

MOMENTOUS TIMES AND ORDINARY PEOPLE: LIFE ON THE RUINS OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

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NEPOSTRANS – NAPVILÁG KIADÓ



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Momentous Times
and Ordinary People:
Life on the Ruins of
Austria-Hungary



NEPOSTRANS – Negotiating post-imperial transitions:
from remobilization to nation-state consolidation.
A comparative study of local and regional transitions
in post-Habsburg East and Central Europe
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Introduction

From 2018 to 2023, a nine-person team conducted research in the frame of the European Research Council Consolidator Grant project entitled “Negotiating post-imperial transitions: from remobilization to nation-state consolidation. A comparative study of local and regional transitions in post-Habsburg East and Central Europe” (grant agreement no. 772264) — or NEPOSTRANS for short. The present volume is an attempt to make publicly available some of the results of our research. In working on the project, we aimed to create a new synthetic narrative of how the Habsburg imperial framework was replaced by nation-states following the end of the First World War. Rather than restating the results of existing historiography, we looked in places neglected by historical works dealing with Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe during the period of post-imperial transition (1918–1923). To create an alternative to nation-centered narratives, we examined municipalities and districts and their local societies, as well as the links between them and broader contexts. This meant confronting the reality of local heterogeneity in many forms: political, social, economic, linguistic, ethnic, and even national. Further, this small-scale view on

the histories of the post-imperial transition meant that we arrived at conclusions which differ from the body of historiography written since the Empire's collapse. Our main arguments are found in the texts which comprise this book. For now, we will leave the summaries of our results for the end, and the particular arguments and details for each chapter.

So let's start by addressing the big question: Why do we need a new history in the first place?

Well, people are usually dissatisfied with the things canonical historical narratives say about the past. So one impulse is to write a new version of the narrative on a given topic. While not everyone thinks that historians only tell lies (a surprisingly popular assumption), anyone starting to explore the histories of continents, states, regions, localities, schools, families, or individuals will soon encounter missing pieces and questions waiting for answers. Perhaps more importantly, in many texts readers may find contradictions between new way of telling the past and the history they learned at school or university. Sometimes that is the result of a conscious politics of history, a "history written by the victors." Other times, it is a consequence of the basic facts that historians gave preference to certain topics and (or) that new archival materials are disclosed. History, and what is included in it and what is written about it, is therefore in constant flux. As historical research shifts its focus, new topics, perspectives, and interpretations emerge. That is a regular occurrence in the profes-

sional lives of historians, but it may not always be clear to the reading public.

One reason why we can now reconsider the end of the First World War in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe is because the region has changed in the century since 1918. Once seen as backward, underdeveloped, and even poor, a source of continental instability that was ravaged by both world wars, now these regions are firmly part of the European Union, and most of the societies there are closing the distance in material terms with the economic core of Europe. This is a very different society and audience than the one that first experienced and later listened to the history of the transition following the First World War. The generations between ourselves and our ancestors also experienced a wide array of changes in their daily lives, and those too came with new interpretations and evaluations of the past. From today's perspective, we hope the current reading public is more receptive to new approaches in professional historiography too. We hope that students, journalists, activists, teachers, and citizens interested in history will take up this challenge.

This book presents the history of the transition from imperial construct to that construct's successor states. This means that it is also a story of how power and territory came to be "national." Since this is such a common European experience, we believe that this will be a similar story to most. But since we have laid our emphasis on individual experiences, we have sought to redress a deficiency in

previously written historical works. Classical social history looked at big changes in politics and social structures, often obscuring the individuals and (implicitly) dismissing their experiences as insignificant and not representative. By reversing the usual logic, which considered individuals as mere dependents of structural changes, we have chosen to put individual experiences in the foreground. In turn, this has helped us to understand structural changes even more thoroughly. By shifting the scale of analysis to the regional and local levels, we hoped to grasp the rapid, intrusive, and often confusing transformations which people lived through (and with) in this period. In this way, we can better highlight structures obscured in existent histories, like regional economic units or professional networks. Using the individual as a starting point has helped us to analyze more closely their strategies and resources, and how they used larger social structures to their advantage. By bringing out their agency even amidst changes at every level after 1918, we highlight the different pace of transition which everyday people experienced at the local level, often differing greatly than the rate of change at the new “national” centers. More fundamentally, we point out another rhythm, a different chronology of the transition.

We narrated this new history as a team. Written under the auspices of NEPOSTRANS, the research team consisted of Gábor Egry, the Principal Investigator; Károly Ignácz and Ségolène Plyer as Senior Researchers; Elisabeth Haid-Lener, Ivan Jeličić, and Jernej Kosi as Post-doctoral

Researchers; as well as Cody James Inglis, Anikó-Borbála Izsák, and Christopher Wendt as Junior (Doctoral) Researchers. The researchers on the team were spread across Europe, based in Budapest, Florence, Ljubljana, Rijeka, Strasbourg, and Vienna. Research was further conducted in many other contexts: Baia Mare, Bratislava, Brixen, Brno, Bucharest, Budapest, Caransebeș, Cluj-Napoca, Feldkirch, Gardone Riviera, Hradec Králové, Innsbruck, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ljubljana, L'viv, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Opatija, Pazin, Prague, Rijeka, Rome, Salzburg, Satu Mare, St. Pölten, Trieste, Trutnov, Vienna, Warsaw, Zagreb, and Znojmo. To that end, the project's work was truly transnational and international, local and continental. Languages spoken and read by the team include Bosnian-Croatian-Montenegrin-Serbian (*naški*), Czech, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Slovene, and Ukrainian — in other words, almost every language in use in the Empire as well as the current languages of international academic historiography.

Starting from previously published blog posts on our project website — 1918local.eu — and using a few amusing stories in each case what we tried to do in the book is to show some features of how the process of post-imperial, post-Habsburg transition occurred at the local and regional levels. The scope of this text is not all-encompassing, and we do not intend to say that the cases we selected represent each and every specificity across the various areas of the former Empire and its successor states. We

acknowledge that not all topics and territories are covered in the same way, and some are even obviously absent. Nevertheless, the point of this volume, every chapter of which can stay alone as a quick reading is to provide a new mosaic of a generally less-known path, one that stresses process and possibilities rather than determined outcomes. We therefore invite you to take the book in your hands and use it as a starting point to rethink the history of those lands that were formerly part of the Habsburg Empire. What was new? What was inherited? Which foundations were demolished, and which were simply refurbished for new use? The histories of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe in the twentieth century are, in part, the histories of what people did with the parts of the Habsburg Empire after it had ceased to function. More generally, transitions in political and social life are fundamental to the human experience in this shared European experience, and it is only right to acknowledge the human element in that story.

*Our friends – the Swiss, Belgian,
French, Romanian, Czech, Yugoslav
ones. Local and transnational
economic networks and the fate of
Austro-Hungarian business elites*

**An inspection – with unexpected
consequences?**

As part of a Europe-wide trend, companies in the hands of non-Romanian owners in Romania since the end of the WWI were accustomed to the process called “Romanianization”. Based on often ad hoc government decrees it supposed to ensure that majority ownership of businesses would be held by ethnic Romanians. In this regard it was analogous with the nostrification process in the other successor states of Austria-Hungary.

Just as many other companies, the Lugoj Textile S.A had devised means to deal with the pressure of politics — rather successfully. Therefore, when industrial inspector Livius Faur and his companions, Nicolae Popovici from the commercial inspectorate and the auditor N. Zsivkovits entered the office of managing vice-director of the Lugoj

Textile Stock Company's Lugoj factory 5 pm on a July day in 1926, the distinguished manager of the factory, Alexander Wagner could not know that the gentlemen arriving will cause him serious headache. Faur spent the next hours with insistently requesting documents related to ownership and shareholders: registers, deposit and issuance certificates, correspondence with banks and shareholders, transfer mandates and account numbers to verify where the company's dividends were sent. As the manager's long letter written after the events testifies, Faur was well prepared for the investigation and easily overcame Wagner's objections and counterarguments. He finally proved: the real shareholders of the company were a few businessmen living in Hungary and not the distinguished Romanian Banks Marmorosch, Blank & Co respectively Banca Chrissoveloni as stated in the public official accounts. Therefore, the ownership structure did not correspond with the legal norms prescribing a minimum of 2/3 majority Romanian ownership of shares and membership in the board of directors and the supervisory board.

After Faur finished the investigation – based on his conclusions he threatened with administrative intervention – he asked Wagner, whom he had known since childhood, to show him around in the factory. While walking around and admiring the workshops and machinery, he remarked that the nationalization was done in an extremely sloppy way: it could have been arranged much more smartly, and he disclosed, that the initiator of the investigation was not

a mysterious denunciation, only a mundane an article in a business bulletin from Hungary which reported on what the Pesti Hungarian Commercial Bank (PMKB) and the Krammer brothers, who owned important textile factories in Hungary, intended to do with *their* Lugoj factory and its shares, although they only figured in the register of shareholders as minority ones. While Wagner's long report did not delve into details, Faur seemed to have advised him how best to remedy the situation.

True, Faur was one of the numerous Romanian officials – ranging from officers of the state security police (Siguranța) to government representatives (prefect) and administrative leaders (subprefect, mayors) in Caras-Severin county – who was diplomatically bribed by the textile company. They got what the company accounts called small loans, sums ranging from a few hundred to about ten thousand lei, a few months of salary of a public employee or high school teacher, accorded to private persons and even to institutions, which were rarely, if ever, repaid. Thus, one aspect of the incident was ordinary corruption, something external observers and internal critics took as almost natural for interwar Romania. Still, the encounter reveals something more important for the Romanian, and for that matter for the whole Central and Eastern European economy: Austria-Hungary's structural survival in the form of the continuous existence of its business networks. Faur was right to look for the manipulation of securities' accounts. The real owners of the textile company were the same Hun-

garian capitalists who acquired the factory in 1911 and kept it running after the city was annexed to Romania in 1919, despite the Romanian state insisting on sidelining „foreign” capitalists and replacing them with Romanian capital. Moreover, Lugoj was not an exception, rather the rule to what happened with the grandiose immediate post-war plans of Romanianizing the economy and the failure was an open secret – that is why Hungarian and occasionally Romanian economic newspapers spoke of it openly too. It is true, Faur as one of the state officials bestowed with the responsibility of supervising the execution of this policy, was part of the scheme, and corruption one of its effective tools, but hardly the most significant. What underpinned the efforts of Hungarian – and actually Viennese and German – capitalists after 1918 to salvage their business „empires” was rather the legacy of their pre-WWI expansion in Southeastern Europe and the strength and durability of their business networks fostered with local businessmen: in terms of trust involved and in terms of mutual benefits they brought.

The Pride of the city and the ballast on its budget

Not every capitalist in mid-sized cities were part of continental or global business networks before the WWI. Rather, most of local businessmen managed ventures of limited scales oriented towards local or regional customers. In prospering cities or in localities on the economic ascendance it was often enough for prosperity for a large family, providing education and advantageous marriages for the offspring. Networks were just as densely woven and efficiently used as between transnational capitalist, and local economies were just as much targeted by nationalizing politics as large foreign businesses were.

One of these prosperous locations in what was to become Northwestern Romania was the medieval mining city of Baia Mare. Its wealth was showcased in its city center, a square-shaped space, characterized by buildings with late medieval foundations and architectural elements. The entire western side, a common subject of postcards is occupied by the imposing Art Nouveau building of the István Király (or Minerul) Hotel. Its main entrance is closed, a few shops occupy some space. Despite renovation in 2005, its façade is already overgrown with lichens, the gutters are apparently dysfunctional, and more than one of the doors and windows are broken or boarded up. This isn't some post-1989 feature: the hotel, designed to be grandiose, was an intolerable burden on the city from

the start, even though the authorities considered it as a symbolic building.

Despite its medieval richness and importance as a mining town and free royal city, Baia Mare lost municipal rights in 1898 and lost prestige. A distinctively industrial site, its emerging new architectural cityscape outside the historic center fit this industrial pattern of urban development. At the end of the century Baia Mare acquired cultural significance through famous artist colony, founded in 1896. The environmental features of the city also became important at this time, as hiking gets popular among the middle class as a recreational activity.

In the 1870s a hotel was built in the city centre, to burn down in 1905. The city council intent to build an imposing, modern and decorative of Hungarian national character building, launched an architectural competition. The new, secessionist (Hungarian Art Nouveau, characterised by oriental and Hungarian folk motifs) establishment was inaugurated in 1910. It became a representative element of the cityscape and an important location of culture, replete with a symbolic meaning, which is reflected in how subsequent political regimes renamed it. Before the First World War, the hotel was named „István (Király) Szálló”, referring to Stephen I, the first king of Hungary. Although there was a dispute between the representatives of the different denominations about the name because the Catholics wanted to name it „St. Stephen’s Hotel”, the Protestants agreed only to the name „King Stephen”, and it was referred

to in various ways in the city vernacular. In the interwar period, the Hotel István was renamed Ștefan Vodă, after Stephen the Great, Voievode of Moldavia. The Romanian officials apparently wanted to find some kind of equivalent names with similar symbolic meanings, just like in nearby Satu Mare, where the Hotel Pannonia, built in similar style, became Hotel Dacia, after the Roman province that falls on the territory of Romania. (After the Second World War the Hotel from Baia Mare was renamed Minerul – eng. Miners –, to represent the working class of the city.)

It could host the largest crowd in the city in its theater hall, and the building hosted the most important social and political events. In the autumn of 1918, the local Social Democratic Party was in the building, in January 1919, the city's magistrates received here the leaders of the invading Romanian troops. The hotel hosted balls, and one of the shops was home to the Berger confectionery (Bergeráj), frequently visited by the painters of Nagybánya and an important venue for local social life.

However, the hotel was an increasing financial burden from the beginning. The city took a large loan to build it, while it was already in debt. It was very difficult to rent out the ground floor shops because local retailers could not usually afford the rent. Therefore, the wealthy citizens of the town formed a joint-stock company called the “King Stephen's Hotel Tenancy Company”, with had the city's own savings bank as the largest shareholder and supported the hotel financially.

The company's articles of association stipulated that the share capital of 100,000 crowns, would be divided equally between the municipal savings bank and the private shareholders. However, private shareholders could always exercise a majority in the general meeting. After the First World War the new city administration brought the joint-stock company under Romanian majority ownership by circumventing this rule. In 1919, as the administrative elite of the city was changed, the management of the municipal savings bank was replaced too, and the shares owned by the bank (and the city) were distributed among the new members of the saving bank's directorate, and a new board elected in February 1920.

One of the directors of the City Savings Bank replaced by a Romanian member was Vilmos Harácsek, scion of a patrician family of the city. Miksa Harácsek arrived to Baia Mare in the late 18th century, acquiring local citizenship in 1792. Family members of the next generation held the positions of the city mayor (Ignác Harácsek in 1869) and councillor (József Harácsek d. 1902). Armed with the wealth and prestige of the family the subsequent generation could easily leave behind the family trade and seek intellectual professions. Moreover, they got networked at the national level. József married his daughter Emma to a Budapest lawyer, Gusztáv Lovrich, director of the Hungarian National Central Savings Bank. Their funeral in 1916 was a real social event, even interwar Hungarian prime minister Pál Teleki sent a wreath for Emma's grave. The

younger brother László made a ministerial career as a favorite of Sándor Wekerle's and in 1913 he was appointed to be Chief Financial Adviser of the Central Directorate of Tobacco Excise. The youngest of them, Imre graduated as a lawyer and engaged in local politics as editor of a local newspaper *Nagybánya és Vidéke*. He „inherited” the council membership passing down the family too.

Among the four children of Vilmos, — eldest son of József — we find directors of the City Savings Bank (Vilmos), director of the Baia Mare Commercial Bank (Károly), wife of the city's long time mayor (Erzsébet), Mihály Makray. Despite reconfigurations in politics, the Harácseks continued to play an important role in the life of Baia Mare. Károly remained on the banks board at least until 1924, Vilmos joined the leadership of the Nagybánya Stock Savings Bank, and Harácsek Vilmos és utódai (Vilmos Harácsek and Descendants) company remained not only operational. Pál Krizsán's database, published in 1933 ranks it first among the traders of the city. According to a 1930 census of the citizens of Baia Mare, Vilmos and Károly lived at Piața Unirii, no. 18 (the old main square). They still looked towards Budapest, in 1926–27 József, son of Vilmos, attended a one-year course at the Budapest Academy of Commerce. It seems that the Harácseks could preserve their importance in the city's economic life; however, they apparently lost their political role in the interwar period.

The Harácsek's were, however, only one typical case of the transformation between political, social and material

capital. The business-political life path of Geza Hartner and his son Ferdinand also illustrates the ingenuity and adaptability of the business elites to new political and cultural realities. Although Geza Hartner was born as a son of impoverished local merchant without social and financial capital needed for more ambitious business ventures, he managed to establish himself as a highly influential political figure in the Muraszombat district. In the decade before the outbreak of war, a series of deft moves and bold decisions eventually took him from electoral agent (kortes) to the Budapest parliament. The political success gave him an opportunity to advance his economic interests at local level before the war. In South Slav state, the Hartner's social ascent came to a temporary halt. As representatives of the local Hungarian elite, they were considered suspicious and enemies of the Yugoslav state. However, through a series of transactions which could only have happened in the context of post-imperial and postwar economic restructuring the Hartners soon experienced an astonishing success. The cornerstone of their business take-off was the acquisition of a majority stake in the local savings bank Muraszombati Takarékpénztár. Being established in 1870s, the oldest bank in the province had serious liquidity and later solvency problems because of its huge stock of war loans. After the annexation of the region, the Yugoslav authorities put the »foreign« bank under state administration and later used its illiquidity for nationalisation, stabilizing the new joint-stock company and changing its name in

»Prekmurska banka«. In the mid-1920s, in a web of unusual circumstances Geza Hartner managed to acquire a majority of bank shares. Prekmurska banka turned out to be an extremely profitable institution. Due to its large local monopoly, it lent money at usurious interest rates, and Hartner, as the majority owner, used his influence on the bank's business to borrow at favorable rate and purchase forests and the Batthyány estate, the castle in Lendava, the steam mill and the brick factory. Adding to their economic influence, the Hartners became politically active. In 1933, Ferdinand Hartner was elected mayor of Murska Sobota. Finally, there were those local actors, who belonged to what became after 1918 the political elite. In Baia Mare, only those board members of the István Hotel could remain who had Romanian national credentials while they were previously embedded into the city elite. Alexandru Breban is the only one who was a founding member of the hotel — listed as Sándor Brebán — and remained on the board after 1920. Breban was a Greek Catholic priest, a dean of Nagybánya at the time, and an activist of the Romanian National Party, as well as vice-president of the Romanian National Council of Satu Mare County. Later, he was also the mayor of Nagybánya from 1929-1930. In this case, the individual career path is the interesting one — coming from a Greek Catholic priestly family and following the same career path, while being an activist in the Romanian national movement, he managed to integrate well into Hungarian institutions and the middle class of the city too.

