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Anna Adorjáni

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INTRODUCTION

Approximations to an Idea on the Move: Non-Territorial Autonomy

In 1907, Manó Buchinger, a member of the leadership of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (SDPH) and the Slovak priest, nation-builder, and deputy in the Hungarian Parliament Ferdinand/Nándor Juriga passed their time in prison debating the nationality issue. Buchinger was incarcerated for socialist agitation, and Juriga, who was allegedly fond of preaching in folk costume, for nationalist agitation. In 1938, Buchinger recollected that it was Juriga who gave him Otto Bauer's *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (*The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*) to nourish their discussions with new arguments.[2] The Austromarxist Otto Bauer advocated for a system of self-determination for the nationalities, with autonomy on a non-territorial basis. "Until then, we had never heard of Bauer," Buchinger recalled.[3] On Buchinger's trips to Vienna, he would visit Bauer's office in the parliament building—"it was an extraordinary pleasure to talk to Bauer, who, though somewhat younger than I, was so superior in knowledge that I could only look up to him with admiration and deep respect."[4] His archives testify that Buchinger, who, as a leading figure in the Hungarian social democratic movement during the years of dualism, had no intention of implementing Bauer's idea of national autonomy, re-read the book and re-interpreted it in the spirit of the interwar years. Detailed notes survived in the Buchinger archives with quotes from authors discussing the nationality question.[5] Three decades would pass before Hungarian experts on the nationality question, such as the revolutionary Lajos Kossuth, the anarcho-syndicalist Ervin Szabó, and the radical Oszkár Jászi, could all appear on the same page with Bauer in Buchinger's notes. My doctoral project aims to provide answers to the question of what pushed these views on nationality apart and then drew them closer together.

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[2] Otto Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (Wien: Brand, 1907).
[3] Manó Buchinger, "Otto Bauer életéből.," October 7, 1938, I/658/1/10, PIL. Manó Buchinger, "Otto Bauer életéből," *Népszava* 66, no. 154 (October 7, 1938): 5.
[4] Buchinger, "Otto Bauer életéből," 5.
[5] Manó Buchinger, "[Buchinger's notes]" (n.d.), V/696/229/310-341, PIL.

A Sort of Ego-Histoire

The initial idea of tracing the interpretations of non-territorial autonomy in late Habsburg Hungary (1848–1918) crystallized in 2018 when I joined the research team of the ERC project *Non-territorial Autonomy – the History of a Traveling Idea*.[6] At the heart of the project was the intellectual work of the fin-de-siècle Austrian jurist and politician Karl Renner. Since in Austria, nationalities lived intermingled, national territorial autonomy was impracticable. Renner was less interested in defining nationality than in how to classify nationality as subject to legal obligations and positive rights.[7] To ensure that nationalities living in a minority within a particular administrative unit had equal representation and rights, Renner introduced the so-called non-territorial principle. Rather than territorial separation, Renner mapped out a legal scheme that provided national groups with political representation and self-government in cultural matters regardless of their place of residence within the state. Renner hoped that with this administrative reorganization, he could extend the life of the multiethnic empire, the framework of which was being pressed from within by competing nationalisms. Renner's idea of cultural autonomy gained momentum and international popularity with the publication of the book of his colleague mentioned above, the Austrian social democrat Otto Bauer.[8] The literature often refers to this non-territorial type of national autonomy as the "Renner-Bauer model."[9] The "Renner-Bauer model" traveled throughout the Russian Empire and among Jewish communities worldwide.[10] In the Interwar period, it gained great

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[6] See: https://ntautonomy.univie.ac.at/en/.

[7] Karl Renner, *Staat und Nation: zur österreichischen Nationalitätenfrage; staatsrechtliche Untersuchung über die möglichen Principien einer Lösung und die juristischen Voraussetzungen eines Nationalitätengesetzes* (Dietl, 1899); Karl Renner [Pseud. Springer, Rudolf], *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie* (Wien, Leipzig: Franz Deuticke, 1906); Karl Renner, *Oesterreichs Erneuerung : politisch-programmatische Aufsätze, I.*, vol. I, III vols. (Wien: Brand, 1916); Karl Renner, *Oesterreichs Erneuerung : politisch-programmatische Aufsätze, II.*, vol. II, III vols. (Wien: Brand, 1916); Karl Renner, *Oesterreichs Erneuerung : politisch-programmatische Aufsätze, III.*, vol. III, III vols. (Wien: Brand, 1916). For a short video about Renner's non-territorial autonomy concept of a multinational Austrian federal state, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= raISGl5XNc&ab_channel=EntanEuropeanNon-TerritorialAutonomyNetwork.

[8] Otto Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). For the original version, see: Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*.

[9] Ephraim Nimni, *National Cultural Autonomy and Its Contemporary Critics* (London: Routledge, 2005), 10.

[10] For the Russian Empire and Jewish communities in the Russian Empire, see: Timo Aava, "Refugees and Diaspora Nationalism: National Activists in Estonian Settlements in Siberia and Non-Territorial Autonomy between 1917 and 1920," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, January 11, 2023, 1–23, https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2023.2166545. Simon Rabinovitch, ed., *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism: Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States*, The Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European

popularity in revolutionary and Soviet Ukraine, partially in the Early Soviet Union, the Baltic States, German communities, and international minority protection organizations.[11] Experts on non-territorial autonomy still tend to quote Bauer's work when reflecting on the theory's origins.[12]

At the initial project meetings, we often discussed the origins of the model of non-territorial autonomy. We understood that the seeds of Renner's idea had been present in Austrian legal thought ever since the Kremsier Constitution Draft of 1848-49.[13] Austrian

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Jewry (Waltham, Mass: Brandeis University Press, 2012); Tatiana Khripachenko, "Beyond the Borders of the Fallen Empire: André Mandelstam's Project for Non-Territorial Autonomy," *Nationalities Papers* 50, no. 5 (September 2022): 963–82, https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.22. Roni Gechtman, "Nationalising the Bund? Zionist Historiography and the Jewish Labour Movement," *East European Jewish Affairs* 43, no. 3 (December 2013): 249–64, https://doi.org/10.1080/13501674.2013.852802. Roni Gechtman, "Conceptualizing National-Cultural Autonomy: From the Austro-Marxists to the Jewish Labor Bund," *Jahrbuch Des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts / Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook*, no. IV (2005): 17–49. See also the forthcoming article: Matthias Battis, "On Common Ground: Soviet Nationalities Policy and the Austro-Marxist Premise," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2023. For Jewish communities, see: Kay Schweigmann-Greve, "Zwischen personaler Autonomie und Zion. Die „nationale Frage" in der jüdisch-russischen Arbeiter-bewegung zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für die Geschichte des Widerstandes und der Arbeit*, no. 19 (2011): 13–60. See also Chapter VI. „Die Kristlichen Minderheiten" in Börries Kuzmany, *Brody : Eine Galizische Grenzstadt Im Langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Böhlau, 2011), https://doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_437213.

[11] For an overview, see: Börries Kuzmany, "Non-Territorial National Autonomy in Interwar European Minority Protection and Its Habsburg Legacies," in *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands*, ed. Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley, First edition, History and Theory of International Law (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 315–42. For revolutionary and Soviet Ukraine, see: Olena Palko, "Constructing Identities, Ascribing Nationalities: The Polish Minority in Ukraine During Late-Imperial and Early-Soviet Rule," *Euxeinos* 12, no. 34 (June 2022), https://doi.org/10.55337/RAZA9737. Jonathan Raspe, "Soviet National Autonomy in the 1920s: The Dilemmas of Ukraine's Jewish Population," *Nationalities Papers* 50, no. 5 (September 2022): 886–905, https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2021.109. See also Yuki Murata's upcoming doctoral dissertation with the working title "Nationalization in Revolutionary Ukraine, 1905–1923: Ukrainian Self-Determination and Russian Nationality." For Estonia, see: Timo Aava, "Minorities and the State. Non-Territorial Autonomy in Estonia in the Late Tsarist and Interwar Periods" (Vienna, University of Vienna, 2023). For German communities, see: Oskar Mulej, "Territorial and Non-Territorial Aspects in the Autonomist Proposals of the Sudeten German Party, 1937–38," *Nationalities Papers* 50, no. 5 (September 2022): 942–62, https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2021.61. For international organizations, see: Marina Germane, "Exercising Minority Rights in New Democracies: Germans and Jews in Interwar Poland, Romania, and Latvia (1919–1933)," in *Sovereignty, Nationalism and the Quest for Homogeneity in Interwar Europe*, ed. Emmanuel Dalle Mulle and Davide Rodogno (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023). David J. Smith, Marina Germane, and Martyn Housden, "'Forgotten Europeans': Transnational Minority Activism in the Age of European Integration," *Nations and Nationalism* 25, no. 2 (April 2019): 523–43, https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12401. For Western Europe, see: Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, "Home-rule versus Non-territorial Autonomy? Western European National Movements and Their Views on the Minority Question, 1919–1939," *Nations and Nationalism* 29, no. 2 (April 2023): 482–97, https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12847.

[12] See: Xabier Arzoz, "Karl Renner's Theory of National Autonomy," ed. Ephraim Nimni and Alexandar Pavlović, *Philosophy and Society*, Non-territorial Autonomy as an Enrichment of Representative Democracy, 31, no. 3 (2020): 302, https://doi.org/10.2298/FID 2003301A.

[13] Erwin Viefhaus, *Die Minderheitenfrage und die Entstehung der Minderheitenschutzverträge auf der Pariser Friedenskonferenz 1919 : eine Studie zur Geschichte des Nationalitätenproblems im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Holzner, 1960), 9, 22; Erich Bayer, *Wörterbuch Zur Geschichte: Begriffe u. Fachausdrücke*, 3., überarb. Aufl, Kröners Taschenausgabe ; Bd. 289 (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1974). Paula

politicians and legal scholars were looking for a way to accommodate districts where linguistic and administrative boundaries did not coincide. In a federal system, what could ensure that the local majority did not oppress the minority? How could the law safeguard and sanction the rights of minorities? The idea of establishing national curiae in the provincial assemblies—which is at the heart of Renner's solution—was born in response to these questions.[14] During the initial project meetings, the questions surrounding the evolution of the concept of non-territorial autonomy in Hungary remained unanswered. Did similar ideas take off in Hungary, where the nationality question was also a pressing concern? What ideas were put forward to solve the problem of administering districts where the linguistic and administrative boundaries did not correspond? Or, more broadly, can we talk about a single conceptual space in the Late Habsburg period in the context of non-territorial autonomy? Were political thinkers in Hungary aware of the solution of the two Austromarxists, Renner and Bauer? Finally, if they were, did Hungarian politicians consider implementing their solution? To answer these questions, this dissertation systematically traces the idea of non-territorial autonomy in Late Habsburg Hungary for the first time.

Ways to Skin the Cat

Carrying out the analysis systematically was one of the most significant challenges of this doctoral project. The history of non-territorial autonomy in Hungary in the late Habsburg period was virtually terra incognita. However, the relative abundance of literature in related disciplines offered an entry point to the subject. The nationality question in the Kingdom of Hungary is a highly popular research topic and has an extensive literature.[15]

Geist-Lányi, *Das Nationalitätenproblem auf dem Reichstag zu Kremsier 1848/1849 : ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Nationalitäten in Österreich* (München: Drei-Masken-Verl, 1920). Aladár Dér, "Az osztrák szocialisták brünni nemzetiségi programjáról," *Múltunk* 40, no. 4 (1995): 87. Ludwig Gumplowicz, *Recht der Nationalitäten und Sprachen in Österreich* (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1879), 63–93.

[14] Provincial assembly representatives would be elected based on the nationalities' proportions in the population. As a national representative body (*Nationalcurie*), they could vote on cultural and educational issues according to the interests of the nationality they represented. See the chapter titled *Die 1848er und ihre Überlegungen zu einer national gerechten Neugestaltung der Habsburgermonarchie.* In: Börries Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'" (n.d.).

[15] The writings and source collections of Gábor Kemény G. proved to be valuable resources for this dissertation project, see: Gábor Kemény G., ed., *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korában: 1867 - 1918* (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1952). While the literature on this topic is

Autonomy plans in East-Central Europe are also a well-researched topic.[16] This is particularly true for the interwar period and the present.[17] There are numerous studies on Hungary's federalist tradition and some on Renner and Bauer's autonomy model.[18] I found only a few works on the 1899 social democratic congress in Brünn/Brno, where the division of the Social Democratic Workers' Party into autonomous units along ethnic fault lines was discussed.[19] For many decades, the internal logic of Hungarian political thought did not align with the model based on national curiae, which posed a challenge

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extensive, I would like to acknowledge the following sources, which were particularly helpful in guiding me to some of the key themes explored in this dissertation. Béla Borsi-Kálmán, "A Kossuth-emigráció és a nemzetiségi kérdés. Dilemmák és alternatívák," *Kritika*, no. 12 (1981): 3–4. István Schlett, ed., *A nemzetiségi törvényjavaslat országgyűlési vitája, 1868*, Magyar néző (Budapest: Természet- és Társadalombarát Fejlődésért Közalapítvány, 2002). Péter Hanák, "A nemzeti identitás konstrukciója és problémái," *Múlt és Jövő* 9, no. 2 (4-7): 1997. Jenő Szűcs, *Nemzet és történelem*, Társadalomtudományi Könyvtár (Budapest: Gondolat, 1974). Nándor Bárdi, *Otthon és haza: tanulmányok a romániai magyar kisebbség történetéről*, Magyar Kisebbség Könyvtára (Csíkszereda: Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, 2013). Barna Ábrahám, *Megmaradni vagy beolvadni? A szlovákság polgárosodása a 19. század második felében* (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2016); Holly Case, *The Age of Questions or, A First Attempt at an Aggregate History of the Eastern, Social, Woman, American, Jewish, Polish, Bullion, Tuberculosis, and Many Other Questions over the Nineteenth Century, and Beyond* (Princeton ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018).

[16] See the special issue Zoltán Kántor and Balázs Majtényi, eds., "Autonómia-modellek Erdélyben," *Magyar kisebbség : nemzetpolitikai szemle* 9, no. 31–32 (2004): 1–590.

[17] For the end of WWI: László Bence Bari, "Trans(National) Concepts of Self-Determination and the Future of Central Europe in the Late First World War, 1917–1918" (Budapest, Central European University, 2023). *Kérészállamok Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022). For the interwar period, see: Ferenc Eiler, "A kisebbségi autonómia gondolata és a nemzetközi politika a két világháború közötti Köztes-Európában 1919–1938," *Regio* 20, no. 3 (2009): 179–96. For the present, see: Balázs Dobos, *A Személyi Elvű Kisebbségi Autonómiák Kelet-Közép-Európában* (Budapest: Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont : MTA Kiváló Kutatóhely : Kalligram, 2020). Levente Salat, "Mire jó, és mire nem a személyi elvű kisebbségi autonómia?," *REGIO* 29, no. 1 (2021): 171–81, https://doi.org/10.17355/rkkpt.v29i1.171.

[18] Gábor Egry, "Ausztromarxizmus, nemzeti kérdés, autonómia," *Magyar kisebbség: nemzetpolitikai szemle* 9, no. 35–36 (2005): 135–42. Enikő Gyarmati, "Autonóm nemzetiségek vagy államalkotó nemzetiségek monarchiája?," *Pro Minoritate* 25, no. 4 (2016): 82–92; Zoltán Szász, "Autonómiavágyak és realitások a Habsburg Monarchia alkonyán," *REGIO* 20, no. 3 (2009): 167–78. Gyula Mérei, *Föderációs tervek Délkelet-Európában és a Habsburg-monarchia: 1840-1918* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1965). László Szarka, *Keleti Svájc - illúzió vagy utópia? A Károlyi-kormány Nemzetiségi Minisztériumának működése*, ed. Miklós Zeidler, Nemzet és emlékezet (Budapest: Osiris, 2003). Jana Osterkamp, "Vielfalt ordnen: das föderale Europa der Habsburgermonarchie (Vormärz bis 1918)," Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum 141 (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck et Ruprecht, 2020). Horst Haselsteiner, "Föderationspläne in Südosteuropa," in *Nationalrevolutionäre Bewegungen in Südosteuropa im 19. Jahrhundert* (Wien : Verl. für Geschichte u. Politik : München : Oldenbourg, 1992), 123. Joachim Kühl, *Föderationspläne im Donauraum und in Ostmitteleuropa* (München: Oldenbourg, 1958). Alina Teslaru-Born, "Ideen und Projekte zur Föderalisierung des Habsburgischen Reiches mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Siebenbürgens 1848 – 1918" (Frankfurt am Main, Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität zu Frankfurt am Main, 2005). Wierer, *Föderalismus im Donauraum*.

[19] Dér, "Az osztrák szocialisták brünni nemzetiségi programjáról"; Éva Bóka, "Karl Renner európai föderalizmusa," *Történelmi szemle* 44, no. 3–4 (2002): 345–68. Imre Gonda, "Az osztrák szociáldemokrácia és a Habsburg-monarchia fenntartásának kérdése," *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 6, no. 3 (1960): 123–37. Ferenc Mucsi, "Törekvések a magyarországi szociáldemokrata párt szervezeti reformjára (1890-1914)," *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 27, no. 1 (1981): 47–80. István Máté, ed., *A nemzeti kérdésről: a nemzeti kérdés Lenini elméletének kialakulása ; 1896 - 1914*, Elméleti viták (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvk, 1988).

to the positive reception of the idea of non-territorial autonomy. The nineteenth-century liberal tradition advocated for a unified and "neutral" political nation with equal individual rights to nurture nationality and culture. As a result, other than these studies, which deal only tangentially with the idea of non-territorial autonomy in the context of late Habsburg Hungary, there is a noticeable absence of historiography on this topic.

In order to discern the fundamental tenets of the Austromarxist idea within the works of Hungarian political thinkers, the initial stage of research involved a dissection of the concept of non-territorial autonomy into its constituent components. What is the necessary and sufficient condition to identify or at least associate an idea with the "Renner-Bauer model?" The easiest way to illustrate my approach is the paradox of the Ship of Theseus. There was once a ship sailed by the hero Theseus on his great adventure. Many years later, the ship was preserved in a harbor as a museum piece. As time passed by, some of the ship's wooden planks began to rot and were gradually replaced by new ones. This process continued until all of the original parts had been replaced by new ones. Now, the question arises: can the "restored" ship still be considered the same object as the original? Moreover, suppose someone had collected all of the old, rotten planks and reassembled the ship with them. In this case, which of the two would be considered the original ship? In less metaphorical terms, my doctoral project focuses on the political motivations behind the decisions to either preserve certain elements of the original model or adjust them to better suit local conditions. My thesis focuses on the process of removing and replacing specific elements of the "Renner-Bauer model", and the expertise of the craftsmen involved in constructing and repairing these elements.

To make matters even more complex, none of their contemporaries referred to the idea of Renner and Bauer as non-territorial autonomy—and even less as NTA, as it is known today. German-, Hungarian-, Romanian-, Serbian-, and Slovak-speaking contemporaries called the idea by various names. This is even more true of the texts written throughout the fifty years preceding the work of Renner and Bauer. Non-territorial autonomy is, thus, a metahistorical—and in some ways anachronistic—concept by which historians and political scientists translate various historical concepts and ideas for their contemporaries.[20] Among the terms that late nineteenth and early twentieth century

[20] For anachronistic terms, see: Sami Syrjämäki, *Sins of a Historian: Perspectives on the Problem of Anachronism* (Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2011). Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding

authors most commonly used to refer to non-territorial autonomy were: personal autonomy or autonomy based on the personality principle; cultural autonomy, national autonomy, national cultural autonomy; nationalities' autonomy; extraterritorial autonomy; the curial system, national cadastres; Rennerian autonomy; or simply autonomy. These contemporary designations are indicative of which component of the theory the speaker considered essential: the scatteredness of a nationality due to which territorial autonomy was impossible, the legal personality of a nation, the reform of the electoral system, or equal language usage in public administration. The concept I find most expressive and would prefer to popularize is "two-dimensional [*national and territorial*] federation."[21] This term originated with Renner but unfortunately did not gain widespread use outside its original context, his 1906 book *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie* (Foundations and Development Goals of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy).

From Sources to Narratives

To trace the idea of non-territorial autonomy in Hungary, this doctoral project used two starting points found in the source texts, where it was easy to recognize the imprint of the Renner-Bauer model. The first of these was in the sources on the party meetings in 1903, where the division of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary, SDPH (*Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt*, MSZDP) along linguistic fault lines came to the fore. The SDPH, much like the Austrian and Russian parties, addressed the issue of workers' multilingualism. During these debates, the idea of adopting the Austrian model emerged. The first part of this thesis, "How to Run a Multinational Social Democratic Party?" therefore traces Austromarxist ideas within the Hungarian Social Democratic movement and party structure. The second starting point was at the end of 1918, when structural changes radically increased interest in the non-territorial solution to the nationality question. In the months of transition from empire to nation-state, the ministers of the new Hungarian Republic and everyday people discussed the federal transformation of

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in the History of Ideas," in *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 57–89, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511790812. Peter Burke, "Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe," in *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7–38, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497193.002.

[21] Karl Renner [Pseud. Springer, Rudolf], *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele*, 245.

Hungary. This high level of attention to the question of minorities also had external causes. The language of the emerging international legal system after World War I (WWI) started to conceptually enable the participation of non-state actors—such as minorities—as legal subjects.[22] Thus, the second part of my study, "From Nationalities to Minorities: The Non-Territorial Autonomy Model in Hungary (1848–1918)," examines how the idea of non-territorial autonomy was reflected in Hungarian nationality policy in the late Habsburg period.

The meetings of the SDPH and the paradigm change in 1918 guided me toward the source corpus on which my research is based. For Part I, which focuses on accommodating linguistic diversity within the worker's movement, I consulted the archives of the SDPH, the nationalities' sections, and the personal archives of social-democratic leaders.[23] My printed sources included the protocols at the SDPH and the Second International congresses and I reviewed the social-democratic press.[24] For Part II, which concentrates on accommodating ethnic diversity within the state, I found most of my sources in the National Archives of Hungary (*Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár – Országos Levéltár*, *MNL OL*). I have benefitted most from the material of the archives of the "Minister Without Portfolio Responsible for Preparing the Right of Self-Determination of Nations Living in Hungary" (*Magyarországon élő nemzetek önrendelkezési joga előkészítésével megbízott tárca nélküli miniszter*), which is often referred to as the "Ministry of Nationalities" or "Ministry of National Minorities" (*Nemzetiségi minisztérium*).[25] Furthermore, I studied the papers of institutional and individual mediators of the idea of non-territorial autonomy.[26] With regard to printed sources, I collected relevant articles from the Jewish, the German-, Hungarian-, Romanian- and Slovak-speaking press.

This thesis is structured around two key moments: the discussion of the nationality question within the Hungarian Social Democratic movement in the early 1900s, and the

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[22] Natasha Wheatley, "Spectral Legal Personality in Interwar International Law: On New Ways of Not Being a State," *Law and History Review* 35, no. 3 (August 2017): 753–87, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0738248017000256.
[23] Politikatörténeti Intézet Levéltára, PIL (Archives of the Institute of Political History).
[24] *A magyarországi szocialisztikus munkásmozgalmak az 1903. évben.* (Budapest, 1904)., Tibor Erényi and Edit Vincze, eds., *A magyar munkásmozgalom történetének válogatott dokumentumai*, vol. 1–6b, 6b vols. (Budapest: Szikra, 1951)., *Népszava*, *Slovenské robotnické noviny, Adevērul,Votul poporului,* etc.
[25] Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár – Országos Levéltár, MNL OL (National Archives of Hungary), K40 and K440.
[26] Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár, Kézirattár, OSZKK (National Széchényi Library, Manuscripts)

emergence of the same question at the end of World War I (WWI). The first part of the dissertation examines the influence of the Austromarxist model on the Hungarian Social Democratic movement, tracing debates around the nationality question during the Second International and exploring the implementation of the model in the party's internal organization and nationality policy. It also traces the path of the Austromarxist idea to Hungary among Magyar, Slovak, and Romanian workers. The second part of the thesis explores whether this idea was present in Hungarian state policy and constitutional thought during the late Habsburg period. Although the idea of non-territorial cultural autonomy appeared only occasionally in written sources, the increased interest in the Renner-Bauer model in 1918 indicated that the idea was well-known. The second part initially traces the origins of the idea of non-territorial cultural autonomy back to the Danube Confederation plan of the Hungarian revolutionary Lajos Kossuth. It then demonstrates how the idea of non-territorial autonomy was translated into the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination. Lastly, it examines how some Hungarian Jewish communities formulated their demands in the new idiom of minority protection and asked for non-territorial autonomy.

My analysis focuses on multilayered interpretations of non-territorial autonomy in the ethnically diverse and socially stratified Kingdom of Hungary from the 1848-1849 Revolution until the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy in 1918-1919. The aftermath of the 1848-1849 Revolution provides an optimal starting point for this inquiry since it marked the first point when the idea of granting modern nations rights similar to religious autonomy emerged in Hungarian political thought. The thesis concludes with the dissolution of the multinational empire in 1918, which led to the emergence of nation-states with minorities. I argue that a Europe of nation-states supplemented by an international minority protection system is a different framework than a Europe of multinational empires. At the same time, both the new nation-states and international minority protection emerged from those multinational empires. My inquiry into the transformation that led to a previously unpopular idea being more positively received concludes with the aftermath of WWI.

The territorial focus of this dissertation is the Kingdom of Hungary in the late Habsburg period. However, the intellectual space encompassed by my analysis is much broader. As I explore the path of the non-territorial autonomy model toward Hungarian political thought, I often wander across the Leitha from Budapest to the Austrian half of

the Empire and into other German-speaking regions, to Imperial Russia and the Ottoman Empire, and even across the Atlantic. My case studies, however, are primarily limited to the territory of present-day Hungary (mainly Budapest), Slovakia, and the territory handed over to Romania after WWI (often referred to as Transylvania). Ideas are not confined by political borders, but their acceptance and implementation can be hindered by censorship and language barriers. This is especially true for legal frameworks tailored to the unique needs of specific states, where the process of enactment is often beset with difficulties. Such reforms typically require a revolutionary transformation or a significant shift in power dynamics to bring about the necessary changes.

From the Toolbox

A Disciplinary Palette

To understand the "Renner-Bauer model" and its travels, I needed to bring together a broad range of perspectives. Political and social history supported the investigation of the context in which the theory was born and interpreted—the late Habsburg Monarchy. Reading histories written from the perspective of the Habsburg Empire as a whole and the respective national histories of the successor states confronted me with an abundance of possible interpretations. As I read the same story from various viewpoints, I faced the difficulty of piecing together the cause-and-effect relationships between events that occurred in succession. The diverging conceptual framework of different ideologies and historiographic traditions raised my awareness of the limits of objectivity and scientific rigor. Sometimes, however, ideologies with opposing agendas presented past events in a similar way. For example, regarding the nationalities' sections in the SDPH, both Marxist and nationalist literature preferred a teleological narrative. This narrative interpreted the activity of non-Magyar workers in the workers' movement in Hungary based on how much they contributed to the creation of their respective future nation-states. At the beginning of each chapter, the Reader will find a detailed presentation of the specific historiographical tradition of the issue in question.

