informed Tisza about: "I made him understand that I would not send him there (i.e. to Albania — J. G.), and that he should hold out patiently in Belgrade, as his main task, for the time being, is not to make a career, but to get information".³²³

³²⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 347.

³²¹ *Képviselőház*, December 9, 1915.

³²² *Tisza*, Vol. V, p. 1.

³²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

In mid-March, Tisza went to the general headquarters in Teschen where he had talks with Chief of Staff Conrad and Commander in Chief Archduke Frederick, trying to persuade them that in civil matters the military government in Serbia should follow the instructions of the Hungarian government. He reported to Thallóczy on the results of the discussions in his letters of March 22 and 30: "The governor will be instructed to inform you and ask your opinion about all important administrative matters". Archduke Frederick also promised that he would replace the chief of general staff of the Serbian military government. "My general impression is," Tisza wrote, summing up his talks, "that the matter is being arranged, even if slowly. We should not take amiss or be discouraged by the initial difficulties."³²⁴

Already in March, Tisza was considering a visit to Serbia. As he wrote to Thallóczy: "My trip will of course be of a private nature, as I have now no official authority in Serbia ... I am not aiming at a show-off, but I want to see things for myself and talk a few things over with the gentlemen there."³²⁵ Tisza's trip to Serbia took place in mid-May. On returning from the three-day trip, he sent a lengthy letter to Archduke Frederick, asking him once more to replace the leaders of the military government in Serbia. He also stressed that in administrative and economic matters the Hungarians should get their way there. Tisza sent copies of this letter to Conrad and Burián.³²⁶ As a result of Tisza's interventions, the military leaders in Serbia were relieved. The new governor-general (General Rhemen) and his chief of staff (Colonel Kerchnawe) handled civil affairs according to Burián's and Thallóczy's intentions, the latter being primarily instructed in Serbian economic and civil matters by Tisza. A few months later, in late September, the military and civil government of Serbia were separated. The civil management was headed by the civil commissioner (i.e. Thallóczy).

The situation was different in Montenegro, which asked for peace in January 1916, before its military occupation. Tisza wanted to give a positive answer to their request and conclude separate peace.³²⁷ He thought that if no occupation took place, it would also put a brake on Vienna's annexation projects. No separate peace was concluded, however, and a military government was established in Montenegro too. The Hungarian government could not even try obtaining the civil government there. However, it often criticized the steps taken by the Montenegrin military government.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9, 20-21.

³²⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 369-373.

THE "EASTERN MISSIONS"

In late 1915, at the height of the Monarchy's military successes, the Hungarian government sent a high-ranking official to Constantinople secretly instructed to explore the possibilities of economic influence. The confidential report the ministerial counsellor sent on January 8 was not very promising: "At the present moment, German economic influence is almost absolute. The financial system of the Ottoman empire relies almost exclusively on income from customs duties, a source of income which has been almost completely blocked since the war. Therefore the entire Ottoman economy is running on German money. Not only the war costs are covered by the Germans, but the salaries of civil servants, etc. are also covered by German loans. As a consequence, economic life is obviously restricted... The transport companies, which are subordinated to the Ministry of Defence, and public transport are under complete German control not only because the Ministry of Defence is under German military influence, but because each of its departments has a chief or at least a senior official who is German... There is no doubt, however, that not only the military, but also the civil administration and institutions will soon be saturated with German instructors and officials..." In these circumstances, the report stressed that it was "necessary, on the one hand, that we should act in full agreement with the Germans in the concrete economic questions, but that we should simultaneously prepare the ground for our future predominance through constant and extensive actions".³²⁸

The method which seemed the most appropriate for preparing action in Turkey was the one which was often applied in underdeveloped countries: penetration under the cover of religion. A few persons had drawn attention to this possibility already at the beginning of the war. For instance on January 16, 1915, Bishop Antal Nemes had sent a letter to the Premier: "Your Excellency! It is well known that the Turkish Imperial government has expelled the French missionaries from its territories both in Europe and in Asia Minor... May I ask your Excellency if it would not be appropriate to take the opportunity which has now offered itself to establish an eastern protectorate which would have so many political and economic consequences? ..." Tisza at once submitted the proposal to the foreign minister who, although not supporting it fully, stressed: "If this plan is feasible from the political and military points of view, we shall do our best to make use of the present situation and strengthen our prestige among the Catholics of the East".³²⁹

In a book published in 1915, the primate of Hungary offered the Church's help for the economic and political influence of the East: "After the war the horizon

³²⁸ *OL K 467*, 7/1916. Report of Imre Bálint.

³²⁹ *OL K 467*, 19/1915.

of our country will also widen. Our country will play a greater part on the international stage. New markets will open up before us in the Balkans and in the friendly Turkish empire... It would be a great pleasure for the Church of Hungary if, following the happy victories, its priests and envoys, like the priests of other countries, could become pioneers for our country abroad through the creation of spiritual relations.”³³⁰

In the autumn of 1915, the situation of the moment was favourable for the Central Powers. In November 1915 a delegation of German Catholic religious and secular leaders was sent to Vienna and from there to Budapest to start the action in the East and to co-ordinate it with the similar actions taken by their Austrian and Hungarian colleagues.

A confidential meeting, presided over by the primate of Hungary, was held in Budapest on November 26. Among those present were the archbishops of Eger and Kalocsa, Prelate János Molnár, as well as other ecclesiastic personalities like Béla Bangha, Sándor Giesswein and the Catholic politician Károly Huszár, etc. The government attached particularly great importance to the meeting, which the Minister of Religion and Education Béla Jankovich also attended as well as his undersecretary Kuno Klebersberg. The German participants included, among others, Erzberger, the leader of the Catholic Centre Party. The presiding Hungarian primate spoke openly at the confidential meeting: “The time for action has come. The road to the East is open.” The German delegate did not beat about the bush either: “The German, Austrian, and Hungarian element must gain access to Turkey. Ecclesiastic persons might encounter more confidence than civilians. Therefore it is advisable that missionaries should start preparing the ground.” The archbishop of Kalocsa also rose to speak. According to the minutes, he “considers it necessary to establish certain spheres of interest. Thus, from the geographical, ethnological, and political points of view he wishes to reserve Bulgaria and Albania for the Monarchy.” A committee, presided over by the archbishop of Kalocsa, was elected to organize the Hungarian participation in the “Eastern missions”. Finally, the emissary of the government thanked the organizers for “calling this highly important conference”. Already the next day the primate reported in a letter to the common foreign minister of the Monarchy on the conference. In his reply, the common foreign minister assured the primate of the support of the common cabinet and of his personal goodwill: “I myself follow with keen interest the efforts made by the Catholic circles of the Monarchy and hope they will result in the strengthening of our political and economic influence in the Near East”.³³¹

³³⁰ J. Csernoch: *Egyház és háború* (Church and War), Budapest 1915, pp. 13–14.

³³¹ EPL, Cat. D/a 1195–1916.

A few weeks later, on December 20, German, Austrian, and Hungarian prelates had talks in Munich under the chairmanship of the cardinal archbishop of Munich. A Hungarian delegation of five, led by the archbishop of Kalocsa, attended this conference. One of the participants, Antal Buttykai, wrote in his memoirs: "The Central Powers wanted to extend their influence towards the East, i.e. to the Holy Land, and would have liked to cover their plans, which obviously served strategic purposes, with the mosquito net of the missionary activities of the Church".³³²

In late 1915 the Hungarian government presented a Bill concerning the recognition of the Islamic religion, and the act was in fact passed in 1916.³³³ It was expected that in return, the Catholic missionaries would get more freedom of action in Turkey.

During the organization of the "Eastern missions" there were differences of opinion between the German and Austrian prelates on the one hand, and the Austrian and Hungarian prelates on the other. These differences reflected the rivalry of the three countries over the issue of penetration into Turkey. The German missionaries laid their hands not only on the Italian and French missions that had been abandoned at the outbreak of the war, but often on the Austrian ones too. In general they were much more active than the Austrians. But there were disputes between the Austrians and Hungarians, too. The Austrians wanted to establish joint missions with the Hungarians, led by Austrian friars, while the Hungarians insisted on having at least a few independent institutions.³³⁴ There was a further difficulty: the attitude of the Vatican was not clear. The Vatican could not support openly the missionary plans of the Central Powers in the Near East, since this would have meant open antagonism with the other belligerent coalition, which the pope wished to avoid.

In late March 1916, however, they thought the time had come for announcing the movement openly and for organizing its social support. At the 1916 general assembly of the Saint Stephen Society the primate called attention to the program in an unusual speech: "Time has come for us to act. We must not delay any more. If now, at the time of raging war, we are looking for contacts with Turkey in the economic field, the emissaries of the Church should also start out, because the missionaries normally precede those who establish the economic contacts, what is more, they usually prepare the ground for the latter... Thus Hungary will step out from the shadow of anonymity which has covered her activities until now... It is with the greatest hopes that we start the first Hungarian missionaries on their

³³² A. P. Butykai: *Találkozásaim Bangha Bélával* (My Encounters with Béla Bangha), Budapest 1940, pp. 10-11.

³³³ *Corpus*, Law XVII of 1916.

³³⁴ *EPL*, Cat. D/a 1195-1916.

eastward journey towards the kins of our Turanian race, and it is with great enthusiasm that we shall organize at home their replacement and supply... Besides Turkey, our attention is drawn automatically to Bulgaria, Albania, and the other Balkan peoples as well."³³⁵

However, the military defeat suffered by the Monarchy and Germany in the summer of 1916 threw cold water on their hopes. The ecclesiastic circles sounded the retreat: "For the time being," the primate wrote in March 1917, "I consider all major agitation useless, because the fate of the Holy Land will be decided by war".³³⁶ In March 1917, the episcopate took a similar attitude in the question of Bulgaria: if the Central Powers win the war, actions can be taken, "but if not, they (i.e. the episcopate — J. G.) regard any effort too early as futile".³³⁷

THE ZIMMERWALD MOVEMENT AND THE HUNGARIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

By the second year of the war all the belligerent countries had suffered severe losses, and the back areas were going through great hardships. The anti-war mood of the working class grew stronger. In 1915 there were important strike movements in almost all belligerent countries. The growing activity of the left wing socialist groups, which had opposed the war from the beginning, had more and more influence.³³⁸ The growing pacifist mood made the centrists, too, demonstrate their pacifism against the war.

In the late spring and early summer of 1915 — after it had become completely obvious that the International Socialist Bureau (whose seat had been transferred to the Hague in neutral Holland after the occupation of Belgium) and the Scandinavian and Dutch parties had failed to bring together those social democratic parties which supported the respective belligerent governments — the Italian and Swiss socialist parties began to prepare an international conference of the parties which opposed the war. The conference met in Zimmerwald, in Switzerland, on September 5, 1915. The second conference was held in Kienthal in April 1916. At both conferences the centrists were in majority, and they took an essentially pacifist stand. They rejected the war and its supporters; those more to the left even demanded fighting against the war.³³⁹ The Zimmerwald movement gave an impetus to the anti-war movement of the working class in the belligerent countries.

³³⁵ *Csernoch*, pp. 36–57, 61.

³³⁶ *EPL*, Cat. 46, 1435–1917.

³³⁷ *OL Püsp. Konf.*, March 18, 1917.

³³⁸ *Jemnitz*, pp. 81–82.

³³⁹ On the conferences, see *Vadász*, pp. 98–156.

In Hungary it was in the second half of 1915 that the conditions became ripe for a pacifist movement. War propaganda had lost some of its earlier effect. In the summer of 1915 and in the second half of the year there were many signs of a spontaneous mass movement caused by discontent. For instance such a sign was the "hunger riot" in Csepel, where on June 9 two thousand people were rioting due to the shortage of food. Eight policemen were wounded during the riot. Reviews of these events were banned from the press.³⁴⁰ Other similar signs were the wage-movements in factories and the mood prevailing against the war-loans in October.³⁴¹ The mood of the working class, as well as the fact that after the Zimmerwald conference the pacifist movement strengthened in Germany and Austria, favoured the development of a pacifist movement in Hungary. Under the government of Count István Tisza, however, the creation of a legal pacifist movement was impossible.

The leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary made several attempts at joining the peace movement in this period. Their letter of July 15, 1915 to the International Socialist Bureau, in which they asked for convening the parties composing the Bureau in order to start discussions on peace, was no more than a very faint sign in this direction,³⁴² since preparations were already being made for convening the Zimmerwald conference. And these preparations did not originate from the Scandinavian and Dutch parties, who were regarded as partisans of the Bureau. In such circumstances this letter is not only a sign that the Social Democratic Party was making a, however small, step towards the peace movement, but also that these steps did not lead to Zimmerwald. The leaders of the Social Democratic Party were looking for paths leading to the peace movement along which they would be able to walk legally. Zimmerwald did not seem to be such a path.

When it again became apparent that the Bureau was powerless, the leaders of the party tried after all to take steps toward the Zimmerwald movement, although they did not send representatives to the conference, as it was not legally possible. On September 5, 1915, the meeting of the party stewards decided to "start the peace movement within the bounds of possibility," and to "propagate vigorously the idea of peace".³⁴³ A manifesto was drawn up to this effect which, however, could only appear half a year later in a periodical.³⁴⁴ Yet, on September 25, *Népszava* published an article praising the Zimmerwald conference: "This meeting gave expression to the desire of the international working class for peace, stressed the importance of loyalty to the basic principles of socialism and to the idea of

³⁴⁰ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 218.; *MMTVD 4/B*, p. 107.

³⁴¹ *MMTVD 4/B*, pp. 114-116.; *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 188-189.

³⁴² *MMTVD 4/B*, pp. 128-129.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

class struggle, protested against the imperialist conquering intentions, professed the self-determination of peoples and nations, in a word, it was a profession of faith in the basic political principles".³⁴⁵ Nothing more happened, however, since it was impossible legally to go further and start organizing mass actions. It was also typical that the party encouraged the movements protesting against the high prices and the shortage of food, but refrained from other mass or factory actions, only trying to call meetings.³⁴⁶ Later it welcomed Károlyi's parliamentary peace initiative, which was also possible within legal bounds.³⁴⁷

The government and the police closely followed the tentatives of the Social Democratic Party,³⁴⁸ which contributed largely to the fact that the latter did not overstep the legal bounds. The chief of police reported on December 8: "I have the party activities constantly watched, but have not observed so far that the decisions the party took after the Zimmerwald conference would be more revolutionary in character than before or that the party would have taken any initiative".³⁴⁹

The feminist movement seems to have gone the farthest. From September 15 on, the blank spaces in the *Nőmunkás* (Woman Worker) due to the censors became larger and larger. Later the feminists' association decided to organize a peace demonstration, which resulted in the banning of their meetings.³⁵⁰

As to the army command, it did not tolerate the activities of the Social Democratic Party even within the limits permitted by the government. They prohibited the distribution of socialist publications that had appeared before the war even in the army.³⁵¹

Thus, in the autumn of 1915 the Social Democratic Party tried to dissociate itself from the warsupporting policy and was inclined to adopt the ideas of the Zimmerwald movement, yet the adoption of a pacifist policy did not in fact take place. The main reason for this was the fact that the Social Democratic Party could not legally adopt such a policy. Tisza's government did not tolerate any pacifist movement or propaganda, not even to the extent the German and Austrian governments tolerated them. It permitted the expression of a desire for peace in a general form, but only if it was not accompanied by any mobilization. A typical manifestation of the government's attitude was the position taken up by the press censors' committee concerning a poem expressing the desire for peace: "*Népszava* as a socialist paper cannot be expected to give professing its principles

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 139–140.

³⁴⁶ *Népszava*, November 29, 1915. „Ankét a drágaságról” (Conference on high prices).

³⁴⁷ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 145–147.

³⁴⁸ *OL K* 578, Cat. no. 278. See outside of file; and *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 69.

³⁴⁹ *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 141.

³⁵⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 222–223.

³⁵¹ *OL K* 578, Cat. no. 398.

up completely, especially if it professes them not in serious articles, as the Germans do in their newspapers day after day, but in a poem, almost in platitudes".³⁵² No more was permitted by the government; thus, no pacifist policy or movement was possible legally, not only in 1915, but in 1916 either. The party leaders' rejection of the pacifist movement was primarily due to their anxiety about their legality. There was a second factor as well: the leaders of the Social Democratic Party continued to identify themselves with the minimum war aims, i.e. the policy of safeguarding the empire. "The victory of the Entente Powers," Garami wrote in the May 1916 issue of *Szocializmus*, "will at best result in the dismemberment of the weakened Monarchy and in one of the bits becoming an 'independent Hungary' ... Although from different points of view, but the dismemberment of Hungary no more serves the interest of the Hungarian working class than that of the ruling classes ... The organized workers of Hungary had to arrive at this 'patriotic' attitude, and this is not only the consequence of the pressure of war, but also that of objective factors due to the situation."³⁵³

In early 1916 the party leadership turned again to the International Socialist Bureau. As the negotiations and interventions carried on by the Bureau were not linked to any anti-war movement, only encouraging contacts between the socialist parties of the belligerent countries, the governments of the Monarchy did not prevent its social democratic parties urging the initiatives to be made by the Bureau. In January 1916 Manó Buchinger and Ernő Garami went to The Hague via Berlin and urged the Bureau to start initiative for a peace agreement. Their idea of this was returning to the *status quo* with two modifications: the recognition of Poland's independence and a referendum to be held in Alsace-Lorraine on its belonging to France or Germany. The initiative of Buchinger and Garami brought no result.³⁵⁴ In early 1916, the party leadership was getting farther away from the Zimmerwald movement even as compared to the stand they had taken in the autumn of 1915. They now rejected joining the Zimmerwald movement formally too, saying that such a movement was inopportune.³⁵⁵ As to the appeal of the Kienthal conference, *Népszava* did not even mention it. *Világ*, the bourgeois radicals' paper, reported on it in May 1916.³⁵⁶

³⁵² *OL Belügyminisztériumi iratok*, 5289/5/74 (Papers of the Ministry of the Interior).

³⁵³ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 180–181.

³⁵⁴ M. Buchinger: *Tanúvallomás* (Testimony), Budapest 1936, p. 19.; *MMTVD* IV/B, pp. 174–176.

³⁵⁵ *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 178.

³⁵⁶ Az új Internacionálé (The New International), *Világ*, May 5, 1916.

THE "GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE"

In 1915 and 1916 the economic difficulties grew harder. It was primarily the masses of workers who suffered from the inflation, the high prices, and the shortage of food. According to Teleszky's calculations, the cost of food for a worker's family of five rose in the following way: taking the costs at the outbreak of the war as 100, they rose to 215.9 a year later, and to 325.8 after another year. Thus, in the summer of 1916, they had to spend more than three times as much money on food as immediately before the war.³⁵⁷ At the same time, wages only rose by about 50 per cent. According to other calculations, taking the year 1913 as 100, the index of the cost of living, which includes, besides food, all other necessary commodities, rose to 190 in 1915 and 278 in 1916.³⁵⁸ The situation differed greatly in the various branches of industry, too. As compared to the iron industry, it was worse in the clothing, building, and food industries, and even worse in the other branches.³⁵⁹

In 1915 the number of economic movements grew, and there was increased agitation in the militarized factories. The trade union leaders wanted to give these movements a direction which would not come up against the state power. They drew up the workers' wishes and forwarded them to the ministers of defence and trade. In several belligerent countries, in Austria for example, there were already arbitration boards which, taking partially into consideration the grievances of the workers of factories which took part in war production, mediated between the workers and the owners.³⁶⁰ The leaders of the Hungarian trade unions, especially of the ironworkers' trade unions, also wished to set up such committees.

In the first years of the war the government tried to counterbalance the agitation of the working class mainly by the militarization of factories: "Militarization," the minister of defence said later at a government meeting, "primarily covered firms and factories whose workers had shown an unreliable or even turbulent behaviour so that the interest of the state demanded that they should be under complete military discipline".³⁶¹ The militarization of factories was accompanied by a considerable strengthening of the repressive apparatus in the areas inhabited by workers.³⁶²

³⁵⁷ Teleszky, p. 58.

³⁵⁸ Szterényi-Ladányi, p. 228.

³⁵⁹ I. Nevelő: A munkásosztály helyzete Magyarországon az első világháború idején, 1914–1917 (Conditions of the Working Class in Hungary During World War I), *Századok*, No. 6/1956, p. 1226.

³⁶⁰ Szterényi-Ladányi, p. 84.

³⁶¹ *Min. tan. jkv*, February 7, 1918, p. 392.

³⁶² It is typical from this aspect that it was the time when the authority of the Budapest police was extended to the big workers' town of Csepel. *Képviselőház, Irom.*, no. 1317.

Due to the deterioration of the living and working conditions, the workers started to protest in the militarized factories too. In order to ensure undisturbed production, the government thought it necessary, besides the maintenance of repressive measures, to settle these affairs peacefully. It was with this intent that the grievance committee was established in early 1916. All during the second half of 1915 the trade unions had been urging this decision.³⁶³ Thus, the whole initiative had started with the trade unions. The factory owners, however, were against the trade unions' proposal, but the government found it a suitable project to work off the workers' unrest and to ensure that war production could go on undisturbed. In such circumstances the establishing of the grievance committee seemed to be a success achieved by the trade unions.

On January 17, 1916, was published the decree of the minister of defence which regulated the situation of the workers of militarized factories. At least 20 per cent bonus was to be paid for overtime; regular working hours could not exceed those in force before the war, but according to the needs of the war, the factory management could demand overtime. In addition to regulating the wage and living conditions, the decree specified the establishing of a grievance committee. A representative of the minister of defence was the chairman of the committee which included two representatives of the trade unions, two of the owners' unions, and a delegate of each the ministry of trade and the military authorities. The committee had no right of decision, but if no peaceful agreement was reached, it could forward the affair to the competent minister. With its sphere of authority thus limited, the grievance committee did not correspond to the hopes of the government or of the trade union leaders.

In the summer of 1916, there were serious agitations for higher wages in several highly important factories, in the Diósgyőr Ironworks, the Weiss Manfréd Cart-ridge Factory, etc., involving many workers, and martial law was introduced on several such occasions.³⁶⁴ The government wished to avoid further similar events by the more efficient functioning of the grievance committee. The leaders of the Social Democratic Party also asked the government to act to this affect. On July 13, the minister of the interior reported to the premier that Garami and Buchinger had called on him asking for the reorganization of the grievance committee. "They stressed repeatedly that they personally understood that the interests of warfare did not permit the workers to use the weapon of strikes, which is legitimate in peace, in the present conditions, and that they personally were ready to do their best to convince the workers of this. Their words, however, could not have any

³⁶³ *MMTVD 4/B*, pp. 153-154.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-168, 195-202.

weight if the hard situation of the workers which they had exposed was not acknowledged."³⁶⁵

On July 19, 1916 a new decree was issued, giving the grievance committee power of decision and at the same time modifying its composition. The delegate of the minister of defence remained its president, but in addition to him, the committee now only included four members, the delegates of the trade unions, the factory owners' union, the minister of trade and the minister of finance. To expedite the transaction of affairs, several sub-committees were set up which examined the complaints.

In the great majority of the cases, the grievance committee complied, partially or entirely, with the workers' demands. In 1916, it could still keep in check the increasing economic struggle of the working class by remedying their grievances to a certain extent and by increasing the role of the trade unions, which was shown by the sudden rise of the number of members in 1916. Later, however, in 1917, the grievance committee was no longer able to bridle the strikes organized by the workers.

PLANS FOR A LAND REFORM

The grievance committee had been set up with the purpose of checking the ever increasing economic movements organized by the working class. In order to pacify the peasantry, a few leaders promised them large-scale settlement programs and a land reform in 1915-16. Those who drew up these plans (Loránd Hegedűs, Emil Nagy, etc.) in fact wished to preserve the system of large estates intact. Their plans had hardly any influence on the peasants and soldiers.

Greater success was achieved by the Bishop of Székesfehérvár, Ottokár Prohászka, who moved a resolution at the 1916 general assembly of the Hungarian agricultural Association (OMGE) proposing to "give land to the heroes". If this proposal were realized, he said, this would be "the greatest land reform since 1848". According to his plan, the owners of entailed, church and public funds estates exceeding 10,000 *holds* (appr. 5,700 hectares) would sell or lease land to the state against a suitable price or rent. On the estates thus bought or leased the state would create 200-acre medium-sized farms and 8- to 20-acre small holdings, to be leased primarily to soldiers who had distinguished themselves on the front, to veterans, and war widows. Expropriation or land distribution were not even mentioned. The bishop in fact proposed a land-lease system in which the state would take the place of the capitalist leaseholder, which would be positively to the advantage of the landowners. Prohászka himself stressed this, lest the members

³⁶⁵ REZsL Balogh, parcel 9.

of the National Agricultural Association should misunderstand him, saying: "The payment of rent by the state, as opposed to the private leasing system, excludes all risk, constituting a permanent contribution".³⁶⁶ Primate János Csernoch was of the same opinion. He was speaking strictly to the point, saying that the episcopate did not object to the state helping veterans settle on the "estates of the Church which are for sale or to be leased".³⁶⁷ *Népszava* at once saw through the project which was to be "the greatest reform since 1848": "Bishop Prohászka's wish, if it were to be realized, would be an excellent bargain for the prelates. It is commonly known that the Church estates, when administered by the prelates themselves, are not very profitable, while leasing them causes the prelates as beneficial owners great worries, and at the same time does not always ensure a suitable income. Thus, it is quite natural that the Church would be willing to lease its estates to the state for a high, sure, and permanent rent."³⁶⁸

In fact it was the government itself which had been behind the whole idea of settling the soldiers on the Church estates. Already in 1915 it had confidentially informed the episcopate of its wish to give the distinguished and disabled soldiers land or land-lease after the war and that "subject to certain conditions, naturally," it was expecting Church estates as well to take part in the project. The episcopate's answer stressed that "the best solution would be if the state bought the lands designed for the settlement program and collected the instalments from the settlers, since it is difficult for the Church as owner to collect the instalments".³⁶⁹ The government thanked the episcopate for its willingness to help the governments' plan "by ceding the estates which are to be sold for a suitable price".³⁷⁰ It was this confidential plan which was now made public by Prohászka who wished to take advantage of it politically, but neither the episcopate nor the government liked what he did. When agreeing to the government proposal, the episcopate had specified that "by no means should we create the impression that forced seizure or expropriation is taking place". Although Prohászka also stressed that he was suggesting voluntary surrender of the estates, they were afraid that by making allusions to 1848 the bishop might create misunderstandings.

The Christian socialists received Prohászka's social demagoguery with more understanding. The April 23, 1916 issue of *Igaz Szó* published the bishop's proposal, explaining it in an editorial: "At the end of the war social struggle will strengthen and sharpen... The Christian socialists must prepare for this with all their might, since the trends which the upsurge of the social struggle will find

³⁶⁶ *Alkotmány*, April 4, 1916.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, April 16, 1916.

³⁶⁸ *Népszava*, April 14, 1916.

³⁶⁹ *OL Püsp. Konf.*, October 27, 1915.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, March 22, 1916.

unprepared, will be absorbed by those other trends which, by keeping abreast of developments, will gain impetus and become dominant."³⁷¹

In June 1916, Parliament also discussed the question of the land reform. In answer to a proposal of a larger-scale reform the prime minister stressed: "I do not think that we should turn our agrarian laws upside down, and I do not think that we should engage in a process of quick transformation".³⁷² From other declarations of his, which were made off the record, it was evident that he contemplated no state measures to be taken besides settling the decorated and invalid soldiers.³⁷³

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON PEACE

After the successful Serbian offensive which followed the eastern advance of the summer of 1915, the Hungarian government circles expected to realize to the maximum their aims in the Balkans which could be achieved through the war.

At the same time the Hungarian prime minister knew well that in a lasting conflict the Central Powers would be defeated. In late December he wrote to Burián: "We shall have to spare our forces and obtain peace in not too long a time, or else we shall run into a shortage of men and economy which, even if it does not lead to our defeat in this war, may result in lasting paralysis and endanger our future".³⁷⁴ He did not expect a victory similar to that of the Balkans on the main (the Russian and French) fronts, but thought that if they showed resolution the Entente would be willing to conclude peace not much later on the basis of the victories the Central Powers would have achieved by then. As the Entente Powers were by no means inclined to this at the moment, a peace proposal would be considered a sign of weakness. Although he did not forbid the confidential peace feelers of the social democratic leaders, he did not favour them either. The Hungarian premier was of the opinion that the Central alliance should make it know how much it was determined to go on with the war. Only this, together with the victorious battles, could soften the enemy enough to start talks on peace. This government opinion corresponded with that of the German and Austrian leading circles. In such circumstances the war leaders of the Central Powers were touched on a sore spot when Mihály Károlyi started to urge a peace initiative in Parliament in December.

After the failures of the first year of the war and Italy's entry, in spite of the successes achieved in 1915 the group of the Party of Independence led by Károlyi

³⁷¹ *Igaz Szó*, July 23, 1916.

³⁷² *Képviselőház*, June 16, 1916.

³⁷³ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 3-4.

³⁷⁴ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 338.

thought a German defeat probable. On seeing Naumann's and other projects, they did not expect much good from a German victory either, which would mean the realization of the Mitteleuropa project with Hungary playing a subordinate role in it. This group now considered the earliest possible conclusion of a peace agreement the most expedient solution.

On December 7, 1915, Mihály Károlyi made a speech in the Hungarian Parliament which attracted great attention. It was for the first time that in the Parliament the issue of a peace initiative was raised: "We must now answer a question. This question is that of peace — peace which we have refused to talk about until now, since we have always started from the right principle that this question can only be raised when we have achieved complete victory... I think it impossible that this question should always be treated as *noli me tangere*."³⁷⁵ He also urged domestic reforms. He submitted a motion for the introduction of universal secret suffrage. Károlyi's action took the government unawares. Just before calling this session Tisza had informed the chairman of the House of Representatives that "only the Central Corporation of Banking Companies is likely to be attacked on a larger scale".³⁷⁶ Károlyi's proposals were rejected not only by the government party, but also by the opposition. In the name of the government, the prime minister immediately took a stand against him: "We must go on resolutely with the war... Nobody in the Hungarian nation would wish to conclude peace before we have created the conditions of an honest peace which will ensure our security and future greatness." In a speech he made a few weeks later, Tisza voiced his opinion that even preparations for a transition to peace economy were inopportune. "We are in a war," he said, "in which we have achieved great victories, but the end of which we cannot see clearly. Today all the energies of the entire nation, of the government, and of society must be concentrated on solving the tasks set by the war. This in itself is a reason why I do not think it right to start a large-scale action which would take the attention of society off today's great tasks and turn it to the problems of a future that is yet, alas, uncertain."³⁷⁷

Andrássy, too, disapproved definitely of Károlyi's attitude both in the question of peace and that of universal suffrage: "It is undeniable that there is now an objective possibility of peace ... In spite of all this I shall not take a single step towards a peace action... I must state with the greatest regret that unfortunately by all appearances our enemies have not yet definitely accepted the present day outcome of the fights and still want to do their utmost to reverse the tide. Therefore, I hardly think we could achieve any result in this respect as yet."

³⁷⁵ *Képviselőház*, December 7, 1915.

³⁷⁶ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, p. 197.

³⁷⁷ *Képviselőház*, February 23, 1916.

Instead of Károlyi's motion on suffrage he proposed Rakovszky's former proposition about the heroes' right to vote and, as against Károlyi, he stressed the necessity to reinforce the *Treuga Dei*, i.e. to suspend the party fights during the war: "We ought to limit to a certain extent our opposition struggle... We do not now think it necessary... to put on the agenda our program as a whole or partially."

Rakovszky, entirely in accordance with Andrassy, also took a stand against the peace action. He once more introduced his motion on "the heroes' right to vote". As the rules of the House did not permit a rejected proposal to be reintroduced during the same session, now he asked for the right to vote to be given to those over 22 (as against over 20 in his former proposal).³⁷⁸

Two days later Apponyi made a speech which was highly noteworthy, since he was following Andrassy more and more, although he was still in the same party as Károlyi. His train of thought was similar to that of Andrassy: "At any moment when our adversaries also acknowledge that refraining from actions doomed to failure serves their interests, too, at any such moment we are ready to make peace... Until, however, they acknowledge this and until we have achieved the aims that had moved us to enter this war against our wish, there can be no question of our entering any peaceful agreement or even peace talks." At the same time Apponyi did not openly reject Károlyi's attitude, but everybody knew what he was speaking about. Tisza did not beat about the bush, and said after Apponyi's intervention: "I repeat that the other day, at the meeting of the House the day before yesterday, I already declared quite clearly that I agreed entirely with Count Gyula Andrassy's declarations. I can now say the same concerning the statements made by Count Albert Apponyi as well".³⁷⁹ Although Apponyi expressed his agreement with Károlyi's proposal about universal suffrage, his entire attitude showed that the divergence, not even a new one as concerned the question of foreign policy, was increasing within the Party of Independence between the two leaders and the groups supporting each of them.

Besides Károlyi's followers in his own party it was only Prelate Sándor Giesswein who made an intervention in support of his stand. Giesswein was an interesting figure of Hungarian political life. He sincerely abhorred the war and was really working hard on the implementation of the social reforms the Catholic movement insisted on. He took the demand of universal suffrage and other reforms very seriously. As a result, later he had trouble with the Christian socialist leaders and the other prelates. Károlyi's speech, he said, "was inspired by real democratic ideas... I also consider very opportune the classic words Count Mihály Károlyi uttered at the last session about peace".³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, December 7, 1915.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, December 9, 1915.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

It was especially the Germans who objected to Károlyi's attitude. From now on they would do their best to shut him out from Hungarian political life. The Germans were working on a new, large-scale plan of attack and firmly rejected the thought of a peace agreement. One of the purposes of Kaiser Wilhelm's visit to Vienna on November 29, 1915 was also to reach a uniform stand with Francis Joseph, who was more inclined to a peace agreement. In fact, in the autumn of 1915, the Central Powers made inquiries, through the mediation of Sweden and Switzerland³⁸¹ and the social democrats, about the eventual peace conditions of the Entente. It became evident that returning the occupied territories and ceding Alsace-Lorraine were essential conditions.

The December debate on peace was repeated six months later. The speakers had not changed their stand and spoke to the same effect as six months earlier. Károlyi again demanded an initiative for a peace agreement on the basis of the *status quo*. The government and the other tendencies of the opposition insisted on perseverance and rejected the thought of a peace initiative, which would be considered a sign of weakness.³⁸² In May 1916, Burián thought it a mistake even if the leaders of the Monarchy made a declaration about "welcoming" an eventual American peace mediation, as "in many places, it would be considered to be a sign that we are flagging".³⁸³

During the late 1915 and early 1916 session, the polarization within the parliamentary opposition was becoming more and more marked. Károlyi's group took a step further as compared to their attitude in the spring of 1915. As to the moderate trends of the opposition, they again approached the attitude of the government. In the spring of 1915 they had also demanded that the government should resign, while now, on seeing the victories, they returned to the policy they had adopted at the beginning of the war, i.e. supporting the government unconditionally. Tisza immediately took advantage of this, and invited Andrassy, Apponyi, and Aladár Zichy for confidential talks in late September. After this, he would inform Andrassy in advance about the motions to be submitted to Parliament.³⁸⁴ During the session of late 1915, these opposition leaders aimed at co-operating harmoniously with the government and even reproached Tisza for not taking their loyalty into account and not giving the opposition enough information. The premier stressed in his answer, "I am at your disposal at any time... I shall endeavour to inform you about all important questions, even in the most confidential matters".³⁸⁵ Following this, he in fact gave regular information to the lead-

³⁸¹ *Margutti*, pp. 450-451.

³⁸² *Képviselőház*, June 14-15, 1916.

³⁸³ *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 202-203.

³⁸⁴ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 178-179, 279-281.

³⁸⁵ *Képviselőház*, December 11, 1915.

ers of the opposition, i.e. to its "confidential council", Andrassy, Apponyi, and Rakovszky.³⁸⁶

The contact between the moderate groups of the opposition and the government became closer, in spite of the fact that Tisza rejected not only Károlyi's proposals concerning peace and universal suffrage, but also the reformist endeavours of the moderates as well. "The reason offered by Count Gyula Andrassy," Tisza said, "for not accepting the draft resolution introduced by Count Mihály Károlyi moves me not to accept the other draft resolution (that of "the heroes' right to vote" — J. G.) either... For great deceptions would be waiting for those who think that the acceptance of the draft resolution submitted by Mr. Rakovszky will not prejudice this entire problem in a wider and more stable context."³⁸⁷ The premier was confident that his policy of the "strong hand" would prevent domestic "troubles", and therefore he refused to make any concession. However, even the moderate groups of the opposition considered some kinds of reform necessary, although they agreed with the government in rejecting the demand of universal suffrage.

Only to a slight degree did the sharp debate of December 1915 on the establishment of the Central Corporation of Banking Companies disturb the harmony which existed in this period between the moderate opposition and the government. On December 21, 1915, Apponyi and Andrassy asked the House of Representatives to strike this question off the agenda in the interest of the undisturbed relations between government and opposition. Apponyi argued that through the Central Corporation the government was able to exert direct influence on all banking institutions and would thus acquire unrestricted power in the country's financial life. Tisza insisted that the bill should be discussed, and he was supported by the majority of the House. At that moment the opposition ostentatiously left the session-room. This incident, while it did not yet break the collaboration of the government and the opposition, was a sign that economic problems were now also contributing to the sharpening of divergences.

³⁸⁶ Gratz, Vol. II, p. 34.; Tisza, Vol. V, pp. 203–206.

³⁸⁷ *Képviseelőház*, December 7, 1915.

THE SHADOW OF DISASTER

On the basis of the military successes they had achieved, the Central Powers wanted to force the issue in 1916, before they would run short of their reserves. They thought that after the defeat it suffered in the summer of 1915 the Russian army would not be in an efficient state for a long time, and thus it would be possible on that front to settle down to trench war, which would require relatively few troops. With the troops withdrawn from the eastern front they would reinforce and start attacks on the other fronts. Already in early August 1915 the Monarchy's minister of foreign affairs noted this plan in his diary: "There is a prospect of solution by not concerning ourselves about the war with Russia beyond the zone destroyed and finishing with France, Italy and Serbia".³⁸⁸ After the occupation of Serbia the German general staff wanted to deal the main enemy a decisive blow, i.e. was planning an offensive on the western front. The Austro-Hungarian general staff, however, was planning an attack on Italy.³⁸⁹ They agreed, however, that after the victory on the French and Italian fronts they would start onslaught on the eastern front.

The German campaign started in February 1916. The battle at Verdun was one of the bloodiest in the war. It went on for five months and entailed great sacrifices on both sides.

The battle for Verdun was still going on when in mid-May, after holding out against the Italian attack in the fifth battle of the Isonzo (March 9–17, 1916), the Monarchy launched an attack on Italy from South Tirol. They planned to attack from the rear and encircle the Italian troops fighting at the Isonzo. They were so sure of victory that they appointed the heir to the throne commander of the 20th Army Corps, which took part in the campaign.³⁹⁰ The beginning was prom-

³⁸⁸ *REZsL Burián*, item 84. Diary 1915.

³⁸⁹ *Krieg*, Vol. III, pp. 604–607.

³⁹⁰ *Werkmann*, p. 17.

ising. However, the campaign could not develop fast enough and the Italians were able to redeploy their troops for defense in time. In June, the campaign had to be abandoned without having achieved any success, because an unexpected Russian offensive had started in the meantime.

The great naval battle which the Germans started in order to break through the blockade also met with failure. The greatest naval battle of the war was fought on May 31 and June 1, 1916, at the entry of the Skagerrak, next to the Jutland peninsula. Over 250 ships took part in it. The losses were considerable on both sides, but Britain's naval superiority, which ensured the blockade of Germany, remained intact.³⁹¹

SERIOUS DEFEAT FOR THE MONARCHY. BRUSILOV'S OFFENSIVE

Unexpected resistance at Verdun and in South Tirol was not the only reason why the Central Powers' plans for 1916 failed. Another reason was that the Russian forces, which they thought to be unsuitable for action for a long time, belying the ideas of the German and Austro-Hungarian generals, retrieved their losses and under the command of General Brusilov started a large-scale attack on the lines of the Monarchy on June 4. From several respects, Brusilov's tactics were new. Thus, for example, he prepared the attack by a short, but carefully aimed cannonade, which did not cease when the infantry set out, but accompanied it. Since until then, attacks had always been preceded by long shell-fires which ceased when the infantry started out, so by these tactics Brusilov's attacks could take the enemy by surprise.³⁹² Already on the second day the Russians forced their way into the Monarchy's position in a zone 25 kms wide and 6 kms deep, and during the next few days, they enlarged the breach to a width of 85 and a depth of 40 kilometers. From June 7 on, the troops of the Monarchy were retreating in disorder, the 4th and the 7th Army scattered. By mid-June the road was clear to Lemberg and the Carpathian Mountains.³⁹³

From early July, simultaneously with Brusilov's offensive, the Entente's counter-attack became even stronger on the western front too, at the Somme. They could thus prevent the Germans from dispatching great forces immediately to the eastern front.

The Monarchy not only had to abandon the attack in South Tirol, but even had to draw away all available troops from the Isonzo front. This gave the Italian

³⁹¹ *Concise*, pp. 242-246.

³⁹² *Krieg*, Vol. IV, p. 366.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 400.; *Concise*, pp. 155-156.

army the opportunity for a successful attack. In the sixth battle of the Isonzo (August 7–17) the Italians achieved considerable success by capturing the town of Gorizia.³⁹⁴ Thus, in the summer of 1916 the Entente started counter-attacks on all three fronts.

Brusilov's offensive was more and more successful, and the Monarchy was suffering extremely heavy losses. The Russian army took almost 300,000 prisoners, and the casualties amounted to a further 200,000.³⁹⁵ The army of the Monarchy was on the brink of complete breakdown.³⁹⁶ Although the Austro-Hungarian army was to fight for two more years, it was incapable of any separate action during all that time and was only able to hold the fronts in co-operation with the German troops. Due to lack of reserves it could not undertake any large-scale fighting similar to the earlier fights. This is clearly shown by the proportion of the losses before and after July 1916: almost three times as many soldiers fell in the first period as in the second, and the number of prisoners was more than three times larger.³⁹⁷ In the last two years of the war the Monarchy's army was vegetating.

THE CREATION AND PROGRAM OF KÁROLYI'S PARTY

The dramatic change in the military situation of the Monarchy began in the second half of June 1916 with the advance of Brusilov's offensive. The effect of the acute crisis was different on the two groups of the parliamentary opposition led by Andrassy, Apponyi, and Rakovszky on the one hand and Károlyi on the other. The attitude of the first group approached more and more that of the government and they even accepted the fact that the government blamed them for the failure. "The Army Act was passed two years later than it ought to have been," the finance minister said, referring to the fact that in the years preceding the war the opposition had blocked the bill. This remark was rejected, yet the ensuing debate hardly prevented the union becoming closer. The moderate opposition spared the government, preferring to attack Károlyi: "Insisting on and demanding peace at a moment when it cannot be concluded means doing the enemy a service," Andrassy said in Parliament.³⁹⁸

The opposition groups co-operating with the government were also worried by Romania's expected entry into the war. On June 28 Rakovszky interpellated, asking the government whether steps had been taken to reinforce the Transylvanian

³⁹⁴ *Concise*, p. 166.

³⁹⁵ *Krieg*, Vol. IV, p. 663.

³⁹⁶ *Julier*, p. 179.

³⁹⁷ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, pp. 46–47.

³⁹⁸ *Képviselőház*, July 6, 1916.

border. On July 4, in a break in the Parliament's meeting, Andrásy, Apponyi, and Aladár Zichy went to premier and asked him to keep them regularly informed about the foreign situation. The next day Andrásy publicly repeated their request in Parliament, asking that the leaders of the opposition be informed about foreign policy actions to be taken "in time for them to be able to express their opinion before the responsible persons before any decision is taken".³⁹⁹ Tisza gave heed to the request and the sovereign also agreed to the leaders of the opposition being informed beforehand, but only in questions of foreign affairs. As the head of the cabinet bureau wrote to the prime minister, "His Majesty considers it inadmissible that the information given to the opposition leaders should also cover the military situation".⁴⁰⁰ A Foreign Affairs Council was set up (which, however, did not last very long). Andrásy, Apponyi, and Rakovszky were its members.⁴⁰¹ They received regular information not only from the prime minister, but after the latter's intervention, directly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well. The sovereign also received the leaders of the moderate opposition in these hard days. All these were signs that the views of the opposition and of the government were getting nearer to one another.

As to Mihály Károlyi and his immediate circle, Tivadar Batthyány, Lajos Holló, Márton Lovászy, Gyula Justh, and János Hock, the conclusions they drew from the worsening military situation were quite different. It seemed, as Károlyi wrote in his memoirs, that "the moment had arrived when with our anti-German policy we would have to demonstrate and show the world outside Hungary that there was a party in Hungary which was ready to break with Germany, conclude a separate peace and orient itself toward the Entente".⁴⁰² Since Apponyi's policy was running in the opposite direction, demonstrating Károlyi's policy demanded a breach within the Party of Independence. The primary cause of the breach, as we have just seen, was the difference in the views concerning the orientation of Hungary's foreign policy. In the critical military situation Apponyi, clinging more and more to the German alliance, got closer to the government whose policy had always been pro-German, while Károlyi wanted to take the opportunity to conclude a separate peace. On July 8, Károlyi resigned the presidency of the Party of Independence and left the party, the majority of which stood by Apponyi's pro-German and government-supporting policy. The immediate reason for Károlyi's step was his disapproval of the Foreign Affairs Council. In his letter of resignation, meant to be made public, Károlyi hinted at the essential point: "The divergences

³⁹⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 232-233.; *Képviselőház*, July 5, 1916.

⁴⁰⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. V, p. 237.

⁴⁰¹ *Andrásy*, p. 135.