Breban was not the sole Romanian who could use pre-1918 social prestige and position to further his career. The lawyer and mine owner Victor Pop de Băsești (in Hungarian sources, listed as illésfalvi Pap/Papp Viktor), 1873–1930/31, was mayor of the city for a short term at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s. Before the First World War, he held a position on the board of directors of the “Aurora” Savings and Loan Institute. In 1923, he was a member of the board of directors of the Baia Mare Savings Bank. His father, Alexandru Pop de Băsești, was a district court judge. The family came from Poland in the seventeenth century, and earned their noble title in the eighteenth. They were among the noble elite of neighboring Szilágy County holding elite administrative positions. Furthermore, the brother of Alexandru Pop and the uncle of Viktor, Gheorge Pop de Băsești, was an important personality of the Romanian national movement in Transylvania. Between 1902 and 1919, he was the president of the Romanian National Party, and the president of the Alba Iulia National Assembly held on December 1, 1918, at which event he declared the annexation of Transylvania by Romania. According to the 1897 edition of the Directory of the Landowners in the Kingdom of Hungary, Gheorge was a great landowner, owning an estate of over 2300 cadastral acres in Băsești/Szilágyillésfalva. This family was linked to the pre-war regional elite of Szilágy/Sălaj and Upper-Szatmár/Sătmăr through their nobility, landed property, and administrative positions, but at the

same time played an important role at the national level through the Romanian national movement.

* * *

While often assumed the opposite, the end of the Habsburg Monarchy and the creation of new states with customs boundaries and economic nationalist politics for the benefit an national capitalist elite was not an economic catastrophe, neither brought the massive loss of assets for Hungarian and Austrian owners. Specific areas close to the new borders might have felt border effects detrimental to their local economy – although their extent is hard to measure – but the most important production and financial centers remained intact. Commerce between the successor states for another decade remained most important within the external trade of the successor states while the business elites who owned and managed the economy were mostly the same: Even if not, their ascent was often the result of already being part of or integration into existing business networks. The Galați steel factory owner Max Ausnit, a long time partner of Austrian businesses was entrusted with the management of their steel and machine factories in the Banat. The Croatian banker-manager Marko Antic was the guarantee for the Viennese Bodencreditanstalt that their assets remain intact even if they renounce any other form of representation in their new Croatian Bank despite being owners of the majority of the shares.

Moreover, economic nationalism and the active use of customs as means of policy helped those who retained their property to profit from markets with more restricted access for imports than the Monarchy was. Another paradox sounding but rather logical aspect of the economic transition was the strengthening cooperation with French and Belgian partners. Despite more than four years of war and ravaging Belgium by the German occupiers, economic ties between partners from before 1914 – often fostered through common endeavors in the Ottoman Empire – remained intact and operable after the armistice. The Wiener Bankverein for example used their French, Belgian and Swiss friends – as they called them in the minutes of the meetings of their directors – to convert their branches in new banks in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Significant shares of the Hungarian General Credit Bank (Magyar Általános Hitelbank) were bought by French and Belgian partners and their representative on the bank's board of directors, Ernest Weyl became a key figure of the electrical industry in Southeastern Europe. Not coincidentally, as the General Credit Bank was the most important owner of the Constantinople Tramways and Electricity Company since 1913 together with French and Belgian partners.

But partners from the Entente countries was never enough to stabilize economic positions. Local contacts and ties from before 1918 mattered just as much. These partners navigated local politics, sought out profitable

businesses and employed the managers of the old firms. However, this general tendency of continuity in the economy did not preclude much more radical changes locally, especially in cases when certain business almost entirely relied on public money for their operation. The King Stephen Hotel was one such institution which was, through the complete change of the administrative and political elite brought under the control of this new elite group – just as much unable to turn it into a profitable enterprise as the old one. But the private sector did not change so radically, and the businesses which leased the shops in the building or rented the whole edifice were the same which operated there before 1918.

The fate of the Harácsek's – which is not dissimilar to the fate of many families of local economic elites in Czechoslovakia, Galicia or Yugoslavia, exemplifies this trajectory. Their private business still flourished in the 1930s despite attempts of Romanian governing parties to favor ethnic Romanian entrepreneurs, and similar non-Romanian businesses in Transylvanian cities often got lucrative orders from local governments, but they lost their political role in the city almost completely.



László Tisza: "mindig
felixgat az
Új Nemzedék
igazsága!"



“Dangerous Riots” in the “hot summer” of 1917 – rising labour movement and urban – rural conflict during and after the First World War

Flour coupons have not been distributed in Erzsébetfalva for two weeks. The dissatisfaction of a population left without flour erupted in a dangerous riot this morning. Towards nine o'clock in the morning, four or five thousand people, mostly women, marched along Kossuth Lajos Street and set up in front of the village hall. They demanded flour and bread from the prefecture, then hurled a shower of stone at the building and broke the windows of the office of village mayor Aladár Matkovics and chief notary Samu Szántó. From here they went to the private homes of the two foremen and besieged them. In her distressed situation, mayor Matkovics' wife fired twice out of the window, but the shots didn't hurt anyone. The gendarmerie arrived in front of the town hall and the state police also showed up, but they did not use force and tried to calm the insurgents with a nice word.

(Zavargás Erzsébetfalván a liszt miatt [Flour Riot in Erzsébetfalva], Világ, 07.08.1917, 13.)

So reported a Budapest opposition newspaper on the hunger demonstration of August 6, 1917, which took place in Erzsébetfalva, a settlement adjacent to the Hungarian capital. In the twenty years since the village had been founded, its population grew exponentially: in 1910, the suburban settlement exceeded 30,000 inhabitants, and, thanks to a wartime boom in the military industry, it rose to 42,000 by 1917. (The large-scale munitions factory of Manfréd Weiss operated in the neighbouring locality of Csepel.) The most populous group among the inhabitants, similar to other agglomerations around Budapest, was industrial workers. As such, the supply of food and other public goods for them and their families became the main local problem in the wartime shortage economy.

The food situation became a permanent and thorny issue during the assemblies of the local representative body since 1915. Initially, the food supply was provided by private traders, but in the wake of some abuses and growing dissatisfaction among the inhabitants, the distribution of flour was taken over by the suburban village itself in the summer of 1916. However, the activities in the official storehouses drew heavy criticism from one of the local newspapers, which wrote about back-room deals, official arbitrariness, and rude service.

In 1917, initiated by local complaints, several formal investigations were launched into supply matters in Erzsébetfalva. In March 1917, a group of women from Erzsébetfalva approached the head of the National Office

of Public Food Supply (NOPFS) to say that they and their “starving children” had not received the food they deserved; they had complained in vain to the local leaders, who rudely rejected them in turn. The letter requesting the intervention of NOPFS was signed by 50 women. According to the summary of the District Chief Magistrate of Kispest, who was instructed to investigate (Erzsébetfalva belonged to the Kispest District administratively), “the complaints were essentially justified” and the supply was indeed significantly worse in Erzsébetfalva than in the capital. People therefore blamed their local authorities, while the chief magistrate considered it more of a systemic problem that should be resolved by NOPFS. In June, a local factory under military command forwarded the female workers’ complaint to the Hungarian Ministry of Defence. The complaint centred on milk distribution problems (e.g., fraud, circumvention of price ceilings, long queues, and favouritism), but according to an accompanying letter from the factory board, food could hardly be obtained in the village and a remedy was requested. At the end of July, the women of Erzsébetfalva personally went to the NOPFS headquarters in the capital to complain that it had not been possible to get flour in the village for weeks, a fact which was confirmed by the District Chief Magistrate of Kispest.

Thus, an open demonstration took place in Erzsébetfalva in early August, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, when a desperate crowd of several thousand peo-

ple – mostly women and young people – threw stones at the village hall and at the houses of the local leaders. The police eventually restored order but did not treat the protest as a police issue, but rather a social affair, and essentially acknowledged that the protesters, who demanded flour, were right. The village, however, was still unable to obtain flour, so the chief of the Budapest State Police put himself in charge of the case and asked for the assistance of the voluntary, social democratic General Consumer Cooperative (GCC). Finally, a solution was reached, wherein the labour cooperative would take over food supply and distribution for the entire population of the large working class village, Erzsébetfalva. The agreement initially covered only the distribution of flour, but then gradually extended to a growing list of commodities. According to press reports, not only was the service better and faster in the cooperative's stores, but the food supply also improved: the cooperative was able to provide some supplies from its stocks when central allocations had not been delivered on time. The success of the GCC in public food supply also contributed to the strengthening of the social democratic movement in the second half of the war, and not only in the outskirts of Budapest, but nationally.

The demonstration proved to be successful, to which several factors contributed. First, the event took place after the fall of Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza in May 1917, when a new government came to power promising internal reforms. This resulted in a reduction in the scale

of censorship, so the demonstration could be reported on in detail by both local and national papers. By publicizing the problem, authorities were pressured to resolve the problem in a quick and meaningful way. Second, after the change in government, the old police chief of the capital resigned and his successor immediately tried to prove that — in his own words — he “would work for the people suffering the most during the war.” Several of his first directives in the capital concerned public services: he tried to reduce queues, imposed new rules on the distribution of goods, and acted against the rude behaviour of vendors. Since the authority of the Budapest State Police extended to Erzsébetfalva as well, the new police chief could play an active role in defusing the situation and solving the food supply problem. Finally, it is also important to mention that in the summer of 1917 the Social Democrats, although still as an extra-parliamentary party, became supporters of the new government. (This situation lasted only for a short time, because the new prime minister following István Tisza resigned at the end of August and the Bolshevik takeover in Russia in autumn led to restoration of tougher wartimes restrictions in Hungarian internal politics.)

Thus, in the summer of 1917 it was not so surprising that an official person asked for a social democratic organization to fulfil a public function. Following the intervention of the police chief, the municipality and local administration no longer had the opportunity to refuse assistance,

which was then approved by the traditional county leadership as well.

This local story is a good example of the processes of social transformation taking place in the areas outside of the Hungarian capital during World War I, particularly in industrial centres, like Erzsébetfalva, that made a ring on the outskirts of Budapest. In the field of public supply, the opinions, complaints and needs of the residents had to be taken into account to a greater extent as the war raged on. At the same time, the role of political action on the street, and the corresponding questions over who controlled the streets, became more and more important. That was the case not only in the outskirts of the capital, but in Budapest itself, which had a better food supply situation and where, as will be seen later, in 1917–1918, large labour processions and demonstrations represented pre-revolutionary situations in some respects.

* * *

One week after the hunger demonstration in Erzsébetfalva, on 13 and 14 August 1917, Pilsen/Plzeň, one of the main industrial cities of the other half of the Habsburg Monarchy, was shaken by street riots. The crowds, mainly women, waiting for food rations were usually controlled by the armed forces, but when one of the soldier tried to apprehend a malcontent woman, the anger of the mass erupt spontaneously, leading to the largest wave of pro-

tests and violence that Pilsen had ever known. The crowd of several thousand protesters began looting and then went to the private apartment of the mayor of the city, where they broke several windowpanes. Soldiers and policemen tried to curb the violence, but were only able to disperse the crowd temporarily, as people gathered again elsewhere and continued looting. In essence, the lower-class working poor from the industrial suburbs temporarily occupied the middle-class streets of the city centre, symbolically challenging the reigning social order.

The next day, some workers from the Škoda arms factory and railway employees joined the riots, which had already spread to the local train station. With the main western Bohemian railway junction threatened with collapse, it was no longer a local riot and the Austrian authorities resorted to the ultimate instrument of declaring martial law. Finally, order was managed to restore in Pilsen on the evening of August 14, with the deployment of substantial regular military forces.

The riot in Pilsen was not isolated: in 1917 the authorities recorded more than 250 “hunger demonstrations” in the Bohemian lands, and the number remained similarly high in the war year of 1918. However, the “hot summer” of 1917 was not only marked by mass street unrest, but also by the widespread wave of strikes that swept through practically all of the industrial centres. The largest one took place in Pilsen Škoda works, one of the main arms factories in the entire monarchy, at the end of June and beginning

of July 1917. Almost all of the 40,000 workers of the plant participated in the strike, which completely paralysed production for a week. The well-organised collective action blurred the internal dividing lines between workers, so that men and women, old and young, skilled and unskilled, and those speaking different languages (Czech, German, Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian) took part together in the peaceful protest and in the meetings that were repeated every day. In the face of this force, the factory management, the local administration and the central government were unable to do anything and were finally obliged to fulfil most of the demands (a significantly increase in wages, a reduction in working hours, an improvement in food supplies) and at the same time to provide the guarantee of immunity to all of the strike participants. Social democratic MPs also played a role in the negotiations and the peaceful settlement, as recognised representatives of the workers.

* * *

1917 was thus a turning point in the war hinterland of the Habsburg Monarchy in many respects. The problems of food supply and other issues in urban and industrial areas did not begin at that time, but in the preceding years the number and intensity of demonstrations and strikes had been low, and the authorities had managed to keep the situation under control. However, the events in Russia in February/March 1917 and the fall of the Tsarist

regime led to the dissatisfaction that had built up in the previous years to erupt in various parts of the Monarchy. The response of the state authorities was not necessarily uniform, not least because of the different systems of war control within the Empire: in Cisleithanian Austria a military administration was introduced, while in the Kingdom of Hungary, despite the wartime laws, the powers of the traditional public administration were basically retained. In Hungary, moreover, the previously mentioned development in domestic politics and the change of government in May and June 1917 led to a loosening of the state's power of restriction and control over society. However, it has become clear everywhere that the authorities were not necessarily in control of the situation and in some places they were no longer or ineffectively trying to suppress protests only by force. The increasing number and scale of street demonstrations and factory strikes show the collapsing wartime "order" and the crumbling social consensus.

The year of 1917 also saw the rise of labour movements which challenged the social democratic leaders, who had hitherto pursued moderate policies, to deal with the increasingly radical masses of workers. This process is illustrated by a symbolic event, the celebration of Workers' Day during the war. Workers and their leaders initially accepted the wartime restrictions: in 1915 and 1916, commemorations were held only in closed places on the evening of the first of May or on the Sunday before. In 1917, however, the wartime exceptional laws were inval-

idated: on 1st May, a Tuesday, the Social Democrats held public mass demonstrations in Budapest, protesting for peace and democracy. The next day they organised the first political warning strike during the war, demanding the extension of suffrage.

Although there had already been several labour protests in Hungary in 1916, the number of strikes increased sharply from May 1917, as in the Bohemian lands, and spread to strategically important locations such as arms factories, mining firms, railway machine factories. Another major feature of the strong wave of protests was the large participation of new, previously less or non-organised groups of employees such as unskilled and young workers, apprentices, clerical workers and women. Most of the demands were for an increase in wages, an improvement in food supplies and a reduction in long working hours.

Parallel to the economic movements, a rising broad opposition movement for the extension of restricted suffrage eventually led to the resignation of Prime Minister István Tisza. In June 1917, a symbolic event marked the new era when, instead of graciously receiving the workers who had presented their complaints, the new prime minister himself went to the suburban headquarters of the extra-parliamentary Social Democratic Party to negotiate his reformist programme and to gain the support of the workers' representatives. And in the more liberal atmosphere around and after the change of government, strikes and mass street demonstrations became accepted as

a means of exerting pressure for labour claims. The Social Democrats took politics to the streets, organising several large-scale demonstrations in the capital with a similar choreography: at the end of working hours, the masses marched in several separate processions from the factories in the suburbs to the inner, bourgeois districts, symbolically occupying the centre of the city.

The number of members of social democratic trade unions increased sharply in 1917, from 55,000 to 215,000. The “rural” (i.e. not in and around Budapest) organisations were revived, while the number of women members increased sixfold in a year to almost 50,000. Why did masses join the various social democratic organisations? It was the daily experience that belonging to the organised workers’ movement brought serious, practical benefits in the most important areas of everyday life. In the workplace, the trade-union members could get higher wages, better conditions, more security. Through their consumer cooperatives, they had cheaper and more secure access to food and other goods. From the autumn of 1917, housing was one of these areas: the social democratic Tenants’ Association also sent members to the rent committees that decided disputes between owners and tenants. There were also many other bodies, such as employment agencies, in which Social Democrats were involved as political-expert-interest representatives.

All of this required the – partly forced – consent of the ruling elite and the weakening of the previous strong

restrictions. As skilled industrial workers became indispensable in the war economy, the labour question was treated less and less as a mere police affair and more as a social issue. As can be seen from the story of Erzsébetfalva, police chiefs and administrative officials, or in other cases military officials, were increasingly understanding of workers' complaints and dissatisfaction. And fear of the labour movement increasingly influenced political decisions.

* * *

The strengthening of the workers' movement during the war, and the greater social and political role of workers' organisations and parties after the war, was of course not a Hungarian but an international process, even if it took place in different ways and under various circumstances in each place. The Social Democrats became a founder party of both the Austrian and Czechoslovak new republic, winning a relative majority in the first post-war democratic national elections and emerging as a governmental actor. At the same time, Social Democracy could not claim to be the sole representative of workers' interests any more. The dividing line between reformism and revolutionarism became sharper in the second half of the war, and this disaggregation led to the creation of separate communist parties in both new countries: in Austria immediately at the end of the war, and in Czechoslovakia a few years later, in 1921.

In Hungary, in the political deadlock of the war year of 1918, the Social Democrats remained an opposition force, but their support continued to grow. After the collapse and the revolution at the end of October 1918, thanks to the new freedom of association, further masses joined the social democratic movement: by the end of the year, the number of trade unionists had risen to over 700,000. This movement formed the most important and organised social base of the revolutionary events of 1918–1919 in Hungary. Especially since this base was concentrated mainly in and around Budapest, the political centre of the still agrarian country. Meanwhile, the movement itself became much more heterogeneous, from socialists still insisting on democracy to increasingly radicalised groups, while the communists who promoted a newer revolution had already established separate party at the end of 1918. In the post-war conditions of the socially and territorially disintegrating old Kingdom of Hungary, the political regime changed with the autumn revolution of 1918, in which the Social Democrats became a substantial governmental actor, further in March 1919, with the proclamation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which was ruled by the Communists and a large part of the Social Democrats. However, after the fall of this short-lived regime in August 1919 – mainly due to the intervention of Romanian forces – a new, counter-revolutionary, authoritarian regime was established from the autumn of 1919, in which the Hungarian Social Demo-

crats had only a restricted, oppositional role, while the Communists could not operate legally.