My thesis tells a story set in the geographical, temporal, and conceptual framework of the late Habsburg Monarchy. Although the story enumerates several protagonists—institutions, and individuals—its main focus is on a product of the mind: Renner and

Bauer's theory on non-territorial autonomy and its journey between different contexts. My investigation follows the circulation of this theory and aims to answer the question of what moves a theory from one system of meaning-making into another. What minor or radical changes in the political, social, and intellectual context had to take place for the theory to travel into the conceptual system of the host culture? To investigate the journey of the idea of non-territorial autonomy from the laboratory to the field, from political thinking to policymaking in different spatial and cultural contexts, I drew inspiration from the methodological and theoretical framework of various related disciplines. The theories and methods of these disciplines equipped me with the tools needed to construct the narrative of my thesis. In doing so, I combined the fields of intellectual history, the history of statistics and sociology, legal history, nationalism and minority studies, and the study of non-territorial autonomy to provide a comprehensive analysis of the complex historical forces that shaped the interpretations of non-territorial autonomy in late Habsburg Hungary.

Since the 1960s, the field of intellectual history has enjoyed almost unassailable popularity in European academia. In recent decades, the field has moved away from its initial elitism and diversified its themes and methods.[27] Intellectual history attempts to understand past thinkers in their historical contexts. The intellectual historian can be likened to a spy listening to past conversations or a translator between past and present societies.[28] In my doctoral project, I have preferred a broader interpretation of what can serve as a research object for the historian of political ideas. Some chapters of the thesis (particularly Chapter I/4, "Fluency in Marxism," and Chapter II/2, "Naïve Wilson") attempt to trace the path of a concept from the expert to the non-expert level. Taking the notion of circulation literally, in these analyses, concepts travel in a perfect circle as everyday people incorporate their own particular claims towards the state into the popular political concepts of their time.

Not only the variety of languages and historiographical traditions but other factors as well broadened the range of meanings associated with certain concepts. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the birth of several new disciplines that took

[27] Anthony Grafton, "The History of Ideas: Precept and Practice, 1950-2000 and Beyond," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 1 (2006): 1.
[28] Richard Whatmore, *What Is Intellectual History?* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015). Jani Marjanen, "Richard Whatmore, What is Intellectual History?," *Prismas* 21, no. 1 (2017): 302.

on the task of defining, with scholarly ambition, concepts that are also the key terms of this study: nation, nationalism, social classes, the course of history, and progress. Two such new disciplines were statistics and sociology. Both defined the scientific measurement and interpretation of social phenomena as possible and part of their mission. Both disciplines enjoyed popularity in fin-de-siècle Hungary, and their practitioners engaged actively in the international debates on the new disciplines.[29] Therefore, my research had to consider the history of the disciplinarization of sociology and statistics.

To better comprehend the logic behind the thinking of Renner and Bauer, I consulted contemporary and present-day texts written by legal historians. I was familiar with the challenges of the nationality question in the nineteenth-century liberal tradition, but the difficulties of the legal codification of nationality contributed new aspects that enriched my previous knowledge. How to conceive of nation(alitie)s as legal subjects and legally define who is who had been among the most challenging preoccupations of historians and legal scholars invested in the minority rights.[30] The question of whether individual and group rights should accommodate minorities is still among the most discussed topics in the field of minority studies.[31] For the liberal political and legal

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[29] On the history of sociological thinking in Hungary, see: Tamás Demeter, "A magyar filozófia szociologizáló hagyománya," *Világosság*, no. 4 (2007): 5–20. Tamás Demeter, *A szociologizáló hagyomány: a magyar filozófia főárama a XX. században* (Budapest: Századvég, 2011). On the disciplinarization of statistics, see Károly Keleti, "Ungarns Nationalitäten.," *Ungarische Revue*, no. 2 (1880): 113–39. Samuel Brown, "Report on the Eighth International Statistical Congress, Held at St. Petersburg, 22nd/10th August to 29th/17th, 1872.," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 35, no. 4 (December 1872): 431, https://doi.org/10.2307/2338764.

[30] Gerald Stourzh, *Der Umfang der österreichischen Geschichte: Ausgewählte Studien 1990-2010* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2011), https://doi.org/10.7767/boehlau.9783205791461. Börries Kuzmany, "Objectivising National Identity: The Introduction of National Registers in the Late Habsburg Empire," *Nations and Nationalism*, no. 5 (2023): 1–17, https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12950. Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 1. Harvard Univ. Press paperback ed (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006). Jeremy King, "The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond," in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, ed. Maria Bucur and Nancy M. Wingfield, Central European Studies (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001).

[31] For an overview, see: Vanessa Gruben, "Language Rights in Canada: A Theoretical Approach," *Supreme Court Law Review*, no. 39 (2008): 91–130. For a conceptual overview, see: Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," *European Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2 (2002): 163-189. For the liberal perspective, see: Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*, 1st ed. (Oxford University PressOxford, 2001), https://doi.org/10.1093/0199240981.001.0001; Michel Seymour, *The Fate of the Nation State* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014); Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford Political Theory (Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1995). Michel Seymour, *The Fate of the Nation State* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014); Zsolt Körtvélyesi, "Transcending the Individual/Collective Minority Rights Divide: A Procedural Solution," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (January 2022): 73–106, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020589321000464. Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013). K. de Feyter and George Pavlakos, eds., *The Tension between Group Rights and Human Rights: A*

tradition, recognizing collective linguistic and cultural rights poses a serious dilemma, especially in the case of the rights of illiberal groups.[32] The extent to which the cultural rights of national minorities are equivalent to linguistic rights is another debate that goes back almost two centuries.

The study of non-territorial autonomy is also a growing interdisciplinary field.[33] Political scientists, sociologists, historians, and legal scholars who specialize in international law are the main contributors to the field. Recent literature interprets non-territorial autonomy as a set of power-sharing arrangements not bound to a geographical or administrative unit. Its aim is to accommodate the interests of different groups—such as ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities—within a political entity, even if they are geographically scattered. Whether non-territorial autonomy is a collective right or an individual right granted to the members of the group—one of the most fascinating questions on the subject—was unfortunately not covered in my sources. However, the historical perspective of my dissertation offers a contribution to other important ongoing discussions in the broader field of the study of non-territorial autonomy. One of these ongoing debates concerns the effectiveness of the Renner-Bauer model in granting greater autonomy to minority groups.[34] Another issue that my study touches on is how non-territorial self-governance can actually be.[35] The Hungarian critique of the Austrian social democratic party's organization is indirectly related to the debates on whether autonomy, including its non-territorial version, leads to even sharper segregation—in other words,

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Multidisciplinary Approach, Human Rights Law in Perspective, v. 13 (Oxford : Portland, Or: Hart Pub, 2008).

[32] Hanna H. Wei, *A Dialogical Concept of Minority Rights* (Brill | Nijhoff, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004312043.

[33] *Non-Territorial Autonomy: An Introduction* (S.l.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). Börries Kuzmany, Matthias Battis, and Oskar Mulej, "Accommodating National Diversity Within States: Territorial and Non-Territorial Approaches Since the Late 19th Century," *Nationalities Papers* 50, no. 5 (September 2022): 850–56, https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2022.79. Tove H. Malloy and Francesco Palermo, eds., *Minority Accommodation through Territorial and Non-Territorial Autonomy* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015). David J. Smith, "Non-Territorial Cultural Autonomy in Contemporary Europe: Reflections on the Revival of an Idea," in *After the Nation? Critical Reflections on Nationalism and Postnationalism*, ed. Keith Breen and Shane O'Neill, International Political Theory Series (Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 84-. Kjetil Duvold, "The Challenge of Non-Territorial Autonomy: Theory and Practice," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 46, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 102–4, https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2015.1009718.

[34] See: Balázs Dobos, "Cultural Autonomy, Safe Haven or Window-Dressing? Institutions Maintained by Minority Self-Governments in Hungary," in *Realising Linguistic,* vol. Cultural and Educational Rights Through Non-Territorial Autonomy, n.d., 155.

[35] Kuzmany, Battis, and Mulej, "Accommodating National Diversity Within States."

whether non-territorial autonomy was the precursor of secession.[36] Finally, this study also addresses the issue of identifying the competencies that fall under the scope of non-territorial self-government.[37]

Theoretical and Methodological Implications

There are four theoretical approaches that are embedded in the way I conceive of the past: the modernist theory of the nation, *Begriffsgeschichte*, narratology, and cultural transfer and translation. These four approaches influenced my thinking during my years of study, and their traces are probably more present in the text of my dissertation than I am aware of. Since Reinhart Koselleck's large-scale and influential work *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* appeared between 1972–1997, historians can no longer use historical concepts in ignorance.[38] Concepts bear the imprint of the experiences in the context in which they came into being. A historical concept always describes the world from a place- and time-specific perspective. The so-called 'cultural turn' in linguistics and translation studies has taken this idea further and expanded it.[39] Translation studies also stresses that a concept is a "response to a specific social and historical situation of which an intellectual occasion is part."[40] Yet concepts are also dynamic and changeable. They are tools of intersubjectivity. They go on journeys and cross disciplinary, national, temporal, and spatial borders. Concepts travel from the laboratory to the field. When an idea crosses the boundaries of one culture and enters another, it is often assimilated, re-invented, misinterpreted, or even rejected. My dissertation thus incorporates peripheral, individual,

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[36] Tracy Beck Fenwick, ed., *Beyond Autonomy: Practical and Theoretical Challenges to 21st Century Federalism*, Studies in Territorial and Cultural Diversity Governance volume12 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2021).

[37] Levente Salat, "Conclusion," in *Managing Diversity through Non-Territorial Autonomy*, ed. Tove H. Malloy, Alexander Osipov, and Balázs Vizi (Oxford University Press, 2015), 249–74, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198738459.003.0013.

[38] Otto Brunner and Reinhart Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, Studienausg (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2004). See also: Reinhart Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik*, 5. Auflage, Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 1656 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2018); Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, 11. Auflage, Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 757 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2020).

[39] Doris Bachmann-Medick, "Translation – A Concept and Model for the Study of Culture," in *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, ed. Birgit Neumann et al., Concepts for the Study of Culture 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 23–43.

[40] Birgit Neumann et al., eds., *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, Concepts for the Study of Culture 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 5.

and sometimes distorted interpretations into the universal flow of concepts or, on the contrary, points out that some ideas are sedentary and resist translation.

My paper *Nemzetfogalom az erdélyi magyar reformkori sajtóban* (The Concept of Nation in the Transylvanian Hungarian Press in the Reform Era) already discussed the continuity of the concept of nation, the changes in the content of the concept, and a large spectrum of theories of nationalism.[41] In my current analysis, I have invoked two types of nationalism theory to interpret non-territorial autonomy. On the one hand, I re-read those authors who see the importance of distinguishing between premodern patriotism and modern nationalism, such as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and, most prominently, Ernest Gellner. Gellner's analysis of effective membership as a citizen of a modern state in *Thought and Change* offers a poignant explanation of why the language of education and public administration has such high stakes in modern societies.[42] Gellner's assumption that nationalism originates from the uneven diffusion of modernization is a view shared by many Marxist thinkers in the late Habsburg Monarchy. On the other hand, authors who identified the elements of the premodern nation that have been transmitted to the modern national consciousness (John A. Armstrong, Hans Kohn, Dieter Langewiesche, Anthony D. Smith, Annemarie Thiesse) also influenced my approach. Despite their different perspectives, all the authors mentioned above agree that modernity does not fully explain the emergence and success of nationalism.[43]

All chapters of my dissertation are infused with the method of *Begriffsgeschichte* or conceptual history. For the present study, I have turned not so much to the volumes of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* as to Koselleck's theoretical work in the books *Vergangene Zukunft* (*Futures of the Past*) and *Zeitschichten*.[44] The notions of "experiential space" (*Erfahrungsraum*) and "horizon of expectation" (*Erwartungshorizont*) do not often occur in this thesis. Still, the content of these two notions has significantly shaped the way I think about time and the changing meanings of concepts throughout time. Koselleck's

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[41] Anna Adorjáni, "Nemzetfogalom az erdélyi magyar reformkori sajtóban (1.)," *Magyar kisebbség: nemzetpolitikai szemle* 12, no. 3–4 (2007): 244–66. Anna Adorjáni, "Nemzetfogalom az erdélyi magyar reformkori sajtóban (2.)," *Magyar kisebbség: nemzetpolitikai szemle* 13, no. 1–2 (2008): 254–75.
[42] Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change*, The Nature of Human Society Series (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964).
[43] Isaiah Berlin, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy and Roger Hausheer, Selected Writings / Isaiah Berlin 3 (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1991). Gellner, *Thought and Change*.
[44] Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*; Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*; Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

impact can also be traced in how I think about historiography. In particular, in writing Chapter II/2, "Jászi Reads Kossuth," I benefited from Koselleck's reflections on the re-writability of already-written texts and how histories depend on historians' viewpoints.[45] I also invoked Koselleck when I needed to identify and analyze the permanent and the singular in the source texts, meanings of concepts, and comparative analyses of the thesis.[46] Koselleck argues convincingly that there is a dialectical relationship between social structure and singular events, meaning that individual interactions between people make up unique and unrepeatable events. However, these events are still influenced by underlying social structures. He further claims that while these singular events may not be replicable in their exact form, they are structurally repeatable and can inform future interactions within similar social structures.[47]

The study of narratives also assumes the continuous change of what language captures with a "rigid designator"—Magyar, Jewish, Social Democrat, Karl Renner, WWI, Nationality, and Non-Territorial Autonomy, to name just a few of the key concepts of the present study.[48] Narratology presumes that the singular is in constant interaction with the changing world around it. Theories and their creators are less congruent and rational than the linear and often teleological accounts of them suggest. Accounts of concepts and people are often an ex-post narrative construction written around a central assertion. Reflecting on the ways we construct the meaning of the world around us prompted me to see my doctoral project as part of a dialogue between past, present, and future texts.[49]

The theories of cultural transfer and translation provided the framework to interpret the movement and change of the concept of non-territorial autonomy and the concepts associated with it. In this way, the traces of the theory of cultural transfer and translation are more directly visible in my thesis. The theory of cultural transfer or circulation of knowledge shares the assumptions of *Begriffsgeschichte* and narratology when it posits that concepts carry the traces of their various journeys.[50] One of the premises of my thesis

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[45] Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*. Especially: *Über die Theoriebedürftigkeit der Geschichtswissenschaft* and *Erfahrungswandel und Methodenwechsel.*
[46] Koselleck. See: *Stetigkeit und Wandel aller Zeitgeschichten* and *Die unbekannte Zukunft und die Kunst der Prognose.*
[47] Koselleck. See: *Geschichte, Recht und Gerechtigkeit.*
[48] Pierre Bourdieu, "L'illusion biographique," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 62–63 (1986): 70.
[49] Beáta Thomka, Tamás Kisantal, and Gábor Zoltán Kiss, *Narratívák* (Budapest: Kijárat, 1998).
[50] Neumann et al., Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture, 5.

is that concepts change along the paths they travel. Adopting a concept is a negotiation between two cultures or systems of meaning-making. Throughout these negotiation processes, meanings are finetuned over and over again. The theory of cultural translation provided me with the tools to analyze the direction in which concepts move, the asymmetry of power between cultures, how disempowered communities translate themselves into universalist ideas to overcome their prevailing condition, the causes of mistranslations or failed transfers, and how some parts of the society did not measure up to the conceptual categories of their contemporaries.[51] In the respective chapters, I provide greater detail regarding the methods and theories that underpin my interpretation of the sources, concepts, and narratives.

On Vocabulary

The vocabulary of the nationality question is loaded. Metahistorical terms might seem like a good solution to overcome the particularities of the source languages and to bridge the gap between the political and legal terminology of the late Habsburg period and the present. Since this text is intended for a specialized audience, I nevertheless chose to maintain historical terms whenever possible. In translation studies, foreignization is the strategy of retaining culture-specific items in the original language. To keep the difference of emphasis intact, whenever possible, I have used the terminology found in the sources instead of the term non-territorial autonomy. Furthermore, I have entirely avoided using the acronym NTA. The term non-territorial autonomy, in fact, places too much emphasis on the non-territorial aspect of the Renner-Bauer model to the detriment of the other components. Another historical term I prefer to keep intact for the late Habsburg period is 'nationality' (*nemzetiség, Nationalität*) instead of 'national minority,' a concept that was born only after WWI, as Bence Bari and I have demonstrated in a study.[52] The legal

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[51] Monica Juneja and Margrit Pernau, "Lost in Translation? Transcending Boundaries in Comparative History," in *Comparative and Transnational History*, ed. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (Berghahn Books, 2022), 111, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781845458034-007; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000), 88. Martin Fuchs, "Reaching out; or, Nobody Exists in One Context Only: Society as Translation," *Translation Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 2009): 21–40, https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700802496191.

[52] Anna Adorjáni and László Bence Bari, "National Minority: The Emergence of the Concept in the Habsburg and International Legal Thought," *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies* 16, no. 1 (December 1, 2019): 7–37, https://doi.org/10.2478/auseur-2019-0010.

term *Volksstamm* does not have a present-day equivalent. I have therefore used it in the original. The word *országos*—concerning the country-wide scope and competence of an institution or event—was also difficult to translate since the term 'national' would have been confusing in the context of multinational empires.

The text of my dissertation was by no means written in the language of the nineteenth century. Some metahistorical concepts proved to be helpful. I refer to intellectuals, activists, and politicians engaged in their nation's cultural, economic, and political uplift as "nation builders." In most cases, I have avoided calling them "nationalists," as some English-language literature does. For readers in modern Central and Eastern Europe, the word nationalist has (negative) connotations that I did not intend to evoke. The use of ethnonyms is another delicate issue. When I use the terms Slovak, Romanian, German, etc., I am generally referring to speakers of these languages. This is particularly true in the case of statistical data from this period since the censuses asked about the mother tongue or *Umgangssprache*, the language used on a daily basis. It is difficult to be precise when using ethnonyms. Often, I could not avoid using them to refer to a particular group of a nation or nationality. Sources also often deliberately obscure the use of ethnonyms—we are, after all, exploring a time and space of competing nation-buildings.

The confusion about the names of nationality, nation, and country is particularly prevalent in the case of Hungarians. In Hungarian, the word *Magyar* can refer to all three. Non-Magyars in the Kingdom of Hungary have often resented the resulting misunderstandings. The meaning can be somewhat nuanced in English by referring to the Hungarian nationality or ethnicity as *Magyar*. In contrast, the political nation, the entire population of Hungary, is referred to as 'Hungarian.' The term 'confessional ethnicities' was also valuable in cases where nationality and confessional boundaries coincided, as in the case of the Romanian Orthodox. This is a suitable formulation since the church often also had cultural-educational functions. Since, according to the Marxist view, religion was "the opium of people" and nationality was a false consciousness, it was also challenging to classify the Hungarian-speaking Jewish leaders of the Social Democratic movement. In the context of the workers' movement, I have only specified the Jewish origin of the protagonists when relevant.

To provide clarity for place names that lack an official English translation (unlike Vienna), I followed a specific format. Firstly, I listed the settlement's contemporary

official name, followed by its current name, and finally, its name in other commonly spoken languages in the region (such as Lugos/Lugoj/Lugosch). To avoid any potential confusion, I avoided using the terms "Cis-" and "Transleithania" to refer to the two halves of the empire. Although these labels are common in German-language literature due to the brevity of "Cisleithania" compared to "Die im Reichsrat vertretenen Königreiche und Länder" (The Kingdoms and Lands Represented in the Imperial Council), I have refrained from using them to describe the two halves of the empire. In my experience, these terms can be confusing for Hungarian readers who approach the topic from the other side of the Leitha. For the protagonists' names, I have also included the name variations found in the sources and their birth name when relevant. I have also provided the names of institutions in both the original language and English. Where no official translation was available, the translations are mine. In this thesis, all quotations have been rendered into English by the author, unless otherwise specified. While it would have been possible to present the original texts alongside the translations, I have chosen not to do so in order to avoid cluttering the text. However, I have made an exception for humorous quotations, where a mere translation would not have done justice to the humor conveyed in the original language. Where the English translation of concepts did not fully reveal their meaning in a time- and space-specific context, I have also given them in brackets in the original language. Since I wanted to avoid establishing a hierarchy between source languages, I have transposed the quotations from all languages into English. Such a hierarchy would have contradicted one of the central themes of my thesis—the equality of languages.

A Compass for the Reader

My thesis traces the path of non-territorial autonomy in late Habsburg Hungary in two contexts: the internal organization of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary and the state's nationality policy. Each chapter presents the journey of the idea of non-territorial autonomy from one historical, political, cultural, linguistic, social, and ideological context to another. This research is not intended to show how the Renner-Bauer model was practically implemented and how it operated—there are no known examples from the period studied. Each chapter aims to address the question of what factors facilitated or impeded the adoption of the autonomy model proposed by Renner and Bauer. In this respect, the research primarily bears the hallmarks of intellectual history. What had to

change for the theory to become known and accepted? What were the channels of cultural transfer, and who were the agents? What can we learn from both the appropriation and the rejection of the idea of non-territorial autonomy? Or, on the contrary, how did various communities and institutions learn and use the idiom of non-territorial autonomy to maintain the status quo or improve their situation?

The section "How to Run a Multinational Social Democratic Party?" takes the reader to the time of the Second International (1889–1914). Why was the nationality question so pressing in the Social Democratic movement at the fin-de-siècle? The decline of nationalism, which Marx predicted would happen by the turn of the century, never materialized. Consequently, proletarians around the world had to confront the issue of nationalism, sometimes even within the workers' movement itself. But even where nationalism did not tear apart the unity of the workers' movement from within, the question of agitation in the mother tongue drove comrades to reflect on nationalism. This part of the dissertation aims to answer five main questions. First, in what international ideological context did the two Austrian social democrats, Renner and Bauer, develop their solution to the nationality question? Second, what solutions set a precedent for the Hungarian workers' movement, which in many respects differed from the Austrian one? Third, through what channels did the idea of non-territorial autonomy travel to the workers' movement in Hungary? Fourth, why was the Renner-Bauer model unpopular among both Magyar and non-Magyar party ideologues? And finally, what changes had to occur before Magyar and non-Magyar comrades took a positive view of the party's internal federation along national lines, as was the case of its Austrian sister party?

In the modern European states of the nineteenth century, not mastering the language of the state stood in the way of equal opportunity.[53] Thus, if the social democratic movement took equality seriously, it had to include at least a negative program for the equal rights of languages and nationalities. Chapter I/2 "'Workers belonging to an oppressed nationality believe that they are miserable because (...) they are of a different nationality.' Understanding Nationalism in the Second International and among Hungarian Social Democrats" presents how the opinion leaders of the Second International reflected on the relationship between national and class oppression. It shows

[53] See: Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs, *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2003), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486647.

various answers to the burning question of nineteenth-century Marxism: whether national struggle always concealed class struggle. The reader can discover what Karl Kautsky, Vladimir Lenin, and the representatives of The General Jewish Labor Bund in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia (Bund) thought about these issues. The second part of this chapter presents the ideas of Karl Renner and Otto Bauer in the international context. The chapter concludes with Czech Social Democrat Bohumír Šmeral's plan for national-cultural autonomy, which would also have included the Kingdom of Hungary. Chapter I/2 thus presents the principles and models available to the Hungarian social democratic leaders to overcome the difficulties arising from the party's multilingualism.

Chapter I/3, "'Technical Autonomy.' Practicing Multilingualism in the Hungarian Workers' Movement," presents the way in which the theories and practices for running a multinational social democratic party at the turn of the century presented in the previous chapter moved into the environment of the Hungarian workers' movement. I argue that this transfer of ideas involved a process of negotiation between the "sending culture" and the new system of meaning-making.[54] In this negotiation process, the original idea changed—it was often misinterpreted and distorted in order to fit the new context. The chapter highlights some similarities and differences between the Austrian and Hungarian party organizations. After presenting the organizational principles adopted by the SDPH in the context of the social and political challenges of fin-de-siècle Hungary, I introduce the reader to the so-called 'nationalities' sections' of the SDPH. The chapter aims to answer the question of the extent to which these nationalities sections were autonomous. Furthermore, it analyzes whether the SDPH incorporated in its structure elements of non-territorial autonomy.

The first part of the dissertation ends with two case studies focusing on whether the non-Magyar workers in Hungary insisted on the internal federalization of the SDPH, as did the Czechs in Austria and Armenians and Jews in Russia. These two chapters offer perspective shifts by focusing on the nationalities to explore whether some Romanian and Slovak communities inside the social democratic movement were more receptive to the Austromarxist model. The first study in Chapter I/4, "Fluency in Marxism. The case of impoverished Romanian workers from Banat and the SDPH," looks at a Romanian social-democratic journal in the multiethnic Southern Hungary (largely in present-day Romania

[54] Neumann et al., *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, 51.

and Serbia). It analyzes how the journal *Votul poporului* (People's Vote/Voice) learned and used the universal language of Marxism to give voice to their particular, and sometimes trivial, local agenda. By showing how "internationalism" (read: multilingualism) worked at local party meetings in practice, the chapter also allows the historian to reflect on the relationship between models and practices.

The other case study in Chapter I/5, "'We do not want any guardianship; we are able to live independently.' The Slovak workers of Hungary and their self-government" scrutinizes the Slovak workers' struggle for autonomy within the SDPH, concentrated around the newspaper *Slovenské robotnícké noviny* (Slovak Workers' Newspaper). The case study analyzes how and why the Slovak workers' leaders, representing only some 3,000 workers, demanded autonomy within the SDPH. To answer these questions, I examine the discourse of the Slovak workers' newspaper in the context of the competing (Czecho)Slovak and Hungarian-Magyar nation-building at the beginning of the twentieth century. The chapter aims to show why a compromise between the party leadership and the Slovak workers' representatives failed.

Consequently, the first part of the dissertation is intended to map how the Austromarxist idea of party organization and national policy traveled between Budapest and the provinces and between expert and non-expert groups and how it traversed linguistic boundaries. My study does this by shifting the scale and perspective to show how different interest groups used (Austro)Marxist language to address the various social and political issues that modernity brought about. The first part of this dissertation also promises to introduce some novel interpretations that contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field. The aim of this part is novel as it proposes a critical analysis of how the Renner-Bauer model reached the Hungarian labor movement during the Second International. The results shed new light on how the SDPH faced the challenges caused by the nationality question and can provide potential implications for future studies. The thesis also promises answers to the question of why the Austromarxist model was unpopular in Hungary before 1918-1919, even in Marxist circles. Finally, the case studies demonstrate situations in which autonomy may not be viable. Based on the analysis of the cases of Romanian and Slovak workers, my conclusions provide valuable insights for those interested in implementing the non-territorial autonomy model today.