⁴⁰² *Károlyi*, p. 180. (Faith, p. 74.)

culminate in the problems concerning the Hungarian nation and the war".⁴⁰³ Károlyi was followed by about twenty members of Parliament, but, as he wrote in his memoirs: "Many members of the Károlyi Party only left the Party of Independence with me because for some personal reason they could not get on within the party".⁴⁰⁴

The statutory meeting of the new party was held on July 18. The party kept its old name, "Independence and '48" Party. Their program was published in the July 18 issue of *Magyarország*: peace without annexation and the safeguarding of Hungary's territorial integrity, personal union, separate customs area, issuing bank and army for Hungary, universal suffrage with secret ballot at 24, social policy, agrarian policy, etc. The party did not work out a nationality policy in a positive form, and they were not planning any change in the question of nationalities. Károlyi's party came into conflict with the government which was conducting the war, because the latter stuck to the German alliance and did not look for possibilities of a separate peace, but on the whole, they continued to regard the war as a defensive one which was going on for the country's integrity. "The Hungarians are defending their country," Károlyi said in the speech he delivered when the party was formed. The government, however, was not representing this fight correctly. "The nation should not only give, it should also receive something," because this would increase the fighting spirit.⁴⁰⁵

On August 9, the next meeting of Parliament, Károlyi once more expounded his views and justified the breach in the party. He stressed that he was not putting off the fight for the program of independence for after the war, but on the contrary, he would most vigorously stand out for it during the war too, and would not make peace with the government. Furthermore, he thought it necessary that the nation's wish for peace should be expressed, and the question of peace be dealt with continually.

In his intervention, Apponyi considered the breach unjustified since, as he said, the existing differences mentioned by Károlyi were not so serious and could not justify a split. "In objective questions of domestic policy there is no difference at all between us. There may only be shades of differences." At the same time, Apponyi also hinted at the fact that there were in fact serious differences between them concerning the orientation of the country: "We are attached to the alliance which is one of the bases of our security".⁴⁰⁶

Károlyi's party supported a peace agreement which, from Hungary's point of view, would be concluded practically on the basis of the pre-war *status quo*. In

⁴⁰³ *Magyarország*, July 10, 1916.

⁴⁰⁴ Károlyi, p. 183.

⁴⁰⁵ *Magyarország*, July 19, 1916.

⁴⁰⁶ *Képviselőház*, August 9, 1916.

questions of home policy, their program was not a radical one, although more stress was now laid on such questions than before. Yet, the creation of the new party caused a considerable storm among the upper-class politicians, who accused Károlyi of disrupting the unity and helping the enemy. "The creation of Mihály Károlyi's new party will have a harmful influence as regards our enemies," wrote Tisza's paper, the *Igazmondó* (Soothsayer). "It encourages the peoples of the Russian-English-French-Italian alliance to continue the war."⁴⁰⁷ This attack, however, only contributed to the peace-loving masses' sympathy for the new party. Károlyi's party succeeded in appealing to the pacifist masses. The social democratic press also appreciated the creation of the new party. According to *Népszava*, all parliamentary opposition parties were "sub-offices" of the governing party. This, however, was something different. "The declarations of the new party show that Justh and Károlyi are aiming higher and are breaking off completely with the reactionary forces represented by Tisza... It is with a courage and clarity uncommon in Hungary that they are steering their new party's ship towards the shores of a new Hungary." At the same time, *Népszava* criticized the weakest point of the new Party of Independence, namely that its policy concerning the national minorities was essentially identical with that of the government and its "sub-offices".⁴⁰⁸ The real importance of the creation of the new party is not that Károlyi's policy became more radical, but that he now overtly chose a different road from his earlier companions of the upper-class opposition, Andrassy, Apponyi, and the others. There had been important divergences between them, but they had belonged to the same party until then. Now their ways separated, for the moment primarily on account of divergences over foreign policy issues. But separation from and increasing opposition to the upper-class opposition at the same time meant approaching the left, and the new party leader started to do so, even if all the new party did not. Later too, it was also primarily the foreignpolicy orientation that separated Károlyi's party as a whole from the mother party, but the leader himself also got nearer and nearer to the socialists. Most of his followers did not like this very much: "During World War I Károlyi turned more and more to the left," Countess Károlyi wrote in her memoirs, "and became the worst enemy of German imperialism and militarism, because he knew that as long as Hungary remained an ally of Germany, it would prevent the creation of a democratic Hungary. He only had a handful of followers in Parliament, and these agreed with his foreign policy and anti-German attitude, but watched with anxiety his attraction to the socialists."⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ *Igazmondó*, July 19, 1916.

⁴⁰⁸ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 207-209, 211-213.

⁴⁰⁹ Mrs. M. Károlyi: Károlyi Mihályról (On Mihály Károlyi), *Párttörténeti Közlemények*, 1963. 3, p. 159.

The man-of-the-street started to turn his attention to Károlyi. The more and more unbearable circumstances of life and the heavy losses gave rise to increasing despair, and the desire for peace gained more and more ground among the population. This was the basis of the extensive spreading of pacifist thoughts and ideas in 1916. "The masses which were tired of war, the masses which hated the war understood the step I was taking," Károlyi wrote in his memoirs, "and began to see in me the man who might deliver them from utter misery".⁴¹⁰

ROMANIA ENTERS THE WAR

A Romanian attack was once more to be feared after the defeats of the summer of 1916. In early July the Hungarian premier thought such an attack probable. On July 7, he sent a memorandum to the sovereign saying that the further advance of the Russians would probably result in a Romanian intervention. Therefore, no matter how much forces were needed to contain the Russians, the defense of the Romanian border was to be reinforced and Bulgaria made to concentrate considerable forces on its Romanian border.⁴¹¹ A week later he wrote to Burián: "Let us not delude ourselves. The Romanian danger is very serious and may become a reality at any moment." He repeated the proposals he had made in his memorandum of July 7: the most important thing was "the greatest possible increase of the Bulgarian pressure, and the military occupation of the Transylvanian passes to a certain degree". However, he did not consider all these measures sufficient, and therefore suggested asking for German help. The Monarchy should renounce Poland in favour of the Germans, thus perhaps getting the latter to give quick military help on the Russian front, in which case the Monarchy would be able to release troops for the defense of Transylvania. "The impending catastrophe now really relegates to the background the future fate of Poland."⁴¹² On July 22 he sent another memorandum to the sovereign: "Since then (i.e. since the memorandum of July 7 — J. G.), the situation has become much more critical," and the danger of a Romanian attack can be probably only be diverted by concentrating military forces on the western and southern borders of Romania.⁴¹³ Tisza even considered a temporary occupation of the frontier regions by Romania a dangerous probability. It would affect the political attitude of the Romanian minority of Transylvania and would also be dangerous from the economic point of view.

⁴¹⁰ *Károlyi*, p. 181.

⁴¹¹ *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 239–244.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 245–248, 252–254.

⁴¹³ *Teleszky*, p. 363.

Even a temporary interruption of the production of the Petrozsény coal mines might cause serious damage and increase Hungary's dependence on German coal.⁴¹⁴ Such an occupation would also set back considerably stockbreeding in the border countries.

While the fight was going on at Verdun, the French government was particularly urging Romania to enter the war and encouraging the Russian government to satisfy to the maximum Romania's demands in the Bukovina issue. At the same time together with Great Britain, they considered the Romanian demands for the areas extending as far as the Tisza river, exorbitant.⁴¹⁵ By this time the Romanian government was certain that the Entente Powers should in the end win the war, but only wanted to enter the war at a moment when not even a temporary superiority of the German forces was to be feared in south-eastern Europe. In June and July the Romanian government held direct secret talks with the Entente Powers, which were now particularly urging for their decision.⁴¹⁶ It was only the Romanian socialists who still clung to the policy of neutrality. In early 1916 the Romanian Social Democratic Party and the trade unions had issued a joint declaration to which they continued to adhere now: "Your enemies are not in Hungary, Russia, or Bulgaria, but here in the country".⁴¹⁷ On August 17 the Romanian government concluded a secret agreement with the Entente in Bucharest: Romania committed itself to attack the Monarchy before the end of August and to break off economic relations with Germany. In return the four Entente Powers recognized Romania's claim to Transylvania, Bucovina, and part of the Banat. The treaty not only promised Romania the annexion of the territories inhabited by Romanians, but also accepted for the most part the territorial claims of the Romanian government which went beyond the national unity. The Entente Powers assured the Romanian government of Russian military help and promised that the troops at Salonica would engage in vigorous action and thus contain Bulgaria.⁴¹⁸

On August 27 the Romanian government declared war on the Monarchy. Following this, three of the four Romanian armies (altogether 500,000-strong), the 1st and 2nd and the 4th, invaded Transylvania, while the other one prepared for the defense of the Bulgarian border. The Monarchy had no reserves, and thus

⁴¹⁴ According to the September 7, 1916 issue of *Budapesti Hírlap*, the livestock in the counties bordering Romania numbered 2 million sheep, 1 million cattle, and half a million pigs before the war.

⁴¹⁵ *Fest*, pp. 34–35.

⁴¹⁶ *Paleologue*, Vol. II, pp. 299–330.

⁴¹⁷ Documente din Miscarea Muncitoreasca 1872–1916, Bucuresti 1947. See, *Századok*, Nos 1–4/1950, p. 441.

⁴¹⁸ *May*, Vol. I, pp. 257–258.

there were only 34,000 troops and 76 guns for the defense in the beginning. The Romanian onslaught advanced in Transylvania.⁴¹⁹

The Monarchy, which had already been unable to defend simultaneously the Russian and the Italian fronts, could not master the situation alone. The Germans, however, redeployed their forces and were able to dispatch help beginning the end of August. "The year 1916" — as Kiszling, an Austrian war historian, wrote — "was full of crises for the Central Powers, Austria-Hungary was on the brink of collapse. Had Romania started its attack six or only four weeks earlier, a military catastrophe could hardly have been avoided. By the end of August, however, there were already enough troops to prevent the new enemy's unhindered advance."⁴²⁰

GERMAN AID AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In the autumn of 1916 it was primarily the German troops which saved the Monarchy from military collapse. Although the attack of the Entente forces at the Somme was increasing, the German military leaders were obliged to transfer German divisions from there to the fronts of the Monarchy. On August 28 Germany declared war on Romania. As a reply to this, Italy sent its declaration of war to the German government, and on September 1 Bulgaria declared war on Romania. The German divisions which came to the aid of the Monarchy appeared on all three fronts, i.e. the Russian, Italian, and Romania ones. They cut off the Russian advance and took part in the seventh to ninth battles of the Isonzo (September to November 1916). Mackensen's army, attacking from Bulgaria, drove back the Romanians and occupied the greatest part of Romania, including Bucharest, by the end of the year.⁴²¹ The Entente, which Greece now joined openly (on November 25 the Prime Minister Venizelos declared war on Bulgaria and Germany against the wish of the king) started a relieving attack on the Salonica front, thus tying down Bulgarian forces. But this did not help Romania. About half of the Romanian soldiers were wounded, had died, or were taken prisoners. The remaining forces gathered in the northern part of the country, under the protection of the Russian army. The government and the king transferred their seat to Iasi.

In exchange for German military help, and this had been predictable, the Monarchy was to give up a considerable amount of its independence. Already on June 12, just after the Russian offensive had started, Foreign Minister Burián

⁴¹⁹ *Krieg*, Vol. V, p. 246.; *Deutschland*, Vol. II, p. 522.

⁴²⁰ R. Kiszling: *Österreich-Ungarns Anteil am ersten Weltkrieg*, Graz 1958, pp. 50–51.

⁴²¹ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, pp. 523–524.

noted in his diary: "Once more only German help can save us, our dependence is increasing".⁴²²

It had been agreed in principle earlier that the German and Austro-Hungarian forces would have a united supreme command. According to Burián's diary, this agreement had been made as early as November 1914, during the great fights on the eastern front: "United supreme command decided in principle".⁴²³ Realization, however, was limited to certain operations; Conrad was a fierce opponent of a united supreme command in German hands.⁴²⁴ In the autumn of 1916, the catastrophic military situation no longer permitted him to refuse to put into concrete form the earlier agreement of principle. Before deploying its forces against the Romanian attack, Germany concluded an agreement with the Monarchy on September 6, which was later acknowledged by the other two allied powers (Bulgaria, Turkey) as well: "In order to assure the unified command of the future operations of the Bulgarian, German, Austro-Hungarian, and Türkisch forces, His Majesty the Emperor of Germany takes over the supreme command of all operations in which the Central Powers and their allies engage".⁴²⁵ A few days before the agreement Hindenburg and Ludendorff had been appointed supreme commanders of the German forces. They essentially exercised the united military command.⁴²⁶

Conrad, who was certainly not very enthusiastic when the German generals were appointed above him, tried to take certain steps on his own. On October 16 the foreign ministry official serving as liaison with the AOK (Thurn) reported to Burián that Conrad was behaving as if nothing had changed and had said confidentially to friends that "our only real enemy is still Germany".⁴²⁷ Francis Joseph, unlike Conrad, considered it necessary that the German military command should be recognized in fact and not only formally. He himself had insisted on his own sovereignty over his army until then, but after the defeats of the summer of 1916 he no longer had confidence in the hitting power of the Monarchy alone.⁴²⁸ In late October Tisza, too, paid a formal visit to the German headquarters.⁴²⁹

The agreement on the united supreme command was a secret one. Károlyi

⁴²² REZsL Burián, item 85. Diary 1916.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, item 5. Diary 1913-1914. Entry on November 12, 1914.

⁴²⁴ Cramon, p. 70.

⁴²⁵ The text of the agreement is published by A. Arz: *Zur Geschichte des grossen Krieges, 1914-1915*, Wien-Leipzig-München 1924, pp. 127-128.

⁴²⁶ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, pp. 412, 513.

⁴²⁷ REZsL Burián, item 32.

⁴²⁸ Margutti, pp. 442-448.

⁴²⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 402-405.

heard about it somehow and interpellated in Parliament on September 20. Tisza, however, denied the existence of an agreement.⁴³⁰

In the yet unsettled foreign policy questions, too, the Monarchy was forced to capitulate. In April 1916 it had rejected the German attitude in the Polish question. Now they had to accept that the Polish territories which had until then belonged to Russia would become a German vassal state.⁴³¹ On November 5 the rulers of Germany and Austria-Hungary issued a joint declaration concerning the creation of an independent Polish constitutional monarchy, and the Germans in fact began to establish the puppet state.⁴³² They expected to raise a million Polish troops against Russia. "Thanks to our diplomacy," Bethmann-Hollweg said, "a million Polish soldiers will rush upon the Entente."⁴³³ The Polish declaration showed the world that the Monarchy had surrendered to Germany. This again undermined the prestige of the Monarchy abroad as well as inside the country.⁴³⁴

Germany was getting the upper hand in economic issues as well. It was now in a better position to oblige the Monarchy to accept the Mitteleuropa project. But this was not all. The depreciation of the Monarchy's currency as against Germany's which had already begun to worry the Hungarian government, now quickened considerably. As early as a year and a half before, in his letters of March 10 and 31, 1915, to the common foreign minister of the Monarchy, Tisza had considered it essential to obtain a large German credit of about 1,000 million marks, or else the Monarchy would only be able to meet its liabilities to foreign banks by drawing once more upon the gold reserve, which would result in the swift depreciation of the Monarchy's currency.⁴³⁵ In the first year of the war Germany had granted the Monarchy 300 million mark credit. Now, however, they flatly refused to grant the further 1,000 million marks, which greatly infuriated the Hungarian prime minister: "The refusal will have grave economic consequences" he wrote to Burián and "we will not then forget" the Germans' attitude in this matter.⁴³⁶ The small credit granted by Germany, as the Hungarian finance minister said at a cabinet meeting, "is not at all in proportion with the economic potentials of the two countries and with the burden which the war, waged for common aims, imposed upon the economies of the two countries. The most eloquent sign of this is the fact that our currency is constantly losing in value as against the currency of the German

⁴³⁰ *Képviselőház*, September 20, 1916.

⁴³¹ *Szokolai*, pp. 92-94, 109-110.

⁴³² *Fischer*, pp. 288-300, 340-343.; *May*, Vol. I, pp. 166-168.

⁴³³ *Szokolai*, p. 118. In fact, they only won a few hundred.

⁴³⁴ *Zeman*, pp. 109-110.

⁴³⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 157-158, 206-208.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 236-237.

empire."⁴³⁷ There was yet another way in which the Germans accelerated the depreciation of the Monarchy's currency: "At the exchange of goods their methods of calculation bordered on meanness," wrote the banker Simon Krausz. "Had they overcharged our account, it would have been understandable. But we had to buy the marks necessary for certain purchases in Germany. As a consequence, the rate of exchange of the crown against the mark fell considerably, which resulted in the first currency depreciation during the war, due to the short-sightedness of the Allied Powers." He also pointed out the advantages the German capital gained from the depreciation: "It is not true that we owed the Germans 4,000 millions. If they sent us 14,000 million worth of goods, and we sent them 10,000 million worth of goods, then the balance was 4,000 million, but if they made our currency depreciate by 30 or 35 per cent, this balance was only due to the rate of exchange and not to the fact that we gave them less goods than they had given us."⁴³⁸

Already in the first years of the war the German government had found ways to oblige Hungary to export to Germany a considerable amount of agricultural products, although these were needed at least as much inside the Monarchy. As to the methods used, we can learn about them from Tisza's complaint which he cabled to Burián in early 1915: "Germany refuses to transport to Hungary metals and other materials coming from Scandinavia and absolutely necessary for the manufacturing of ammunition, thus wishing to force us to allow the exportation of foodstuffs in return... It is highly regrettable that petty quarrelling over *do ut des* has become customary in the communication between the two countries."⁴³⁹

From the autumn of 1916 on, when the Monarchy was forced to become more and more dependent on Germany, German economic policy could prevail more freely over the Monarchy.⁴⁴⁰ Tisza, as it can be seen in the letter he wrote to Albert Berzeviczy on October 31,⁴⁴¹ continued to stress the economic independence of the Monarchy, but was less and less able to restrain the enforcement of the German demands. The Germans were hardly touched by what Tisza advised the foreign minister always to insist on, i.e. that the reason why the army of the Monarchy had become much weaker than the German army was that in the autumn of 1914 it alone had been sent to contain Russia, and "in this glorious action, which saved the whole war, our army had bled to death".⁴⁴²

⁴³⁷ *Min. tan. jkv*, June 5, 1915, p. 153.

⁴³⁸ *Krausz*, pp. 230–237.

⁴³⁹ *OL K 467*, 6/1915.

⁴⁴⁰ On this see, the talks of the joint ministerial council on September 8 and October 16, 1916. *Protokolle*, pp. 392–427.

⁴⁴¹ *Tisza*, Vol. V, p. 414.

⁴⁴² *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 117. Letter of January 3, 1917.

THE WORSENING OF THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.
DISPUTES BETWEEN VIENNA AND BUDAPEST

The army, which had suffered particularly serious defeats and great losses in the first year of the war already, and whose ulterior successes were only achieved by a great sacrifice of human and material means, made such demands of supply on the country that it was less and less able to meet them. The switchover to war economy and its constant extension could not, after the first one or two years, bridge the ever increasing differences between the demands and the available means, however much the consumption of the population was limited. The economy of the Monarchy was unable to satisfy the demands of this all-consuming long war. Already in 1915 there were grave economic difficulties, which became extremely serious in 1916. "The period of economic exhaustion and of the harmful effects of increasing inflation approximately began in mid-1916," Teleszky, the economic specialist of Tisza's government wrote later. Gusztáv Gratz had a similar view: "The year 1916 was that of increasing shortages, while 1917 meant a transition from shortage to dire need".⁴⁴³

During the entire period of war, the regular expenses of the Hungarian state remained on the same level as in the years preceding the war. At the same time, the state paid many times as much, 15,000 million crowns from the beginning of the war to the spring of 1917, to cover the mobilization expenses of the army and navy. By the end of the war this sum had risen to 25,000 million crowns.⁴⁴⁴ Finding all this money was only possible with the help of large-scale credit operations, domestic credits, and last but not least inflation. On the Zurich exchange, the currency of the Monarchy lost half of its value during the war.⁴⁴⁵ All this upset the balance of the budget. Expenses surpassed receipts by far.

The government tried to find a solution to the grave financial situation by increasing taxation. New taxes were introduced, like income tax, war profit tax, etc. A tax on larger flats was also planned, but the government finally abandoned the idea. All these measures, however, hardly slowed down the process of economic exhaustion.

In 1916 and 1917 cereal products covered only 62 or 63 per cent of the demand.⁴⁴⁶ The creation of a Provision Bureau and of a Food Administration Council at the end of 1916 could only result in a slightly more balanced distribution. Before the war, the Monarchy's annual need of coal had been 63 million tons. In 1915 85

⁴⁴³ *Teleszky*, p. 323.; *Gratz-Schüller*, p. 197.

⁴⁴⁴ *Teleszky*, pp. 67-100.; *Min. tan. jkv.*, July 3, 1917, p. 262.

⁴⁴⁵ *A Pesti Magyar Kereskedelmi Bank 100 éves története* (A History of the 100 Years of the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest), Budapest 1941, p. 148.

⁴⁴⁶ *Gratz-Schüller*, p. 46.

per cent of this amount was produced, in 1916 92 per cent, and in 1917, 87 per cent.⁴⁴⁷ The situation was similar with iron ore. Thus, in 1915 and 1916, and even in 1917, the coal and iron supply was not too bad. The problems were much graver in the clothing industry: the supply of both the army and the population with leather and textile goods lagged far behind the demands. The supply of cotton thread, for instance, only covered 88 per cent of the pre-war demand in 1915, 21 per cent in 1916 and 25 per cent in 1917. Another example: the demand of footwear of the army could only be met 70 to 75 per cent in the first half of 1917, and 50 to 60 per cent in the second half of the same year.⁴⁴⁸

The economic differences, which had always given rise to disputes between Vienna and Budapest within the dualist system, took a specific form during the war. The war expenses had to be met by the two countries of the Monarchy according to a certain quota, Hungary having a share of 36.4 per cent. This proportion may have been just when the common expenses of a peaceful period had to be shared, but it was by no means just when many times as much expenditure had to be covered. The maximum potential of Austria, which was better provided with capital and whose industry was more developed, was considerably greater than its quota. Thus, the increasingly stepped-up burdens which Hungary had to share according to the original quota exhausted the country earlier than they exhausted Austria. Since covering the expenses of the common army according to the quota was beyond dispute, the antagonism broke out in questions for which there was no preliminary and codified agreement. Since the outbreak of the war it had been a disputed question how the losses and damage caused by war actions should be replaced. The losses involved primarily Austrian provinces, and the Hungarian government was against covering these expenses from the common budget. In late August 1914 Burián cabled the prime minister asking the latter to approve of his having opposed the indemnification of damages in Galicia from the common budget. Tisza approved of this minister's attitude.⁴⁴⁹ After the summer of 1915 the dispute went on about the reparations in the reoccupied territories. As this also concerned territories belonging to Austria, the Hungarians did not regard these as common expenses, while the Austrian government demanded that they be shared according to the quota. Later there was an additional matter of dispute, i.e. how the war damages should be repaired after the war. In Hungary both the government and the opposition refused the possibility of the quota principle being applied.

The most serious disputes broke out in the questions concerning the covering

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 144.

⁴⁴⁹ *REZsL Burián*, item 41, book of telegrammes 1913–1914.

of the costs of provision. Already during the first winter of the war Austria found Hungary's shipments of agricultural products destined for the Austrian population insufficient. It was obvious that the expenses of the supply of the army with agricultural products had to be shared according to the quota, but the products themselves had to come to a much larger degree from Hungary, which was an agricultural country. This was past question. But the Hungarians were of the opinion that after supplying the army, first the demands of the country's own population had to be covered, and only the surplus was to be taken to Austria. As a consequence, there was a considerable difference between the food supply of Austria and that of Hungary, which in turn resulted in Austria's constantly urging for food rationing and more severe requisitioning. "Serious fighting was going on behind the scenes."⁴⁵⁰

The problem of food supply was a constant topic in the two prime ministers' letters to each other in late 1914 and early 1915. Before long, the Austrian and Hungarian papers were openly using polemics. This was highly inconvenient for the Hungarian government. In February Tisza suggested to Stürgkh on several occasions that both governments should ban, by censoring, the open debate on the problems of food supply.⁴⁵¹ Stürgkh, however, did not want to recur to this measure, on the contrary, he wished to influence the Hungarian government through Austrian public opinion. Tisza also wanted to influence the Austrian leading circles through Burián, who had been appointed common foreign minister in the meantime, by warning against too great expectations. He wrote on March 23: "The final result of requisitioning is not known yet... We can already see, however, that the situation is extremely serious, Hungary has hardly any surplus."⁴⁵² A week later the mayor of Vienna discussed the question of food supply openly. At this, Tisza sent a letter directly to the Austrian prime minister on April 2 saying that Austria's exaggerated expectations about requisitioning in Hungary were unrealistic.⁴⁵³

The crop of 1915 improved for a time the food supply, and the disputes calmed down temporarily, only to resume in November. Stürgkh again wanted more rigour in requisitioning in Hungary and also that all the cereals bought from Romania be transported to Austria, neglecting the earlier agreement, according to which 20 per cent was to be taken to Hungary. The common cabinet meeting of December 12, 1915 saw an especially passionate debate.⁴⁵⁴ Stürgkh got so excited

⁴⁵⁰ *Krausz*, p. 230.

⁴⁵¹ *Tisza*, Vol. III, pp. 118-119, 122.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁴⁵³ *HHSStA Kab.*, Parcel 20.

⁴⁵⁴ *Protokolle*, pp. 316-333.

that he had to leave the meeting.⁴⁵⁵ Heated debates continued in later years too, especially in the winter months.

Food supply was slightly better in Hungary than in Austria, but the provisioning of the great masses of the population of towns deteriorated greatly in Hungary too, while the coercive measures and requisitioning caused considerable despair in the villages. In the summer of 1916 the question of the mass antipathy toward the company which purchased the agricultural products with force for the army was discussed at a cabinet meeting.⁴⁵⁶

The war, however, was more and more demanding. In the autumn of 1916, the premier could not promise much good in Parliament: "The situation is serious. The amount of bread crops at our disposal is not enough to cover the regular demand, which means that the consumers will have to reduce consumption. They will not be able to consume as much as they have until now."⁴⁵⁷

THE QUESTION OF RENEWING THE ECONOMIC COMPROMISE BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY

The renewal of the economic agreement, which was concluded in every 10 years since 1867, was again put on the agenda of the negotiations between the Austrian and Hungarian governments from the end of 1915. For over a year the question was to give rise to heated debates. The Hungarian party had started the preparations for the renewal of the economic agreement, which would expire at the end of 1917, before the war. The preparations went on during the first year of the war as well. As renewing the agreement without change, even for a period longer than ten years, was in the interest of the Austrian party, it is natural that it was the Hungarians, who demanded some changes, who made preparations on a larger scale.⁴⁵⁸

In 1915, preparations for the renewal of the Austro-Hungarian economic compromise were influenced by a new factor: Germany was advocating an economic rapprochement or even a customs union between the Monarchy and Germany. It was obvious that first the question of the future economic relations between Austria and Hungary had to be straightened out, and only after this could genuine negotiations be held with Germany. From the spring of 1915 on, the German government was urging for high-level talks between the Monarchy and Ger-

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 201–202.

⁴⁵⁶ *Min. tan. jkv.*, July 21, 1916, p. 228.

⁴⁵⁷ *Képviseelőház*, September 29, 1916.

⁴⁵⁸ *OL K 255*, parcel 1198. Economic compromise 1906–1917.

many on economic relations. The Monarchy, however, and in this both governments agreed, tried to avoid genuine negotiations with the Germans. At the same time the Austrian government likewise put off negotiations with Hungary on the economic agreement. The Austrian government thought that the later the negotiations on the compromise began, the easier it would be to renew (alleging also the German pressure as a reason) the agreement in an unchanged form. "The Austrian strategy is obvious," Tisza wrote to Burián in early 1916, "they want to put off genuine negotiating until the German attitude forces us to sign an agreement on the basis of the *status quo*. And to this the Hungarian government can in no circumstances agree."⁴⁵⁹ The Hungarian government, which wanted to modify considerably the Austro-Hungarian economic compromise, wished to take advantage of the Germans' pressing, in contrast with the Austrian government, to force the start of preparatory talks concerning the renewal of the Austro-Hungarian economic compromise. Tisza took quick steps in the summer of 1915. He instructed the ministers in charge of economic matters to speed up work on the preparation of the talks. On July 27 he wrote to the minister of agriculture: "Concrete work should begin and our concrete claims to Austria formulated without delay... It is impossible for us to hold genuine talks with foreign countries as long as we have not made an agreement with Austria." At the same time he wrote a letter to Stürgkh, insisting that the Austrian government should also start preparations.⁴⁶⁰

The Hungarian government let the major economic organizations also take part in the preparations. The National Federation of Industrialists drew up a detailed and comprehensive memorandum surveying the economic development of the entire dualist period and demanding in the last analysis the loosening of the Austro-Hungarian customs union: "Too strict insistence on the principle of free circulation is the greatest hindrance to the industrial development of Hungary". The relation between the two countries of the Monarchy "would only become more intimate and closer if the economic relations of Austria and Hungary were settled in a way that would make it possible for both countries to protect openly by a contractual arrangement their own economic interests without damaging the interests of the other state, which is only conceivable through intermediate duties".⁴⁶¹

The project drawn up by the minister of trade before the war did not question the customs union itself, but by desiring a "more general revision" of the customs tariff and other modifications, it approached the points of view of the Industrialists' Federation. In Tisza's view the minister of trade had gone too far: his memo-

⁴⁵⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. V, p. 39.

⁴⁶⁰ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 113-115.

⁴⁶¹ *OL K 255*, parcel 1198. Economic compromise 1906-1917.

randum, he wrote, "raises a whole series of ideas which are not objectively in relation with the economic compromise and in part even contravene the Compromise of 1967. I consider the unnecessary raising of all these issues not only superfluous, but positively harmful, and advise striking them off the agenda." At the same time the prime minister also wished to make considerable modifications in the agreement which would promote the development of Hungarian industry.⁴⁶²

Negotiations between the two governments began at the end of January 1916. At the meeting held on January 28 and 29 the Austrian government suggested renewing the agreement without change to extend over the period of the long-term treaty to be concluded with Germany, i.e. to 25 or 30 years. Austrian Minister of Trade Spitzmüller represented the Austrian government in these questions. He had entered the Strürgkh cabinet in late November 1915 on condition that the government include in its program the conclusion of a long-term, at least twenty-year-long, agreement.⁴⁶³ The Hungarian government rejected both Austrian proposals and wanted to continue the negotiations where concrete propositions would be submitted and discussed. The Austrian government could not refuse this. The next meeting took place on February 7 and 8. Here the Austrians subjected the presentation and discussion of concrete propositions to conditions, namely that the Hungarian government should agree in advance to the new Austro-Hungarian compromise being concluded for the duration of the treaty to be concluded with Germany and to the quota problem being left out of the talks. During the discussion, the Austrian party abandoned these conditions following the protest of the Hungarians. However, they asked for the adjournment of the negotiations until the Austrian government took a stand as to how they should go on.⁴⁶⁴

On the day the talks had ended Tisza sent a report to the sovereign. He exposed in detail the stand taken by the Hungarian government and the Austrian government's attempts at temporization. He ended the report by declaring that if the Austrian government went on with these tactics, the king would have to take a decision, and if the latter was unfavourable for the Hungarian government, he himself would have to resign.⁴⁶⁵ Tisza sent a copy of this report to Burián too. In the accompanying letter he wrote openly, which was in fact obvious from the memorandum, that he wanted to exercise pressure on the Austrian government through the sovereign, and he wanted Burián, the common minister of foreign affairs to do so as well: "All constitutional factors should exercise increased pressure on the Austrians that they take the negotiations seriously". It is also clear

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*

⁴⁶³ A. Spitzmüller-Harmersbach: *Der letzte österreichische-ungarische Ausgleich*, Berlin 1929, p. 15.

⁴⁶⁴ *Gratz-Schüller*, pp. 15-20.

⁴⁶⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 30-39.

from this letter that Tisza was not systematically opposed to an agreement of over ten years duration, but would only accept it if his demands in other domains were fulfilled.⁴⁶⁶ He avoided asking for military concessions, but wanted the quota to be modified, the Kassa–Oderberg railway line to be connected directly with the German railway network, certain agrarian duties to be raised, etc.⁴⁶⁷

A pause followed, then the negotiations resumed in mid-April. "Although haltingly, our negotiations concerning the compromise are progressing," Tisza wrote to Pál Beöthy, the chairman of the House of Representatives on April 16. In his letters of April 16 and 20 to the heir to the throne he spoke of "welcome progress" which would bring "positive results" before long. His letter to Czernin had a similar tone: "I hope that in two or three weeks we shall be through with the essential points".⁴⁶⁸ Reconciling the differing stands was a long process, however. No agreement was reached about the duration of the new treaty. In early June Apponyi interpellated in Parliament about the Austrians' wanting a longer-term agreement.⁴⁶⁹

The Hungarian government concealed from the public the difficulties it had encountered in the talks. In March they restricted the reports about the talks in the papers of the capital and instructed the provincial papers only to report on them according to the papers of the capital.⁴⁷⁰

As a consequence of the serious military situation which followed Brusilov's offensive, the talks on the compromise were suspended. Later, when the military crisis let up slightly, they resumed. On October 13 Tisza wrote to Stürgkh that he hoped they would come to an agreement quickly.⁴⁷¹ A week later, however, Stürgkh died. It was Körber, the common finance minister, whom the Hungarian government had always found highly difficult to handle, who became the new Austrian premier. Körber did not approve of even the points of the agreement which had already been agreed upon and wished to revise a whole series of issues. Thus the negotiations would have had to start from the beginning. Tisza again appealed to the sovereign. In his memorandum of November 7 he reminded the king that the initial program of the Körber government had included among others, taking over and completing the half-finished work on the economic agreement.⁴⁷² Francis Joseph, however, had no time to intervene either: on November 21 he died. The talks were once more broken off.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴⁶⁷ *Spitzmüller, op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁶⁸ *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 39, 143–146, 167, 168.

⁴⁶⁹ *Képviselőház*, June 9, 1916.

⁴⁷⁰ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 310.

⁴⁷¹ *Tisza*, Vol. V, p. 377.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 417–420.

THE GENERAL OFFENSIVE OF THE OPPOSITION AND THE WEAKENING OF THE POSITION OF TISZA'S GOVERNMENT

In the early summer of 1916 there was some rapprochement between the moderate opposition and the government due to the critical military situation. The probability of a Romanian intervention, however, made the opposition careful, they did not want to share the responsibility of the government. On August 23 Apponyi, Andrásy, and Rakovszky announced in Parliament that they would no longer sit on the Foreign Affairs Committee, as they did not take the responsibility for the direction of foreign affairs. At the next meeting of the House, on August 26, they demanded the supervision of the Monarchy's foreign policy by Parliament. Andrásy proposed a motion to convoke the delegations without delay, and Apponyi a modification of the Compromise Act which would oblige the common foreign minister to appear before the Hungarian Parliament and give information. Both propositions stressed the sole responsibility of the government in foreign affairs, and both objected against it in the future. With this, even the moderate opposition turned against the government. In these days Tisza even contemplated by-passing the Hungarian Parliament.⁴⁷³ Finally he decided not to take this step, but prevented the leaders of the opposition intriguing against him from having access to the Court.⁴⁷⁴ And on August 27 he sent a circular to the members of his party asking them to by all means attend the next meeting, as "violent attacks had been made on the government".⁴⁷⁵

In the days following the Romanian intervention both the papers of the government party and those of the opposition supported the defense of Transylvania. *Népszava* also took a similar stand.⁴⁷⁶ In the first few days, the government papers reassured the Hungarian public that the defense was ensured: "Everything necessary has been done to assure the safety of our frontiers and the frontier population... Very great forces are stationed at the Transylvanian border."⁴⁷⁷ In fact, there were hardly any forces to defend the Transylvanian frontier, as warding off the Russian and Italian offensives had exhausted all reserve troops. A few days later it was discovered that the Romanian troops were advancing almost unhindered and the Hungarian population living near the frontier was fleeing towards the interior of the country. The opposition made the government responsible for the events. On the first session of Parliament following the Romanian attack,

⁴⁷³ A. Fussek: Ministerpräsident Karl Graf Stürgkh und die parlamentarische Frage, *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchiv* 1964/1965, p. 347.

⁴⁷⁴ *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 280-281.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁴⁷⁶ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 216-217.

⁴⁷⁷ *Budapesti Hírlap*, August 29, 1916.

on September 5, violent scenes took place. The leaders of the opposition stood out for a retaliatory war against Romania, but gave voice to their lack of confidence in the government: "After what has happened, they can no longer ask for unconditional confidence which would permit them to go on exercising dictatorial power without any control, criticism, or assent", Apponyi said. According to Andrásy every nerve had to be strained for the success of the war, "but at the same time we must do everything possible to have better leadership". Károlyi's speech had a similar tone, he also stressed the necessity to do the utmost against the Romanian troops, but also that "the men who had led the country so far should resign... The glass, which was full already, has overflowed today".⁴⁷⁸

In the second half of September a violent foreign policy debate took place in Parliament. The opposition unanimously demanded the resignation of Foreign Minister Burián and of Tisza. They also pressed for the convocation of the Delegations so that the foreign minister, who had been unable to prevent the intervention first of Italy and then of Romania, might be called to account. The temporary truce in the party fights which had been concluded at the outbreak of the war, and which Károlyi had already denounced, now broke up entirely and definitively. The opposition demanded the resignation of Tisza's government and the creation of a new cabinet which would include, besides the Party of Work, the parties of the opposition too. This government would ensure for itself the support of the masses by reforms. In addition, Károlyi and his followers wanted to take steps towards the conclusion of a separate peace.

The joint attack on the government once more temporarily brought closer the various groups of the parliamentary opposition. Now the moderates did not so categorically refuse Károlyi's proposal for a peace initiative based on the *status quo*, as they had done earlier and would do later after the slight improvement of the military situation. They strongly agreed with him that, primarily for reasons of home politics, the desire for peace should be made public. The moderates were of the opinion that insistence on the desire for peace and criticism of the foreign policy and of military "errors" were necessary, because this, as Apponyi said, "would steel the hearts against the hard ordeals that surpass all expectation until we can obtain a peace which would increase the guarantees of our national entity... By maintaining a smooth surface today we do not serve sufficiently the cause of the nation's innermost soul."⁴⁷⁹

Andrásy and Apponyi still stuck to the alliance with Germany. In this respect they still firmly dissociated themselves from Károlyi, whose party openly declared during the debate on foreign policy that it would perhaps be necessary to conclude

⁴⁷⁸ *Képviseelőház*, November 5, 1916.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, September 13, 1916.

a separate peace: "The community of interests has its own limits even in the case of allied partners who are in the closest relation with one another. We know that Germany's interests are much more far-reaching than ours... The most propitious moment for starting peace talks might not be the same for Germany and Hungary. Yet only we are competent to decide which is the most convenient moment for us to start the peace talks." Andrassy and Apponyi dissociated themselves from the remarks made by the speakers of the Károlyi party against the alliance with Germany.⁴⁸⁰

Tisza still refused categorically any opposition. He was of the opinion that resolution to fight had to be displayed, and thus he even disapproved of the public debate on peace. He had confidence in Germany's strength, consequently in a favourable ending of the war and also in his own ability to break down any inner "agitation". He saw in the debate on peace and in the insistence on the desire for peace a concession to pacifist mass feeling, and therefore took a strong line against them. He also refused any other concession too. Unlike Apponyi he did not want to make concessions to the "national soul". "At the present moment," he said at the end of the debate, "the continual public debating of these matters does not benefit the great public concern of the nation."⁴⁸¹ Burián did not take part in the parliamentary debate, since according to the Compromise Act the common foreign minister was represented in Parliament by the prime minister. He naturally approved of Tisza's attitude. "Such phenomena," he wrote to Tisza, "are politically harmful and should not be repeated."⁴⁸² The premier was able to ensure for himself and the common foreign minister the unanimous support of the Party of Work except for a single member who left the party and took Andrassy's side.⁴⁸³ The parliamentary majority of Tisza's party was beyond question, its position, however, was shaken by the attacks of the opposition, which also expressed the feeling of the masses.

THE DEATH OF FRANCIS JOSEPH AND THE ACCESSION OF CHARLES

On November 21, 1916 Francis Joseph died. His successor was the Archduke Charles, who was to reign in Austria as Emperor Charles I and in Hungary as King Charles IV.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, September 14, 21, 1916.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, September 21, 1916.

⁴⁸² *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 272-273.

⁴⁸³ *Képviselőház*, September 14, 1916. The speech of Béla Serényi.

The Hungarian political leaders received the change watchfully. Tisza's relations with the crown prince had been rather cold. In the summer of 1914 the Hungarian prime minister had immediately offered his services to the new heir to the throne through his lord steward, but had spoken in no uncertain terms of his own indispensableness: "As the responsible advisor of the Crown I consider it my pleasant duty to be at Your Serene Highness' disposal and to be of help in every respect in Your Serene Highness' preparation for his sublime task, and I should deem it a particular honour if Your Serene Highness availed himself of my services in this respect". The crown prince did not wish to avail himself of Tisza's services, although the latter repeatedly offered them to him in a similar tone.⁴⁸⁴ Neither did their relations become any friendlier during the princely couple's visit to Hungary in August 1915. On the occasion Tisza had handed the crown prince a lengthy memorandum about the constitutional situation of Hungary and its antecedents, especially the Compromise, "I should like to avoid even the appearance of wishing to give the heir to the throne a lesson on the constitution," he wrote at the same time to the head of the sovereign's cabinet bureau.⁴⁸⁵ In fact he wanted the new crown prince to understand that the Hungarian government would by all means stick to the dualist system. He was moved by similar motives when he sent Charles a copy of the memorandum which the Hungarian government had submitted to the common cabinet on October 6, 1916 and in which it had declared its insistence on the dualist principle being the basis of the distribution of the war conquests. A few days later he sent the crown prince a summary of the minutes of the Hungarian cabinet meetings relative to the subject, offering him a more detailed oral explanation. In his reply Archduke Charles thanked Tisza for the summary, but made no remark upon the oral explanations he had offered. The prime minister did not have much more success with the crown prince's wife.⁴⁸⁶

The cool relations between the archduke and Tisza did not diminish Tisza's influence on the leading circles of the Monarchy, as Francis Joseph did not share his authority with Charles. Only in the very last month of his life, in October 1916 did he consult the heir to the throne about the decisions he was about to make.⁴⁸⁷

Charles' dislike to Tisza was probably due to the earlier influence of Francis Ferdinand. By virtue of his morganatic marriage the latter had had to renounce on his descendants' inheriting the throne. His younger brother, Archduke Otto died early, thus at Francis Ferdinand's accession his brother's eldest son, Charles,

⁴⁸⁴ *Tisza*, Vol. II, pp. 26, 390-391.

⁴⁸⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. IV, pp. 80-95.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 206-207, 218-219.; Vol. V, pp. 110-112.

⁴⁸⁷ Berchtold's letters on October 8, 10, 1916. *Tisza*, Vol. V, pp. 373-374.

would have become the heir to the throne. It was for this reason that Francis Ferdinand, while heir to the throne himself, had paid great attention to Charles' education.⁴⁸⁸ Baron Werkmann, Emperor Charles' secretary, was also of the opinion that the divergence of opinion which arose between Charles and Tisza in early 1917 concerning suffrage and the policy towards the nationalities dated from much earlier.⁴⁸⁹

Tisza wished, and in this all the Hungarian leading classes agreed with him, the new sovereign to have himself immediately crowned king of Hungary, too. They were afraid that the new sovereign and his advisers tended towards reorganizing the Monarchy, and they saw in the coronation an assurance of the maintenance of the dualist system. On learning of Francis Joseph's death the Hungarian prime minister immediately travelled to Vienna and pressed for the coronation. As he could not speak openly, he advanced the argument that the budget of the following year had to be given royal assent in the current year and thus the coronation must take place before the end of the year. To comply with formalities he tendered the government's resignation, which the new sovereign did not accept. On November 23, Charles instructed Tisza in an open letter to make the necessary preparations for the earliest possible coronation.⁴⁹⁰

The Hungarian premier also wanted to take advantage of the coronation to strengthen his diminished prestige. Neglecting the protests of the leaders of the opposition, he himself wanted to assist at the coronation instead of the palatine, as that post had not been occupied since 1867. "I will not let the position I occupy in the country be impaired," Tisza wrote to the head of the cabinet bureau, "because it would be neglect of duty on my part to pass over in silence any action that would reduce my efficiency in the service of public matters".⁴⁹¹ According to the law, the deputy of the palatine, who had to assist at the coronation, was to be designated by Parliament.

After the adjournment of late September the Parliament met again on November 27. The discussion of the budget bill and of the question of indemnity once more led to a debate of confidence. Just as in September, the members belonging to the opposition demanded the establishment of a cabinet which would include all parliamentary parties, and a more flexible government policy. This debate was a short and relatively calm one, however, since Tisza promised to give the opposition an opportunity after the coronation for an extensive parliamentary debate.

⁴⁸⁸ J. Kristóffy: *Magyarország kálváriája* (The Calvary of Hungary), Budapest 1927, p. 423.

⁴⁸⁹ *Werkmann*, p. 113.

⁴⁹⁰ *Budapesti Közlöny*, November 24, 1916.

⁴⁹¹ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 66.

The Party of Work unanimously supported Tisza, and thus his designation as deputy palatine was certain. The opposition, however, to diminish further the prestige of the prime minister, nominated Archduke Joseph. Now Tisza insisted on being elected as against the archduke, which displeased even some circles not belonging to the opposition. Besides, the king himself would also have been more pleased, for religious and political reasons, with the appointment of the archduke.⁴⁹² The voting machinery of the Party of Work functioned perfectly in Parliament. The coronation took place on December 30 with Tisza assisting as deputy palatine.

⁴⁹² *Cramon*, pp. 109-110.

THE YEAR OF DECISIVE CHANGES

ATTEMPTS AT PEACE

In January 1917 the war had been going on for almost three years, and although both camps had a weak point, Austria-Hungary and Russia, neither side could expect a quick victory. With the continuing of the war, the exhaustion of reserves, the large-scale destruction of productive forces, and the extreme straining of the productive capacity of the national economies, held grave dangers for each belligerent country, namely the collapse of the normal system of economy. In addition, it also had to reckon with the possibility that the long war would revolutionize the people and jeopardize the existing social and political system. Therefore, at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917, the tendencies aiming at ending the war by agreement strengthened in the belligerent countries.

At the same time the other tendency was also present, which stood for continuing the fight until the final victory. In this case, the huge costs of the war and the difficulties of the transition to peace economy could be shifted to the losers after the victory. In addition, finishing the war on the basis of a compromise might give an impetus to the revolutionary forces, while a victory might be an outlet for the inner tensions. Besides, would it be possible to arrive at a compromise which would be considered realistic by all the interested parties? All these considerations strengthened the idea that the solution was to be sought in complete victory and for the sake of it all possible means had to be put into action.