* * *

The story of Erzsébetfalva also highlights another characteristic of the wartime period: how the ordinary issue of providing food, or more broadly goods, became a primary public affair during and after the war. Free market processes were increasingly replaced by public provision, which meant a politically controlled, bureaucratically rationalised handling – collection and distribution – of scarce stocks. However, under the conditions of a wartime shortage economy, sufficient food supply proved to be an essentially unsolvable task, especially in the larger cities (such as starving Vienna or Budapest), which caused serious social conflicts.

What the riots in Erzsébetfalva do not show is that the main reason for the food shortages in urban-industrial areas was the war, and the fact that a large part of the already decreasing stocks had to be used to supply the army. The worsening food supply crisis caused conflict and scapegoating not only within the provinces of the Monarchy, but also between the two sides of the Empire. In the Austrian lands, the censored press could however voice accusations that Hungary, supposedly well supplied with food, was not sharing its stocks with Austria to a sufficient extent. On the other hand, the disappearance of some free

trade foods from the markets of the Hungarian capital was repeatedly explained in the Budapest newspapers by the argument that Austrian traders almost entirely bought up these goods from Hungarian farmers, because they could sell them at a high profit in Vienna.

The end of the war was not the end of the rationing public provision, the food ration system survived in many of the successor states, because the transition from war to peace was a difficult and long process. Food riots went on as well. So it was even in alpine, agricultural North Tyrol; demonstrations related to food shortages and rationing had broken out in its urban areas — primarily in Innsbruck — already in the middle years of the war. By 1918, a failing provisioning system and declining currency values led to hunger strikes and work stoppages in district centres across the province. The most serious outbreak of urban unrest, however, actually occurred more than a year after the official end of the war. On December 4 and 5, 1919, what began as a female deputation delivering demands over failing food supplies and poor working conditions to the provincial government turned to riots throughout the city centre. Bands of demonstrators broke into storehouses, cafes, and Catholic institutions, which were rumoured to be hoarding food. After the police and local city guard failed to restore order, the small Italian occupation force in Innsbruck was even called in to quell the rioters. Police inspectors and most of the press concluded that the real cause of the riots was indeed frustration over

the miserable post-war material circumstances. Although the demonstrations brought immediate relief in the form of food deliveries from abroad, they were less successful in bringing sympathetic attention to the demands and needs of working women and men. Rather, rumours swirled of (foreign) communist agitation and to many conservative elites, the unrest confirmed Innsbruck as a threatening centre of foreign revolution that was somehow distinct from the rest of the province.

The urban-rural cleavage, or in other words the conflict of interests between food consumers and producers, was thus one of the major political tensions of the post-war period – as illustrated by a 1920 Austrian election poster of the Social Democrats in Austria (see picture 2). In Hungary, the previously mentioned proletarian dictatorship of 1919, which was the result of a specific situation, can be interpreted in a certain sense as an attempt by urban food consumers to dominate the country. After its fall, food supply remained a serious problem and however the new right-wing regime thought about industrial workers, it maintained the public supply for them and other socially important groups like the civil servants until the mid-1920s.





48. SZÁM. 1917. (64. ÉVFOLYAM.)

HÓTSY PÁL.

BUDAPEST, DECEMBER HÓ 2.

Beszámítójai: öszi IV. Varságy-száma II. Kiadókörlet: IV. Fajton-száma 4.	Részlet- ára 60 fillér.	Előfizetési árak:	Évesi: 60 Féléves: 30 Negyedéves: 15	Kétszázötvenkötven és pontosan öszi kiadások: székelyi és másoké.
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A FETNYÖLÖ FÖRÖK A VÁROSLIGETI PÁRKOLÓK ELŐTT.

A SZOCIÁLDÉMOKRATA PÁRT NOVEMBER 25-IKI BÉKÉTUNTÉSE BUDAPESTEN.

Against the “Law of Nature”: Daylight Savings Time and the Local Origins of Regionalism in Austrian Tyrol

This childlike aping of official measures, that perhaps in foreign states might prove themselves to be necessary and useful, testifies to the Viennese government’s fervor for issuing orders without having itself come to clarity over the consequences of these nonsensical decrees. Hereby the Viennese government renders by itself the best proof of the incompetence and intolerability of its governance.

The whole population therefore rightfully demands to finally be released from red Vienna, which is only the playground of selfish and all-powerful soldiers’ and workers’ councils, which find their only purpose in life in wrangling the modest, virtuous, industrious, and fatherland-loving people of the Alpine lands in the bindings of egoism, in order to erode their beggarly existence through the spirit of Bolshevism to the point of insufferableness.

With these bitter words, Josef Alois Probst, the mayor of the Tyrolean town of Landeck, in the Upper Inn Valley, harangued what he perceived to be the callous overreach

of the Austrian central government in late March 1920. Charges of unjustified external intrusion into internal Tyrolean affairs were of course nothing new to the province's politics. Under the Habsburg Monarchy, a sense of Tyrolean particularity was fostered that was based on the protection of certain rights and privileges. Historically, these rights included the exclusive protection of the Catholic faith, control over its provincial school system, and limitations on the Tyrolean militia being deployed beyond the defense of its own borders. These impulses for maintaining a measure of autonomy for the crownland under the monarchy carried over after North Tyrol tentatively joined the new Republic of German-Austria that was proclaimed in November 1918.

Of course, while Tyrol may present a pronounced case when it comes to regional particularism in the monarchy, it was not unique. The Habsburg Empire is well known for its patchwork character, having comprised a collection of kingdoms, principalities, duchies, and other largely "historical" units. Even after the constitutional experiments in the 1860s, when a collection of crownlands (in Austria) and counties (in Hungary) simplified this administrative diversity, much of the historical character of these new units remained. At least in Austria, the new crownlands were built out of these older units. In a more regulated form, these new crownlands carried on the traditions — and the claims to rights and privileges — of the older provinces.

These 17 Austrian crownlands, outfitted with provincial diets and constitutions, became key sites of political mobilization and contestation within the monarchy. On the one hand, the crownlands, based on historical regions, continued to be points of loyalty for their citizens — whether Bohemians, Carniolans, Istrians, or Galicians — as they increasingly provided life-improving services and, at points, sought to better their position within the empire. On the other hand, especially by 1900, many of the crownlands, most of which were inhabited by a multilingual population, were contested by mass political movements, including nationalist parties. Besides loyalty to emperor, the loyalties to these other points — to a historical region and a nation that crossed historical borders — could be at the same time reinforcing, conflicting, and divisive.

German- and Italian-speaking Tyrol provides a good example. In the predominately German-speaking northern two-thirds, political elites developed a discourse on “German Tyrol” that claimed the region as exclusively “German,” while still maintaining its regional particularity. In the predominately Italian-speaking southern third, where there was little identification with the traditions of Tyrol, the notion of a sub-regional Italian space of “Trentino” gained traction. Thus, within the crownland of Tyrol, there developed *two* different regionalisms, which both overlapped *and* maintained a sense of distinction from a particular nationalist movement. Like many other forms of identification, these Habsburg regionalisms outlived the empire.

To turn back to Mayor Probst's harsh words, however — what exactly was the measure that the Landeck administration was protesting in 1920? Was the province truly being governed by Viennese “councils”? Were Tyrolean customs wantonly violated? In truth, despite the charged language present in the petition, its authors were protesting something much more mundane. They were protesting the annual reintroduction of daylight savings time, or *Sommerzeit*.

Daylight savings time was first introduced midway through the First World War by the core Central Powers, the German Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy, to save energy and maximize the efficiency of workers. Accordingly, from May 1 through September 30, 1916, the clocks were moved forward an hour to increase daylight during waking hours.

Across parts of Austria-Hungary (and Germany, for that matter), the new measures were often met with skepticism, confusion, and disapproval. Whereas commentators grasped parts of the rationale behind *Sommerzeit*, they wondered if the benefits gained from moving the clocks forward were realized in practice. Further, there was a perception that disruptions to such a basic thing as time, especially during a destabilizing war, might only further increase everyday hardships for normal people.

An article in the liberal *Innsbrucker Nachrichten* that appeared in late September 1916 to mark the end of the first period of *Sommerzeit* made these points in arguing

for a review of the costs and benefits of the clock-changing measures. As the author explained, the point of *Sommerzeit* was first and foremost to win an extra hour of daylight for workers. By starting and finishing earlier during the summer, it was hoped that they could make better use of natural light, preserving fuel and lighting materials.

However, the paper found the measure's results left much to be desired. If in high summer the change offered workers more natural light, in September artificial light was needed for the mornings. *Sommerzeit* also apparently caused problems in schools, where younger children were going "sleepily" to their classrooms. Most worrisome were the complaints of farmers, who saw *Sommerzeit* as the "violation of the naturally ordered, astronomical time." As the article explained, farmers were used to beginning work at a certain hour and continuing until dark. Moving this starting hour earlier created a longer workday and disrupted the normal rhythms on the farm. For instance, cows that, following the "law of nature," were accustomed to being roused later became ornery and refused to be milked.

Then there was the question of how far *Sommerzeit* had been implemented across Tyrol in 1916. In the Eastern Puster Valley (*Pustertal*), it was reported that farmers had held to their old hours through the summer and greeted October 1 as the return to the "good, old time." Parish priests had also continued to hold masses at the usual hour, meaning one hour later than usual with the new *Sommerzeit*. The paper concluded by admitting "that in our area

the voices of rejection [of *Sommerzeit*] far exceed those of praise.”

Despite the apparent dissatisfaction that it called forth, particularly in rural areas of Austria, *Sommerzeit* was renewed by the imperial government in 1917 and 1918. With the end of the war and the monarchy’s collapse, it might be expected that this measure would be abandoned. However, by cabinet decree of the new Republic of German-Austria, *Sommerzeit* was reintroduced on April 28, 1919, to last until September 29. By the time it came into effect, however, some provinces, such as Carinthia, had already decided that they would take a different course.

In Austrian Tyrol — which was split from Italian-occupied South Tyrol and Trentino at the end of the war — local mobilization against *Sommerzeit* also began early. A letter published in the *Tiroler Bauern-Zeitung*, organ of the powerful Tyrolean Farmers League, pronounced the coming first day of changed clocks — originally set for April 1 — as the “general day of fools” (*Allerweltsnarr-entag*) and wrote how the common people were referring to *Sommerzeit* as the “crazy time.” The municipal councils of Kitzbühel and Schwaz also complained to Innsbruck. Kitzbühel’s letter, signed by its mayor, charged that the new measures were “totally worthless” in the countryside and urged that “it was time to do away with this memento left over to us from the war.” In the end, Austrian *Sommerzeit* in 1919 lasted a little more than a week before it was retracted by Vienna.

News that *Sommerzeit* would return in 1920 — meaning that the “good old time” was not here to stay — brought forth an even more defensive reaction from the Tyrolean population. The municipal leaders from Landeck, who had strongly disparaged the measures as the overreach of socialist Vienna, were not alone in their displeasure over the time shift, which was to last from April 5 through September 13. A petition from Lienz in East Tyrol calling for the clocks to be turned back warned that “this remnant of the war (*Kriegsüberbleibsel*) remains among the population still from the last years a bad memory.” Further, it cautioned that while one could easily set the times for trains and appointments one hour earlier, “never...does nature allow itself to be forced into such a sham.”

Likewise, in mid-May, the municipal council of Schwaz also called for a return to the “old time.” Council members noted that a local reversion had already been made, “since from all circles of the population complaints and grievances flowed steadily in.” The petition demanded an early return to the “old time” to assuage local frictions that had resulted from *Sommerzeit*. Families with children had trouble getting them off to school, while farmers were split between the “new time” set by school and church, and the “old time” maintained in their farm labor. The district itself was split by the time change: only the more urbane Schwaz recognized *Sommerzeit*, while in the countryside the “old time” reigned — a circumstance that led to ongoing “disorder.” Echoing a common refrain, the municipal council

warned that “one should prudently not violate the laws of nature.”

A worried report from the district captain of Landeck revealed similar circumstances in the western end of Tyrol. Despite repeated admonishments, neither rural municipalities nor parish churches had set their clocks to *Sommerzeit*, and the official professed to having “no illusions” that this would change. As he wrote to Innsbruck, “the current situation, which has been brought about through [*Sommerzeit*], that only the public — better said, state — offices and institutions, such as the post, railway, etc. follow *Sommerzeit*, while all local factors (church, school, municipality, etc.) ignore it, gives occasion to numerous confusions and misunderstandings.” The municipal administration in the city of Landeck — from which Mayor Probst’s complaint originated — had already decided on April 8 (a full 3 days into *Sommerzeit*) to rescind the measure and to return the town’s official clock to its old time, apparently with the support of local factory owners. Facing a wave of public dissatisfaction, the district captain closed his report by cautioning his superiors against enforcing an obviously unpopular measure.

Meanwhile, regional politicians and the leaders of the Tyrolean provincial government had taken notice of the popular disapproval of *Sommerzeit*. Already in mid-April, Hans Peer, a member of the Tyrolean People’s Party (*Tiroler Volkspartei* – Tyrol’s Christian Social Party) introduced an emergency motion in the regional parliament (*Landtag*)

that called on Innsbruck to pressure Vienna into ending *Sommerzeit*, and appealed to the Tyrolean government to adjust its official hours back to the old time. Indeed, on May 1, 1920, provincial authorities directed a message to Austrian Chancellor Karl Renner, in which they laid out their objections to *Sommerzeit* and explained that Tyrol would soon do away with the measure on its own if the Austrian federal government did not act — a threat that was carried out on May 14. Accordingly, *Sommerzeit* in Austrian Tyrol officially ended on May 24, 1920, with the exception of clocks that regulated the state railways and the postal service.

After 1920, *Sommerzeit* did not return to Tyrol for the remainder of the First Republic. While the decision not to institute *Sommerzeit* may have been partly influenced by the negative local reaction of past years, it was also shaped by the needs of international travel and commerce. As the *Innsbrucker Nachrichten* noted in February 1921, after Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland — countries with strong transit links to Austria — had decided against changing the clocks, it made little sense for Austria to do so either. In fact, it was only in 1940, after Austria's *Anschluss* to Nazi Germany in 1938, that *Sommerzeit* was reinstated, again as a wartime measure.

Turning back to earlier times, however, these local post-war conflicts over *Sommerzeit* help to make clear some of the fault lines around (and within) Tyrol — and further Central European societies — that opened as the Habsburg

Monarchy began to split apart, and further how these were transformed in the early days of the successor states.

Opposition to *Sommerzeit* initially arose as the clock changing was perceived as befuddling wartime measure. Like the requisitions, price controls, and rationing, it was seen to primarily hurt the common people. The fact that rural farmers felt most affected and perceived *Sommerzeit* to be “against nature” itself intensified opposition to this decree “from Vienna.” However, as long as the empire and its unpopular measures prevailed, there was little that locals could do.

With the end of the war and the founding of the Republic of German-Austria, however, the context shifted. Now, *Sommerzeit* carried a dual negative connotation. On the one hand, it served as a cruel reminder of the war and of the failings of a monarchy that had dared to challenge the sacred notion of time itself. On the other hand, with Social Democrats occupying high places in the central government in Vienna, and anxieties about revolution running high in Tyrol, it became easier to see *Sommerzeit* as a “foreign” intrusion into the provinces. *Sommerzeit* therefore became a site of the emerging cultural conflict between Vienna and rural Austria, a conflict that, especially in Tyrol, melded easily with older concerns regarding provincial rights and autonomy. The fact that two sets of time came to be used — the official *Sommerzeit* for state institutions, and the “old time” for local life — tangibly demonstrated that strong regional differences existed within one

cobbled-together state. After all, rural Tyrol and Vienna were literally running on different clocks.

While the controversy over *Sommerzeit* may appear to be a minor squabble between a peripheral region and its metropolitan center, this conflict mirrored other disputes that emerged across Central Europe during the post-imperial transition. As in North Tyrol, pre-existing regional differences were not resolved with the establishment or expansion of nation states in the place of empire; rather, in many of the states that rose from the Habsburg Empire's ashes, the process of post-war reorientation reinforced a sense of regional or local difference that could trump feelings of belonging to a nation.

Looking south to Italian-speaking Trentino is again illustrative. Having already developed a sense of regional particularity in distinction to "German Tyrol" prior to 1914, the territory was incorporated into the Kingdom of Italy after the war. However, Trentino's predominately political Catholic elite and rural population quickly became alienated by the liberal character of the state that "redeemed" it. Further afield, in Transylvania, which was annexed to Romania, the refusal of the new national government in Bucharest to grant wider regional autonomies emerged as a sore point, even to those who identified as Romanian. In some cases, regionalisms emerged in territories where beforehand they were not so apparent. In newly Yugoslav Prekmurje, for example, local Slavophone elites began to promote themselves as "*Sloveni*"

or “*Slovinci*.” Used as a means of political mobilization in the context of expanded suffrage, the identifications emphasized the region’s particularity as a distinct region within Slovenia.

If in German-speaking Austrian Tyrol, as in these other cases, the salient differences were perceived in terms of rural–urban and center–periphery distinctions, in other parts of the former monarchy regional differences overlapped more clearly with nationalist claims. Efforts by German national activists to proclaim their border regions independent of the new Czechoslovak Republic — and the counter efforts of the new national government in Prague to quash these — led not only to a further sharpening of nationalist antagonisms. Short-lived “paper states” established at the end of 1918 such as “German Bohemia” and the “German Southern Moravia” also facilitated complex regional identifications among these German speakers.

Feelings of difference could also be centered on extremely small spaces. The citizens of Fiume, the Upper Adriatic “*Corpus Separatum*” within Habsburg Hungary, displayed resilient local patriotism as the city was contested by Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after the war. Though decisive elements of Fiume’s elite favored joining Italy, they sought to guarantee that the city’s privileges would be extended after joining the nation state. And the autonomist movement, which drew on local symbols and promoted independent municipal governance, continued to be a political force.

Although not all regionalisms remained so salient, many of them continued to shape individual loyalties and politics across the interwar period. Natives of Trentino increasingly came to be seen as suspect Italians due to their regionalism, especially after the fascist seizure of power from 1922 onwards. Frustration over a lack of regional autonomy helped to drive the success of the National Peasant Party in Romania, which had a strong base in Transylvania, to sweep into the national government in 1928. And German speakers' dissatisfaction with the Czechoslovak government's denial of more regional governance contributed to pushing them away from participating in state political life and towards more radical, anti-state solutions. In all these cases, regional identifications — as well as feelings of belonging to the local homeland, *Heimat*, or *patria* — remained constitutive of both politics and a sense of self. National identifications surely took on an added meaning in post-Habsburg Central Europe. But rather than thinking of themselves primarily as German Austrians, Czechs, or Romanians after 1918, many people identified first as Tyroleans, Styrians, or Carinthians; as Moravians, Silesians, or German Bohemians; and as Transylvanians, Banater, or Maramuresians.