The second part of the thesis, "From Nationalities to Minorities: The Non-Territorial Autonomy Model in Hungary (1848–1918)," follows the journey and

reception of the idea of non-territorial autonomy in the wider context of state policy in late Habsburg Hungary. It spans the period from the aftermath of the 1848-1849 Revolution to the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of WWI. This section focuses on instances where the territorial integrity of the Hungarian state was threatened and minority nationalities in the minority sought independence. In such situations, finding a compromise between the dominant and non-dominant nations was necessary. Did the non-territorial form of autonomy emerge as a solution in these cases? If so, through which channels did it travel, and which groups supported it? This part of the dissertation also explores the social and political changes that made non-territorial national autonomy more acceptable over time. The three chapters of this part shed light on the continuities and specificities of the months between November 1918 and March 1919. In this part of the dissertation, I argue that the period of 1918-1919 can be considered a critical juncture in the development of the nationality question.[55] During this period, the traditional ideas of the previous decades intersected with new developments in international law and minority protection. These ideas later became widespread in the interwar period, suggesting that the years 1918-1919 were a pivotal time for transformation and progress in accommodating different nationalities.

Chapter II/1, "Jászi Reads Kossuth—an Intellectual Journey," sets off from a parallel that exists in Hungarian historiography between the surrender of the Hungarian Army at Világos in 1849 and the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. The chapter looks at this parallel from a new perspective: the viewpoint of non-territorial autonomy. Both in 1848-1849 and 1918-1919, armed attacks by nationalities living in Hungary confronted the Hungarian political elite with the extent of their dissatisfaction. In the aftermath of the traumatic experience of fratricidal conflict, the two protagonists of the chapter, Lajos Kossuth, leader of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution, and Oszkár Jászi, the Minister of National Minorities of the government of the First Hungarian Republic, developed models of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Both put forward a confederation proposal centered around a kind of non-territorial autonomy. This form of national representation guaranteed the rights of minorities within administrative units. In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of two plans related to non-territorial autonomy.

[55] Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism," *World Politics* 59, no. 3 (April 2007): 341–69, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100020852.s

Although a detailed analysis of these plans has already been developed by other authors, the novelty of my contribution consists in examining whether Renner was familiar with Kossuth's Danube Confederation plan that incorporated the concept of non-territorial autonomy. Additionally, I reconstruct how Jászi became acquainted with both the Kossuth and the Renner-Bauer models. Finally, this chapter presents the historiography of non-territorial autonomy in Hungary from 1848 to 1918, offering new insights and analysis that add to the existing literature in the field.

Chapter II/2, "Naïve Wilson," is set during the months of the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy. The Habsburg Monarchy dissolved, but a new order did not emerge overnight. The chapter investigates how the representatives of the Hungarian state, the spokesmen of the nationalities, and everyday people interpreted the Wilsonian principle of self-determination during the months of transition from empire to nation-state. I aim to show whether non-territorial autonomy was one of the pre-existing ideas from the late Habsburg period that officials and everyday people successfully translated into the Wilsonian language of self-determination. The chapter presents a handful of curious plans for the implementation of the principle of national self-determination, which sought to build order from the bottom up in the power vacuum of the period under review. The chapter is based on plans for a new Hungarian state and a new Europe sent by ordinary people to the Ministry Responsible for Preparing the Right of Self-determination of Nations Living in Hungary. The broader goal of the chapter is to incorporate peripheral, individual, and distorted interpretations of Wilsonian self-determination into the universal flow of the concept.

The last chapter, "'What Is Jewishness, Actually?' The Curious Situation of Hungarian Jews during the Dissolution of the Habsburg Empire," also closely considers the final months of 1918 and the first months of 1919. In this chapter, I investigate how Hungarian Jewish communities in present-day Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania responded to the new situation that recognized and distributed civic rights based on national minority status. In Hungary, from the second half of the nineteenth century, Jews were equal citizens, much as they were in Austria, Germany, and France. The majority of Jews in Hungary considered themselves to belong to the Magyar nation and the Mosaic faith. The idea of Jewish nationality was only marginally present in late Habsburg Hungary. With the change in state power and state language in Romania and Czechoslovakia, Hungarian Jews needed to think and talk about themselves in new ways.

Chapter II/3 seeks to analyze how some Hungarian Jewish communities translated their demands into the language of self-determination and minority right and demanded non-territorial national cultural autonomy. The second part of my dissertation takes a comparative approach to go beyond the narrow focus of the nation-state perspective of history writing. It aspires to contribute to the increasingly significant literature that concentrates on the critical months of transition from empire to nation-state.[56]

[56] Tomasz Pudłocki and Kamil Ruszała, eds., *Postwar Continuity and New Challenges in Central Europe, 1918-1923: The War That Never Ended*, Routledge Studies in Modern European History, volume 87 (New York: Routledge, 2022). Furthermore, two ongoing ERC projects are dedicated to this topic: 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) and REVENANT (Revivals of Empire: Nostalgia, Amnesia, Tribulation).

Non-Territorial Autonomy in Late Habsburg Hungary: Historical Context

Monarchia (De)composita

The nineteenth century was the period of internal social integration of the territory within the borders of the Habsburg Empire. In the first half of the century, the Habsburg monarchy consisted of a conglomerate of various types of territories stretching from the Bohemian crownlands through Southern Poland to Transylvania, from which two major political entities emerged, Austria and Hungary.[57] Borders, as a fusion of political, taxation, and customs jurisdictions, were also mainly a product of the nineteenth century and the centralization efforts of the state.[58] The late Habsburg period was one of nation-building, gradual democratization, and broadening participation, although these developments had different dynamics and stakes in Austria and Hungary due to their different territorial characteristics and administrative traditions.[59] However, not all social and interest groups welcomed the state's efforts at centralization, integration, and cultural expansion with open arms. In the face of centralizing and nation-building efforts, particular interests emerged in the form of ethnic and religious opposition.[60] The set of tensions created by ethno-confessional resistance is often referred to as the "nationality question."[61] Industrialization, alongside integration, also created divisions between owners and workers, which are often referred to as the "social question." At the intersection of the national and social questions emerged the electoral struggle. In this way, the integration process virtually restructured Austro-Hungarian society, introducing new demarcation lines.[62] By the end of the period covered by this thesis, the framework of the subject of this study, the Habsburg monarchy, had disintegrated, partly as a result of the dynamics set in motion by the integration process.

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[57] István. Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 3.
[58] Jan Hansen et al., eds., *The European Experience: A Multi-Perspective History of Modern Europe, 1500–2000*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2023), 45, https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0323.
[59] Gábor Egry, "Magyar birodalom? Regionális elitek, nacionalista politika, centrum-periféria küzdelem Magyarországon a dualizmus utolsó évtizedeiben," *Sic Itur ad Astra* 76 (2022): 37.
[60] Gábor Demeter, "Estimating Regional Inequalities in the Carpathian Basin - Historical Origins and Recent Outcomes (1880-2010)," *Regional Statistics* 10, no. 1 (2020): 53–54, https://doi.org/10.15196/RS100105.
[61] Case, *Age of Questions*.
[62] Gábor Gyáni and György Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a reformkortól a második világháborúig*, Osiris tankönyvek (Budapest: Osiris, 1998), 106.

Paradoxically, it was the Habsburg state that enabled the expansion of political space and institutional opportunities for the emergence of civil society and, consequently, nation-building activism. An important question for the study of nationalism is estimating the actual popular base of these movements. While some argue that nationalism was omnipresent and permeated all aspects of life,[63] others suggest that everyday life was possible without a daily referendum on national belonging.[64] Traditional national historiographies often portray the Habsburg monarchy as an ill-fated state, a "prison of nations" whose inflexible structure would inevitably disintegrate due to "heroic" national struggles. Yet, in order to enhance their political power, the majority of the nationalities or *Volksstämme* (*néptörzsek*) of the empire, as they were known at the time, sought for a more vigorous presence within the multinational Habsburg state, rather than seeking independence as separate states. John W. Boyer even argued that opposing nation buildings in Austria-Hungary were not only destructive and centrifugal but also emancipatory and centripetal processes.[65] More recently, historians have tended to examine nationalist movements by scrutinizing the interconnected developments of civil society, popular political activism, and governmental and administrative structures.[66]

Ascertaining whether Hungary should be viewed as a nation-state, an empire, or a colony remains a significant challenge for historians.[67] Historians often treat Hungary as a separate entity or an exception due to its unique status, particularly during the Dualist

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[63] John Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2020), 1–30, https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691189185.

[64] For the literature on indifference to nation, see: Zahra Tara, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93–119., Maarten van Ginderachter and Jon Fox, eds., *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, Routledge Studies in Modern European History 65 (London New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019)., Pieter M. Judson and Tara Zahra, "Introduction," *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (April 2012): 21–27, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237811000567. For nationalism as a daily referendum, see: Ernest Renan, *What Is a Nation? And Other Political Writings*, ed. M. F. N. Giglioli (Columbia University Press, 2018), 247–63, https://doi.org/10.7312/rena17430.

[65] John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Cited in: Gary B. Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914," *Central European History* 40, no. 2 (June 2007): 275, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938907000532.

[66] Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914," 243. Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts : London, England: Harvard University Press, 2016), 4–5. Ágnes Deák, *Polgári átalakulás és neoabszolutizmus 1849-1867*, Magyarország története / Főszerkesztő Romsics Ignác 15 (Budapest: Kossuth, 2009), 16–21.

[67] Egry, Gábor (2022) *Magyar birodalom? Regionális elitek, nacionalista politika, centrum-periféria küzdelem Magyarországon a dualizmus utolsó évtizedeiben című tanulmánya.* Sic Itur ad Astra: fiatal történészek folyóirata, 76. pp. 37. ISSN 0238-4779

period, and its self-representation as a nation-state. From 1526, the major part of the Kingdom of Hungary gradually became part of the lands of the Habsburg monarchy and the Habsburg sovereigns became kings of Hungary.[68] Hungary was a Habsburg province, but was allowed to keep its legal traditions. Despite the centralizing efforts from Vienna from the eighteenth century on, the lands of the crown of St. Stephen kept much of their administrative, legislative, linguistic, and social distinctiveness.

To plunge more deeply into this tangled past, we also need look into Transylvania, which became part of the Hungarian state during the Middle Ages. In the aftermath of the peasant uprising of 1437, the Hungarian, Szekler, and Saxon nobles (*natio*) compromised and formed a so-called union. During the years of the Principality of Transylvania (1570–1711) the three nations held a joint provincial assembly or Diet in Torda/Turda, which had a kind of executive power. The religions of the three feudal nations (*natio*), Catholicism and three Protestant denominations, Calvinism in 1564, Lutheranism in 1557, and Unitarianism in 1571, became accepted. Greek Orthodoxy, to which most Romanians adhered, was tolerated. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as an autonomous principality, it was caught in the middle of conflicts between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, becoming part of the Habsburg Monarchy as a distinct principality in 1687. From loose Ottoman dependence, Transylvania entered into an empire that was administered with a higher degree of organization. In the 1780s, Joseph II wanted to unify the administration by merging the Transylvanian and Hungarian chancelleries and the Hungarian royal chamber with the governor's council. In Transylvania, the idea of union with Hungary was born in reaction to these measures. Joseph II's decree introducing German as the primary administrative language is considered the cradle of modern Hungarian nationalism in Transylvania.[69]

During the 1830s and 40s, representatives of the growing civil society demanded liberal and democratic reforms and constitutional changes, which culminated in the revolutions and independence struggles of 1848-1849. Habsburg Austria was defeated in the Austro-Prussian War in 1866. The weakened Austria made concessions to the

[68] Géza Pálffy, *A Magyar Királyság és a Habsburg Monarchia a 16. században*, História könyvtár. Monográfiák 27 (Budapest: História, 2011).
[69] Béla Köpeczi, ed., *Erdély története három kötetben: 1, A kezdetektől 1606-ig* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986); Béla Köpeczi, ed., *Erdély története három kötetben: 2, 1606-tól 1830-ig* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986).

Hungarians and agreed on Hungary's equal legal status and full internal constitutional autonomy within the Empire. The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 marked the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the name in use for the Habsburg Empire between 1867 to 1918. Transylvania was again part of Hungary under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from 1867 to 1918, when it became a part of Romania. The compromise of 1867 introduced parliamentarism in both halves of the empire. In the Dual Monarchy, Austria and Hungary conducted all governmental faculties separately, except for foreign and defense policy and joint financial policies. The Compromise introduced a single currency system in which the monetary policy was conducted by a common central bank.[70] Besides the multinational Habsburg army, it was the dynasty, or more specifically the long reign of Emperor-King Francis Joseph, that provided the connective tissue between the two halves of the monarchy.

The Kingdoms and Lands Represented in the Imperial Council—also known as Cisleithania or Austria—and Hungary, were not required to harmonize their nationality policies. In the Austrian half of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Article 19 of the December Constitution of 1867 prescribed equal treatment of all nationalities (*Volksstämme*).[71] Furthermore, Austria's electoral reforms during the late nineteenth century progressively expanded voting rights. Universal suffrage was ultimately introduced in 1907, granting all adult male citizens the right to vote. However, contrary to expectations, the extension of nationality rights and the right to vote did not alleviate but in fact intensified national antagonisms in the Imperial Parliament.[72] Moreover, with the autonomous provincial and communal governments, social groups with opposing interests entered policy-making and state administration.

In the constitutionally autonomous Hungarian Kingdom, only between 6 and 7 percent of the entire population had voting rights. Article V of the Law 1848, which regulated the right to vote, was amended in 1874. This narrow participation remained in effect until the end of WWI, and voting was conducted openly. The law enacted in 1848

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[70] Marc Flandreau, "The Logic of Compromise: Monetary Bargaining in Austria-Hungary, 1867-1913," *European Review of Economic History* 10, no. 1 (2006): 3–33.

[71] "Alle Volksstämme des Staates sind gleichberechtigt, und jeder Volksstamm hat ein unverletzliches Recht auf Wahrung und Pflege seiner Nationalität und Sprache." Staatsgrundgesetz vom 21. December 1867, über die allgemeinen Rechte der Staatsbürger für die im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreiche und Länder. https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Erv/ERV_1867_142/ERV_1867_142.pdf. Accessed: April 19, 2022.

[72] Hansen et al., *The European Experience*, 181.

established the total number of eligible voters by considering factors such as social status, property value, income level, occupation, and what was referred to as the "old right." The "old right" allowed individuals to retain their voting rights even if they did not meet the criteria set by the new law but had the right to vote prior to its enactment.[73] This resulted in an electorate comprising 7 percent of the population, which was a 4 percent increase compared to the previous electorate. The electorate predominantly consisted of nobility and parties were organized from the top down during election campaigns, with little to no mass base. Those who accepted the 1867 Compromise joined the governing party, while those who did not were drawn to the opposition parties, the most prominent of which was the Independence Party. Interestingly, this narrow participation was based on a liberal principle that only independent and autonomous citizens could decide on political issues. As a result, almost all urban workers were excluded from participation. Consequently, the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (SDPH), the first grassroots mass party, had no voters, and its members were not elected. Thus, the party did not attain parliamentary status but instead remained politically active outside the parliament. As new social and ethnic groups emerged at the turn of the century, electoral reform became an important issue due to their desire to participate in politics.[74]

After the turn of the century, four elections took place between 1901 and 1910, with the most controversial one in 1905. This period was marked by suffrage protests and collective actions, especially during the middle of parliamentary terms when non-voters aimed to pressure parliament to change the electoral law. Protesters resorted to blockading streets and overturning trams, while strikes by harvesters and maids occurred in rural areas. Some believed that the introduction of general suffrage would come from Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne, who was also working on plans for the future of Hungary. Organizational efforts for suffrage were also underway. In 1905, the opposition won the elections with a coalition. The coalition's program included extending suffrage as well as creating an independent customs territory and army. However, ignoring the election results, Franz Joseph appointed Major-General Géza Fejérváry as prime minister. His government lacked support from all sides, so he promised to extend suffrage to gain favor. The Interior Minister, József Kristóffy, began negotiating with the SDPH and

[73] Judit Pál et al., eds., *Parliamentary Elections in Eastern Hungary and Transylvania (1865-1918)* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018), 26.
[74] Gyáni and Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, 105–16.

Oszkár Jászi's party, the Civic Radicals and formed the League for General Secret Suffrage. Historiography deems this cooperation short-sighted and naïve. Eventually, an opposition coalition government was appointed in April 1906 under Prime Minister Sándor Wekerle. Although Kristóffy's proposed electoral reform was not implemented, Minister of the Interior Gyula Andrássy drafted another proposal in 1908 that also failed to be put into effect. In 1909, Gyula Justh, a member of the Independence Party, resumed the suffrage movement.[75]

The Hungarian governmental system proved to be resistant to the mounting pressure for increased social participation, especially among the lower classes and the nationalities. Until the late nineteenth century, the church played a significant role in managing many aspects of cultural and family life in Hungary, including registers and schools. Consequently, belonging and loyalty were strongly shaped by confession: Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Greek Orthodox, and Israelite. In Hungary (excluding Transylvania), the Catholic Church held the status of a quasi-state religion while the other confessions were recognized and, as such, entitled to state support, allowing them to attain a good level of autonomy. Throughout the nineteenth century, an ongoing process of secularization was occurring parallel to these developments. Before the mid-nineteenth century, census data did not include information on the nationality or language of the population. In Hungary, the 1851 census was the first to ask for "nationality," and the question of language was not standardized until 1880.[76] The primary languages spoken in Hungary included Hungarian, German, Slovak, Romanian, Rusyn, Croatian, Serbian, Bunjevci and Šokci, Slovene, Romanes ("*Cigány"*), Yiddish, and Armenian.

Statistical data shows that in many cases, but not all, confessional and linguistic divisions overlapped regionally. For example, in 1910, 98 percent of Calvinists spoke Hungarian, and in most regions, there was an overlap between the Greek Orthodox and

[75] Gyáni and Kövér, 105–16. Tamás Csík, "Az Általános Választójog Prófétája. Méray-Horváth Károly a Tudomány És a Politika Határán 1905–1910," *Múltunk* 59, no. 3 (2014): 4–37; Tamás Csík, "Cenzusok a századelő választójogában és képviseleti reformterveiben: egy statisztika tanulságai.," *Levéltári Szemle* 64, no. 3 (2014): 19–60. Péter Hanák, ed., *Magyarország története. Kötet 1: 7. 1890 - 1918 / főszerkesztő Hanák Péter* (Budapest: Akad. Kiadó, 1890), 584–95.
[76] Gyáni and Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, 127–47.

Serbian or Romanian population or the Croatian and Roman Catholic populations.[77] Two-thirds of Israelites spoke Hungarian, and Yiddish speakers were registered among speakers of German. Overall, the constant number of individuals identifying with each confession and the shifting percentages of individuals who spoke different languages in late Habsburg Hungary imply that adopting a new language was more prevalent than converting to a different religion. As secularization progressed, ethnicity gradually became less connected to religious affiliation and nation-builders aimed to associate nationality with a specific geographic region or territory.[78] While there is not sufficient room to delve into the intricacies of the intersection between modern nations and the ethno-confessional communities of the past, there have been comprehensive studies conducted on this subject.[79]

From Conflict to Compromise: The Emergence of the Non-Territorial Principle

Even from this brief and, in many ways, simplistic summary, it is clear that the so-called nationality question is a complex issue with numerous contributing factors. Most of the literature examines the problem within the legal framework of language usage. Although there are premodern historical examples of compromises with elements of non-territorial autonomy, such as the millet system or the Saxon *universitas* in Transylvania, historians generally agree that the idea of the non-territorial principle as a possible solution to the nationality question emerged in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1848.[80] The Revolution marked a major internal crisis in the history of the Habsburg monarchy, which remained an important point of reference for the next generation, regardless of which side

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[77] A Magyar Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, *A Magyar Szent Korona Országainak 1910. évi népszámlálása* (Budapest: Athaeneum, 1912), https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/collection/ksh_neda_nepszamlalasok_1910/.

[78] Gyáni and Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, 137. Emanuel Turczynski, *Konfession und Nation: zur Frühgeschichte d. serb. u. rumän. Nationsbildung*, 1. Aufl, Geschichte und Gesellschaft ; Bd. 11 (Düsseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1976).

[79] King, "The Nationalization of East Central Europe: Ethnicism, Ethnicity, and Beyond." Joachim von Puttkamer, *Schulalltag und nationale Integration in Ungarn: Slowaken, Rumänen und Siebenbürger Sachsen in der Auseinandersetzung mit der ungarischen Staatsidee 1867-1914*, Südosteuropäische Arbeiten 115 (München: R. Oldenbourg, 2003); Martin Schulze Wessel, ed., *Nationalisierung der Religion und Sakralisierung der Nation im östlichen Europa*, Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur des östlichen Mitteleuropa, Bd. 27 (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, 2006).

[80] See the Introduction and first chapter in Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"

they fought on in the fratricidal war.[81] The aftermath of the Revolution saw numerous attempts at a compromise between Emperor and civil society, conservative and democratic forces, landowners and peasants, and empowered and disempowered nations. This willingness to compromise between actors representing old and new, integration and separation, gave rise to the rich federalist tradition of the Habsburg Empire, in the context of which the idea of non-territorial autonomy was born.[82] Critical moments in social and political life turned the Empire into a laboratory of plans to accommodate opposing interests. The literature agrees that the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy contributed less to this intellectual and political endeavor, partly because of its position within the empire, partly because of the inflexibility of the Hungarian political élite and government, and partly because most Austrian and Austro-Slavic federation plans implied partitioning Hungary's administrative units along national lines.[83]

At the Austrian Parliament meeting in Kremsier/Kroměříž (present-day Czechia) in March 1849, delegates discussed the future administrative structure of the Austrian state and introduced a new line of arguments for assuring national rights. Nations with past statehood, such as the Poles and Czechs, argued for equal treatment based on historical rights. In the case of nations without past independent statehood, such as the Slovaks or Slovenes, the arguments in favor of equal rights were based on natural law.[84] These debates led to the idea of federalizing Austria based on historical territories (*Landesnation*) or language (*Sprachnation*) and introduced the notion of rounding off administrative units (*Kreise*) within the crownlands based on the use of languages.[85] This gave rise to the dilemma of how to legally establish the national identity of the delegates and the individuals within their respective constituencies who had elected them. This was also the occasion of questioning the majority principle when it came to nationality equality. These two issues, codifying belonging and the empowerment of minorities, later became the cornerstone of the nationality question and later the minority question.

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[81] Borsi-Kálmán, "A Kossuth-emigráció és a nemzetiségi kérdés. Dilemmák és alternatívák."
[82] Osterkamp, "Vielfalt ordnen," 1–6.
[83] Osterkamp, 70. Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867–1914," 274–78.
[84] See Chapter 2. in Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"
[85] Osterkamp, "Vielfalt ordnen," 176–82.

In the aftermath of the 1848 revolution, Magyar nation-builders also came to terms with the fact that their vision of a unified Hungarian political nation, sanctioned by introducing Hungarian as the state language in 1844, was illusory. Contemporaries belonging to the nationalities' élites often voiced their hesitation to embrace freedom if it meant voluntarily becoming Magyar, which called for compromise from all parties involved.[86] In July 1849, the National Assembly in Szeged passed a resolution on nationality that aimed to reconcile the Hungarian revolutionary Kossuth and the Romanian revolutionary Nicolae Bălcescu. The resolution focused on language use and the "unrestricted development of nationality." This experience influenced Kossuth's 1851 Danube Confederation plan, written in exile, in which he suggested solving the nationality question based on the non-territorial principle wherever territorial autonomy is impossible.[87] Similarly, in 1850, in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1848, in order to reconcile the tension between popular sovereignty and a multi-ethnic state, the statesman and writer József Eötvös put forward a potential solution: the personal and non-territorial principle, which he framed as "descent-related entitlement" (*abstammungsbedingte Berechtigung*). According to Eötvös, if the provinces of the Austrian Monarchy were to be divided based on the principle of nationality, the division would only be accurate if it was not based on territory but on the population itself (*Bevökerung*). This would mean that each individual locality (*Gemeinde*) would exercise its political rights not as a community with its neighbors but with the members of its own nationality (*Stammesgenossen*).[88] Chapter II/1, "Jászi Reads Kossuth," is dedicated to these ideas and their circulation among contemporaries and in Hungarian historiography.

Following the Compromise between Emperor Francis Joseph and the Hungarian élite in 1867, the December Constitution (*Dezemberverfassung*) provided the fundamental laws for the Austrian part of the empire. Article 19 enshrined the "equal rights of nationalities" (*Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten*), allowing for the use of "native" languages and the right of nationalities to receive education in their mother

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[86] Attila Demeter M., "Politikai nemzet versus nemzetiség - 1848, 1861, 1868. Nemzet, faj, kultúra a hosszú 19. században Magyarországon és Európában.," in *Magyar történelmi emlékek. Értekezések. Tanulmányok a nacionalizmus kultúrtörténetéből 2.*, ed. Ferenc Hörcher, Mátyás Lajtai, and Béla Mester (Budapest: MTA, 2016), 238-260.
[87] Mérei, *Föderációs tervek*, 68–90.
[88] See: József Eötvös, *Über die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in Österreich* (Budapest: C. A. Hartleben, 1850).

tongue. It acknowledged the official use of the language by the language group and outlined its applicability in regions where the language was customary (*landesüblich*). The implementation of the law posed several conundrums for officials and legal experts, with the primary issue being whether individuals or groups could invoke its provisions and, specifically, how to establish a nationality group as a legal entity and identify its eligible members.[89] Consequently, the legal framework of the Austrian part of the Monarchy did not recognize any dominant nation, making it a "nationalities state." The official name of the Austrian half of the empire suggested a territorial-federalist character, but the central state was still strongly involved in the administration of the crown lands, leading to a so-called "decentralized unitary state."[90]

Act XLIV of 1868, the Nationality Act on the equal rights of nationalities, declared linguistic rights for the nationalities who were part of the Hungarian (political) nation and delineated the extent of the usage of non-dominant languages in the public sphere and education. Denominational schools were enabled to choose their language of tuition and administration freely. As historian Ágoston Berecz pointed out, since Robert William Seton-Watson, the majority of historians have agreed that state policies in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Hungary implemented this Act poorly in practice.[91] The Nationality Committee of the 1861 Parliament, presided over by Eötvös, is often cited as a precursor to the 1868 law. Eötvös proposed a unified and neutral state where nationality rights would be restricted to cultural and linguistic practices, similar to religious freedoms. However, the nationalities, rather than calling for equal rights for individuals, pushed for equal rights for nations, resulting in a federalist strategy that is mirrored in Aurel Popovici's blueprint for federation, entitled "Die Vereinigten Staaten von Gross-Österreich" (The United States of Greater Austria).[92] In addition to opposing to the

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[89] Gerald Stourzh, *Die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in der Verfassung und Verwaltung Österreichs, 1848-1918* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985). Natasha Wheatley, "Making Nations into Legal Persons between Imperial and International Law: Scenes from a Central European History of Group Rights," *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law*, Making Nations into Legal Persons, 28, no. 3 (2018): 481–94.

[90] Stourzh, *Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten*. See also Chapter 2 of Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"

[91] Ágoston Berecz, "The Hungarian Nationalities Act of 1868 in Operation (1868–1914)," *Slavic Review* 81, no. 4 (2023): 1–22, https://doi.org/doi: 10.1017/slr.2023.2. See also: Ludwig Gogolák, in *Die Völker des Reiches. 2: Die Völker des Reiches ; Teilbd. 2*, ed. Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, 2., unveränd. Aufl, Die Habsburgermonarchie, 3,2, 2003, 1,285-87.