In late 1916 and early 1917 the two tendencies, the aspiration to peace by agreement and the wish to continue the war until the final victory, existed side by side in the politics of the belligerent countries. The first tendency primarily characterized the leading circles of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and of Russia, while the greater part of the German, English, and some of the French leaders, especially the general staffs, were rather for continuing the war until the final victory.¹

The war had been easier to start than to end.

¹ *Taylor*, pp. 101-103.

At the time of Brusilov's offensive, as it appears from Margutti's notes, the thoughts prevailing in the court circles were fairly realistic. In June 1916 Francis Joseph said before Margutti that he would by all means end the war by spring adding, "I do not want us to be completely and irredeemably ruined".²

In July, Czernin, who was still envoy in Bucharest, was actually preparing the points of a peace proposal which, as he wrote to the Hungarian premier were to be presented "after driving the enemy back to their former position." Tisza showed undiminished fighting spirit on the outside. In the serious situation which developed after the summer of 1916, however, he too, as well as all the leaders of the Monarchy, was anxious to obtain peace. "The Central Powers", he wrote to Czernin on August 8, "must make a serious attempt at concluding peace at very moderate terms, because the right moment has now arrived for this. However, I shall only consider the moment really propitious when we have succeeded in repelling the general offensive which is now going on".³

Following the defeats of the summer of 1916, the leading circles of the Monarchy realized that the war had to be ended since it could not bring any more advantage. This opinion did not change when the Dual Monarchy finally avoided military collapse by German help and even achieved some success by the occupation of a great part of Romania. While in the gravest period of the summer they had contented themselves with the pre-war *status quo*, when the direct danger was averted, although still insisting on the necessity to conclude peace, they found unsatisfactory the return to the *status quo*. It is undeniable, however, that from the autumn of 1916 on, within the Central block, Viennese politics were characterized by peace initiatives.

In Germany, however, the views of the political and military leaders were different. Already since the beginning of 1916 the military command had been urging more and more for unlimited submarine warfare, which, as the generals thought, would bring England to heel in a few months. They were not even afraid of the United States entering the war since they thought that before the effect of the U-boat war was felt, they could finish with France and England. The political leaders, including the chancellor himself, were more careful. The chancellor did not believe in the quick success of the U-boat war and feared that the U.S. and the neutral countries of Europe would turn against Germany. He was not averse to the extension of the U-boat war, but only if there was no other solution, and in

² Margutti, pp. 458-459.

³ Tisza, Vol. VI, pp. 15-16.

case it were decided, he wished to prepare it diplomatically so as to reduce the danger of U.S. intervention.⁴

In the autumn of 1916 it seemed that the Central Powers might be able to conclude a separate peace with Russia. The German Chancellor, supported by the leaders of the Monarchy, tried to take this opportunity and this was one of the reasons why he was opposed to the extension of submarine warfare.

In the leading circles of Russia there had been a few partisans of a separate peace to be concluded with the Central Powers ever since the great losses of the summer of 1915. Such voices could primarily be heard in the tsar's entourage, while Foreign Minister Sazonov was rather opposed to the conclusion of a separate peace. In the spring of 1916 contacts were established through Japanese mediation between German and Russian diplomats in Stockholm with a view to the conclusion of a separate peace, but the talks were soon broken off. The Russian ruling circles wanted to make the best of the success of Brusilov's offensive and conclude a separate peace favourable for Russia. Sazonov had to go. The new government, headed by Stürmer, took into consideration the fact that in spite of the successful campaign, Russia was on the brink of exhaustion, and explosive forces had gathered inside the country. From July 1916 on, constant contacts resumed in Stockholm between the Russian and German diplomatic services through unofficial persons. Fritz Warburg, a Hamburg banker was charged by the German government with negotiating with the chairman of the Duma, Protopopov.⁵ Contacts were also established between the Stockholm ambassadors of the two countries. In late August Burián noted in his diary that the German and Russian ambassadors were having talks in Stockholm, but he did not expect much from the negotiations because of the excessive German claims. "Germany in chasing some mirage of peace," he wrote.⁶ The talks went on in the autumn months.

It became evident, however, with the Polish declaration of November 1916 that for Germany the attempt at a separate peace with Russia did not mean that they would moderate their eastern aims: on the contrary, it was exactly through the realization of the latter that they wanted to conclude the separate peace with Russia. The Russian government, however, rejected this proposal. Stürmer fell, and his successor, Trepov, was opposed to the idea of a separate peace.

The failure of the attempt to conclude a separate peace with Russia turned the attention of the leaders of the Monarchy even more toward the idea of a general peace proposal. They had been considering this idea, as we have seen, since the summer of 1916, and its elaboration began in October 1916. According to Foreign

⁴ *Fischer*, pp. 362-363.

⁵ *Zeman, Diplomatic*, pp. 104-107.

⁶ *REZsL Burián*, item 85. Diary, August 29, 1916.

Minister Burián's diary note of October 11, he had had talks with the two premiers about the plans of a general peace proposal: "Talks with Tisza and Stürgkh on the basic idea. They agreed. New aspects as well. For us, only frontier adjustment in Serbia."⁷

On October 18, Burián even presented his proposal, which he had previously discussed with the leading politicians of the Monarchy, to Bethmann-Hollweg at the German general headquarters: he proposed that the four countries of the Central block should send a concrete proposition to the hostile powers through the neutral countries. Personally, he thought this proposition should imply that all four Central Powers would preserve their territorial integrity, including the return of the German colonies. The neutrality of Belgium would be restored, but it would have to submit to the German strategic and economic interests and cede Congo to Germany. A Polish kingdom would be created in the territories which had belonged to Russia. The Albanian protectorate would be restored. Serbia would be reduced in favour of Bulgaria in the south and of the Monarchy in the north (Macva), otherwise it would be a politically independent state belonging to the economic sphere of the Monarchy. Bulgaria and the Monarchy would receive parts of Romania, and there would be adjustments of strategic importance in favour of the Monarchy at the Russian and Italian frontiers. Capitulations would cease in Turkey. Russia would get free passage in the Straits. The German chancellor approved of the idea of a common peace proposal, but did not enter into the details.⁸

In Vienna, Burián went on with the preparations. In those days it became apparent that the increasing inner tension of the Monarchy also held grave dangers. This was revealed in depth by the assassination of the Austrian premier.

As the talks about a separate peace with Russia were broken off in early November, the preparations for a general peace proposal quickened in Vienna. Foreign Minister Burián noted in his diary on November 6: "Have talked over the points of the peace offer with Tisza and Körber. They agreed to my plans." The next day he noted after the audience: "I submitted it in Schönbrunn, he agreed that I should negotiate in Berlin on this basis".⁹ After this, there were more talks between the leaders of the Monarchy and Germany. At the Berlin conference of November 15–16, however, it became apparent that the German leaders' aims with the peace proposal were different from those of the Monarchy.¹⁰ The German

⁷ *Ibid.*, item 43, papers 26–31.

⁸ For the preparation of the peace offer see in more details, W. Steglich: *Bündnissicherung oder Verständigungsfrieden*, Göttingen–Berlin–Frankfurt 1958.

⁹ REZsL Burián, item 85. Diary 1916.

¹⁰ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, pp. 547–548.

leading circles also took into consideration the consequences which the prolongation of the war might have, but since their army was still the strongest and they could trust their relatively firmer hinterland, they expected their enemies, especially Italy, but also France, to collapse more rapidly in spite of the fact that in the last analysis the Entente had greater reserves. The policy of *durchhalten* gained ground, mainly in the general staff. They believed in victory, and refused to let go, even partially, of the spoils it had obtained in Europe. And Burián's proposal went in that direction.

On the urging of the Monarchy the German leaders did not refuse the idea of a peace offer, but rejected all plans which envisaged, with a view to the success of the offer, evacuating the territories they had occupied (thus, of Belgium and northern France, as well as of Kurland and Lithuania).¹¹ Even under these conditions the German military command hardly agreed to the project, and when they did, they insisted that the proposal only be made after the occupation of Bucharest. At the same time, the new sovereign of the Monarchy was urging for the peace action. On November 25, Burián wrote in his diary: "Long talk with the sovereign. Contrary to the German delay, he wishes to hasten the peace action."¹²

On December 12, six days after Mackensen had occupied Bucharest, a joint memorandum of the Central Powers was published and sent to the Entente through the neutral countries. According to this, the Central Powers "have given proof of their indestructible strength", and "the general situation much rather justifies their hope of fresh success." In spite of this, "they do not seek to crush or annihilate their adversaries," therefore "the four allied powers propose to enter even now into peace negotiations." The memorandum did not mention any concrete peace conditions, it only said that "the latter would be presented at the negotiations". The supercilious memorandum ended with some platitudes to the intention of the neutral countries and the domestic readers: "If not withstanding this offer of peace and conciliation the struggle should continue, the four allied powers are resolved to carry it on to a victorious end while solemnly disclaiming any responsibility before mankind and history."¹³

This memorandum was the first official proposal made during the war to start negotiations. It was drawn up on the initiative and urging of the exhausted Monarchy, but as a joint memorandum of the Central Powers, it primarily reflected the German attitude. Finally it only reflected the position of the Monarchy by the mere fact of its being drawn up at all. It was probably only in his diary that Burián

¹¹ Fischer, pp. 412-413.

¹² REZsL Burián, item 85. Diary 1916.

¹³ Its text was published by the contemporary press. See, e. g. *Népszava*, December 13, 1916 (for the English translation see, *Papers*, 1916, Suppl. The World War, p. 94.).

could boast: "I took the initiative and the control in this matter".¹⁴ In this period, the German military command, which had a very great influence on the political attitude, was for extending the war. In December 1916 they were urging for unlimited submarine warfare. The political leaders yielded to their arguments. With the "peace memorandum" the German military and political leaders wanted to disorganize the enemy and justify the extension of the war by its refusal.¹⁵ Naturally, Entente diplomacy was fully aware of the aims the Central block wanted to achieve with the note. The French ambassador in Petrograd, Paléologue, noted in his diary on December 13.¹⁶

In the Hungarian Parliament it was the premier who announced the diplomatic action, which the leaders of the opposition welcomed. Károlyi was the only one to express some worry, only because the note did not contain any concrete proposal and did not speak of the conquered territories. It was for this reason that he stressed: "We have no expansionist design. This must be our slogan at the peace conference table."¹⁷ The social democratic papers also welcomed the initiative, criticizing however, the lack of concrete conditions: "The note does not yet expound the peace conditions. It only invites the hostile countries to peace negotiations... This is why we must demand that the people should be informed openly, without any ambiguity, of the conditions of peace."¹⁸

The fact that the note lacked any concrete proposal, and especially that Germany showed no disposition to evacuate the Belgian and Polish territories it had occupied during the war, made it easier for the Entente block to reject the memorandum, particularly because they were certain that Germany would also become exhausted in due time.

THE UNITED STATES' ATTEMPT AT MEDIATING AND THE FORMULATION OF THE WAR AIMS OF THE ENTENTE

Simultaneously with the Central Powers' memorandum of December, President Wilson, who had been re-elected for another four years on November 7, 1916, made an attempt at the conclusion of peace in Europe. The first two years of the war in Europe had not been disadvantageous for the economic and political interests of the United States. The European powers had mutually weakened each

¹⁴ *REZsL Burián*, item 85. Diary, December 12, 1916.

¹⁵ *Fischer*, p. 378.; *Deutschland*, Vol. II, pp. 561-562.

¹⁶ *Paleologue*, Vol. III, p. 111.

¹⁷ *Képviseletőház*, December 12, 1916.

¹⁸ *MMTVD 4/B*, p. 224.

other, and the Entente countries were indebted to the United States. The U.S. which had had debts before 1914, became the world's chief creditor country.¹⁹

From early 1916, U.S. leaders were more and more concerned about a possible end of the war in Europe. Preserving the former balance in Europe was advantageous for the United States, and the long war made this more and more improbable. In addition, it had to be expected that with the prolongation of the war the Germans would extend their U-boat actions, in which case the U.S. would have to take part in the fighting. From this perspective, the best solution for the U.S. would have been to end the war without winners. In his speech of May 27, 1916, President Wilson offered to mediate between the belligerents and to guarantee the agreements that would be arrived at.²⁰ Over six months later, on December 18, he sent a note to the governments of the belligerent countries, saying that so far, the responsible leaders had not formulated their exact aims and that they should do so now. They should specify the conditions on which they were willing to enter into peace negotiations.²¹ In its reply note of December 26, the German government refused to give its conditions, saying that such a concrete proposition should only be made at direct talks between the belligerents, for which the Central Powers had already made a proposal.²²

The diplomacy of the Entente was now in a highly advantageous position. First, on December 30, they replied to the proposition of the Central Powers. The reply had been made up of generalities, and explained the rejection of peace negotiations with liberal platitudes. With this refusal, the German leaders considered the peace action to be settled. In vain did the sovereign of the Monarchy try to explain in his telegram of January 2 the refusal as an act which did not exclude "the possibility of pursuing the idea of peace".²³

On January 12, the Entente countries sent their reply to Wilson. Their main peace conditions were the following: the Central Powers must restore the independence of Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro and indemnify these countries; they must evacuate the French, Russian, and Romanian territories they had occupied during the war and pay damages for the occupation. The national principle must be enforced; the provinces which had earlier been occupied by force or against the will of the population were also to be given back. (This meant Alsace-Lorraine and the Polish territories.) The authority of Turkey over European territories was

¹⁹ See, Wilson's address before the salesmanship congress in Detroit on July 10, 1916. In *Wilson, The New Democracy*, Vol. II, pp. 228-233.

²⁰ *Mamatey*, p. 41.

²¹ *Wilson, The new Democracy*. Vol. II, pp. 402-406; *Papers*, 1916, Suppl. The World War. pp. 98-99.

²² *Fischer*, pp. 382-383.; *Papers, op. cit.*, p. 118.

²³ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, p. 553.

to cease. From the Monarchy they demanded "the liberation of Italians, Slavs, Romanians, and Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination".²⁴

This was the first time the war aims of the Entente against the Monarchy were officially formulated. The wording is not quite clear, as the realization might have involved several solutions.²⁵ At that time the leading Entente politicians were planning to detach large peripheric regions from the Monarchy, but also to preserve the Monarchy on the remaining, still considerable territories, with some kind of federal transformation. By the liberation of the Czechoslovaks they did not mean the creation of an independent state, but several leading Entente statesmen (following the great summer defeat of the Monarchy when only German help could ward off its complete collapse) were considering the possibility of the dissolution of the Monarchy.²⁶

The Italian, Romanian, and Serb politicians, as well as the emigré leaders interpreted the Entente reply note as one claiming territorial changes which would mean the dismemberment of the Monarchy. The journalists of the Entente countries who supported the emigrés also interpreted the reply note in this way, and greatly intensified their campaign after the defeats the Monarchy suffered in the summer. In October 1916 they started a new journal (*The New Europe*) which was to become their most important forum.

The Czech emigrés also interpreted the program as that of the dismemberment of the Monarchy. For them, the fact that the term "Czecho-Slovak" appeared, for the first time, in an official document of the Entente, was particularly advantageous. The term "Yugoslav" had also figured in the original English and French project, but was changed to "Slavs" upon the wish of the Italian government.²⁷

The fact that the Entente's reply could be interpreted in various ways ensured that all countries of the Entente as well as the emigré organizations accepted it.

With the exchange of notes about the question of peace, it was the Entente which won the diplomatic battle as concerned the effect exerted on the neutral countries. Already before the Entente reply, Tisza had urged the foreign minister to try to counterbalance in the neutral countries the ill effects of the Central Powers' peace offer. On December 26, he wrote that the note, which was too general, "might make the impression that we are only toying with the idea of peace for tactical reasons". Therefore, the diplomats accredited in neutral countries, especially in Spain, Sweden, and The Netherlands, "should explain that we would

²⁴ *Papers*, 1917, Suppl. 1. The World War, p. 8.; *Zeman*, p. 113.; *Fischer*, p. 386.; *Taylor*, p. 117.

²⁵ "The reply note", Renouvin wrote, "was highly ambiguous at several points". *Renouvin*, p. 138.

²⁶ *May*, Vol. I, p. 254.

²⁷ *Zeman*, p. 114.; *Mamatey*, p. 47.; *Taylor*, p. 117.

bring the detailed propositions to the negotiations". In his letter of January 3, already with full knowledge of the Entente's refusal, he proposed that the Monarchy send a note to the neutral countries, explaining in detail that "we were not the aggressors", and "our war never lost its defensive nature in the course of events". In his letter of January 16 he wished to influence the press of the neutral countries.²⁸

After the failure of his attempt at mediation, President Wilson thought it necessary to speak more concretely about the peace aims of the U.S. His Senate address of January 22 gave the outlines of the program which would be drawn up in fourteen points a year later. Wilson's conception differed from the program outlined in the Entente reply note a fortnight earlier. His address expressed very well the particular interests of the U.S. which also differed a little from those of the Entente block. One of his slogans, "peace without victory", reflects the U.S. policy which wished to preserve the balance of power in Europe. It was the greatest economic power of the world that stood out for the freedom of the seas, which could enforce its authority through free trade: "...no nation need be shut away from free access to the open paths of the world's commerce ... The freedom of the seas is the *sine qua non* of peace, equality and cooperation." The appeal to form a "league of nations" was linked to the unspoken claim of a leading role for the U.S. The Senate message did not contradict the program inherent in the Entente reply note, it only stressed different issues, since it approached the same problem from the aspect of another interest. In one point, however, an essential difference was manifest, and it was the point which was the most important from the Monarchy's point of view. The Entente reply note spoke of the rearrangement of the Monarchy and Turkey on the basis of the "national principle". In this respect, President Wilson claimed much less: "...and that henceforth inviolable security of life, of worship, and of industrial and social development should be guaranteed to all peoples who have lived hitherto under the power of governments devoted to a faith and purpose hostile to their own". Among the peoples of the Monarchy he only mentioned in particular the Poles, stressing the necessity to create a united, independent, and autonomous Poland.²⁹

Károlyi's Party of Independence, which represented a policy of orientation toward the Entente, could openly welcome Wilson's program as that of a neutral United States. "When we already believed," wrote *Magyarország*, "that the cause of peace had been buried for a long time and the last possible mediator itself had retreated, disheartened, from the tedious task of saving the idea of peace, Wilson issues this high-soaring ode to peace and liberty which it is impossible to read

²⁸ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 109-111, 59-63.

²⁹ *Wilson*, *The New Democracy*, Vol. II, pp. 407-414. (quotations on pages 411-412.)

without emotion.”³⁰ From early 1917 on, Károlyi’s party endeavoured to bring its own pacifist policy into harmony with “Wilsonism”. This was manifest in Lovászy’s interpellation in Parliament on January 24, when he summoned the government to express an opinion on Wilson’s message of January 22. As to the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, its leaders greeted President Wilson’s peace initiative in a telegram.³¹

It was not only Károlyi’s party and the socialists, who were in opposition against the Hungarian government, who welcomed the program of Wilson’s message. It was a program which was acceptable even for the Hungarian leading circles, as it primarily restricted the powers which would claim sea and colonial domination, and in the points which applied to the Monarchy it differed favourably from the Entente reply note. The Viennese papers also reported on it appreciatively.³² In his answer to Lovászy’s interpellation Tisza tried to explain that the attitude of the Central Powers was nearer to that of the president of the United States. Moreover, “there are irreconcilable differences between their attitude (i.e. of the Entente — J.G.) and the peace aims of the President of the United States”. After this introduction, he went on to compare the points of the Entente note and of Wilson’s program relative to the Monarchy: the Entente program was “tantamount to ... the dismemberment ... of the Monarchy”, while the structure of the latter fully corresponded to the Wilsonian principle: “The national principle should only prevail in the limited way expressed very correctly by the President of the United States... I believe that nowhere has this requirement found realization to a degree comparable to the two states of the Monarchy, including the Hungarian state, where the national character is stronger, and I think that in the region inhabited by this variegated conglomerate of peoples and nations which forms the southeastern part of Europe, the postulate of the free evolution of nations cannot be realized more perfectly than if the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is preserved and continues to play a major role.”³³ The foreign minister had previously approved of the Hungarian premier’s declaration, since the subject of Lovászy’s announced interpellation had been obvious. Therefore, a few hours before the session, Tisza had cabled the essence of what he was to reply to the foreign minister who, according to the telegram he sent him in reply, “fully agreed” with it.³⁴

The premier drew the attention of the U.S. ambassador in Vienna to his parliamentary speech in a letter, stressing once more: “The idea of the free evolution of all nations of a state, meaning their national character, cannot be realized in a

³⁰ *Magyarország*, January 24, 1917. Editorial.

³¹ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 225–226.

³² *May*, Vol. I, p. 472.

³³ *Képviselőház*, January 24, 1917.

³⁴ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 113–114.

country with mixed nationalities. Specifically in southeastern Europe, no solution can approach this ideal as much as the political system of the Dual Monarchy.”³⁵

On January 27, the U. S. Ambassador, Penfield, informed State Secretary Lansing, about Tisza's letter. A few weeks later, on February 22, Lansing instructed the Vienna ambassador to inform the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister that neither the Entente nor the United States desired the dismemberment of the Monarchy.³⁶ In those days, the U.S. ambassador in Berlin also wrote to Colonel House, President Wilson's man of confidence, that the U.S. initiative was well received in the “high government circles” of Hungary.³⁷

The reaction of the Hungarian government to the U.S. initiative is a point of interest and worthy of note. Hungarian historians between the two world wars, however, influenced by their cult of Tisza, exaggerated its importance when they spoke of Tisza's “peace offer” and attempts at a “separate peace”.³⁸ In fact Tisza's attitude shows that in late 1916 and early 1917 he too promoted the attempts which promised peace by preserving the integrity of the Monarchy.

THE POLICY OF CHARLES AND THE COMMON CABINET MEETING OF JANUARY

Public opinion expected the accession of Charles, which took place in November, to bring about a political change. It had been difficult to imagine any change in government policy with the aged conservative Francis Joseph who had reigned for almost seventy years. In the last years of his life, as Margutti writes, he thought any transformation of Austria-Hungary impossible.³⁹ Archduke Charles, however, was not averse to a more flexible government policy, which the circumstances in fact made necessary at his accession.

In order to ease the inner tension, the new sovereign tried to reach an agreement with the leaders of the Slav peoples of the hereditary lands. At the same time, in order to calm the social discontent, he also tried to reach an agreement with the Austrian Social Democratic Party. He wished to introduce a similar policy in Hungary.

Soon personnel changes took place in the Monarchy, and the sovereign put his own men of confidence into the limelight. On December 21, Burián, Tisza's

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 115–116.

³⁶ *Papers*, 1917, Suppl. 1. *The World War*, pp. 34, 57–58.

³⁷ *House*, Vol. II, p. 427.

³⁸ See, e. g. J. Horváth: *Felelősség a világháborúért és a békeszerződésért* (Responsibility for the World War and the Peace Treaty). Budapest 1939, pp. 393–394.

³⁹ *Margutti*, p. 56.

friend, was replaced as foreign minister by the former Bucharest Ambassador Count Ottokar Czernin. Burián remained in the common cabinet as common finance minister. In his diary note of December 21 Burián explains his downfall by the fact that according to the new ruler he had "not administered well the relations with Germany". His note of December 26 is similar: "The offence I committed was that for two years I had defended the authority of the Monarchy against the Germans. I wanted to be their ally and not their vassal."⁴⁰ In reality, the reason was rather that Charles wanted to have a freer hand in foreign policy with Germany. There were other personnel changes too. General Arz succeeded Conrad as chief of the general staff. Charles himself took over the supreme command of the army and navy, and the general headquarters were moved from Teschen to Baden. Count Clam-Martinic became Austrian premier.

The new sovereign also wanted to get rid of Tisza. As early as January 1917 he was planning to make him resign. "I no longer like Tisza very much, he does not suit me... I do not want Tisza, I have dropped him, and am looking for someone else", he said to Archduke Joseph at his audience of January 21. He would have liked to offer the post to Archduke Joseph, but the latter had not much contact with Hungarian political life. His father had been supreme commander of the Hungarian army, and he himself had had a military education. Francis Joseph had hardly had any contacts with this branch of the Habsburgs.⁴¹ This was one of the reasons why Charles, who wanted to start a new era, wished to rely on him more. At last he dismissed the idea of appointing Archduke Joseph Hungarian premier, but he did not strengthen Tisza's position either. On February 6, Baron Marterer, who belonged to the new sovereign's innermost circle, noted in his diary: The Archduke Joseph is *ad acta*, "but Tisza will fall. The reason: His Majesty has no confidence in him."⁴² The sovereign asked the premier to recommend some members of his party as eligible for the post. At the audience of February 11, Tisza proposed János Teleszky, Károly Khuen-Héderváry, Albert Berzevitzy, László Lukács, and László Beöthy.⁴³ The majority of the Hungarian political leaders, however, not only supported the policy represented by Tisza, but also insisted on Tisza's person. This is why in spite of the political changes which took place in Vienna, the Hungarian premier stayed on in his post for several months.

At the first common cabinet meeting presided over by the new sovereign, which was held on January 12, the war aims, or rather the peace conditions, were discussed. Both the initiative of the Central Powers and President Wilson's mediation

⁴⁰ *REZsL Burián*, item 85. Diary 1916.

⁴¹ *József*, Vol. IV, pp. 285-286.; *Margutti*, p. 160.

⁴² R. Lorenz: *Aus dem Kriegstagebuch des Generaladjutanten Freiherrn von Marterer. Festschrift Hantsch*, p. 493.

⁴³ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 274-275.

had failed by then. The discussion indicates that the leading circles of the Monarchy were again considering the conclusion of a separate peace between the Central Powers and Russia. This is shown by the fact that the Polish issue as well as plans concerning Romania were discussed once more, and that the idea of the "three emperors' alliance" was raised.⁴⁴

In the Polish question as we have already seen the Monarchy had capitulated before the German attitude in the autumn of 1916. Now, however, in case a separate peace was concluded with Russia, they were considering raising once more the original Austrian idea. Agreement with Russia was impossible without giving back the Russian-Polish territories or at least offering compensation for them. According to the Austrian solution, however, the Monarchy might cede eastern Galicia to Russia as compensation for the acquired Polish territories in Russia and thus help Russia to realize the union of Ukrainians inside Russia. The cabinet finally renounced on stirring up the issue once more with regard to Germany. On the next day, Tisza even wrote a memorandum to the sovereign. During the war, he wrote, the Polish issue should by no means be raised, since "it would disturb most seriously our relations with the German government". It would be possible, however, to raise it after the war at the peace negotiations.⁴⁵ A few weeks later, in his letter to the new foreign minister he repeated the ideas outlined in his memorandum, and also stressed that the incidental Austrian solution of the Polish problem after the war must not affect the dualist system, a point of view which all those concerned had already accepted. He stressed this, since Czernin, although he thought the raising of the Polish issue not timely at the moment, held open the way for Austrian solution which for him might involve a trialist system.⁴⁶

After the Polish question, the common cabinet discussed the war aims in general. The sovereign was the first to expound his views: "It is advisable in this respect to prepare a minimum and a maximum program. The maximum program would include the annexation of Congress Poland, Montenegro and Macva, certain adjustments on the Transylvanian border, as well as the replacement of the House of Karadjordjevic in Serbia by another dynasty. On the other hand, the minimum program would be limited to claiming full territorial integrity for the Monarchy, obtaining Lovcen, and the change of dynasty in Serbia."

Czernin thought the minimum program outlined by the sovereign the realistic one, completing it, however, with adjustments on the Romanian border at the Iron Gate and Brassov. "The Entente would hardly allow", he explained, "the

⁴⁴ The protocol see, *Protokolle*, pp. 441-442.

⁴⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 127-219.

⁴⁶ *Czernin, Emlékeim*, pp. 23-25.

complete dismemberment of the small Balkan states. They would at most accept the reduction of Romanian", — Russia might also be interested in this, and could perhaps receive Moldavia.

Tisza remarked on the foreign minister's plan concerning Romania: "It would be beneficial to all other Balkan states as well." "A few hundred millions" of war damages might also be claimed from Romania. About the question of ceding Moldavia to Russia, however, Tisza was more careful. It would perhaps create a controversy between Romania and Russia which would be advantageous for the Monarchy, he said at the common cabinet meeting, but a few days later, when Czernin discussed the question in Berlin, he advised him caution.⁴⁷

At the common cabinet meeting Tisza considered the solution of the Serbian question to be the most important: "The main point of our policy is the enforcement of our interests in the Balkans... The main target of our Balkan policy is greatest possible weakening of Serbia and the greatest possible strengthening of Bulgaria." With this view, a Bulgarian-Hungarian frontier might even be created at the Iron Gate. Thus, a railway line which would not have to run across Serbia might be constructed leading to Turkey. And Serbia, which would be reduced in favour of Bulgaria, and Montenegro, which would be cut off from the sea, would be able to unite and establish a customs union with the Monarchy.

The Austrian premier spoke in favour of the creation of South Slav unity within the Monarchy. The Hungarian premier immediately rejected this idea as unfounded and not corresponding to the Monarchy's interests. Conrad, for whom this was the last cabinet meeting he attended, shared the Austrian premier's view. Czernin hesitated: the idea might be unfounded but was not without advantages. At this, Tisza stressed: "The annexation of Serbia and the union of all South Slav territories would mean the greatest catastrophe not only for Hungary, but for the entire Monarchy, and would entail disastrous consequences".

It is noteworthy that the idea of renewing the "three emperors' alliance" was raised at the January cabinet meeting. This shows, that the persons present were concerned with the idea of a separate peace agreement with Russia. Conrad doubted its efficacy because of the divergences over the Straits. Czernin argued with him: "As to the practicability of the three emperors' alliance", the minutes run, "Count Czernin cannot share the scepticism of the chief of the general staff, since the question of Constantinople and the Straits is a point of divergence not only between the Monarchy and Russia, but also between the Western Powers and Russia".

It was the presiding sovereign, who summed up the debate: "In the Polish ques-

⁴⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 156–157.

tion the *status quo* is to be maintained; our chief war aim is the preservation of the Monarchy's integrity; the existence of Serbia must be assured; and finally, we should try to get nearer to the attitude of Russia".⁴⁸

THE ECONOMIC AGREEMENT CONCLUDED BY TISZA AND CLAM-MARTINIC

The government led by Clam-Martinic, contrary to the expectations linked to the premier's person, (Count Clam-Martinic belonged to the circle of Francis Ferdinand before the war and advocated "federalism" satisfying the interests of the aristocracy) mostly represented the interests of the Austrian centralists. Its most prominent members, Josef Maria Baernreither and Karl Urban, were the leaders of the Austrian *Deutscher Nationalverband*. The government was secretly engaged in the preparation of the *Neuordnung* in Cisleithania, in the spirit of Austrian centralism. Essentially, in the planned new system Galicia was to have a more extensive autonomy, so much as that the Polish delegates would not even sit in the Vienna Parliament, where there would be a firm German majority, and apart from Galicia, the whole of Cisleithania would be thoroughly Germanized.⁴⁹ After the revolution in Russia, the sovereign and Czernin considered this plan too risky, and wished to find a solution by calling the Reichsrat. With this, the position of Clam-Martinic became intolerable.

With a view to successfully preparing the economic negotiations with the Germans, Clam-Martinic's government, in which Spitzmüller held the post of finance minister, also wanted to conclude the Austro-Hungarian economic agreement. The negotiations, which had been broken off, resumed in the first days of January, and the respective ministers concerned prepared a new compromise draft. On February 24 the premiers and economic ministers of the two governments signed the treaty in Vienna.⁵⁰

The new economic agreement was concluded for twenty years, which was advantageous for Austria. At fixing the quota, however, the Hungarian attitude was accepted: in the first five years the earlier proportion of 63.6 to 36.4 would remain in force, while in the next five years Austria's share would increase to 64.6, in the third five years to 65.1 and in the last period to 65.6 per cent. The Austrians made another concession to counterbalance the long duration of the agreement by agreeing to raise the agrarian duties.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Protokolle*, p. 442.

⁴⁹ See, F. Höglinger: *Ministerpräsident Heinrich Graf Clam-Martinic*, Graz-Köln 1964.

⁵⁰ *OL K 255*, 1198. Economic compromise 1906-1917.

⁵¹ *Gratz-Schüller, Äussere*, pp. 33-35.

Neither party wanted to make the text of the settlement public. On the day following its signature, the two governments officially announced in the same wording that agreements had been concluded between the Austrian and Hungarian governments and therefore there was "no obstacle to the beginning of trade negotiations with third countries and particularly with the German Empire". The announcement did not say anything about details, the government "is not able at the moment to give any other information". Clam's position was easier, as the Austrian Parliament was not sitting yet. In the Hungarian Parliament, however, Apponyi and Károlyi interpellated already the next day. Tisza explained the secrecy by saying that otherwise "we should lay our cards on the table for foreign countries to see". In reality he wanted to avoid the attacks of the opposition in the insecure position he was in. Both on account of the Slovak-Hungarian economic settlement and the agreements to be concluded with Germany, the two governments wished to confront public opinion as well as the Parliaments with accomplished facts. "It would be preferable if not this Parliament, but the one which will be elected after the war were to decide in this matter", the premier replied to Apponyi and Károlyi. In his letter to Clam, which he wrote on the following day, he explained that he had wished "to calm public opinion a little".⁵²

The agreement between the two governments in the question of the economic settlement did not mean that the other divergences of economic nature were reduced. At that time the Austrian capital was literally starving. The U.S. ambassador's report of January 10, 1917 says that the food supply was very poor in other towns as well (e.g. in Prague, Trieste, etc.).⁵³ The debate on provisionment once more became highly acrimonious in the winter of 1916-17 and the spring of 1917.

In the spring of 1917 the provisionment situation was critical in Hungary too. Yet, at the cabinet meeting of April 2 it was decided that with regard to "the unexpected deterioration of provisionment in Germany", further food consignments were to be shipped, but it was also stated that "the present food rations threaten the health and working capacity of our agrarian population in most parts of the country".⁵⁴

⁵² *Képviselőház*, February 26, 1917.; *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 182.

⁵³ *Gratz*, Vol. II, p. 366.; *May*, Vol. I, p. 348.

⁵⁴ *Mí an. jkv*, April 2, 1917, p. 249.

It was in October 1914 that for the first time, German submarines had sunk a merchant ship: the British steamship *Glitra*.⁵⁵ Shortly others followed. In late 1914 and early 1915 the German military and political leading circles were already considering starting U-boat attacks on a general scale against merchant ships transporting supplies to the Entente countries. In this way they wanted to blockade England and force her to surrender. General, unlimited submarine warfare thus meant that all ships carrying goods for the Entente, neutral merchant ships too, would be attacked and sunk, and in most cases no exception would be made even for passenger boats. In february 1915, after the German government had sent a note to the neutral countries declaring that they considered the transport of armaments to the Entente irreconcilable with neutrality and would blockade the coasts of England and France, general U-boat warfare was begun with 23 vessels, with the only restriction that the crews would be allowed to get into boats and only the empty ships would be sunk. In many cases, however, ships were torpedoed without warning. On May 1, the Germans sank the first U.S. vessel, then on May 7 the big British liner *Lusitania*, on which 1198 persons, 128 Americans among them, lost their lives. Following the vigorous protest of the U.S., however, they stopped these cruel tactics.⁵⁶ A year later, the sinking of the British liner *Sussex*, with several Americans on board, resulted in a new crisis, but on May 4, 1916, Germany promised to restrict the submarine attacks.⁵⁷ Tirpitz, who disapproved of delaying the introduction of unlimited submarine warfare, resigned in the spring of 1916.

After the failure of the peace initiative, on January 9, 1917 the German supreme command, which from the autumn of 1916 had more and more say in the direction of the country, made its claim concerning the starting of unlimited submarine warfare accepted.⁵⁸ This meant that in the designated blockade zones they would torpedo every ship without warning. On January 16, Kaiser Wilhelm issued a secret order to begin the U-boat war on February 1.

It was in mid-January that the German decision became known in Vienna in the leading circles. Unlimited submarine warfare did not contradict the Viennese ideas about a separate peace, with Russia, but delayed the possibility of starting any action with that view and probably excluded any peace agreement with the western Entente powers. Thus, on the whole it crossed the plans of the Viennese politicians, who in the second part of January had already got into touch, through

⁵⁵ *Deutschland*, Vol. I, p. 346.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 202.

⁵⁷ *Concise*, p. 252.; *Mamatey*, p. 51.

⁵⁸ *Fischer*, p. 384.; *Deutschland*, Vol. II, pp. 555-573.

Denmark and Sweden, with English diplomacy. The Bourbon brothers (Sixtus and Xavier) had also made their first trip to Switzerland in order to establish contacts with the Court in Vienna.⁵⁹ Vienna was not at all pleased with the extension of the war. Tisza also disapproved of it and considered the German decision premature as it would result in the United States taking a hostile stand. On January 15, he had telegraphed Mérey, who substituted for Czernin during the latter's illness: "We must now try to influence the United States to be well disposed towards the Central Powers. This is most important."⁶⁰ The Germans refused to discuss the decision. The decision was an accomplished fact, and they demanded that the Monarchy agree to it. Holtzendorff (Tirpitz's successor) and Zimmermann went to Vienna, but not to discuss matters: they assured the hesitating sovereign and his ministers of the certainty of success.⁶¹ The common cabinet meeting held in Vienna on January 22, reluctantly agreed to the decision. Tisza's remarks also showed reluctance.⁶²

The Hungarian Parliament also discussed the declaration of unlimited submarine war on February 5, a few days after the declaration itself. The prime minister threw the responsibility on the Entente, stressing once more his agreement with President Wilson's program. There was no enthusiasm, but both the government party and the moderate opposition, Andrásy, Apponyi, and Rakovszky, supported the decision. Károlyi was the only one to protest in Parliament: "Because I openly declare myself a pacifist." *Népszava* also disapproved of the decision: "If it is a question of ending the war, that cause might have been and might still be served much better and with much less sacrifice by stipulating wise and fair peace conditions than by increasing the horrors of war."⁶³

The unlimited U-boat war temporarily caused England serious difficulties. In 1916, the submarines of the Central Powers had sunk on the average approximately a monthly tonnage of 200,000. In 1917, the German U-boats alone sunk over 400,000 tons almost every month, in April 1917, they sunk 841,118 tons.⁶⁴ The submarine war, however, although it put England in a serious situation, did not reach its goal, as it could not force England to the conference table. On the contrary, it strengthened the tendency which demanded the continuation of the war until the final victory and which had been represented more and more firmly by Prime Minister Lloyd George since December 1916.

⁵⁹ Zeman, *Diplomatic*, pp. 128–131.

⁶⁰ Tisza, Vol. VI, pp. 132–133.

⁶¹ May, Vol. I, pp. 476–477.

⁶² *Protokolle*, pp. 454–457.

⁶³ *Képviselőház*, February 5, 1917.; *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 226–228.

⁶⁴ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, p. 592.

The submarines now tried to increasingly disturb the sea-routes of the Entente in the Mediterranean as well. The German U-boats used the Austro-Hungarian bases on the Adriatic coast and sailed through the Straits of Otranto. In order to prevent this, the Entente blockade was strengthened at The Straits. On May 14–15, 1917 the warships of the Monarchy (*Novara*, *Helgoland*, *Saida*) tried to weaken the blockade by sinking several guard-boats.⁶⁵

The U-boat war hastened the entry of the U.S. into the war. On February 3, in reply to the declaration of unlimited submarine warfare, the U.S. broke off diplomatic relations with Germany. The publication of the so-called Zimmermann telegram contributed to turning American public opinion against Germany.⁶⁶ The news of the sinking of U.S. ships had even more effect: that of the *Algonquin* on March 12, of the *Vigilancia* on March 16, of the *City of Memphis* on March 17, and of the *Illinois* on March 18.⁶⁷ On April 6, the United States declared war on Germany.

In the first year of the war, diplomatic contacts between the U.S. and the Monarchy had been undisturbed. In September 1915, however, the U.S. asked the Monarchy to recall its ambassador in Washington (C. T. Dumba) saying that the latter had interfered in the affairs of the production and transport to Europe of ammunition.⁶⁸ Immediately after this, in November, an Austro-Hungarian U-boat sank the Italian liner *Ancona* with a few American passengers on board. Since the Austro-Hungarian government finally expressed its regret to the U.S. the incident had not led to the rupture of relations.⁶⁹ The Entente, however, prevented for a long time (until the end of 1916) Dumba's successor, A. Tarnowsky, from occupying his post by not guaranteeing his safe voyage. Thus, Tarnowsky arrived in Washington at the moment the submarine war was declared, when the U.S. government broke off diplomatic relations with Germany. Tarnowsky was not received officially.⁷⁰ Since for the Monarchy the maintenance of diplomatic relations was more important than for the U.S., no counter-move was made. The embassy of the U.S. in Vienna, headed by Ambassador Penfield, continued to work undisturbed. In the first months of 1917, the leading politicians of the Monarchy,

⁶⁵ *Pilch*, p. 243.

⁶⁶ Zimmermann cabled to the German ambassador to Mexico the decision about the submarine war on January 16 and instructed him that if he failed to prevent the USA from entering the war, he would have to encourage Mexico to attack them. The coded telegram was intercepted and decoded by the British. See more detailed, B. W. Tuchmann: *The Zimmermann Telegram*, New York 1966.

⁶⁷ *Zeman, Diplomatic*, pp. 203–204.

⁶⁸ J. May: Woodrow Wilson and Austria-Hungary to the End of 1917. *Festschrift Benedikt*, pp. 220–221.

⁶⁹ *Mamatey*, p. 53.

⁷⁰ *May*, p. 228.

including Tisza, tried to further neutralize the U.S.⁷¹ Minister for Foreign Affairs Czernin repeatedly declared that he was ready to start peace negotiations on the basis of President Wilson's principles of January 22. Wilson was confident that he would be able to separate the Monarchy from Germany, which was conducting the unlimited U-boat war, and therefore maintained diplomatic relations with the former.⁷²

When the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, three days later the Monarchy broke off diplomatic relations with Washington. So did Turkey two weeks later, but diplomatic relations were maintained between Bulgarian and the U.S.

After entering the war against Germany, the United States did not conclude a new alliance with its partners, but only "associated" with them. Thus it did not regard the earlier treaties and official declarations of the Entente as binding for itself.⁷³

The effect of the failure of the peace action and of the extension of the war was different on the two tendencies of the Hungarian parliamentary opposition. Károlyi's party was now even more certain that Germany was heading for disaster and thus wished even more to change the course of the Monarchy through a separate peace. As to the other, greater part of the parliamentary opposition, the moderates, like the government, the weaker the Monarchy became and the more its changes deteriorated, the more confident they were in Germany which was still strong, and expected to get off somehow with the help of the latter.

DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT ON SUFFRAGE AND ON GOVERNMENT POLICY

The changes in the Austrian government encouraged the fight of the Hungarian parliamentary opposition against Tisza. In February 1917 there was a heated debate in the House of Representatives about suffrage and the government policy in general. The opportunity was given by the bill concerning the "immortalization of the memory of heroes fighting for the country" and by the premier's sixth report "on the recourse to special powers in case of war".

The government proposal that each community should erect a memorial to the soldiers who had died in the war with the names of the fallen carved on it met with general approval. The opposition, however, extended the debate by demanding that not only the fallen, but also those who had been spared should be honoured

⁷¹ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 146-148, 184-187.

⁷² *Mamatey*, pp. 55-57.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-90.; *Taylor*, p. 112.

They once more presented their earlier bill on "the heroes' right to vote". Károlyi's party went even further and demanded general and secret suffrage, while others were urging for measures of social policy.⁷⁴ Giesswein proposed settling the disabled soldiers and war widows on land. Tisza and the Party of Work objected to any extension of the right to vote with their habitual inflexibility: "We should commit a fatal error", because "this would mean carelessly granting political rights to strata and factors which are not ripe for them ... As long as I have an ounce of strength in me, I shall always use it to save this nation from irresponsible radicalism in the question of the right to vote."⁷⁵

It was in a heated atmosphere that the debate started on the sixth report of the prime minister on the recourse to special powers. The opposition regarded it as a question of confidence and made attacks on the domestic policy of the government for weeks on end. The parliamentary majority, the Party of Work, insisted on the continuation of the government policy, thus consolidating Tisza's position towards Vienna. It also became apparent that unlike the tendencies demanding essential changes in government policy (Károlyi, Vázsonyi, Giesswein), the greater, moderate part of the opposition (Andrássy, Apponyi, Rakovszky) only wished to use liberalization as bait because they were afraid that the discontent which had accumulated during the war might lead to revolution. "The Prime Minister sticks to a regime", Andrásy said, "which cannot be maintained, which will collapse, and with which will collapse the last possibility of a limited reform the conservatives might hope for... I consider it highly dangerous to exclude from the constitution those who have a political will, a political design, a political education and interest, because, even if I fear the influence they might have on the country, it is better if we overcome them when they have the right to vote, than if we exclude them from that right, abandon them to extreme despair and thus undermine the very basis of the state ... If the government and the leading circles think that they may continue things where they left them before the war, if they think that they need not conduct an entirely new social policy for which the first step must be taken now, then there really will be a revolution."⁷⁶ During the parliamentary debate of February, the leaders of the opposition also urged the sovereign to dismiss the unpopular Tisza government.

It is noteworthy that while the Catholic People's Party joined Andrásy and Apponyi in attacking the government, its founders and chief protectors, the episcopate, did not approve of the attacks against Tisza. "The greatest part of the episcopate", the primate would write to the sovereign later, "could not be persuad-

⁷⁴ *Képviseletőház*, February 5, 1917.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, February 8, 1917.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, February 26, 1917.

ed to take part in the extremely violent attacks of the opposition against the government of Count István Tisza, which had been most favourably inclined towards the Church. We did not think it wise to contribute to overthrowing the regime which we considered the best from the point of view of the Church.”⁷⁷

THE REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA. FRATERNIZATION BETWEEN SOLDIERS

It was in mid-March that the first news of the Russian revolution reached Hungary. The censors let the press reports through because the government expected the revolution which broke out in hostile Russia to deepen the confidence in a victorious ending of the war. “In the Petrograd turmoil,” ran the editorial of *Az Újság* on March 16, “we greet an upheaval which weakens the adversary.” It is interesting that even the Court in Vienna was pleased to hear about the commotion which preceded the revolution: “This news,” Margutti writes, “caused in the beginning a sensation of relief and even of joy.” The fall of the tsar, however, naturally changed the mood prevailing at the Court.⁷⁸

The Hungarian leading politicians also assessed the events in Russia from the strategic aspect. “The Russian revolution which broke out in March 1917”, Teleszky, a member of Tisza’s government, was to write later, “seemed to improve our position”. Owing to the premier’s illness it was Teleszky who declared in Parliament in the name of the cabinet: “It is our desire to see in Russia, as soon as possible, a government which enjoys the Russian people’s confidence and with which we might conclude an honourable peace.”⁷⁹

Tisza and his party saw in the revolution in Russia the justification of their foreign and domestic policy. If Russia were to drop out of the fighting, it would be possible to end the war victoriously with German help. Andrassy, Apponyi, and the leaders of the Catholic People’s Party shared this view. The prime minister, however, being confident of the successful ending of the war, at the same time became even more inflexible in matters of domestic policy. The parliamentary opposition, on the other hand, also understood from the Russian revolution that it was impossible to shirk certain reforms. In this way, both camps saw in the events in Russia the justification of their own policy. On March 16 Tisza, referring to “the perspectives of the world events” asked for the conclusion of the parliamentary debate, which was becoming more and more embarrassing for the govern-

⁷⁷ EPL, Cat. D/b. 6394–1917.