At the same time, it is important to remember that these regional societies were not homogenous. In North Tyrol, beyond the gulf with Vienna that was widened by *Sommerzeit*, the clock changing also pulled at social cleavages within the region. Urban officials and employees had an

easier time adapting to the changes than did farmers in the countryside, and these internal differences contributed to stark urban-rural tensions within Tyrol itself. Tyrol's conservative particularism, directed against socialist Vienna, had many adherents, but not everyone identified with it.

Nevertheless, dominant versions of Tyrolean regionalism — located in the conservative, Catholic German farmer as the embodiment of the true Tyrolean — were powerful. This regionalism continued to color Tyrol's relationship with Vienna in the First Republic. Actions ranging from the regional parliament's insistence on the provisional character of its inclusion within the Austrian Republic, to Tyrol's provocative (and ultimately futile) referendum on joining Germany in April 1921, can be attributed to its regionalist streak. So too did this Vienna-opposed regionalism contribute to Tyroleans' lack of support for the republic as Austria moved from democracy to authoritarian dictatorship under Engelbert Dollfuß in 1933/34. Indeed, while the post-imperial moment is associated more with the emergence of nation states than regional entities, loyalties to territories “under the nation” were resilient, and they continued to shape local realities and high politics across Central Europe after 1918.





Tiroler! Auf!

fordert einig und geschlossen am 24. April
unseren Anschluß an das Deutsche Reich!

Für den Arbeits-Ausschuß für die Volks-Abstimmung

Der Vorsitzende:

Dr. Stumpf.

***“Monarchy or Republic,
Nation-State or Micro-State?
Central and Southeastern European
Visions of Statehood in the
First Moments of Post-Imperial
Transition, 1918–20” – State form***

Gentlemen, the republic has been declared. It is our duty to do everything as peacefully and orderly as possible, to save what can still be saved. The Entente’s troops are approaching. Let us keep watch over and secure this little piece of land which has been entrusted to us. I would ask the gentlemen to go to City Hall, where the workers’ council and the elected soldiers’ council have collected.

This is how the Hungarian-Jewish social democrat Otto Roth (Róth Ottó, 1884–1956) addressed the members of the various national councils — German, Hungarian, Romanian, and Serb — in Timișoara/Temesvár on October 31, 1918. Roth proposed the creation of a pan-national Banat People’s Council (*Bánáti Néptanács*) to unite the various national councils into one organ. This went along with the creation of the Banat Republic, a multilingual, multina-

tional experiment in regional sovereignty. While incredible from today's perspective, where the homogenizing nation-state is seen as natural and necessary, local, nationally heterogeneous experiments like this were rather typical during the collapse of the Habsburg Empire.

Partially, this had to do with the variety of revolutionary situations in the region from 1918–1919 and onward. Local contestations of imperial sovereignty could also follow non-revolutionary “official proclamations,” like Emperor Charles's last-minute idea for the federalization of the Empire in his “manifesto to the people” given in October 1918. As the Empire ceased to exert social control as autumn 1918 drew on, local actors began to seize power in villages, towns, cities, and capitals alike. The old centers of power slowly appeared much further away, even provincial, from the perspective of places like Timișoara/Temesvár, Znojmo/Znaim, or Rijeka/Fiume, each of which claimed their own sovereignty on quite different ideological bases.

These examples reveal that the transition from empire to nation-state was a contested process, and the ending not at all pre-ordained. Many varieties of political ideologies began to serve as foundations for new experiments in local, regional, or supra-national state-building. Some remained at the level of intellectual debate and future-oriented speculation. Others combined explorations in political thought with the constructive work of political practice. Abroad, the successes of the Russian February and October Revolutions in 1917 led to a proliferation of ideas in

Central Europe about the realizability of internationalist federations, dictatorships of the proletariat, or local council republics. In part, these ideas travelled by text, through telegrams, newspapers, journals, books, or pamphlets. Returning Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war held in Russian camps brought back ideas and experiences which shaped their visions of possible political futures, revolutionary or reactionary. Certainly, ideas spread verbally too, though never preserved in an archive.

In the former dual capitals of the Habsburg Empire — Vienna and Budapest — “republics” were declared in November 1918. In response, conservatives balked. The Austrian Catholic political thinker and priest Aemilian Schöpfer (1858–1936) contested this development, arguing that socialist and “freemason” ideas had infiltrated society in the guise of the conspiracy of republican statehood. But there were always exceptions: the Croatian right-wing nationalist *Stranka prava*’s first post-war party program was rather qualified as “republican!” (But perhaps this was rather a rhetorical effort to demonstrate its fundamental opposition to what it saw as a Serbian national monarchy controlling the new South Slav State.) In fact, the recurring question “monarchy or republic?” was asked over and over by a host of different political thinkers — famous, infamous, and still uncanonized — across every national and regional context in post-imperial Central and South-eastern Europe.

Likewise, questions about the seemingly fundamental relation between ‘nation’ and ‘state’ arose. Could a state with a majority nation guarantee the rights of national minorities? Would centralization or federalization best address this issue? The Hungarian sociologist and liberal socialist political thinker Oszkár Jászi (1875–1957) reflected precisely on this. The first edition of his text *The Future of the Monarchy and the Danubian United States* was published in October 1918, but had run out quickly. A second edition was commissioned, but printed with an alternative title: *The Future of Hungary and the Danubian United States*. This reflected the changed situation. At that moment, Jászi had been appointed Minister of Nationalities in Mihály Károlyi’s revolutionary cabinet in Budapest. Subsequently, Károlyi and the Hungarian National Council (*Magyar Nemzeti Tanács*) declared Hungary a republic — in fact a “people’s republic (*népköztársaság*)” — on November 16. Still, the question of whether such a state form could protect the interests of the many non-Magyar nations was left open. Ties with the Empire had been (at least rhetorically) severed in October, but imperial (or, in Hungary, royal) bureaucrats remained at their posts, and the connective institutional tissue which bound Budapest to Vienna had not been completely cut. This also meant that the legal framework which had upheld Magyar domination in the state continued. The entire system had to be reformed from the view of the Károlyi government, and in this heady revolutionary situation in October and November 1918, Jászi submitted his ideas.

Jászi called the territory of the Habsburg Empire — along with Russia and “the Balkans” — Europe’s “danger zone (*veszélyeztetett zóna*).” For Jászi, the national question remained unresolved there, and imperial states’ institutional frameworks were calcified and ailed from “chronic sickness.” The hunt was on for reform. The problems arising from the incongruence between nation and state — a harsh reality in the immediate post-imperial period — were already conceived by political thinkers working in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In autumn 1918, one would have been tempted to draw on their works for inspiration, or to implement their models in practice.

To temper this desire, Jászi listed three main theories which had been in circulation since the middle of the nineteenth century. The first was based on the constitutional ideas proposed at the 1848 Kremsier Parliament, as well as the (then) more recent work of Aurel Popovici (1863–1917) and Richard Charmatz (1879–1957). For them, new, ethnographically homogeneous administrative units should be drawn within a multinational state, and these would then be given wide autonomies as part of a federalized system. The second idea was found in the works of József Eötvös (1813–1871) and Czech thinkers like Karel Kramář (1860–1937): the state would also be federalized, but rather according to already existing historical-political units like the crownland. The third and final theory was to build the new state according to what historians and political scientists now call “non-territorial autonomy.” Here,

Jászi cited Lajos Kossuth (1802–1894) and Karl Renner (1870–1950). In their ideas, existing territorial administrative units would be maintained, and the state’s administration would be federalized, but political representation would be based on national councils or committees set up like cultural associations. This had its most developed form in Austro-Marxist thought from the turn of the twentieth century. Renner’s *State and Nation: On the National Question in Austria* (1899) and his *Struggle of the Austrian Nations for the State* (1918), as well as Otto Bauer’s (1881–1938) *The National Question and Social Democracy* (1907), were the key texts to reference in that regard, and Jászi was certainly familiar with them.

Individually, these theories were unsatisfactory in Jászi’s opinion. They could not ensure the “possibility of the formation of viable national statehoods,” nor guarantee “the protection of national minorities in national states,” nor be able to assist in “the organic cooperation of new states” in the Danubian basin — inter-state cooperation the key to the preservation of peace to Jászi’s mind. Partially, this was due to the ambiguous role of democracy in these schemes. For Jászi, universal, equal suffrage with a secret ballot was necessary, coupled with decentralized decision-making for national minorities. Jászi opted for a combination, and it was ultimately the Swiss cantonal model which he saw as the only way to solve the complex and intertwined geographic, demographic, economic, national, and statehood problems which faced the peoples residing in the Danu-

bian basin. Federal units on equal administrative footing with decentralized internal democratic processes limited to the canton — as well as the ability to create state-wide referenda and representative bodies — meant that the unity of the multinational state could be preserved, and the interests of national minorities protected. To that end, the model of a democratic, federal, “union state (*szövetséges állam*)” would be the best means to ensure the region’s political future.

While Jászi’s vision was macroregional in character, other, smaller-scale projects were also envisioned and even created, even if they existed for only a few months in 1918–1921. Still, these microstates mushroomed all over (former) Habsburg space and had a wide variety of political characterizations. The port city of Fiume/Rijeka — a *corpus separatum* bound to the Kingdom of Hungary during the imperial period — was one such site. The city saw a national-political polarization between two rival agendas: the Italian National Council, which wanted to annex the city to Italy, and the Slovene, Croat, and Serb National Council, which wanted the city to be incorporated into the forming South Slav state.

On the edges of these divergent national interpretations of the city’s liberation stood the political considerations of the local socialist party. The same day that Italian troops came into Fiume/Rijeka in November 1918 — marking the partial victory of the Italian annexation camp — the International Socialist Party of Fiume organized a public

meeting. After speeches in Italian, Croatian, and Hungarian, the members passed a memorandum which demanded that Fiume/Rijeka become a “free independent republic under the protection of the Socialist International.” *La Bilancia*, an Italian-language daily formerly loyal to the Kingdom of Hungary and subsequently an Italian nationalist paper, criticized the socialists’ political conduct. An article entitled “Are you serious (*Dite sul serio*)?” attempted to stress Fiume/Rijeka’s local variant of Italian nationalism. In the end, it rather demonstrated that loyalty to an imagined Italian nation-state was not as consistent as Italian nationalists would claim.

The socialists’ request for an independent republic was called “astounding (*sbalorditivo*).” The author argued that, given this decisive moment in “our political life” — which did not allow for divisions within the nation — a need to enlighten the “obfuscated minds of our best workers” arose. In the nationalists’ minds, workers were included in the national community, but they were not completely aware of the political situation. A patronizing attitude towards local workers was further demonstrated. The article claimed that the workers didn’t yet have the opportunity to create a political culture which would allow them to decide, with the required competence, on such issues in such a serious moment. The existence and efforts of the International Socialist Party — founded in Rijeka/Fiume in 1903 and with an elected city councilor during the World War — was simply neglected or erased by the author of this article.

Advancing alternatives to the city's annexation by Italy was a sign of incompetence and ignorance in the author's view, and so not a valid political claim.

By criticizing the socialists' agenda, the local Italian nationalists acknowledged that alternatives to annexation by Italy were considered realistic by the local population, and so posed a threat to the nationalists' goals. The fact that the author felt it necessary to present the multiple weaknesses behind such a form of independent statehood was an admission that such ideas did circulate among the public. The former Hungarian state's presence, the city's multinational and multilinguistic social practices, its economic bonds with the Habsburg lands, and its multilayered loyalties did not vanish overnight. The choices between a South Slav State, Croatia, and Italy were not obvious options. An independent republic was not an "astounding" option, but rather an expression of the composite political vision of the local socialists. They combined and condensed the political languages of Austro-Marxism (that is, non-territorial autonomy) and Hungarian social democracy (the preservation of the large economic space multinational statehood provided) into a concrete policy option that refused to simply abandon the Habsburg Empire's economic and political framework.

Elsewhere in the former Empire, there were other contestations of sovereignty at the local level. The attempted union of southern Moravia with the Republic of German-Austria in the last months of 1918, particularly the

city of Znojmo/Znaim and its surrounding district (*Bezirk*), proved to be a thorny issue for the new Czechoslovak state. In a memorandum addressed to all district offices in Moravia, Jan Černý (1874–1959) — the acting *Statthalter* (provincial governor) of the former crownland — informed the district captains (*Bezirkshauptmänner*) in the region that

the central administrative authorities of the former state entity of the kingdoms and realms represented in the Reichsrat [Cisleithania, the “Austrian half” of the Empire after the 1867 Ausgleich] have been taken over from the imperial-royal (kaiserlich-königlich, k.k.) government by the German-Austrian state. As such, the former central state administration no longer exists. The [district] leaders are therefore instructed to break off all contact with those authorities. Between the authorities of the Czechoslovak state and the authorities of German-Austria, only international contact can be made in the future. The files of local state authorities are to be requested from the erstwhile central state authorities and filed.

But this directive was rejected by the local German Radical representative in the *Reichsrat* in Vienna, Oskar Teufel (1880–1946). Instead, he unilaterally declared that Znojmo and the surrounding region had become the German Southern Moravian Circle (*Deutschsüdmährische Kreishauptmannschaft*), reviving a nineteenth-century

Habsburg administrative unit (the *Kreis*, meaning ‘Circle’ or even ‘County’) which had been abolished in the wake of the 1867 Austro-Hungarian Settlement (*Ausgleich*). Teufel likewise declared himself the head of the administration (*Kreishauptmann*), based on “revolutionary law,” and began a campaign to have each German-led village and town in the region declare themselves part of the unit. Here, a radical German nationalist political vision of separate, local, ethnicity-based sovereignty was being enacted.

The idea was to gather enough local support for the secession of this nation-statelet that their annexation to the Republic of German-Austria could not be refused. Even members of the Ministry of Interior in Vienna were involved — Count Hieronymus Oldofredi (1873–1935), a former section head in the Ministry, was called out of retirement to assist in the new regional administration. Ostensibly, the presence of an experienced, professional bureaucrat would give the microstate legitimacy, allow it to keep close contact with Vienna, and ensure the situation did not spiral out of hand. There were clear national anxieties behind this bold, local attempt at secession and annexation: German nationalists like Teufel and Oldofredi, and many of the German mayors of the municipalities in southern Moravia, feared that they would become a minority in the new Czechoslovak state, and so lose the social privileges and authority in public life which they had enjoyed before the collapse of the Empire.

There were economic arguments to incorporate the region into Austria too. A local citizen, Karl Petzina, privately wrote to the mayor of Vienna that the city of Břeclov/Lundenburg — to Znojmo/Znaim's east — was a key railway juncture in southern Moravia and the place of an important sugar refinery. Lying on the *Nordbahn*, if the city was incorporated into Czechoslovakia Petzina felt it would negatively affect northward commercial and passenger transit from Vienna. A place with such economic and logistic importance should rather stay in the “German Southern Moravian Circle,” Petzina argued — and so with German-Austria. He closed by reminding the mayor that staying with the Czechs meant to be subjected to their armed “terror.” There, the discourse shifted from economic rationality back to the local language of an anxiety-ridden German nationalism.

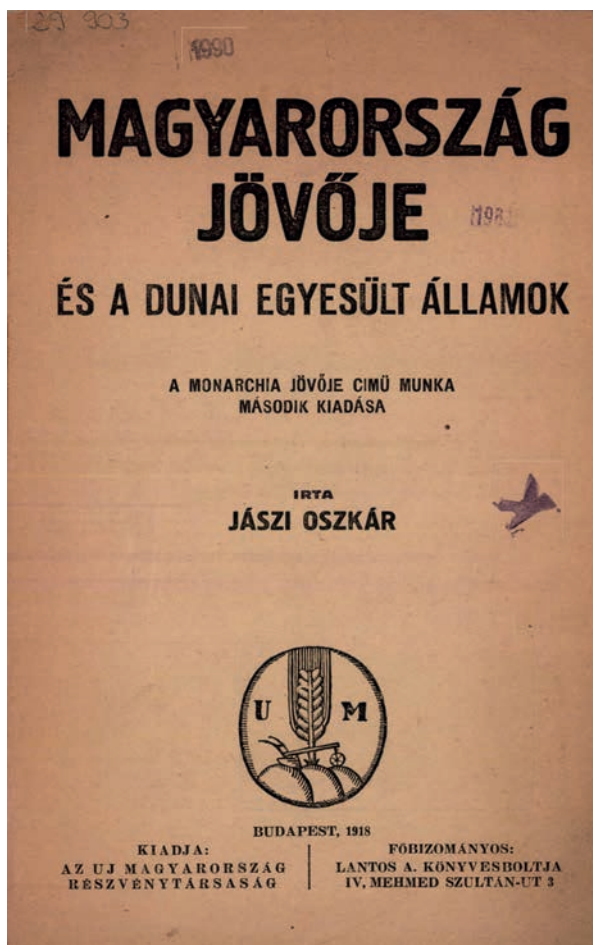
Teufel and Oldofredi, at the head of the Circle's administration, likewise felt the need to ensure the security of their territory through arms. They co-opted the gendarmes at a number of posts in the areas around Znojmo/Znaim and Mikulov/Nikolsburg, creating a kind of paramilitary or civic militia. The main publishing voice of this German nationalist camp in the region, Karl Bornemann, even printed leaflets with a call for peasants to engage in armed resistance against local Czechs. For this, he received an indictment from new Czechoslovak authorities in Brno, who still relied on Austrian wartime censorship laws which remained in effect. Yet, it was impossible

to enforce the regulations: the authorities admitted that “at this time, no Czechoslovak authorities are present on the territory.”

Ultimately, the project of creating and maintaining a German Southern Moravia failed. Just after the beginning of December 1918, Czechoslovak army regiments were sent in to enforce Czechoslovak state control over the region. The gendarme formations gave up their resistance and the administration of the Circle fled across the border to Retz in Lower Austria. Between independence and annexation, the Circle attempted to maintain sovereignty over its own affairs, and so engaged in an alternative form of state-building which was local (municipal), national (German), and regional (Moravian) at the same time. This intertwinement of different claims to sovereignty, based on different and parallel loyalties, ideologically divergent visions of the future, and local realities, was common among the attempts at local or regional statehood made in Timișoara/Temesvár, Rijeka/Fiume, and elsewhere.

In sum, these post-imperial visions of new statehood could be massive, regional projects, or local in character and (temporary) realization. They could attempt to preserve traditional dynastic monarchic symbols and institutions, do away with them altogether and implement a republic, or even negotiate some sort of combination of the two. To that end, the period of post-imperial transition in Habsburg and post-Habsburg Central and Southeastern Europe (1918–mid-1920s) was fraught with alternatives.