[92] Aurel Popovici, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Groß-Österreich: politische Studien zur Lösung der nationalen Fragen und staatsrechtlichen Krisen in Österreich-Ungarn; mit einer Karte des föderativen Groß-Österreich* (Leipzig: Elischer Nachf., 1906).

suggestion of the nationalities, in 1868, the Hungarian political élite also did not envision implementing nationalities' rights by creating new administrative units based on national division lines. The so-called "rounding up" (*kikerekítés)* of administrative units to make them monolingual would not have been possible without population exchanges. Nineteenth-century Hungarian liberal political thought instead imagined nationality rights on the model of individual rights of association. Liberal politicians opposed the enactment of collective nationality rights and the recognition of nationalities as collective legal personalities.[93] The literature suggests that the discrepancy of perspectives can be attributed to the fact that, at the time, the nationalities were in the "second phase" of nation-building, to use an interpretive framework suggested by the Czech historian Miroslav Hroch, which was political rather than cultural. The Hungarian élite failed to acknowledge this crucial distinction.[94] The decline in the allegiance of non-Hungarians to the Hungarian state has multiple causes that cannot be limited to the nationality law or its deficient execution. Factors such as increasing literacy rates, urbanization, and industrialization also played a significant role in this erosion.[95]

Adolf Fischhof, a committed liberal politician from Austria with federalist leanings, was the first to thoroughly investigate how to safeguard the multilingualism of the Austrian crownlands and protect the rights of minorities. In his book *Oesterreich und die Bürgschaften seines Bestandes,* Fischhof proposed the creation of national curiae in provincial, district, and municipal assemblies based on the classification of elected representatives. These curiae would vote separately only on language and education matters, and a court of arbitration with equal representation to the national curia would be set up for disputes.[96] When it was published, Fischhof's book attracted the attention of Hungarians and Czechs and later Renner and Bauer. Overall, it had a significant impact

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[93] Schlett, *A nemzetiségi törvényjavaslat országgyűlési vitája, 1868*. Demeter M., "Politikai nemzet versus nemzetiség - 1848, 1861, 1868. Nemzet, faj, kultúra a hosszú 19. században Magyarországon és Európában."

[94] Fort he typology see: Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Alexander Maxwell, "Typologies and Phases in Nationalism Studies: Hroch's A-B-C Schema as a Basis for Comparative Terminology," *Nationalities Papers* 38, no. 6 (November 2010): 865–80, https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2010.515970. For such an interpretation, see: Gyáni and Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, 140.

[95] Gyáni and Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, 140.

[96] Adolf Fischhof, *Oesterreich und die Bürgschaften Seines Bestandes.* (Wien: Wallishausser'sche Buchhandlung, 1869).

across the entire empire.[97] National cultural autonomy is also linked to legal scholar Georg Jellinek's critique of the principle of majority rule, which questioned how majority rule could be prevented from leading to "brutalization" in cases of internal strife. To avoid simple majority rule, political parties introduced mechanisms such as the veto, curial vote, and *amicabilis compositio*, which was a form of decision-making based on reconciliation between two parties of equal weight, even if they are not numerically equal.[98] It is worth noting that the statesmen mentioned above, and even Renner and Bauer, were not simply examining the dangers of the "tyranny of the majority" in a purely theoretical sense. They sought to support the German administrative personnel of the Czech crownlands who were concerned about being pressured to conform to the language and culture of the Czech majority. Despite being part of a "dominant nation," this group was a numerical minority compared to other nationalities within their state.

After the turn of the century, to assure national representation, the so-called provincial compromises in Moravia (1905), Bukovina (1910), and Galicia (1914) introduced national electoral cadasters.[99] These negotiations were preceded by a failed compromise in Bohemia in 1871.[100] The Bohemian Nationalities Protection Act aimed to establish equality between the Czech and German groups in politics and administration, with officials required to know both languages. The Act intended to introduce the idea of national curiae within the Diet and allow for partial autonomy in financing educational institutions. This idea and practice were at the core of the regional compromises, which aimed to vent the steam of overheated national tensions. The new provincial constitutions introduced national electoral registers as a compromise between the interests of the estates

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[97] See Chapter 2 of Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'" Adorjáni and Bari, "National Minority," 18–19.
[98] Georg Jellinek, *Das Recht der Minoritäten* (Wien: Alfred Hölder, 1898).
[99] See: Gerald Stourzh, "The National Compromise in the Bukovina," in *From Vienna to Chicago and Back. Essays on Intellectual History and Political Thought in Europe and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 177–89. Börries Kuzmany, "Habsburg Austria: Experiments in Non-Territorial Autonomy," *Ethnopolitics* 15, no. 1 (January 2016): 43–65, https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2015.1101838. See also the subchapter *Die nationalen Ausgleiche in Mähren, der Bukowina, Galizien und Bosnien* in the book manuscript Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"
[100] Stourzh, *Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten*, 200–228; Stourzh, "The National Compromise in the Bukovina." See also Chapter 4 of Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'" Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 13–48. Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton University Press, 2002), https://doi.org/10.1515/9780691186382.

and competing nation-builders. While these institutions had elements of non-territorial autonomy, they did not create separate assemblies. Instead, elected representatives sat together in the same parliament, and, in some cases, national curiae controlled schools assigned to their nationality. However, implementing elements of non-territorial autonomy presented challenges with regard to national assignment, and final decisions on the correctness of such assignments were left to the supreme national authority, resulting in thousands of citizens appealing to the Administrative Court.[101]

With Karl Renner's writings, the idea of non-territorial autonomy made its entry into the workers' movement, primarily in Austria but also in Imperial Russia, and as the first part of this dissertation will show, to a partial extent in Hungary. The nationality question and its possible Marxist solutions were widely discussed at the meeting of the Second International.[102] The Czecho-Slav Social Democratic Workers' Party, as an independent faction within the Austrian Social Democratic Workers' Party (*Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei Österreichs, SDAPÖ*), supported the federalization of the Austrian worker's party based on ethnic lines. This program was adopted in 1897, resolving the nationality issue within the party's organizational structure from the perspective of the *Gesamtpartei*. The next goal was to address the issue on an empire-wide level, which was discussed at the party congress in Brno/Brünn in 1899.[103] Otto Bauer's 1907 work *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (*Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*), provided the Austromarxist interpretation of the nationality question and the corresponding non-territorial solution with even greater visibility.[104] It was considered the most comprehensive Marxist analysis of the

[101] Gerald Stourzh, "The Ethnicizing of Politics and 'National Indifference' in Late Imperial Austria," in *Der Umfang Der Österreichischen Geschichte: Ausgewählte Studien 1990-2010* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2011), 283–323, https://doi.org/10.7767/boehlau.9783205791461. Kuzmany, "Objectivising National Identity: The Introduction of National Registers in the Late Habsburg Empire."

[102] Michal Kasprzak, "To Reject or Not to Reject Nationalism: Debating Marx and Engels' Struggles with Nationalism, 1840s–1880s," *Nationalities Papers* 40, no. 04 (July 2012): 585–606, https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2012.685058. Michael Forman, *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement: The Idea of the Nation in Socialist and Anarchist Theory* (Penn State University Press, 1998), https://doi.org/10.5325/j.ctv14gpd6r.

[103] *Verhandlungen des Gesammtparteitages der Sozialdemokratie in Oesterreich abgehalten in Brünn vom 24. bis 29. September 1899 im Arbeiterheim.* (Wien: Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung Ignaz Brand, 1899).

[104] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*; Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*.

nationality question by contemporaries. The following chapters aim to trace the trajectory of Renner's non-territorial solution and Bauer's book in the Hungarian part of the Empire.

The issue of ensuring equal rights and freedoms for individuals belonging to an ethnocultural group was a critical concern during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, this matter was seldom referred to as the "minority question." The term "(national) minority" only gained significance as an international legal concept during WWI, replacing the earlier domestic legal notion of nationality or *Volksstamm*, which was prevalent until approximately 1918.[105] Despite the Great War and the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy, attempts at compromise and federalization persisted, particularly in Hungary, where politicians, thinkers, and citizens passionately pursued new solutions. Chapter II/2, "Naive Wilson," delves into this issue. In Central and Eastern Europe, the continuation of the war led to a tumultuous environment where armed conflicts often superseded democratic referendums, creating a power vacuum in which county systems, national councils, and military councils competed to maintain order.[106] Some historians interpret the unrest and violence as grassroots attempts at state-building, reflecting the tensions of the long nineteenth century and WWI. The initiatives to protect small nations and minorities in this context can be seen as contributing to the building of the state.[107] The aftermath of WWI created an environment that amplified the fascination with new models of minority protection which carried the legacy of experiences from the previous century, among them the idea of non-territorial autonomy.

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[105] Adorjáni and Bari, "National Minority"; Wheatley, "Spectral Legal Personality in Interwar International Law"; Adorjáni and Bari, "National Minority"; Viefhaus, *Die Minderheitenfrage und die Entstehung der Minderheitenschutzverträge auf der Pariser Friedenskonferenz 1919 : eine Studie zur Geschichte des Nationalitätenproblems im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*.

[106] Jörg Fisch, *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker: die Domestizierung einer Illusion*, Historische Bibliothek der Gerda-Henkel-Stiftung (München: C.H. Beck, 2010). Ewald Frie, "100 Jahre 1918/19. Offene Zukünfte," ed. Zentrum Für Zeithistorische Forschung, *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, 2018, https://doi.org/10.14765/ZZF.DOK.4.1132. Jochen Böhler, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918-1921: The Reconstruction of Poland*, First edition, The Greater War, 1912-1923 (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2018). Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917-1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2016). Gábor Egry, "Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions: Local Societies and Nationalizing States in East Central Europe," in *Embers of Empire*, ed. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon (Berghahn Books, 2022), 15–42, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781789200232-004.

[107] Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*.

PART I. HOW TO RUN A MULTINATIONAL SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY?

1. Introduction

1.1. On Life and Reason

Although Marxism and nineteenth-century liberalism had different views on social justice and progress, they did agree on one thing—they both anticipated the decline of nationalism.[108] In the second half of the nineteenth century, nationalism's decay seemed to be just around the corner. Although the fall of nationalism by the turn of the century appeared plausible, nationalism persisted even within the workers' movement and has not declined to this day. "Life and Reason are opposed," the social anthropologist Ernest Gellner concluded aphoristically in his essay on nationalism.[109] However, a few Marxist thinkers bowed to the folly of life at the turn of the century. They begrudgingly accepted that nationalism would not go away by itself and that national demands must be taken seriously.

Among the most important exponents of this position were the Austromarxists. Austromarxism distinguished itself from both Marxism and liberalism by taking the persistence of nationalism seriously and finding a unique way to solve the difficulties it caused in the organization of a multinational workers' party. Austromarxists federalized the Austrian Social Democratic Workers Party (*Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei Österreichs*, SDAPÖ) by creating so-called nationalities sections to guarantee the autonomy of each nationality within the party. Their efforts did not stop at the party organization. Austromarxists wanted to entangle Austria (and eventually Hungary) with non-territorial national autonomies. They believed the linguistic and cultural rights these autonomies guaranteed would keep the multi-ethnic empire together.

Since Hungary had a similar degree of multi-ethnicity to Cisleithania, one would assume that the inner federalization of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary, SDPH (*Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt*, MSZDP) and a nationality policy based on

[108] See: Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 148–49. Berlin, *Against the Current*, 333–55.
[109] Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 148–49.

cultural autonomy was also a popular solution among workers in Hungary. But this was not quite the case. The leaders of the Hungarian workers' movement were, of course, intimately familiar with their Austrian sister party's doings. They knew what they discussed at the party congress in Brno/Brünn (present-day Czechia) and were familiar with the work of the Austromarxists, whose most prominent writers were Karl Renner and Otto Bauer. Tactically or theoretically, who in Hungary took into account the lessons of the Austrian example? When, why, and for whom? The following chapter takes stock of the responses of the SDPH to the nationality question from the fin-de-siècle up to the dissolution of the Monarchy. The period under study covers roughly the Second International (1889–1914). It aims to place the theory of non-territorial autonomy among other currents of thought on the nation in the Marxist intellectual tradition. Analyzing the social, political, and intellectual context will shed light on the opportune and inopportune times for the Social Democrats to take up the cause of autonomy for themselves or other nations.

The following chapters provide an opportunity to analyze which social, political, economic, and ideological constellations favored the appropriation of the idea of non-territorial arrangements in the Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy. To write a history of positive reception, it is often sufficient to focus primarily on intellectual legacies, relations, and networks. A history of rejection, however, cannot obscure the constantly changing social and political context. Small changes can provide the key to what makes a milieu suddenly receptive to a new theory or practical model. Therefore, three chapters of my thesis examine the party organization and its official documents, political entrepreneurs, but also local activists. Sometimes, sources allowed me to follow the circulation of the idea between expert and non-expert groups and write micro-level case studies. Other sections follow more traditional historical methods in intellectual, social, and political history. In analyzing the sources, I benefited greatly from the theories of cultural transfer, knowledge transfer, and cultural translation.

The editors of the volume *Social Movements, 1768–2018,* claim that social movements will likely appear in a time of democratization where parliaments must negotiate with the people.[110] Social movements aim at reorganizing the relationships of

[110] Charles Tilly, Ernesto Castañeda, and Lesley J. Wood, *Social Movements, 1768–2018*, 4th ed. (Routledge, 2019), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429297632., 38-40.

the existing social order.[111] My thesis devotes much attention to the bargaining process of these actors to define the shared symbols of membership. To analyze how deprived groups translate their particular grievances into a universal language, I have drawn on theories from the toolbox of anthropology and cultural studies. Martin Fuchs's concept of the "third idiom" refers to the institution of a universalistic idiom in order to reach out to others and overcome existing socio-political restrictions.[112] In the work of Fuchs, Buddhism is such an idiom. In my case study, the language of socialism enables deprived groups to reach out. Nicole Doerr's concept of "political translation" offers a toolkit to analyze how power asymmetries influence the negotiation discourse between the center and the periphery.[113]

The first part of my thesis argues that the Austrian model of dealing with multiethnicity within the workers' movement and on the level of the state traveled to the other side of the Leitha. The idea circulated throughout the political spectrum, but it was primarily Marxist politicians whose discussions of it left a mark. Until the end of WWI, no one earnestly advocated for implementing the Austromarxist solution in Hungary. In what follows, I will present several reasons why the Austromarxist way of dealing with linguistic diversity was rejected from a theoretical perspective. Furthermore, the organizational model of the Austrian Workers' Party, even though it was not applied, did influence the Hungarian Marxists, since in 1904 they established the so-called national agitational and organizational committees. Chapter I/3, "Technical Autonomy," analyzes the extent to which these committees met nationalities' needs for autonomy and empowerment from a practical standpoint. Finally, changing the scale and perspective of analysis in almost every subchapter enables us to question fixed categories and repeatedly reflect on our metahistorical concepts, which are themselves the outcome of the struggle over the production of meaning.

The Austrian Social Democratic Workers' Party has received significant scholarly attention. What follows is an asymmetrical comparative analysis that gives more space to Hungarian social democracy. I am most interested in how the SDPH dealt with the

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[111] Nathan Crick, ed., *The Rhetoric of Social Movements: Networks, Power, and New Media*, 1st ed. (New York : Routledge, 2020.: Routledge, 2020), 1–2, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429436291.
[112] Fuchs, "Reaching out; or, Nobody Exists in One Context Only."
[113] Nicole Doerr, "Between Habermas and Rancière: The Democracy of Political Translation," *Transversal* (blog), June 2013, https://transversal.at/transversal/0613/doerr/en.

multinational character of the party. The chapter starts with a brief account of the existing literature and explains why fin-de-siècle Hungarian social democracy has received little international scholarly attention. Chapter I/2. "Workers belonging to an oppressed nationality believe that they are miserable because (...) they are of a different nationality.' Understanding Nationalism in the Second International and among Hungarian Social Democrats" presents the options available for comrades in Hungary to respond to the nationality question during the years of the Second International. This section shows how workers' leaders in Hungary received ideas from abroad on how to deal with multinationalism within the workers' movement and in the state. Most of my attention, of course, is devoted to the reception of the Austrian sister party's solution. Chapter I/3. "'Technical Autonomy.' Practicing multilingualism in the Hungarian workers' movement" answers how to deal with multinationalism within the workers' movement and beyond from a practical point of view. While Chapter I/3 presents the responses to the nationality question from the perspective of the party leadership, consisting primarily of Hungarian speakers with different ethno-confessional backgrounds, the two case studies in Chapters I/4 and I/5 show how Romanian and Slovak workers imagined multinationalism. The Romanian case study in Chapter I.4. "Fluency in Marxism. The case of impoverished Romanian workers from Banat with the SDPH" shows why some Romanian workers in the multi-ethnic rural Banat (present-day Romania and Serbia) did not become familiar with the idea of cultural autonomy. Chapter I.5. "'We do not want any guardianship; we are able to live independently.' The Slovak workers of Hungary and their self-government," a case study on the Slovak workers' movement in Upper Hungary, on the other hand, shows a more receptive milieu for the Austrian model of national autonomy.

1.2. Literature Review

Historians can tell the story of the SDPH before WWI as one of both success and failure. On the one hand, the SDPH became a mass party within a decade, addressing critical social issues and giving a sense of agency to people who lacked the right to vote.[114] The

[114] The trade union movement grew from 10,000 members in 1901 to 130,000 members in 1907. Karl Kautsky, *Karl Kautsky und die Sozialdemokratie Südosteuropas: Korrespondenz 1883-1938*, ed. Georges

party was particularly active in social work during WWI.[115] On the other hand, the Hungarian labor movement was considered a repressed movement without a mass following compared to the Austrian one. The Hungarian labor movement is also considered to be weak in theorizing. The Hungarian workers' movement did not have such prominent specialists on the nationality question as Karl Kautsky in the German, Karl Renner and Otto Bauer in the Austrian, Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin in the Russian, or Rosa Luxemburg in the Polish movement. Hungarians did not develop a socialist theory of nationalism of their own.[116] When German or Anglo-American authors mention the Hungarian workers' movement, it mostly appears in listings or is overshadowed by the Austrian movement. "Hungarian Socialism (…) was always a repressed movement. It produced no thinker of much importance; nor did it ever achieve a mass following at all comparable with that of Austrians."[117] Foreign literature provides little substantial information about the labor movement in Hungary. However, it is undoubtedly not only the genuine "intellectual weakness" of Hungarian Social Democrats that kept Hungarian social democracy from being prominent.[118] The leaders of the SDPH followed the so-called "worker into professional revolutionary" model.[119] The Hungarian movement instead adopted earlier domestic practices and contemporary international ideas on how to deal with nationalities. The repression of the worker's movement in Hungary and the lack of internationally active theoreticians among its leadership may

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Haupt, János Jemnitz, and Leo van Rossum, Quellen und Studien zur Sozialgeschichte, Bd. 5 (Frankfurt ; New York: Campus, 1986), 412.

[115] Pál Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság: az 1918-as összeomlás és az őszirózsás forradalom története*, Modern magyar történelem (Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2018).

[116] See: "The Country whose absence in the preceding chapters has no doubt been particularly noticeable in Austria, or the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, as it was called before its breakup at the end of World War I." Albert S. Lindemann, *A History of European Socialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 247.

[117] Cole, George, *A History of Socialist Thought. 3. 2. The Second International: 1889 - 1914*, vol. 3.2., A History of Socialist Thought (London ; New York: Macmillan, St. Martin's Press, 1956), 566.

[118] Some historians insist that the leadership of the SDPH professed Magyar nationalism. Moreover, since the leaders of the Hungarian workers' movement emerged from the working class, they lacked the education and intellectual capacity to theorize the nationality question: "the HSDP (sic) was unwilling to address the concrete issues associated with the problem of national oppression in Hungary. In this regard it was less serious and creative than the Austrian party. (...) The Hungarian party did not possess thinkers of this calibre and was almost exclusively led by self-taught men, who had risen from the ranks of the artisan and skilled worker strata and who, unfortunately, did not develop a broad perspective on the national problem." Pieter van Duin, *Central European Crossroads: Social Democracy and National Revolution in Bratislava (Pressburg), 1867-1921*, International Studies in Social History, v. 14 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 117–19.

[119] György Borsányi, "The Labour Movement and the Jewish Question in Hungary (1880-1944).," in *Études Historiques Hongroises* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985), 89–90.

explain why the SDPH and its national policy have received little international scholarly attention.

Scholars explain the Hungarian "aversion to theory" using three arguments: First, the progressive and democratic intelligentsia were frightened away from the social democratic movement since the main political agenda in progressive circles was national independence. The idea of internationalism was, therefore, terrifying for the first generation of intellectuals in Dualist Hungary, a generation that—socialist or not—still deemed Lajos Kossuth, the revolutionary of 1848-1849 as a national hero.[120] Second, Hungary was a predominantly agricultural country. As a result, Social Democrats were frustrated by the delayed state of industrialization and modernization in Hungary. Compared with Germany or Austria, the capitalist transformation in Hungary was "behind." This sense of belatedness and the desire to keep up favored a more action-oriented path rather than a theoretical approach.[121] Third, there was also a historiographical myth in Dualist Hungary which claimed that Hungarians were less inclined to philosophical thinking than Austrians. This myth held that the Hungarian language was not suitable for theoretical reflection. Consequently, Hungary's social and historical problems were framed either politically or poetically, but not philosophically.[122] Budapest and the Hungarian social-democratic movement nevertheless "produced" (German) theoreticians like Georg Lukács (born György Bernát Löwinger). In his essay *Traveling Theory,* Edward Said traces Lukácsian Marxism precisely to this period of alleged theoretical weakness in the Hungarian labor movement.[123] Scholarship tends to legitimize the relevance of ideas from the periphery based on their impact on Western meaning-making systems.

Today's historians can trace the mark of both nationalist and Leninist historiography in the Hungarian historical discourse on the workers' movement before 1918. Some Hungarian historians attempted to provide an answer to the question of whether the disintegration of the Kingdom of Hungary was the fault of social democracy. The

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[120] Lajos Varga, "A Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt 1903-as kongresszusának előzményeihez.," *Tudományos szocializmus* 5 (1967): 6.
[121] János Kristóf Nyíri, *A Monarchia szellemi életéről: filozófiatörténeti tanulmányok* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1980), 12.
[122] Nyíri, 18.
[123] Edward W. Said, *The Edward Said Reader*, ed. Moustafa Bayoumi, 1. publ (London: Granta Books, 2001), 195–217.

scholarship concerning the social democratic movement in Hungary is predominantly the work of Marxist Hungarian historians. Between the 1950s and 1989, there was an increased interest in the workers' movement. Historians affiliated with the Institute for Party History *(Párttörténeti Intézet)* have systematically covered the history of the labor movement in Hungary. This scholarship analyzed the nationality policy of the Hungarian Social Democrats from a normative Leninist-Stalinist perspective. This Leninist-Stalinist approach to the question of nationality was more typical for the first decades of the Hungarian People's Republic (1949–1989). However, a particular affinity for Lenin's national self-determination and Stalin's territorial autonomy can be observed throughout the period.[124]

This normativity is clearly visible in the way Hungarian scholars evaluated the nationality issue and the SDPH's nationality policy. Leninist–Stalinist scholarship always considered a nationality policy that did not guarantee the right to national independence unsatisfactory and failed. The historian János Kende, for instance, argued that hiding naively behind the idea of internationalism was a misguided tactic of the SDPH leadership. Moreover, he insisted that the leaders of the Hungarian workers should have conferred the right to self-determination on all nation(alitie)s before WWI. This is a clearly Leninist line of argument. A federative reorganization of the SDPH, similar to the party structure developed in the Austrian half of the Monarchy, had always been evaluated as an idea that should be rejected. This is because, besides the right to self-determination, Lenin supported the principle of unity in the labor movement. There has been a new interest in the workers' movement among Hungarian historians in recent years. We can

[124] János Kende, "Az 1903-1904. évi nemzetiségi mozgalmak és az MSZDP," *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 7, no. 4 (1961): 80–108. János Kende, *A Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, Értekezések a Történeti Tudományok Köréből (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973). Tibor Erényi, *Szocializmus a századelőn. Tanulmányok a magyarországi munkásmozgalom történetéből.* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1979). Tibor Erényi, "Az 1918 előtti magyarországi munkásmozgalom és a nemzeti kérdés," in *A magyar nacionalizmus kialakulása és története.*, ed. Endre Arató (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1964), 187–208. Tibor Erényi, "Nemzet, haza, hazafiság a magyar szociáldemokrata mozgalomban," *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 18, no. 4 (1972): 55–81. Lajos Varga, "A Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt 1903-as programjának néhány kérdése," *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 15, no. 3 (1969): 32–67; I. György Kalmár, *Szociáldemokrácia, nemzeti és nemzetiségi kérdés Magyarországon (1900-1914)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976). Gyula Mérei, "A Habsburg monarchia idealizálása a „nemzetek fölötti állam" eszméjének szolgálatában.," *Akadémiai Értesítő - Magyar Tudomány* 68, no. 9 (1961): 513–27. Erényi and Vincze, *A magyar munkásmozgalom történetének válogatott dokumentumai*.

see examples of novel approaches that break with both the Leninist-Stalinist and the nationalist discourse.[125]

Scholarly works focusing on the social democratic movement in Hungary accessible in languages other than Hungarian are mostly translations or published by Hungarian scholars in foreign languages. An exception to this is literature written in the language of the nationalities living in the Kingdom of Hungary. The historians of the successor states needed to integrate the history of the Romanian, Slovak, Serbian, and Ruthenian workers of the former Kingdom of Hungary into their respective national histories. The literature written in the languages used in the Kingdom of Hungary also falls into the three categories typical of Hungarian literature: nationalist, Stalinist-Leninist, and, more recently, an analytical approach that goes beyond these two schools. I will explore this literature in more detail in the two case studies in Chapters I/4 and I/5.

The literature usually divides the workers' movement into a period before 1890, characterized by inner schisms and competing opinions on how to organize the movement, and a period after 1890, when a new generation of socialist leaders emerged and dominated the workers' movement until the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy. This second period roughly corresponds with the duration of the Second International. Scholarship divided the second period into four intervals. The first comprised the years between the birth of the SDPH (1890) and the adoption of the first thorough party program in 1903. Negotiations over the individual points of the party program marked the second period between 1903 and 1906. This was also when the agrarian and nationality question was fiercely debated and the leadership attempted to integrate agricultural and non-Magyar workers into the movement. The party created separate sections for each nationality. The Romanian and Slovak case studies thus focus on this period, when intense negotiations over the production of meaning took place. The third period, from 1906 to 1914, was a time of domestic political crises. During this period, the party was willing to ally with "bourgeois" parties to enhance the fight for electoral rights. In doing so, it indirectly and progressively abandoned its commitment to the cause of the nationalities.

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[125] Péter Tibor Csunderlik, *Radikálisok, szabadgondolkodók, ateisták: a Galilei Kör (1908-1919) története* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2017). Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság*, 2018. Róbert-István Antal, "Jordáky Lajos politikai karrierjének csúcsán (1944–1945/46)," *REGIO* 28, no. 2 (August 19, 2020): 54, https://doi.org/10.17355/rkkpt.v28i2.309. János Főcze, *A MADOSZ: balodali magyar történet a Román Királyságban (1934-1944)*, 20. század 3 (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület : Kriterion Könyvkiadó, 2020).