⁷⁸ Margutti, p. 501.

⁷⁹ Teleszky, p. 360.; *Képviselőház*, March 31, 1917.; *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 215.

ment. The entire opposition protested vigorously, forced the continuation of the debate and, referring to the events in Russia, demanded even more firmly that the government policy be changed. "Even in Russia they want to base the Tsar's empire on democratic, universal and secret suffrage", said a speaker of the opposition. "Has the Hungarian Prime Minister learned nothing from this, and can the majority not draw the consequences and lessons of all this?"⁸⁰

In order to cut the debate short the prime minister had the session of Parliament adjourned. The opposition protested indignantly and went on attacking the government in the press.

The left wing of the parliamentary opposition and the bourgeois radicals outside the Parliament welcomed the revolution in Russia because they hoped that it would bring about a system similar to that of western European countries, and would thus also make it easier for such a system to be created in Hungary.⁸¹ After the events in Russia, Károlyi's party saw a good opportunity to break with Germany and conclude a separate peace based on a compromise. Jászi abandoned the *Mitteuropa* idea after the Russian democratic revolution, and even stood out for the union of all Europe, a sign of his orientation toward the Entente.⁸²

In the spring of 1917, the prevailing mood among the workers, was one of confidence. *Typographia*, the printer's paper, reflects this mood well: "The Russian revolution might become the saviour of the suffering nations which are fighting on the fronts inside and outside... A new spring is coming. The inheritor of history, socialism, is arriving, making the earth rumble in the East. It is only socialism that can bring the olive-branch of peace."⁸³ The poet Ady expressed this same mood of confidence in his poem *Preparation for a Spring Journey*: "Every stream now sweeps away its dam ... Life is starting everywhere."

After March 16, *Népszava* reported every day on the revolution in Russia. In spite of the frequent censoring it was this paper which published the greatest number of commentaries and reports.⁸⁴

At its extraordinary congress of April 8-9 the Social Democratic Party greeted "the heroic Russian proletariat, which by overthrowing Tsarist absolutism has dealt a fatal blow not only on its own oppressors, but on all the tyrannies of the world, thus promoting substantially the cause of democracy, social progress, and peace all over the world".⁸⁵ *Népszava* published this decision in its April 11 issue

⁸⁰ *Képviselőház*, March 19, 1917.

⁸¹ See Károlyi's speech in Parliament on March 20, 1917 and Oszkár Jászi's article in *Világ* on March 25.

⁸² Jászi, p. 3.; Irinyi, p. 96.

⁸³ *Typographia*, April 13, 1917.

⁸⁴ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 238-239.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

by circumventing the press committee which exercised preliminary censoring, expecting that once the paper appeared, it would not be sized. They were right, but on account of this article the minister of justice ordered that the paper would be censored *before* publication in the future.⁸⁶

After the revolution in Russia, fraternization between the soldiers in the opposite trenches of the eastern front, which had occurred occasionally ever since the end of 1914, assumed mass proportions.

The first cases of spontaneous fraternization occurred during the cease-fires which were concluded or tacitly considered to be concluded at Christmas and Easter. It is from Christmas 1914 that the sources speak of English or French soldiers fraternizing with Germans. On the eastern front the first friendly contacts between soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian armies were established in April 1915.⁸⁷

The first and simplest form of fraternization was the exchange of presents. Taking advantage of the cease-fire and signalling their peaceful intentions somehow, a few soldiers climbed out of their trench onto the no man's land, and placed some presents (drinks, bread, sugar, etc.) there. When they had returned to their trench, some soldiers from the opposite trench went to get the presents and left similar things there. Later, this gave rise to real barter at some places on the days of cease-fire. Other forms of fraternization also developed, which involved more direct contacts. An officer of the 69th Common Infantry Regiment, which fought on the eastern front, noted in his diary on April 1, 1916: "In the morning, great fraternization with the Russians... Many of our infantrymen, as well as of the Russians', climbed out of the trenches." Then, a few emissaries advanced on both sides, "meeting mid-way between the two trenches and talking to each other ... They made a friendly agreement that the Russians would not shoot at us and we would not shoot at the Russians."⁸⁸

These fraternizations constituted a specific phenomenon characteristic of the First World War. The privates instinctively felt that the soldiers who, like them, were suffering in the opposite trench and worrying about those at home, were not really their enemies.

The company officers often overlooked occasional fraternization between soldiers. The high command, however, strictly forbade it, and if it found out about such incidents, the soldiers were severely punished. The army corps commanders, understandably, regarded these fraternizations on both sides as highly dangerous,

⁸⁶ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 453.

⁸⁷ *Józsa*, pp. 76, 81–82.

⁸⁸ J. Györkei–A. Józsa: *A magyar Internacionalisták a Nagy Októberi Forradalomban* (The Hungarian Internationalists in the Great October Revolution), Budapest 1957, p. 12.

since later it would be more and more difficult to order these soldiers to charge with their bayonets. They considered these fraternizations to be the expression of the desire for peace and revolutionary incidents, and they were not wrong. For example this was the order of the day issued by Archduke Joseph, who commanded the 1st and 7th Armies as well as the Gerok troops stationed on the eastern front, on January 18, 1917: "I quite particularly warn against the slackening of the fighting spirit which the friendly contacts with the enemy might imply. These incidents result from the long confrontation. I forbid any commerce that is not part of the military actions: any conversation, communication, or negotiation between troops is strictly forbidden. Any infraction of this command shall be punished by court-martial without indulgence and reported to me. Colonel General Archduke Joseph."⁸⁹

The Russian provisional government proclaimed the continuation of the war. General Alexeyev, the new commander-in-chief strictly forbade fraternization. The Russian commanders, however, were unable to carry out the order and could not prevent revolutionary propaganda and fraternizations in which the officers were now also taking part to an increasing degree. On April 15, at Easter, the Russian soldiers started fraternizing with the enemy troops all along the frontline in spite of the interdiction.⁹⁰ Almost all German and Austro-Hungarian army corps and army commands reported on this. This is how the commanders of the 7th Army of the Monarchy reported on the events of April 15 to general headquarters: "Communication was the most intense on the frontline of the 34th Infantry Division. The Russians advanced in groups all along the line... The Russians, including the officers, came with friendly shouts and waved white flags. In one case, at Sumarem, the Russian artillery opened fire on the advancing troops. Altogether about ten officers and four or five hundred privates approached our lines... Opposite the 59th Infantry Division, there was great commotion in the Russian camp from 9 a.m. They were moving about unarmed before their posts or reading the tracts we had given them in the trenches. Delegations came at several points of the frontline. The desire for peace is general... In front of the XIth Army Corps, south of Beszterce, the defenders of the enemy trenches wanted to make friendly contacts with our troops..."⁹¹

The initiatives of the Russian soldiers at fraternization were favourably received by the German and Austro-Hungarian troops. The attitude of the commanders was not uniform. One of the ideas present in the general staffs of the Central

⁸⁹ József, Vol. IV, pp. 241-242.

⁹⁰ Józsa, p. 215.

⁹¹ Böhm-Gazsi-Józsa-Kun: Katonabarátkozások a keleti arcvonalon (Fraternization along the Eastern Front), *Hadtörténeti Közlemények*, No. 3/1967, pp. 548-549.

Powers was to use the fraternizations to create subversion in the opposite camp. At the same time, the earlier view also persisted: to forbid the fraternizations categorically. For the most part, the army commanders ordered that the fraternization, initiated by the Russian troops *en masse* were not to be rejected, but only the designated propaganda officers were to establish contacts who would distribute among the Russian troops propaganda material against their own government. At the same time, direct contacts between troops were to be prevented by all means. The order issued by the commander of the 11th Austro-Hungarian Army Corps on April 12 is typical: "It is to be expected that on the occasion of Orthodox Easter many enemy agents will come to our lines. The specific conditions of the Russian army justify that we should not shoot at the emissaries. We must let them return to their trenches in all cases. On the northern front it has become a practice to give the hostile emissaries some brandy and tobacco. To avoid surprises, these delegations must not exceed six persons. They must not establish contacts with our troops. One of our officers will brief them in front of the lines... We ourselves must in no case send emissaries to the enemy... It is forbidden to allow whole groups to advance towards our lines, but we should take care not to open fire."⁹²

Even more significant were the orders of the commander of the 38th Honvéd Infantry Division: "It appears from the daily reports and from enemy information that the orders concerning the attitude towards the Russian emissaries and the behaviour of our own troops towards the enemy are not always executed satisfactorily. It is inadmissible that the briefing of the Russian emissaries should be accompanied by great scenes of fraternization, that counter-delegations should be sent, or that the discourse of soldiers of the ranks be interrupted at the barricades... In the future, the following rules will apply: The sentries (guards and patrols) are to stop the approaching Russians and report to the nearest officer in all cases... Any talk can only be conducted by officers or by an interpreter in the presence of an officer, but in no case by the rank and file... Sending counter-delegations is forbidden. Discussions may only be conducted by the persons authorized by the regulations. Any communication (or attempt at communication) is forbidden for other persons, especially for the rank and file, in any circumstances."⁹³

Many commanders, especially where there were signs of demoralization among the troops, forbade even these forms of contacts. The commander of the 20th Honvéd Field Artillery Brigade issued the following orders in connection with the expected Easter fraternizations: "All forms of fraternization (mutual visits in or between the trenches) must by all means be forbidden. Brigadier General Lukachich." Even more strict were the orders given by the commander of the 51th

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 544.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 550-551.

Honvéd Infantry Division: "Any communication with the enemy is to be absolutely prevented. Fighting is to go on, and the Russians are to be prevented by fire from standing before their posts... Normal fighting activities are to resume."⁹⁴

A NEW PEACE INITIATIVE BY THE MONARCHY.
THE SIXTUS LETTER

The new Russian government decided to continue the war. Thus, for the time being, there was no hope of a separate peace to be concluded with Russia. But this did not seem to be so important because as the revolution was spreading more and more, Russia was no longer a threat from the military point of view. These circumstances made the Viennese politicians, who were looking for a possibility to conclude peace as soon as possible, try to come to terms with the western Entente Powers at the expense of Russia and the Balkans. They thought that England and France would deliver Russia into the hands of the Central Powers if the latter accepted their minimum war aims. They had to act fast, while the western Entente Powers were afraid of suffering great losses in the submarine war, but their actual losses were not yet so great as to exacerbate definitively the relations between the U.S. and the Central Powers.

Vienna tried to exert some influence on the Germans who came to quite different conclusions. They thought that with the help of the Russian events the chances of their total victory over the Western Powers had grown. Therefore they were standing more and more rigidly by their principle, which was to persist until the revolution had weakened their adversaries in the east and the submarines the enemy in the west. Vienna's main counter-argument was the intolerable situation of the Monarchy. In mid-March they invited the German chancellor to Vienna. At the negotiations on March 16, Czernin outlined the grave situation: "The Monarchy is exhausted. Everything possible must be done to draw the necessary consequences from this sad situation... Every opportunity must be taken to conclude an acceptable peace." France was not averse, thus Czernin wanted to send Count Mensdorff, the Monarchy's former ambassador in London, to Switzerland to establish contacts. Before instructing him, he asked the chancellor to declare Germany's peace aims.

Bethmann-Hollweg stressed that Germany would not renounce Alsace-Lorraine and would keep Belgium and northern France in exchange for its colonies occupied by England until the latter was defeated. Germany needed these territories for military operations against England and could not evacuate them. Therefore he

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 542, 548.

did not believe that an agreement could be reached with France at the moment. He had no objection, however, to exploratory talks. He was optimistic about the situation: the inner disorder in Russia and the success of the U-boat war might force the enemy to ask for peace negotiations. Therefore, they must not tie their hands towards France with any concrete proposal.

The other part of the negotiations concerned the reconciliation of the eastern war aims. It was agreed that Poland would belong to Germany's sphere, while the Monarchy would be compensated in the Balkans.⁹⁵ On Tisza's proposal, the politicians of the Monarchy took advantage of Bethmann-Hollweg's visit to Vienna to obtain part of the cereals the Germans had seized in Romania. "We must convince him", Tisza wrote to the Austrian premier, "that it is vital, in the strictest sense of the word, for Germany too, to give us at least ten million quintals of cereals, several millions of which immediately, or else we shall collapse, and then Germany will also lose the war". The Germans ceded, if not all the desired quantity, but part of it.⁹⁶

A few days later, on March 22, Czernin reported to the common cabinet on his talks with the chancellor. It appears from the minutes that at the time the Austrian and Hungarian leaders, in exchange for ceding Congress Poland to Germany, wished to get their maximum Balkan program realized.⁹⁷

The only agreement the leaders of the Monarchy were able to reach with the German chancellor was that they would try to establish contacts with France and England in order to inquire about peace intentions. According to this, on March 21 Mensdorff went to Bern, where he made contact with the negotiator of the British envoy to Switzerland. The meeting was only informational on both sides, the Monarchy's representative stood for the common standpoint of the Central Powers. It also became evident in mid-March that it would be impossible to reach an agreement on the basis of the German program which counted on Germany's victory. This prompted the new emperor of the Monarchy not to confine himself to sending Mensdorff as an envoy (who had to act according to the German conception and thus was to be expected to come back empty-handed), but to inform France secretly about the Austro-Hungarian attitude concerning the settlement in the west, which differed from Germany's, and the Monarchy's possible intentions of concluding a separate peace.

⁹⁵ The protocol of the meeting on March 16 was attached to the material of the ministerial conference a few days later, on March 22. *Protokolle*, pp. 492-499. See also Kann, *Sixtusaffäre*, pp. 58-59.; Fischer, pp. 492-499.

⁹⁶ Tisza, Vol. VI, pp. 200-201, 234.

⁹⁷ *Protokolle*, pp. 482-491.

Prince Sixtus and Prince Xavier, Charles' brothers-in-law,⁹⁸ after meeting with Count Erdődy, who was the king's man of confidence, in Switzerland, established indirect contact in February between the ruler of the Monarchy and some leading French statesmen.⁹⁹ The German emperor also knew about this.¹⁰⁰ These contacts, however, increasingly became for Charles a separate way to try to reach a peace agreement or even separate peace. The information obtained both by Prince Sixtus and Mensdorff indicated that it would not be possible to conclude peace in the west if Belgium's independence was not restored and Alsace-Lorraine not returned to France.¹⁰¹ Thus Charles wanted to inform the French government through Sixtus that he himself supported the western claims concerning Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine.

At the end of March the two princes were asked to come to Vienna. The Germans knew about this journey, and the German general attached to the AOK also reported on it.¹⁰² They did not know, however, the subject of their discussion with Charles. They could possibly have known only that part of the negotiations with which Czernin was also familiar. They did not know that in the evening of March 24 the sovereign handed over to them a four-page letter written in his own hand, which was addressed to Prince Sixtus, but was in reality meant for Poincaré, the president of the French Republic. The letter first stressed the sovereign's insistence on the Monarchy's minimum war aim: "All the peoples of my Empire are united more closely than ever in a common will: to preserve the integrity of the Monarchy even at the cost of the heaviest sacrifices... Nobody can deny the achievements won by my armies, especially in the Balkan theatre of war." Serbia's independence would be restored, and it would even get access to the sea, but it would have to give up Great Serb policy and propaganda, which the Entente Powers would also have to guarantee. In what followed, and this is the most important, the sovereign recognized in the letter, as opposed to Germany, that France's war aim concerning Alsace-Lorraine was justified: "I beg you to let the President of the French Republic, Mr. Poincaré, know in a secret and unofficial way that I shall support the first claims of the French to Alsace-Lorraine in every way and with all my power. Belgium must be reestablished as a sovereign state, retaining all its African possessions..." In the last part of the letter Charles wrote to Sixtus: "I should like to ask you to let me know, after a previous consultation

⁹⁸ Charles got married in 1911. His wife Zita was the daughter of the duke of Parma (Bourbon). When Italy was united, the duke lost his throne. Two of Zita's brothers were serving in the Austro-Hungarian army, two (Sixtus, Xavier) in the Belgian army.

⁹⁹ Zeman, *Diplomatic*, p. 131.

¹⁰⁰ Lajos, p. 177.

¹⁰¹ Steglich, Vol. I, p. 48.

¹⁰² Cramon, p. 155.

with the two Powers, the views of France and England so that a basis for official and mutually satisfactory negotiations may be laid."¹⁰³

The Sixtus-letter was the "individual" action of the Monarchy's sovereign, which also implemented the notion for a separate peace. In the days following the handing over of the Sixtus letter, the foreign policy of Charles and Czernin, who did not know the text, was characterized by their endeavours to reach a peace agreement between the Central Powers and France and England at the expense of Russia and Serbia. Having agreed with the Germans about the partition in the east, they tried to urge the latter to make concessions to the Western Powers.

In keeping with this policy, first Czernin, then Charles himself also established direct contact with Mihály Károlyi. At the time the Sixtus-letter was written, the sovereign received Károlyi and encouraged his anti-German policy.¹⁰⁴ They needed Károlyi now, to "press" the Germans on the one hand, and to create a more favourable attitude towards the Monarchy in France and England on the other.

Czernin's memorandum of April 12 was also connected with "pressing" the Germans. It was addressed to the sovereign, but the latter immediately sent it over to Kaiser Wilhelm for examination, stressing in the accompanying letter: "I fully identify with its content ... It describes the situation exactly as I myself see it." Czernin's memorandum drew a gloomy yet realistic picture of the situation of the Monarchy: "It is quite obvious that our military strength is coming to an end. Besides, the danger of revolution... The statesman who is neither blind nor deaf must be aware how the dull despair of the population increases day by day; he is bound to hear the sullen grumbling of the great masses..." Peace should be concluded now, when the submarine war has brought some results, which has not yet reached its goal, and before America appears on the battlefield. Charles, afraid of losing his throne, also referred to the approaching revolution in his letter: "We are fighting against a new enemy, which is more dangerous than the Entente: international revolution... A quick ending of the war, perhaps at the price of great sacrifice, would give us the opportunity to counter successfully the approaching revolutionary movement."¹⁰⁵

The German emperor immediately sent a reply full of self-confidence, and so did Bethmann-Hollweg a month later. Tisza also wrote to Czernin about "keeping one's head" and "sang-froid".¹⁰⁶ The sovereign and his foreign minister, however, were right in appreciating the situation of the Monarchy and the consequences of the prolongation of the war.

¹⁰³ Zeman, *Diplomatic*, pp. 132–133. Details of the Sixtus affair, see R. Lorenz: *Kaiser Karl und der Untergang der Donaumonarchie*, Graz–Wien–Köln 1959.

¹⁰⁴ Károlyi, pp. 195–197. (Faith, pp. 79–80.)

¹⁰⁵ Czernin, pp. 164–165.; Lajos, p. 263.

¹⁰⁶ Czernin, p. 172.

By that time it seemed possible that the Sixtus-action could be successful. Sixtus showed the letter to Poincaré, and on April 11 the French (Ribot) and the British (Lloyd George) prime ministers talked about it. They considered it as the separate peace suggestion of the Monarchy, and regarded it with great promise. They informed the Italian leaders about the letter on the 19th, who insisted on getting the territories incorporated in the Treaty of London, in care of a separate peace, too. Therefore Sixtus went again to Vienna, to make Charles accept the Italian claims, but the "second" Sixtus-letter, written on May 5, turned a deaf ear to these.¹⁰⁷

PACIFISM AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HUNGARY

Among the social democrats the pacifist trends strengthened, and their influence grew considerably in late 1916 and early 1917. Dissociating itself from the appeals of the Provisional Government to continue the war, the Petrograd soviet, in which the Mensheviks and social revolutionaries (esers) were in majority, also took a pacifist stand. The pacifist trends wanted to obtain peace by forcing the belligerent governments to negotiate. This tendency now began to have more influence on those leading politicians who supported the idea of peace agreement.

It was in this period that the Social Democratic Party of Hungary also began to take up a pacifist attitude. There had been hesitations and attempts earlier, but it was now that real change took place. There was now a hope to pursue this pacifist policy, which was accompanied by the renewal of the fight for universal suffrage, legally. The Foreign Ministry in Vienna, which initiated the December peace proposition, encouraged Buchinger's and Weltner's trip to The Hague in the autumn of 1916, although in Hungary the government did not back the social democrats' peace attempts.¹⁰⁸ At the time of the peace proposal, Tisza wanted to show the greatest possible determination, and prohibited expressions of the pacifist mood. This was why, for instance, he prevented the leader of the feminists, Róza Bedy-Schwimmer, from leaving the country, explaining in his letter to her on January 11: "The peace campaign which you and your comrades are leading ... provides our enemies, who are claiming and hoping that we are exhausted, with a weapon".¹⁰⁹ The censors cancelled all sentences relative to peace which were written in a pacifist tone. In *Népszava*, the "blank spaces" increased considerably in this period. The government gave slightly more scope to the campaign for universal suffrage. They could not prevent, however, but at most slow down, the pacifist

¹⁰⁷ *Fest*, pp. 66-70, 74-76.; *Zeman, Diplomatic*, p. 135.

¹⁰⁸ *MMTVD 4/B*, p. 229.

¹⁰⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. V, p. 122.

turn in the policy of the Social Democratic Party. In his memoirs, Mihály Károlyi registered this turn in connection with the planned Sotckholm conference, i.e. in the spring of 1917.¹¹⁰

In the spring of 1917 the Swedish, Danish, and Dutch social democrats, with the co-operation of the International Socialist Bureau, proposed holding a conference in Stockholm with the participation of the social democratic parties of both belligerent camps. The leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary were among the active supporters of the conference. The extraordinary party congress, held on April 8 and 9, also took a stand for calling the conference as soon as possible. In mid-April, the leaders of the German, Austrian, and Hungarian social democratic parties met in Berlin and decided to attend the conference.¹¹¹

The socialists of the western Entente countries refused to attend the conference. In Russia, this was the period of dual power. The Provisional Government, like the governments of the western Entente countries, stood for the continuation of the war, but the Menshevik and social revolutionary socialists, who were in majority in the Petrograd soviet, were partisans of a peace agreement and decided to attend the conference. A conference with these participants, however, would only have resulted in a separate peace for Russia, which the parties mutually rejected. Thus, the Stockholm conference did not take place. Yet, even this failed attempt is interesting, since from May to July the preparatory committee of the conference held talks with the delegates of the different parties and these discussions reflected the various policies of the different social democratic parties.

Tisza was at first opposed to allowing the Hungarian social democratic leaders to travel to Stockholm, as he wanted to hold them on a short leash for pacifist agitation. In mid-April the Hungarian government ordered the preliminary censoring of *Népszava* since in some of the articles the "strong desire for peace which is manifest jeopardize the interests of warfare," while in another article the paper "promises starting a nation-wide movement for peace". In vain did Buchinger ask on behalf of the editors for the lifting of the censorship saying that their peace efforts were supported "in official quarters" (i.e. in the Foreign Ministry).¹¹² Czernin in fact supported the social democrats' action and even wrote a letter to Tisza: "If the secure peace it will be a socialist one, and the Emperor will have to pay out of his own pocket; I am sure too, dear friend, that if it is not possible to end the war, the Emperor will have to pay still more; you may be sure of that."¹¹³ In the end the Hungarian premier authorized the Hungarian social democrats' travel,

¹¹⁰ Károlyi, p. 294.

¹¹¹ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 328-329.

¹¹² *OL K* 578, Cat. no. 453.

¹¹³ Czernin, p. 187-188.

but the divergence of opinion concerning the Stockholm initiative remained. The official Hungarian government statement about the Stockholm conference was so reserved that Czernin did not allow its publication in the Viennese papers. Only after the German papers had published it and Tisza had protested, did it appear in the *Wiener Morgenblätter*.¹¹⁴

At the end of May, the Hungarian Social Democratic Party sent a delegation of six (Garami, Weltner, Kunfi, Jászai, Buchinger, and Bokányi) to Stockholm to discuss matters with the preparatory committee. They handed over a lengthy memorandum: "The peoples which are bleeding from many wounds cannot continue war until the proletariat is able to seize power everywhere. The peoples need peace as soon as possible. Therefore, they cannot demand a peace in which the basic principles of the international social democratic movement would be fully realized, but they should urge the governments to conclude peace as soon as possible even if the content of the peace which is realizable in the actual power relations fell far short of the claims of the international social democratic movement and did not make possible the peoples' right of self-determination."¹¹⁵ The delegation of the Hungarian social democrats, like the Austrians (Victor Adler, Ellenbogen, Renner, etc.), insisted on the territorial integrity of the Monarchy.¹¹⁶

In April and May, while preparations were going on for the Stockholm conference, the Austro-Hungarian and German leaders once more had negotiations in Kreuznach in order to reconcile their eastern war aims. While the social democratic parties of the Central Powers were issuing declarations about peace without annexation, their countries' leaders were planning important annexations and the creation of puppet-states. The German program included the annexation of Kurland, Lithuania, and the Baltic isles, and the creation of a Poland which would be Germany's vassal. Bethmann-Hollweg wished to grant autonomy to the annexed territories, to which the military leaders, who were for complete assimilation, only agreed with difficulty.¹¹⁷ The results of the negotiations were laid down in a secret agreement on March 18. According to the latter, Poland and the Baltic countries would belong to Germany's sphere, and the Serbian and Romanian regions to the Balkans to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Tisza, Vol. VI, pp. 320-321.

¹¹⁵ The memorandum is quoted by Buchinger, Vol. I, p. 238.

¹¹⁶ Jemnitz, pp. 250-251.

¹¹⁷ Steglich, Vol. I, p. 70.

¹¹⁸ Deutsch-sowjetische Bez, pp. 860-862.; Fischer, pp. 457-458.

THE PEACE INITIATIVE OF THE VATICAN
AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF HUNGARY

On the first anniversary of the outbreak of the war the pope addressed an appeal to the belligerent countries and their leaders to try to reach an agreement. It was not just the expectations of the faithful that made the Vatican issue declarations recommending peace. In his memoirs, Erzberger wrote that in 1915 the pope declared: "If the war goes on much longer, there will be a social revolution comparable to nothing the world has seen so far."¹¹⁹ The leaders of the Catholic Church regarded the maintenance of the monarchies of Central Europe, and especially of that of the Habsburgs, as one of the most vital interests of the Church. "The future of the Church in the Monarchy," wrote the prince primate of Hungary to the chaplains-general to the forces in January 1917, "principally depends on the fate of the Monarchy itself. Thus, we must make every sacrifice in order to defend the Monarchy."¹²⁰ The fall of the tsar was another sign that the prolongation of the war may be dangerous for all the monarchies.

The priests' soothing words advising patience and acquiescence meant a less and less efficacious consolation for the increasing suffering caused by the long war. Canon Giesswein, who knew the people's mood well, warned the primate in September 1916 that if the episcopate did not wish to lose completely its influence on the common people, they would have to do something for the sake of peace. "Some national chauvinism," he wrote in a confidential letter, "or other feelings stop the members of the Church from working seriously for peace... I know from experience that all over the world the Catholic papers are the most chauvinistic. I might add that in Hungary, the well-meaning public is getting bored by and starting to hate the *Új Lap* (New Review)." The believers "are longing for the Church and its leaders to do something at last in order that this horrible and monstrous war, which is upsetting civilisation and Christian morality, should end." At the end of his letter, Giesswein warned the primate that they would lose their influence completely "if there is no visible sign of the Church leaders' doing something in this matter".¹²¹

The primate took notice of Giesswein's warnings and submitted this letter to the next episcopal conference. There it was decided that "the bishops will give expression to the desire for peace in an appropriate way in their encyclical letters". They sent a petition to the pope asking him to make similar declarations.¹²² A few weeks after the Central Powers' memorandum of December, the pope

¹¹⁹ M. Erzberger: *Erlebnisse im Weltkrieg*, Stuttgart-Berlin 1920, p. 43.

¹²⁰ *EPL*, Cat. 51. 164-1917.

¹²¹ *EPL*, Cat. D/a. 4868-1916.

¹²² *OL Püsp. Konf.*, November 15, 1916.

stressed in a letter to the Hungarian episcopate how much he desired peace. He wrote in a similar sense to the primate. These letters were published in the most widely-read Catholic dailies.

The Church leaders were greatly worried when in the spring of 1917 the leading political circles encouraged the social democrats' peace action, thus reinforcing their prestige above and below. To counteract the social democrats' action in February 1917 the Catholic parties organized an international conference in Zurich, but only the leaders of the Catholic political movements of the Central Powers took part. The delegates of the German, Austrian, Hungarian, and Polish Catholic parties present formed the International Union of Catholics.¹²³

In addition to the International Union of Catholics, the Christian socialists and certain Catholic People's Party members also laid stress upon the role of the pacifist Lasting Peace League, which had been created at the beginning of the war, to counterbalance the social democrats' actions. In his article "The Right Way to Peace," Giesswein called attention to both organizations.¹²⁴ Most of the Catholic politicians, however, were reluctant to support the League, since their old enemies, the bourgeois radicals, had also taken part in its creation and activity.

In the spring of 1917 the Vatican was planning to propose calling a peace conference, and its diplomacy was busy preparing it.¹²⁵ The task of Cardinal Pacelli, the new Munich nuncio appointed in April, was especially important: he had to make the German emperor and chancellor accept the restoration of independence to Belgium. The pope could not start any action if he did not take a stand for the independence of a country whose population was 95 per cent Catholic.

A note was prepared in the Vatican to be sent to heads of state. The pope wanted to hand it over on August 1, the third anniversary of the outbreak of the war, but the preliminary official German position concerning Belgium was late in arriving. Finally they did not wait any longer and on August 15 the note, dated August 1, was handed over to the heads of state. Two days later the note was published in the Italian press. The pope's appeal, as well as the socialists' action, did not bring any result.¹²⁶

¹²³ *Ibid.*, March 18, 1917.

¹²⁴ *Új Lap*, March 18, 1917.

¹²⁵ F. Lama: *Die Friedensvermittlung Papst Benedikt XV*, München 1932.

¹²⁶ *Fischer*, pp. 541-543.

THE FALL OF THE TISZA CABINET AND THE NEW POLITICAL LINE

In the spring of 1917 it became increasingly apparent that Tisza's ossific system of administration could no longer be maintained. This was also confirmed by events within Germany. In his speeches in March and April Bethmann-Hollweg promised reforms, trying to draw support from the cross-benchers. In his proclamation in March 7 (the Easter address) Kaiser Wilhelm formally asked the chancellor to reform suffrage.¹²⁷ The foreign minister of the Monarchy also realized that now it was no longer possible to eschew a reform of franchise in Hungary, and this he communicated to the prime minister,¹²⁸ Tisza, however, would not acknowledge the connection. "The Prussian suffrage", he replied, "became totally obsolete half a century ago and needs reforming, while in Hungary a far-reaching liberal reform was carried out three years ago based upon the principle of universal suffrage".¹²⁹ The three-class (plural) vote in Prussia was indeed worse than the Hungarian one of 1913, though it was not far-reaching or liberal either, yet in several provinces of the German empire and at the Reichstag elections suffrage was universal and equal. In the Monarchy the Hungarian franchise lagged way behind that of Austria.

Although the fact that Tisza's policy was not feasible was becoming ever more obvious, the omnipotent prime minister was unshakable, enjoying the firm support of the majority of the Hungarian ruling stratum.

¹²⁷ Its text is carried in *Népszava*, April 8, 1917.

¹²⁸ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 297-298.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 298-299.

Three political trends had crystallized by the spring of 1917. Tisza and the Party of Work represented the hard line. They wished to remain in control by squashing unrest and remaining impervious to demands for a reconsideration of suffrage. "We introduced an electoral reform only four years ago", he said in the March 13 meeting of the Party of Work, "resulting by now in some 1,800,000 voters, which is more than half of the male population over 30... Well, my dear friends, now that the Hungarian nation made such a great effort towards liberal reform just four years ago ... we must not let ourselves be deterred from the sublime traditions of this country with a past of a thousand years".¹³⁰ All he was willing to do was to slightly extend suffrage towards industrial workers and the Social Democratic Party.¹³¹ In his foreign policy he demanded a peace ensuring integrity and a minimum of the war aims. This made him adhere to the Germans, for the only way he saw this practicable was through the military might of Germany. Since now the Allies would not consider a peace like that, the only way to attain it was by perseverance and resolve in the war.

Another trend was represented by the groups of the opposition right (Andrássy, Apponyi, and those of the Catholic People's Party). Their foreign policy completely tallied with that of Tisza. Indeed, complying with their agrarian interests, they had the strongest affiliation to the Mitteleuropa scheme. In domestic politics, however, they firmly called for changes as they were convinced that the rigid policy of Tisza would provoke revolution. They did not share Tisza's view that "each war makes people more serious, religious, and conservative".¹³² Quite the contrary, they claimed: wars drove people towards revolution. Thus they wished to channel off mounting internal tensions by concessions and promises. They also thought it imperative to somewhat reform suffrage. Neither were they averse to pacifist slogans. The class basis of both the Party of Work and the opposition right wing was the large estate and plutocracy. Most of these classes supported the Party of Work. One and a half years later, in the autumn of 1918, these two trends of the large estate and big capital merged to produce a common counter-revolutionary front. In the spring of 1917, however, they were still at variance as to the tactics of domestic politics.

The third trend, the opposition left headed by Mihály Károlyi, advocated pacifist policies. They opposed any conquests, but wished to end the war on the grounds of

¹³⁰ Gróf Tisza István miniszterelnök beszéde a belpolitikai helyzetről 1917 április 13-án a Munkapárt értekezletén (The Address of Prime Minister Count István Tisza about the Situation in Domestic Politics at the Meeting of the Party of Work on April 13, 1917), Budapest n.d., p. 6.

¹³¹ Gratz, Vol. II, p. 357.

¹³² Tisza, Vol. VI, p. 256.

integrity. With this in mind they suggested a new orientation in foreign politics: estrangement from the Germans and a separate peace with the Entente. In interior politics they called for more far-reaching reforms, first of all universal suffrage. Nevertheless, the reforms they had in mind would not affect the bourgeois foundations or the Hungarian hegemony over the nationalities. The trend depended mostly on the middle and lower strata of the bourgeoisie and the layers of the peasantry for support. Károlyi and the essentially similar, though more democratic extra-parliamentary bourgeois radicals were drawing closer together in a brotherhood. The social democrats plunging into the political struggle again took the side of this current of bourgeois politics.

THE UPSWING OF LABOUR MOVEMENT IN THE SPRING OF 1917 AND THE SDP

The struggle of the working classes had three express aims in the spring of 1917: to improve living and working conditions, to attain peace, and to extend political right, above all universal suffrage.

There was a sudden great rise in the number of economic unrests in the spring of 1917 which not even the conciliatory activities of the complaints committees could curb. A wave of strikes began in February, gradually increased during March and April and climaxed in May-June. Extensive strikes were called first of all in the iron industry, the mines, and the repair shops of the Hungarian Railways. There were stoppages in the mines of Tatabánya, Dorog, and Tokod, followed by strikes in the mining areas of Brennberg and Pécs. Most of the miners being "militarized", they were to be court-martialled for putting down tools. When five miners had been sentenced to death under martial law, the others resumed work. Capital punishment was commuted to imprisonment.¹³³ In late May the workers of the railway shops at Szolnok, Debrecen, Érsekújvár, Sátoraljaújhely, Szeged, Budapest, and Székesfehérvár walked out. These spring actions were effective in that the workers managed to get some wage raise and somewhat improved working conditions. But the rapid rise in the cost of living shattered all achievements in a couple of months.

Having assessed the mood of the workers, the leaders of the Social Democratic Party realized that it would be impossible to pass up May Day celebrations again. With the mounted police and the gendarmerie on the ready, the Tisza cabinet also found it better to sanction the holiday which they banned in 1915 and 1916 under extraordinary legislation. Police did not allow demonstrations, but accepted the

¹³³ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 459.

fact that work would stop and rallies would be held.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the justice minister prepared for all emergencies and drafted four ordinance (including the introduction of martial law and a further tightening up of the right of assembly). One can read in the explanation that their proclamation "might be necessary because of the possible popular unrests to be expected on the 1st day of May 1917".¹³⁵ Following the successful industrial disputes and the celebration of May Day, the membership of the trade unions rapidly increased from 55,338 in late 1916 to 215,222 in late 1917, that is, the number of union members quadrupled during 1917. "This rise", as Samu Jászai, he then secretary of the Trade Union Council, pointed out in his memoirs "actually only began after May 1, 1917."¹³⁶ Since the strikes directly affected the military interests, the drafting of union leaders as a way of retaliation was an imminent threat especially under the Tisza administration. The union officials sought to temper the strike movement. "The number of wage movements was quite high already in 1917, although the trade unions made all efforts to prevent stoppages," Jászai wrote.¹³⁷

To support the policy of the bourgeois opposition, the leadership of the Social Democratic Party tried to use the strengthening labour movement to attain suffrage, keeping the movement adequately under control. Expecting to see the upper echelons of the parliamentary opposition, who were also considered presentable in court, in power, the social democrat leaders chose to support them as they included the reform of the franchise on their platform. Their ties were strongest with the left wing of the opposition, Károlyi and Vázsonyi, and with the extra-parliamentary bourgeois radicals, but they did not neglect relations with Andrásy's circle either, who was the favourite after the possible downfall of Tisza. This is how they intended to achieve their long awaited goal, universal suffrage, or at least a considerable extension of the vote.

On April 25 *Népszava* called on "all politically social-conscious parties and factions", not only the opposition left wing but the moderates as well, to unite in a suffrage bloc. This bloc, they claimed, would be a "serious alliance" between the workers and the bourgeoisie "in the interest of a single, distinctly defined goal: the attainment of democracy". The slogan of the bloc was "Down with Tisza and the war: long live suffrage and peace".¹³⁸

Many of the social democrats criticized the planned alliance with the bourgeois parties. The extraordinary congress of April 8-9 also witnessed a sharp debate

¹³⁴ *MMTVD 4/B*, pp. 194, 279-280.; L. Réti: *Magyar május elsejék* (May Days in Hungary) Budapest 1953, pp. 198-206.

¹³⁵ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 457.

¹³⁶ *Jászai*, pp. 226, 272-273.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹³⁸ *MMTVD 4/B*, pp. 284-285.

over the issue. Many assumed the position that past experiences had been too bitter to allow for an alliance of this sort. But the congress failed to take a common stand, conferring this task to the leadership. All agreed with Zsigmond Kunfi's argument to wait: "No one knows what historic situations may ensue in which the party leadership and the committee will need a free hand".¹³⁹ As early as the end of April the top officials of the party urged solidarity among the bourgeois parties, and so the issue was put on the agenda of the May 9 meeting of stewards. One speaker expressly denounced the alliance and nine voted against it. In the face of the opponents and the cautious, Kunfi stressed that: "he would strike an alliance with the devil himself to overthrow Tisza. There must be parliamentary war and street fighting against Tisza. One may fail without the other, but the two together will surely bring success."¹⁴⁰

TISZA'S FALL

The monarch's remedy for the ever more critical situation of Hungary's domestic politics was to retain Tisza due to the wish of the Party of Work majority in Parliament, but press him to make some moderately liberal concessions. Charles, as has been seen, was prepared to replace the prime minister, but he was afraid that the situation in the Hungarian Parliament would be untenable. Either the Parliament would have to be left out of the proceedings, or elections must be held. Both would run great risks. Such were the circumstances under which the royal rescript of April 28 was written. In a letter addressed to "Dear Count Tisza" the sovereign expressed his confidence: "I can see no reason why I should part with a cabinet that has a firm majority in Parliament... I call upon the government to continue managing the affairs of the country with its tried loyalty." At the same time he ordered the prime minister to put forward proposals for social measures and an extension of suffrage, "such that are equal to the present great moment and to the sacrifices made by the people, complying at the sate".¹⁴¹ As the rescript did not specify the welfare measures or the extension of the vote in detail, Tisza could accept it. The next day the papers carried the government's statement which, as the premier let the lord lieutenants know in confidence, "was published with His Majesty's connivance and preliminary approval".¹⁴² After mentioning a few minor social measures, he took a stand against the enlargement of the right to vote: "All that can be considered at present is the amendment of the so-far untried re-

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

¹⁴⁰ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 9. Police Report.

¹⁴¹ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 277.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 301.

form bill (i.e. the franchise act of 1913 – J. G.)”. This meant the extension of the vote to those awarded a *vitéz*’s medal, with the further modification that not only those literate citizens who were rated for 20 crown tax, but also those with 8 acres tilled land or its equivalent should be qualified to vote.

The prime minister’s program left even the moderate opposition cool as even the “heroes’ right to vote” they had proposed was only partly accepted. During these days Tisza was busy trying to involve some politicians from the opposition right in the government in order to give his cabinet the semblance of concentration. He tried to persuade Móric Esterházy and István Bethlen, but they declined to join the uncertain Tisza cabinet.¹⁴³

As the premier saw it, the royal rescript was a sign of the consolidation of his power, provided that the cabinet kept the reign firmly in hand in regard to home affairs. This might offset the disadvantage that the ruler was put to in foreign politics by keeping the old government which was also responsible for starting the war in power. In his letter of thanks dated April 29 Tisza also dealt with the Spanish king’s offer to intercede in this spirit. Upon the request of Charles, Alphonse XIII had also tried to negotiate peace, but he had made it clear to the ruler of the Monarchy that Tisza’s retention in the post of prime minister hindered his attempts. The Hungarian premier was informed of this. “I do not think,” Tisza wrote to the sovereign, “that my retention of office would harm the cause of peace more than a Hungarian cabinet crisis would” which the enemy might regard as a sign of inner weakness.¹⁴⁴

After the publication of the royal letter and the government statement the prime minister sent confidential instructions to the lord lieutenants to stage demonstrations in support of the government’s announcement and against radical suffrage. “It would greatly influence the June session of Parliament if we succeeded in provoking considerable protest among the population against the idea of the radical vote.”¹⁴⁵ Sporadically such demonstrations were successfully incited, but they were by far surpassed in magnitude and repercussions by the demonstrations of the industrial workers and the left wing bourgeois and intellectual strata protesting for universal suffrage.

The workers and the bourgeois opposition were outraged by the official communique. “This means that the king has pledged his full support to the Tisza government,” *Népszava* commented. “This extension of the vote à la Tisza is a clear provocation of the Hungarian masses.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 260–261.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

¹⁴⁶ *Népszava*, April 29, 1917.

Most of the May Day rallies of the workers also took place in a spirit of protest against the electoral bill drafted by the government.¹⁴⁷ Factories in and around Budapest stopped work for an hour at 11 a.m. on May 2 and the union stewards forwarded memoranda to the management sent out by the party leadership so that they would send them on to the government. The memoranda demanded universal suffrage.¹⁴⁸

On May 18 Károlyi's party held a meeting and protested Tisza's move. It called on everyone to jointly strive for the right to vote and peace. The top brass of the Social Democratic Party backed up the Károlyi party's demands for Tisza's resignation and to reform the franchise, and they also pressed for joint efforts. At the same time, they busied themselves trying to involve the moderate opposition in the Suffrage Bloc. Apponyi, however, flatly refused to participate while all Andrassy was willing to collaborate with the social democrats on was the ousting of Tisza, but not general vote.¹⁴⁹ On May 20 *Népszava* wrote that an agreement had been reached between the Social Democratic Party and the left wing bourgeois opposition concerning the basic principles of the future Suffrage Bloc.

The reaction of the workers and the left wing bourgeoisie challenged the ruler to a showdown. Gusztáv Gratz who became minister of finance in the new government wrote in his later works that the greatest impetus was the fact that "in those days the population, particularly the industrial workers seethed with anger".¹⁵⁰ Through the mediation of Burián, Charles made a last attempt to get the premier to substantially reform suffrage. Having failed in this attempt as well, he asked Tisza to resign on May 22. The same day the ministerial council of Hungary authorized the president of the cabinet to offer his resignation, making it unequivocally clear that it was unavoidable due to the suffrage program. "The Prime Minister says that His Majesty having failed to approve of the government's proposal concerning the right to vote, he would most humbly hand in his resignation of his cabinet to His Majesty", as the minutes of the ministerial council read.¹⁵¹ *Népszava* was not entirely mistaken when on May 24 it wrote: "István Tisza was ousted from office by the Hungarian proletariat, and the Tisza cabinet fell flat on its back due to the great notion of universal suffrage".¹⁵² Tisza, however, did not give up his crusade against the extension of the right to vote even after his fall. The day

¹⁴⁷ *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 281-282.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.

¹⁴⁹ *Népszava*, April 29, 1917.; May 11, 1917.

¹⁵⁰ *Gratz*, Vol. II, pp. 349-350.

¹⁵¹ *Min. tan. jkv*, May 22, 1917, p. 254.

¹⁵² *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 288-289.

after his resignation he addressed the members of the Party of Work in a circular: "We are going to take up the fight against the radical line on the vote from a position independent of official bonds."¹⁵³

THE SUFFRAGE BLOC

The composition and program of the new government remained unsettled after Tisza's resignation. The Party of Work remained loyal to him, which meant that no cabinet of concentration could be formed. It was still undecided which group of the opposition would be in government and with what program, and who could be assigned the leading role. In the first days the odds seemed to be in favour of Andrassy.¹⁵⁴ Tisza was also for him. "I am doing all that is in my power," he wrote to his brother, "that Andrassy, whose duty it would be, should undertake the forming of the cabinet perhaps with the People's Party and the independent 67-ers on the condition that he postpone the suffrage controversy, and hence the elections, until after the war."¹⁵⁵

After Tisza's fall the Social Democratic Party launched a massive campaign, staging several demonstrations for the electoral rights. The news of his downfall triggered protest marches immediately on May 24.¹⁵⁶ On May 31 there were spontaneous meetings at 35 points in the capital attended by some 50,000 people according to news reports.¹⁵⁷ It was the Social Democratic Party's aim to use the workers' demonstrations to put pressure on the new cabinet to come out with a substantial suffrage reform. This is why they pressed for the establishment of the Suffrage Bloc even more strongly. As a preliminary step, the Suffrage Committee of the Citizens and Workers of Budapest was set up in the first days of June, which called a protest rally for June 8 in support of universal suffrage.