The multiplicity of ways in which “the state” was conceived and re-conceived provides us with ample evidence that there were more pathways toward statehood beyond the teleology of the nation-state.





*Leavers and Remainders:
The Self-Fashioning of a Hungarian
Administrative Official Leaving
Greater Romania*

On July 5, 1920, a month after the signing of the Trianon peace treaty, the newspaper *Erdélyi Hírek* announced that Sándor Antalfy had arrived in the city of Abony with his family. At that moment, Antalfy was a modestly known official, the district chief (*főszolgabíró*, *primpretor*) in Krassó-Szörény/Caraș-Severin county, which had been under Romanian administration since June 1919. A decade later, Antalfy was a figure of relative fame with a respectable administrative career behind him, having served as the mayor of the city of Kalocsa in Hungary since 1921, and become an acknowledged expert of administration, especially urban welfare issues.

On the surface, Antalfy's story is banal, at least as it is told by those celebratory articles that were published on the occasion of the anniversary of his entry into service, or when he officially retired. Holding the position of district chief in Facsád/Făget in November 1918, he was persecuted by the incoming Romanian administration, laid off

after refusing to take the oath of allegiance that the new rulers required, and in one version, even jailed. The reason for his incarceration was — in this version — his personal involvement in the infamous incident in Făget, where pillaging Romanians were dispersed by bombs thrown from military aircraft. Antalfy claimed that he was the commander of this military action. Thus, leaving Romania in the summer of 1920 was more than logical: it was the only means of survival, while his subsequent career demonstrated his professional merit and the credibility of his victimhood story. Not that the latter — the general suffering of Hungarian administrative officials at the hands of the Romanian administration — would ever have been questioned publicly. It became the general image applied to refugees and minority Hungarians. But a closer look at Antalfy's fate between the end of 1919 and his registration as a refugee in Hungary fails to substantiate this perception.

While the documents preserved in various archives in Romania do not offer a full picture of Antalfy's fate, he left enough traces to debunk all of his major claims. His chief claim to victimhood — being jailed — is not mentioned in the major works on the history of this period, even though its authors were keen to mention serious grievances. But there is more palpable proof of his twisting the truth after his arrival to Hungary. Antalfy was still a district chief in the new, Romanian county administration in March 1920, 9 months after its institution, and he duly responded to

several queries of and executed orders from his superior, the vice-prefect. In one case the vice-prefect ordered his subordinates, including district administrations, to finally start using the Romanian language in their internal and external documents and explicitly banned the Hungarian or German language. Antalffy's response was exemplary of the situation faced by the Romanian state in those regions. He crafted an official response, with all the required details and niceties (address, greeting — Nr. 186/1920. Pretura plășii Răcășdia Domnul Subprefect Lugoj datum, official signature — Răcășdia, 10. Februarie 1920 Antalffy prim-pretor) in Romanian, and an obedient answer in between. The district chief insisted in proper Hungarian bureaucratic parlance that the order was already implemented in the district administration (!), and all documents would be written in Romanian as soon as he had someone on his staff who spoke Romanian.

However ironic, Antalffy's response was no mockery, but rather the *modus operandi* of an administrative official who still pondered the idea of a career in Caraș-Severin county. Thus, we can safely presume Antalffy had taken the oath, was neither laid off nor jailed, and was a relatively faithful official of Greater Romania for about a year.

Why did he leave? Why and how did he present a story that contradicted his actual experience? The general answer is that his story would have been the expectation in Hungary. Admitting that Romanian rule did not immediately mean the persecution of Hungarians in the adminis-

tration was contrary to the politics of irredentism that was partly justified by the fate of laid-off public servants, while the story of personal vicissitudes justified material claims against the Hungarian state as a refugee. But Antalfy had more direct personal reasons to gloss over his loyal service in Romania, whatever his reasons for doing it were. Legally, the Romanian oath of allegiance meant the forfeiture of all rights and claims as a Hungarian public official, including one's actual position on the career ladder and accumulated pension rights. Anyone who had taken the oath would have had to start a new career from the very bottom, at least theoretically.

His later career suggests that Antalfy was driven by the prospect of promotion and was probably very much aware of the pitfalls that his continued service in the Romanian county administration presented in this regard. There is no proof of how he managed to erase its memory and official traces. One of its plausible explanations is based on how the world of county politics and administration worked in dualist Hungary. The most important figure in this regard is the person of the vice-prefect to whom Antalfy duly reported: Ioan Băltescu. An ethnic Romanian, he was the mayor of the county seat of Lugos/Lugoj from 1911 to 1918, elected in this position by a Hungarian-German council majority against the vote of Romanian council members and as such a respected figure of the county elite, to whom Antalfy also belonged. Furthermore, Facsád/Făget is not far from Lugos/Lugoj (if Antalfy

wished he even could have lived in Lugos/Lugoj and commuted to Facsád/Făget), and thus it is again almost certain that they knew each other, probably well enough to be on informal terms. After the signing of the peace treaty, Antalffy, who so far could have imagined that Romanian rule was temporary, and who was transferred from central Facsád to distant Rakasdia/Răcașdia, could have visited his acquaintance, Băltescu. If it happened, he probably asked the vice-prefect about his career prospects, and if the response was honest — that there was not much room for advancement beyond Antalffy's actual position — he could have considered his options.

Erasing the traces was also easy, if Băltescu helped him. The vice-prefect could have removed the documents from the archives, and as Antalffy was never supposed to return, it would not really have harmed the Romanian state. But even this probably would have represented an overabundance of caution, as it is hard to see how Budapest ministries would have been able to check documents beyond the new borders. If the local Hungarian elite remained silent, Antalffy would have been safe and could freely craft his new biography.

Antalffy's decision was thus a strategic choice that was only partly the result of a minority experience, as he was not threatened with the immediate loss of his position. Moreover, he was not alone, neither in making rational calculations, nor in continuing his services after the Romanian takeover of the administration. Hundreds — if not

thousand — of Hungarians continued working in the administration of counties, cities, and the judiciary, and some retired officials decided to take up their duties again. Others decided to leave, but not always for the reasons they communicated later. Antalfy's case demonstrates how and why they could survive and continue their work and shows further that even among the convulsions of the collapse of the Monarchy, administrative officials had their agency.

* * *

Already during the war tens of thousands of people moved away from their homes to avoid enemy occupation. The end of hostilities and the establishing of Polish, Czechoslovak, south Slav, Romanian, Italian rule over vast swathes of Austria-Hungary facilitated a new wave of movement. Finally, the peace treaties granted the right to everyone to choose another country where he would not be a national minority (the so-called citizenship option) and move there in a year. In case of Hungary the number people arriving with all the waves of migrations until 1924 was somewhere between 300000 and 400000. Similarly, all other countries had to deal with migrants in the tens or hundreds of thousands. South Slavs, for example, left from the territories annexed to Italy, especially after Mussolini came to power.

Migrants were not always co-ethnics too. Austria, struggling with the threat of famine, targeted tens of thousands

of Galician Jews who arrived as refugees during the war and who did not hold the right of citizenship option. Thousands of politically active Ukrainians left Galicia after Poland's victory over the Ukrainians to settle – if only temporarily – in Czechoslovakia.

Antalffy was one of those, whose migration was legally simple with potentially opting for Hungarian citizenship, but he himself clearly tried to cast an aura of victimhood over his experience, mostly because he hoped concrete benefits. In this attempt he was helped not only by the heightened nationalist sentiment in Hungary. His social position – middle-class, educated administrative official – made him part of a group that post-Habsburg, Western European and US politicians and experts saw as the most important politically. Local politicians thought that the middle-class is the backbone of any national organization and the nation state and everyone assumed that the extreme poverty of the middle-class in the post-Habsburg lands would lead to a breakthrough of Bolshevism. Thus, they made a serious, transnational effort to stabilize its material position, mostly through humanitarian intervention, and especially in Hungary the middle-class family living in railway carriages became the avatar of all the migrants and refugees who people ought to have solidarized with. Unlike Jews, whose presence – especially the ones from Galicia or Ukraine – was often resented, and not only in Hungary.

However, migration was just as complex at the end of the war as it is today and the middle-class was hardly the

most numerous among people on the move. In case of Hungary underage pupils, widows, blue collar workers and petty officials of large state enterprises (mostly, but not exclusively the railways) constituted a much larger part of migrants. Those, who were left without a male bread earner and had to rely on relatives or the state, and those who often became part of a conflict with the new state. Thus, people whose family ties now bound them to another state and people who could not realistically hope to get support from the state they were living in had an incentive to move. But even from those social groups which were the most affected by population movements across borders, many – the lower we go on the social ladder the more – remained, maybe never even thought about moving. The poorest, if they did not have family ties had no means to facilitate migration, and the middle-class that was not dependent on state employment (craftsmen, merchants, company officials and clerks etc.) remained in large numbers, while workers – and with lower frequency female and youth dependent on family – continued to move in both directions over the new borders. Especially industrial facilities, like shipyards in Trieste, steel factories in Resita, mines in the Jiu-valley attracted and tried to keep skilled workers in relatively large numbers.

Therefore, post-war migration wave(s) was a longer and not unidirectional process. Successor states initially faced a choice between nationalizing public services quickly at the detriment of their operation as – apart from Czechoslova-

kia and Poland, where large number of former Cisleithanian state officials remained at their posts – they lacked the necessary personnel. Thus, they tried to find a careful balance between eliminating politically unreliable and keeping apolitical employees (after a few weeks or month they demanded an oath of allegiance from everyone), while also reacting to political developments with cycles of lay-offs. Nationality of the titular nation (Czech or Slovak, Slovene, Croat, Serb, Romanian, Polish, Italian) was an advantage and the number of minority officials decreased, but the successor states of Czechoslovakia, Romania, Poland or the south Slav state were built on the legacy of Austria-Hungary in very concrete terms: on the administrators of the empire.

The successor states pretended to purge the administration from “aliens” swiftly, but the reality was more nuanced. Even in the South Slav State, where – together with Italy – the purges were probably the most thoroughgoing and the fastest, former Austrian officials were welcomed if they could prove command of the official language. In Poland former Austrian officials were seen as the most efficient and used to help building the new administration in other regions too. Despite waves of expulsions from every country, and the Hungarian propaganda about “cleaning the state” in Czechoslovakia and Romania, large number of Hungarians remained or were reinstated in service at the mid- and lower levels. Employees of strategic services were in a similar situation, but their case was complicated by

strike actions for political or economic goals. Railwaymen went on strike frequently, and both the Czechoslovak and south Slav authorities reacted with mass lay-offs and expulsions to avoid disruption of service and alleged “bolshevization”. Migration finally abated by 1922-1923, with the closing of the citizenship option process.

One would think that states helped their co-ethnics, but it was surprisingly often not the case. The legal rules of acquiring citizenship were complicated and allowed for arbitrary conduct from state officials. Those were often more concerned about abiding by the letter of the law than helping co-nationals. Hungarians moving to Hungary, for example, had to submit a series of documents, including a certificate that they would not be a burden on the community they intended to move into, before getting a permission to enter the country despite the clear regulation in the peace treaty. On the other hand, successor states which intended to use migration to enhance their national homogeneity, used the special provisions of the treaties and the complicated nature of Austrian and Hungarian pertinency laws to deprive unwanted people of their citizenship – often many years after the war. The treaties, while successful in avoiding the creation of a large number of stateless people through granting citizenship automatically, linked citizenship with pertinency on the state territory. Pertinency – a German-Austrian legal institution, introduced in Hungary too, was the registered, official membership of a commune as opposed to simply residing on its territory

— was, however, not identical with residence, even though most people was not aware of this difference. Furthermore, successor states got some concessions regarding the date before people should have moved to their territory, for example in case of Czechoslovakia, Italy and the south Slav state it was December 31, 1910. Anyone who settled there later was exposed to denial of citizenship.

Post-World War One migration, if it is part of the historical memory, like in Hungary, is still considered as a traumatic event and exclusively the result violence and abuse of power from the new nation states. In other cases, for example in Croatia and Slovenia, its memory is lost today, even though it was an important part of the inter-war political discourse. But after the Second World War the “recovery” of the territories gained by Italy in 1918 made this story of secondary importance. However, migration after 1918 was not the story of indiscriminate mass expulsions. Despite cases of pressure and forced migration, most of the new minorities remained where they were. Often they continued their career in state service or could switch to the private sphere. Migration decisions were usually – unless someone faced forced expulsion (and even those expelled could sometimes return to less efficient states like Romania) – the result of a broad set of factors. People weighed material, intellectual, political, national considerations and it was very often not the national identity that trumped the others.



1
A főrendihá-
ban öt terem
engedtek át a
vagonokba
gyermekeknek.
— Képünk: 1.
Mennék a gyere-
kek a főren-
diház folyosó-
jára a játszó-
terembe. — 2. A



3. Három ilyen
hálóterem van,
60–60 ágy
gyerekekkel;
két tanítónő
ágyval ellátva a kis
gyermekekre.
Erdős Izab-
ella és Böcs-
ler Erzsébet
kezelik a gyere-
keket.





“The house, in which we lived, has been burned down“. The Old and the New, the Habsburg Past as a Negative or a Positive Point of Reference

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy state-building processes were accompanied by different notions about the “old” and the “new” in all the emerging states. Political activists often sought to distinguish the “new” state from the “old” empire to legitimize a new order. Narratives of rupture and revolution, and different visions of emancipatory politics were dominant in this transition period. However, this should not obscure the fact that the new states were characterized by many continuities with the empire. Contemporaries were also aware of these continuities and evaluated them positively or negatively depending on their political point of view.

Opinions on the Habsburg past were divided – even in two predominantly rural regions that had a reputation for special loyalty to the emperor in the late Habsburg Monarchy. In the case of the German-speaking portion of Tyrol, these claims rested on well-worked historical narratives on a regional uprising against overwhelming French and

Bavarian invaders in 1809. Galician Ukrainians, on the other hand, were known as the “Tyrolians of the East” due to their loyalty to the imperial house during the Polish nobility’s mid-nineteenth-century rebellions. While shows of personal devotion to the emperor gave the conservative politicians in Tyrol license to pursue a region-centered politics that departed from the imperial line, Galician Ukrainian politicians hoped for support for their emancipation efforts from the Polish elites who dominated politics in Galicia.

As late as the autumn of 1918, many Galician Ukrainian politicians were still counting on a reform of the empire and the establishment of a Ukrainian crown land within the Habsburg Monarchy, separating eastern Galicia from Polish western Galicia. However, in the face of the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy, aspirations for an independent Ukrainian state gained the upper hand. On November 1, 1918, the West Ukrainian People’s Republic was proclaimed, which was intended to forestall the annexation of the multiethnic region eastern Galicia to an independent Polish state. At the same time, voices that critically examined the Habsburg past became more prominent.

“Those of our own [...] are so steeped in the system of the old regime that they cannot come to terms with the newest requirements of the time. They still think in the ‘Austrian’ way and do not think about completely rejecting the old regime, but only in the ‘Austrian’ way correcting it somewhat, patching it up somewhat, changing some-

thing, remodeling it — and the whole ‘reform’ would end there.”

With these words in January 1919, a Ukrainian teacher representative from the region Pokuttia in the southeast of Galicia spoke out for revolutionary changes in state and society. He regarded the Habsburg past of the region as the “old” that had to be overcome. Similar statements are often found in the local press during the transition period after the First World War, when local Ukrainian and Polish activists sought to build a Ukrainian or Polish nation-state in the region.

The Habsburg Monarchy seemed to be a long way off after only a few months in view of the unfolding events following the collapse of Austria-Hungary, such as the proclamation of the West Ukrainian People’s Republic, the Polish resistance in Lviv, which sparked a Polish-Ukrainian war, and the occupation of ever larger territories of eastern Galicia by the nascent Polish Republic up to the dissolution of the West Ukrainian state in the summer of 1919. Polish-Ukrainian competition for the region dominated political discourses. Nevertheless, local activists repeatedly referred to the Habsburg past to clarify their visions for a new state and a new society. The Habsburg Monarchy served as a negative or positive point of reference at the time of the formation of the West Ukrainian state. The coverage of Ukrainian newspapers in Pokuttia – one of those regions where Ukrainian statehood has lasted the longest – illustrates this.

Immediately after the Ukrainian seizure of power in eastern Galicia, references to the Habsburg Monarchy often served to underline the legitimacy of the new government and the new state. Members of the Ukrainian National Council – the provisional parliament, which was composed of Ukrainian deputies of the Austrian Imperial Council and the Galician Diet – had tried to persuade the governor of Galicia to hand over power to the Ukrainian representatives. West Ukrainian political elites sought a legal transition from the Habsburg Monarchy to a Ukrainian nation-state and conveyed this concept to the public. This was taken up also by local actors. Regarding the establishment of the West Ukrainian People's Republic, for example, the Ukrainian-language newspaper *Pokuts'kyj Vistnyk* not only referred to the “Wilsonian principle of national self-determination”, which the “Ukrainians realized like all the other peoples of Austria-Hungary”, but at the same time emphasized that the takeover by the Ukrainian National Council took place on the basis of the “Peoples Manifesto” of Emperor Charles. The local newspaper thus indicated a legal continuity between the Habsburg Monarchy and the new Ukrainian state.

Other authors on the pages of the same newspaper, on the other hand, pointed to radical changes. This was a widespread phenomenon in post-Habsburg Central Europe. While many new nation-state regimes declared in their legal gazettes that the old legal order would continue until further notice, this wasn't matched by the public

rhetoric of politicians, who declared that a fundamentally new state had been created. The initial successes of Ukrainian state-building in eastern Galicia were accompanied by discourses about a “Ukrainian revolution.” They regarded Austria-Hungary as a symbol of the old order, which had to be overcome. Hence, the task of the new state was to place society on new, fairer foundations, both socially and nationally. Sometimes Ukrainian authors also used the image of the “prison of peoples”, which was common in contemporary discourses all over the former Habsburg Monarchy. Most of the articles, however, placed a stronger emphasis on social aspects.

Given the social structure in eastern Galicia, where economic and political elites were predominantly Polish, while the Ukrainian population was mostly peasants, complaints about discrimination against Ukrainians within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy mostly blamed the Polish elites in Galicia. Polish-Ukrainian conflicts had shaped politics in Galicia already in the pre-war period. In view of the competing state-building projects and the Polish-Ukrainian war, these conflicts intensified significantly. Before and during the war, many Ukrainian activists had pinned their hopes on the Austrian central authorities. However, given the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy, an independent Ukrainian state seemed to be the only option, and the advantages of an independent state over belonging to the Habsburg Monarchy took up more space in Ukrainian discourses.