The nationality sections gradually stopped attending the meetings of the central party and grew closer to their respective "bourgeois" national parties.[126] The fourth period coincides with the years of the Great War. The SDPH initially supported the war, which it justified on the grounds of the legitimacy of the fight against Tsarism. But the militarization of factories, military service, censorship, and restrictions on the right of assembly negatively affected the movement. The authorities banned many newspapers written in the languages of the nationalities. Social democrats started to criticize the war in the summer of 1915. Through their country-wide organizations, they played an active role in securing food supplies. The Russian Revolution of February 1917 also significantly impacted Hungarian workers.[127]

[126] To avoid the confusion that the concepts of Hungarian and national might cause, I use the term "central party" to refer to the all-Hungarian nationwide organization (*országos pártszervezet*), reffered to as *Gesamtpartei* in the Austrian sister party. The central organization of the SDPH was based in Budapest and it encompassed workers belonging to all nationalities. Its leadership, however, was predominantly composed of Hungarian-speaking Jews.

[127] Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság*, 2018, 54–55. Ferenc Mucsi et al., eds., *A szocialista munkásmozgalom Magyarországon az első világháborút közvetlenül megelőző években és a háború idején. 1907-1918.*, Kossuth Könyvkiadó, vol. 2, A magyar munkásmozgalom történetének válogatott dokumentumai 4 (Budapest, 1969), 5–6.

2. "Workers belonging to an oppressed nationality believe that they are miserable because (...) they are of a different nationality."[128] Understanding Nationalism in the Second International and among Hungarian Social Democrats

At the fin-de-siècle, anarchist and revolutionary tendencies gave way to reformism that adopted constitutional and non-violent means. National social democratic parties were established and were active in the electoral field all over Europe. The German Social Democratic Party was at the forefront of these new tendencies, and its Erfurt Program (1891) significantly influenced the policy of other parties, including the Hungarian party program of 1903.[129] At the turn of the century, European states significantly expanded their armies and navies. The system of universal compulsory military service forced workers to have a fatherland and protect it—in contrast to the teachings of Marx. Thus, workers' duties as citizens could override those of class struggle. Social democratic parties active in these states had to address the issue of overlapping national and class loyalties.[130] Since nationality offered a competitive social identity for workers, the Second International inevitably had to take a stance on the nationality question. Parallel to this, modern national movements aiming at independence, or at least autonomy, emerged.[131] Social democratic parties in multinational empires faced the challenge of maintaining their unity and separating class struggle from the national struggle. This was the context in which the Austromarxists decided to divide their party along linguistic fault lines. In the Russian Empire, the workers' movement faced similar problems. Hungarian comrades were familiar with the state of affairs on the other side of the Leitha, but Russian social democratic ideas were little known in Hungary before 1917.

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[128] J. St., "A nemzetiségi kérdés irodalmához," *Szocializmus. Szociáldemokrata folyóirat.* 2, no. 4 (1907): 128.
[129] Cole, George, *A History of Socialist Thought. 3. 2. The Second International: 1889 - 1914*, vol. 3.2., 5 vols., A History of Socialist Thought (London ; New York: Macmillan, St. Martin's Press, 1956), XI-XII.
[130] James Joll, *The Second International: 1889 - 1914*, 1st ed. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1955), 108-109.
[131] Karl Kautsky, "Nationality and Internationality," ed. Ben Lewis, *Critique* 37, no. 3 (August 2009): 373, https://doi.org/10.1080/03017600902989799.

2.1. Kladderadatsch Postponed! Making Sense of Nationalism in the Second International

The Second International (1889–1914) brought together the Social Democrats of the world. The International was seen as a loose federation of national groups. The leaders allowed each national party flexibility in shaping its own policy and program.[132] In the view of Marx, Engels, and the First International, nationalism was a bourgeois concept, a product of capitalism, and thus false and transient. For a socialist thinker, the belief in a close connection between the diffusion of modernity and nationalism was common sense.[133] According to Marx's theory on the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, the big *Kladderadatsch* (crash bang wallop) of the capitalist system and the takeover by the masses were just around the corner.[134] Not only capitalism but also nationalism was expected to break down by the end of the nineteenth century with the rise of what Marx and Engels called the proletariat. At the time of the Second International, Marxist thinkers acknowledged that this would not happen anytime soon.[135] Both nationalism and capitalism persisted.

At the same time, when dealing with current political issues, Marx and Engels accepted strategic flexibility in supporting national revolutionary movements. They were ready to exploit nationalism for their own ends.[136] Consequently, since the fathers of socialist thought gave a vague definition of class and nation, social democratic workers, politicians, and political thinkers faced difficulties in interpreting and implementing the two opposing principles: internationalism on the one hand and national self-determination on the other.[137] Having said that, it is equally important to note that most of the works of Marx and Engels were not accessible to a broader public before the turn of the century.

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[132] Cole, George, *The Second International, 3.2.*, XIV.
[133] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Moscow: International Publishers, 1969), 98–137, Marxists Internet Archive (marxists.org).
[134] Jenny Jansson, *Manufacturing Consensus: The Making of the Swedish Reformist Working Class*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Skrifter Utgivna Av Statsvetenskapliga Föreningen i Uppsala 184 (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2012), 19.
[135] See Ervin Szabó's report on the labor movement in 1903: "The twentieth century arrived and the big Kladderadatsch, the breakdown of the bourgeois society at the end of the 19th century has been held off as opposed to what Engels and later Bebel prognosticated. Now even the most plethoric socialists started to measure the periods of the socialist movement in larger intervals." Ervin Szabó, "A munkásmozgalom 1903-ban," *Huszadik Század* 5, no. 1 (1904): 38.
[136] Kasprzak, "To Reject or Not to Reject Nationalism," 3–4.
[137] Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party."; Philipp Djokic, *Nationale Frage und marxistische Theorie*, 1. Aufl (Wien: Arbeitsgruppe Marxismus, 2003), 103.; Kasprzak, "To Reject or Not to Reject Nationalism," 14.; Jansson, *Manufacturing Consensus*, 38.

Only those belonging to the inner circle of Engels, such as Karl Kautsky, the key figure in the German Social Democratic Party and the Second International, were familiar with most of their writings. Efforts to translate and publish Marx and Engels started to take off with the new century.[138]

Socialist thinkers agreed that the nationality question was one of the topics where the legacy of Marx and Engels needed revision.[139] Regarding the dilemma of when to apply the principle of internationalism and when to apply that of the self-determination of nations, both Karl Kautsky and Vladimir Lenin (born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov), the most prominent theorist of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) categorically rejected the unconditional demand for the independence of nations. They both considered it necessary to analyze the actual historical circumstances closely. In Kautsky's opinion, the view of Marx and Engels on the nationality question "had become untenable."[140] He made this point as early as in 1896 in the preface of *Revolution und Kontre-Revolution in Deutschland* (*Revolution and Counter-Revolution*) and a letter to Victor Adler, the leader of the Austrian Social Democrats: "We would not be faithful to the Marxist method if we shut down our eyes to the facts and stood by the outdated standpoint of Marx."[141] In particular, Kautsky had to distance himself from the views of Marx and Engels on the Slavs, especially the Czechs, to whom the fathers of socialism had denied the right of national self-determination. Lenin, not independent of Kautsky's influence, claimed in a similar manner that ignoring the changes in the social, political, and economic circumstances and advocating the old solutions given by Marx "would mean being true to the letter but not to the spirit of the teaching, would mean repeating the old conclusions by rote, without being able to use the Marxist method of research to analyze the new political situation."[142] Consequently, according to Kautsky and Lenin, a true Marxist had to challenge and overwrite old Marxist claims with the help of the Marxist method.

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[138] Máté, *Nemzeti kérdésről*, 11.
[139] Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*. 36.
[140] Kautsky, "Nationality and Internationality," 373.
[141] Adler, Friedrich, ed., *Victor Adler : Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky sowie Briefe von und an Ignaz Auer, Eduard Bernstein, Adolf Braun, Heinrich Dietz, Friedrich Ebert, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Hermann Müller und Paul Singer* (Wien: Verl. d. Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, 1954), 211.
[142] Vladimir Il′ich Lenin, "The National Question in Our Programme," in *Lenin Collected Works, Volume 6.*, vol. 6, 45 vols., Lenin Collected Works (Marxists Internet Archive) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 454–63, https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1903/jul/15.htm.

The nationality question came to the fore in two contexts at the Second International. First, and more explicitly, in the discussions of colonial rivalries and the measures to be taken to prevent war. Second, and more implicitly, in the debates concerning the internal organization of the Second International. In this chapter, I concentrate more on the latter. In order to decide which nationalities could become full members with voting rights and with what voting weight in the International, statehood proved to be a decisive criterion.[143] From the perspective of preventing war, there was a consensus in favor of supporting national self-determination, with the caveat that this support would be more valid in the colonial context than in the case of the emerging European national movements.[144] With regard to the internal structure of the International, nation(ality) became synonymous with the "sections" as reformism progressed and national parties became the pillars of the internal structure of the socialist movement.

Manó Buchinger, the secretary of the SDPH between 1905–1919, recalled that it created humorous situations at the international socialist meetings that the representative of the German Social Democratic Party of Moravia was Dr. Ludwig Czech, whereas Antonín Němec represented the Czech section of the Austrian party.[145] Victor Adler, the founder of the SDAPÖ, presented the Austrian party as "a little International in itself" at the Paris Congress of the Second International in 1900. Conversely, comrade Wilhelm Pfannkuch, the board member of the central Social Democratic Party in Berlin, remarked that "We are glad that we are not obliged to labor under the confusion of languages which our comrades in Austria have to deal with."[146] Adler added that when it came to the problem of nationalities, they were "the ones who know best the difficulties which have to be overcome."[147] The historian Pieter Van Duin reported that in 1895, Victor Adler asked Engels to give him fatherly advice on the nationality question, which was causing so much trouble in the Austrian party. "The dying Engels was not able to answer Adler's

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[143] Joll, *The Second International: 1889 - 1914*, 106–26.; Sebastian D. Schickl, *Universalismus und Partikularismus: Erfahrungsraum, Erwartungshorizont und Territorialdebatten in der diskursiven Praxis der II. Internationale 1889-1917*, 1. Auflage, Mannheimer historische Forschungen, Band 34 (St. Ingbert: Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 2012), 72–89.
[144] Forman, *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement*, 69.
[145] Manó Buchinger, *Találkozásom Európa szocialista vezetőivel*, ed. János Kende, [Újrakiad.] (Budapest: Napvilág, 2003), 26–27.
[146] Joll, *The Second International: 1889 - 1914*, 117.
[147] Joll, 118.

request but may have been surprised by the vitality of Czech nationalism and Czech social democratic autonomism, phenomena that hardly fitted into his historical and political concepts," Van Duin speculated.[148]

Parallel to the interest in the nationality question, there was also a strong sentiment of revulsion against the advance of nationalism in the labor movement. Internationalism was one of the core identity elements of social democracy. Yet internationalism also served as an instrument to take the nationality question off the agenda when necessary. At the same time, the nationality problem was continuously interlocked with the member states' power struggles. Much like in other political decision-making situations, the members of the International voted on items on the agenda concerning nationality issues based on *a priori* doctrines rather than by understanding and analyzing the case in question.

The Amsterdam Congress in 1905 accepted an étatist-governmental interpretation of the national sections. This étatist approach meant that only the dominant nation represented the workers of each state. Despite the relative consensus concerning national self-determination, differences in cultural and historical tradition came across in the translations of the Copenhagen Resolution of 1910. As the historian Sebastian Schickl points out in his book on the discursive practices in the Second International, whereas the German version of the resolution applied the term "*Selbstbestimmungsrecht aller Völker*," the French version used *"l'autonomie des tous les peuples,*" and the English the "*independence of all nations*."[149] Since "*Selbstbestimmungsrecht*" is hardly synonymous with "*autonomie*" or "independence" and the relation between "*Völker*," "*peuple*," and "nations" is also problematic, the translation of the principle to three different discursive practices shows the confusion around them. There was a great variety of interpretations of the idea of national self-determination, hiding within numerous pitfalls regarding its practical implementation. All in all, this conceptual framework did not allow a nation(ality) without a state (i.e. national minorities) to have a separate section. English delegates, for instance, also voted for Australia. Nation(alitie)s without a state, like the Armenians, could only participate as part of the party of the dominant nation, in their

[148] van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, 116.
[149] Schickl, *Universalismus und Partikularismus*, 86–87.

case, the Turkish or Russian Party.[150] As we will see below, the Slovaks of Hungary also voiced their displeasure when their minority report concerning the secession of the Czech trade unions from the German-Austrian trade unions was not presented at the International.

2.2. The Opinion Leaders of the Second International on the Nationality Question (Kautsky, Lenin, and the Bund)

Karl Kautsky was born in 1854 in Prague and raised in Vienna. He was not only a key figure in the German Social Democratic Party and the Second International but also a mentor for the socialist leaders born in the last decades of the nineteenth century. It was Kautsky who discovered the talent of the young Otto Bauer and published his writings in his journal, the *Neue Zeit*.[151] Hungarian Social Democrats studied socialism almost exclusively from *Neue Zeit*, which often published papers concentrating on Hungary. One of Kautsky's papers, for example, gave a Marxist analysis of the Romanian-Hungarian conflict. He argued that this conflict originated from the over-production of the Romanian intelligentsia, while the Hungarian ruling class held a monopoly on official jobs. Kautsky saw similarities with the Galician Polish–Ruthenian and the Bohemian Czech–German conflicts.[152] Since Kautsky was familiar with the socio-political reality in Hungary, the articles discussing Hungarian issues seemed relevant and instructive to the Hungarian readership.[153] The journal also had Hungarian collaborators, such as Eugen/Evgenij Varga (born Jenő Weisz), the publicist and expert on economic subjects who later became Stalin's adviser, and the anarcho-syndicalist revolutionary librarian Ervin/Erwin Szabó (born Samuel Ármin Schlesinger). Kautsky also assisted in drafting the 1903 resolution of the SDPH and preparing the first Hungarian edition of the works of Marx and Engels.

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[150] Schickl, 82–85.
[151] Ephraim Nimni, "Introduction for the English-Reading Audience.," in *Otto Bauer: The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (Minneapolis ; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), XV–XLV.
[152] Karl Kautsky, "A magyar és román ifjúság közötti harc," *Népszava* 21, no. 13 (március 1893): 1–3.; K. (Karl) K. (Kautsky), "Die Ungarischen Rumänen und die Ungarische Nation. Antwort der Hochschuljugend auf das Memorandum der Rumänischen Universitätsjugend. Budapest, 78 S. . Die Rumänische Frage in Siebenbürgen und Ungarn. Replik der Rumänischen akademischen Jugend Siebenbürgens und Ungarns gegen die obige Schrift. VII, 172 S. : [Rezension]," *Die neue Zeit : Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* 26, no. 1 (1893): 830–32.
[153] Buchinger, *Találkozásom*, 46–51.

Kautsky had close ties to Engels, exchanging letters on various topics including the Polish question, i.e., the issue of Poland's independent statehood during the long nineteenth century. In a nutshell, Engels believed that international cooperation is only possible among equal parties. Thus, national independence was the precondition of internationalism. It was, however, not the task of the social democratic movement to fight for national independence, Engels contended.[154] Unlike Marx and Engels, Kautsky admitted that although socialist propaganda and organization are international in content, they must be national in form. In *Nationality and Internationality*, an article Kautsky wrote in reaction to Bauer's book on the nationality question, he argued that nationalities had "entered into the sphere of modern international culture" in multinational states like Austria.[155] Since the proletariat could access modern culture through the national language, it was the job of social democratic parties in multinational states to "create forms that make possible the peaceful cooperation of the different nationalities."[156] For Kautsky, language, economy, and territory were the main constitutive elements of the nation, of which language was the most important.[157] Kautsky believed that while national autonomy might be important for propaganda, it could become dangerous in the field of party activity.[158] Still, he considered class differences more pregnant than national ones. He believed that developing the global market and economy would only lead to assimilation and the dominance of a single language.[159]

Lenin's writings were less well-known in Hungary in the period covered by this research but later became important retrospectively in the historiography of the Eastern Bloc. Until 1917, Lenin's presence at the meetings of the Second International was insignificant. Lenin was not widely known due to the lack of Russian reading ability among Hungarian Social Democrats. In 1907, twenty-seven delegates of the SDPH met Lenin in person in Stuttgart at the congress of the Second International. Manó Buchinger remembered Lenin from the Zürich meeting in 1912 when they happened to sit next to

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[154] *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Werke. Band 35.*, vol. 35, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Werke. (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1967), 269-270.
[155] Karl Kautsky, "Nationality and Internationality Part 2," ed. Ben Lewis, *Critique* 38, no. 1 (February 2010): 153, https://doi.org/10.1080/03017600903454439.
[156] Kautsky, 153.
[157] Djokic, *Nationale Frage und marxistische Theorie*, 104–5.
[158] Kautsky, "Nationality and Internationality Part 2," 161.
[159] Karl Kautsky, "Die moderne Nationalität," *Die neue Zeit : Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* 5 (1887): 442-.

each other at the table. What made the presence of Lenin even more memorable was that he challenged Kautsky in a notice of opposition on a seemingly "academic" question, Buchinger recalled. Since Kautsky's words were regarded as an epiphany and he had an incontestable authority, Lenin's demeanor was imprinted on Buchinger's mind.[160]

Lenin's view on the nationality question did not diverge radically from Kautsky's until the early 1910s. Much like Kautsky, Lenin emphasized that one has to analyze the historical circumstances thoroughly to judge whether a national movement serves the interests of the proletariat and decide whether or not to support it accordingly.[161] When in his 1903 article, the *Nationality Question in Our Program*, Lenin studied the necessary circumstances to demand national independence, he referred to Kautsky's opinion regarding the Polish question. He stressed that as important as national independence is, it is not in the proletariat's interest to strive for it unconditionally. Most of the reports in the Hungarian workers' press discussed the antagonisms between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in the years before the Great War. Lenin believed that a strongly centralized party helped the fight against the international bourgeoisie. Nationalities alone could not succeed. Lenin was firmly against the codification of dividing walls within the party. And federation, in his opinion, was nothing but a "fig leaf" meant to hide national separation.[162]

Russian social democracy faced problems similar to those of the Austrian party in 1903–1904 when the nationalities' social democratic associations, including the Armenian Social-Democratic Labor Organization and the General Jewish Labor Bund in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia (Bund), were integrated into the central body. Lenin published several articles on the topic. His views on how to run a multinational worker's party crystallized in the course of these polemics. In 1903, Armenian Social Democrats published their Manifesto suggesting that the future Russia should have a federal organization with cultural autonomy for all the nationalities in the Caucasus. Lenin published a note in *Iskra*, the official newspaper of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, which was edited by Russian socialist emigrants, to welcome the Armenians into

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[160] Buchinger, *Találkozásom*, 107–9.
[161] Máté, *Nemzeti kérdésről*.
[162] Lenin, "The National Question in Our Programme." In Hungarian translation: Vladimir Il′ich Lenin, "A nemzeti kérdés programunkban," in *A nemzeti kérdésről: a nemzeti kérdés Lenini elméletének kialakulása ; 1896 - 1914*, ed. István Máté, Elméleti viták (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvk, 1988), 62–68.

the Party. He also used this occasion to dispel the misunderstandings around the promise of national autonomy and the federalization of the party.[163] "It is not the business of the proletariat to preach federalism and national autonomy."[164] Despite acknowledging the principles of political and civic liberty and full equality, for Lenin, the unity of all nationalities for democracy and socialism had primacy over national struggle. Lenin did not endorse the idea of supporting national demands unconditionally, emphasizing that the right to self-determination of all nationalities of the state is a negative demand. By this, he meant that one must object to using force in special cases when it serves the interests of the proletariat.[165]

In 1903 at their fifth congress, held in Zürich, the Jewish Bund also raised the issue of the party's federalization to guarantee the autonomy of their organization. According to Lenin's article which contested the autonomist position, the Bund distinguished between "technical" and "substantial" autonomy.[166] Technical autonomy implied that language, mentality, and culture influenced the specificities of agitation work among Jews. They argued that workers belonging to different cultures required different agitation strategies. Developing these specific strategies was what technical autonomy encompassed. As an alternative, substantial autonomy referred to the autonomy to decide the matters of the party program through national delegates. Substantial autonomy consequently presupposed a federal reorganization of the party, in which all the constituent nations were equal members and had an equal say in the content of the party program.[167] The activity of the Bund, as we will see in Chapter II/3.2.2. *"*Land der unbegrenzten Unmöglichkeiten,*"* had some echoes among Jews in Hungary. Hungarian Jews also followed the struggle of Jews from Galicia to create a Jewish national section

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[163] Vladimir Il′ich Lenin, "On the Manifesto of the Armenian Social-Democrats," in *Lenin Collected Works, Volume 6.*, vol. 6, 45 vols., Lenin Collected Works (Marxists Internet Archive) (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 326–29, https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1903/jul/15.htm.

[164] Lenin. In Hungarian translation: Vladimir Il′ich Lenin, "Az 'Örmény Szociáldemokraták Szövetségé-'nek Kiáltványáról (Részlet)," in *A nemzeti kérdésről: a nemzeti kérdés Lenini elméletének kialakulása ; 1896 - 1914*, ed. István Máté, Elméleti viták (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvk, 1988), 61.

[165] Lenin, "Az 'Örmény Szociáldemokraták Szövetségé-'nek Kiáltványáról (Részlet)."

[166] Vladimir Il′ich Lenin, "A Bund helyzete a pártban," in *A nemzeti kérdésről: a nemzeti kérdés Lenini elméletének kialakulása ; 1896 - 1914*, ed. István Máté, Elméleti viták (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvk, 1988), 124.

[167] The English and Hungarian translation of the text uses the term "program autonomy" to refer to what I have framed as substantial autonomy for the sake of clarity. Vladimir Il′ich Lenin, "The Position of the Bund in the Party," in *Lenin Collected Works*, vol. 7, 45 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 92–103, https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1903/oct/22a.htm. In Hungarian: Lenin, "A Bund helyzete a pártban," 124–26.

within the Austrian Workers' Party.[168] The leadership of the SDPH and the Marxist intelligentsia comprised mainly Hungarian Jews. However, Hungarian Jews generally did not perceive themselves as part of the Jewish nation but as Magyars of the Mosaic faith, and thus part of the dominant nation. Although Lenin considered the distinction between technical and substantive autonomy to be a syllogism, this distinction can be helpful for the historian to understand the difference between the Austrian and Hungarian party organizations.

Lenin, on the contrary, believed that only the party's central organization should have the capacity to delineate principles. The subordinate organizations could apply them, taking into account local or national differences. Hence, Lenin supported what the Bundists framed as technical autonomy: "One and the same point in the program will be applied differently depending on differences in conditions of life, differences of culture, differences in the relation of social forces in different parts of the country, and so forth. [169] Lenin argued that the Party, through its central institutions, establishes the fundamental principles of program and tactics. However, the specific methods of implementing these principles in practice and promoting them are determined by the subordinate party organizations at the local level, taking into account factors such as locality, ethnicity, nationality, culture, and other relevant differences. He did not consider the "dual" identity of Jewish workers as something special. In his view, every worker belonged to other identity groups besides class, such as workers in a particular trade, members of a nation, and inhabitants of a particular locality.

During the Second International, Kautsky's opinion prevailed for Hungarian Social Democrats on most issues, including nationality. On theoretical questions, he was the final authority. The Hungarian public became familiar with the struggles of the nationalities within the Russian Social Democratic Party primarily through German translations of Bund publications. These were mainly produced by Galician and Bukovinian Jewish socialists who opposed Zionism. Lenin's position on the nationality question evolved from discussions with the Bund and other non-Russian socialists. His position was then still close to that of Kautsky. Lenin's ideas on the nationality question were not known to his contemporaries in Hungary. There was one exception, namely

[168] J. St., "A nemzetiségi kérdés irodalmához," 126–28.
[169] Lenin, "The Position of the Bund in the Party."

Ervin Szabó, who had some knowledge of Russian socialist literature, particularly its anarcho-syndicalist faction. However, Soviet-era literature assumed that socialists at the turn of the century were familiar with Leninist principles as if they were already common knowledge. The situation was different in the case of the Austromarxist principles of nationality, of which fin-de-siècle Hungarian socialists were well aware. However, the Austrian comrades' theories had nowhere near the prestige of Kautsky's writings.

2.3. The Doyens of National Thought in Eastern Europe (Karl Renner, Otto Bauer)

The Austrian jurist and social-democratic politician Karl Renner was the first person to publish continuously on the socialist solution to the nationality question, from the final years of the nineteenth century. Renner also started from the premise that the principle of national equality is a negative right that protects against discrimination based on language. However, his approach differed from those of Lenin and Kautsky in that Renner did not accept the contemporary statistical definition of the nation. The new science of statistics took ethnological characteristics, the mother tongue, or the language most preferred by the individual (*Umgangssprache*) as the determining constituent of nationality. Conversely, Renner was interested in how nationality could be classified as a subject of public law—that is, subject to legal obligations and positive rights. He would have made nationality a matter of conscience, similar to confessional belonging.[170] His inspiration came from premodern examples of people living in one area while being subject to different juridical systems. By listing nationality among the manifestations of inner life and making it a matter of personal confession (*Bekenntnis*), Renner was able to divide nationality and territory. Territory was no longer an indispensable precondition for nationality. Renner's theory thus rested on two distinctions: first, the separation of nationality from territory, and second, the separation of state from nation.[171]

In practice, to what extent and how could the nation be separated from the territory? And how were these ideas connected to social democracy? Despite moving away from the territorial principle, Renner did not entirely break with the federalist tradition. Still,

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[170] Renner, *Staat und Nation: zur österreichischen Nationalitätenfrage; staatsrechtliche Untersuchung über die möglichen Principien einer Lösung und die juristischen Voraussetzungen eines Nationalitätengesetzes*, 7–8.
[171] Kuzmany, Battis, and Mulej, "Accommodating National Diversity Within States."

his theoretical and legal framework for national autonomy for the Austrian Crownlands originated from the personality principle. The personality principle gives the members of a community separate political rights or enables them to be subject to separate representative organs of the same state power. His model of autonomy was based on local democratic self-government. Renner calculated that about four-fifths of the local districts would be nationally homogeneous. Thus national representation would be secured on the local level, where most citizens encountered the state. The novelty in Renner's plan was that the local national autonomies formed a higher unit, the national curia. "(…) the country [must be] surveyed twice according to different principles. [We must] register (*eintragen*) a double network (*doppeltes Netz*) over the map, to organize the population twice: territorially and nationally."[172]

In mixed districts, Renner's model used the personality principle to create two or more national representative bodies. These *bodies* would be responsible for cultural and educational matters. "We must, therefore, first of all federate all districts of a nationality, regardless of their location, into a national university (*Nationsuniversität*), if I may transpose the expression of the Transylvanian Saxons to the Empire. And secondly, federate all districts of a geographically, economically, and culturally closed area into one territory. The federation must therefore be two-dimensional."[173] The *universitas saxonum* was the self-governing body of the Transylvanian Saxons between the fifteenth and the late nineteenth centuries, when the institution underwent an organizational transformation. The *universitas* had administrative, legislative, economic, and political decision-making competencies, exclusive judicial power, and regulated everyday life. Curiously, Renner, who never missed an opportunity to point out the feudal character of the autonomy of the Hungarian county, did not mention that the Transylvanian Saxon university was not a modern and democratic institution. Furthermore, even the non-territorial aspect of the institution is open to question.