Counting on Andrassy's appointment as the head of government, the leadership of the SDP made a secret agreement with him through the mediation of Vázsonyi about a moderate enlargement of suffrage.¹⁵⁸ According to this version, all the literate citizens over 24 and the soldiers fighting at the front decorated with the Charles cross would have the right to vote, while the villagers would continue to have an open vote.¹⁵⁹ Thus in the fight for suffrage the social democrats kept two

¹⁵³ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, pp. 306-307.

¹⁵⁴ *Károlyi*, p. 206.

¹⁵⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 282.

¹⁵⁶ *Népszava*, May 27, 1917.

¹⁵⁷ *Népszava*, June 3, 1917.

¹⁵⁸ *Andrassy*, pp. 174-175.

¹⁵⁹ *Gratz*, Vol. II, p. 356.

irons in the fire: they accepted the very moderate reform that suited Andrassy, a considerable compromise, but at the same time wanted and advocated radical reform, mobilized the masses for it and urged for the establishment of the Suffrage Bloc.

On June 6, after nearly a month and a half of wrangling, the Suffrage Bloc was set up with the participation of the Social Democratic Party and the opposition left: the Károlyi party, the bourgeois radicals, and Vázsonyi's party. The Christian socialist Giesswein and some other minor associations also joined the bloc which was headed by Károlyi with Vázsonyi and socialist Garbai as vice presidents.¹⁶⁰ The platform of the bloc included the achievement of universal, equal, and secret vote, as well as peace without territorial expansion or war indemnities. They wished to see international organizations established for the preservation of peace and intended to democratize military and foreign policies. The Suffrage Bloc was the first organized form which the collaboration between the left wing bourgeois trends and the Social Democratic Party took, whose more advanced manifestation was the National Council at the end of the war. The Independent Party had a leading role in the alliance, but the Bloc did not adopt the specific independence program of the Károlyi party.

The papers reported that some 100,000 workers of the capital gathered for the meeting on June 8 at the town hall in support of the program of the Suffrage Bloc.¹⁶¹ Several country towns (Győr, Miskolc, Kassa, Debrecen, Kolozsvár, and Szabadka) also held demonstrations. The electoral demands of the Budapest rally were taken by the mayor to the king who was staying in Buda Castle.

THE ESTERHÁZY CABINET

Contrary to the expectations of the politicians the monarchy did not appoint Andrassy, widely known as a pro-German, as premier. It is worth noting what common Finance Minister Burián wrote about the audience on June 1: "To my remark that the easiest thing would be to have Andrassy undertake it, he replied that he did not trust him and feared that he would confuse the political situation and this would have a disturbing effect on foreign affairs". According to Burián's notes he himself was mentioned in the audience — "The King made the point that I might be the most suitable" — but he declined. According to Baron Marterer, who accompanied the king to Budapest, Wekerle was also a possible choice.¹⁶² Eventually Charles chose his man from Andrassy's circle:

¹⁶⁰ *Batthyány*, Vol. I, p. 142.; *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 290–293.

¹⁶¹ The police report mentions 55–60 thousand people. *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 294.

¹⁶² *REZsL Burián*, item 44, p. 46.; *Festschrift Hantsch*, p. 497.

early on June 8, right before the town hall rally, he appointed Móric Esterházy to form a government. Having had no significant position either in public administration or politics, Esterházy was not an experienced politician.

The new prime minister immediately turned to Andrassy for advice on whether to accept the appointment. It was in the latter's residence and with his mediation that he began negotiating with representatives of the parties to form a cabinet,¹⁶³ which was largely composed of Andrassy's followers. Apart from the prime minister himself, they included Minister of the Interior Gábor Ugron, Minister of Trade Béla Serényi, Minister of Agriculture Béla Mezőssy, and Finance Minister Gusztáv Gratz (although formally he was the member of the Party of Work). The other two parties of the moderate opposition were given a ministerial post each: Independent MP Apponyi that of religion and public education, People's Party's Aladár Zichy that of the Croat matters. One department went to the two parliamentary parties each belonging to the Suffrage Bloc: Vilmos Vázsonyi became the minister of justice and Tivadar Batthyány the minister in attendance on the king's person. The only minister to come from the Tisza cabinet was Defence Minister Sándor Szurmay.

Besides the left wing opposition, Esterházy also wanted to win over the social democrats to his cabinet. He offered a state secretarial position to them through Vázsonyi. In the course of his policy visits he called on the editorial office of *Népszava*, an unparalleled move in Hungary.¹⁶⁴

Not only the opposition circles of the bourgeoisie, but also the working classes were looking forward to the activities of the new government. *Népszava* struck an optimistic key in the first days. Many of the workers expected the new cabinet to carry out the Suffrage Bloc program. What fed this illusion was the fact that the new cabinet included two of the Bloc's leaders. On June 15 *Népszava* wrote: "We do believe and hope that we shall be fully justified in calling the new cabinet the government of suffrage. We see it as a promising guarantee that the two leading members of the Suffrage Bloc are involved in the new ministry."¹⁶⁵ However, these illusions were soon shattered. The new government's platform was not the universal and secret vote, but the pact struck by Andrassy with the social democrats through Vázsonyi. This pact was now joined by Károlyi's party on the condition that in certain rural districts voting would be secret. At the June 15 session of the council of ministers it was agreed that the electoral reform "will be created along evolutionary lines, in keeping with the traditions of Hungarian history".¹⁶⁶ The June 19 issue of *Népszava* did not hide its disappointment:

¹⁶³ Károlyi, p. 214.; Batthyány, Vol. I, pp. 142–143.

¹⁶⁴ Garami, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ MMTVD 4/B, pp. 349–350.

¹⁶⁶ Min, tan. jkv, June 15, 1917, p. 257.

"No government can enjoy the confidence of the people and István Tisza at the same time".¹⁶⁷

The new cabinet made its debut in Parliament on June 21. Esterházy stressed in his policy speech: "The foundation and justification of the new government lies in the need for a reformed suffrage", but the reform he outlined, which corresponded to the above-mentioned pact, did not satisfy the demands of the democrats in the least. This is exactly what Andrassy had in mind when he tried to persuade the Party of Work majority to consent to it as the lesser evil: "I myself also feel the weight of his concerns," he said turning to the ex-premier, "but precisely in order to save the country from a greater evil, he should have accepted what he regarded as the lesser danger".¹⁶⁸ In reply to the prime minister's policy speech Tisza, however, who had the absolute majority of Parliament behind him, with only 13 deputies having left the Party of Work¹⁶⁹, let it be known in no uncertain terms that even this moderate reform bill would be vetoed. He regarded the government's program of "extreme suffrage" as "perilous to the Hungarian nation".¹⁷⁰ Given these facts, the demonstrations in support of an enlarged franchise went on after the formation and inauguration of the new cabinet as well.

The Social Democratic Party called for support for the government's franchise program: although "Count Esterházy's is not *our* program ... we are not able for the time being to pass a voting bill which is substantially better than the one approved by Esterházy".¹⁷¹ On June 27 there was widespread protest in the capital followed by several demonstrations. The main target of these unrests was the Party of Work, who expressly hindered the suffrage reform and had the majority in Parliament, and demanded the dissolution of Parliament. Tisza attacked the cabinet in the house saying that it did not take a strong line against the rebels.¹⁷² Though they were clamorously debating in the House, the right wing of the new government and the overthrown Party of Work were tied to each other by a thousand threads due to their common class origin. Let us mention one example: in the House István Bethlen sat on Apponyi's bench. On June 17 he sent a letter to Tisza — "Will you please keep the contents of my letter in strict confidence" — in which he asked him not to insist on the resignation of the Party of Work lord lieutenants in counties with Romanian inhabitants.¹⁷³ Bethlen had more confi-

¹⁶⁷ *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 350.

¹⁶⁸ *Képviselet*, June 21, 1917.

¹⁶⁹ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 319.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

¹⁷¹ *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 353.

¹⁷² *Képviselet*, June 28, 1917, Teleszky's speech; July 12, 1917, Tisza's speech.

¹⁷³ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 9.

dence in Tisza's men than in his own party and was happy to see them in the lieutenant's chair, especially in those counties where he owned estates.

The Esterházy cabinet was drifting towards a crisis. The masses demanded the promised voting reform, but the majority of Parliament opposed it. The greater part of the government was made up of Andrassy's followers who were not seriously in favour of it. And Vázsonyi, who had been a loud advocate of the suffrage reform until his inclusion in the government, was already muting his voice and concentrating more on the consolidation of his position than on a rapid elaboration of the reform. Under the Esterházy government nothing happened regarding the right to vote or, for that matter, about social welfare. Esterházy was very reluctant to sanction the charter of the craft association of agricultural workers and flatly refused to sign that of the miners.¹⁷⁴ In order to calm the workers down, the government planned to reduce the militarization of the factories, emphasizing however, in the decree that "militarization ought not to be abolished anywhere where fresh outbreaks of unrest... are likely". The cabinet called on the military administration of militarized factories to appeal to the government for advice before enforcing anti-strike measures, because otherwise "it is incapable of undertaking its constitutional responsibility for the governance of the country".¹⁷⁵ But even these attempts failed to be translated into practice. Soon the government composed of the former opposition parties was stripped of all authority. "The change," Garami wrote, "that the country expected of Esterházy's rule simply would not come, and this, in turn, reduced and undermined the prestige of the government day by day."¹⁷⁶ The Party of Work majority of the House had been against the government from the beginning, which was at first counterbalanced by support which came from the street. This being lost, the Esterházy cabinet remained without support. Two solutions seemed feasible: either to compromise with Tisza and adopt the policy required by the Party of Work majority, or to force the Party of Work to accept moderate reforms relying on the extra-parliamentary forces, and when this failed, to dissolve Parliament. Eschewing both solutions, Esterházy handed in his resignation in mid-August.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ *Garami*, p. 6.

¹⁷⁵ *Min. tan. jkv*, July 27, 1917, p. 269.; August 10, p. 277.

¹⁷⁶ *Garami*, p. 6.

¹⁷⁷ Besides the untenable domestic political position of the government, an additional reason of his resignation, as he wrote in his unpublished memoirs, was that he was not informed of the secret peace attempts of which he was supposed to know in his capacity as prime minister, yet he was not involved in the making of the foreign policy despite his repeated requests. *Engel-Jánosi*, p. 280.

It seemed that the domestic political changes in both parts of the Monarchy led her peace-seeking foreign policy to firmer ground. Seemingly even the conditions in Germany's domestic politics were favourable. Despite the opposition of the conservatives Bethmann-Hollweg called for an electoral reform in the spring of 1917. In the summer the liberal wing, who were more ready to compromise, won a majority in the Reichstag with the support of the Social Democratic Party: amid heated protest and opposition by the conservatives, the Parliament on July 19 carried a motion calling for a non-annexation, negotiated peace. Though seemingly favourable for Vienna's policies, the actual change in the German line went precisely in the opposite direction. The supreme command, by far superior to the civilian administration by then, had the Kaiser's sanction for the long-sought-for replacement of the chancellor a few days before the resolution of the Reichstag. Michaelis who was mainly influenced by the high command, replaced Bethmann-Hollweg in the chancellor's chair. Thus the political course taken by the German government was dictated not by the parliamentary liberal majority inclined to compromise, but by the military commanders who adopted a policy of extensive annexations.¹⁷⁸

In the early summer of 1917 Charles and Czernin were still taking steps on the basis of the former policy: they were making efforts to achieve peace because of the domestic plight of the Monarchy. During the June 29 session of the joint ministerial council the king himself mentioned the grave problems of breadgrain and coal supplies. "It is vitally important for the Monarchy," he said, "that we save our national economy from disaster."¹⁷⁹ He was determined to put an end to the war before winter. This is what he wrote to the German heir presumptive on August 20, 1917: "Despite the superhuman efforts of our soldiers the termination of war before winter sets in is imperative due to the plight of the hinterland, and this applies to Germany just as much as to us".¹⁸⁰

Czernin and Charles renewed efforts to persuade the Germans to assume a more lenient position. Czernin established ties with the more moderate parties of the German Reichstag and had a say in the drafting of the resolution of July 19. Czernin and Charles were inclined to yield more to the Germans in order that they would decrease their demands in the west and thus negotiations could commence at last. During the July talks on economic rapprochement the Monarchy was far less reluctant than before.¹⁸¹ In eastern dealings she also showed

¹⁷⁸ *Deutschland*, Vol. II, pp. 749-759.; *Ritter*, Vol. III, p. 587.

¹⁷⁹ *Protokolle*, p. 511.

¹⁸⁰ *Lajos*, p. 331.

¹⁸¹ *Gratz-Schüller, Äussere*, pp. 63-69.

signs of surrendering more and more. In his letter to the German heir to the throne Charles wrote: "I have seen unmistakable signs that we could win France over, provided that Germany would make certain territorial sacrifices in Alsace-Lorraine. Winning over France could mean our victory, and then Germany could substantially recoup herself elsewhere... I am willing to relinquish not only the whole of Poland, but to yield Galicia to Poland as well, and I am also prepared to help annex this empire to Germany. In this way Germany would gain a whole empire in the east, while in the west she would sacrifice a part of her country." Though left unmentioned in the letter, this concept implied that the Monarchy would reimburse herself in the Balkans for her generosity in Galicia. It was also to put pressure on the Germans that Czernin urged Károlyi to deliver pacifist speeches. He also encouraged him in July 1917 to demand the formulation of the German war aims. Károlyi's actions along this line caused quite a lot of embarrassment for the Esterházy cabinet whose policy was pro-German, but whose member, Batthyány, was an adherent of the Károlyi party. This contradiction felt ever since the formation of the cabinet had earlier been overcome by not emphasizing any foreign policy program. Károlyi's trenchant actions, however, forced the government to take sides, and this in turn made Batthyány's position untenable. The situation gave rise to several disputes between Batthyány and Károlyi as well.¹⁸²

The intransigency of the Germans led Charles and Czernin to resume talks with the French, sometimes along different lines from the Germans. The Sixtus action ended in May 1917, but in its place a new tie was also established. In the summer of 1917 the Austrian Count Revertera, a former diplomat who often travelled to Switzerland on family business, and the French Count Armand, a colonel of the French army, held talks in neutral Fribourg on behalf of their governments. Though not unaware of the contact, the Germans thought it was no more than a probe with a common aim. The Revertera-Armand negotiations also touched upon the Monarchy's separate peace. Armand was instructed only to prepare a separate peace if it was reached with the Monarchy.¹⁸³

At that time England and France also had some more lenient tendencies in political circles. All insisted on such war aims as the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine, the independence of Belgium, the partition of Turkey, etc., but some were also inclined to strike a peace by restoring the pre-war situation in Europe.¹⁸⁴ The probable withdrawal of Russia and the partial blockade caused by the submarine war worsened the plight of Britain and France. For many it appeared a practical alternative that peace should be struck by attaining only a minimum of the war

¹⁸² Károlyi, p. 237.; Batthyány, Vol. I, p. 155.

¹⁸³ Engel-János, pp. 287-290.; Fest, p. 140.

¹⁸⁴ Renouvin, p. 145.

aims (even if their reserves were more numerous) in order to prevent the outbreak of a possible European revolution and to forestall endless tribulations. This situation offered some chance for the Monarchy's peace initiatives, and particularly for her separate peace. The Monarchy's initiatives were favourably received in French and English government circles.

Britain and France could not negotiate in effect with the Monarchy without involving Italy. The Russian government could more easily be ignored, for Russia had not been reckoned with as a military factor by the western Allied circles since the failure of Kerensky's offensive in July. "In July Russia's allies," Renouvin writes, "thought that she would soon drop out."¹⁸⁵ Italy, however, maintained an extensive front against the Monarchy, so a possible armistice without her was out of the question. With this in mind, Italy was included in the talks in the summer of 1917. But the Italian leaders would not hear of the Monarchy's integrity or the retention of her positions in the Balkans.¹⁸⁶ The peace talks on the basis of the minimal war aims of the Monarchy thus broke down.¹⁸⁷

The political line launched with Charles' ascension to the throne broke down in the summer of 1917. Czernin pledged allegiance to the Germans several times and shunned contact with Károlyi. In the spring and summer of 1917 the monarch and his foreign minister kept "two irons" in the fire. Batthyány vividly described this double orientation: "With our anti-German alliance policy we kept in the fire another iron which was designed to serve the interest of our country in regard to foreign affairs, had the first iron, the policy of an alliance with Germany, become useless for one reason or another".¹⁸⁸ Now the decision-makers of foreign policy in Vienna decided that the Monarchy's integrity could only be saved by the German alliance and they removed the "second iron" from the fire. Czernin's memoirs throw light on the fundamental considerations behind this political change. In the early summer of 1917, he wrote, there was hope of a peace treaty based on negotiation, but it did not take long to find out that it was impractical. Neither the German high command, nor the English and French leaders would relinquish the hope of victory. And the Monarchy could not conclude a separate peace treaty because first of all it would have led to war with Germany, and secondly, because then she would have to accept the obligations undertaken by the Allied Powers towards Italy, Romania, and Serbia. And this, Czernin wrote, would have meant the acceptance of the Monarchy's break-up.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹⁸⁶ *Zeman, Diplomatic*, pp. 140, 144.

¹⁸⁷ *Fest*, p. 76.

¹⁸⁸ *Batthyány*, Vol. II, p. 58.

¹⁸⁹ *Czernin*, pp. 189-194; 239-242.

At that time the survival of a domestically changed Monarchy still fit into England's and France's policy since their system of interests included a strong continental power in Central Europe. However, the policy of the Italian, Serbian, and Romanian allies was heading in the opposite direction. Their line was bolstered by Russian foreign policy after the February revolution, even if it weighed far less within the Entente bloc. The Provisional Government proclaiming the continuation of the war referred to the enforcement of self-determination as a war aim. In 1917 England and France were inclined, to the detriment of Russia and neglecting Serbia's and Romania's demands, to sign a peace treaty based on negotiations with the Monarchy. Italy, however, insisted on weakening the Monarchy and this position could not be neglected by the compromise-minded circles of London and Paris either.

It was not only the areas inhabited by the Italians that the Italian government demanded of the Monarchy, this the Viennese leaders were under pressure to accept, as early as 1915 they had made offers to cede certain territories in return for Italy's neutrality. Italy made far wider-reaching claims: she wished to supplant the Monarchy in the Balkans. Not wishing to be faced with a new rival in the Balkans, Italy also opposed Serbia's reinforcement, but at the same time she was busy creating a large and powerful Romanian state. This she needed so as to cut off Russia from the Balkans on the one hand, and to forestall possible Austro-Hungarian retaliation. Thus the Italian policy espoused Romanian interests and demanded that a possible separate peace by the Monarchy should also entail the enforcement of the London agreement of 1915 and the Bucharest agreement of 1916.

It was thus impossible for the Monarchy to conclude a separate peace in 1917 on the basis of her minimal program of territorial integrity. Besides achieving a separate peace was a risky venture because of the pending danger of a German offensive. As against this, the leaders of the Monarchy had grounds to hope that in the case of a general peace conference where the Monarchy's integrity would be safeguarded by her German partner and on whom no claims were laid by Britain and France, the Italian, Serbian, and Romanian demands could be counterbalanced by various political combinations. After the failure of their diverse peace attempts, only one possible way to ensure their minimal war aims was envisaged by the Monarchy's leaders: to hope for a German victory, or at least to conclude a joint peace on the basis of the minimal war aims of the Monarchy by sticking to the German side. This lay behind the shift in favour of the Germans at the end of the summer of 1917. Revertera and Armand's talks broke down provisionally in the last days of August.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ *Fest*, pp. 143–144.

The wavering of the Viennese circles in foreign policy adopted at the beginning of 1917, their tighter contacts with the Germans, the impact of the sensational crop of 1917 which was still felt, as well as a lull in the movement of industrial strikes in the summer months all led towards a conservative turn in Hungary. There was a good chance to settle the crisis of the Esterházy government with a rapprochement between the Andrássy, Apponyi, People's Party group and Tisza's circles, a union implying a shift to the right. The beginning of this shift was evident in the appointment of Sándor Wekerle as the new prime minister.

The new cabinet appointed on August 20 co-opted all the members of the outgoing one. In his policy speech Wekerle stressed: the program of the previous government "will remain unchanged and we intend to maintain it in full".¹⁹¹ But the public was quick to realize that the appointment of Wekerle, an expert at making promises and cynically ignoring them, was the first step towards flouting the promises. Obviously, the proposed electoral reform could only be passed in defiance of Tisza and the parliamentary majority. This, in turn, would have needed a man who was able, and ready, to fight against the Tisza faction. In Wekerle's case it was out of the question; quite the contrary, he was known as a man of deception and compromise. The aim of selecting him for the presidency was beyond doubt. "Sándor Wekerle was once the president of a cabinet," *Népszava* wrote, "that professed the introduction of universal suffrage as the central plank of its program only to betray it disgracefully... On the day of his appointment we must frankly admit that we are worried to see him in the chair, as his nomination may also be regarded as a sign of change."¹⁹² One of the very first steps of the Wekerle cabinet was to sanction a measure of the minister of home affairs who ordered "so as to prevent or quench possible disturbances and strikes movements" the concentration of 11 gendarme officers, 330 gendarmes and 670 militia-men assigned to the gendarmerie.¹⁹³

Wekerle was generally known to be a pro-German politician, an advocate of the Mitteleuropa plan. His appointment was warmly welcomed among German leaders. It is remarkable now Germany's ambassador to Vienna reported on the appointment of Wekerle as the new premier: "Apart from Count Tisza, he is the only Hungarian politician who can be expected to navigate the ship of state firmly and with a sure hand. This time the emperor has really chosen the right man ... We have reasons to be satisfied with the choice. Mr. Wekerle, whose father

¹⁹¹ *Képviselőház*, September 12, 1917.

¹⁹² *MMTVD 4/B*, p. 385.

¹⁹³ *Min. tan. jkv*, September 7, 1917, p. 289.

I understand migrated to Hungary from Swabian lands to manage the affairs of an aristocrat's estates, does not deny his German nature. His sentiments are for Germany, and first and foremost he is a hearty supporter of the long-term compromise and close economic alliance with the German empire. He is one of the few Hungarian politicians whose vision extends beyond the Hungarian frontier post. Mr. Wekerle is a *Mitteeuropäer*. He will not repeat the difficulties raised by Count Tisza, who know nothing beyond the Hungarian globe... He is a master of the parliamentary game and compromise, and indispensable quality for a Trans-Leithanian top official amid the conditions of Hungarian party-relations and the tasks to be executed, notably electoral reform... Wekerle is said to be unreliable. Francis Joseph disliked him, saying that during his long reign no minister had cheated him as many times as Dr. Wekerle. Undoubtedly, the new prime minister does share some talents of *Münchhausen*, but it is a matter of temperament with him rather than perfidy. The convivial Swabian can hardly say no to anybody, promising mountains of gold to everybody, but keeping only those promises which appear useful to him. I know him well personally... one may say that privately he is unreliable but politically he can be trusted." The secret report of the German ambassador drew a true-to-life portrait of the new Hungarian premier who had taken the velvet chair of the president for the third time.¹⁹⁴

Though still worried about the greed of the Germans towards their ally, Tisza, the head of the parliamentary majority, backed Wekerle's pro-German policies. It is illuminating to quote his views on the German alliance presented in his letter of September 17, a few days after the formation of the Wekerle cabinet, to Mihály Réz: "In my view, we must do our utmost to help Germany allied to us, but we must be allies and not vassals, which of course is a question of actual power constellations... In the final analysis, I cannot but conclude that what we have to resort to as a satisfactory solution is the German alliance despite its many drawbacks... only if the Germans make this policy untenable would we have to seek shelter in an alliance with the western states against the German-Russian alliance, but this would be like clutching at straws!"¹⁹⁵

The fear of the left that Wekerle's appointment meant putting in cold storage the promised reforms was soon realized, for the electoral reform bill would simply not be prepared, while wrangling with Tisza's side was leaked to the public.

Wekerle found a good ally in Vázsonyi for shelving the promised electoral reform as he had exchanged the portfolio of the justice minister with the top post

¹⁹⁴ *DZA Merseburg. Ministerium für Handel und Gewerbe*, Rp. 120. C. XII. 2a. Nr. 1. Bd. 8.

¹⁹⁵ *REZsL Tisza*, item 15.

in the ministry without portfolio which was entrusted with preparing the suffrage reform. Vázsonyi made his way into the Esterházy cabinet as the representative of left wing opposition, while he also took part in the Suffrage Bloc. Having tasted power, the strong attitude he assumed against the policy of the large estate and large capital was toned down. He was also pushed in this direction by the strengthening popular movements. Vázsonyi now entered into the electoral wrangling and the procrastination of the reform. He also put pressure on the Suffrage Bloc to take a more indulgent course. "It was not he who made the government more democratic, but the reactionary majority reshaped him, electoral right and all."¹⁹⁶ Vázsonyi was moving away from the left wing bourgeois current.

The leaders of the other two bourgeois parties of the Suffrage Bloc, Károlyi and Jászi, were becoming closer on the common footing of the separate peace and a substantial electoral reform. By the spring of 1917 Jászi was already convinced that Germany would be defeated in the war, retaining at most her old power, but not capable of becoming the head of Central Europe. The entry of the United States into the war made it clear to him that the realization of the economic and military supremacy of the Allies was unavoidable. He ceased to fear the eastern neighbour not only because it had undergone an internal transformation, but because he thought the western factor would have a greater say in the victorious Entente alliance. All this led him to break away from a vision of a Central Europe headed by Germany and turn his attention to the policy of the Allies. In the summer of 1917 he saw the major threat to democracy in imperial Germany: "Having eliminated the major and most dangerous militarist plague, Central Europe has become the cauldron which concocts all reactionary policies".¹⁹⁷

In November 1917 Jászi also participated in the Bern conference of the League of Lasting Peace, where he held talks with Entente diplomats as well. He had a long discussion in Bern with Károlyi, who as a participant in the conference had established contacts with the American ambassador to Bern.¹⁹⁸ Károlyi had given his pacifist program an anti-German and pro-Entente meaning from the beginning. "In the nationalities question I was brought over to his side," Károlyi wrote about these talks in his memoirs, "and in the peace question he came over to mine." Jászi commented in the same vein in his memoirs: "From that time

¹⁹⁶ Károlyi, p. 266.

¹⁹⁷ *Világ*, July 29, 1917. Quoted by Irinyi, p. 96.

¹⁹⁸ Jászi, p. 1. He mentions his talks with British Diplomat Edwards in Geneva about the talks between Károlyi and the ambassador of the United States. See the report of Ambassador H. R. Wilson in *Papers*, 1917. Suppl. 2. The World War, Vol. I, pp. 322-325.

onwards my views as to Hungary's external policy were completely at one with those of Michael Károlyi's".¹⁹⁹

Wekerle solved the problem of the Austro-Hungarian economic compromise, which was due in the autumn of 1917, by a new compromise. The Esterházy cabinet, just as the Seidler cabinet succeeding Clam, recognized the compromise struck by Tisza and Clam. It was accepted by the Independent Party members of government as government policy, sticking at the same time to his party's position on an independent customs area. The Wekerle government formed in August acted along the same lines. But in the autumn months they had to address the question fully, as the former economic compromise was to expire by the end of the year. The February agreement could not be expected to enter into force as the government was not in agreement about it. An advocate of the independent customs area could go so far as to accept for tactical reasons the agreement concluded by the previous government which contradicted his position, but only applied to a future development. It was, however, impossible to represent it as something about to be introduced. Tabling the motion of the February agreement could have immediately triggered off a government crisis. Eventually, the cabinet solved the problem with a compromise: still acknowledging the February agreement, it postponed the moment of its entry into force and prolonged the old economic compromise instead. On November 18 the two governments concluded an agreement which maintained the old compromise "until such a date when new regulations of these matters agreed upon by the two governments and sanctioned by the legislations of the two states enters into force, but not later than December 31, 1919". This new agreement was put before Parliament on November 20 and passed.²⁰⁰ As not even the two parliamentary committees assigned to negotiate the quotas could agree, a compromise was created by a royal decision: the existing quotas would remain valid for another year.²⁰¹

THE STRENGTHENING OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT'S LEFT WING GROUPS

The failure of the peace attempts and the neglect of social issues increased the distress. A report by the censorship committee on the correspondence of prisoners of war dealing with the October letters from home aptly characterizes the mood of the people: "The longing for peace is becoming more and more immense,

¹⁹⁹ *Károlyi*, p. 306.; *Jászi*, p. 2.; also see *Fest*, pp. 163-165.

²⁰⁰ *Corpus*, Law XVII of 1917.

²⁰¹ *Képviselőház*, January 16, 1918.; *Képviselőház*, *Irom.*, no. 1429.

and on the other hand, a dissatisfaction is growing because one has to suffer more than the other".²⁰² A new wave of strikes broke out in the autumn of 1917, culminating in the railway strike of the first half of October. The strike paralyzed rail transportation for a week. The government did not manage to disrupt the unity of the strike even with a swift move to raise the wages of locomotive personnel.²⁰³

These strikes, especially the railwaymen's, partly protested against the war, too, but the council of ministers was quite right in stating that "of all reasons leading to discontent the most significant one was the deficiency of basic necessities, the second reason being the workers' dissatisfaction with the wage issue".²⁰⁴ In the House Wekerle lashed out at the trade unions supporting the strikes and promised retaliation. *Népszava* repelled the attack and promised to convoke an extraordinary party meeting. "We shall not tolerate," the party organ declared in its reply to Wekerle, "that he should resuscitate the old coalition's traditions of persecuting workers."²⁰⁵ At the same time, the party leadership wanted to channel the workers' unrest from economic grievances to the area of the electoral dispute.²⁰⁶

In the autumn of 1917 the influence of left wing socialists in the leadership of trade unions increased. Although the left wing in both the trade unions and the party was loosely organized without central guidance, it had a substantial role in revolutionizing the labour movement.

There was an acceleration in the establishing of revolutionary and anti-war centers within the labour movement independent of the leadership of the Social Democratic Party. These days witnessed the founding of the illegal faction of the Galilei Circle.²⁰⁷ The revolutionary socialists began their activities in September 1917 which were to become so significant later on.²⁰⁸ They published their first anti-war pamphlet in October 1917 signed by "a group of Hungarian socialists siding with Zimmerwald," in which they emphasized that peace would be achieved neither by the governments, nor the social democratic leaders, and that the workers must act: "Governments, foreign ministers, and diplomats representing the ruling classes are unable to give back peace to the people... Neither can we expect any longer that those whose task it is should force a peace, for we have had to realize that no uniform decision could be taken in Stockholm to serve the

²⁰² *MMTVD* 4/B, p. 393.

²⁰³ *Min. tan. jkv*, October 4, 1917, p. 298.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, October 19, 1917, p. 309.; October 30, p. 322.

²⁰⁵ *Képviselőház*, October 24, 1917.; *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 389-391.

²⁰⁶ *Garami*, p. 7.

²⁰⁷ M. Tömöry: *Új vizeken járok* (I am Sailing New Waters), Budapest 1960, p. 105.

²⁰⁸ J. Kelen: *A Galilei-per a XX. században* (The Galilei Trial in the 20th Century), Budapest 1957, p. 35.

common interests of the world's proletarians; even those official party chiefs could not convene and agree, who would not have been at variance, had they all stood on the basis of class struggle... Fellow workers! There is only one force that is capable of changing the world, and only this force can overcome the perfectly organized international reaction. And this is the firm revolutionary peace movement of the international proletariat." They called on the workers to sabotage war production and prepare for a general strike.²⁰⁹

A TURN IN THE POLICY OF THE NATIONALITIES

There were increasing signs in 1917 anticipating a shift in the policies of the nationalities of the Monarchy. The trend advocating the settling of national problems within the Monarchy was dwindling, with those currents demanding a new type of state organization becoming more and more dominant. The fact that the governments had adopted an unusually coarse style of conduct during the war years assumed special importance, as well as the fact that the independence movements of the nationalities won mighty supporters among the great powers who included among their war aims the support of nationality interests. Another basic factor was the increasingly grave and hopeless situation of the Monarchy not only due to her defeats and inner disorganization, but also because of her growing dependency on Germany.

In Austria the program of the national movements could more openly be aired, particularly after the convocation of the Slav majority Reichsrat in May 1917. The Czech movement had entered a new phase of development with the establishment of the "Czech Alliance" in November 1916. It united all the Czech parties on a national basis, including the social democrats. The Czech alliance professed an Austria-oriented program, but the Czech deputies demanded in the May 29 session of the Reichsrat that Austria transform into a federation of states with equal rights so that Bohemia and Slovakia would form a common state. Similarly, the South Slav club of the Austrian Parliament suggested a union of all South Slavs living in the Monarchy (Slovens, Croats, Serbs). The Sloven members of Parliament submitted a relevant statement to the Reichsrat on May 30. The Ukrainian members of the Reichsrat voiced their claim to establish Ukrainian unity within the Monarchy.²¹⁰ The unity of the Czecho-Slovaks and the South Slavs was also a pivotal plank of the policies of the emigrés who coupled it with the demand for the dissolution of the Monarchy. Though still

²⁰⁹ *MMTV*, Vol. 5, p. 16.

²¹⁰ *Zeman*, pp. 126, 128.

at variance over the latter issue, the national movements at home and abroad were drawing closer to each other in 1917.

The leaders of the Allied Powers drummed up more support for the Czechoslovak and South Slav emigré movements in 1917. Their weight was further increased by the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav prisoners of war in Russia who had participated as military units in the Kerensky offensive.²¹¹ The South Slav emigré movement made a great stride forward by concluding the Corfu pact. On July 20, 1917 Pašić who represented the emigré Serb government, and Trumbić of the Yugoslav Committee in London signed an agreement to establish a Serbo-Croat-Sloven confederate state with the retention of the Karadjordjevic dynasty.²¹² In regard to the Czechoslovaks, a similar agreement stipulating the relationship of the two lands was signed a year later: Masaryk and the leaders of the Czech and Slovak organizations in America agreed on May 30, 1918 in Pittsburg that Slovakia would assume autonomy within the Czechoslovak state.²¹³ The successes of the Czechoslovak and South Slav emigré politicians had repercussions on the movements at home, strengthening all trends which aspired to an autonomous state.

Clam, who drew support from the Austrian centralists, was unable to hold his position in the face of the Slav majority Parliament, where the deputies expressly demanded the self-determination of the nationalities and the federal transformation of the Monarchy.²¹⁴ On June 23, 1917 Seidler took office as the head of government, announcing in his policy-making speeches promises of a constitutional reform which tended towards compliance with nationality demands. On July 2 an imperial pardon concerning politicians of the nationalities was announced.²¹⁵ The new era was felt in occupied Serbia as well. In July 1917 military administration, though not abolished, assumed a strongly civilian style and devoted considerable attention to improving agriculture and animal husbandry.²¹⁶

From the point of view of the Hungarian government, the efforts of the Czechoslovak and South Slav movements to unite, either within the Monarchy or through her disruption, were nearly all the same. Both trends wished to take some northern

²¹¹ Their transport began through Siberia after the armistice and separate peace of Soviet Russia. The relatively small Yugoslav units were transported to the front of Salonika. *Mamatey*, p. 218.; The transfer of Czechoslovak units also began through Siberia, but at the end of May 40 thousand armed people joined the counter-revolutionary rebellion and the intervention. *Zeman, Diplomatic*, pp. 314-331.

²¹² *May*, Vol. II, p. 590.

²¹³ *Mamatey*, pp. 282-283.

²¹⁴ R. Lorenz: *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht im Österreichischen Kriegsparlament 1917-1918, Festschrift für K. G. Hugelmann*, Aalen 1959, Vol. I, p. 259.

²¹⁵ *May*, Vol. II, pp. 645-646.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 116.

or southern area of Hungary peopled by Slaves and attach them to another state formation either outside or inside a transformed Monarchy. The Hungarian government also took a firm stand against the latter.

In late 1917 and early 1918 the Hungarian leading strata put out an extensive social protest against the unity of South Slave, Czechoslovaks, and Ukrainians within the Monarchy. The municipal authorities held protest meetings everywhere and forwarded their resolutions to the government.²¹⁷

Parallel with the pacification of Serbia, the terror campaign against the Serbs in Hungary and Croatia launched at the outbreak of the war continued. The period of political weapons had long passed. The drive of the Serbs in Hungary and Croatia to unite outside the Monarchy, manifest in a rudimentary form already at the time of the Balkans war, became unambiguous now. It was evident that this point would have to be decided by the outcome of the war.

From the turn of 1916–1917 the situation was similar among the Romanian nationalities. After the declaration of war by Romania, the Transylvanian authorities interned well-known Romanian political figures of Transylvania in the western part of the country.²¹⁸ The Romanian army pushing into the eastern part of Transylvania was most warmly received by the Transylvanian Romanians deprived of their political leaders. In the occupied towns and villages the Romanian army commands put the local Romanian professionals in charge of local administration. Both the Romanian army and the new administration relied solely on the Romanian population. The Hungarian population fled in droves from the Romanian army towards the heart of the country. Atrocious acts against the Hungarians who remained at home were not infrequent.²¹⁹

When the counterattack started and the Romanian army withdrew, the Romanian population of Transylvania fled to Romania by the thousand.²²⁰ In order to temper reprisals, the retreating Romanian army took hostages with them.²²¹ This, however, could hardly restrain retaliation. Dozens of Romanians were put on trial of a military nature by the country attorneys in Transylvania for their behaviour during the occupation.²²²

This is how the question of the Transylvanian nationalities grew irremediably aggravated after the incursion and repulsion of the Romanian army. Thus from 1917 onwards the only settlement of the affairs to be expected was the outcome of the war, not politics.

²¹⁷ *OL K 26*, 1918–XII. res–413, res–786.

²¹⁸ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 383.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Cat. no. 452.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, Cat. no. 421, 452.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, Cat. no. 421, base no. 6, 8.

²²² *Ibid.*, base no. 14.

The strategists of the Allies meeting in Chantilly on November 15, 1916 planned to repeat the concentrated offensive of the previous summer in the spring of 1917, still expecting to be able to crush the Central Powers in this way. At the beginning of 1917, however, they had far fewer hopes of a final decision in the subsequent months. At the military conference of February in Petrograd, the Russian supreme command could not promise to prepare the troops fighting on the eastern front for an offensive until a later date.²²³ After the revolution the calculable military value of this offensive became even more uncertain. The launching of an unlimited U-boat war and the considerable initial losses further undermined the reality of the 1917 decision. In spite of all this, the high command of the Allies stuck to the idea of a concentrated attack.

Thus the spring and early summer of 1917 witnessed several attacks by the Allied forces. The most powerful assaults were launched on the western front. The western offensive was still well underway when the Allies started to attack on the Italian front as well, but the so-called 10th Battle of Isonzo (May 12–June 8, 1917) failed to bring victory again. Immediately after this the Italian troops initiated some action in southern Tirol, but scored no success.²²⁴

Following the western and southwestern attempts, Kerensky started an offensive in the east. After 3-day artillery preparations, Brusilov launched the offensive on Lemberg on July 1. After the initial success, the Russian troops were halted and driven back by the German and Austro-Hungarian units on July 19. At the end of July the Russian–Romanian forces opened an attack on the southern part of the eastern front, in Moldavia, which again ended with retreat. The counterstrike of the Central Powers in Bukovina gained some ground and they seized the town of Czernowitz.²²⁵

The Entente started an offensive at the battleline of Salonika as well in the summer of 1917. Prior to that, at the end of June, the king of Greece also declared war and reinstated Prime Minister Venizelos, who had proclaimed war back in November 1916, thereby separating himself from the Athens government. The fighting line, thus extended in Macedonia, saw several assaults from the end of July, none of which brought success. The only front along which the Allies met with some success was in Turkey. The English troops fighting in Mesopotamia took Baghdad in March, while those in action in Palestina captured Ghaza and Jaffa in November and Jerusalem in December.²²⁶

²²³ Vershovsky–Liachov: *Pervaja mirovaia voina 1914–1918*, Moskow 1964, p. 195.

²²⁴ *Concise*, pp. 95–96, 168.

²²⁵ *Krieg*, Vol. IV, pp. 409–411.; *Deutschland*, Vol. II, pp. 615–616.

²²⁶ *Concise*, pp. 209–210, 213–214, 276.

The German supreme command did not plan to open offensives in the first half of 1917. They rejected the Monarchy's suggestion of attacking Italy as well as the Bulgarian top officers' intention to push on to Macedonia.²²⁷ Still in his capacity as premier Tisza suggested to the chief of staff of the Monarchy on March 5 that a Balkan campaign be mounted, but Arz rejected it in view of the German plans.²²⁸

The German high command concentrated on fending off the expected Allied offensives, especially the possibly most dangerous offensive in the west, until the summer of 1917. The Hindenburg program called in the autumn of 1916 with the aim of doubling the production of munition and tripling the output of guns, machine guns, and aircraft by the spring of 1917, could not be fulfilled.²²⁹ Especially in the western front the superiority of the Entente in men and arms was beyond question. Despite this, the German high command had an unswerving confidence in victory. In a few months' time, they thought, the outcome of the submarine war would level off the balance of forces on the western front, while the Russian revolution would soon abolish the battle-front in the east.

Having fended off the attacks of the Allies, the Central Powers launched counter-attacks, trying first in the east. This in turn triggered off a new attack by the Entente in Flanders, preventing the Central Powers from making the best of the failure of the Kerensky offensive. In August the eastern front-line all but petrified, somewhat slackened later by minor attacks by the German and Austro-Hungarian troops in September and October. These took them further into eastern Galicia and Bukovina, while on the northern section of the front they captured Riga on September 3, followed by the islands off the gulf of Riga in October.²³⁰

A counteroffensive was being prepared on the southern front-line as well. In the 12th Battle of Isonzo started on October 24 the troops of the Central Powers broke through the Italian line at Caporetto and pushed on to the Piave on November 10. A significant military victory, it ensured that from then on the war would go on in the territory of the enemy on this front, too. The losses of the Italian army were immense: ten thousand soldiers were killed, 30,000 wounded and 293,000 taken into captivity. Another 350,000 soldiers deserted, meaning that altogether some 700,000 soldiers of the Italian army were excluded from the fighting.²³¹

²²⁷ *Deutschland*, Vol. 2, p. 584.

²²⁸ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 9.

²²⁹ *Deutschland*, Vol. 2, pp. 463, 588.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 617.

²³¹ *Krieg*, Vol. VI, p. 712.; A. Wagner: Die 12. Isonzo-Schlacht, *Der Donauraum*, No. 4/1967, pp. 193-204.

In order to co-ordinate the management of the war in the grave situation, the Allied Powers decided in Rapallo on November 7 to set up the Supreme War Council with the participation of the heads of government and representatives of the military command. The council was to have its headquarters in Versailles. With the help of the six French and English divisions, who were rapidly deployed in Italy, a defense position was built up on the right-hand side of the Piave. To break through this, reinforcements would have been necessary which the German command intended to deploy elsewhere.²³² The Allies tried to offset the Isonzo breakthrough with renewed attacks in Flanders, too, and at the end of November they made a breach in the defense of the Germans with the employment of nearly 400 tanks, but it entailed no considerable strategic significance. This battle marked the first mass deployment of tanks supported by the artillery and the air force.²³³

In the autumn of 1917 the military situation appeared to be in favour of the Central Powers. Not only did they repel the allied attacks, but their counterattacks gained new territories as well. Most important of all, however, was the expectation that Russia's withdrawal from the war due to the collapse of the Kerensky offensive and the intensifying revolutionary situation in the country might only be a matter of weeks. The Germans also placed great hopes on the success of the U-boat warfare for it was in the spring and summer months that the largest amount of tonnage could be sunk. The entry of the United States into the war was not yet felt.

In the autumn of 1917 the German army command did not intend to launch decisive offensives. They wished to wait for Russia's separate peace and the success of the submarine war. With these behind them, they wanted to attain either a military decision or the forcing of a docile, submissive enemy to the negotiating table. True, the larger reserves of the Entente and the increasingly grave economic plight of the Central Powers cast darker and darker shadows over their future, yet in the autumn of 1917 the German supreme command was still certain of near victory, in the spring of 1918 at the latest.²³⁴

²³² *Krieg*, Vol. VI, p. 711.; Vol. VII, p. 28.

²³³ *Concise*, p. 102.

²³⁴ *Deutschland*, Vol. 2, p. 642.

AFTER THE RUSSIAN SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The Budapest dailies were first to report on the Russian revolution in the evening of November 8. They detailed the events of the first days, including how the armed workers and soldiers overthrew the Provisional Government on November 7, arrested its members and conferred power to the second Soviet Congress meeting in the evening of November 7.²³⁵ The papers also reported that on the night of November 8 the Soviet Congress formed the Soviet government, which called on all the belligerent governments, allies and foes alike, to sign an armistice for three months and use this period of ceasefire to conclude a peace without annexations or war indemnities. *Pesti Hírlap* and *Népszava* carried the full text of the Soviet government's appeal for armistice and peace negotiations.²³⁶ It is easily understandable that this piece of news had an extraordinary effect amidst the war which had already gone on for three years.²³⁷

In response to the Soviet government's plea for peace, the leadership of the Social Democratic Party promptly adopted a resolution. In this, the party acknowledged the peace program of the Soviet government as "its own policy, the immediate realization of which it wishes to promote with all its might, organization, and zeal". It called on the Hungarian government, notably the common foreign minister of the Monarchy, to join the peace action right away, accept the offered armistice and declare that they were ready to start peace talks immediately on the basis of the principles implied in the Russian decree.²³⁸

As a reaction to the socialist revolution in Russia, the left wing elements and groups of the Hungarian labour movement gained strength. The "revolutionary

²³⁵ To eliminate confusion due to the two kinds of calendars (European and Russian) used at the time (giving a difference of 13 days), here the Russian events are given according to the European calendar.

²³⁶ *Népszava*, November 9, 1917.

²³⁷ *Neues Politisches Volksblatt*, November 10, 1917. Article by Gy. Alpári.