The old regime served as a counter-image to the new regime, the new Ukrainian Republic. Several authors criticized not only the political conditions in Galicia, but the social foundations of the Habsburg Monarchy or the feudal social order in general, occasionally adopting anti-elitist and anti-capitalist discourses. “The rotten foundations of the Habsburg monarchy crumbled to dust and the last dream of hope of transforming the Rothschild empire into a state of peoples vanished”, another article in the newspaper *Pokuts’kyj Vistnyk* argued. The author justified “We no longer belong to Austria, but the old yoke over our heads remained” the detachment from the Habsburg Monarchy with its lack of ability to reform. The anti-Semitic stereotype of the Habsburg Monarchy as the “Rothschild Empire” expressed social criticism of the rule of the elites; at the same time, it can be understood as a renunciation from cosmopolitanism.

The criticism of the old regime was directed in particular against the “masters” or “lords”, often in connection with criticism of the war, which had been waged for the interests of the “masters” only – “be they emperors, kings, princes, archdukes, be they generals, bankers, speculators, factory owners or landowners.” The First World War thus represented an important element in the delegitimization of the old order and the ruling elites. During the Polish-Ukrainian war on eastern Galicia, Ukrainian authors equated the fight against the Polish troops with the fight against the old order, arguing that the “Polish Szlachta

troops” want to bring back the Polish lords and bring back not only national, but above all social bondage.

The old order, they argued, divided the people into two opposing classes: the workers and the idle lords. In contrast to the old order, many Ukrainian authors conceived the new Ukrainian state as a state of the working people, as a modern state with modern social legislation. More radical authors, who wrote especially for the newspaper *Sičovyj Holos in Pokuttia*, even spoke out in favor of a nationalization of factories as well as of land holdings, in favor of revolutionary upheavals, even at the price of a bloody revolution. However, these views were not likely to be accepted by the majority. Most peasants were in favor of far-reaching land reform and the distribution of land to the peasants who work the land. However, they were opposed to the abolition of private property.

In Ukrainian texts, state building was often described by the metaphor of building one’s own house – or one’s own “hut”, which was preferable to the “old pompous building, founded on violence and exploitation.” The new house must stand on the “firm foundations of justice”. The self-determination of the Ukrainian people thus meant the emancipation of the ordinary folk and was closely linked to democratization.

Among those who advocated a radical break with the “old order,” some were more optimistic and some more pessimistic. Some Ukrainian activists argued that a new era had already begun. For others, however, the hitherto exist-

ing reforms did not go far enough. Sičovyj Holos argued: „The land still belongs to the lords and the great owners of land, yards, factories and banks still are masters over us. They are already somewhat pushed aside, but they still exist”. Several years later, an article in the local Ukrainian newspaper Pokuts’ke Slovo retrospectively compared the revolution in the Ukrainian territories, which had formerly been part of the Russian Empire, to the Galician “revolution”. The author argued that the Galician revolution was not a revolution that put society on new foundations, pointing out that the Austrian administrative system had been adopted without significant changes. Important positions of the young “revolutionary” state were filled with people who spoke Ukrainian. However, these were not “new” people, but “old” imperial politicians, people without initiative, for whom “the paragraph comes first”. A Ukrainian nation, the author argued, does not exist as long as it thinks and acts on the foundations of a foreign culture. In a similar way, Pokuts’kyj Vistnyk complained in 1919 about the Ukrainian intelligentsia, who was “educated in the old Austrian school of bureaucracy” and put the national question first, neglecting the social needs of the people. The criticism from Ukrainian activists seeking a more radical policy was directed against the West Ukrainian political elite, who had sought a legal transition from the Habsburg Monarchy to a Ukrainian nation-state.

From the perspective of the criticized, however, the rule of law was a positive value in contrast to the cha-

otic situation in the former Russian territories. At a public meeting in Kolomyja, for example, the West Ukrainian State Secretary of Interior pointed out: “The power of the people solidifies by law. You say that a revolution is going on. But even during a revolution, liberty must be legally consolidated and ensured.” In local Ukrainian discourses, narratives were widespread that described emancipation from the Habsburg past as a revolution. Others, however, painted a picture of evolution in continuity and on the basis of Austrian political culture.

Despite a certain enthusiasm among the Ukrainian population for the political upheavals and an empowerment of the (mostly peasant) Ukrainian people, there was also a widespread need for stability. On the ground, the experiences of violence during the war, and in particular the Polish-Ukrainian War for eastern Galicia in 1918/19, strengthened the need for the rule of law. Especially Jews, who often got caught between the fronts in the Polish-Ukrainian conflict, retrospectively described the time of the Habsburg Monarchy as a time of stability that ended with the First World War. From a Ukrainian perspective, this aspect came more into focus in view of the failure of Ukrainian statehood and the integration of the region into the Polish Republic. Even during this period, Ukrainian activists did not assess the Habsburg past in an unanimously positive way. Abuses under Polish rule were often shown in continuity with the pre-war period. However, compared to the Polish Republic the Habsburg

Monarchy sometimes performed better. Long after the turbulent transitional period of 1918/19, the end of the armed conflicts over eastern Galicia, and the consolidation of the Polish administration, locals sometimes referred to the rule of law as a positive aspect of the Habsburg Monarchy.

In North Tyrol, similar developments in attitudes towards the Habsburg monarchy can be observed, ranging from critical approaches immediately after the end of the disastrous war to Habsburg nostalgia.

While prominent members of Tyrol's conservative elite held firm to the empire, for much of the population of North Tyrol, the Habsburg Dynasty and its monarchy had lost its prestige and indeed *raison d'être* during the long years of the war. Even on the conservative side, while much of the criticism around the war's end was directed against alleged war profiteers (identified as Jews and socialists) and the military and civil bureaucracy, the emperor received only limited sympathy.

The stance of the *Tiroler Bauern-Zeitung*, organ of the powerful Tyrolean Farmer's League (*Tiroler Bauernbund*) reflected this general turning away. It made use of the trope of Tyrolean loyalty to claim that Tyrol had suffered excessively during the war, driving it away from the empire. Enumerating the injustices endured, the author declared that "for the tragic fate that the monarchy and the Habsburg dynasty — by its own fault — was delivered, we can muster no *Schadenfreude*, but also no grief." The monarchical state form, due to the "bad experiences

made,” was declared to be “for all times cast aside.” In its place, readers were urged to participate in constructing a “new house” of state that, taking orders from neither Vienna nor Berlin, would be steered by Tyrol’s “peasant estate” (Bauernstand).

The more Catholic *Tiroler Volksbote* delivered a similar sentiment. Also employing the metaphor of a new “house” — a common device employed across Central Europe in transition, it seems — the paper wrote that through the war, the “house, in which we lived, has been burned down,” and decried alleged efforts by “the Jew” to build the new Austria in the form of a synagogue. “We want to build the new house in the Christian style,” it retorted. Its New Year’s address further developed this metaphor, declaring that “in the Land Tyrol there should be laid a completely new floor.” However, it was to lie on the “old, iron-strong, and durable supports and beams, that are given in our true Tyrolean motto: for God, Emperor, and Fatherland!” With the emperor gone (misled by his advisors, but gone nonetheless), it was to the first and third elements — God and Fatherland — that Tyroleans were to reconstruct over.

However, the Tyrolean conservative press soon softened on the monarchy. Although consensus over German-speaking Tyrol’s future was always lacking, unanimity reigned over Tyrol’s “right to self-determination,” with the most popular options being either independence as a small state or an Anschluss to Germany. In this context, the Republic of German-Austria — and the disappointing

reality it represented — quickly became a target. A Volksbote article from early February 1919 took this tack in questioning the difference between the old monarchy and the new republic. It argued that the republic, while supposedly inaugurating “a completely new, evidently golden era,” had changed little; in fact, things had only become worse: administration and the economy had declined further, and contrary to expectations, the Volk had even less say in government than before. This sad situation prevailed, claimed the author, because Jews and Socialists were running the state, and not the “Christian Volk.”

The increasing identification of the republic with Social Democracy and Socialist-dominated Vienna brought forth stronger statements favoring conditions in “Old Austria.” In June 1919, the Volksbote surveyed the former monarchy in claiming that “in Galicia the people cry for the old government, and in Italian Tyrol the population has asked in every way, that the Austrian administration be reintroduced. Yes, when it continues as such, then also by us [in North Tyrol] will the people cry and sigh for the monarchy and the old conditions under the emperors.”²⁰ By December, after so-called “Hunger riots” broke out in Innsbruck and the regional food supplies fell to levels lower than of the war years, the Volksbote peered back into the past through rose-colored glasses: “If we think back to the time before the war, it seems to us, as if we had been in paradise. We could all live, even sufficiently, indeed richly. We were doing well, more than well. Nobody on earth lived

so without worry through the day as the Burger of Old Austria.” The end came, wrote the Volksbote in a typical anti-Semitic style, as “Austria was poisoned with the Jewish spirit.”

Does this mean that the average Tyrolean, and particularly the rural population targeted by the Volksbote, shared this re-evaluation and longed for the return of the monarchy and Habsburg dynasty? While there may have been little identification with the “socialist” republic centered in Vienna, opinions were muddled, especially in the countryside. Individual reports filed by local groups of the Tiroler Heimatwehr — a conservative paramilitary organization that developed out of the post-war flux to maintain Ruhe und Ordnung — evidence members’ diverse views in the early 1920s. A few recorded that “many” supported a monarchy, while others counted only “individual” proponents. At the same time, one described how “those who served in the military want to hear nothing about the monarchy.”²² Nearly all relayed back shared disgruntlement with alleged economic “mismanagement” in the new state. Indeed, when memories of the long war were still fresh, frustration with a halting post-war recovery, rather than a longing for the old monarchy, prevailed. As the 1920s wore on, distance from the war, ongoing disillusionment with the Austrian republic, and miserable economic conditions — made worse by the global economic crisis that began in 1929 — facilitated a more sympathetic view toward the monarchy.

While in the first months after the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy a euphoria about the founding of new, democratic nation states dominated public discourses, during the 1920s skepticism towards the “new” became louder and louder, even to the point of Habsburg nostalgia. This applies not only to population groups that found themselves as national minorities in the new states, such as Jews or Ukrainians in the Polish Republic. A critical attitude towards the new central government due to different regional or political interests could also be a reason for a positive reference to the good old Habsburg monarchy as the example of Tyrol shows. However, these sentiments had more to do with a longing for the stability of the pre-war years than with a political program for a return of the monarchy and Habsburg dynasty, which had lost its legitimacy mainly due to the experiences of the war.



*A nationalizing façades?
Reflections on education in
local post-imperial settings*

Hardly anyone would be surprised by the important role public education held in the new emerging post-imperial nation-states. After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the successor states presented themselves as examples of the triumph of the “principle of nationality” and schools were considered of extraordinary importance for the future of the “nation(s)”. In schooling the nation, language played a key role and changing the official one on new territories, usually happened straightforward. Yet, if we take a closer look to the various local experiences of post-transition there is a lot to untangle behind nationalizing façades.

Let's start with Prekmurje (in Hungarian, Muravidék), a predominantly rural area, made of segments of two former western counties of the Kingdom of Hungary: Vas/Železna and Zala. In July 1919, the Yugoslav delegation at the Paris Peace Conference received permission to occupy this area and soon Yugoslav forces acquired control confirming its acquisition a year later by the Treaty of Tri-

anon (1920). The area of Prekmurje was subordinate to the Slovene Provincial Government in Ljubljana, which retained exclusive authority to assign and dismiss officials and, unsurprisingly, the government quickly began replacing Hungarian administrators with Slovene ones. About a month after the occupation, the Higher School Council in Ljubljana, the leading administrative body responsible for the school network under the control of the Slovene Provincial Government, sent Franjo Cvetko to Prekmurje. Cvetko, a head teacher from the neighboring East Styrian village of Vučja Vas, departed on a mission to assess the situation and report in detail on the organization of the school network.

Given that in autumn 1918, the Slovene language was declared the official language of the territory under the control of the Slovene government, Cvetko proposed an immediate dismissal of teachers who were fluent only in Hungarian or German and their replacement with Slovene speakers from the former Cisleithania. His proposal was certainly typical in post-1918 transitional Central Europe marked by the triumph of the “principle of nationality”.

What is much more surprising, however, is Cvetko’s attitude towards the local literary Slavic language, which was traditionally used as an unofficial auxiliary language of instruction in several elementary schools in Prekmurje. Cvetko claimed that this local Slovene should be prohibited as well. Instead, the official Slovene national (standard) literary language should be the exclusive language

of instruction. However, such a linguistic transformation could only happen if the local Slavophone teachers, fluent in the local Slovene but with a very limited knowledge of standard literary Slovene, improved their poor language skills. A cohort of “native” local Slovene teachers should, Cvetko concluded, take courses in the standard Slovene national language and pass an exam to continue teaching in Prekmurje elementary schools.

To his meticulously written assessment of school affairs in Prekmurje, Cvetko attached a spreadsheet that provided the civil servants in Ljubljana with a condensed and multifaceted overview of his findings and recommendations. In this document, the headmaster listed all the employed teachers according to their “nationality.” The spreadsheet of 124 teachers reveals that Cvetko labeled the majority of teachers either as Hungarians (59) or as Slovenes (57), but there were also four Slovaks, two Germans, a Serb and a “Hungarian Serb” who taught in the region. An additional column described each teacher’s “knowledge of Slovene.” Only six of the 59 teachers categorized as Hungarians were considered to be qualified in Slovene. Five Slovene teachers and one German teacher were also evaluated as being incapable to speak Slovene. Interestingly enough, the Slovak and Serbian teachers’ knowledge of Slovene proved to be sufficient, which was also true in the case of one German teacher. Cvetko’s overview of the local schools ended with a column euphemistically titled “Suggestions” or “Remarks.” In this column, Cvetko “suggested” or “remarked” that

teachers capable of communicating in the Slovene language — regardless of their nationality — should keep their posts, while all those with an insufficient command of Slovene should simply be dismissed. The spreadsheet sealed the destiny of the existing teaching staff, but not without a certain ambiguity.

On October 30 1919, the Higher School Council issued the decree that put an end to the period of uncertainty and conclusively regulated the question of language in Prekmurje schools reflecting the linguistic reality on the ground. The decree unsurprisingly proclaimed standard literary Slovene as the language of instruction, where supposed Slovenes represented the majority of enrolled pupils. Yet the officials also left the door open for necessary compromises. In those schools where teaching in standard Slovene was not possible due to a lack of appropriate teaching staff, the decree allowed the use of “Prekmurje Slovene” or the “dialect of Prekmurje.” Still, the pupils educated in schools where local Slovene was used were expected to acquire a satisfactory level of knowledge in standard Slovene by the time they finished their schooling. The decree also made standard Slovene a compulsory course in places where the population was prevalingly Hungarian and/or German and hence the language of instruction was either Hungarian or German.

In Prekmurje, the verdict of the late-nineteenth-century national activists that schools were sites where pupils ought to be forged into compatriots while using a “stand-

ardized national language” as a language of instruction proved correct. However, a clear distinction can be identified between a relatively rapid act of political and ideological transition of education agenda on the one hand and a gradual transformation of the existing school network on the other. The normative and ideological transition of education – from the Hungarian to the Yugoslav (Slovenian) system – passed smoothly. Reforms began immediately after the arrival of the Yugoslav authorities. In line with the expectations of the new school administration – based on the premises of ethnolinguistic nationalism – unfit teachers were dismissed. Yet the transformation of the “hearts and minds” of local Prekmurje Slavophone teachers who retained their positions was not entirely successful, despite the re-education efforts. When Prekmurje was occupied by the Hungarian army in April 1941, the older generation of local teachers immediately began to cooperate with the new leadership of the Hungarian Education Department for Prekmurje.

In the post-imperial rearranging world Prekmurje schools were not an exception. On the contrary, if we move a few hundred kilometers south-west, we can see a new layer of ambiguity. Today, visitors to the small and picturesque locality of Moščenička Draga (Italian Draga di Moschiena/Moschienizze) — once a fisherman’s village today a small tourist resort in northeastern Istria — will unlikely associate this area with Istria’s early interwar transition. Yet, this tiny municipality, located fifteen kilometers

south of the renowned resort town Opatija (Italian Abbazia), had its own post-imperial transition to Italy.

After the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, in November 1918, the Italian army occupied the Austrian Littoral. Military administration operated until July-August 1919, replaced by a civil one. Only after the Treaty of Rapallo (November 1920), was the area officially annexed to Italy, but immediately after occupation Italian authorities adopted policies, including ones on elementary education to strengthen their control over the region and its multilinguistic population. The Kingdom of Italy was not an Austro-Hungarian successor state, it claimed to be a nation-state, not surprisingly keen to make its population Italian. Nonetheless, a simple transfer of Italian institutions to Austrian Littoral did not occur. Instead, a process of transition lasted for a few years. Istrian Schools were not immediately aligned with the rest of Italy and the locals were not made into Italians overnight. In fact, even when language of instruction and census data shows ongoing Italianization, it is worth to look behind the façade.

A school report written from 1920 provides an amusing account of what was happening on the ground. On July 8, 1920, a teacher at the Italian folk school in Draga di Moschienizze wrote a report on the school's activity during the 1919/20 school year. The teacher, however, started to work in this school only in the middle of March 1920, assuming the office from the previous teacher who had

been seconded by the Italian military. The methods of the previous teacher were, to say the least, unorthodox:

“He [the teacher] aimed, so to say, to entertain and delight the pupils, without really teaching or educating them: this is confirmed partially by the schoolwork written by the pupils in their notebooks.” As the new teacher noted elsewhere, discipline among the pupils “...slightly relaxed, in particular among the older ones, among whom some had acquired bad and ugly habits, thus providing a terrible example to the others”. The new teacher claimed to have instituted some sort of discipline, but this is not the main point of this vignette. Before the Italian occupation, the school was a two-classes compulsory elementary school (Volksschule). In the first years of the occupation, the Italian authorities did not radically change the educational system, that is, they did not replace all the existing non-Italian-language schools with Italian-language schools. Yet, as in the case of Draga di Moschienizze — or “Valle di S. Marina di Moschiena” in an official document from the Julian March Governorate in July 1919 — a new Italian school was opened during the first school year 1918/1919. Or, to be more precise, an existing two-classes Croatian-language school was split, with one class becoming an Italian-language section. This was no outright nationalization at the expense of locals: a Croatian-language school still continued to function.

Italian authorities were achieving nationalization through supposed consent of some locals. Allegedly, it

was the locals who had initially requested the change, and the Italian authorities did their best to fulfill that request. Surely, this kind of consent was generated by some locals' adaptation to the new state and to meet its expectations. It was a shift in sovereignty that the local population had not chosen for themselves, and yet some locals were not so eager to resist this change.