Initially, Renner's plan completely ignored Hungary. In his 1906 work, *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie* (Foundations and Development Goals of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), published under the pseudonym

[172] Karl Renner [Pseud. Springer, Rudolf], *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele*, 245.
[173] Karl Renner [Pseud. Springer, Rudolf], 245. See also: Szász, "Autonómiavágyak és realitások a Habsburg Monarchia alkonyán."

Rudolf Springer, Renner analyzed the Hungarian administrative system for the first time. In the book's conclusions, Renner projected the integration of Hungary into his state of national universities and examined the preconditions under which the territory of Hungary could be involved in creating such national autonomies. He argued that if Austria offered liberty and autonomy to its nationalities, it would be impossible for Hungary to keep up its oligarchic administrative and political system. Hungary, Renner argued, would have to follow the Austrian example "by natural attraction, power of freedom, and national autonomy."[174] In a speech given in 1910 in Budapest, Renner made a similar argument. "But regarding foreign policy, the right to vote is also crucial for the Hungarian state. They know that the Hungarians are not alone here. There are Ruthenians, Serbs, and Romanians, nations that will have universal suffrage in the not-too-distant future. And they have language communities on Hungarian territory. What power can such a Hungary have over Serbia and Romania?"[175]

Huszadik Század (*Twentieth Century*), the Hungarian journal of the *Társadalomtudományi Társaság (Society for Social Sciences*), commented on Renner's *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele* and the arguments the book voiced. First, the journal translated and published the book chapter discussing the administration of Hungary's counties and municipalities (*Die Lokalverwaltung*). Two years later, the sociologist Robert Braun noted in an essay that Renner's work analyzed the foundations and development goals of the Dual Monarchy while propagating the *Reichsidee.* Moreover, he criticized the fact that in his book, Renner had explored the Hungarian county and its administration from the point of view of Greater Austria (*Grossösterreich*).[176] In doing so, Renner had touched on one of the most sensitive points of Hungarian public discourse. Since the reform era, some politicians, notably Lajos Kossuth, had advocated Hungary's democratization through the democratic transformation of autonomous counties. Those who championed such a decentralized transformation also criticized the Compromise in 1867 and supported Hungarian independence. The reviewer criticized the book for "(…) the defense of Austrian state unity and the attack on Hungary's separate statehood (...), in which we do not hear a single word about what the Hungarian Social Democratic Party

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[174] Karl Renner [Pseud. Springer, Rudolf], *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele*, 247.
[175] Károly [Karl] Renner, *Tisza István gróf és az általános választójog. Az osztrák reichsrati képviselő beszéde, amelyet 1910. évi február 3-án, az Intim-szinház nagytermében tartott.*, trans. Vilmos Fenyő (Budapest: Népszava Könyvkereskedés, 1910), 11.
[176] O. J., "Két új külföldi írás Magyarországról," *Huszadik Század* 10, no. 2 (1910): 192–99.

has to say on the question."[177] Consequently, people educated in the Hungarian political discourse interpreted Renner's criticism of the county's autonomy as if he were contesting the autonomy of the Kingdom of Hungary. In this context, it is understandable why Renner's book did not enjoy much popularity in Hungary. All in all, contemporaries considered Renner a prejudiced and imprecise author and a bad writer despite a bright mind. His Hungarian critics were convinced that Renner's poor style was why his ideas became internationally famous through the works of others, such as Otto Bauer and Friedrich Naumann.[178]

Another review by economist Pál Szende, which analyzed the plans for Greater Austria of the Austrian jurist Friedrich Tezner and the Romanian politician from Hungary Aurel Popovici alongside Renner's work, emphasized Renner's thoroughness, thoughtfulness, consistency, and wit. At the same time, Szende did not deny—and the essay itself was written to prove this point—that Renner "completely misunderstood Hungarian class, economic, and nationality relations, and misinformed foreign countries about their nature."[179] Szende accused Renner of projecting the Austrian pattern of class division onto Hungary. Furthermore, he claimed that Renner misunderstood the administrative and social relations in Hungary from focusing exclusively on the text of the law and disregarding their practical implementation. Renner was criticized not only for his "chauvinism," i.e., for questioning the autonomy of the Hungarian state, but also for not taking historical materialism seriously. According to Szende, Renner made the mistake of creating the illusion that the solution to the nationality question would solve the problem of the disempowered members of nationalities. Consequently, Szende declared, Renner had not drawn the correct conclusions from class division.[180]

After 1918, however, Hungary became an independent republic and lost large swathes of territory to neighboring states. With this change in the socio-political context, the reception of Renner's ideas changed, too. Now that the threat of Greater Austria had faded away and three million Magyars lived in neighboring states, Hungarian politicians and political thinkers read Renner's books with increased interest. Plans rooted in the personality principle and the idea of national cultural autonomy became, in late 1918, the

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[177] Róbert Braun, "Ausztria megújhódása," *Huszadik Század* 18, no. 1 (1917): 178.
[178] Braun, "Ausztria megújhódása."
[179] Pál Szende, "Gross-Oesterreich és a magyar proletariátus," *Huszadik Század* 8, no. 2 (1907): 934.
[180] Szende, "Gross-Oesterreich és a magyar proletariátus."

official minority policy of Hungary. With this shift, the complaints about Renner's poor style also faded away. On the other side of the Leitha, the Republic of German-Austria was declared and the dreams about a Greater Austria fell flat. Renner became the chancellor of the new republic. Ironically, he lost interest in the idea of national cultural autonomy exactly when his Hungarian comrades became ready to implement it.

Otto Bauer was born in Vienna in 1881 and became active in the Social Democratic Workers' Party in Austria at a very young age, around the turn of the century. He met the already well-known Karl Renner and they co-founded an educational association for workers, which they named *Zukunft* (Future). In 1907, at just twenty-six, Bauer published an exhaustive study on the nationality question, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (*The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*). The book was well-received in the leading socialist newspapers. As previously mentioned, Kautsky wrote a significant review of the book. According to Buchinger's memoirs, it was not only in journals that Bauer's book was the subject of heated debate but also in the prisons where socialists were locked up for their illegal activities.[181] The book also served as a summary of Renner's earlier publications on the topic as well as the nationality program of the workers' party.[182] In the last chapter, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie,* Otto Bauer criticized the national program of international social democracy and presented the tactics of the Austrian Social Democratic Workers' Party. Despite his close collaboration with Kautsky, Bauer's 1907 national program clearly diverged from that of Kautsky and the Second International while sharing Renner's position. Bauer's work built more organically on Marxism and, in the opinion of Social Democrats in Hungary, he was more accurate concerning Hungarian social conditions. In his theory of the nation, Bauer merged two ideas of different origins: first, the Kantian notion that individuals can bond despite the asymmetries of power between them and their differences of interest, and second, the Marxist idea that social classes are formed by homogeneous experiences.[183]

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[181] Buchinger, "Otto Bauer életéből." Buchinger, "Otto Bauer életéből."
[182] See Chapter 3 in Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"
[183] John A. Hall, ed., *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner*, Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities 48 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 181.

Like Renner, Bauer divided the economic sphere of life from the cultural: economic life was represented by the state, and cultural life by nationality. Bauer saw the nation as *Character- und Schicksalgemeinschaft*, a community of shared national characteristics and destiny.[184] He advocated the principle of national self-determination but would not separate nations along the territorial principle so that each nation could govern itself. Bauer wanted to implement national self-determination according to the personality principle on a non-territorial basis.[185] He considered the principle of non-territorial separation of nationalities to be indispensable in both state and party organizations. This chapter focuses mainly on party organization. Bauer was aware that the unorthodox solution he and his party developed—the inner division of the unified party into a federation of autonomous national parties—would open them up to criticism. However, the young Bauer reiterated his view from a position of authority. Even Kautsky acknowledged that both Renner and Bauer "admirably wield the methodology of historical materialism."[186] And even the critics of Austromarxism believed that Bauer's work was the most exhaustive analysis of the nationality question from the socialist perspective.

A Marxist story of Eastern European nationalism

The Marxist representatives of different nations tried to reach the correct conclusion from the rise of nationalism in capitalist settings. First, they differentiated between two types of states: the Western and the Eastern. The specificities of Eastern European nationalism continue to fascinate historians to this day. The pioneers of the theory of Eastern European nationalism were the Marxist thinkers of the turn of the century. They believed that in the West, the tendency to create large economic units and national awareness overlapped. "The result is a great capitalist nation-empire: France, unified Germany, unified Italy."[187] The situation was more difficult in the East, where opposing national aspirations stood in the way of creating large nation-states. Bauer's argument regarding the differences in

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[184] Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, 194.
[185] See Chapter 3 in Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"; Djokic, *Nationale Frage und marxistische Theorie*, 118–26.
[186] Kautsky, "Nationality and Internationality," 372.
[187] Bohumír Šmeral, "The National Question and the Social Democrats," in *Modernism*, ed. Ahmet Ersoy, Maciej Górny, and Vangelis Kechriotis (Central European University Press, 2010), 416, https://doi.org/10.1515/9786155211935-051.

nation-formation in Western and Eastern Europe probably originated from Kautsky's ideas formulated in his article *Das nationale Problem in Österreich* (The National Problem in Austria). The nation-states of the West and the multinational states (*Nationalitätenstaaten*) of the East resulted from the divergent socio-economic evolution. The division between Western and Eastern European nationalism also echoed Stalin's thinking.[188] For present-day research on nationalism, the Prague-born American historian and philosopher Hans Kohn has transposed the idea in his work *The Idea of Nationalism*.[189]

Whereas in a nation-state such as Germany or France, class struggle devolved within that nation, in multinational states like the Habsburg Monarchy or the Russian Empire, the class struggle and national struggle merged into one another. In the East, the oppressors and the oppressed represented different ethnolinguistic groups. The principles of cultural cosmopolitanism and international solidarity had developed historically in the more industrialized and nationally homogenous Western European states. Bauer defined internationalism as a national program "expressed in negative terms." By this, he meant that workers rejected the national-conservative culture of the ruling class and developed ideas opposing the national discourse and an endorsement of humanism. Bauer, however, considered the neglect of national differences on which the nationality program of the international worker's movement was based as "naïve cosmopolitanism."[190] He urged Social Democrats to go beyond their naivety and instead become "conscious internationalists."

In arguing that capitalism made not just class differences but also national ones visible in multinational states, Bauer also drew inspiration from Kautsky's insights.[191] In multinational states, nationalities lived intertwined.[192] Since class and national fault lines

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[188] Sztálin, *I. V. Sztálin művei 2.*, vol. 2, Sztáin művei (Budapest: Szikra, 1949), 329.
[189] Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background*, 3. print., with add.. (New York, NY: Macmillan, St. Martin's Press, 1946).
[190] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 417.
[191] "The nationalist tendency is necessarily a force of economic development and can be repressed as little as economic development itself." J.(ózsef) St.(rasser), "1907-1908. A nemzetiségi kérdés irodalmához. David Balakan két tanulmányának ismertetése: 1. 'Die Sozialdemokratie und das Jüdische Proletaiat.' 2. 'Natioanle Forderungen, Nationalkuturelle Autonomie.,'" *Szocializmus. Szociáldemokrata folyóirat.* 2, no. 4 (1907-1908): 126–28.
[192] Nicholas Stargardt, "Origins of the Constructivist Theory of the Nation," in *Notions of Nationalism* (Budapest ; New York: Central European University Press, Oxford University Press, 1995), 83, https://search-ebscohost-com.uaccess.univie.ac.at/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=43780&site=ehost-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_105.

often coincided, the national-evolutionary struggle of the working class became more prominent. In contrast to the negative national program of "naive cosmopolitanism," Bauer defined national emancipation as the positive national program of social democracy. However, this positive program of national liberation was sidelined in the international labor movement, at least when it came to Europe. The national-evolutionary aspect of the workers' struggle came to the fore only in opposition to imperialism, where national liberation opposed capitalist expansionism.[193]

Bauer pointed out that a positive social-democratic national program would be important not only in the colonial context but also in the case of the so-called "nations without history" or "stateless nations" of the multinational states of Eastern Europe.[194] The term "nations without history" was a burdensome legacy from the vocabulary of Marx and Engels.[195] The "nonhistorical existence" of a nation referred to nations that did not have their own ruling class in the feudal era, when the ruling class alone held cultural and political power. According to this definition, the nonhistorical nations in Austria were the Czechs and Slovenes. In Hungary, the Romanians, Serbs, and Slovaks existed nonhistorically, and the Ruthenians in both parts of the Monarchy. Since multinational states had joined the international worker's movement and the problem of national evolution concerned millions of workers, Bauer went on to argue that the narrow program of "internationalism" was untenable—all the more so because what Bauer called "naïve nationalism" had already entered the labor movement. "Naïve nationalism" meant the support of a nonhistorical nation for the power politics of its own nation and its hatred of the dominant historical nations.[196] Accordingly, Bauer called for "conscious internationalism," a national program that would take on the challenge of an up-to-date nationality program. This was precisely what the Austrian Labor Party had been experimenting with.

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[193] Forman, *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement*.
[194] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*. 419
[195] Djokic, *Nationale Frage und marxistische Theorie*, 104.
[196] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*. 244

"Once you have the problem, you need to confront it"[197]

As the social scientist Ephraim Nimni rightfully emphasized, the German-Austrian socialists were not keen on devoting their intellectual and organizational energies to the nationality problem. However, they accepted that "the resolution of the national question could not be postponed until the victory of the working class."[198] The Czech comrades constantly challenged the party leadership and their internationalism.[199] As a consequence, the party leadership had to understand, address, and solve the issue of national diversity within their party and their state. Bauer expressed his endorsement of a careful analysis of the actual situation and the principles of practical needs when he elaborated on the historical development of the national program in the labor movement. As he put it, the Austrian national program was "only a nationality policy relevant to present times" (*Gegenwartsprogramm*) that "was not devised by a theorist." [200]

Bauer pointed out three criteria that naturally (*naturgemäß*) led to the federalization of the Austrian Social Democratic Workers' Party. These preconditions, he once again emphasized, were based on everyday experience: first, the emergence of non-German social democratic parties in Austria by the end of the nineteenth century. Second, the willingness to protect the unity of the socialist movement and the party. Third, the necessity of employing different means and languages in agitation work among different nations.[201] At first sight, these circumstances were not very different from the challenges that Russian social democracy faced. On the face of it, Bauer's theoretical position was not radically different from Lenin's, but in practical terms, the two parties followed different paths. These three time- and space-specific preconditions "organically" entailed the subdivision of the party into autonomous national sections. At the same time, the Party did not accept national divisions in the trade union movement, a division that the Czech workers were constantly pushing. This shows the pragmatism with which the directorate of the Party set the limits of national autonomy within the party: "Social organizations as

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[197] Vladimir Medem, "A szociáldemokrácia és a nemzeti kérdés (Részletek)," in *A nemzeti kérdésről: a nemzeti kérdés Lenini elméletének kialakulása ; 1896 - 1914*, ed. István Máté, Elméleti viták (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvk, 1988), 136.
[198] Nimni, "Introduction for the English-Reading Audience." , XXII-XXIII
[199] Leó (Lev) Winter, "A cseh-szláv szociáldemokrácia," *Szocializmus. Szociáldemokrata folyóirat.* 2, no. 14 (1907-1908): 426-431.
[200] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*. 423, 426.
[201] Bauer, 426.

diverse as the state, the party, and the trade union also require different organizational principles."[202] For Bauer, national autonomy was not an end in itself but the guarantee of unity and mass support for the democratic struggle.

Austrian socialists saw their nationality program as an organic and natural answer to the immediate necessities of everyday policy.[203] In Bauer's view, the Austrian program was highly context-dependent, practical, and in line with the principles of common sense. When it came to the tactics of social democracy, he stressed the importance of strategic flexibility.[204] This was a clear sign of compliance with the norms of the Second International which, as Rosa Luxemburg put it, was no longer a "sect of idealists" but a big organization with the capacity to act.[205] As many scholars and thinkers have already pointed out, while the First International had a theoretical focus, the Second was more concerned with practical issues and effective tactics.[206] However, as the case of the trade unions showed, practicality and flexibility did not mean unbounded permissiveness. Renner and Bauer were likewise flexible when it came to supporting the primacy of Germans in Austria or the union of German-Austria with Germany. As we will see below, many contemporaries had already pointed out that the Austromarxist set of ideas comprised nationalist tendencies.

2.4. The Magyar Psyche on the Couch of Dr. Bauer[207]

"Zufrieden ist keine Nation in diesem Reiche, keine Einzige."[208]

In his 1907 book, Bauer envisioned a pessimistic future for the dualist system; however, it was a different one than what actually happened. He analyzed the development of the Hungarian national consciousness and history from the class struggle perspective. Bauer

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[202] Bauer, 426.
[203] Bauer, 426.
[204] Bauer 2000, 353.
[205] Máté, *Nemzeti kérdésről*, 39.
[206] Cole, George, *The Second International, 3.2.*, 3.2.:75–87; Joll, *The Second International: 1889 - 1914*, 108.
[207] It is not relevant to the present study, but interesting to note that Freud described the case of Otto Bauer's sister in the iconic Dora study on hysteria. James Strachey et al., eds., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume VII (1901-1905): A Case of Hysteria, Three Essays on Sexuality and Other Works. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 7:i-iv (London: Hogarth, 1953), https://pep-web-org.uaccess.univie.ac.at/browse/document/SE.007.0000A?page=PR0004.
[208] "[...]," *Gross-Österreich* 1, no. 1 (1910): 1.

foresaw the collapse of the dualistic system due to the Hungarian's struggle to break off the customs union between the two parts of the Monarchy. The majority of Hungarian economists supported the abolition of the customs union. Bauer concluded that the dissolution of the economic union could easily lead to a total political separation of Austria and Hungary. Now, in an independent Hungary, capitalism could develop swiftly and the progress of capitalism would wake up the nationalities: "Magyars will experience with their Romanians and Slovaks what the Germans have experienced with the Czechs and Slovenes. The day the customs border between Austria and Hungary is established will represent the death of exclusive Magyar hegemony in the country!"[209] This was when the Crown would come as the liberator of the oppressed nationalities to introduce national autonomy and re-organize the Monarchy into a federal state: "…the day will certainly come when the Crown has to offer autonomy to the nations of Hungary, beginning the transformation of the whole empire into a multinational federative state. (…) on this day, the Hungarian 'nation-state' constitution will be nothing more than a worthless piece of paper. !!!! [sic]."[210]

In such packaging, of course, the idea of national autonomy was unacceptable even to Hungarian Social Democrats. When Bauer's book with its plan to federalize Austria, and possibly Hungary too, appeared, it was already loaded with the Hungarian political élites' fears of plans to establish *Grossösterreich* (Greater Austria). The interpellation of the former prime minister Baron Dezső Bánffy in the Hungarian parliament in 1907 reveals the main partisans of this pent-up resentment. Bánffy presented the ideas spread in the weekly newspaper, *Gross-Österreich,* founded in 1905 in the Austrian half of the Monarchy.[211] True to its title, the newspaper envisioned a *Gesamtmonarchie* in which the parliament would be elected based on national cadasters. These cadasters would also serve as the foundation of national autonomy. The Hungarian Baron saw these plans that aimed to guarantee autonomy to all nationalities as an attempt to divide Hungary into national territorial units.[212] In Bánffy's view, the very thought of federalizing Hungary

[209] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 344.
[210] Bauer, 348–51.
[211] The newspaper was not allowed to be circulated in Hungary as the Hungarian minister of commerce revoked the license for postal transportation for the newspaper.
[212] The authors of the newspaper did not make it clear to what kind of autonomy they were confessing. They claimed that the federative organization of the Empire could have been a historically natural evolution if it was not cut off with the *Ausgleich* in 1867. They suggested unity from the bottom up and autonomy top-down.

offended Hungary's statehood, territorial integrity, and constitution. To retaliate against the citizens who spread these ideas, he suggested applying the Penal Code's provisions related to high treason and agitation against the constitution. He proposed adding further articles to punish the spread of federalist ideas as capital treason. He mentioned Aurel Popovici, the politician and journalist from Banat (present-day Romania and Serbia), and his writings to exemplify who could be punished based on the draft amendment he proposed.[213]

In Bauer's opinion, the Magyars' tendency to separation has always been fueled by the ideology of the ruling class. He offered an insightful analysis of the collective Hungarian psyche and its expressions since Hungary became part of the Habsburg Empire. The struggle of the estates was directed against the absolute authority of the state, which responded with death sentences and executions. Bauer reasoned that the ideology of the Hungarian nobility was still charged with the memory of this brutal struggle. The resentment towards "Vienna" spilled over into other classes of the population with the reform movement of 1848. Draped in the colors of the struggle for national independence, this anti-Habsburg ideology was meant to hide the economic interests of the Hungarian nobility. Since the estates regarded exemption from taxation as their most sacred national right, the Habsburgs' attempt to abolish serfdom and to protect the peasants against exploitation had continuously failed. The dynasty reacted to the resistance of the estates by introducing commercial legislation and a customs policy that kept Hungary in quasi-colonial status. The burden of this commercial legislation and tax policy fell on the lower classes.[214] Bauer's conclusion was to the taste of the Hungarian Social Democrats: anti-Austrian resentment helped preserve the underlying economic problems by hiding class struggle under the cover of national struggle.[215]

Considering Bauer's stream of arguments, it is no wonder that Hungarian political thinkers were hesitant to embrace his ideas. In 1907, introducing national autonomy in the way Bauer envisioned it would have been possible only by abolishing Hungary's separate statehood and creating a multinational federal *Grossösterreich.* The idea of abolishing Hungarian statehood for the sake of national cultural autonomy was not an

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[213] "Bánffy és Gross-Oesterreich.," *Pesti Napló* 58, no. 63 (March 14, 1907): 3–5.
[214] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 326–27.
[215] Zsigmond Kunfi, "A magyar közjogi politika útjai," *Szocializmus. Szociáldemokrata folyóirat.* 3, no. 7 (1908-1909): 325–29.

acceptable program, even in socialist circles that rejected the idea of constitutional and economic unity.[216] And as Bauer presented it in his work, giving up on the idea of an independent Hungary contradicted the anti-Austrian sentiment that shaped the Hungarian collective psyche.

Although Austrian and Hungarian Social Democrats shared an interest in Marxist theory and in revealing the class struggle hidden behind national struggle, Hungarians had three main reasons not to make non-territorial autonomy the nationality program of the SDPH in 1907. First, as Bauer pointed out, the idea of an independent Hungary and Kossuthism were so deeply rooted in the masses that it would have been impossible for the leaders of the social democratic movement to agitate for class emancipation at the cost of giving up independent statehood.[217] Second, the SDPH saw the right to universal suffrage as the precondition of the emancipation of the working class and the nationalities. National cadasters seemed meaningless until workers and non-Magyars gained the right to vote. Finally, Hungarian Social Democrats were skeptical about the capacity of cultural autonomy to end the national struggle in reality. Austria was nearby, and the Hungarian comrades watched in dismay as their sister party disintegrated because of nationalist conflicts. The economist Jenő Varga even applied Bauer's claim as an argument against him. Since every national struggle is, in fact, a class struggle, national cultural autonomy cannot put an end to national enmity.[218]

However, the political crisis in Hungary created situations in which the plans for *Grossösterreich* seemed to the Social Democrats to be the lesser of two evils. In 1908-1909, after the introduction of general suffrage succeeded in Austria and failed in Hungary, some politicians pondered the idea of securing democratic rights not necessarily in an independent Hungary but in a federalized *Grossösterreich*.[219] Since general suffrage had been introduced in Austria from the top down, some social democratic politicians expected that the dynasty would also be keen to urge the introduction of universal suffrage

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[216] Gábor Egry, "Social Democracy and the Nationalities Question.," in *Regimes and Transformations: Hungary in the Twentieth Century*, ed. István Feitl and Balázs Sipos (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2005), 102.
[217] Jenő Varga, "Az önálló vámterület és az osztrák proletariátus.," *Szocializmus. Szociáldemokrata folyóirat.* 1, no. 18 (1906-1907): 567–68.
[218] Varga, "Az önálló vámterület és az osztrák proletariátus."
[219] Jenő Varga, "Függetlenségi párt és demokrácia," *Szocializmus. Szociáldemokrata folyóirat.* 3, no. 7 (1908-1909): 302.; Eugen [Jenő] Varga, "Die politische Lage Ungarns," *Die neue Zeit : Wochenschrift der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* 27, no. 2/51 (1909): 876–87.; "Karácsonyi szózatot," *Népszava* 37, no. 305 (December 25, 1909): 3.

in Hungary. In 1910, an article in *Népszava* explained that Hungary faced two paths: the path of democratization, which would strengthen the country, or declining into an Austrian province by failing to democratize and industrialize. If Hungary remains weak and the workers disenfranchised, there would be no other solution than to join Austria.[220] The theoretical studies of the journal *Szocializmus* (*Socialism*) presented Hungary's prospects similarly. "It is clear by now that there are two possibilities: we either become an independent, but truly independent, truly self-sufficient state… or we need to go there, where the capitalist state is given, with not just the burdens but also the benefits of a capitalist state."[221] However, even from this short excerpt, it is clear that an economically independent democratic Hungary was the priority. The *Grossösterreich* alternative functioned as a menace to urge democratic reforms. "It is foolish to guarantee people in Transleithania fewer rights than those in Cisleithania. Because the people only love a country that gives them rights: this is why people will embrace the idea of *Grossösterreich*."[222] This verdict of the party leadership from 1908, when universal suffrage on the Austrian side of the Leitha was introduced, echoed Renner's and Bauer's earlier prophecy.