²³⁸ *Népszava*, November 11, 1917.

socialists" initiated more powerful action: "Lasting a peace will not be brought by social democracy, nor by any government, but only by the ideal of bolshevism realized in our country. So act!"²³⁹

In *Népszava* the party command published an appeal to the workers to gather for a peace rally in the Trade Hall in the city park on Sunday November 25, in the morning.²⁴⁰ This move was also connected with the fact that it had just recently become known that the Soviet government ordered the commander-in-chief to make the first step to begin the peace talks. The demonstration was to promote the favourable reception of this move. The party leadership had some fears that the revolutionary spirits of the meeting might snatch the helm from their hands, so they also summoned the stewards on the day of issuing the appeal and exhorted them to "socialist prudence" and "cold blood".²⁴¹

On November 25 over 100,000 workers marched along the Budapest streets heading for the Trade Hall in the city park. The chief slogans of the demonstrators were "Down with the war!", "Long live the Russian revolution!" All the members of the Galilei Circle took part in the rally.²⁴² The speaker of the mass meeting was Dezső Bokányi, the most effective rhetor of the SDP. Emphatically adapting to the mood of his audience, Bokányi could perfectly express it. This time, however, he failed to keep up with the revolutionary tone of the interrupting exclamations, although he struck an ever more radical note and even stressed the necessity, to establish councils. The participants of the rally demanded a general strike. The meeting passed a revolutionary resolution: "We are determined to support the Russian revolutionaries' heroic fight for peace and to fight to the utmost of our power to abolish the exploitation of one social class by another, and the subjugation of one nation by another in our country".²⁴³ Partly parallel with the Budapest rally several country towns also held effective demonstrations.

On the day of the Trade Hall meeting, on Sunday afternoon the Social Democratic Party held an extraordinary congress. "If no other way is effective," said the leader of the printers, "we have to resort to force against the government which ensures that the government can be driven away from its office."²⁴⁴

At the end of December the miners in the Miskolc region went on strike. The strikers were taken down the pits by force. In early January the workers of Szeged protested against the disastrous food supply. During these months the gov-

²³⁹ *MMTYD*, Vol. 5, p. 41.

²⁴⁰ *Népszava*, November 23, 1917.

²⁴¹ *Népszava*, November 24, 1917.

²⁴² *Világ*, November 26, 1917.

²⁴³ *Népszava*, November 27, 1917.

²⁴⁴ *MMTYD* 4/B, p. 402.

ernment was contemplating the declaration of a state of emergency in the industrial and mining regions — Budapest, Miskolc, Győr, Besztercebánya, etc. — due to the strengthening of the strike movement.²⁴⁵

The revolutionary socialists, the most active group of the left wing labour movement in Hungary at the time, appealed to the soldiers, too, to take revolutionary action. In their leaflet they wrote: "Our brothers under arms! Your lives are at stake now! The earth is rumbling at home, the exploited and the subjugated are getting ready to take to task those who have to pay for the sea of blood and tears. You are the last resort of the lords of the earth, they are taking shelter behind your bayonets. When the hungry and the miserable go out into the streets and you are sent to quench the action of your brothers... Soldiers, what will you do?"²⁴⁶

The Russian revolution calling for peace was first examined by the Hungarian ruling strata in order to see whether this might lead Russia to withdraw from the war and would allow for the conclusion of the war in the east, not only on the basis of integrity, but also ensuring conquests. In this case the released forces could be deployed by the Germans in a western offensive and by the Austro-Hungarians in Italy, forcing their enemies to accept their terms. The press carried the first news of the breakthrough at Caporetto nearly simultaneously with the news of the Russian revolution. Clearly, the Central Powers would not have been able to predominate on the Italian front if there had not been silence at the eastern battle-line after the Kerensky offensive, enabling them to redeploy considerable forces.

The leading circles of the Monarchy and Germany were uncertain as to how to respond to the peace policy of the Soviet government. This is clearly revealed in Count Czernin's confidential letter of November 17 to a friend of his: "If they can throw their massed forces against the west, they have no doubt of being able to break through, take Paris and Calais, and directly threaten England... I cannot believe that the Entente, after losing Paris and Calais, would refuse to treat for peace as *inter pares* ... There are three trends within the government here: one does not take Lenin seriously and thinks his power will be short-lived; the other does not believe so, but is opposed to negotiating with such a revolutionary; and the third, which as far as I know is represented by me alone, wishes to negotiate with them despite their probably ephemeral existence and unquestionably revolutionary character. The less time Lenin stays in power, the less time we have to negotiate, for no government after him will be able to resume the war ..."²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ *MMTVD*, Vol. 5, p. 52.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁴⁷ *Czernin*, pp. 239–241.

Ex-premier Tisza, still the head of the parliamentary majority party, took a position similar to Czernin's. He wrote to one of his relatives in the summer of 1917, still before the revolution: "Good news keeps coming from the center and the interior of the country; according to all appearances anarchy is growing, and hope is justified in seeing the current semi-military coalition government of Kerensky replaced by a completely pacifist, extremely socialist current".²⁴⁸ When after the revolution he got word of the Soviet government's order to the army to initiate an armistice, he submitted an urgent interpellation on November 23: "It is highly desirable that if the prospective démarche by the Russians should be carried out, it will be received by the Central European alliance in such a way that holds out the promise of triumph and strengthens the position of the pacifist elements in the Russian empire". Although afraid of the revolution, he considered it more important to finish the war with ensured conquests. "I cannot overlook the difficulty," he said, "underlying the current turbulence in the domestic affairs of the mighty Russian empire. I cannot overlook it, but at the same time I must stress my conviction that it would be a fatal error on our part to exaggerate the anxiety over it." He, too, expected the revolution to be subdued by internal or external forces soon enough and to see "equilibrium restored amidst the waves thrown at one another from all around". The new government must be recognized "at least to such an extent" as to be able "to enter into negotiations with them," the refusal of which "for certain formal concerns" would be erroneous. Wekerle's evasive reply was a clear sign of the uncertainty of the ruling circles as to the policy to be adopted.²⁴⁹

Positions collided within the Hungarian government, too. The most ardent opponent of negotiations with the Soviet government was Vázsonyi.²⁵⁰

Thus two trends clashed in the leading circles of the Central Powers. One demanded an armed intervention against the Soviet revolution, thereby to ensure eastern conquests and eliminate the growing revolutionary tendencies in their countries by crushing the Russian revolution. They refused to talk with the Soviet government as that would mean its recognition to a certain extent. The exponents of the other trend privately shared this position, but realized that an intervention against Soviet Russia would certainly entail a defeat by their western foes. If they imposed their recognition of their eastern conquests and a relevant peace on Russia not by intervention, but at the negotiating table, they would have enough strength to gain ascendancy over their enemy in the west, even though the revolutionary power would remain in Russia. They thought they would have enough

²⁴⁸ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 330.

²⁴⁹ *Képviseletőház*, November 23, 1917.

²⁵⁰ *Károlyi*, p. 310.

time to do away with the Russian revolution later, if by then it had not been stifled from within. Though the latter trend was more powerful, the course of later action (breaking down of negotiations, armed attacks, etc.) reveals that hesitation between the two trends existed throughout.

To set off the revolutionizing effect, the Hungarian government stepped up aggressive measures in late 1917 and early 1918, but they also tried their hand, tentatively, at the tactics of neutralization. The former included a substantial rise, by 3,500, of the strength of the gendarmerie and deploying another 500 gendarmes in Budapest, as well as the tightening of the censorship of the press, etc.²⁵¹ As a neutralizing manoeuvre of the government they supported the drafting of an estate policy, and first and foremost they submitted an electoral bill to parliament.²⁵² The bill had of course little to do with universal suffrage. As Vázsonyi put it at the ministerial council: "Universal suffrage might throw the nation into a state of shock".²⁵³ The electoral bill suggested qualification for vote by education (schooling) and financial standing and set the age limit at 24 years. In addition, there were special restrictions for women, so only some 300,000 women would have received the vote. Vázsonyi's proposal for suffrage would have given the vote to less than 4 million people,²⁵⁴ that is, one third of the adult population (over 18). The bill did not satisfy the masses while Tisza and the Party of Work found it too radical.

The press and various representatives of the ruling strata urged the government in December 1917 and January 1918 to take firm action against the rioting masses. *Az Újság* wrote on January 3: "It is our duty to openly take the side of this world to which we are loyal, as is the royal family down to the last artisan, for our world as it is today will surely come to an end the moment theirs is created. And so socialism is paving the way for its birth, it is our obligation to protect the world we consider only correct and appropriate for us ... In this sense democrats are nearer to the aristocrats, the latifundium nearer to the factory, than to the socialists."²⁵⁵ The government decreed during these days: "The introduction of summary proceedings in those law courts whose jurisdiction belongs to major industrial or mining communities, due to the threatening strike movement".²⁵⁶ The prince primate appealed to the monarch at the end of 1917 to restore a government like Tisza's that would resort to no concessions. "We are living in dangerous days,"

²⁵¹ *Min. tan. jkv*, December 8, 13, 1917, pp. 358, 367.; *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 476.

²⁵² *Min. tan. jkv*, December 8, 1917, p. 361.; *Képviseelőház*, December 21, 1917.; *Képviseelőház, Irom.*, no. 1413.

²⁵³ *Min. tan. jkv*, November 5, 1917, p. 337.

²⁵⁴ *Gratz*, Vol. II, p. 360.

²⁵⁵ *Az Újság*, January 3, 1918.

²⁵⁶ *MMTVD*, Vol. 5, p. 52.

he wrote in his interpellation of December 14. "The optimal and conservative feeling prevailing at the beginning of the war has been changed by the misery of the protracted war and deliberate subversion. Especially since the outbreak of the Russian revolution the radical elements have become louder, working for such situations that might be perilous to the kingdom, the national consciousness, and the Church alike. Various social classes, the civil servants and employees of public firms openly organize themselves on a radical basis as well. A government composed of diverse parties is weak and feeble in the face of such movements ... History has taught us that in chaotic times indulgence fails to attain the goal." "At that time (i.e. during Tisza — J. G.) the affairs were not heading towards uncontrolled libertinism." What we need is "firm and soberly conservative policy that only a strong government aware of all the conditions could implement in Hungary. Such a government could be supported by the Church with all its authority."²⁵⁷ With regard to the increasingly critical domestic situation, the episcopacy asked the defence minister to be allowed to call home with special despatch the army chaplains.²⁵⁸

FRATERNIZATIONS AND TRUCE ON THE EASTERN FRONT

Fraternization supported by the Soviet government was spreading fast, becoming regular on the Austro-Hungarian section of the eastern battle-line before the signing of the armistice.²⁵⁹ The situation was similar along the German section of the front in the east. Friendships struck by the hundreds in November–December 1917 were initiated not only by Russian, but also by Austro-Hungarian soldiers. The longing for peace was expressed in mass fraternizations along these friendships: "Our visit was just like theirs," a correspondent wrote from the front. "Mus- ing, singing, dancing. Then all 15 of us were treated to a cup of tea. They also fetched a Muscovite, who allegedly spoke German, but we could make ourselves understood more easily with the others than with him... We exchanged our treasures; I got at least a kilo of sugar and a nice piece of coarse soap. Then we crawled back under the wire..."²⁶⁰ The German and Austro-Hungarian war command wished to use these communications to disrupt the Russian troops, and thereby promoted the peace propaganda among the Russian soldiers.²⁶¹ They forbade all fraternization that might disrupt their troops. It was especially strictly forbid-

²⁵⁷ *EPL*, Cat. D/c. 6394–1917.

²⁵⁸ *OL Püsp. Konf.*, January 9, 1918.

²⁵⁹ *Józsa*, p. 332.

²⁶⁰ *MMTVD*, Vol. 5, p. 34.

²⁶¹ *Józsa*, p. 327.

den for the troops to go over to Russian positions without the supervision and accompaniment of their officers. On December 21 the commander of the 16th Honvéd Infantry Brigade reported: "An outrageous thing has happened: along a certain stretch of the front-line our troops went over to the Russian posts on their own authority..."²⁶²

On December 3 armistice talks opened in Brest-Litovsk between the Central Powers and the Soviet government. As the first outcome of the talks, an agreement was signed on December 5 for a provisional 10-day truce along the entire length of the eastern front (from the Black to the Baltic Sea) and for the Russian-Turkish battleground in Asia (effective December 7-17).²⁶³ On December 15 a longer armistice was agreed upon: it was to last from December 17 to January 14, i.e. 28 days, with the qualification that if neither party denounced the treaty seven days prior to expiration, it would be automatically extended until one of the signatories denounced it with a seven-day notice.²⁶⁴

Parallel with Brest-Litovsk, negotiations were underway in Focsani involving the Central Powers and the united Romanian-Russian forces controlling the northern part of Romania.²⁶⁵

England and France did not accept the armistice of the Soviet government. They made efforts to overthrow it and help the counter-revolutionary government that went on fighting in the east to power.²⁶⁶

THE USA'S DECLARATION OF WAR ON THE MONARCHY

It could hardly be doubted at the end of 1917 that the protracted war would end with the victory of the Allies, for their reserves were superior. Nevertheless, it was not impossible that the Germans would achieve decisive victories on the European fronts before the Entente could put to use their reserves. From November 1917 this danger loomed large over the Allies, indications of which were the breakthrough of the Italian battle-front at Caporetto and the retreat as far back as the Piave. A far more dangerous threat to the Allies was, however, Russia's armistice and possible separate peace. This might have entailed the consequence that the entire striking force of the German army would be concentrated on one front, the western one, thus achieving a military decision before the American army arrived.

²⁶² *MMTVD*, Vol. 5, pp. 34-35.

²⁶³ *Krieg*, Vol. VI, p. 762.

²⁶⁴ *Deutsch-sowjetische Bez.*, pp. 112-117.; *Krieg*, Vol. VI, pp. 765-769.

²⁶⁵ *Zeman*, *Diplomatic*, p. 280.; See also *Mamatey*, pp. 249-250.

²⁶⁶ For more details see, J. Bradley: *The Allied Intervention in Russia*, London 1968.

In the autumn of 1917 the United States stepped up the supply of reinforcements and accelerated the training of the army and the preparations to cross the Atlantic. In November Colonel House headed an American mission to Europe to prepare and co-ordinate the relevant tasks.

The heightening danger forced the Allied Powers to draw even closer and co-ordinate their military and political actions more precisely. In compliance with the Rapallo agreement of November 7, on December 1 the Supreme War Council was set up in Versailles involving the leaders or delegates of England, France, Italy, and the United States.²⁶⁷

Immediately after the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk armistice, the United States declared war on the Monarchy, demonstrating their determination to continue the war. It was a message just as much for the Italian general public shaken by the November defeat as for the Soviet government who wished to finish the war.²⁶⁸ The declaration of war did not alter the United States' aims in connexion with the Monarchy specified in the Senate's message of January 22, 1917. Strange though it may sound, in a certain sense it was designed to force the Monarchy to conclude a separate peace. In his address to the Congress on December 4 announcing the declaration of war Wilson said that the peoples of the Balkans, Turkey, and Austria-Hungary must be liberated from the domination of *Prussian* military and commercial autocracy. He added: "We owe it, however, to ourselves to say that we do not wish in any way to impair or to re-arrange the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is no affair of ours what they do with their own life, either industrially or politically. We do not purpose or desire to dictate to them in any way. We only desire to see that their affairs are left in their own hands, in all matters, great or small."²⁶⁹ The United States' declaration of war on the Monarchy was an explicit warning: we do not identify the Monarchy with Germany, but if she sticks to the latter, she will have to share her fate.

Both the Hungarian government and the parliamentary opposition tried to deal with the U.S.' declaration of war as little as possible in public. An apt instance is the Hungarian government's decree to confiscate U.S. state property in Hungary with an order to the press to keep silent about it.²⁷⁰ Neither did the Parliament discuss the declaration of war, although the opposition could have interpellated the question. Apparently, it was not in the interest of the government and the Party

²⁶⁷ *House*, Vol. III, pp. 224, 250-251; 253, 275.

²⁶⁸ May maintains that Wilson acted under the influence of the "bolshhevik coup" and the "failure of Caporetto". *May*, Vol. II, p. 570. Mamatey gives priority to Caporetto. *Mamatey*, pp. 153-162.

²⁶⁹ *Wilson*, *War and Peace*, Vol. I, p. 132.

²⁷⁰ *OL K 578*, Cat. no. 476.

of Work supporting its foreign policy to air the latest fiasco of their foreign policy. The left wing of the opposition, on the other hand, did not wish to stress that the United States had turned into an enemy, as they identified themselves with "Wilsonism".

FIRST STAGE OF THE BREST-LITOVSK PEACE TALKS AND WILSON'S POINTS

The peace talks began in Brest-Litovsk on December 22. The leading role in the delegation of the Central Powers was played by German Foreign Minister Kühlmann and General Hoffmann, the representative of the German high command. The Germans had drafted a far reaching imperialistic program: they wanted to see satellite states established from the Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, and the Baltic area, and economic agreements detrimental to Soviet-Russia.²⁷¹

On January 10 they declared that the Ukraine did not belong to Russia and wished to conclude a separate peace with the Ukrainian Rada as its autonomous government. On January 12 General Hoffmann warned the Soviet delegation in a harsh speech that they could only speak in defeated tones, and on January 18 he demanded the evacuation of the area up to the "Hoffmann-line".²⁷² It became evident that they wanted to carve huge areas out of Russia so the negotiations broke down.

The Russian policy of the United States differed from that of Britain and France as regards tactics, but tallied when it came to essentials: Russia must fight throughout the war. In his "assurance of assistance to Russia" on August 27, several months earlier, Wilson had called on them to resume fighting until final victory.²⁷³ England and France added to their efforts to keep Russia in the war their overt support of counter-revolutionary actions aiming to overthrow the Soviet government. The president of the United States at the same time made attempts to get the Soviet government to continue the war.

Continuing the war, however, required a program. Originally, Wilson thought that the Allies should proclaim their war aims jointly. One of the chief goals of the mission of Colonel House was to achieve this. But the colonel met with no success. The editor of his papers, Seymour, comments: "Negatively the Mission was of equal historical importance, since by its very omissions it led to the Fourteen Points. Historians have often wondered why Wilson chose to make the speech of the Fourteen Points at the particular moment he selected. According

²⁷¹ *Deutsch-sowjetische Bez.*, pp. 121-164.

²⁷² The Hoffmann-line pushed the armistice line between the Ukraine and the Gulf of Riga some 150-200 km eastward.

²⁷³ *Wilson, War and Peace*, Vol. I, p. 98.

to the evidence in the House Papers, it was because the American Mission failed to secure from the Inter-allied Conference the manifesto on war aims that might serve to hold Russia in the war and result in an effective diplomatic offensive against the Central Powers."²⁷⁴

In mid-December House returned to the USA, and Wilson relied most heavily on him when elaborating the points.

In the introduction of Wilson's address to the Congress on January 8 he referred to the Brest-Litovsk talks: the Germans had put forth an imperialist program which caused the failure of the talks. The president patted the Soviet delegation on the back because "they have refused to compound their ideals or desert others that they themselves may be safe". He urged the Soviet government to resume the war. He promised help and support in the fighting. The president formulated his program justifying the continuation of the war in 14 points.²⁷⁵ The American historian Mamatey wrote: "The Fourteen Points was a liberal program, but hardly an 'idealistic one'. It was intended less to provide a basis for peace than a justification for continuing war. In this immediate purpose it succeeded."²⁷⁶

Points 9, 10, 11, and 13 implied the aims connected with the Monarchy. Point 9 wished to readjust the frontiers of Italy according to nationalities. Point 10 wanted to ensure the nationalities of Austria-Hungary "autonomous development". Point 11 voiced the evacuation of Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro, accorded Serbia free access to the sea and settled the borders of the Balkan states along the "historically established lines of allegiance and nationality." Point 13 wished to see an independent Polish state with free access to the sea. These points indicated that the war aims of the USA in connection with the Monarchy had changed from the general at the declaration of war a month earlier to the particular. The way Wilson's program wished to settle the Italian, Serbian, Romanian, and Polish situations affected the territorial integrity of the Monarchy, but the program was rather to maintain a multi-national Monarchy by ensuring autonomous development. Lansing, who did not take part in formulating the points, but added modifying remarks, said that: "The President ... has indicated a purpose to preserve the Dual Monarchy intact". The foreign minister, however, was already somewhat inclined to accept the system of new states as: "This is the only certain means of ending German power in Europe".²⁷⁷ The British government also adopted Wilson's program on the Monarchy. Lloyd George said in the Commons on January 9 that the war aims had not implied the

²⁷⁴ *House*, Vol. III, p. 324.

²⁷⁵ *Wilson*, *War and Peace*, Vol. I, pp. 155-162. Quotation on p. 158 and 160.

²⁷⁶ G. Bruun-V. Mamatey: *The World in the Twentieth Century*, Boston 1962, p. 162.

²⁷⁷ *Mamatey*, p. 184.

dismemberment of the Monarchy. Even the political writers in Britain who wished the dissolution of the Monarchy realized the tactics of the government that had defined its war aims so as to promote the separate peace of the Monarchy, so they refrained from criticizing it.²⁷⁸ Seymour makes the point when evaluating Wilson's program concerning the Monarchy in the following words: "In common with the leading statesmen of western Europe, he believed that the political union of Austro-Hungarian peoples was a necessity, and he seems to have felt that once freed from German domination, the Habsburg Monarchy would prove a beneficial force... President Wilson in his speech of the Fourteen Points did not threaten the integrity of the Habsburg Empire".²⁷⁹

THE JANUARY STRIKE

The workers in Germany and the Monarchy followed the Brest-Litovsk talks with keen attention. When they received the news of the events of January 10-12 revealing that the Central Powers submitted expansionist demands which in turn made peace impossible, their outrage exploded in a general strike. The strike broke out in Wiener Neustadt in January 12. On January 16 the entire work force of Vienna was on strike and they set up a workers' council. Two days later the strike spread to the country in Austria and from there to Hungary. The Hungarian strike was even more widespread than the Austrian.²⁸⁰ When it was over in the Monarchy, a political strike in protest against the country's imperialistic demands voiced at Brest-Litovsk broke out in Germany involving one million workers.²⁸¹

The alarming news coming from Brest-Litovsk had already caused agitation in the first days of January in Budapest. The leaders of the social democratic party called six meetings on January 13. The resolutions they put to the meetings called for a peace with Russia without annexations or indemnities. Leftist groups also prepared to hold meetings. They embraced the movement that called for the establishment of workers' councils upon the spiritual initiative of revolutionary policies different from those of the social democrats. Four of the six mass meetings held on January 13 passed the left wing resolution demanding that: "The Workers' Council of Budapest should immediately be set up ... the party leadership should account for all its actions to the Workers' Council of Budapest."²⁸² Local commit-

²⁷⁸ *May*, Vol. II, pp. 574-575.; *Fest*, pp. 189-190.

²⁷⁹ *House*, Vol. III, p. 345.

²⁸⁰ *Zeman*, p. 135.

²⁸¹ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 168.

²⁸² Quoted by T. Hajdú: *Tanácsok Magyarországon 1918-1919-ben* (Councils in Hungary in 1918-1919), Budapest 1958, p. 13.

tees and workers' councils began to be set up in various factories in preparation for the establishment of the Workers' Council of Budapest.

The sabre-rattling in Brest-Litovsk also outraged the anti-German bourgeois circles in Hungary. On January 17 Lajos Holló (Károlyi party) put the following question to the prime minister: "Do we still advocate the position of peace without annexations or indemnities?" In presenting the reasons for his interpellation he sharply criticized the Brest-Litovsk policy of the Central Powers, particularly the position taken by Hoffmann. In his reply Prime Minister Wekerle held forth on determination and perseverance.²⁸³

The stoppages began on January 17, when news of the Vienna strikes arrived. The next day dawned on a general strike in Budapest. Its organization involved the workers' councils which had been or were being set up in many factories before and during the strike movement. No central workers' council could be established, however. The leadership of the SDP tried to take command of the strike movement, partly to neutralize the workers' council movement, and to guide it in a direction that suited its policy.

By January 19 the strike had spread to country towns. In Nagykanizsa and Szeged municipal workers' councils were set up. According to the report of the German consul in Budapest dated January 20 the strike movement "has engulfed all the industrial centers of Hungary" and "is strongly anti-German".²⁸⁴

On January 20 a mass rally was again held at the Trade Hall involving some one hundred thousand. In its wake the Social Democratic Party leadership sought out Wekerle, who promised to satisfy their demands in a statement.²⁸⁵ (Just remember the portrait painted of him by the German ambassador!) The party command called off the strike, with reference to the reassuring statements of the Monarchy's foreign minister and the two prime ministers. The workers went on with the strike at several places. Those in Csepel were being persuaded to resume work by Buchinger "All I realized was," he wrote in his memoirs, "that the masses were not interested in what I was to say and would not hear of accepting my arguments for going back to work."²⁸⁶ The January strike marked a turning point in Hungary's labour movement towards the revolution. Its reverberations in the army and navy, and the mutiny of Cattaro further strengthened this trend.²⁸⁷

Calling off the January strike infuriated the movement so much that the party

²⁸³ *Képviseelőház*, January 17, 1918.

²⁸⁴ *DZA Merseburg. Ministerium für Handel und Gewerbe*, Rp. 120. C. XIII. 2a. Nr. 1. Bd. 8.

²⁸⁵ His statement was published in *Népszava* on January 22.

²⁸⁶ M. Buchinger: *Tanúvallomás* (Testimony), Budapest 1936, p. 71.

²⁸⁷ For the Cattaro events, see *Plaschka*.

leadership of the social Democratic Party was considering resignation. They convoked an extraordinary party congress on February 10.

Many participants of the extraordinary congress sharply criticized the party leadership. The congress took a vote of confidence on the party leadership.²⁸⁸

THE MONARCHY'S RENEWED SECRET TALKS WITH THE ALLIES

During the days of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations there were far from insignificant differences between the leaders of the Monarchy and Germany. The conquests in the east were not anticipated to be larger than what they had divided in May 1917 in Kreuznach, with excess conquests claimed by the Germans for themselves alone. The politicians of the Monarchy would only have accepted that if in return the Germans had reverted to the Austrian version of a Polish settlement. Without recompensation for the Polish question Czernin refused to take the risk of continuing the war in the east and threatened his partners with opening negotiations separately with the Soviet delegation. This, however, was not meant in dead earnest even by him, as the well-informed General Cramon noted in his memoirs.²⁸⁹ Undoubtedly, the top echelons of the Monarchy were seriously dissatisfied with the parsimony of the Germans. On January 20 German Foreign Minister Kühlmann sent a cable to the chancellor from Brest-Litovsk saying that according to Czernin "not only the masses of the people, but influential persons like Count Tisza, General Arz, and others are also turning away from the idea of the alliance because Austria-Hungary is treated badly and ignored, especially by the German military forces". The foreign minister remarked that Czernin would resign the Ukraine, but insisted on the Austrian settlement of the Polish question in its stead.²⁹⁰

There was a conciliatory meeting in Berlin presided over by the German chancellor on February 5 at which the Monarchy was represented by Czernin, the Austrian Ambassador to Berlin Hohenlohe, and Gusztáv Gratz as the economic expert. This time the Monarchy did not question the previous decision on "independent" Poland, but wished to draw it within the sphere of her economic influence. "Poland," Gratz said, "must adopt the Austro-Hungarian currency. She must be completely dissolved in the Austro-Hungarian economic territory."²⁹¹ The Monarchy also demanded that not only Germany but also Austria-Hungary should

²⁸⁸ Protocol of the congress, see *MMTVD* 4/B, pp. 410-461.

²⁸⁹ *Cramon*, pp. 131-141.

²⁹⁰ *Deutsch-sowjetische Bez.*, pp. 239-242.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

get a considerable share of the food shipments from the Ukraine and Romania. "Germany," Czernin said, "wished to pass down Romania to us like a squeezed-out lemon."²⁹²

Another point of contention between the leaders of the Monarchy and Germany at the time of the Brest-Litovsk talks concerned the application of the eastern victory for the whole of the war. The German position was such that by concentrating all their strength on one front they would have to fight for a decisive victory in the west, too. The statesmen of the Monarchy, on the other hand, wished to achieve a negotiated peace with compromises as soon as possible, just as they did in the spring of 1917. So Charles and his foreign minister wanted to respond to the tentative peace initiatives made in late 1917–early 1918 by the Allied circles. The Germans did not oppose such contacts as a way of intelligence, but this did not prevent them from getting ready for the western offensive.

The Allied Powers had decided to break the German army. But of course it was not all the same for them when, and at what cost they would win. They ascribed great importance to the possible separate peace with the Monarchy, by which they hoped to achieve a delay in the German offensive on the western front. They reasoned that after the transportation and deployment of the American troops the balance of power would be changed in the western theatre of war to such an extent that the German offensive would no longer be a threat. The speeches of Lloyd George and Wilson on January 5 and 8 respectively were well-disposed towards the Monarchy, reflecting the above political considerations. Parallel with these statements the representatives of the British, American, and French governments held secret talks with the Monarchy between December 1917 and February 1918.

In November English and American persons got word in Switzerland of the Monarchy's willingness to talk from Julius Meinl, the well-known Austrian coffee and tea merchant.²⁹³ On November 29 a meeting of the British, French, and Italian prime ministers and foreign ministers, as well as Colonel House on behalf of the United States, empowered the British government to send a mission to Switzerland to clarify the terms under which the Monarchy was willing to sign a separate peace. House cabled this to Wilson, adding: "This action was taken because of the probability of Russia soon making a separate peace".²⁹⁴ The British government chose General Smuts, while Czernin commissioned the pre-war ambassador Count Mensdorff, to London. Their talks began in Geneva on December 18. Conveying Czernin's memorandum and keeping to the Viennese instructions

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 371.

²⁹³ H. Benedikt: *Die Friedensaktion der Meinlgruppe*, Graz-Köln 1962, p. 195.

²⁹⁴ *House*, Vol. III, p. 283.

Mensdorff evaded the question of the separate peace, but represented a possible joint peace by the Central Powers on the basis of the pre-war *status quo* in the west.²⁹⁵ The leaders of the Monarchy no longer contemplated a separate peace, but wished to put forward a new joint peace proposal to the Entente. Baron Szilassy noted in his memoirs that during the audience of January 22 the monarch spoke of his intentions to this end, and complained of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, who kept hindering it.²⁹⁶

The difference between the policies of Austria-Hungary and Germany also became apparent in their responses to Wilson's 14 points. On one and the same day, January 24, the German chancellor spoke of the 14 points before the political committee of the Reichstag, while the foreign minister of the Monarchy addressed the issue in the Austrian delegation. The chancellor emphasized that peace in eastern Europe was nobody else's business but theirs and the Russians'. This meant an open opposition to Wilson's program. Czernin, on the other hand, said that Wilson's principles were in general acceptable. "This is an offer of peace," he said, "which comes fairly close to the Austro-Hungarian position; the proposals contain certain points of which we can approve with the greatest pleasure..." Austria-Hungary and the United States are those two powers of the opposing camps whose interests are the least at variance, thus the exchange of their ideas may pave the way for understanding among all the states.²⁹⁷ Later, on February 3-4, Wilson's confidant Herron and a member of the Austrian Parliament Lammasch held talks in Bern.²⁹⁸

Czernin's statement and the Swiss talks were considered promising by Wilson and Lansing.²⁹⁹ "Czernin's speech," as Wilson said in his address on February 11, "is uttered in a very friendly tone, while that of the German Chancellor is very vague and very confusing... it is certainly in a very different tone from that of Count Czernin... The governments of Washington and Vienna should go on a step further in exchanging their views. Then the president summed up the principles of further dialogues in four points. These four points, unlike the earlier 14, merely contain general platitudes thus being more favourable for the Monarchy".³⁰⁰ In this telegram of February 20 to the Spanish king, Charles accepted Wilson's four points and asked him to inform the American president of this.³⁰¹

²⁹⁵ Zeman, *Diplomatic*, pp. 152-159.; House, Vol. III, pp. 390-391.; Mamatey, p. 151.; Fest, pp. 160-177.

²⁹⁶ J. Szilassy: *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, Berlin 1921, pp. 287-288.

²⁹⁷ Czernin, pp. 338-341.

²⁹⁸ Benedikt, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-243.

²⁹⁹ Mamatey, pp. 223-224.

³⁰⁰ Wilson, *War and Peace*, Vol. I, pp. 182-183.

³⁰¹ House, Vol. III, pp. 393-395.; Werkmann, pp. 237-245.

Due to French initiatives, the Revertera-Armand ties were also renewed in early February. The talks that broke down in August 1917 were resumed in Fribourg, Switzerland. This time Revertera was instructed by Czernin to stick to the pre-war situation, in other words, to Alsace-Lorraine remaining with Germany. The restoration of these provinces to France, however, was a crucial French war aim which was beyond question at home and had also been fully recognized by France's allies.³⁰² Clemenceau's reply was negative and the negotiations were once more broken off in early March.³⁰³ Due to this the entire action ran aground. The Monarchy refused to consider a separate peace and committed herself to Germany's position in the question of Alsace-Lorraine. This, however, was not a basis for talks with the Allies. The only line along which the Entente wished to have ties with the Monarchy was the separate peace. The ambassador of the Monarchy to Madrid reported on March 8: "The main endeavour of the statesmen of the Entente is to estrange Austria-Hungary from Germany, and to entice the Monarchy into separation with the promise of a favourable separate peace."³⁰⁴ For the last time the Monarchy tried "to press" the Germans but her sovereign was no longer in the position even to allow himself to toy with the idea of a separate peace, unlike the year before.

THE BREST-LITOVSK AND THE BUCHAREST PEACE TREATIES

During the Brest-Litovsk talks, which resumed after the elimination of the January strikes, the Central Powers handed over to the Soviet delegation an ultimatum of 24 hours to accept the Hoffmann line and evacuate the Ukraine.

On February 11 Germany regarded the armistice signed with the Soviet government of Russia as repudiated. At that time about 100 divisions of the Central Powers were on the eastern theatre of war. Of these 38 divisions and 4 independent brigades belonged to the Monarchy.³⁰⁵ The Monarchy's divisions were deployed along the middle and southern stretches of the front-line. On February 18 the German divisions positioned along the front-line ranging from the Baltic Sea to Bukovina opened an offensive and pushed forward without meeting much resistance. The Austro-Hungarian divisions did not take part in the resumed offensive on February 18, but the Monarchy made sure to keep a free hand for the future by not replying to the Soviet government's telegram inquiring whether the Monar-

³⁰² *Renouvin*, pp. 154-155.

³⁰³ *Engel-Jánosi*, p. 293.

³⁰⁴ *OL K* 26, 1918-XII. res-1449.

³⁰⁵ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, p. 31. (Bulgaria had 3 divisions, Turkey 1)

chy regarded the situation as the resumption of the state of war.³⁰⁶ On February 23 the German government forwarded another ultimatum to Petrograd with even harsher demands. The Soviet government decided to accept it the next day. The Soviet delegation signed the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty on March 3 and at the same time declared it "an explicitly imperialistic peace with annexations" but the republic of the Soviets was "not in the position to resist the military offensive of German imperialism, therefore, we are forced to accept the submitted terms in order to save the revolution".³⁰⁷ The Germans continued with their forward drive into the Ukraine. On February 28 the Monarchy also joined these operations.³⁰⁸ She took part in occupying first the area between the Dniester and the Bug east of the Russian-Romanian forces in control Moldavia and Bessarabia, then a part of the Doniec basin with a force of about 10 divisions.³⁰⁹

On February 24 Kühlmann and Czernin talked with Romanian President Ave-rescu, who succeeded Bratianu on February 9. Czernin held talks with the Romanian king, too, on February 27.³¹⁰ Two days after the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, on March 5, the Central Powers signed a preliminary peace with Romania in the castle of Buftea near Bucharest. Ferdinand had appointed a government made up of pro-German politicians with Marghiloman as president. The peace talks were resumed by this cabinet. The final draft of the peace treaty was signed in Bucharest on May 7. The Monarchy and Bulgaria annexed areas adjacent to their borders; Germany and Austria-Hungary ensured some agricultural products and oil reserves and in return, they surrendered Bessarabia to Romania.

Austria-Hungary and Germany were again at variance concerning the peace with Romania, especially because of the economic use they could make of Romania (wheat, oil). These differences in interest were resolved mostly to the benefit of Germany during the two months separating the preliminary and the final peace.³¹¹

Debates went on between the Austrian and the Hungarian leaders as well. The Hungarian government wished to annex areas next to the country's borders. The Austrians wanted to incorporate the whole of Romania in the customs union. According to the Hungarian government the Austrian proposal concerning the possible customs union "went too far", they could not accept it as it "does not coincide with our interests". Wekerle told the ministerial council that "His Ma-

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

³⁰⁷ *Deutsch-sowjetische Bez.*, pp. 452-455.

³⁰⁸ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, p. 119.

³⁰⁹ *Pilch*, p. 186.

³¹⁰ *Czernin*, pp. 294-296.; *May*, Vol. II, p. 627.

³¹¹ *Gratz-Schüller, Äussere*, pp. 210-244.

nesty does not wish to lay stress on the rectification of the borders". He had explained to the monarch that "peace without the adjustment of the borders is impossible". This position of the prime minister was "supported by all the members of the cabinet".³¹² Finally, the old border between Romania and the Monarchy was brought forward by a narrow zone, allegedly for strategic reasons. Austria annexed an area of 600 km², Hungary one of 5,000 km².³¹³

The Central Powers had attained without fail their war aims in the east.

A SHIFT IN GOVERNMENT POLICY: THE "SECOND" WEKERLE CABINET

After the January strike there was a shift in the Hungarian government's policy, a return to Tisza's line. Wekerle's appointment in August 1917 already anticipated this turn. At the end of December several voices were heard from various corners claiming that a shift in official policy would solve the crisis. This, as we have seen, was urged by the prince primate in his December letter to the monarch. What the prince primate stressed in mid-December became generally espoused by the ruling circles after the January strikes.

At the turn of 1917-1918 Tisza's position was gaining strength. "Our country needs our party more than ever," he wrote with new self-confidence in his new year's address to his party's adherents.³¹⁴ In January 1918 he offered his services to the monarch again, and leading politicians seriously contemplated putting him at the helm again. They gave up the idea, however. It seemed far more prudent that Tisza's former opponents should carry out the political about-turn gradually.

On January 23 the Wekerle cabinet decided to resign, and on January 26 the new — second — Wekerle administration was formed. Tivadar Batthyhány of the Károlyi party was omitted and Baron József Sztérényi and Prince Lajos Windischgraetz, two pro-German politicians belonging to Andrassy's circle, received portfolios. Sztérényi was an ardent advocate of the *Mitteuropa* scheme. The social basis of the government had shifted to the right. They wished to form a government that was better suited to the Party of Work, the parliamentary majority party. This would prevent the dissolution of Parliament and the holding of highly risky elections. "There is no longer a single logical or moral obstacle," Oszkár Jászi wrote bitterly in the *Világ*, "that could prevent the conservative concentration of the 67-ers from being completed and finalized by the joining of István Tisza and his party."³¹⁵

³¹² *Min. tan. jkv*, March 7, 1918, pp. 416-417.

³¹³ *Zeman, Diplomatic*, p. 284.

³¹⁴ *Pesti Hírlap*, January 4, 1918.

³¹⁵ *Világ*, January 27, 1918.

Parallel with the reshuffling of government, a new governing party was established under the title Party of the '48 Constitution by merging the Andrassy and Apponyi circles and a few Party of Work deputies with Andrassy as party chief. The party platform gave priority to certain national claims (independent army after the war, etc.) in order to disguise their submission to Tisza and to cover up the ignored electoral bill with nationalistic slogans. The Party of the '48 Constitution was also joined by the Catholic People's Party who had fused with the christian socialists and the Democratic Party of Vázsonyi.

The second Wekerle administration relied on this party, wishing to unite it with Tisza's party in order to form a solid parliamentary basis under the banner of the continued war and close ties with the Germans. Some members of Apponyi's party refused to enter the new formation. They organized under Ákos Bizony into a separate National Independent Party.³¹⁶

The second Wekerle cabinet, making good use of its extraordinary war-time powers, launched a campaign against the democratic and socialist forces.³¹⁷ The leaders of the revolutionary socialists were already arrested during the January strike. Several left wing leaders of the SDP were taken captive and tried. They banned and dismissed the Galilei Circle, starting proceedings against its leaders. The persecution of Mihály Károlyi also began.³¹⁸

The blows placed on the leftist revolutionary groups backfired. The mutually independent, so far only loosely connected pacifist groups, were drawing closer and closer to each other under the circumstances of heightened terror.³¹⁹ The ever more unstoppable revolutionary labour movement is aptly illustrated by the reports of the interior minister read at the meetings of the ministerial council. At the beginning of February "His Excellency the Minister of the Interior reports that the industrial towns of the country, and firstly Budapest, are completely undermined by revolutionary tendencies. The forthcoming mass strikes and revolutionary movements most seriously jeopardize the social order."³²⁰ Three weeks later "His Excellency the Minister of the Interior reports that the experiences of the past weeks have revealed that the movements dangerous to the society and the state are increasing daily". The ministerial council passed a resolution to the effect that by "restationing the gendarmes and policemen called up for military

³¹⁶ *Pesti Hírlap*, February 20, 1918.

³¹⁷ See, e. g. Minister of Justice Vázsonyi's answer to an interpellation. *Képviseelőház*, February 6, 1918.

³¹⁸ *Károlyi*, pp. 317, 331. (Faith, pp. 90-93.)

³¹⁹ Gy. Hevesi: *Egy mérnök a forradalomban* (An Engineer in the Revolution), Budapest 1959, p. 140.

³²⁰ *Min. tan. jkv*, February 6, 1918, p. 389.

service" the police force should be reinforced.³²¹ On March 7 "His Excellency the Minister of the Interior has announced that all the necessary preliminary steps have been made to declare summary justice". At the same conference "all the ministers spoke in favour of the firmest course of action, without which no one could undertake responsibility for the maintenance of law and order".³²²

FURTHER TO THE RIGHT: THE "THIRD" WEKERLE CABINET

The government wanted to get over the electoral reform bill submitted in December in order to reduce tensions. The Party of Work, however, remained uncompromising on this point. During the parliamentary debut of the second Wekerle cabinet Tisza made it clear that though appreciating and understanding the platform of the new government, they would continue to remain in opposition for which "the only significant reason is the unfortunate fact that such a settlement of the question of vote has been placed on the agenda that might arouse the gravest anxieties in us regarding the vital interests of the nation".³²³ Having severed all its ties with the left, the second Wekerle government could not stand erect without the support of the Party of Work. This forced them to start bargaining with the majority party of Parliament that had even refused to accept the massively toned down bill as proposed by Vázsonyi in December. These wranglings went on in the 48-strong electoral committee commissioned by the Parliament back in January. The committee, whose task was to make a report to Parliament on the electoral reform bill as tabled by the government, began work on February 8, that is, after the reshuffling of the cabinet. The Party of Work, however, was not satisfied with the concessions that the second Wekerle cabinet was willing to make. They demanded that the basis for qualification be raised from 4 to 6 elementary classes, that only skilled workers get the vote among the industrial work force, with only those agricultural labourers being liable to vote who had worked for the same master for a long period of time without a break. They were also against giving franchise to those who had been awarded the Charles cross. "These are the very crucial moves the government is committed to take," Wekerle said at the ministerial council meeting on March 11. Vázsonyi "also concludes that making concessions on these points would be tantamount to a moral defeat". Apponyi also shared this position. There were many, however, who advocated a compromise: "Attempts should be made at an agreement," Szterényi

³²¹ *Ibid.*, February 28, 1918, pp. 398-399.

³²² *Ibid.*, March 7, 1918, p. 414.

³²³ *Képviselőház*, January 31, 1918.

said. "An agreement should be reached regarding the cardinal points of the proposed bill", Finance Minister Popovics declared.³²⁴

After the ministerial council on March 11 the parliamentary committee discussing the electoral bill went on with the bargaining. The Party of Work insisted that the government should renounce the proposal. Tisza entered the debate with his old rigidity. He made it impossible for the second Wekerle cabinet to put through their new reform proposal that was far more moderate than that of the first Wekerle government, but did not tally with that of the Party of Work. He calculated that sooner or later the government would capitulate. "It is not unlikely," he wrote to Burián on March 19, "that the uncertainty of the situation might last for months, but I think the matter is on the right path."³²⁵ Refusing to dissolve Parliament, the government resigned on April 17. The following day Tisza informed Burián: "Even left to itself" the Party of Work would undertake the forming of a cabinet, but it would be more desirable to try and involve the Party of Work on a "possibly broad basis".³²⁶ The composition of the new government reflected the latter tendency: Vázsonyi and Apponyi were left out as they refused to participate for fear of losing all contact with their followers. They were replaced by politicians close to the Party of Work. The third Wekerle cabinet adopted the demands of the Party of Work. In his policy-making address to Parliament Wekerle said: "We must enact the vote as soon as possible with mutual agreement, at least to such an extent as is feasible today without offending the accepted Hungarian principle". Tisza warmly welcomed the fact that "the honourable government entered the House with an open program of peacefully solving the question of vote".³²⁷ By early June the electoral committee had drafted a joint proposal by the government and the Party of Work based on compromise.³²⁸

In the spring of 1918, when the third Wekerle cabinet took office, the lines in domestic politics were more clearly discernible, the various trends were still quite distinct. The large estate and large capital continued to stand for the perpetuation of the existing social and economical order while their foreign policy advocated adherence to the German alliance and perseverance in the war. All the Tisza's, Wekerle's, Andrassy's, Apponyi's, Zichy's, Vázsonyi's, and the clericals held this view. Despite the slight differences they made up a homogeneous camp which tactical maneuvering could hardly disguise. Apponyi, Andrassy, and Vázsonyi were against adjusting the electoral bill completely to the demands of the Party of Work, but the public was aware that they were to blame for turning the prom-

³²⁴ *Min. tan. jkv*, March 11, 1918, pp. 419-420.

³²⁵ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 348.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

³²⁷ *Képviseelőház*, March 11, 1918.

³²⁸ *Képviseelőház, Irom.*, no. 1450.

ised reform to naught. The Christian socialist Giesswein also fell into line with this trend more and more.

The liberal and democratic middle and lower middle classes became sharply separated from these circles as they called for a bourgeois democratic reform of the political structure and were against the alliance with Germany and desired a quick termination of the war. Not only Károlyi's and Jászi's followers held this view, but also the social democrats who championed the cause of democratic transformation. The about-turn in government policy and the pooling of the forces of the big agrarians and financiers also forced the democratic tendencies to draw closer. Although the extraordinary congress of the social democrats in February declared alliance with the bourgeois parties cancelled, the party leadership tried their best to re-establish a pact with the leftist bourgeois parties. The closest adherents of Kunfi were especially determined to strike close contact with Károlyi's circle.