Language and education in a certain language was not perceived by all the locals as their most prominent concern. In fact, in a community where a lot of inhabitants were sailors maybe learning another language was not a tremendous issue. One could also wonder, was it not difficult for pupils to switch from one language of instruction to another? From the perspective of the late twentieth century, the phenomenon of Istrian linguistic hybridity, that is, fluency in local Croatian-Italian vernaculars, would not come as a surprise. To answer the question, in this case Italian was not a completely unknown language; Italian was already taught in the pre-war Volksschule from the second grade.

Returning to the school report: discipline, education, and language knowledge seem to be very loose categories. As the local teacher wrote: "Generally, the undersigned has abided by the normal provisional program, somewhat reducing it, to conform it with the specific local conditions and the level of intellectual and cultural development of the pupils." Discipline, as noted previously, was not strictly enforced, and the teacher was not keen on radical punish-

ments, so as not to alienate the character of these pupils “who, if treated too harshly, could probably return to the Croatian school next year”. The undisciplined character of the twenty-two questionably prepared pupils, spread across four classes, was the result of the previous teacher’s (lack of) pedagogical methods and the abnormal postwar conditions of social, economic, and political transition in the region.

So, the establishment of an Italian-language school in Draga di Moschienizze — replacing a Croatian-language one — is a symptom of nationalization, but also of local parents’ adaptation to the administration of their district by a new state. Their adaptation, however, was not driven by unconditional loyalty towards a new state power or dominant nationality, but rather a way to make thoughtful, locally-sensitive, but still reversible decisions. The deliberately bland treatment of the pupils by the first two teachers at the Italian-language school demonstrates that teachers were very aware of the fluctuating nature of language and educational choices. Before the ascendancy of Fascism in Italy, locals in Italy’s newly acquired territories were not merely viewed as objects to be conquered or dominated; they were still individuals who had to be attracted to the national cause rather than be subjugated by it.

Let’s now head north-east from the Adriatic shores to Eastern Galicia, from a rural landscape to an urban environment, on the banks of the Prut River, were lies the city of Kolomyia.

Kolomyja/Kołomyja/Kolomea, was a city of about 40,000 inhabitants and a regional centre in the southeast of Galicia. Kolomyja's demographic structure was typical of the region. While the majority of the city's population were Jews and Poles, the rural surroundings were mostly inhabited by Ukrainian speakers (or Ruthenian speakers as they were traditionally called). Following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Kolomyja, as the most of Eastern Galicia, was taken in November 1918 by Ukrainian forces and under the rule of the short-lived West Ukrainian People's Republic. From July 1919, after the Polish-Ukrainian war, the Allies had authorized Poland to occupy Eastern Galicia and temporarily assigned the region to the Polish Republic but did not make a final decision on the status of the region until March 1923 when the Conference of Ambassadors recognized Polish borders. Nevertheless, the Polish authorities treated the territory like an integral part of the Polish state from the beginning, while Ukrainian activists continued to claim an independent Ukrainian state and did not recognize Polish state institutions. In such a context the local Ukrainian (in official Polish usage still "Ruthenian") boys' gymnasium received a lot of attention and became a symbol of national antagonism in the multi-ethnic region.

In 1892 the Ukrainian gymnasium in Kolomyja was founded, strengthening city's position as an educational centre in southeastern Galicia. The school attracted not only the children of the relatively small Ukrainian-speak-

ing intelligentsia of the city but above all peasants' sons from the region. It developed successfully and the number of its students eventually exceeded that of the Polish gymnasium founded years before. The Ukrainian gymnasium not only contributed significantly to the development of local Ukrainian intelligentsia, but also became a hotbed of political activism. During the Ukrainian takeover in Eastern Galicia in November 1918 and the rule of the short-lived West Ukrainian People's Republic, the director of the Ukrainian gymnasium in Kolomyja, Prokop Mostovyč, played a prominent role in local politics, and several professors held positions in the new Ukrainian administration. When the competing nationalist claims on Eastern Galicia as the nucleus of a Ukrainian nation state or part of a Polish nation-state led to the Polish-Ukrainian war in 1918/19, numerous professors and students of the gymnasium joined the Ukrainian army. If it was seen by Ukrainian activists as an essential instrument of social advancement, it came under criticism from Polish activists as an anti-state institution in the early 1920s.

After the Polish victory and the de facto integration of Eastern Galicia into the Polish Republic in the summer of 1919, the Ukrainian gymnasium in Kolomyja remained a centre of resistance to Polish rule in the region and repeatedly made the headlines of the local press. In Kolomyja, several students of the Ukrainian gymnasium were charged with spreading Ukrainian propaganda, acts of violence, and sabotage. Overall, the *Gazeta Kołomyjska*

argued, it was especially the students who caused unrest in the countryside. The Polish newspaper did not consider these incidents as individual acts but blamed the spirit of education in the Ukrainian gymnasium. As a commentator warning of Ukrainian nationalist incitement of the youth wrote: “as the school goes, so goes the younger generation.” What is denounced here as an anti-state education from a Polish nationalist perspective could also be interpreted positively as “national education” from a Ukrainian nationalist perspective.

In Kolomyja, the accusations of anti-state activities by students and teachers in 1922/23 provided a pretext to question the Ukrainian gymnasium’s right to exist. A series of articles in the *Gazeta Kołomyjska* cast doubt on whether the teaching content taught in the Ukrainian high school corresponded to the Polish curriculum and criticized the local Polish school authorities for their leniency towards the Ukrainian educational institution. It was not until October 1923 that the local school authorities (due to an intervention by the Ministry of Education in Warsaw) finally intervened when students of the Ukrainian gymnasium systematically destroyed the Polish state coat of arms in the classrooms. Several classes were dissolved and several teachers suspended. Director Mostovyč, however, remained in his post. In 1924, a new law favored the introduction of “utraquist” (bilingual) primary schools. While Polish-speaking schools were hardly affected, a large part of the existing Ukrainian-speaking primary schools

were converted. In fact, as Ukrainian activists argued, these bilingual schools were Polish-speaking schools. Instead of a better understanding between Poles and Ukrainians, the new law further fueled the struggle for Ukrainian schools and intensified nationalist agitation in the countryside. Three years later, the Polish government ordered the introduction of Ukrainian as a compulsory subject in Polish gymnasia in areas inhabited by Ukrainians. While Polish nationalists considered this to be a concession to the Ukrainians and strongly protested this measure, Ukrainian activists feared a similar development to that of primary schools.

Even though efforts for an independent Ukrainian state lapsed after the final integration of East Galicia into the Polish Republic in 1923, minority rights within the Polish Republic remained a contentious issue. The demand for “national education” through schools continued to play a prominent role. This was true not only for Ukrainians, but also for other minorities in the Polish Republic. In Jewish circles, too, “national education” became an increasingly important topic in the interwar period.

We should therefore also take a look at the third (and largest) demographic group in the city of Kolomyja – people who identified primarily as Jews. Experiences with anti-Semitism in the course of the formation of the Polish state contributed to the distancing of large sections of the Jewish population from assimilation into Polish culture. Interestingly, the Ukrainian gymnasium played a role in

this process in Kolomyja. While at the turn of the century Jewish students in Kolomyja, as in other Galician cities, still attended the Polish gymnasium and only sporadically the Ukrainian one, the number of Jewish students at the Ukrainian gymnasium increased significantly around World War I. In 1920, two-thirds of the students of Jewish religion in Kolomyja attended the Ukrainian gymnasium. Polish newspaper argued, the Ukrainian school owed the growing number of students not least to a mass admission of Jews who had difficulties in the Polish gymnasium. The argument was obviously primarily aimed at depreciating the Ukrainian gymnasium and underpinning the superiority of Polish culture and education. And it was a desperate attempt to explain why Jewish students chose the Ukrainian school instead of the Polish one. Even though Polish nationalists often accused Jews of “treason” or collaboration with the Ukrainians in the Polish-Ukrainian war, it seemed to them natural that Jews attended Polish schools, as they had done for decades.

There was also another logical reason for Jews to attend the Ukrainian gymnasium as national-Jewish minded parents feared Polish assimilation of their children in the Polish school. The readiness of Ukrainian activists to recognize Jews as a distinct and equal nationality, as signaled by the Ukrainian authorities in 1918, could also be a factor. While in the Polish school students of Jewish religion identified or were identified with the Polish nationality, in the Ukrainian one, most Jewish students did not profess to

be of Ukrainian, Polish, or German nationality, but rather of an “other” nationality, which was obviously the Jewish nationality.

The national aspirations of local Jewish activists are also evident in their efforts to found a Jewish gymnasium in Kolomyja. In the mid-1920s, a private Jewish girls gymnasium was finally established, which doesn't mean it was not subject to criticism. The Zionist newspaper cited the local Jewish girls' gymnasium as a drastic example and argued that, unlike other Jewish schools, its curriculum did not include any Hebrew lessons and did not differ from non-Jewish schools. Moreover, in Kolomyja's Jewish gymnasium, Sunday rather than Saturday was the day off from school. *Nasz Głos* considered this to be unique for a Jewish school in Poland, and probably for the whole world. The Zionist newspaper blamed not only directors and teachers for the lack of national education, but the entire Jewish society. Jewish society and politicians – at the local level as well as at the state level – would pay far too little attention to the school- *Nasz Głos* considered this indifference to issues of education to be a serious threat to the future of the Jewish nation: “Like school, like society”.

What these stories show are that “national education”, mainly the language of instruction, played indeed an important role in the post-imperial nation-state from the moment of its establishment. These nationalizing claims were not only somehow obviously challenged by national and linguistic minorities, as the case of Kolomyja most

clearly shows. The nationalizing stance in the school had to reckon with the situation on the ground. State officials discovered that they must nationalize the members of their own nation – like the Slavophones of Prekmurje – and to avoid deterring a rural population from leaving schools with the state language –as in the case of former Croatian-language pupils of Mošćenička Draga shows. On a more general level it was often the result of serious shortages of qualified teachers that obstructed another important function of the education: raising the cultural level of the population. It was therefore sometimes a delicate balancing act, like in Romania to retain teachers who were not qualified to teach in the state language, expand the number of schools with instruction in the state language and train all teachers in the required standard variety of the state language. Beneath the nationalizing façades, cultural, economic, political, and social features of the Habsburg period-with a different degree in different case-still shaped local conditions.



*The private bases of the
growing state intervention in
the economy. Bohemian textile
firms and the transformation of
the flax market, 1915-1925*

The First World War is considered at the origin of the state-led economy. In the inter-war period, the erection of customs barriers throughout Central and Eastern Europe ended up with unprecedented state intervention in import and export activities. However, what economic organisations and human realities lie behind these general assertions?

**From a constrained partnership between
public and private during the Great War...**

Company archives allow us to trace a non-linear history, made up of uncertainties, relationships between people, and sometimes of passion. The flax lends itself particularly to a European history on a human scale. The Austro-Hungarian flax industry, concentrated in northeast

Bohemia in the Trautenau/Trutnov district, was the work of mostly medium-sized, family-run businesses that relied as little as possible on external financing. They bought the fibre they processed essentially from the Western part of Russia, which supplied 80% of the flax world needs at the beginning of the 20th century. Riga was by then the first world flax stock exchange. Wholesale trade houses centralised there the flax grown inland, checked its quality and exported it to the West.

With the war beginning, how could northeast Bohemian companies obtain flax, when Austrian production was insufficient and Russia, on the enemy's side?

Franz Kluge was a partner of the J.A. Kluge linen and jute firm, one of the oldest linen companies in Trautenau; in 1914, he was put on active service into the uniform department of the War Ministry in Vienna (*13. Abteilung*).

“In the course of his duties”, he remembered some thirty years later, referring to himself in the third person, “the engineer Kluge asked, at the beginning of 1915, to be commissioned to look for ways of supplying his spinning mill and other Austrian flax mills [... He] made a first trip to Sweden to negotiate with the suppliers of flax who had passed from Russia to this neutral country”. Indeed, Russia continued to export flax westwards via Arkhangelsk. “On several trips throughout the war, he managed to buy more than 10,000 tonnes of flax from Russia, thanks to the large warehouses of a friendly firm in Sörforsa in the province of Hälsingland”.

This was most likely the Holma-Helsinglands spinning and weaving mill, of which a cousin of the Kluges, Franz Wenzel Kaulich, had become the director in 1905. "In spite of great difficulties, by changing the method several times, he also managed to transport this flax to Austria [Inland] with the exception of 1,500 tons; until our troops, by occupying [in 1918] the flax-growing territories of Poland and Lithuania, could once again supply the rear with raw materials".

The Kluges seem to have been well connected in many ways. In 1903, other cousins of them, the Etrichs, had opened a flax mill in Russia near Vitebsk, that employed over 2,000 workers. According to their account book in foreign currencies, kept between 1908 and 1923, they bought flax to merchants who acted as intermediaries between peasants and industrialists, in the absence of a central linen market in Russia. One of them was a "Mr. Isaac Lewin". His name also appears from 1915 onward in the financial commitments abroad of the biggest firm in Trautenau, Faltis Heirs, together with another new supplier, the Swede Axel Lehman. Before 1914, Faltis Heirs, like most of the Trautenau flax and linen industrialists, would have bought flax directly in the Riga stock exchange. During the war, they had to query themselves for brokers. It is likely that they made the acquaintance with Lewin (and perhaps Lehman) through the Etrichs or the Kluges.

Faltis Heir's directorial correspondence, although partly erased and difficult to read, confirms the existence of a

financial association with the firm J. A. Kluge. That left proxy Russ with mixed feelings, as expressed in September 1917 when reviewing the financial year for Carl Faltis, head of the Faltis family:

“This Swedish affair is complicated and the accounting records are unclear, as the firm J.A.K. [sic] never gave us exact figures for the arrivals of the linen. We had to bear the bulk of the losses; we were told that the missing goods were lost en route and the transport was at the risk of the client”.

But the firms had no choice: war forced them to move closer to each other. Not only because of the circumstances, but also because the linen production, like the rest of the textile industry, had been integrated into the war economy in 1916 in the form of a compulsory “War Group” (*Kriegsverband*). However, the military administration was dependent on the biggest companies to find and buy the raw materials. One year after Kluge had begun his hazardous voyages, a joint stock company for the purchase of flax (*Österreichische Flachszentrale A.G.* or OFAG) was established under the control of the War and Trade Ministries; its director, Alexander Vidéky, was the second proxy of Faltis Heirs.

Not only the disruption of trade routes, but also that of money flows hindered trade relationships since the start of the war. With inflation, loans from the central Austro-Hungarian Bank to the governments and the decline

of the bullion and foreign currency cover ratio of the Austro-Hungarian crown, Austro-Hungarian companies were forced to pay for imports in foreign currency. So Lehman was paid in Swedish crowns by the Faltis Heirs firm. However, declining trade meant the decline of monetary reserves from export of goods. Thus, the Empire increasingly had to rely on ad hoc financial arrangements, concluding by Austrian and Hungarian bank consortia with neutral countries. Those were nominally for financing the delivery of goods, with a twist that enabled to show higher reserve amounts on the balance of the central bank. Oil and petroleum were such goods that neutral countries like Switzerland or Sweden eagerly bought from Austria. In the Swiss case in 1917 it was the federal state that paid for the oil 53,9 million Swiss francs, in Sweden a consortium of private companies advanced 8,4 million Swedish crown in 1918. At both occasions, the payment to Austria was advanced before delivery and credited to an account which the Austro-Hungarian Bank indicated among its foreign currency deposits, in order to support the exchange rate of the Austro-Hungarian crown.

Some of the foreign money was used to pay for imports and put at disposal of the firms by the banks. In September 1917, as already mentioned, Director Russ explained that Faltis Heirs possessed two accounts in Swedish crowns, one at the Bohemian Discount Bank and one in Germany at the *Deutsche Bank*. Together they amounted to 270 000 Swedish crowns, partly to cover the firm's own needs,

partly aiming at selling the currency to other flax and linen firms. Furthermore, Faltis Heirs had remittance in Stockholm for 30 000 roubles, an amount secured in a bank in Petersburg, which would be payed in Berlin as soon as the peace would be signed.

The Central Powers – Germany and Austria-Hungary – thus relied on banks and company networks for supplies and for acquiring the foreign currency, necessary to continue import of crucial materials and food. This gave the entrepreneurs some leeway. When the food situation became catastrophic in the Trautenau district in June 1918, the textile industrialists, exasperated by the ‘glaring impertiousness of our supply administration’, decided to divert the flax supply circuit. They planned to bring back ‘ten to twenty wagons of foodstuffs’ bought in occupied Galicia and Russian Poland; with, notably, the complicity of the local prefecture, which agreed to requisition in Krakow the railway equipment they needed.

...To the insertion of the Central Eastern states in the new East European trade after 1918

The proclamation of Czechoslovakia on 28 September 1918 first did not change anything in this association between State and companies, which was both forced and pragmatic; and that until the end of the war economy, i.e.

on 1st September 1921 in the case of flax. Therefore, on 27 March 1919, the Ministry of Trade of the new state requisitioned the Russian flax formerly stored by the OFAG in Trutnov/Trautenau, originally destined for the Hungarian part of the former Empire, because Czechoslovakia was at war with Hungary. However, the Ministry made it available to the domestic industry through the *Sdružení lnářských přádelen* or *Verein der Flachsspinner* (Cooperative of Flax Spinning Mills), which succeeded the OFAG and whose headquarters were placed in Trutnov.

In the following years, it became clear that fitting into the shifting commercial relationships of Central Eastern Europe would not be easy. Financial ties were restored slowly; control on the flow of money was kept for a long time, not least because the successor states had to convert the currency of the now defunct Habsburg Monarchy into their new, sovereign legal tender. To disentangle the complex web of obligations between the businesses now operating in different states was complicated, full of legal and practical pitfalls, and finally in need of bilateral agreements between the states. Furthermore, as the new currencies were often not convertible, imports were still paid for from export revenues, as it was hard to acquire foreign currency otherwise.

In the same time, between 1919 and 1921, there was a very strong demand for raw materials, like flax, due to the reconstruction and the slow resumption of supply circuits to the New World, which was hindering the recovery of

such import industries like the cotton one. However, the flax market remained confused until the early 1920s. Its traditional territories were affected by the war between Poland and Russia. Russia as a world provider of flax collapsed and never recovered its level of pre-war time. German and Austrian commercial fleets were strongly diminished by the seizure of their boats ordered by the Peace treaties, while the new borders with Poland temporarily disrupted the trade by train. At soon as founded, Lithuanian state put flax trade and export under its monopole, although it was by far not so effective in trading than the Riga stock exchange before.