In 1909, Jenő Varga, who in 1907 was still voicing his skepticism concerning national cultural autonomy, changed his mind: "The most eminent academics of the Austrian Social Democratic Party herald that the direction of development is towards Greater Austria. However, it is no longer a matter of creating a German-speaking empire, of Germanizing the Hungarians. On the contrary, even the nationalities living under Hungarian rule would gain an independent life in the new Greater Austria."[223] Varga considered that maintaining the territorial unity of the Monarchy was primarily advantageous from an economic point of view. But in his opinion, a Greater Austria that did not aim to achieve Germanization would have other advantages. "Of course, in this context, they also want to resolve the nationality issue once and for all. In cultural terms, all nations—like religious denominations today—would manage their affairs autonomously. There is strong support for this plan among Austrian workers. A more

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[220] "Ki hamisít?," *Népszava* 38, no. 310 (December 30, 1910): 2.
[221] Kunfi, "A magyar közjogi politika útjai," 327.
[222] Zsigmond Kunfi, "A cselekvés ideje," *Népszava* 36, no. 129 (May 30, 1908): 1–2. See also: "Egy kis eset," *Népszava* 36 (October 21, 1908): 2.
[223] Vj., "Nagy osztrák törekvések a múltban és jelenben.," *Népszava* 37, no. 305 (December 25, 1909): 27–28.

detailed examination would show that the Hungarian working class would also benefit greatly from this kind of Greater Austria."[224]

2.5. *Gross-Österreich* Lite. Šmeral's Synthesis of a State of National Cultural Autonomies

The relative support of some Hungarian Social Democrats for the project of federalizing the Dual Monarchy might be related to the initiative of the Marxist Left in the Czecho-Slav Social Democratic Party in 1909. Their leading representative, Bohumír Šmeral, presented a revision of the Brno/Brünn program regarding the nationality question at the ninth Party Congress in Prague. Since the electoral reform of 1907 in Austria had not softened but instead intensified the Czech-German differences, the nationality question was reopened at the 1909 Party Congress. Šmeral interpreted this tendency in terms of class struggle and saw it as temporary.[225] His program envisaged the creation of national-cultural autonomies very similar to those proposed by Renner and Bauer. The proposal enjoyed the support of the German Social Democrats from Austria, who were invested in saving the unity of the workers' movement. Šmeral, however, did not refer to Renner and Bauer but to František Palacký's 1848–49 ethnic federalist program. Thus, in his proposal, Šmeral tried integrating the idea of national-cultural autonomy into the Czech national historiography. He did this, presumably, so that his nationalist comrades would not reject his plan because it had initially been the brainchild of German politicians. This strategy was very similar to that of the Hungarian sociologist and politician Oszkár Jászi, who, from 1905, gradually integrated Renner's idea of autonomy into Hungarian historiography. He did so by ascribing the idea of national-cultural autonomy based on the personality principle to the Danube Confederation plan of Lajos Kossuth.[226]

Šmeral advocated for national-cultural autonomy for each nationality of the Habsburg Empire based on the personality principle. Parallel to this, he wanted to create a decentralized and democratic state administration. By contrast, other Czech social

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[224] Vj.
[225] Jan Galandauer, "Šmerals Auffassung der Nationalitätenfrage und des Verhältnisses der tschechischen Nation zu Österreich-Ungarn am Vorabend des Ersten imperialistischen Weltkriegs," *HISTORICA. Historical Sciences in Czechoslovakia* XXIII (1983): 50–51.
[226] See Chapter II/1 "Jászi Reads Kossuth."

democratic politicians like Alfréd Meissner and František Modrácek imagined the future of the Czech nation in an independent Bohemia. In opposition to them, Šmeral argued for a solution within the borders of multinational Austria-Hungary. Šmeral doubted that establishing a Bohemian state could solve the Czech question.[227] He also believed that cultural and linguistic struggles should not override common economic interests. At the turn of the century, opinions diverged on whether economic interest was holding the monarchy together or pulling it apart. The extent to which economic and cultural life could be separate also provoked heated debates. Šmeral's plan implicitly included a criticism of the dualist system, also a widespread view in the Czech worker's movement, which would have preferred a tripartite compromise. Šmeral wanted to create a new constitutional and institutional model "which would meet every nation's cultural and national need for independence, as well as its immediate economic needs within a large state."[228] He understood national independence as the right to national schools, literature, and culture. Consequently, to guide the Empire's path through democratic transformation, he proposed to formulate a unified plan that included all workers, regardless of their nationality.[229]

At the 1909 Congress of the Czecho-Slav Party in Prague, which the leaders of the Austrian labor movement supported, Šmeral's position was not rejected. The German Austrian Party's congress in Reichenberg later endorsed the resolution. After the meeting, a Czech commission was set up to develop a joint nationality program and to keep the social democratic movement united. The German-Austrians were to set up a similar commission. Moreover, at Easter 1910, the Hungarians were to be included as well.[230] The minutes of the meeting show that no one from the SDPH attended the congress.[231]

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[227] Šmeral argued that a Bohemian state could not survive in the long term because a third of its inhabitants would be German. This would hinder Greater German plans and Bismarck would not allow the Czechs to be at the center of the pan-Germanic project as a defensive wall. Jan Galandauer, "Šmerals Auffassung der Nationalitätenfrage und des Verhältnisses der tschechischen Nation zu Österreich-Ungarn am Vorabend des Ersten imperialistischen Weltkriegs," *HISTORICA. Historical Sciences in Czechoslovakia* XXIII (1983): 65-68.
[228] Šmeral, "National Question." 416.
[229] Šmeral. See also: van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, 197.
[230] Galandauer, "Šmerals Auffassung der Nationalitätenfrage," 77–83.
[231] "Protokol IX. řádného sjezdu československé sociálně-demokratické strany dělnické ve dnech 4. až 8. září 1909" (Praha: Tisk. výbor, 1909), https://masarykovaakademie.cz/knihy/protokol-ix-radneho-sjezdu-ceskoslovanske-socialne-demokraticke-strany-delnicke-ve-dnech-4-az-8-zari-1909-1909/.

Nor did the Hungarian socialist press report on Šmeral's plan. Whether the Hungarian commission was actually formed and who its members were is unclear.[232]

In addition to creating cultural autonomies on a non-territorial basis, the introduction of equal and universal suffrage at the level of the empire would have had another significant advantage for Šmeral and his comrades. It would have put the Czechs in the same national cadaster as the "two million of the Czech branch of Slovaks in Hungary."[233] Šmeral, however, did not consistently follow through on this idea and did not formulate Czechoslovak unity as a goal. He also made the introduction of national autonomy in Hungary conditional on the enactment of universal suffrage.[234] Despite appearances, Šmeral's plan for national cultural autonomy was not precisely identical to Bauer's. It included an important argument from Kautsky's critique of Bauer, *Nationalism and Internationalism*. Kautsky voiced his concerns regarding the significant differences in wealth and the taxes paid by the individual crown lands. "The school system in Ruthenia and Dalmatia would therefore be a lot worse off than that of the Germans. It stands to reason that poor nations will jealously look over to the rich nations and then demand from the state that it should justly balance out these differences."[235] Šmeral's version corrected this error. Šmeral proposed a tax based on nationality, not on income. He aimed to ensure that the income tax on the work of Czech workers did not enrich German industrialists.[236] Due to strong Czech separatism, however, the program of national autonomy was dropped from the agenda.[237]

At the turn of the century, the European social-democratic movement began to organize itself on a national basis. Universal suffrage opened the way for social democratic parties to enter parliamentary politics. In the view of Marxist theorists of the time, the Eastern and Western halves of Europe differed in this regard. In the West, where

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[232] I did not find evidence of the creation of such a committee either in the press or in the party archive. The Czech version of Galandauer's study suggests that the establishment of the Hungarian Commission remained in torso. Jan Galandauer, *Šmeral: Bohumír Šmeral 1880 - 1914*, vol. Vyd. 1. (Praha: Nakladat. Svoboda, 1981), 121. In order to clarify Šmeral's arguments, I received indispensable support from Luděk Němec, who helped me compare German and Czech versions of the texts and find my way around the Czech literature on the subject.

[233] "eine Nationalitatenautonomie könnte in der Zukunft eine Vereinigung der Tschechen und Slowaken zu einem Ganzen möglich machen." Galandauer, "Šmerals Auffassung der Nationalitätenfrage," 73.

[234] Galandauer, "Šmerals Auffassung der Nationalitätenfrage.".

[235] Kautsky, "Nationality and Internationality Part 2," 155–56.

[236] Galandauer, "Šmerals Auffassung der Nationalitätenfrage," 70.

[237] Dér, "Az osztrák szocialisták brünni nemzetiségi programjáról," 84.

the borders of state and nation coincided, the nationality question did not threaten the party's internal unity.[238] This was not the case in Eastern Europe, where the boundaries of national and class struggle often blurred in multinational empires. The ruling class was of a different nationality from the oppressed class, contemporaries argued. Although the most prominent thinkers of the Second International thought about the nationality question in terms of similar principles, they arrived at different practical solutions. Kautsky and Lenin did not support the internal federalization of the social-democratic party organization. The Jewish Bund and the Austromarxists favored national autonomy both in the party and in the state's organization.

The leaders of the Hungarian labor movement also had to confront the multi-ethnic nature of their homeland and party. Some internationally circulating theories had undesirable practical consequences for the Hungarian labor movement. If national autonomies were established on the territory of Austria-Hungary or national self-determination was implemented consistently, the territorial unity of Hungary, which was a pillar of the Hungarian psyche, would be in danger. However, it was also clear to the Hungarian labor movement that it would not be able to win equal suffrage without the support of workers belonging to the nationalities. The Hungarian state was what we would call today a "Majority Minority" state, that is, the nationalities comprised approximately half of Hungary's population.[239] Moreover, the party leadership also had the task of organizing the workers in their mother tongue. General suffrage was a *sine qua non* for the democratization of the country. The following three chapters discuss the party's practical measures on the nationality question.

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[238] For a view that challenges the homogeneous character of Western European states see the project "The Myth of Homogeneity." https://themythofhomogeneity.org/about/. Accessed: May 19, 2023.

[239] Scholarship talks about a "Majority Minority" state when "the native constituency of people, defined by race, ethnicity, and/or religion, loses its numerical advantage in the territory of a sovereign state." See: Justin Gest, *Majority Minority*, 1st ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022)., Justin Gest, "Majority Minority: A Comparative Historical Analysis of Political Responses to Demographic Transformation," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47, no. 16 (December 10, 2021): 3701–28, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2020.1774113.

3. "Technical Autonomy." Practicing Multilingualism in the Hungarian Workers' Movement

In 1904 Ervin Szabó, the Hungarian socialist and leader of the opposition in the SDPH, analyzed the events of the labor movement of the precedent year. While contemplating the roles of intellectuals and the masses in the labor movement, he came to the conclusion that it is not theory that gives birth to social movements, but movements that give birth to theories. "Many theoretical premises of socialism were already ratified by socialist practice. And many in theory unforeseen or rejected occurrences enriched the great theoretical reservoir of socialism with new directions, new perspectives, and approaches."[240] Thus, in Szabó's opinion Life and Reason were not necessarily opposed, as Gellner claimed, but in a dialectic relationship. Everyday practices translate into theory and theoretical models give birth to new practices when applied to different spatial-temporal circumstances.

In the Introduction to the volume *The Diffusion of Social Movements,* the editors argue that the scope and scale of political principles and models shift when they are diffused, since diffusion is a bi- or multilateral process. "To mobilize participants, social movements engage in a dynamic and interactive struggle over the production of meanings."[241] Thus, so-called deviations are inherent to the process of transfer. An idea's "movement into a new environment is never unimpeded."[242] Rather than focusing on flaws, diffusion theory guides our attention to the dynamic nature of the way knowledge circulates. The socio-political environment, the channels of diffusion, the actors' strategic considerations, and the portability of political principles and models are all in flux.

Likewise, the analytical category of cultural translation interprets the transfer of ideas as a process of negotiation between cultures. It questions old assumptions, such as the stability of cultural identities.[243] Moreover, the theory of cultural translation gives us the toolkit to understand "mistranslations" and "failed" cultural transfers as part of the

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[240] Szabó, "A munkásmozgalom 1903-ban," 52.
[241] Rebecca Kolins Givan, Kenneth M. Roberts, and Sarah A. Soule, eds., *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511761638. Snow, D. and Benford, R., "Master Frames and Cycles of Protest," in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. Morris, A. and Mueller, C.M. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 136.
[242] Said, *The Edward Said Reader*, 196.
[243] Bachmann-Medick, "Translation – A Concept and Model for the Study of Culture," 27.

history of reception.[244] As the discursive context, the language, and the constituent elements of the idea change, it becomes more and more difficult to recognize the criteria which enable us to recognize a translation as congruent with the original. We will see plenty of examples of such (mis)translations in all the case studies covered by this dissertation. In this fashion, I propose to analyze the sources using the toolkit offered by the theories of cultural transfer and translation and that of the diffusion of social movements. Instead of interpreting the "deviations" of the Hungarian labor movement from Leninism-Stalinism, orthodox Marxism, or Austromarxism as deficient, my critical analysis argues that these "deviations" are inherent to the process of transfer.

This chapter focuses on the theories and practices on how to run a multinational social democratic party at the turn of the century. It will touch upon the similarities and differences between the Austrian and Hungarian party organizations. Scholars usually point out the fundamental political and theoretical differences between the two parties when it comes to the nationality question.[245] In this chapter I suggest instead seeing these differences as tactical ones, in other words, not so much as products of Reason as products of Life. Without questioning the validity of non-Magyar workers' struggle for emancipation and equal rights, I argue that in the Hungarian socialist movement it was questionable whether their autonomy within the party would indeed empower them and advance their cause.[246]

In what follows, I will guide the reader through the organizational principles of the Hungarian social democratic party. After presenting the socio-political context of fin-de-siècle Hungary, I will analyze in more depth how the nationalities' sections (*nemzetiségi szekciók*) were organized within the party, to what extent they were autonomous, and whether the party applied a two-dimensional—national and territorial—federal structure in the party organization. I will borrow the term "technical autonomy" from the Jewish Bund to give a name to the Hungarian version of the Austromarxist idea of party organization and national autonomies. Technical autonomy, as opposed to substantial autonomy, implies the central party's support of regional or national organizations to agitate according to their national specificities. They are encouraged to adapt the

[244] Bachmann-Medick, 55.
[245] Egry, "Social Democracy and the Nationalities Question." 96; 101
[246] Egry, 96.

principles of the party to the linguistic, cultural, and moral specificities of their target group when they spread social democracy among them.[247]

3.1. "International per se." The Organizational Principles and Practices of the SDPH

In 1890, Friedrich Engels welcomed the newly instituted Social Democratic Party of Hungary (SDPH) in *Népszava*, the official party organ. He claimed that the SDPH was "international per se" since it comprised workers of five different nationalities. Social democrats often called their annual plenary sessions "the true parliament of Hungary" since its composition better reflected Hungary's social and ethnic makeup. However, internationalism in the Hungarian party was more an opportunity to be harnessed than a reality. Whereas the Austrian Workers' Party was highly organized, had mass appeal, and was represented on the Imperial Council and some provincial diets, the SDPH operated on a system of census suffrage. Before 1919, only six to seven percent of Hungary's population had the right to vote. It took much more time, effort, and compromise to organize the workers belonging to the nationalities and those in the periphery than Engels' note implied when he called the SDPH an international in itself.[248] While the creation of nationality sections in the Austrian party had already been passed at the 1897 Party Congress in Vienna, at the turn of the century, non-Magyar workers were still poorly organized. Consequently, the centripetal tendencies were still more potent than the centrifugal tendencies.

In Eastern Europe, the national question was a serious puzzle even for Social Democrats because ethnic and class consciousness often overlapped. Hungarian speakers primarily made up the so-called ruling class. Industrialization started in the second half of the nineteenth century, but the country remained predominantly agrarian. Who were the workers in a mainly agricultural country? Before WWI, the share of industrial workers increased to 60 percent, but one-third were employed in Budapest. These figures alone suggest that the logic of the workers' movement in Budapest did not necessarily match the reality in other parts of the country. Until the turn of the century, craftspeople represented the majority of the industrial population. In the second half of the nineteenth

[247] See: Lenin, "The Position of the Bund in the Party."
[248] Borsányi 1985, 89-90.

century, skilled workers were mainly German and German-Austrian. Magyars were employed in small-scale industries. Unskilled and seasonal workers were drawn from among the nationalities. The numbers of Hungarian Germans and Slovaks in the ranks of the working class were high. The share of Hungarians was similar to their overall proportion in the country, while the participation of Romanians, Ruthenians, and Southern Slavs was smaller in proportion.[249] Jewish workers returned to Hungary with Marxist ideas after years of working abroad in their trades. They also became the key figures of the SDPH. The resettlement of workers from all parts of the Monarchy and the high proportion of non-Magyars among the working class contributed to the myth that the working class was a foreign element, unpatriotic and landless (*hazátlan*). From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, a large-scale shift affected industrial and mining areas. The language of urban administration, culture, and factory jargon contributed to settlers becoming Magyarized within two or three generations.[250] Partly due to Magyarization, by 1914 Magyars comprised 65 percent of the workforce.[251]

The first workers' organization in Hungary (*Általános Munkásegylet*) was founded in 1868. This was also the year when trade associations came into existence. Later, in Pest-Buda, an association for the worker's education was also created. Their activity mainly concentrated on organizing strikes and offering organized medical aid and disability assistance for workers. In 1870 the first workers' newspaper (*Általános Munkásújság*) saw the light of day. During these years, the authorities constantly banned and harassed workers' associations. The suffrage movement started in the 1870s with the formation of the so-called Party of Non-Electors (*Nemválasztók Pártja*). In 1880, the party merged with the Hungarian Workers' Party. In 1890, the Hungarian labor movement received strong support from the Austrian Labor Party. This support is visible in the first party program of 1890, which was practically a copy of the Austrian party program. On

[249] Romanians (16%), Slovaks (11%), Germans (10%), Ruthenians (2.5%), Serbians (2.5%), and Croatians (1.5%) comprised the non-Magyar half of Hungary's population, without Croatia and Slavonia. Jews mostly declared themselves as Hungarian-speaking in censuses. See: A Magyar Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, *A Magyar Szent Korona Országainak 1910. évi népszámlálása*..

[250] Attila Paládi-Kovács, ed., *Magyar Néprajz VIII. - Társadalom* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2000), 255–59. See also: Ágoston Berecz, "Top-down and Bottom-up Magyarization in Multiethnic Banat Towns under Dualist Hungary (1867–1914)," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 28, no. 3 (May 4, 2021): 422–40, https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2021.1894099.

[251] Kautsky, *Karl Kautsky und die Sozialdemokratie Südosteuropas*, 411.

this occasion, the party's name was changed to the Social Democratic Party of Hungary or SDPH (*Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt*, MSZDP).[252]

From 1890, the party began to develop its local organizations at the national level amid fierce opposition from the authorities, who feared the mobilization of the non-Magyar peasantry. A new generation took over the leading positions in the party—overwhelmingly self-made men with a working-class background. The party's frontperson until the dissolution of the Monarchy was the former machinist Ernő Garami (born Grünbaum), who had returned from Germany; the carpenter Jakab Weltner, who became a socialist during a demonstration on the *Ring* in Vienna; the stonemason Dezső Bokányi, who first translated the slogan "Proletarians of the world, unite!" into Hungarian (*Világ proletárjai, egyesüljetek!*); the Kolozsvár/Cluj/Klausenburg grammar school teacher Zsigmond Kunfi, who was the editor of the official party organ *Népszava* from 1907; and the bookbinder Manó Buchinger, who came to the party leadership from the trade union movement and represented the reformist branch of socialism as the central party's secretary.[253]

All over Hungary, the number of party supporters increased after the turn of the century. This meant that a significant number of non-Magyar workers, mostly agricultural workers, joined the local bodies of the SDPH. In addition to creating regional organizations, many leaders who had been banned from the capital by the authorities began organizing workers in the countryside. Much like the Austrian movement, meeting the demand for agitation work and information available in the language of each nationality— German, Serbian, Romanian, and Slovak—became a daily necessity. The minutes of the party congresses report numerous requests for non-Magyar newspapers and pamphlets. The need for traveling speakers who mastered German, Serbian, Romanian, and Slovak also increased. Additionally, orators who spoke the vernacular, "the language of the people," were in demand. The central committee of the party gradually fulfilled some of these requests. They instructed orators in the languages of the nationalities and founded weekly newspapers for German, Serbian, Romanian, and

[252] Kautsky, 411–14.
[253] Kautsky, 412.

Slovak workers. However, organizing workers countrywide placed the central committee under too much strain, while comrades from the provinces also felt neglected.[254]

In his memoirs, Jakab Weltner, the secretary of the SDPH between 1898 and 1905 and the representative of the board, recalled that at the beginning, the party's central office employed only three comrades. The office was in a two-room apartment on the Erzsébet körút in Budapest. The apartment hosted not just the party secretariat but also the party bookstore and the editorial room of the party organ, *Népszava*. Since the office had no telephone or typewriter, the secretary answered 40-50 letters daily by hand.[255] The police often searched the offices. Weltner recalled that propaganda materials left the premises hidden in laundry baskets and stovepipes. Often the employees sacrificed their salaries for the sake of spreading socialism. They organized approximately fifteen assemblies a week in the provinces. The party covered only the expense of the speakers' outward journey since the authorities took care of the return when they removed them by force. Imprisonment was also part of the routine of a good social democrat—Weltner was confined three times. As confined socialist leaders became more and more familiar with the poor conditions in Hungarian prisons, they also turned prisons into a platform for agitation. In response, authorities started to object to the incarceration of socialist agitators.

The SDPH developed into a mass organization between 1890 and 1903. The agitators expelled from Budapest spread their ideas all over the country.[256] Degradation and poverty brought more and more workers under the umbrella of the SDPH, the only party they could identify with. Since workers did not have the right to vote, the party adopted the strategy of collective action instead of policymaking. They fought for the extension of voting rights by trying to influence legislation through actions outside the parliament.[257] Parallel to this, the authorities exerted all their power in an attempt to halt the democratization of social conditions. They attempted to repress every movement that aimed to raise awareness among non-Magyar agricultural workers about their situation and the idea of general suffrage. It was even more fearsome for the authorities when

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[254] Tibor Erényi, "Szocializmus a századelőn.," in *Tanulmányok a magyarországi munkásmozgalom történetéből* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1979), 351.
[255] Jakab Weltner, *"Milljók egy miatt" (Emlékek)* (Budapest: A szerző saját kiadása, 1927), 135.
[256] Weltner, *Milljók egy miatt*.
[257] Gyáni and Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, 111.

socialist ideas started to spread in areas where rural and non-Magyar populations formed a majority. Their fear of a harvest workers' strike was justified because the agrarian and nationality questions were the weakest points of Dualist Hungary. The only way to prevent a harvest workers' strike was through police force. The government restrained the right to demonstrations and public meetings. Freedom of association for rural workers was also restricted and incitement to strike was a criminal offense.

The SDPH developed a solid organization based on the territorial principle that, due to legal restrictions, grew under the cover of friendly benefit activities. According to the law, only friendly societies could work without officially authorized statutes. Friendly societies, however, were not allowed to pursue political activity. On the local level, so-called half-secret auxiliary bodies administered party activities. These auxiliary bodies had developed from the semi-illegal strike organizations. The professional societies, that is, the trade unions, also worked under the cover of friendly societies. They created a very close, organic relationship with the party. Local union cells backed up political agitators and assisted in the birth of the SDPH as a mass party. Trade union membership matched almost exactly the membership of the party.[258] This state of affairs influenced how the party structure developed. Unlike in other countries, in Hungary, workers' political and professional organizations could not split until 1919. Abandoning the territorial principle and reorganizing the party along national lines would have made unified action against the authorities more difficult.

The so-called confidential men were the middlemen between the local auxiliary bodies and the central party. They were elected yearly in each municipality. According to the 1903 resolution, these "workers turned into professional revolutionaries" were not just excellent workers who enjoyed the respect of their communities but also the facilitators of the movement and responsible for its implementation on the local level. They were the ones who mobilized the workers, distributed party literature, and were in rapport with the party leadership. Confidential men formed the local party leadership and their representatives constituted the middle-level organizations that made up the agitation commission on the county level.[259] They had executive and leadership power that took the form of organizing meetings at the county level. At the same time, the confidential

[258] Cole 1956a, 570-379, Mucsi 1981, 50-54.
[259] Lajos Varga, *A magyar szociáldemokrácia kézikönyve* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 1999), 65–71.

men were obliged to report to the party leadership. The county-level organization functioned as one mobilization unit. The district-level organization comprised the county-level units or a linguistic cluster. The district leaders coordinated agitation work within their territory, collected party members' annual dues, organized the district assembly, and reported quarterly to the party leadership.

The party assembly was the representative organ of the party. It comprised the members of the organizations, the members of the party leadership, the editors of the major party newspapers, the secretary, the treasurer of the party, and one female delegate. The party assembly members had the right to vote, whereas the members of the Control Committee only had an advisory role. The party leaders and the members of the Control Committee were re-elected yearly. The local organizations were responsible for setting the amount of the annual allowance. Social democrats held their yearly meeting of the party assembly in Budapest. Local organizations had the right to send a second delegate after every 500 members.[260] Delegates from Budapest usually outnumbered delegates from the provinces. The 1904 party program introduced nationality sections. One delegate represented each nationality section, similar to the representation of significant party organs.

The detailed description of how the inner structure of the SDPH developed draws our attention to two specific features of Hungarian social democracy. For one, workers belonging to the nationalities did not initially organize themselves from the bottom up. The social democratic movement spilled over from the center. Due to its semi-illegality, the movement in the provinces initially did not need more autonomy but more support from Budapest. For another, since there was no universal suffrage in Hungary, it may have initially seemed to non-Magyar workers that socialism had given them and their grievances a voice. Thus, until the turn of the century, the slogan of internationalism implicitly stood for national emancipation. In Hungary, the impoverished masses, often of non-Magyar ethnicities, were susceptible to socialist propaganda. In the areas populated by the nationalities, the authorities needed to take a strong stance against the spread of socialism, often not without violence, since the struggle for democratic rights could easily take on an anti-Hungarian or nationalist tone. Consequently, by the time that non-German workers in Austria demanded the inner federalization of the party based on

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[260] *MSZMM 1903,* 131–43.

nationality, in Hungary, the constant struggle with the authorities blurred national antagonisms within the party. Of course, class consciousness did not supersede national consciousness in Hungary for long. In what follows, I will present Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovak perspectives and ideas on how to run a multi-ethnic workers' party.

3.2. As Good as Autonomy: the Institution of National Agitation and Organizational Committees

Despite many similarities, the Hungarian party initially faced different challenges than the Austrian party. Three preconditions led to the federalization of the Austrian social democratic party: the existence of strong non-German-speaking workers' parties, the need to agitate in multiple languages, and the objective of maintaining the party's unity. Out of these three essential conditions, the latter two were also characteristic of the Hungarian movement. The first requirement of strong pre-existing non-Magyar parties, which would have gravitated outwards to split the party from within, was not characteristic of the SDPH. The SDPH did not have to integrate existing non-Magyar social democratic unions as did the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Austria or the Russian Democratic Labor Party. The SDPH had to organize and represent non-Magyar workers first. However, to activate and represent them, the party leadership needed to develop a common language with the nationalities and identify their demands. In this way, the SDPH inevitably found itself in the thick of the nationality question.

The party's nationality policy developed in parallel to the movement and only became a high-priority issue after the turn of the century, when socialism gained popularity among non-Magyar workers. This shift in the ethnic composition of the party led to a change of tactics.[261] Scholarship holds that the nationality question was tactical in the Hungarian socialist movement and was subordinate to the objectives of class struggle.[262] The national sentiments in the workers' movement caught the leaders of the SDPH by surprise, and they tried to find solutions to accommodate them.[263] The party adopted a negative nationality program in the first years of the new century, promulgating the principles of internationality and the equality of all nations. Since democratic rights

[261] Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 8.
[262] Erényi, "Szocializmus a századelőn.," 363.
[263] Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 29.

were lacking in Hungary, the principle of internationalism, the promise of equality, and the recognition of the "double oppression" that non-Magyar workers suffered were more than any other party in Hungary offered to people belonging to the nationalities. But statements of intent were not sufficient, and the party had to find a solution for how to organize and run a multilingual workers' movement. Such an endeavor meant a change in two areas: first, in the internal operation of the party and the organization of multilingual agitation, and second, in the party's nationality policy.