In addition to these two trends, however, the forces of revolutionary transformation were steadily gaining strength and power.

THE COLLAPSE

THE PLAN OF THE CENTRAL POWERS AND FAILURE
OF THE MILITARY POLICY

The German high command expected that by transferring the troops which had become redundant in the east they could achieve supremacy in the other theatres of war.¹

With regard to the number of divisions, the Germans had the upper hand in the west in the spring of 1918, pitting 200 divisions against 176 of the Allies.² When it came to soldiers, however, 4 million German troops faced 5 million of the Allies, whose technical level was also far superior with 18,500 guns as against 14,000, 800 tanks against 10 (!), 4,500 aircraft against 3,610.³ The Monarchy could not conform with the Germans' wish to see divisions directed to the west. They were preparing an offensive against the Italians and they also had to make up for the 8 German divisions that the German commanders had redeployed in the west. Even so, they put 46 heavy batteries at the disposal of the German offensive in February.⁴

The German offensive opened on March 21 against the adjacent flanks of the British and French armies. The offensive gained ground, putting forward the front-line by some 40 miles, coming near the town of Amiens, but it failed to achieve its strategic goal.⁵

The second attack was launched on April 9 against the left flank of the British defense line. Although the 20 day fighting advanced the front by 20 km, the defense zone of the Allies could not be broken again.⁶ The dangerous military situation compelled the Entente to set up a co-ordinating military command of

¹ *Julier*, p. 231.; *Concise*, p. 104.

² *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 231.; According to data in the Kriegsarchiv of Vienna the ratio was 192:176. *Krieg*, Vol. VII, p. 30.

³ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 231.

⁴ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, pp. 23, 26.

⁵ *Concise*, pp. 107-110.; *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 234.

⁶ *Concise*, p. 112.

the western front on April 14 with the commander-in-chief being Marshal Foch.⁷

The next wave of the German offensive against French positions along the Marne began on May 27. Even though making an advance of 60 km and reaching within 80 km of Paris, the attack was stayed and had to be given up on June 14. The warding off of this attack also involved American troops for the first time.⁸ The fourth attack, smaller in scale than the previous three, was mounted on June 9 towards Paris in an effort to straighten out the front-line. By June 13 they made some 15–20 km, but with heavy casualties.⁹ The fifth, and last, attempt was made a month later, on July 15. Two days later the offensive was already stranded and turned into retreat by the successful Allied counter-attack.¹⁰

Thus a decision was out of the question in the west. The German army lost more than 800,000 soldiers killed or injured.¹¹

The Monarchy's offensive on the Italian front ended with an even larger failure. In order to fight for a decision, the Monarchy had concentrated her divisions here, but she had been so weakened that no superiority could be achieved on the front. Just like in the first year of the Italian war, there were only Austro-Hungarian divisions deployed in the Italian theatre of war, as the German forces formerly engaged here were redeployed on the western front. On the Italian side of the front the divisions were mostly Italian complemented by 5 British-French divisions and some, mostly symbolic, American forces. In late May a Czechoslovak military unit also appeared on the Italian front, but they were equipped with propaganda rather than combat duties.¹²

Facing the 60 Allied divisions 54 were deployed by the high command of the Austro-Hungarian army, with 6,833 guns against 7,550 of the Allies.¹³ In 1918 the army of the Monarchy needed 1.5 million new conscripts to replace the losses and complement the troops. According to a survey of the Hungarian ministerial council dated December 18, 1917, not even two thirds of this could be called up. They could provide a replacement of 950,000 at most.¹⁴ The army was even more poorly supplied with arms. In 1918 munition output dropped to half of the previous year's.¹⁵ Food supplies were so disastrous that the commander of the Piave

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁸ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, pp. 257–259.; *Concise*, p. 113.

⁹ *Concise*, p. 114.

¹⁰ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 265.

¹¹ *Concise*, p. 115.

¹² *Mamatey*, p. 247.

¹³ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 261.; *Krieg*, Vol. VII, pp. 213, 220–221. According to the Italian war historian 58 Austro-Hungarian divisions were pitted against 57 of the Allies. *Concise*, p. 173.

¹⁴ *Min. tan. jkv*, December 8, 1917, p. 302.

¹⁵ *Gratz-Schüller*, p. 122.

army group, Borojević, proposed on May 28 postponing the offensive for this very reason.¹⁶ Returning prisoners of war from Russia who were already fed up with the war were also sent to the front by the dozen. The offensive was particularly encouraged by Conrad, the commander of the South Tirol army group. The military and political leaders of the Monarchy expected to see a victory surpassing even the Caporetto triumph and wanted to consolidate the internal position of the Monarchy by this military victory so that their stature when facing their German partner would also be reinforced.¹⁷

The offensive began on June 15 along the South Tirol section of the front. Conrad's troops were thrown back by the Italians already on the second day. Along Borojević's front-line the Piave river was successfully crossed at several points and some advance made, but the offensive collapsed in a few days' time. The Piave flooded in the meantime, gravely hindering retreat and the army suffered heavy losses: some 150,000 men were killed, wounded, or captured.¹⁸

The surviving forces settled in a defense position behind the Piave. During the same days on the western front the Germans were still attacking, even making some advance, so the Allies could not exploit the Piave disaster to the full by launching a counter-offensive for they needed all their dispensable forces in the western theatre of war. This time the Monarchy avoided military collapse.

As part of the Piave offensive, but a few days prior to it, the warships of the Monarchy left their base at Cattaro intent on smashing the blockade of the Otranto Strait. The French fleet at Corfu, however, confronted them even before they reached the Strait and made the Monarchy's fleet turn back by sinking the "Saint Stephen".¹⁹

Even after the fiasco at the Piave the leaders of the Monarchy still entertained some hope that the Germans, who were on the verge of attacking again, would succeed in breaking through. To support it, further heavy batteries were sent to the western front on June 4, followed by two Austro-Hungarian divisions on July 8. They agreed to send another four later.²⁰

¹⁶ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, pp. 186, 201–202.

¹⁷ *Farkas*, pp. 173–175.

¹⁸ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, p. 359.

¹⁹ *Pilch*, p. 241.

²⁰ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, p. 421.

What accounts for the failure of the Monarchy's June offensive in Italy was not the strategic planning errors or the suddenly unfavourable weather. Rather the fighting spirits and the hinterland that the Monarchy possessed in 1918 were simply insufficient to field a combat-worthy army.

After the winter of 1917–1918 the economy of the Monarchy began showing signs of disintegration. "In 1918 it became more and more obvious", Gratz, who because of his official appointment in Vienna had a good view about the economic situation, later wrote, "that exhaustion could not be prevented. It let itself be felt already in 1917, and in part in the summer of 1918, but poverty struck everywhere or came very near".²¹ Food supplies for the towns and the army grew catastrophically short. Neither did the transports from the Ukraine and Romania improve the situation, especially since the greater part of the spoils went to Germany.²² In April 1918 death due to starvation was common in Austria.²³ Nothing reveals better the desperate plight in Vienna than the move taken by the food administration officials who stopped the ships carrying grain along the Danube from Romania to Germany on April 30 and distributed it among the population of Vienna, after Germany had refused their requests.²⁴ Food supply had greatly deteriorated in Hungary, too. The number of "fatless" days was increased as early as the autumn of 1917.²⁵ In early February 1918 the minister of public food supply painted a grim picture at the ministerial council: another 200,000 pigs were needed to cover the minimal needs of the country; "not only are we unable to help Austria, but we cannot fulfil our commitment to supply the needs of the population and the army either". Cereal fodder was 10 million quintals short. "It is without doubt that the above outlined conditions force the government to face the gravest situation both economically and politically." The government decided to set up government committees for public food supply and to cut down again on rations.²⁶ Three weeks later the minister of agriculture reported: "Provisioning the army has reached a critical state now." The government ordered further requisitioning.²⁷ A month later they were contemplating getting a royal proclamation to make the requisitioning more efficient.²⁸ The brutalities of comman-

²¹ Gratz-Schüller, p. 200.

²² *Min. tan. jkv*, March 7, 1918, p. 410.

²³ Gratz, Vol. II, p. 366.

²⁴ Gratz-Schüller, pp. 77–78.

²⁵ *Min. tan. jkv*, September 28, 1917, p. 296.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, February 7, 1917, pp. 394–396.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, February 28, 1917, pp. 401–402.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, March 21, 1917, p. 424.

deering were broached by the minister of justice when the government sat: "When requisitioning, the army uses violence."²⁹ Yet two months later the government ordered that not only the police and the customs' police, but also the armed forces were to be used when sequestering the new crop.³⁰ A few weeks before harvesting the food supply was disastrously low in certain places among the population. In 1918 death due to starvation was not rare in the villages of the Carpathian Ukraine.³¹ In his letter addressed to the minister of public food supply Tisza also commented that in Transylvania "dreadful cases" (i.e. starvation) had occurred.³² The new grain crop could only temporarily alleviate the situation as it covered a mere 53% of the annual need.³³ The yield of potato production dropped from 211 million quintals in 1914 to 90 million quintals.³⁴

Industrial supply was not any better. At the beginning of 1918 the industry of the Monarchy could no longer equip the troops fighting at the front with indispensable munition, clothes, and other necessities.³⁵ What was seized in the Ukraine in this area went to the Germans first. "With most article", the minister of trade complained, "they put forth excessive and unfulfillable demands, requiring in more than one case the setting of a 100:0 ratio in their favour". What the Monarchy did manage to extort, invariably went to Austria. "Austria has made the express statement that the only basis for the distribution of raw materials from Russia and the Ukraine acceptable to them is the principle of industrial productivity."³⁶

The dire plight of industrial production was to be alleviated by extending centralization: the Supervising Office of Centers and Committees was set up.³⁷ Various substituting materials were tried out.³⁸ These moves could hardly slow down economic disintegration, however.

The financial balance of the budget became highly precarious, too. In early 1918 there was a deficit of 886 million crowns in the Estimates. "This extremely grave situation makes it imperative", the finance minister said, "that in every sector the principle of strictest austerity should be observed". He called for the raising of railway and postal rates.³⁹

²⁹ *Ibid.*, April 12, 1917, p. 433.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1917, pp. 462-463.

³¹ M. Trojan: Bereg vármegye dolgozóinak harca a tanács hatalomért (The Struggle of the Workers in the County of Bereg for Soviet Power), *Századok*, Nos 1-2/1964, pp. 113-114.

³² *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 358.

³³ *Gratz-Schüller*, p. 46.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³⁵ *Julier*, p. 234.

³⁶ *Min. tan. jkv.*, March 7, 1918, pp. 410-411.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, May 22, 1917, p. 449.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, July 6, 1917, pp. 479-480.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, February 14, 1917.

The plight of the poorest strata was indeed hopeless. Taking the index of subsistence as 100 for the year 1913, it rose to 853 in 1918.⁴⁰ Even with the doubling of wages the living standards fell back to a fourth of those before the war. And this was well below subsistence level. The soldiers were also incredibly wretched. "July and August were hunger months on the front. For many days the soldiers did not see a spot of meat or a gram of fat... More miserable still was their clothing. A full set of underwear was a sign of affluence. It was common for the men to have shirts without sleeves or a back, or one-legged underpants."⁴¹

The economic depletion, Gratz said, assumed such proportions in 1918 that the possibility of surviving another winter would have been out of the question if the collapse had been avoided in the autumn.⁴²

THE JUNE STRIKE

Strikes and demonstrations grew in number already in 1917, with more and more frequent signs of growing restlessness among the soldiers as well. Then from the spring of 1918 their number and attendance increased by leaps and bounds, indicating that the embittered despair of the workers was approaching the limits of endurance.

Only two months after the January strike there were strike movements affecting every walk of life. In March 1918 60,000 iron workers went on strike in support of their demand of the 8-hour workday, without success. Factory strikes continued to occur one after the other in the iron industry, in which women workers played an increasingly important role. Strikes spread on a mass scale in the mines as well.⁴³ On May Day a general strike was held both in the capital and in country towns and mining centers. Just like the previous year, the minister of the interior prohibited all demonstrations and processions. In spite of this, tens of thousands marched in protest in several country towns (Miskolc, Debrecen, Salgótarján, Győr).⁴⁴

The government tried to stifle the strike movements by increasing military terror. Organizers were arrested, hundreds of strikers were called up. But they could no longer crush the strike movement that was complemented by hunger protests. On May 22 the ministerial council declared: "The reports of the chief of police

⁴⁰ *Szterényi-Ladányi*, p. 228.

⁴¹ E. Glaise-Horstenau: *Die Katastrophe*, Zürich-Leipzig-Wien 1929, p. 332.

⁴² *Gratz-Schüller*, p. 202.

⁴³ *A magyar forradalmi munkásmozgalom története* (History of the Hungarian Revolutionary Working Class Movement), Budapest 1966, Vol. I, p. 142.

⁴⁴ *Magyar május elsejék*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 211-214.

give cause for the gravest concern".⁴⁵ Neither the persuasion of the trade union leaders, nor the terror acts of the government could direct the vigorously surging wave of strikes into a narrower channel. "Discontent among the workers and their exhaustion from the four-year war was so huge", Buchinger wrote in his memoirs, "that we could no longer advise patience... slowly the government also arrived at a point beyond which it could not control or influence the event any more".⁴⁶

The agitated strike movement of the workers climaxed in a general strike in June. On June 18 the majority of Vienna's factories stopped work. On June 20 the political strike broke out in Budapest as well. In the courtyard of the MÁV Machine Factory the military commander ordered his men to fire at the workers demanding a wage rise. The barrage killed four and wounded over 20. In a few hours' time all the factories of the capital walked out, railway transport was halted and factories in the country towns also launched strikes.

Jenő Landler, a left wing social democrat leader, delivered a revolutionary speech to the striking workers in front of the Parliament building: "It is not words that are needed now but acts. We have to put an end to the entire corrupt system of government."⁴⁷ The next day the ministerial council ordered the arrest of Landler and decided to take retaliatory measures against the Iron and Metal Workers Trade Union. They issued an order to arrest all "trouble-makers" heading towards the country. The government also contemplated conscripting all the leaders of the trade unions because, in the words of the minister of trade, "control has slipped from the hands of the trade union leaders, and now they must swim with the tide. In order to maintain their positions as leaders they are forced to go on agitating. We seem to be in a situation in which the leaders can organize strikes but cannot call them off."⁴⁸ The government was unable to cope with the nationwide political strike that lasted 8, or in some places 10 days.

The Social Democratic Party command which in the highly electric atmosphere stewards' meeting on June 20 had taken the side of the strike, set up a Workers' Council involving members of the party leadership and the Trade Union Council as well as some stewards in order to control and eventually end the strike. On June 27 the Workers' Council called off the strike, with success too: "Having realized the futility of the current fight, we interrupt it... Stop fighting and return to the workshops."⁴⁹ Thus having accomplished its "task", the Workers' Council dissolved.

⁴⁵ *Min. tan. jkv*, May 22, 1918, p. 454.

⁴⁶ *Buchinger*, Vol. I, p. 267.

⁴⁷ *MMTVD*, Vol. 5, pp. 211-212.

⁴⁸ *Min. tan. jkv*, June 21, 1918, pp. 471-475.

⁴⁹ *Népszava*, June 28, 1918.

The June strike shook the foundations of the entire system, a straw in the wind of revolution. With the June strike and its follow-up the domestic movements assumed such proportions that through them "the Austro-Hungarian armed forces were occupied on two fronts, with the front at home putting more burden on the soldiers every day".⁵⁰ Not only in the towns, but in the villages as well, where unrest was also assuming revolutionary traits an ever increasing number of swords and guns were needed. On August 31 the ministerial council resolved to increase the strength of the gendarmerie by 50 per cent.⁵¹

THE STRUGGLE FOR FRANCHISE

The increasingly revolutionary strike movements and demonstrations of the workers made it ever clearer that the government's suffrage program was mere windowdressing, followed by the recognition that the policy of the social democratic leaders, who made the fight for the vote their central issue, was hopeless.

In the struggle for suffrage the Social Democratic Party pitted its customary tactic against the bargaining of the second Wekerle cabinet, and in the days following the latter's resignation, in late April and early May, it wished to force the government, with strongly-worded resolutions passed by the meetings, to act upon its promises regarding the vote. They held a protest meeting at the Trade Hall on April 14. The Party stewards handed over memoranda to the managements and military commanders, underscored by a half-hour strike on April 19 in which they called on the government to keep itself to its franchise promises. On April 22 there was a half-day strike with the same purpose and a mass meeting at the Trade Hall attended by a hundred thousand people. A part of the May Day demonstrations were also turned into electoral protests. Not that it had much influence on those in power. The reshuffled (third) Wekerle cabinet surrendered to the parliamentary majority opposing the extension of the franchise.

During the nationwide June strikes, on the 25th, the electoral committee submitted its report to Parliament and adduced reasons why Vázsonyi's bill should be further whittled down. The original proposal of the government "caused great concern particularly among the bourgeois and the so-called middle classes", the speaker said. The new proposal would easily put their minds at rest. The number of voters would be an estimated 2,714,000 (2 million at most according to the critics!), with the overwhelming majority being Hungarian. Rating by education was raised from 4 to 6 elementary standards, the women's vote was abolished, and so

⁵⁰ *Zeman*, pp. 145, 256.

⁵¹ *Min. tan. jkv*, August 31, 1918, p. 496.

was "the vote of the heroes" (those decorated with the "Charles cross"), while an open ballot was decided for the villages.⁵²

The ensuing three-week long debate in the House of Representatives shattered all illusions of a democratic franchise to be introduced by the current government. The exclusion of some 75 per cent of the adult population from the vote was justified by national interest. But from the common preamble of the whittling down of the original proposal it also came to light that they were in fact afraid of the "lower classes" without national distinction: "The committee's professional misgivings concerning national interests were founded mainly on... whether or not (disregarding their mothertongue) the voters have that intellectual standard and moral qualification which are indispensable conditions to the exercise of suffrage because of public interest".⁵³

László Fényes, Mihály Károlyi, and Tivadar Batthyány sharply criticized the bill and went on to call for a general, equal, and secret vote. Vázsonyi, Apponyi, and Andrassy were also forced into a position of opposition, criticizing the bill from the angle of the original Vázsonyi version and voting against it. This, however, no longer concealed their role in doing away with the originally promised reform. On July 19 the majority passed the new franchise act, caricaturing the extension of the vote by being the reformulation of the franchise Law of 1913.⁵⁴

The Upper House discussed it on July 31. The only person to vote against it was Aladár Széchenyi, who insisted on Vázsonyi's original version. Bishop Prohászka criticized the bill, finding the 6 elementary classes as qualification too high and toying with the idea of women's vote, but in the end he voted for it.⁵⁵

Although the new franchise act was indeed the parody of the reform promised by the Esterházy cabinet and later by the first Wekerle administration, there were some who found it too liberal.⁵⁶ Tisza, on the other hand, was fully satisfied. On the day following the parliamentary vote he sent a circular to the heads of his party in the country: "The spirit of government which made the first period of rule of our political adversaries so disagreeable has been replaced by a more reasonable conception".⁵⁷ But "this pleasing modification in the government's policy" (to quote Tisza) wrecked their whole drive at a reform policy. If there were any illusions left about the willingness of the ruling classes to bring about reforms, this wiped them out without a trace.⁵⁸

⁵² *Képviseelőház*, June 25, 1918.

⁵³ *Képviseelőház, Irom.*, 1910-1918, Vol. LXII, p. 225.

⁵⁴ *Corpus*, Law XVII of 1918.

⁵⁵ *Főrendiházi Napló*, July 31, 1918.

⁵⁶ *Gratz*, Vol. II, p. 363.; *Képviseelőház*, July 11, 1918.

⁵⁷ *Tisza*, Vol. VI, p. 361.

⁵⁸ *Károlyi*, p. 270.

With the disclosure of the rabble-rousing of reform policy anti-Semitism was increased, which the government joining forces with Tisza's circle against the revolution, kindly tolerated. The overture, so to speak, was Károly Huszár's speech in March claiming that the afflictions of war were caused by the "destructive influence of alien elements".⁵⁹ The paper, *Szív* (Heart) announced in an editorial that it would "write in no uncertain terms" about the subject.⁶⁰ The *Magyar Kultúra* (Hungarian Culture) edited by Béla Bangha, the Vermes-Katona wing of the Christian socialists, and last but not least, Bishop Prohászka fanned anti-Semitism openly.

In the editorial of the May 26 issue of the *Alkotmány* Prohászka called for a sort of *numerus clausus* at universities. This article elicited fierce criticism on the left. Some days later Prohászka elaborated his statements in detail in a May article.⁶¹ His arguments were constantly kept in store at Christian socialist meetings and were defended in the teeth of leftist criticism. Later the bishop published another editorial in *Alkotmány* in which he titled his movement "Hungarism".⁶² *Alkotmány* carried an interview entitled "The program of Hungarism", in which the bishop talked about "racial hygiene" and "destructive races".⁶³

REVOLUTIONARY EVENTS IN THE ARMY

Grave inner problems had already cropped up in the army of the Monarchy before 1918. Desertions and escapes were by far not so numerous in any other army of World War I as in the Monarchy's. By the autumn of 1917 600,000 soldiers of the nationalities had surrendered to the Russian forces. Official reports put the number of deserters in Hungary alone at above 80,000 at the end of 1917.⁶⁴ From this time on the revolutionary spirit permeated the army more and more thoroughly in the first half of 1918. Already the beginning of the year 1918 witnessed actions on a far larger scale than ever before. Rebellion broke out on January 19 in the 86th Common Infantry Regiment at Szabadka, on February 11 in the 22nd Common Regiment at Mostar and on February 14 in the 53rd Common Infantry Regiment in Trebinje. Minor disturbances and desertions occurred nearly every day in the army.

⁵⁹ *Alkotmány*, March 12, 1918.

⁶⁰ *A Szív*, April 27, 1918.

⁶¹ *Alkotmány*, June 30, 1918.

⁶² *Ibid.*, September 11, 1918.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, September 24, 1918.

⁶⁴ *Farkas*, pp. 49-50.

In February the sailors of the Adriatic fleet lying in Pola and Cattaro mutinied. The mutiny of Cattaro (February 1–3) was closely related to the great dock strikes at Pola (January 22–28) and Trieste (January 28–February 2). This wave of actions constitutes the last phase of the great January upsurge of strikes. The leaders and the participants of the Cattaro mutiny belonged to the most diverse nations of the Monarchy, thus it was not so much a nationalist, but a social revolutionary uprising.⁶⁵

In the first three months of 1918 44,000 runaways were captured, but the actual number of deserters was by then its multiple. On March 20 summary jurisdiction against deserters was declared, but it did not cut down the number of desertions. Scores of soldiers on the run were hiding in the southern mountains ("Green Cadre"). In the months following the disaster at the Piave over 200,000 soldiers are presumed to have escaped from the Italian front and from the units newly sent there. In September the number of deserters must have been a total of 400,000 over the Monarchy.⁶⁶

In the area of Hungary the most significant military rebellion was the one in May in the depot battalion at Pécs of the 6th Common Infantry Regiment. In May there were major soldiers' mutinies in nearly every province of the Monarchy.⁶⁷ The Pécs mutiny was largely initiated by the Serb prisoners of war returning from Russia, who got back again into military units. Early on May 20 a company despatched to the front refused to obey and seized the arsenal. The 2,000 soldiers in the barracks joined the rebellion. The rebels got in touch with the miners on strike in the Pécs region who gave them armed support. The mutiny was subdued by force with the help of Hungarian Honvéd units. It was nothing new to use Hungarian soldiers to suppress a riot of mostly South Slav soldiers. In the first months of 1918 the Hungarian Honvéd troops were considered reliable corps. At the Hungarian ministerial council in February it was planned that the garrison troops in Fiume penetrated by "the Yugoslav movement" should be replaced by Honvéd units.⁶⁸ One battalion of the 19th Honvéd Infantry Regiment was immediately deployed to quench the mutiny at Pécs.⁶⁹ Another unit thrown in to suppress the rebellion was the Pécs formation of the 8th Hussars. As this proved too little, the troops of the 9th Honvéd Infantry Regiment heading for the front were also despatched to confront them.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ On the mutiny at Cattaro, see *Plaschka*; E. Priester: *Cattaro 1918*, Budapest 1958.

⁶⁶ *Farkas*, pp. 193–194.

⁶⁷ *Zeman*, p. 143.

⁶⁸ *Min. tan. jkv*, February 14, 1918, p. 396.

⁶⁹ *Farkas*, pp. 141–142.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

From the spring of 1918 the returning prisoners of war had a great share in spreading the revolutionary spirit. After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, POWs were transported home by the hundreds from Russia. Nearly 2 million soldiers of the Monarchy and a quarter million of Germany were in captivity in Russia, the largest national group being Hungarian at over half a million.⁷¹ A revolutionary movement was spreading among the POWs in Russia.

By the end of October 1918 over 300,000 captives had returned to Hungary (the majority being Hungarian by nationality), and 400,000 to Austria. About 100,000 of the Hungarian POWs remaining in Russia took part in the Russian civil war on the side of the Soviet power. The military command placed the very first homecomers in quarantine.⁷² At the meeting of the governing party on February 19 Károly Huszár "voiced his concern that the returning prisoners of war might be infected by bolshevism. He asked the government to take the severest possible security measures."⁷³ Not much later these circles were pleased to see that those returning were kept in camps for six weeks.⁷⁴

THE CHANGE IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MONARCHY AND GERMANY

At around the time of the Brest-Litovsk peace talks and the declaration of Wilson's points the Monarchy was still trying to curb the German war aims in the west. This time, however, her failure did not lead to attempts at a separate peace, unlike a year earlier. The Monarchy again tried to moderate the demands of Germany concerning Alsace and Lorraine, but having failed to do so, she fully supported the German position in this matter at the secret negotiations, no longer giving the impression that she did not share it. Not only the breaking off of the negotiations indicated the Monarchy's adherence to Germany: shortly afterward it was spectacularly revealed by the Czernin-Clemenceau affair and the publication of the Sixtus letter.

On the eve of the Germans' spring offensive French politicians were struggling to settle a grave problem. How could they prevent, with political means, the danger of losing Paris and the transformation of the entire country into a huge battleground? Should the British and American allies later subdue the Germans, would this victory be beneficial for France? Understandably enough, the French government wished to put out secret feelers to see what chances there were for a

⁷¹ *Józsa*, p. 102. Without the nationalities of Hungary, of course.

⁷² *Józsa*, p. 336.

⁷³ *Alkotmány*, February 20, 1918.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, February 28, 1918.

separate peace with the Monarchy that could disrupt the German plans before the outset of the offensive. With this in mind they revived the talks between Armand and Revertera in February 1918. As has been seen, the talks bore no fruit. France insisted on the return of Alsace and Lorraine, while the Germans, optimistic about their victory, refused to give up both these provinces and some further-reaching aims as well. Czernin, who now did not commit himself to the separate peace, also represented their position. Clemenceau, who showed the utmost resolve and perseverance towards his nation in these grave days naturally counted on the discretion of the Monarchy, in the same manner as France had acted in the Sixtus affair.

In order to stir up confusion in France and facilitate the fall of the Clemenceau cabinet as well as to prove his unconditional loyalty and confidence towards the Germans, Czernin, who had been pursuing the line of German policy closely since the outset of the western offensive, divulged the French initiative in his speech addressed to the delegation of the city council of Vienna on April 2, and also attacked the French cabinet for their reluctance to relinquish the idea of seizing Alsace and Lorraine, but making her soldiers shed their blood for it. "Before the opening of the western offensive Clemenceau asked me whether I was prepared to enter into negotiations, and if so, on what basis. In harmony with Berlin I hastened to reply that I was willing, and that I did not see any obstacle in the way of peace on the part of France apart from her claim for Alsace-Lorraine. Paris replied that no talks could be held on such grounds."⁷⁵

Czernin's comments threw Clemenceau into a tight corner as the French premier had everyone gaoled who talked of peace in France. On April 3 the "Tiger" stated: "Count Czernin lied." To save face, Czernin disclosed the Armand-Revertera talks which took place in late February. Clemenceau, in turn, remarked that the talks had been initiated much earlier by Austria-Hungary, making an unmistakable reference to the Sixtus affair without actually mentioning the name. Czernin took the hint, but did not know that Charles had also given a document. On April 7 he replied that the point was not who had initiated the negotiations, but how they had come to a standstill, that is, that the French government wanted to get Alsace-Lorraine. Two days later Clemenceau had an official press communique published revealing that in March 1917 Emperor Charles himself had admitted in a handwritten letter that France's claim to Alsace and Lorraine was justified. In a statement of April 10 Czernin denied it: "M. Clemenceau's information concerning the statement in Emperor Charles' letter is fictitious from beginning to end."⁷⁶ On April 12 Clemenceau published the entire Sixtus letter. Czernin could not help

⁷⁵ *Lajos*, pp. 383-384.; *Mamatey*, p. 324.; *Kann*, *Sixtusaffäre*, p. 67.

⁷⁶ *Lajos*, p. 388.

acknowledging the authenticity of the letter but claimed that the infamous sentence in question was a subsequent fabrication.⁷⁷ No one believed it any more, neither friend, nor foe. On April 10 and 14 Charles wrote loyalty letters to Kaiser Wilhelm, while Czernin, who made a blunder by provoking the debate, had to leave. To the great joy of the Germans he was replaced by Burián, about whom the German General Cramon, assigned to the AOK, was quite right in saying in his memoirs: "He has always shown himself as a faithful and reliable friend of Germany." He also recorded that he had mentioned to Charles Tisza, too, as a possible successor to Czernin: "Yes, I have also thought of him", the ruler replied. Indeed, he held talks with Tisza, but then decided otherwise, for fear of the displeasure of the Austrian leading circles.⁷⁸ In any case, both Tisza and Wekerle recommended Burián as a candidate to the monarch.⁷⁹

The pro-German ruling strata of Austria and Hungary grew frightened: would Germany, now heading for victory, not turn her back upon the "unfaithful" ally? Would she not treat her as an adversary? The ambassador of Germany to Vienna sent a report on April 22 in which he described the atmosphere in these circles: "Now, that the alliance seems to be in danger a policy like this is being denounced throughout the country."⁸⁰ Tisza did not hesitate to pledge his allegiance. "The person of the new foreign minister", he told the Parliament, "may guarantee that he will insist on the alliance with unswerving loyalty to which I think we must stick not only until the glorious end of this great battle which we were forced to enter, but also after it, for the steadfast state of alliance with the German Empire must be a corner-stone of the foreign policy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy".⁸¹

The Germans, whose victory was now strongly expected in the Monarchy, made the utmost of the situation. They were fully prepared, looking forward to the visit of Charles, who was ready to eat humble pie. When he appeared in German uniform⁸² accompanied by Burián at Spa, the German headquarters, on May 12 the two emperors concluded momentous agreements: I. The two emperors struck a long-term and close political alliance; II. They established the military unity of the two countries; III. They signed a customs and an economic alliance, "gradually to be extended towards the final goal of a completely tariff-free traffic".⁸³ This was

⁷⁷ The circumstances surrounding the Sixtus-letter are well covered in the literature. See R. A. Kann: *Baernreithers und Czernins fragmentarische Darstellung der Sixtus-Affaire. Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, Wien 1963, pp. 412-452.

⁷⁸ *Cramon*, pp. 156-157.

⁷⁹ *Werkmann*, p. 251.

⁸⁰ *Zeman*, p. 159.

⁸¹ *Képviseelőház*, April 23, 1918.

⁸² For the imperial meetings during the war they put on the uniforms of each other's army.

⁸³ *Zeman*, pp. 160-161.; *Gratz-Schüller, Äussere*, p. 86.

the first time the Monarchy had officially accepted the customs union as a final aim. At the same time she received no concessions whatever from the Germans. She demanded in vain the approval of an Austrian settlement to the Polish question; this time Ludendorff bluntly refused it,⁸⁴ even though at the end of 1917 he had sided with it.⁸⁵

Under point III of the Spa agreement, preparations were made on both sides to start discussions about the creation of the customs and economic union with Salzburg being chosen as the venue for the talks. Károlyi protested openly to Parliament against the tightening of the alliance with Germany.⁸⁶ The adherents of the Independent Party protested in vain. The top echelons of Hungarian society contained more and more exponents of the Mitteleuropa customs union project, which also influenced the government. The domestic disintegration of the Monarchy also precipitated closer ties, including economic ones, with the Germans. As is evident in his remarks to Parliament on June 5, Tisza considered the customs union too far-fetched, but approved of a closer alliance with Germany including economic co-operation. He stressed the need of closer ties with Germany "in the interest of the survival and security of the Monarchy in general and the Hungarian nation in particular". Tisza agreed with "the substantial extension of the duration of the alliance" and also "that the chiefs of staff and high commands of the two armed forces should co-operate more intensely in the future". He concluded by saying that "the issue might assume the richest meaning in the field of economy".⁸⁷

The Germans hurriedly prepared for the negotiation in June 1918.⁸⁸ The preliminary draft as well as the minutes of the talks on June 28 and July 1 show that they did not wish to introduce the customs union gradually, but immediately after the war.⁸⁹

Preparations within the Monarchy, on the other hand, could not be characterized by domestic harmony. The Hungarian industrial circles exercised some restraint on the excessive economic alliance. On the eve of the Salzburg talks the German ambassador to Vienna said: "It became quite clear during the latest talks that despite Wekerle and Sztérényi, the Hungarians have adopted an unsympathetic attitude towards the economic union to be struck with us ... Apparently, there

⁸⁴ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 397.

⁸⁵ *Fischer*, p. 692.

⁸⁶ *Képviselőház*, May 15, 1918.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, June 5, 1918.

⁸⁸ *Fischer*, pp. 700–702.

⁸⁹ *DZA Potsdam Reichskanzlei*, Auswärtige Angelegenheiten. 4/2. Nr. 8.

has been an about-turn in Hungary. But the Hungarians do not wish to be explicit about it ..."⁹⁰

The negotiations began in Salzburg on July 9. The Germans demanded completely free trade, while the Monarchy accepted it only for particular goods. There were debates about the tariff rates. The meeting of the Hungarian ministerial council also showed reserve on July 13.⁹¹

In the days after the beginning of the talks the last attempt of the Germans to break through in the west collapsed, and the counter-attack of the Allies began. This made the representatives of the Monarchy even more cautious. On August 10 the German ambassador to Vienna informed Berlin that the Austrian industrial circles speculated that they should take their time since after the war Austria would have a chance to establish favourable economic ties with the Allies.⁹² The talks were drawn out and ended on October 11 due to the military situation without any conclusive agreements.⁹³

THE MILITARY PLANS OF THE ALLIES IN 1918 AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MONARCHY

Like the German high command, the Allies were also preparing for a final showdown in 1918. They were planning a concentrated attack to be launched practically simultaneously on all fronts, but it could not be started before the summer of 1918 as that was the date when the American troops being transported to France would reach over 1 million. At the beginning of the year there were only 170,000 American troops in France, this number rising to 1,200,000 by July with immense stores of supplies. A contributory factor to this favourable situation was that after the heavy losses of the first months of the year, they had devised an effective means to combat the German submarines. They neutralized the dangerous underwater foes with mine blockades, deepwater bombs, and hydroplanes, and sea transport was conducted in convoys to guarantee safety.⁹⁴

On July 18 the Allied troops opened a counter-offensive on the western front. They forced the Germans to retreat at two points, along the Somme and the Marne. Thereby the initiative was placed in the hands of the Allies. They reinforced

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15. Blatt.

⁹¹ *Min. tan. jkv*, July 13, 1918, p. 483.

⁹² *DZA Potsdam*, etc. 36. Blatt.

⁹³ *Gratz-Schüller, Áussere*, pp. 85–106. The authors were present at the negotiations (see, p. 87), so their work is a reliable source.

⁹⁴ *Taylor*, p. 123.

their Italian, Bulgarian, and Turkish fronts and made immediate preparations for the final encounter.

The Entente countries, like the Central Powers, were wrought with domestic difficulties. Pacifist and revolutionary movements were on the rise in the Allied countries, too. Their armies, however, were perfectly equipped and well supplied. They wished to neutralize the revolutionary tendency with total victory.

In early 1918 the leading Entente Powers, particularly the USA and Britain, still wanted to maintain a weakened and transformed Monarchy separated from Germany. Already at that time the French officials were more reserved. After the spring of 1918, however, they adopted the program of eliminating Austria-Hungary. This shift in policy was called for by the internal disintegration of the Monarchy and her adherence to Germany. The British and the French increasingly tended to adopt the policy of setting up a system of successor states, promising more stability in the region. The circle of political writers and politicians around the journal *The New Europe*, Seton-Watson and the others, launched a final attack in February 1918 to convince the leading official circles that the dissolution of the Monarchy was necessary, a line they had taken since the beginning of the war and voiced ever more vigorously since the first publication of the journal in October 1916.⁹⁵ The German ambassador to Vienna cannot have been wrong when stating in his summer report that two-thirds of the population of the Monarchy were siding with the Allies.⁹⁶ Conditions within the Monarchy indicated that the moment the war was lost domestic tensions would surface so vehemently as to destroy the Monarchy. With a view to these considerations, the leading stratum of the nationalities adopted in the first half of 1918 the policy, pursued by politicians in exile from the outset of the war, of settling the nationalities question by secession from the Monarchy.

The Rome congress and its impact interestingly show how emigration and the movements at home found a common platform. On April 8, 1918 the representatives of the prisoners of war of the Monarchy's nationalities and the emigré politicians held a major congress in Rome: in addition to the Yugoslav, Czechoslovak, and Polish national committees, the Serbian Skuptsina and the Romanians of Transylvania were also represented. The Italian government supported the congress⁹⁷ which resolved that the suppressed nations of the Monarchy chose to live no longer within the framework of the Monarchy, but to exist as self-governing states.⁹⁸ This resolution must have been a reflection of the real sentiments among the

⁹⁵ H. Hanak: *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary during the First World War*, London 1962, pp. 276-278.

⁹⁶ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 396.

⁹⁷ *Mamatey*, pp. 244-245.

⁹⁸ *May*, Vol. II, pp. 296-597.

nationalities of the Monarchy which found their most outspoken expression in the May-June moves of the Czech politicians at home.⁹⁹ This string of events was initiated by the May 15 celebrations in Prague. The representatives of the Czech, Slovak, South Slav, Polish, Italian, and Romanian nationalities of the Monarchy gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Czech national theatre, in emulation of the Rome congress.¹⁰⁰

The turn pointing to secession could not be explicitly expressed within the Monarchy even in the first half of 1918. In addition to the Prague events, this turn was also anticipated by the fact that the leaders of the nationalities at home no longer denounced the actions of the emigrés and many politicians fled the country to reinforce their ranks. The movement for Romanian unity as part of the dissolution of the Monarchy established its organizing body in May in Paris (the National Committee of the Romanians of Transylvania, the Banat, and Bukovina) in which Lucaciu and Goga played leading roles.¹⁰¹

Did the statesmen of the Monarchy assess the significance of the new developments in the movements of the nationalities? At the joint ministerial council on May 30 the South Slav issue was hastily put on the agenda. Besides the common minister and the two prime ministers, the ban of Croatia and the provincial governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina were also present. All agreed with one voice that sheer violence would not carry the point against the South Slav movement and a constructive move of some kind would be inevitable. This was an indication of the recognition of the significance of the recent South Slav events. However, what they could think of proposing as a settlement of the problem clearly reveals that they could get nowhere near understanding the national demands of the South Slavs and were also incapacitated by their internal differences. The ministerial council ended with no success.¹⁰²

The abandonment by the national movements of the enforcement of national aims within the Monarchy, or more precisely, the consummation of this trend, as well as its antagonism towards the Monarchy could be more or less overtly expressed in Trans-Leithania by the Croat movement.¹⁰³ The remarks of the Romanian and Slovak deputies in the Hungarian Parliament were conspicuously sharper in April 1918 than ever before. Even those parliamentarians who had stressed their devotion to the war government so far struck a severe tone of opposition. On April 25 István Cs. Pop refused to vote (for the first time during the war) for the budget on behalf of the Romanian national party and ended his

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 661-662, 675-676.

¹⁰⁰ *Mamatey*, p. 248.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

¹⁰² *Protokolle*, pp. 661-668.

¹⁰³ *Zeman*, p. 167.

contribution with the following words, referring to the reshuffled Wekerle cabinet: "I do not expect anything good."¹⁰⁴ Some days later the Slovak Juriga, so far unshakably loyal, contributed to the debate. He voiced his loyalty to the political idea of the Hungarian state but lashed out, in a manner unprecedented for him, at the government's nationalities policy. "The so-called historical class has failed", he concluded, "for they are unable to transform a new Hungary".¹⁰⁵

On May 29 1918 the United States accepted the resolution of the Rome congress with Lansing's declaration: "The secretary of state desires to announce that the proceedings of the Congress of the Opressed Races of Austria-Hungary, which was held in Rome in April, have been followed with great interest by the government of the United States and the nationalistic aspirations of the Czecho-Slovaks and Jugo-Slavs for freedom have the earnest sympathy of this government".¹⁰⁶ Until this time the USA had been against the breaking up of the Monarchy advocated by emigré politicians. "In 1917 The President not only did not approve this program but took active steps to check it."¹⁰⁷ The chief reason Lansing gave for this change in policy in his memoirs was that it emerged from the Sixtus affair: unlike during the period when the letter was written, the severing of Austria-Hungary from Germany was not impossible due to the given structure, and therefore an orientation towards new forces was necessary.¹⁰⁸

On June 3, during the sixth session of the Supreme War Council in Versailles, the French, British, and Italian heads of state (Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando) adopted the American government's position. They also decided on an independent Polish state.¹⁰⁹ The Entente also considered the setting up of the Czechoslovak, Yugoslav, and Polish states as part of its war aims. From the end of June the French government regarded the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris as the belligerent Czech government.¹¹⁰ This was also declared by the British in early August and on September 3 by the American government.¹¹¹ They also regarded all the Slav nationalities within the Monarchy not only as allies in the war, but also as the basis for the formation of a new system of states in Central Europe after the victory.¹¹²

¹⁰⁴ *Képviseelőház*, April 25, 1918.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, May 11, 1918.

¹⁰⁶ *Papers*, 1918, Suppl. 1. The World War. Vol. I, pp. 808-809.

¹⁰⁷ Mamatey: The United States and the Dissolution of Austria-Hungary, *Journal of Central European Affairs*, No. 3/1950, p. 257.; also see *May*, Vol. II, pp. 532, 559.

¹⁰⁸ R. Lansing: *War Memoirs*, London 1935, pp. 267-269.

¹⁰⁹ *Papers*, 1918, Suppl. 1. Vol. I, pp. 809-810.

¹¹⁰ *Zeman*, *Diplomatic*, pp. 358-359.; *Mamatey*, pp. 302, 309.

¹¹¹ *May*, Vol. II, pp. 754-758.

¹¹² *Fest*, pp. 240-241.

The German supreme command thought that they could launch lasting defense along the front which was formed at the beginning of August.¹¹³ However, on August 8 the Allies broke the German line with the mass deployment of armoured vehicles and aeroplanes. Ludendorff in his memoirs recorded the retreat from the Marne and the setting up of new positions as "glorious achievements", but August 8 he referred to as "the Black Day" in the history of the German army.¹¹⁴ Yet in the crown council of August 14 the German high command still trusted that they could finish the war by retaining their war conquests, and not only in the east.¹¹⁵

The Monarchy's supreme command had other ideas. The last hope, that of the Germans' victory in the west, was lost. They realized that the only possibility for survival was an immediate peace. Vienna pressed for a new summit which was convened in Spa on August 14-15. They decided: the Monarchy proposed to all belligerent countries, adversaries and allies alike, that they should prepare negotiations.¹¹⁶ The Germans, however, did not think it was necessary to hurry. First they needed to organize the troops, and settle with a more solid defense by cutting down the fronts, and only after this should the proposal be made. At the beginning of September the German high command forced the Monarchy to redeploy another two divisions.¹¹⁷ Thus the Monarchy in the last phase of the war had 4 divisions fighting in the western theatre of war. These troops, however, were of hardly any military use. The troops in the divisions redeployed in September were starving when they arrived at the western front.¹¹⁸

Even before this peace proposal, on August 27, the Central Powers amended the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in accordance with which their takings in the east would be considerably enlarged.¹¹⁹

The Germans were not in a hurry. The Monarchy, on the other hand, could not wait. Although on the Italian front she also attempted to create a shorter defensive line by straightening out the front, but resistance in the face of an offensive was completely impossible. Revolution in the hinterland and the dissolution of the army was only a matter of weeks away. On September 1 Commander-in-Chief Arz reported to the monarch: "If the two governments are not able to supply

¹¹³ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 368.

¹¹⁴ E. Ludendorff: *Meine Kriegserinnerungen 1914-1918*, Berlin 1919, pp. 544, 560.

¹¹⁵ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, pp. 370-372.

¹¹⁶ *Burián*, pp. 280-286.

¹¹⁷ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, p. 436.

¹¹⁸ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 398.

¹¹⁹ *Deutsch-sowjetische Bez.*, pp. 724-755.

fighting troops with the most indispensable necessities then it will be impossible to fight the enemy any longer, and the same sad signs will be seen in the army as have brought about Russia's misfortune".¹²⁰ From early September Charles pressed more and more firmly for the launching of the agreed peace action.¹²¹

During this period in Hungary Károlyi urged more and more forcefully the launching of the peace action. In his open letter written to the voters of Cegléd on September 8 he demanded a peace offer on the basis of Wilson's Points.¹²²

On September 15 the foreign minister of the Monarchy, Burián, called on the belligerents in a note (both the adversaries, through the non-aligned states, and the allies) "to send to a neutral country...delegates who would broach a confidential non-binding conversation over the fundamental principles of a peace that could be concluded". These delegates should discuss whether it was possible to put an end to the "undecided" struggle whose whole process "seems to demand a compromise". In the meantime, warfare would not be interrupted.¹²³ Obviously, the tone of the note did not harmonize with the actual position of the Central Powers. He also referred to the generalities in Wilson's speeches on February 12 and July 14 as signs of a "rapprochement in the basic principles serving as the basis for peace and for the future order in Europe and the whole world", but he did not appear willing to accept the earlier, more concrete points of Wilson.

The Allies refused Burián's proposal. Balfour announced it on September 16, Clemenceau on the 17th. Lansing, the Secretary of State of the USA replied in writing through the mediation of the Swedish government and "has repeatedly and with entire candor stated the terms upon which the United States would consider peace and can and will entertain no proposal for a conference upon a matter concerning which it has made its position and purpose so plain".¹²⁴

ISTVÁN TISZA IN SARAJEVO

Parallel with Burián's peace action the attention of the Vienna leaders turned towards the South Slav problem. If it could be arranged by inner reconstruction the Monarchy would gain a better position against territorial demands of the Entente.