Northeast Bohemian flax and linen industrialists, now Czechoslovakian citizens, found it difficult to regain a foothold. In 1919, they played the Slavic card: through individual buyers from the Czech diaspora in southern Russia, they imported flax via Ukraine and the Black Sea. For its part, the Ukrainian Ministry of Supply sent a delegation to Prague in the name of the Denikin government, offering flax and hemp in exchange for manufactured goods. In spring 1920, Czechoslovakian Legionnaires, former prisoners now fighting in the Russian civil war, brought a certain amount of flax with them when they were repatriated through Vladivostok.

In 1920, during the Russian-Polish war, the now independent Baltic republics were briefly the focus of attention for supplying Europe with flax and wood. The Cooperative of Flax Spinning Mills, supported by the Czechoslovakian

Consulate in Riga, tried to find a place in the middle of the British and German trade war for this export. However, the uncertainty of local payments was great. Neither the Bohemian flax companies nor Czechoslovakia saw themselves risking a lot in this game that they did not master. They were generally content to buy from foreign firms, especially the flax arriving at the mouth of the Elbe, in the port of Hamburg. There Czechoslovakia had obtained a free zone, thank the internationalization of the Elbe River by the Peace treaties.

From 1921 onwards, Russia slowly returned to the flax market. An exchange of trade missions in the spring of 1921 was followed by an agreement in early June 1922 between Prague and Moscow. In 1924 and 1925, flax and hemp imports were high, accounting for more than 95% of Czechoslovakia's textile exports from the USSR. Still the two countries did not have diplomatic relations; they signed a formal trade agreement only in 1935. Moreover, the Union of Textile Industrialists, led by cotton manufacturers close to the Czech National Democracy, was quite hostile to the recognition of the USSR.

As a result, individual purchases remained the rule. Via foreign trading houses, mainly German, but not exclusively, firms freed from collective constraints bought at the best market price. The statistics of the trade between Czechoslovakia and USSR show that raw or semi-worked flax were exchanged for linen thread and jute sacks, as well as wool and cotton products. Often the same firms did

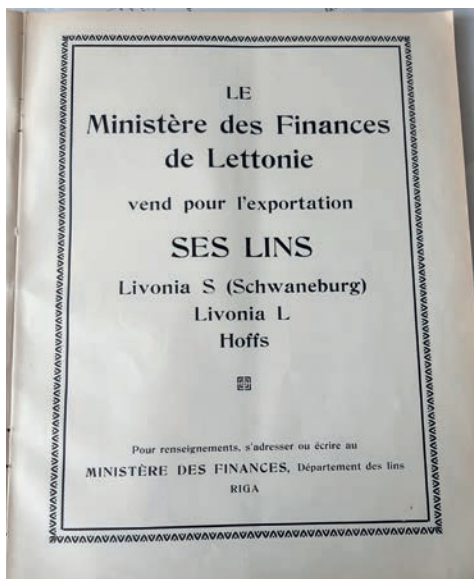
this trade, as processing linen and jute use close technologies. They bought the soviet flax raw or half-processed, and sold it back to USSR when processed, with in addition jute products. Possibly, they also added cotton goods, as poly-activity was the rule in the Bohemian linen region. This trade was financed by short-term loans from Czech banks, which otherwise refused to engage in the Eastern neighbour. It relied partly on foreign trading houses, partly on direct purchases, for example at the Charkov fair.

To sum up, the war brought new relations between the state and the private economy, based on their interdependence. The state imposed a centralized control over the flow of money and goods indispensable for the war, but partly delegated this control to the biggest banks and companies. Indeed, one of the important lessons of the period from 1914 until 1918 was that the state and the private sector had to find new and more comprehensive ways of coordinating their actions. Many of these arrangements, initially imagined as transitory, were brought over to the twenties and thirties. After 1918, customs and different laws fragmented the former unified imperial space. East Central, Eastern and Danube Europe became the field where France, Belgium, Italy and Great Britain competed, trying to take advantage of the dissolution of the Empires.

From the new states and their firms, it required a good deal of skills and agility to insert themselves in this new, volatile power balance. Some of the latter regained a foot-

hold by revitalizing their former business ties with Western companies. That went surprisingly easily, as if the war had been a mere parenthesis. In the countries where the economy was weak and the government had clear policy goals, the state intervened more and more in economy. In other ones like Czechoslovakia, whose Western part had reached the level of development of Western Europe before 1914, the state, which beside that had no clear economic policy, did not wish to deprive itself of the assistance of the enterprises. They were just as capable, if not more so, than the state agents, of orienting themselves in the very uncertain international context that followed the Great War in Central and Eastern Europe.





A (post)imperial context without an Empire?

What, hopefully, the selected texts have shown is a more nuanced picture of the transition from the Habsburg Empire to its successor states, from those newly established in its wake to those that incorporated its parts. Although Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania were all nominally nation-states, and while even Yugoslavia claimed to be made up of “three tribes of the same nation,” these states remain difficult to label for the historian, and even more difficult to see as ideal-type nation-states. The same can even be said of the Kingdom of Italy, the only larger state that annexed a relatively small part of former Austro-Hungarian imperial territory. To use the historian Pieter Judson’s phrase, these successor states could perhaps be better described as “mini-empires.” This struggle to function as a nation-state becomes more visible when the point of comparison is shifted to Transylvania, which was incorporated into the Kingdom of Romania, or the former Austro-Hungarian territories controlled by Slovene, Croat, and Serb authorities, which were then unified with the Kingdom of Serbia.

In all the cases mentioned here, it is hard to trace one coherent nation-state model that was successfully imposed from above or accepted from below without contestation. As one examines these processes from the local level, one must abandon the idea of a genuine, natural, necessary model. Analysis of how successor states functioned at the local level reveals that these states started out (and in many ways continued to be) patchworks which retained Habsburg-era features. This is true in terms of elements as varied as legal heritage, economic ties, personal biographies, collective patterns of identification, and informal practices of interacting with the state. The heterogeneous character of these states and their societies point toward a much more differentiated discussion of what a “national” model may be and if any of these imagined “national” models could exist without the influence of the historical experience of the Habsburg imperial framework.

This is not to say that there was no rupture with the past in 1918. Our local cases show plenty of rupture — in particular in those territories that underwent the experience of fascist Italy — and there is strong evidence that by the end of the 1920s deeper changes were underway that affected the continuity of the Habsburg legacy. And yet, in these nations-states, and particularly in their post-Habsburg regions, social and national heterogeneity were real and consequential, most visibly through the resilience and importance of Hungarian- and German-speakers in

Romanian Transylvania, or the continued translation of Hungarian authors by Italian Fiumian intellectuals.

Regional economies present an interesting case in point regarding continuity. While the Austro-Hungarian Empire disappeared as a state, its business networks survived, providing a sense of the structural survival of Austria-Hungary and of the whole Central and Eastern European economic space. The nationalization of businesses certainly affected the economy, but it did not thoroughly nationalize economic life, and certainly not in the way that it was expected or imagined to. Hungarian capitalists, and even more those based in Vienna or parts of Germany, saved their business “empires” by partnering with local businessmen with whom they shared mutual benefits. If we switch our focus to social history, we see that an overlooked feature of this transition process is the rise of these intermediaries — an unforeseen by-product of nationalization and the First World War. Further, though political concerns and nationalization drives changed the relations between politics and the economy, there is still a duality that should be seen. As the case of the Harácséks family in Baia Mare shows, individuals and groups could preserve their importance in economic life even after losing their previous political standing. Administrative and political elites were exchanged in cities, but the private sector was spared such radical changes. Private business still flourished, regardless of belonging to the “wrong” ethnic background.

While some private businesses flourished, problems still lingered in the supply of food and fuel. These issues were tied to the effects of war (1914–1918) and the transition from war to peace (1918–1923). During and after the war, food and the issues of providing food — or of “goods” more broadly — was the primary public concern for people. According to historian Rudolf Kučera, for example, roughly 250 hunger demonstrations took place across the Bohemian lands in 1917. Public protests became increasingly frequent as the food supply system in the Empire fell apart in the last years of the war. The one in Erzsébetfalva, in the outskirts of Budapest, is a case in point. The issue centered on the fact that limited food supplies of limited quality had to be distributed. Who should distribute the food? The answer in the outskirts of Budapest was for the social democrats to organize non-state systems of food supply for industrial workers in the city. As a result — an unexpected one at that — the workers’ movement and socialist parties grew, a common occurrence across the former Empire in fact. While questions related to socialist participation in bourgeois governments seemed to have created internal crises within the parties in the Habsburg Empire, the support for striking workers and other citizens helped them recover their previous influence. By the end of the war, social democrats were a force to be reckoned with, and their support is an almost forgotten but quite important outcome of the war that influenced the post-war transition.

The relations between the state and the private economy are another sphere shaped by World War One and the post-imperial transition. War and postwar created new relations between the state and the private economy based on their interdependence, and extension of centralized control over resources and the flow of goods and money. One of the important lessons of the war was that the state and the private sector had to find ways of coordinating their actions for well-defined goals. Yet, it was not necessarily a strong state hand directing the economy. Many of these state and private economy arrangements were brought over to the post-WWI era, initially imagined as transitory, but left in place longer than expected, despite the surprisingly quick revival of business networks between the former Monarchy and Western Europe, mainly France and Belgium. The idea of state intervention did not go away too, coming back in full swing after the Great Depression. That a determined intervention of the state in the economy requires, as the Central, Eastern and Balkan European nations between 1918 and 1938 show, either a weak economy or a strong state following a clear economic policy. Neither of these conditions applied to Czechoslovakia. The west of the country had already reached the level of development of Western Europe before 1914. The state had no clear economic policy, nor did it wish to deprive itself of the assistance of the valuable auxiliaries of the enterprises that had emerged under the Empire. They were just as capable,

if not more so, than its agents, of orienting themselves in the very uncertain international context that followed the Great War in Central and Eastern Europe.

Education, or at least elementary and high school education, demonstrates further the complexities brought on by nationalization and, even more, the processes that it triggered. Every one of the new states, from the moment of their establishment, adopted policies regarding language use in an attempt to drive forward national education. However, as many local cases show, these efforts quickly became contested, and not only by the “usual suspects” — ethnic and linguistic minorities — but even by the same members of the imagined national community. This resistance points to an important fact that may seem strange from today’s perspective: across Europe at that time, it was entirely common for people not to know that they “belonged” to a nation or, even more, that a single genuinely acceptable model of the nation existed. Tied up in the complications of nationalization was another phenomenon that bedeviled authorities: the lack of appropriate teaching personnel. This shortage exposed a crucial tension. On the one hand, the state needed to deliver education for the population, while on the other hand, efforts to nationalize school systems meant that only some teachers could be entrusted with this task. Balancing these dueling concerns meant that beneath the nationalizing façades, there was a lot more happening at the local level in terms of accommodation, compromise, and conflict.

A further question arises on the topic of individuals' reactions to the drastic changes around them. Was the First World War a mass traumatic event? In terms of human losses and various aspects of crises on the home front, the war had a huge impact on the population's life, and indeed it was a trauma. But can the same be said about the end of the war and the new reshaping of borders? Did the post-war redrawing of borders generate national traumas? In historical memory, particularly in Hungary, the Treaty of Trianon is seen as a traumatic event, a national tragedy driven by the violent abuse of power by new nation-states and the Entente. Similarly, the Treaty of Rapallo was to a certain extent a national trauma for the Serb, Croat, and Slovene Kingdom (Yugoslavia), in that it left purported co-nationals within Italy's borders. In both cases, the establishment of new nation-state borders set in motion population migrations. However, most of the new national minorities remained where they were before 1918. Mass expulsions were not part of the post-imperial Habsburg transition, though individuals and groups were expelled at times. Migrations did occur, sometimes in larger numbers, even for typical national and political reasons: joining one's new national "homeland," or entering into a political community to which one felt a greater affinity. In sum, migration was driven by a broad set of factors, including material, intellectual, political, and national considerations. Quite often, it was not national identification that caused an individual to gather their things and leave.

Identifications, more specifically collective identifications, are probably among the most fascinating features of the Habsburg and post-Habsburg world. Regional identifications, and similar feelings of belonging to a local community or a local homeland, contributed to the formation of a sense of self for people across the Habsburg Empire. These regional or local identifications did not expire with the Empire: even after the creation of nation-states, rather than — or often in parallel with — thinking of themselves as Austrians or Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, or Czechoslovaks, Slovenes or Yugoslavs, Italians, or Romanians, many people identified as Tyroleans, Styrians, Prekmurjan Slavophones, Moravians, Fiumians, and Maramuresians. These identifications had their roots in imperial experiences and institutions, and they continued to drive a sense of distinction between “us” and “them.” In many cases, regional identifications held primacy even if members of the regional community shared a common (or similar) language or religion with those taken to be “co-nationals” by nationalist activists. New nation-states imposing nationalization “from above” were quickly forced to reckon with local conditions and local experiences. Central governments could be surprised that seemingly mundane local issues, such as the imposition of daylight savings time, could galvanize popular support for regionalism, giving meaning to feelings of regional specificity. The transition period resulted not only in Habsburg citizens becoming Austrians, Hungarians, Yugoslavs, Italians, Czechoslovaks,

and Germans, but also compelled them to perceive their distinctiveness separate from an alleged normative central model.

All of these raise another question: was the nation-state the sole model and the logical replacement for the Habsburg Empire? In reality, visions of new statehood were quite diverse and not necessarily centered around the nation-state. These visions could be massive, regional projects, or rather local in character and temporary in their realization. Some attempted to preserve traditional dynastic monarchic symbols and institutions, others sought to do away with these altogether and implement a republic, while still others even negotiated some sort of combination of the two. Envisioning state-political futures was not only a speculative exercise reserved for well-known political theorists or public intellectuals. On the micro-level, for example, socialists in Fiume proposed the city's elevation to an independent republic under the protection of the Third International. Faced with choosing between Italian and Yugoslav annexation, working-class organizers considered a tiny city-state republic to be a realistic solution for the municipality's multiethnic populace and economic function as a port for Austro-Hungarian imports and exports. Other bottom-up initiatives mushroomed across post-Habsburg space in the immediate postwar months, as evidenced by the multinational Banat Republic or the nationalist German Southern Moravia. In other cases, locals pursued creative annexation plans: among multiple

schemes developed in regionalist Tyrol was the creation of an “Alpine state” that would be free of red Vienna. Some of these alternative visions were temporarily realized, others remained in the realm of political imagination. But they all remained distinct in character from the nation-state, and pointed to how that model was not a natural outcome of imperial collapse, but rather a product of many various and intertwined contingencies — some of which were imposed rather than negotiated locally.

This brings us to the last question, the image of the empire and the imperial past. It is hardly surprising that local political activists repeatedly referred to the Habsburg past to clarify their visions for a new state and society. In the first months after the collapse of the Habsburg state, euphoria about the founding of new, democratic states dominated public discourse. Quite soon, however, skepticism towards the “new” became louder and louder, even to the point that one could talk about a certain Habsburg nostalgia. These more positive re-evaluations were not restricted to groups and individuals that became national minorities in the new states. Critical attitudes toward the new central governments, driven by different regional or political interests, also became grounds for positive references to the “good old” Habsburg Monarchy. Still, the roots of this discourse had more to do with a search for the stability of the pre-war years than with political support for a return to the monarchy and the restoration of the Habsburgs. While the monarchy and the dynasty lost

its legitimacy due to the experiences of the First World War, the Habsburg Empire — or even different ideas of “an Empire” — continued to exist and were reference points for locals all over the successor states. From this perspective too, the nation-state was not able to make a clean cut with the past, and the social, economic, cultural, and historic experiences of everyday people were still tied to the Habsburg Empire.

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Images

Our friends – the Swiss, Belgian, French, Romanian, Czech, Yugoslav ones. Local and transnational economic networks and the fate of Austro-Hungarian business elites – Economic transition

Leó Lánczy: The truth of the new generation always excites me!
Graphic by Henrik Major, 1919. OSZK, B1 PKG.1919/44

“Dangerous Riots” in the “hot summer” of 1917 – rising labour movement and urban-rural conflict during and after the First World War

Female munition workers filling shells with explosives at the Skoda Works in Pilsen. Imperial War Museums, BARBANTI GIAN G (MR) COLLECTION, IWM Q 112680

Social Democratic Peace Demonstration in Budapest Vasárnapi Újság, vol. 64., no. 48., 02.12.1917

Remember the cereal law and your hunger! Vote social democratic! Don't vote for the bread sellers! Election poster of the Social Democratic Workers' Party in the Austrian parliamentary elections of 1920, designed by Mihály Biró, a Hungarian Social Democratic artist who emigrated to Vienna after the fall of the Hungarian dictatorship of the proletariat. OSZK Kisnyomtatványtár (Small Prints Library), B1 PKG.1920/59

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Landeck, 1915. View from the rooftops towards Ladis Castle and the Kausertal Valley. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 69.630 B POR MAG

Wipptal, 1925. A farming family with oxen ploughing the terraced fields. Photo by Therese Zillinger. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 00077544, 147.699 B

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Monarchy or Republic, Nation-State or Micro-State? Central and Southeastern European Visions of Statehood in the First Moments of Post-Imperial Transition, 1918–1920

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Leavers and Remainers: The Self-Fashioning of a Hungarian Administrative Official Leaving Greater Romania – Migration and citizenship

Five rooms in the Hall of Peers were made available for the children of the wagon-dwellers. Képes Krónika, 1920 July–December (vol. 2., no. 27–52.)

Megay Róbert útlevele, 1920. The passport of Róbert Megay. Hungarian Museum of Trade and Tourism (Magyar Kereskedelmi és Vendéglátóipari Múzeum), MKVM VF_2016_92_1

*“The house, in which we lived, has been burned down“.
The Old and the New, the Habsburg Past as a Negative
or a Positive Point of Reference – Discourses*

Interiors – the building of the former Galician Diet in Lviv. Visible war damage – 1918–1919 – Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe 3/41/0/-/998

*A nationalizing façades? Reflections on education
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Postcard of Beltinci (Prekmurje) from 1943. Pokrajinska in študijska knjižnica Murska Sobota (Murska Sobota Regional and Study Library)

Kolomyja (Ukraine), I. Gymnasium (Polish gymnasium), 1909. Postcard. Biblioteka Narodowa, 15162, uid repozytorium: 769203

*The private bases of the growing state intervention
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Tow. Source: SOKA Trutnov, ‘Firma J. Faltis Heirs’ collection, box 5, inventory no. 129: ‘Flachsspinnerei auf der Reichenberger Ausstellung, 1906‘.

Advertisement: the Latvian Finance ministry exports flax, 1920s. La Lettonie (Latvija), La Revue belge d’importation et d’exportation, Bruxelles, Lebegue (1926)

The port of Riga in winter, 1920s. La Lettonie (Latvija), La Revue belge d’importation et d’exportation, Bruxelles, Lebegue (1926)