The domestic reconstruction of the Monarchy as a solution to the South Slav problem had already been discussed in the common ministerial council in May.

¹²⁰ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, p. 399.

¹²¹ *Cramon*, p. 177.

¹²² *Magyarország*, September 8, 1918.; *Károlyi*, p. 361.

¹²³ *Papers*, 1918. Supplement 1. The World War. Vol. I, p. 309. See also *Mamatey*, p. 319.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

Due to contrasting opinions no resolution was made and no practical measures ensued. The decision could no longer be postponed after the summer defeat of the Germans and the "Laibach declaration" of August 17.¹²⁵ The Hussarek cabinet, which replaced the Seidler administration in late July, was looking for ways to settle the problem with a confederation.¹²⁶ Both in the court and among the top officials of Austria many had for some time been in favour of a Trialist transformation, this being seen as a possible way out now as well. The Hungarian leaders, however, opposed South Slav unity not only within a Triple Monarchy, but also under the crown of St Stephen.¹²⁷ On August 31 the two ministers met in Budapest in the presence of Baron Sarkotić, the provincial governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The baron sent a report of the meeting to his immediate superior the common Finance Minister Spitzmüller-Harmersbach: "I had the impression after the meeting that Hungary is still underestimating the events that are taking place partly overtly (Laibach congress) and partly covertly, as well as the need for a swift and adequate settlement to the South Slav problem".¹²⁸

It was commonly known that Hungarian Prime Minister Wekerle's position on the South Slav issue was actually Tisza's. For this reason the ruler asked Tisza during an audience on September 6 to travel to Croatia, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, and Bosnia. There he should survey the conditions of food supply, and take the necessary steps to improve them as "homo regius".¹²⁹ The monarch wished to influence him in regard to the idea of the South Slav unity within the Monarchy by giving him a chance to gain experience for himself. But he did not expect him to make statements.¹³⁰ This is what Tisza wrote in a letter dated September 10, right before his departure: "My actual task is to become informed of the political situation (South Slav agitation, etc.) and report on in".¹³¹

His journey taking him across Croatia, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, and Bosnia lasted from September 13 to 26, its climax being a visit to Sarajevo on September 20-21. Here the local parliament submitted a declaration to him protesting against the merciless oppression of the population, asking for general amnesty and compensation. They demanded the restoration of autonomy and forwarded similar

¹²⁵ On August 17, 1918 the South Slav members of the Reichsrat issued a statement in the capital of Slovenia on South Slav unity and self-determination, and set up the Yugoslav National Committee. A month earlier, on July 13, the Czech National Committee was established under Kramar. *Mamatey*, p. 318.

¹²⁶ *May*, Vol. II, p. 738.

¹²⁷ *Gratz*, Vol. II, p. 372.

¹²⁸ *Tonelli*, p. 130.

¹²⁹ *Nádasdy*, p. 27. Béla Nádasdy was Tisza's escort.

¹³⁰ *Werkmann*, p. 309.

¹³¹ *REZsL Tisza*, item 41.

demands from the other South Slav provinces.¹³² The following day Tisza received the signatories of the declaration as a feudal lord receives his serfs.¹³³ As the head of the province wrote in his report: "The delegation turned their backs on Count Tisza and left".¹³⁴ Tisza found time to dictate to the stenographer: "The dualist structure of the Monarchy and the federalist alliance with Croatia are the immovable barriers between which all the plans and endeavours of Bosnia and Herzegovina must move". What Tisza told the Bosnian leaders was so obsolete that Sarkotić reported to Vienna, "it was so brusque that I will refrain from transmitting it through the Hughes-machine".¹³⁵ In his later memoirs Baron Sarkotić, the governor of the province who accompanied Tisza, wrote that he made the impression of a person "who suddenly notices an abyss at his feet, is caught by vertigo, but cannot make a step either forward or backward".¹³⁶

This needs no further comment. The fiasco of the nationalities policy of Tisza was undeniable. Tisza stuck to the former line: what is needed is "resilience" and "resolve". "Lack of will and courage on all fronts", he wrote to his friend Jenő Balogh.¹³⁷ In early September Jenő Balogh who understood more of the new course, answered him: "We are wake in the face of the powerful factor of the psychology of the people".¹³⁸

THE CAPITULATION OF BULGARIA AND THE OCTOBER 16 MANIFESTO

By the early autumn of 1918 the Allies had concentrated an overwhelming superiority of forces on all fronts. They placed their first blow on the Balkan front commanded by Franchet d'Esperey. They broke through the defense of the Bulgarians.¹³⁹ On September 25 the government of Bulgaria appealed for peace and signed the armistice in Salonika on September 29.

After the Bulgarian debacle and plea for an armistice, the joint ministerial council of Austria-Hungary sat on September 27.¹⁴⁰ "With the desertion of Bulgaria", Burián said, "we are finished". A new defensive line had to be drawn along

¹³² *Nádasdy*, pp. 167–170. The original text with the signatures is among Tisza's papers. *REZsL Tisza*, item 41.

¹³³ *REZsL Tisza*, item 41.

¹³⁴ *Tonelli*, p. 139.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹³⁷ *REZsL Balogh*, parcel 9.

¹³⁸ *REZsL Tisza*, item 41.

¹³⁹ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, pp. 501–511.

¹⁴⁰ *Protokolle*, pp. 680–686.

the southern borders of the Monarchy now that the Allies were pushing forward from Salonika, and along Romania, too, for she was expected to take hostile steps as well. This, in turn, exceeded all their available military potential. A rapid peace offer must be made, in the interest of which Burián had already contacted the German government. As for domestic questions, immediate measures must be taken to settle the South Slav issue. "We must make decisions if we wish to prevent the peoples themselves from taking control and deciding about their future over the heads of the governments." The fact that he saw this clearly yet was incapable of proposing anything to solve the problem showed that the leaders of the Monarchy could no longer maintain the old structure and at the same time they were unable to change it.

Out of the 6 resolutions 5 were negligible: the replacement of the ban of Croatia; a statement by the ruler that in the future (after the peace) the national assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that of Dalmatia were to decide upon their fates; the speeding up of the ratification of the Treaty of Bucharest; renewed talks on the Austrian Polish settlement of the Polish question; urging Germany to call for an armistice. One resolution, however, deserves special mention: "to start the domestic reconstruction of Austria as soon as possible". So far it had always been the inner reconstruction of the entire Monarchy, but since Hungarian statesmen were insisting on the parity structure of the Monarchy, the ruler and the Austrian government decided on the domestic reconstruction of Austria.

On the day that Bulgaria sought peace, the French-American forces opened an offensive between Reims and Verdun, which was extended in the following days along the entire length of the western front between the sea and the Maas by the joining of the British and Belgian forces. The German troops stood no chance of halting the offensive. To stop the enemy from breaking through, they began a rapid retreat to Belgium.¹⁴¹ Ludendorff was still hesitating, but the supreme command's more realistic officers forced him to make up his mind on September 28, that an armistice and peace must be sought. The next day the crown council decided to plead for an armistice and peace acknowledging Wilson's points.¹⁴²

Having been informed of the German decision, the joint ministerial council of the Monarchy sat again on October 2.¹⁴³ Burián reported that Germany had also adopted the idea of a plea for peace on the basis of Wilson's points.¹⁴⁴ Having agreed with the Austrian and the Hungarian premiers previously, he made preparations to draft the note.

¹⁴¹ *Deutschland*, Vol. 3, pp. 393-394, 425-430.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 425-430.

¹⁴³ *Protokolle*, pp. 687-695.

¹⁴⁴ *Burián*, pp. 291, 294-295.

On October 4 Burián sent a note to the president of the United States as the German and Turkish governments had done. He asked the Swedish government to forward the note (the Swiss having mediated for Germany and Spain for Turkey).¹⁴⁵ He proposed an immediate truce and adjoining peace talks on the basis of Wilson's points.¹⁴⁶ In the meantime they set up the armistice commissions headed by General Weber on the Italian front and General Laxa in the Balkans.¹⁴⁷ A favourable answer was awaited by the armistice commissions, but it did not arrive. On October 8 the American government replied to the German note, saying that as long as the troops of the Central Powers were stationed in the territory of the Allies, they did not feel empowered to offer an armistice.¹⁴⁸ The reply to the Monarchy took very long to arrive. Many in the top circles of the Allies took the view that they had nothing to settle with Austria-Hungary and it is her successors that count. This was the position of Wilson's chief advisor Colonel House as well.¹⁴⁹

The leading politicians of the nationalities regarded the events of late September and early October not only as the consummation of a military defeat but also as the debacle of the Monarchy, and decided it was time to act. Hussarek talked about the need to reorganize Austria as a federation when he addressed the Reichsrat meeting again from October 2 onward. The keynote speakers of the Czech, Slovene, and Polish representatives, however, did not acknowledge the right of the Viennese government to speak for their nations and demanded the right of self-determination.¹⁵⁰ From this date on the representatives of the nationalities ignored the Reichsrat. In Hungary a similar situation evolved with the Croats. On October 5-6 the "National Council of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs" was set up in Zagreb, declaring itself to be the representative of the policy of the South Slav nations. Two weeks later they accepted a provisional constitution and formed an executive committee acting in the capacity of government.¹⁵¹ Thereby the South Slav nationalities of the Monarchy established a unified bloc with Croat superiority independent of the other nations of the Monarchy. Whether this state-like formation was within or outside the Monarchy was left undeclared during the whirlwind of events.

The National Council of Zagreb regarded itself as the representative not only of Croatia, but of the Croats and Serbs of Hungary as well. The provisional consti-

¹⁴⁵ A. Arz: *Zur Geschichte des grossen Krieges, 1914-1918*, Wien 1924, p. 308.

¹⁴⁶ Gratz, Vol. II, p. 378.

¹⁴⁷ Krieg, Vol. VII, pp. 577, 789.

¹⁴⁸ Deutschland, Vol. 3, pp. 463-464.

¹⁴⁹ Mamatey, pp. 321-322.

¹⁵⁰ Mamatey, p. 323.

¹⁵¹ Kővágó, p. 60.

tution laid down that the Yugoslav confederation also included the Voivodina and the Medjimurje regions.

In mid-October decisive events took place in Bohemia as well. The general strike of October 14 shook the Monarchy's rule in Bohemia so much that from this time on the hands of Prague held the reins in the Czech land. The Polish deputies in the Reichsrat, who became the members of the Polish National Council set up in Cracow on October 11, regarded themselves as guests in Vienna and looked upon Galicia as a province ruled by Warsaw.¹⁵²

From around the middle of October the nationalities ceased obeying the Viennese government and the Croats, who refused to attend the Hungarian Parliament sitting on October 16, ignored the Hungarian government. The empire began to crumble. The manifesto of the monarch of October 16 was meant to stop these processes: he declared that Austria "shall become a federal state in which each racial component shall form its own state organization in its settlement area". He called for the establishment of national councils composed of the parliamentary deputies of each nation of Austria. The manifesto did not touch upon the domestic structure of Hungary or Hungarian-Croat relations. The formulators of the manifesto imagined that this reconstruction would leave the common management of defense and foreign affairs intact. The unity of the army was emphasized by the monarch's despatch of October 23,¹⁵³ while common foreign policy was still considered as based on the Pragmatic Sanction.¹⁵⁴

The issuing of the manifesto was in close relation with their hopes of getting a more favourable reply to their note suing for peace on the basis of Wilson's points.¹⁵⁵ These hopes, however, were banished. Lansing forwarded the United States' answer via the Swedish ambassador on October 18 which reached Vienna late on the 19th.¹⁵⁶ Wilson, and his state secretary could no longer form the basis for peace with the Monarchy: "The President deems it his duty to say to the Austro-Hungarian Government that he cannot entertain the present suggestions of that Government because of certain events of utmost importance which, occurring since the delivery of his address of eighth of January last, have necessarily altered the attitude and responsibility of the Government of the United States.

¹⁵² On October 7 the restoration of tripartite old Poland was proclaimed in Warsaw, that is, together with Galicia. The Polish politicians of Galicia acted in accordance with this. *Mamatey*, pp. 327-328.

¹⁵³ J. Breit: *A magyarországi 1918/19 évi forradalmi mozgalmak* (The Revolutionary Movements in Hungary in 1918-1919), Budapest 1925, Vol. I, p. 152.

¹⁵⁴ *Protokolle*, p. 702.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *REZsL Burján*, item 43, folio 155.

Among the fourteen terms of peace which the President formulated at that time occurred the following:

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

Since that sentence was written and uttered to the Congress of the United States the Government of the United States has recognized that a state of belligerency exist between the Czecho-Slovaks and the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires and that the Czecho-Slovak National Council is a *de facto* belligerent government clothed with proper authority to direct the military and political affairs of the Czecho-Slovaks. It has also recognized in the fullest manner the justice of the nationalistic aspirations of the Jugo-Slavs for freedom.

The President is, therefore, no longer at liberty to accept the mere "autonomy" of these peoples as a basis of peace, but is obliged to insist that they, and not he, shall be the judges of what action on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government will satisfy their aspirations and their conception of their rights and destiny as members of the family of nations."¹⁵⁷

After the arrival of Wilson's reply note, the joint ministerial council met on October 22 to discuss their reply to Wilson.¹⁵⁸ Yet this answer was never despatched events changing at a dizzy speed left it way behind them. Wilson and Lansing considered their contact with Austria-Hungary's government finished with the note of October 18.¹⁵⁹

THE HUNGARIAN OPPOSITION PARTIES AND THE NATIONALITIES IN OCTOBER 1918

The parliamentary deputies of the national minorities in Hungary were also expressly demanding the recognition of their right to self-determination. On the October 18 session of Parliament Vaida-Voevod read out the declaration of the national party of Transylvanian and Hungarian Romanians formulated on October 13: "The Romanian nation of Transylvania and Hungary demand the right to determine freely and without any external influence the location and co-ordination of its constitutional state among the other free nations... The national organization of the Romanian nation of Transylvania and Hungary does not recognize the legitimacy of this Parliament and government to consider themselves the representatives of the Romanian nation." The next day Juriga read the procla-

¹⁵⁷ *Wilson, War and Peace*, Vol. I, pp. 281-282.; *Papers*, 1918. Supplement I. The World War, Vol. I, p. 368.

¹⁵⁸ *Protokolle*, pp. 696-703.

¹⁵⁹ *Mamatey*, p. 335.

mation of the "National Council of the Slovak Nation in Hungary" saying that "they claim the right to determine the location and co-ordination of their constitutional state among the other free nations freely and without any foreign influence. The Slovak nation does not recognize the legitimacy of this Parliament and government to consider themselves the representatives of the Slovak nation."¹⁶⁰

With this and many parallel actions of this kind which eventually led to the establishment of national councils¹⁶¹ the nationalities of Hungary openly broke with the concept of a unified political state so far legally observed. Their leading politicians and organizations expressly demanded the recognition of their existence as a political state and its self-determination. The open declarations generally eschewed the question of which direction to take in self-government.

On October 16 the Hungarian government announced in Parliament that due to the federal reconstruction of Austria Law XII of 1867 was rescinded, but the Pragmatic Sanction was still in force. Based on the latter they wished to submit a bill concerning the Personal Union between the federal state of Austria and the Hungarian crown lands. They also promised to revise the Hungarian-Croat Compromise (1868: XXX), yet it stressed the essential stability of Hungary's nationalities policy: "We wish to give the nationalities individual rights. As far as full individual equality and the maintenance of the unity and indivisibility of the state enable us, we are ready to satisfy the demands of the nationalities..."¹⁶²

During these days, between October 16 and 22, Mihály Károlyi disclosed to Parliament the nationalities program of his party which differed from the official position. They recognized the right of Croatia to secede provided that Hungary's access to the sea and retention of Fiume was ensured. As for the national minorities within Hungary, he thought that a general drive for democratization (suffrage, etc.) would solve the problem and wanted the government to start negotiations with the nationalities from this stand.¹⁶³

By declaring the Personal Union, the followers of the Independent Party came to see one of their central plans come true yet their "independence" opposition still had some formal basis as the government standing for the Personal Union had not clarified its position as to military and financial affairs. The independent Hungarian army and the separate customs area were certainly not yet adopted by the government, and besides, the alliance with the Germans was still formally valid. However, these were not the main points of contention between the Károlyi party and the government; it was over the change of regime and ensuing democratiza-

¹⁶⁰ *Képviselőház*, October 18 and 19, 1918.

¹⁶¹ According to Mamatey the Slovak politicians set up their national committee secretly in mid-September, the Romanians of Transylvania in early October. *Mamatey*, p. 336.

¹⁶² *Képviselőház*, October 16, 1918.

¹⁶³ *Képviselőház*, October 16 and 22, 1918.; *Károlyi*, pp. 422-423.

tion. Their antagonism over the nationalities question was also connected with this issue. Károlyi stressed the need to negotiate with the leaders of the nationalities, as well as to grant immediate concessions which did not affect political integrity.

The federalist plan of Oszkár Jászi disclosed at about this time deserves attention. In the spring of 1918 when the Allied politicians were making their last attempts to sever the Monarchy from Germany, Jászi's plan of a federation was being conceived: with the preservation of the Monarchy, but the elimination of the dual system. Five state units — Austria, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, and Illyria (South Slavs) — should be established to form a federal United States of Danubian Lands. The new plan for confederation developed in the spring of 1918 was only made public in its entirety about half a year later. The book that included it went to press only in the autumn of 1918 and was available in mid-October.¹⁶⁴ This federation, he wrote, would be a balancing buffer between Germany and Russia: "It is in the interest of western Europe that the nations with power over vast economic and cultural resources along the Danube and in the Balkans should not be the satellites of either Germany or Russia. This is what the concept of the Danubian federation of states would exactly prevent."¹⁶⁵

This federalist scheme as elaborated by Jászi was, he thought, adequately adjusted to the new world political constellation and fitted Hungary's orientation towards the western Allied Powers. However, while his former federalist plan with German orientation did tally with the interests of German politics, this new plan of his, gravitating towards the Entente, was out of tune with the policy of the Allied governments. His plan had just taken shape when in the early summer of 1918 Britain and the United States, following in the steps of France, acknowledged the inevitability of the dissolution of the Monarchy, and brought the most probable outcome of the events, that is, the system of successor states, in harmony with their policies. Thus Jászi's concept lacked the very background of world politics that it was planned against, let alone the fact that the nations he reckoned with as federal members (Czechs, Poles, Croats, Serbs, etc.) were pursuing a totally different route. This meant that the plan was already unrealistic when it was conceived, and even more so when it was revealed to the public.

Of all the Hungarian parties it was the Social Democratic Party that went furthest along the lines of a nationalities policy in October 1918. Their October 8

¹⁶⁴ O. Jászi: *A Monarchia jövője. A dualizmus bukása és a Dunai Egyesült Államok* (The Future of the Monarchy. The Collapse of Dualism and the Danubian United States), Budapest 1918. Lajos Biró's article in *Világ* on October 13, 1918 informed that the book completed half a year earlier was available.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 76–77.

manifesto demanded the self-determination of the nations of Hungary, and through this "a Hungary based on the federation and free association of equal, free and democratic nations".¹⁶⁶ The extraordinary congress of the SDP on October 13 accepted Kunfi's interpretation of the statement: Kunfi had made it quite clear that he regarded the right of secession as compatible with the right to self-determination. "We recognize overtly and clearly the right of the nationalities to self-determination, with all its consequences... Neither at this, nor at any later moment will the Social Democratic Party support a policy that is intended to keep nations here by force of arms who do not wish to remain here." Kunfi hoped that the appeal of a democratically reshaped confederation would guarantee the survival of the multi-national Hungary.¹⁶⁷ The speeches of the representatives of the social democratic groups of the nationalities are also remarkable. The spokesmen for the German-speaking workers in Hungary said they would fight shoulder to shoulder with the Hungarians "to make Hungary free and democratic and federalistic". The others commented that it was right to give the nationalities self-determination and showed willingness to participate in the struggle for democratization, but they kept silent on the subject of preserving or abolishing the idea of the integrity of the state within a confederation.¹⁶⁸

Jászi also made another step forward during these days, partly in response to the position taken by the social democrats. In his article in *Világ* on October 10 entitled "The Message of the Workers" he adopted the platform of the SDP wishing to see Hungary turned into a confederation, and spoke of the "Switzerland of the east" as an allusion to the domestic reconstruction of Hungary. During the same days he and Károlyi held talks with the leaders of the nationalities on the basis of territorial autonomy to be granted them.¹⁶⁹

THE GOVERNMENT CRISIS AND THE FORMING OF THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL

Around mid-October and the days following it tension was heightened in Hungary. Added to the more and more straightforward assertion of the so-far suppressed aspiration of the nationalities, the class struggle also became intensified to the utmost degree.

By mid-October the spirit of revolution had kindled the atmosphere among the troops in the hinterland so much that they could no longer be used in case of a

¹⁶⁶ *MMTVD*, Vol. 5, pp. 244-245.

¹⁶⁷ *MMTVD*, 4/B, pp. 470-471.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 475-479.

¹⁶⁹ *Károlyi*, p. 385. (Faith, pp. 97-98.)

revolution. One corps after another mutinied at the front, not only the national troops, but Hungarians as well.¹⁷⁰ "We are standing over a volcano," Károlyi Huszár said on October 22 in Parliament, "and we do not know which moment, the volcano is going to erupt".¹⁷¹

The Wekerle government already tendered its resignation of September 30, but the leading circles failing to replace them commissioned them to continue running the affairs of the country.¹⁷²

In the Parliament on October 16, Károlyi demanded in a sharp tone the surrendering of the government to those who were able to pursue new lines in both domestic and foreign politics, who would tear themselves from Germany and could rescue the peace even after a lost war. János Hock read the proposed petition of the party: the monarch should appoint a new cabinet that would be able to create an independent Hungary, order the Hungarian soldiers fighting abroad to come home to defend their own borders, launch peace negotiations immediately with its own foreign minister as its representative and defend the territorial integrity of the country. The new government should implement the democratic transformation, granting general suffrage, freedom of the press, a far-reaching social policy, an agrarian policy giving land to the people, etc. It also demanded that the nationalities question be settled in the spirit of Wilson's points, with free use of the mother tongue, etc.¹⁷³

The next day Tisza also acknowledged the loss of the war and adopted the Wilsonian program saying that the present *status quo* in Hungary was not widely different from what that program implied, and consequently no radical change was needed. "We do not need to take the position of democratization", he said "as we have been cherishing it for a long time."¹⁷⁴ In his speech on the previous day Wekerle pulled the same stunt: "By accepting Wilson's thesis I think we did not contradict our traditional stance." This was the domestic and foreign political platform that Tisza tried to base the unity of the Hungarian political parties on in mid-October. A few days before the convening of Parliament he virtually dissolved his Party of Work at its meeting, suggesting to the deputies that they should join the Party of the '48 Constitution, the basis of the Wekerle cabinet.¹⁷⁵ Taking this policy further after his parliamentary address, he initiated a meeting of the leaders of all parliamentary parties on October 18 to discuss a merger. But it was already a futile attempt. Only Wekerle and the most right wing

¹⁷⁰ Farkas, pp. 245-256.

¹⁷¹ *Képviseletsház*, October 22, 1918.

¹⁷² Gratz, Vol. II, pp. 377-378.

¹⁷³ *Képviseletsház*, October 16, 1918.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, October 17, 1918.

¹⁷⁵ See *Magyarország*, October 12, its report.

faction of the government party ventured to fuse with the Party of Work. Andrassy was also for a coalition of parties, but against the fusion. Károlyi did not even attend.¹⁷⁶

Károlyi's party did not want a revolution. Its policy-makers believed that if the left wing parties rose to power and their program was executed, it could be avoided. Károlyi insisted that a new government be formed, dominated by his party and the extraparlimentary radicals and social democrats, provisionally containing Andrassy, Apponyi, the People's Party and Vázsonyi if they remained in the minority. Andrassy and Apponyi, on the other hand, stuck to the idea of a cabinet similar to Esterházy's in 1917, that is one that was predominated by the old moderate oppositions, while Károlyi and the democratic parties would be given an inferior role. No agreement was reached, but on October 23 Wekerle again tendered his resignation to the House.¹⁷⁷

While Andrassy, Apponyi, Wekerle, Tisza, the ruler who arrived at Gödöllő and the others began to discuss how to throw together a new cabinet, the left wing parties resolved to take a decisive step on the night of the 23rd. Representatives of the Károlyi party, the radicals and the social democrats declared the formation of the Hungarian National Council. For want of a parliamentary system, the Council regarded itself as the representative of the Hungarian nation, placing itself in opposition to the "noblemen's Parliament" that represented only a narrow stratum of the society and felt empowered to form an independent popular government. This was the revolutionary aspect of setting up the Hungarian National Council. This is exactly why its founders who wished to avoid the revolution or channel it off in peaceful ways decided not to disclose their move, but to make a last attempt to seize power in the parliamentary way.¹⁷⁸

The reception rooms and studies of the ruler's mansion at Gödöllő were bustling with busy talks aimed at forming a government, the threads of which all converged in the hands of Andrassy, whom the ruler appointed as "common" foreign minister to replace Burián on October 24. Most typical of his ideas is perhaps the plan of a cabinet to be formed under Bárczy. This combination was basically built on the politicians around Andrassy. During these days Andrassy and Tisza had already openly joined forces. The Party of Work and the Party of the '48 Constitution had been pursuing converging lines since June and by the end of October united in one camp. The Bárczy cabinet was to have represented this camp, borrowing at the same time Károlyi's program dressed up in liberal phrases. In the highly strained situation, however, such tactics were doomed to failure. Even

¹⁷⁶ *Hajdú*, p. 75.

¹⁷⁷ *Képviselőház*, October 23, 1918.

¹⁷⁸ *Hajdú*, pp. 84–87.

the persons involved in the possible cabinet saw the unreal aspect of the plan clearly. Simon Krausz, the would-be financial minister of the Bárczy cabinet wrote: "Either Hadik (the "iron-fisted") must come together with general Lukachich (the armed) ... or an agreement must be made with the socialists, with Károlyi and his men, with the radicals". Bárczy also refused to form an administration.¹⁷⁹

In the afternoon of October 25, Károlyi attended an audience with the monarch and submitted his plans for the composition and platform of a new government. The audience was not successful. "He did not say yes or no to anything."¹⁸⁰ In the evening of the same day Batthyány had a similarly futile audience with the king.

The leaders of the parties, who had in principle decided the formation of the National Council two days earlier, made up their minds on the night of October 25: they would declare the formation and the program of the Council. Károlyi became the president of the Council.

On October 26 the proclamation of the Hungarian National Council appeared with the title "To the People of Hungary!", summing up the tasks in 12 points.¹⁸¹ It demanded the elimination of the existing systems of Parliament and government, the recognition of the complete independence of Hungary, the immediate ending of the war, and the renouncing of the alliance with Germany. They also demanded that the Upper House be dissolved and elections be called on the basis of general, secret, and equal vote including women. As for the nationalities, they called for the implementation of Wilson's proposals "cherishing the hope that these principles do not jeopardize the territorial integrity of Hungary, but place it on the firmest possible basis". They demanded the freedom to unite and assemble, the abolition of conscription, amnesty for political prisoners, and rapid measures to combat imminent starvation. "We must effectively better the losses of the working people, especially the returning soldiers', by sweeping reforms in agrarian and social policies that would give land to the people. Excessive accumulation of capital must be prevented and recycled for public use." They also called for the recognition of the new Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, and German-Austrian states and the cancellation of the peace treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest. In the proclamation the National Council declared itself to be a rival government: "Instead of the present government in power ... it is only authorized to speak and act in the name of the Hungarian nation whose blood and labour upholds Hungary".

¹⁷⁹ *Krausz*, p. 273.

¹⁸⁰ *Károlyi*, pp. 445-446.

¹⁸¹ *MMTVD*, Vol. 5, pp. 266-268.

The trends concentrated in the National Council were still of the view that they should rise to power and implement the democratization of the political and social conditions without revolution. By forming and proclaiming the National Council as a rival government its leaders took a revolutionary step, no matter how they planned to go on afterwards. The Soldiers' Council, which was organized parallel to the National Council by army officers with a revolutionary outlook, was consciously preparing for the overthrow of the regime by revolution.

Those who still held the power in their hands were hesitating, unable to decide. The crisis at the top was absolute. At that moment decisive events occurred at the fronts.

THE ITALIAN OFFENSIVE AND ANDRÁSSY'S SEPARATE PEACE OFFER

The Piave was defended by the 6th Army and the Isonzo Army. It was quite clear in the first days of October that in case of an Allied offensive the two armies would crumble in a matter of days. An officer of the staff of the 6th Army reported on September 29: "Average weight is 50 kg... Morale and moods depressed." The liaison officer of the Isonzo Army had similar things to report on October 14: "The army consists of 15 units; seven of these have hardly one-third of normal strength, three have about half and five have three-quarters of full strength. The strength of the artillery is frighteningly low..."¹⁸² The situation was no better in southern Tirol where the 10th and 11th Armies were stationed. "The HQ of the 11th Army doubt it very much", they cabled to general headquarters, "that a breakthrough could be prevented."¹⁸³

After mid-October, disobedience and mutinies cropped up along the southwestern front-line. The number of disturbances grew rapidly, especially in the Slav and Hungarian units. After the October 16 manifesto of the emperor and Wilson's negative note of October 18, the Slav regiments regarded the Monarchy as fallen and the Austro-Hungarian high command as illegitimate, while the Hungarian regiments, formerly the firmest pillars of the armed forces, demanded their transport home. The headquarters were no longer able to retaliate. They tried to hold the crumbling of the front by deploying the mutinous troops behind the front.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² I. Stréter: *A badeni hadsereg főparancsnokság 1918 októberében és a hadsereg fölbonnlása* (The Baden Supreme Command in October 1918 and the Disintegration of the Army), Budapest 1922, pp. 6-7.

¹⁸³ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, p. 588.

¹⁸⁴ *Farkas*, p. 261.

General Diaz, the commander-in-chief of the Allied forces fighting along the Italian front, originally set the date of the offensive for October 16, but foul weather made him change it to October 24.¹⁸⁵ The most violent fighting of the first two days took place at the juncture of the flanks of the 11th and 6th Armies because the deployment of the decisive forces at the Piave was delayed by the weather. This attack could be arrested by the troops, but the main onslaught to be launched any hour was to prove irresistible for them. At the same time revolution was about to break out both in Vienna and Budapest. The last hour of the Monarchy had struck.

On October 24 Andrassy got his mandate as foreign minister on the condition that he should sign a separate peace immediately. On October 25 the last foreign minister of the Monarchy took office in Vienna.

The following day, the 26th, Charles cabled to Kaiser Wilhelm: "I have made and unalterable resolve to seek a separate peace and an immediate armistice within the next 24 hours".¹⁸⁶ On October 27 Andrassy sent a note to Wilson seeking a separate peace. "In reply to the note of President Wilson to the Austro-Hungarian Government dated October 18 of this year, with regard to the decision of the President to take up with Austria-Hungary separately the question of armistice and peace, the Austro-Hungarian Government has the honour to declare that it adheres both to the previous declarations of the President and his opinion of the rights of the peoples of Austria-Hungary, notably those of the Czecho-Slovaks and the Yugo-Slavs, contained in his last note. Austria-Hungary having thereby accepted all the conditions which the President had put upon entering into negotiations on the subject of armistice and peace, nothing, in the opinion of the Austro-Hungarian Government, longer stands in the way of beginning the negotiations. The Austro-Hungarian Government therefore declares itself ready to enter, without waiting for the outcome of other negotiations, into negotiations for a peace between Austria-Hungary and the Entente states and for an immediate armistice on all the Austro-Hungarian fronts and begs President Wilson to take the necessary measures to that effect."¹⁸⁷

The formulation of the note asking for a separate peace reveals that the Monarchy's leaders eventually acknowledged the right of the Czechoslovaks and the South Slavs to independence, although they were still cherishing some hope that they might circumvent it somehow or other in the course of future developments. The break-up of the Monarchy, however, was an accomplished fact in no time. On October 28 there was a large-scale revolutionary demonstration in Prague, as

¹⁸⁵ *Krieg*, Vol. VII, p. 596.

¹⁸⁶ Its text see *Glaise-Horstenau*, *op. cit.*, pp. 356-357.

¹⁸⁷ O. Rubint: *Az 6sszeomlás* (The Collapse), p. 309.

a result of which the National Council of Prague declared the formation of the Czechoslovak state and the seizure of power.¹⁸⁸ On October 30 the Slovak National Council proclaimed in Turócszentmárton that they had joined Bohemia. On October 29 the Sabor in Zabreb resolved that Croatia was part of the sovereign state of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. In Lemberg the Ukrainians of Galicia declared themselves separate from Austria on October 31.

The new Austrian government formed under Lammasch on October 26, which had made its debut as the government of the entire Cis-Leithania, accepted these events and resigned.¹⁸⁹ The German-Austrian Provisional National Assembly made up of the German-Austrian deputies of the Reichsrat back on October 21, declared themselves to be in power over the German Austrian territories of the Monarchy and next day a German-Austrian government was formed under Renner claiming authority over these areas. The Austrian part of the empire was thus fully dissolved.

Croatia's secession from Hungary was also an accomplished fact. The multinational country of Hungary began disintegrating.

THE HADIK CABINET AND THE REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY

After the emergence of the National Council, the plan to form a new government with the predominance of the old guard had to be discarded. They had to look for politicians nearer to the lower strata who had never been in top position before and who could be used as figureheads to disguise the maintenance of the old *status quo*. Károly Huszár, and István Nagyatádi Szabó emerged in the forefront, on whom the National Council had also counted. Hadik was singled out for the premier's chair.

The monarch wavered. On the 27th he received Károlyi again, and upon his request Oszkár Jászi, Garami, and Kunfi. He may even have entertained the idea of appointing Károlyi. But he left for Vienna without coming to a decision.

When the word spread that the ruler had not appointed Károlyi premier, a massive demonstration was staged on October 28 to see the government of the National Council take office. The revolutionary masses wanted to march on the castle to express their desire to Archduke Joseph. The king, who had returned to Vienna, sent the archduke to Budapest to resume talks on his behalf as "homo regius". Disobeying orders, Lukachich's soldiers cleared the way for the demonstrators heading for the castle. The policy, however, opened fire on the demonstrators

¹⁸⁸ *Plaschka*, p. 260.

¹⁸⁹ *Mamatey*, pp. 339-340.

on the Chain Bridge and launched a mounted attack against the dense rows of people. Three people were killed and some 70 injured. The "Battle of the Chain Bridge" was the prelude to the revolution.

The next day, on October 29, Archduke Joseph appointed Hadik in the name of the ruler as prime minister. The appointment of the Hadik cabinet made it impossible for the National Council to rise to power with the consent of the old possessors of power. Yet the National Council did not invite revolution. They kept hoping that those still in power would make up their minds and surrender their posts. They wished to wait this out and tried to pacify the rebellious masses. "The masses were waiting for action", Károlyi wrote, "and kept demanding it, while we on top wanted to see a peaceful development... It demanded superhuman efforts from the National Council to hold back the sailors who wanted to open fire from their monitors on the palace of the archduke and the ministries."¹⁹⁰ At the same time the National Council committed itself to the revolution and thus the masses had trust in it.

On October 30 the revolution broke out. The streets of Budapest overflowed with revolutionary people. They freed from the transit prison the political prisoners and the detained members of the Soldiers' Council from the gaol of the Honvéd court. The workers set up revolutionary organizations in the factories. The Soldiers' Council arrested Military Governor General Várkonyi and was ready to occupy the military establishments. Lukachich had no soldiers to obey him. "The best troops," he wrote in his memoirs, "mutinied and refused to use their weapons."¹⁹¹ The soldiers who tore off the insignia of the Monarchy from their caps, replacing it with an aster, marched to the headquarters of the National Council in the Astoria Hotel and took their oath to the National Council. The revolutionary masses prevented two reserve companies from leaving for the front at Keleti Railway Station. The soldiers despatched to the front joined the revolution.

During the night of the 30th, the revolutionary soldiers seized the main post office, the telephone centre, the police headquarters, the railway stations, etc. under guidance of the Soldiers' Council. The Social Democratic Party had leaflets printed the same night and delivered them at dawn to the workers of the capital:

"The revolution is on!

Workers! Comrades!

Now it is your turn! No doubt the counter-revolution will attempt to regain

¹⁹⁰ Károlyi, pp. 479, 485.

¹⁹¹ G. Lukachich: *Magyarország megcsonkításának okai* (The Causes of the Dismemberment of Hungary), Budapest 1932, p. 131.

power. You must show that you sympathize with your fellow soldiers. To the streets! Put down your tools!"¹⁹²

The workers walked out in the morning of October 31 and poured into the streets. They occupied the Maria Theresia Barracks. The immense and determined masses brought victory to the revolution. The bloodless revolution passed sentence over the old regime, but it only became bloody in reaction to the epitome of the old regime: a group of armed soldiers shot Count István Tisza in his mansion on October 30.

THE CAPITULATION

On the night of the 26th Italian and British units established several bridge-heads on the left bank of the Piave after and during heavy artillery shelling and coverage and extended them the following day. On October 29 the Italian offensive broke through the Monarchy's defense line at several points. Teams of the disintegrating army retreated in disarray, plundering as they went.¹⁹³ This made Vienna order that the armistice commission formerly set up should immediately contact the Italian high command without awaiting the answer to their plea for a separate peace and seek an armistice. One member of the armistice commission crossed the front-line on October 29. The Italian high command told him they were not receiving delegations for negotiations, but only for taking over the unconditional terms. On October 30 the armistice commission headed by General Weber crossed the front and reached Padova, the seat of the Italian general headquarters, on the 31st.

It was still on the same day, October 31, that the Supreme War Council of the Allies confirmed in Paris the armistice terms with Austria-Hungary. On November 1 these were handed over to Weber who signed them on November 3, having been authorized by Vienna. The convention stipulated that the Austro-Hungarian army be disarmed (with a peace-time strength of 20 divisions in arms at most), and that the territories occupied since the beginning of the war as well as certain southern areas of the Monarchy should be evacuated. The forces of the Allies gained free access everywhere and the right to occupy some strategic points. They granted 15 days to the German troops to withdraw, beyond which date their internment was to follow.¹⁹⁴ The supplementary minutes of the armistice convention decided the date on which it entered into force: 3 p.m. on November 4. The Italian general staff used this time to ensure the territory and military

¹⁹² J. Weltner: *Forradalom, bolsevizmus, emigráció* (Revolution, bolshevism, emigration), Budapest 1929, pp. 56-57.

¹⁹³ *Farkas*, p. 325.

¹⁹⁴ *Papers*, 1918. Supplement 1. The World War. Vol. I, pp. 433-435.

equipment they needed against the dissolving and homeward pouring troops of the Monarchy.

Apart from the strategic statements concerning the entire territory of the former empire and the stipulations for the joint army, the armistice convention only laid down the areas to be evacuated for the Italian sphere of interest. For the Allied forces in the Balkans which were crossing the southeastern borders of the Monarchy during these days and were pushing forward without any resistance, the armistice did not fix the line of occupation. This was later dictated to Hungary's new government by the commander of the advancing army, Franchet d'Esperey himself.

On November 11 the armistice with Germany was also concluded. The World War ended with the defeat of Germany and its allies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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- Albertini* = Albertini, Luigi: *The Origins of the War of 1914*, Vols I–III, London 1952–1957
- Andrássy* = Andrássy Gyula gróf: *Diplomácia és világháború* (Diplomacy and World War), Budapest n. d.
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- Csernoch* = *Csernoch János hercegprímás beszédei a Szt. István Társulat közgyűlésein 1911–1924* (The Speeches of Prince Pimate János Csernoch at the General Meetings of the St. Stephen Society), Budapest 1924

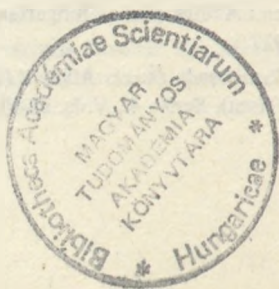
- Delegáció* = *A közös ügyek tárgyalására a Magyar Országgyűlés által kiküldött Bizottság Naplója* (Diary of the Committee Delegated by the Hungarian Parliament to Discuss the Common Affairs)
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- Deutsch-sowjetische Bez.* = *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen von der Verhandlungen in Brest-Litovsk bis zum Abschluss des Rapallovertrages. Dokumentensammlung 1917–1918*, Vol. I, Berlin 1967
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- DZA Potsdam = Deutsches Zentralarchiv, Potsdam
- Engel-Jánosi* = Engel-Jánosi, Friedrich: *Die Friedensbemühungen Kaiser Karls mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Besprechungen des Grafen Reverte mit Comte Armand*, Comité International des Sciences Historiques, Rapports IV, Wien 1965
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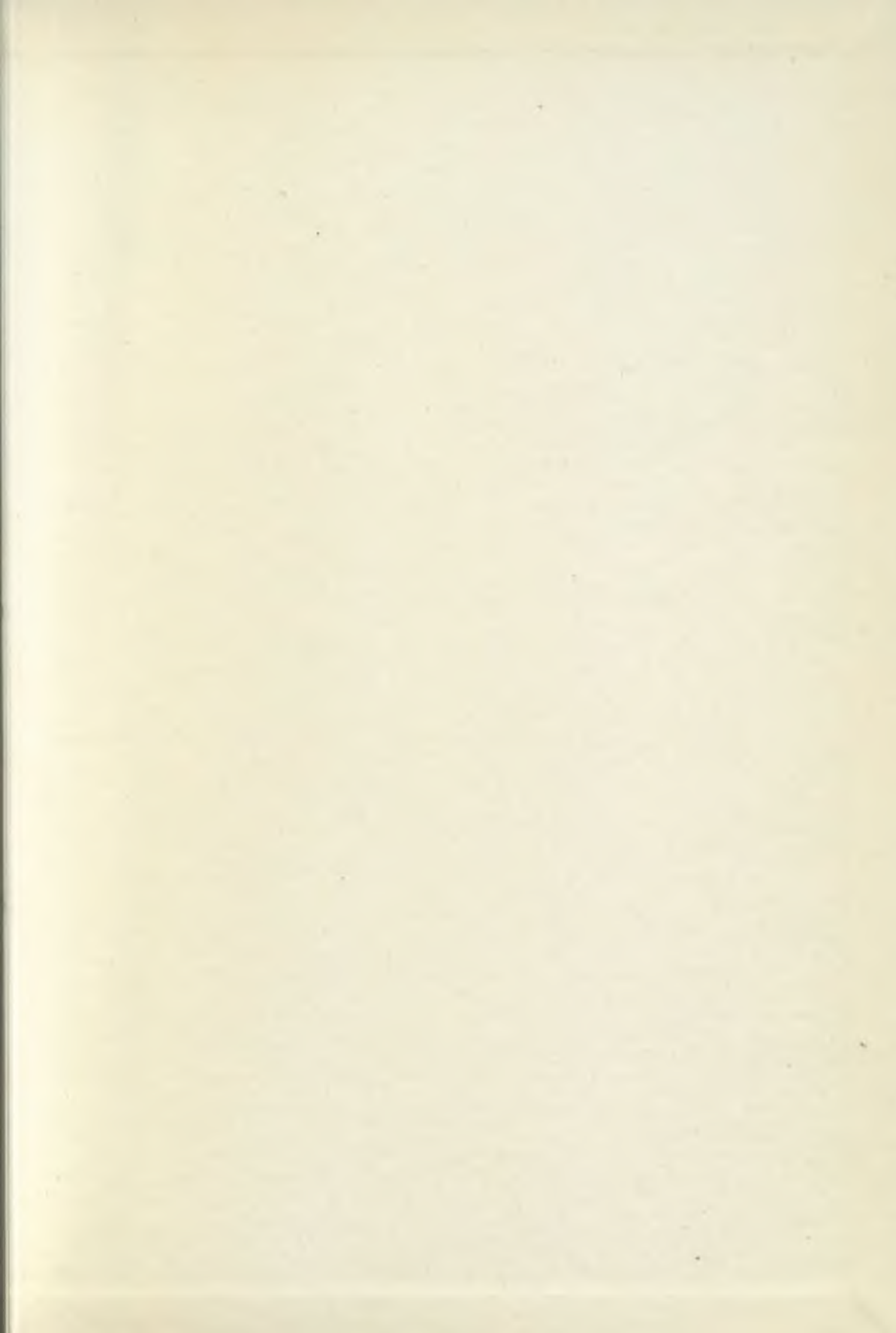
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- Hantsch = Hantsch, Hugo: *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, Vols. I-II, Graz 1963
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- OL K 467* = Országos Levéltár. *Miniszterelnökségi Iratok. A miniszterelnök félhivatalos levelezése* (National Archives. Prime Ministerial Documents. The Informal Correspondence of the Prime Minister)
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- OL Püsp. Konf. = Országos Levéltár. *Püspökkari konferenciák jegyzőkönyve* (National Archives. Minutes of the Episcopal Conferences. (Film Archives))
- OL VKM = Országos Levéltár. *Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi minisztériumi iratok* (National Archives. Documents of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education)
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- Redlich* = Redlich, Joseph: *Österreichische Regierung und Verwaltung im Weltkrieg*, Wien 1925
- REZsL Balogh = Református Egyház Zsinati Levéltára. Balogh Jenő iratai (Synodical Archives of the Reformed Church. Papers of Jenő Balogh)
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This study casts light on one of the most critical periods in the modern history of Hungary. With due attention to the events leading up to the conflict and their interrelations, it discusses Hungary's participation in the First World War, when the country formed part of the Habsburg-ruled Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The events are dealt with not only from the point of view of military history but are also interpreted — mainly from the political angle — as part of the profound crisis of the old, multi-national Hungary. The policy of the Hungarian leadership is comprehensively analyzed, as are the domestic and foreign policy ideas of Prime Minister István Tisza, on the basis of his previously unpublished writings. The different opposition trends — from the gentry opposition through the democratic groupings co-ordinated by Mihály Károlyi to the socialist movements — are also scrutinized.

The book lays special stress on the changes and developments in the nationality question during the war itself.

The author expertly and evocatively presents the deepening crisis of Hungarian society at this time, a society heading for disintegration and revolution.

The study is based primarily on his own archival research but also draws on works by Hungarian and foreign historians, as well as on memoirs. With its easy, readable style, it deserves the interest not only of scholars and teachers of history, but also of members of the general public.