The 4th Article of the 1903 party program declared the equality of all nations of the state. The Serbian delegates at the party assembly proposed completing the 4th Article with the recognition of national autonomy. This proposal was overruled.[264] The party's wording, however, went beyond the discourse of the 1868 Nationality Law in that it referred to the beneficiaries not as "nationalities" but as "nations." Thus, the very wording expressed the principle of equality that the article proclaimed. This was a meaningful gesture because the nationalities had been continuously fighting since the 1860s to change the legal term and to recognize the "nationalities" as state-constituting "nations." In Hungary, only Magyars and Croatians were called nations. Therefore, the term "nationality" gained a derogatory connotation, similar to the word 'minority,' which was often criticized in the period between the two world wars for being belittling.[265]

A new inner structure was developed and adopted at the 1904 party assembly. This new organization reflected the principles of the 1903 party program. The practice of the new party structure was consolidated between 1905 and 1907 and did not change significantly until 1918. The resolution of 1904 regulated the party's work among non-Magyar workers. The 1904 congress of the SDPH voted for creating German, Romanian, Serbian, and Slovak national agitation and organizational committees (*nemzeti agitációs bizottságok*), the so-called nationalities' (or national) sections. Although the institution of the countrywide (*országos*) national units broke the purely territorial organization of the party, these agitation committees did not form a federation like in the Austrian party and did not collect membership dues separately.[266] The organization of female workers followed a similar model since women, too, required different means of agitation. Female

[264] "A magyarországi szociáldemokrata párt 1903. évi X. pártkongresszusa Budapesten / X. Parteitag der ungarländischen sozialdemokratischen Partei 1903 zu Budapest," 1903, I/658/1/7, PIL.
[265] Adorjáni and Bari, "National Minority."
[266] Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 59–60.

workers did not gather in pubs, where male workers tended to join the social democratic movement. The aim of the sections was not to overwrite the existing territorial units. Local German, Romanian, Serbian, and Slovak party organizations could be established only in localities where the SDPH did not yet have a local representative. The SDPH tried to avoid the existence of parallel organizations on the local level and encouraged non-Magyar workers to join the central party. It is also important to note that the 1904 program did not create a Magyar section. This indicates that the "neutral" central party was not only Hungarian but also Magyar.[267]

By setting up committees operating in languages other than Hungarian, the SDPH introduced in 1904 what Lenin framed as "technical autonomy" for the nationalities in his article about the autonomist movement of the Jewish Bund. The subscribers of the Romanian (*Adevērul*), Serbian (*Narodni Glasz* and *Sloboda*), Slovak (*Slovenské Robotnícké Noviny*), and German (*Volksstimme*) journals, edited by the nationality sections, informally constituted the "members" of the sections. The Serbian newspaper, however, mistook the creation of the nationalities' sections for inner federalization. The Serbian comrades thought the new national committees had competencies similar to those in the Austrian party. Hungary's German, Romanian, Serbian, and Slovak sections were not separate parties. The historian János Kende interprets this misunderstanding as a sign of Serbian separatist tendencies. Kende also entertained the idea that if every nationality section had stepped forward with autonomy claims in 1904, the SDPH could have done nothing but grant their autonomy. In 1904, the SDPH responded to the nationality question by setting up national agitation and organizing committees. The right to self-determination appeared on the official program of the SDPH in 1917 after the 1917 Stockholm Peace Conference.[268] The literature rightly sees this as a halfway solution and accuses the party of not reflecting consistently on the importance of the nationality question. The case studies below will give a more detailed picture of how the resolution considered current realities and contributed to the empowerment of non-Magyar workers. A change of perspective and scale will show that there was hardly an optimal solution for all parties.

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[267] The lack of legal differentiation between the Hungarian state and citizens and the Hungarian (Magyar) ethnicity had been one of the main grievances of the nationalities in Hungary since the 1860s. See. Schlett, *A nemzetiségi törvényjavaslat országgyűlési vitája, 1868*, 5–23.
[268] Buchinger 1936, 39.

Most reports at the time celebrated the 1904 decision to create nationalities' sections. There were laudatory statements, and not only in the Hungarian-language workers' journals or by Serbian editors who misunderstood the competencies of the nationalities' sections. At the same time, the assembly of 1904 also revealed the party's structural problems and the challenge of managing a discussion in five languages. The 1903 resolution and the 1904 organizational arrangements revealed hidden tensions. Despite internationalist enthusiasm and a shared belief in equality and humanism, the breaches between different interest groups became evident. The tension between the center and periphery, Magyars and non-Magyars, industrial and agricultural workers, and practical and theoretical socialists came to the fore during the discussions. The leadership was frustrated that delegates from the provinces failed to comprehend the higher concerns that guided the party's work. The party leadership saw the grievances of the non-Magyar delegates as petty and distracting. In their view, the representatives from outside Budapest lacked appreciation for the hard work that the leadership undertook and failed to do their share.

Communication between the parties became difficult since the 665 delegates spoke five different languages. Moreover, the party leadership reproached the "low level of socialist education" of those from the countryside. At the same time, the delegates from different regions were offended by the patronizing tone of the party leadership.[269] Workers representing the dominantly non-Magyar agrarian periphery did not feel understood, heard, or represented. The Magyar-speaking party leadership was also disappointed since "those who join the party cannot comprehend the essence of socialism."[270] Managing multilingualism at the party assembly was also a challenging task. The party administration conducted its proceedings mainly in Hungarian, except for brief greetings from representatives of nationalities and foreign parties. Representatives of the nationalities usually spoke in their own languages. Although interpreters translated the discussion at the party assembly into German, Serbian, and Romanian, the often off-topic remarks and contributions of non-Magyar delegates indicate that the dialogue was far from seamless. The assembly did not use what we would consider professional interpreting today. The multilingual comrades simultaneously summarized what had been

[269] Mucsi, "Törekvések a magyarországi szociáldemokrata párt szervezeti reformjára (1890-1914)," 65.
[270] *A magyarországi szocialisztikus munkásmozgalmak az 1905. évben.* (Budapest, 1906), 247–49.

said for the non-Magyar representatives or gave a short explanation before they put a matter to the vote. But interpretation did not always go smoothly. For example, in 1903, when the new party program had been set to vote, a babel broke out in the meeting room. The chaos became so rampant that the voting had to be postponed.[271] Since efficient decision-making became impossible, the party leadership reorganized the representation system in the years after 1904.

The Austrian model of dealing with nationalities influenced how Social Democrats in Hungary thought about the nationality question within their party. For one, creating separate sections supported agitation work in different languages and gave non-Magyar workers a sense of national autonomy. For another, the escalation of the nationality question in the Austrian party was alarming enough for the Hungarians to stick to the "technical autonomy" they had developed. They continued to represent non-Magyar workers without federalizing the party. At the Copenhagen Congress of the Second International, the division of the trade unions along linguistic fault lines in Austria was one of the most controversial discussion topics. Ernő Garami, the opinion leader of Hungarian social democracy, addressed the topic in his interpellation. Garami pointed out that Hungary was also multilingual, much like Austria. Despite having a similar constitution, Hungary was far behind Austria in economic development. Thus, Austria represented the future of Hungary, the Hungarian socialist argued. Garami also highlighted that the Hungarian labor movement aimed to avoid the sinister fate of national segregation witnessed in Austria.[272] Otto Bauer also spoke on the issue. He argued that even in Austria, not every nationality obtained the right to administer itself. He pointed out that out of the eight nationalities of Austria, only three were strong enough to enjoy the benefits of separate organizations. Bauer alleged that only "strong" and well-organized nations are ripe for autonomy. By strength, Bauer meant the potential to fully enjoy the liberties and rights of modern society. The party leadership rendered the movement of non-Magyar workers weak, meaning that it could not survive under the constant attack of the authorities. The Slovak workers of Hungary had a different opinion on the subject. They objected firmly to Garami's speech and expressed resentment at not

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[271] *MSZMM 1903*, 130.

[272] "International Socialist Congress, 1910. Abridged Minutes and Complete Resolutions of the 1910 Copenhagen Socialist Congress.," 1910, 12, https://archive.org/details/InternationalSocialistCongress1910SecondInternationalConferenceOf/mode/2up., *Internationaler Sozialisten-Kongress zu Kopenhagen, 1910* (Berlin: Verlag Buchhandlung Vorwärts, 1910), 81–97, https://www.tic.ugent.be/item/263.

being represented at the international congresses. “The Hungarian comrades shudder at the thought that one day the Slovaks, Serbs, and Romanians of Hungary will stand up for being members with equal rights of the International,” concluded one of the Slovak delegates.[273]

The moment to review the Austromarxist solution to the nationality question arrived only in 1918 with the dissolution of the Monarchy. Before WWI, the SDPH’s main activity aimed at achieving a democratic parliament through universal suffrage. The leadership believed that a positive nationality program could wait until Hungary became more democratic and industrialized. They envisioned achieving this future by abolishing the customs union between Austria and Hungary and holding direct and equal popular elections. Inspired by the Austrian comrades, they restructured the party to create separate sections for the nationalities. The party leadership set up a framework to organize laborers in their mother tongue but did not federalize the party based on nationality like the Austrian party. The Hungarians were not alone in their strategy, and their position was in line with the principles of the Second International. The fact that their Austrian sister party’s division along national lines did not produce the expected results prompted the SDPH to conclude that the Austromarxists’ nationality policy was flawed. One crucial question remains, which we have not yet addressed. Did the nationalities in Hungary insist on the internal federalization of the party, as did the Czechs, Armenians, and Bundists? Did non-Magyar workers strive for national cultural autonomy within the state organization? In what follows, I will explore this issue in more detail by looking at Romanian and Slovak workers.

[273] Tibor Erényi and Edit Vincze, eds., *A szocialista munkásmozgalom Magyarországon az első világháborút közvetlenül megelőző években és a háború idején. Első rész, 1907-1914.*, vol. A, A magyar munkásmozgalom történeténetének válogatott dokumentumai 4 (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1966), 331–38.

4. Fluency in Marxism: The Case of Impoverished Romanian Workers from Banat and the SDPH

The SDPH leadership did not want to federalize the workers' movement in Hungary from within along ethnic lines. At the same time, it drew heavily on the Austrian model to create nationalities' sections and encourage multilingual agitation, in what I have framed as "technical autonomy." One of the reasons for rejecting "substantial autonomy" was that Hungarian Social Democrats were frightened by the internal schisms within their Austrian sister party. I have also shown the reasons for dismissing national autonomies at the state level. The fear of plans for Greater Austria extinguished ambitions to adopt national cultural autonomy as the party's political program. The federalization of the empire was not desirable for Hungarians since they wanted to maintain the Kingdom's territorial integrity.

The next two chapter shift the perspective by focusing on the nationalities to explore whether some Romanian and Slovak communities inside the social democratic movement were more receptive to the Austromarxist answer to the nationality question. The first case study focuses on Romanian workers from Southern Hungary. Despite being a multi-ethnic area, the Banat region (largely in present-day Romania and Serbia) was also one of the fastest modernizing regions in the second half of the nineteenth century. Since the early workers' movement followed the activities of the Viennese comrades, it seemed reasonable to look for echoes of Austromarxism there. Banat was also the epicenter of the peasant movement in this period. What were the main objectives of the socialist movement in such a diverse setting? The second case study brings the reader to Upper Hungary, present-day Slovakia. Slovak workers' leaders took up the cause of federalizing the party and national autonomy. Their autonomy claims were not surprising, given the Czech neighborhood and fraternity and the proximity of Vienna. I will argue that the ideas of independent party organization and national autonomy integrated the Slovak workers' local struggles into a larger framework.

4.1. Excursion to Southern Hungary

In the social democratic movement in Hungary, class struggle, the agrarian question, and the nationality problem were inseparable.[274] The ethnic masses included peasants, most of them with less than 5-10 acres of land. The relationship between rural proletarians and the workers' movement was a contentious issue throughout Europe. Was the Hungarian movement ready to take on the Magyar and non-Magyar peasantry? Was the SDPH at all responsible for organizing the poor rural masses? Were the non-Magyar peasant masses receptive to socialism? What were the means of cooperation at their disposal? This chapter is interested in how social democratic leaders from Budapest and in the countryside dealt with this complex socio-political situation. To understand the differences between the meaning-making systems at the center and periphery, I consulted a broad spectrum of sources: theoretical texts, party programs and statements, party protocols, central and regional newspapers of the SDPH, and arrest records. My inquiry led me to the Romanian newspaper edited in Temesvár/Timișoara/Temeswar (present-day Romania), *Votul Poporului* (People's Vote/Voice), and its controversial editor-in-chief, Atanasie Voichescu. This short-lived newspaper appeared between January and November 1903, when Southern Hungary was the scene of harvest strikes and peasant rebellion. 1903 was also the year in which the SDPH adopted a new party program that took a stand on both nationality and agrarian issues.

Hungarian and Romanian scholars dealt with the Banat labor movement mainly before 1990. I have already noted that although the studies of pre-1990 Hungarian historians are highly informative, they have a strong Leninist ideological commitment. Romanian studies before the Ceaușescu era show a solid affiliation with the Leninist-Stalinist interpretation of the nationality question. Given that on the territories later surrendered to Romania, the ruling class consisted mainly of Magyars, it was easy for this scholarship to integrate the Romanian national and national unification movements into the narrative of class struggle. Even if creating nation-states was not among the aims of the social democratic movements during the Second International, Romanian historians in the 1960s and 1970s defined the Romanian national unification movement as

[274] Dezső Farkas, *A magyarországi szociáldemokrata párt és az agrárkérdés 1900 és 1914 között* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973), 194.

progressive.[275] Romanian historians read the history of the Romanian section of the SDPH from the perspective of the Great Unification of Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina with the Romanian Kingdom in 1918.[276] Romanian research mainly focused on the relations between the labor movement in Transylvania and the Romanian Kingdom. They interpreted the activity of the Romanian section of the SDPH teleologically, as if its activity consciously aimed to urge the union of Transylvania with Romania.[277]

This case study takes the reader to multiethnic Southern Hungary. The Banat region stretches between the Mureș/Maros river to the north, Tisa/Tisza to the northwest, the Danube to the west, and the Carpathian Mountains to the east.[278] In 1910, the population of Banat was 37.4 percent Romanian, 24.5 percent German, 18 percent Serbian, and 15.3 percent Magyar.[279] Between 1880 and 1910, the development of Southern Hungary was remarkable.[280] Timișoara/Temesvár/Temeswar, the most important city in the region, industrialized rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century. The first workers' association was founded in 1868 and led by Károly Farkas. The association had implemented a multiethnic party organization at the local level right away: the Romanian Gheorghe Ungureanu, the German Andrei Platzer, and the Serbian Stefan Novotni joined Farkas as leaders.[281] All of the association's official publications and its seal were in four languages. Examining the Timișoara/Temesvár/Temeswar workers' press at the turn of the century, the historian Lajos Jordáky argued that the Timișoara/Temesvár/Temeswar workers' movement was constantly following the news of the Vienna workers' movement. Members also distributed the works of Julius Deutsch, Adolf Mössler, Ernst

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[275] Clara Cușnir-Mihailovici, Florea Dragne, and Gheorghe Unc, eds., *Mişcarea muncitorească din România între anii 1916-1921 : crearea Partidului Comunist Român* (București: Editura Politică, 1971). 351, 357, 359.
[276] Ion Cicală, "Mișcarea muncitorească și socialistă din Transilvania : 1900-1918" (Doctoral dissertation, Cluj-Napoca, 1967), 446. Ioan Grecu, "Din activitatea secţiei române a Partidului Social Democrat din Ungaria pentru desăvârşirea unităţii naţionale (1903-1918) Localitate" (Doctoral dissertation, Cluj-Napoca, 1972). Cușnir-Mihailovici, Dragne, and Unc, *Mişcarea muncitorească din România între anii 1916-1921*.
[277] Grecu, "Din activitatea secţiei române." Cușnir-Mihailovici, Dragne, and Unc, *Mişcarea muncitorească din România între anii 1916-1921*.
[278] Cătălina Ancuța, "Territorial Disparities in the Romanian Banat: Assessment, Dynamics and Impact on the Territorial System," *Journal of Urban and Regional Analysis* 2, no. 2 (January 1, 2021): 45, https://doi.org/10.37043/JURA.2010.2.2.4.
[279] Réka Marchut, "Bánáti Köztársaság: valóság vagy legenda?," in *Kérészállamok. Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022), 37–38. Kókai Sándor, "Etnicitás és kulturalizmus a Bánságban : 1910," *Közép-európai közlemények* 6, no. 1–2 (2013): 180-199.
[280] Demeter, "Estimating Regional Inequalities," 36.
[281] Lajos Jordáky, "Tanulmány az I. Internacionálé temesvári szekciójáról," n.d., 34, V/847/61/1, PIL.

Berner, Robert Danneberg, Karl Renner, and Otto Bauer—but not their writings on the nationality question. Moreover, the Vienna workers' newspaper *Der Kampf* had several subscribers in Timișoara/Temesvár/Temeswar.

From 1890, the labor movement gradually spread into the rural population and developed into a mass movement. Circles and unions of farm workers emerged all over the region. The party needed new means of organization to spread socialism among the impoverished peasants. The workers' movement had spread slowly among the rural population in many regions worldwide. Not so in Southern Hungary, where the labor movement quickly found a resonance among agricultural workers since the peasants put an equal sign between socialist slogans and their discontent. The leaders of socialist associations, registered as reading circles, were in contact with the SDPH leadership and distributed *Népszava*, its official newspaper. In the larger settlements, the peasant workers' "reading associations" became workshops for mass politicking and had up to a thousand members.

The leaders had learned how to organize public assemblies, disposed of an excellent knowledge of local conditions, and could speak the people's language. Oral agitation was also crucial because of the high illiteracy rate. Popular assemblies were usually held outdoors or in taverns on Sundays. From 1895 onwards, under the Bánffy government's measures, the authorities tried to suppress the movement with soldiers and armed police officers. These actions ended with the arrest of the organizers and orators and cost many lives.[282] The topics on the agenda of the popular assemblies covered the economic and political situation, including universal suffrage, the press, what the Social Democrats want, law and justice, and the purpose and benefits of cooperation. The social democratic press sometimes reported between 6,000 and 12,000 workers participating in these gatherings. Even if these figures are exaggerated, they indicate the popularity of these events. Contemporary newspaper articles and police reports show that these assemblies were also multilingual. However, they did not achieve multilingualism through translation or interpretation, as in more formal settings. The orators distributed the items from the agenda among the different languages (Magyar, Romanian, Serbian, and

[282] Lajos Varga, *A magyar szociáldemokrácia kézikönyve* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 1999), 96-98.

German). These speeches often lasted more than an hour—unless the officers of law cut them short.

4.2. A Curious Brotherhood: the Social Democrats and the Agrarian Question

In Hungary, the agrarian movement developed in close relation to the local organizations of the SDPH. The literature unanimously points out that in Hungary, the issues of nationality and agriculture were utterly intertwined.[283] It also emphasizes that the party did not excel in solving either of these issues.[284] From 1890 onwards, the agrarian question was repeatedly on the agenda of party meetings, yet the Marxist theoretical literature provided sufficient arguments for the leaders of the workers' movement not to regard land distribution and national autonomy as the explicit aims of their movement. In Hungary, however, the need to solve these two issues was inescapable. The social-democratic workers' and peasants' movements separated institutionally in 1896, but they did not break off contact. The SDPH saw the rural poor as a political partner. However, that did not provide them with an answer to the burning question of farming and land ownership.[285] The SDPH adopted several resolutions on the agrarian question. The most important ones were issued in 1894, 1900, and 1903. The ambivalence between denying and acknowledging the agrarian problem characterized the SDPH until the end of WWI. The non-Magyar press also gave a mixed assessment of the role of the socialists in inciting the rural masses. While the Magyar press and public opinion accused the socialists of nationalist incitement (*nemzetiségi izgatás*) among the Serbs in the Banat region, Serbian newspapers accused the socialists of Magyarization: "They are Jewish agents who want to Magyarize the Serbian people," the newspaper *Zastava* wrote.[286]

The theoreticians of the SDPH familiarized themselves with the international literature on the agrarian question. Similar to the nationality question, Marx and Engels did not formulate a systematic theory of the agrarian issue. The lack of international Marxist literature on the agrarian question and the importance of the problems of poor agricultural workers also confused faithful Marxists in other agrarian regions, such as

[283] Varga, 95.
[284] Farkas, *Agrárkérdés 1900 és 1914 között*, 194–98.
[285] Varga, *Magyar szociáldemokrácia kézikönyve*, 50.
[286] "Szocializmus a szerbek között," *Népszava* 32, no. 11 (January 28, 1904): 2.

Galicia.[287] Marxist theoretical literature from abroad assumed that the transformation of industrial and agricultural economic relations would follow similar patterns. The agrarian question was a heated topic in the German social democratic movement in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The theoretical interest of the German comrades originated from the party's failed attempts to mobilize the rural population.[288] At the turn of the century, Karl Kautsky and Eduard David became the theoretical experts on the relationship between the agrarian and industrial workers' movements. The Hungarian Social Democrats sided with Kautsky's principles in this debate. In 1899, in a study entitled *Die Agrarfrage* (*The Agrarian Question*), Kautsky analyzed the situation of the peasantry in capitalist society and the possibility of a worker-peasant alliance.[289] On the matter of the survival of smallholdings in a world of large farms that used modern tools to optimize costs and increase productivity, Kautsky took the view that cooperatives could guarantee the survival of small farms. Moreover, industrial workers could lead the way in self-organization for farmers.[290] The idea of supporting small farms also found resonance in Hungary because the abolition of feudal estates seemed indispensable. David saw industrial and rural development as separate processes. His position was more popular among Marxist intellectuals and sociologists in Hungary.

"Learning from foreign experience can only be fruitful if we recognize the specificities of our own relations. And as far as I know, the peculiarities of the Hungarian conditions include, first of all, the specific nature of agricultural conditions."[291] These are Kautsky's thoughts written to Ernő Garami in 1906, when the first issue of the theoretical journal of the Hungarian social democratic movement *Szocializmus* (*Socialism*) saw the light of the day. In Kautsky's opinion, the Eastern European specificity was that the labor movement could and should still win over the impoverished rural class. In his message,

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[287] Kerstin S. Jobst, *Zwischen Nationalismus und Internationalismus: die polnische und ukrainische Sozialdemokratie in Galizien von 1890 bis 1914: ein Beitrag zur Nationalitätenfrage in Habsburgerreich*, 1. Aufl, Hamburger Veröffentlichungen Zur Geschichte Mittel- Und Osteuropas 2 (Hamburg: Dölling und Gallitz, 1996), 62-72.

[288] József Diner-Dénes, "Szocialista agrárpolitika," *Szocializmus. Szociáldemokrata folyóirat.* I, no. 8 (1907): 225.

[289] Karl Kautsky, *Die Agrarfrage. Eine Uebersicht über die Tendenzen der modernen Landwirthschaft und die Agrarpolitik der Sozialdemokratie.* (Stuttgart: Verlag von J. H. W. Dietz Nachf, 1899). R.V. Ramana Murthy, ed., *The Agrarian Question: A Reader*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2021), 51–59, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003191704.

[290] Murthy, *The Agrarian Question*, 57–58.

[291] Karl Kautsky, "Nemzetközi elmélet és nemzeti sajátosság," ed. Ernő Garami and Zsigmond Kunfi, *Szocializmus. Szociáldemokrata folyóirat.* 1, no. 1 (1907): 4–5.

Kautsky urged his Hungarian comrades to make the newly launched scientific journal the workshop where Hungarians would develop a Marxist theory of the agrarian question. While the newspaper published a few studies on the subject, Kautsky's wish was not fulfilled.

In Hungary, agricultural workers' desires resonated with the promises of the social democratic movement. The SDPH repeatedly spoke out in favor of confiscating church property and large estates but not for parceling them out.[292] This led to misunderstandings, with rural workers reading the slogan of expropriation as a promise of land allocation while the SDPH wanted to take the land into public ownership and abolish private property. The literature criticizes the SDPH sharply for not taking on board the specific interests and demands of the rural masses— if nothing else, at least for tactical reasons to deepen the class conflict between landowners and peasants.[293] The SDPH had an ambivalent position regarding integrating rural workers into social democracy. Socialists had to decide on the extent to which they dared to seek the support of the non-Magyar masses who, contrary to the official discourse, wanted land.

The issue of non-Magyar agrarian workers became particularly topical in 1903 when Romanian agricultural workers rose, demanding agrarian reform and land allocation. While there were lively debates about the extent to which the paths of industrial and agricultural workers were the same, the upheavals of 1903 and 1904 left no doubt that the nationality and peasant questions overlapped. With elections approaching, the tense atmosphere prompted the SDPH leadership to shift its ambiguous position and take a firmer stance on the agrarian question. Winning over the Romanian population would have been a trump card in the party's political struggles. In 1903, the SDPH felt strong enough to take on the endeavor of organizing Romanian rural workers. Thanks to the network of trade unions in all important industrial and agricultural centers, the SDPH was present all over the Kingdom of Hungary.

Emancipation was a shared goal of the party leadership and the Romanian rural population, but with distinct accents. The SDPH needed mass support while the Romanians were struggling to renegotiate their position in the Hungarian socio-political ecosystem. Romanian agricultural workers needed allies to formulate their grievances and

[292] Diner-Dénes, "Szocialista agrárpolitika."
[293] Farkas, *Agrárkérdés 1900 és 1914 között*, 130.

defend themselves from their "enemies," the state officers. The central party sent agitators to organize the non-Hungarian, mostly illiterate rural population. The later editor of the Romanian workers' newspaper *Votul Poporului,* Atanasie Voichescu, was one of these comrades. In the Banat region, he was the Romanian-language speaker at popular assemblies.

In 1903, a new party program was to be adopted at the tenth Party Congress. The Congress was prepared in great excitement, and even local unions assisted in the preparations. The international social democratic press, too, followed the preparations with attention. The worker's movement was gaining strength all over Europe. 1903 was also the year of the success of the Social Democratic Party in Germany in the parliamentary elections. All over the world, voters elected 243 social democratic deputies to national parliaments.[294] None other than Karl Kautsky himself supervised the preparation of the new party program. It is hardly surprising that the program was considered a copy of the Erfurt Party Program of the German Social Democratic Party applied to the Hungarian socio-political circumstances. The only flaw in the preparations was that the party leadership entirely left out the representatives of the nationalities. However, they were present at the party assembly, where every delegate spoke in their own language, German, Hungarian, Bulgarian [sic], and Romanian.[295] *Votul poporului* reported that agricultural workers were also *truly* represented by "field laborers dressed in *peasant clothes* (...) There were many Romanian delegates and each and every one took the floor and unfolded their misery in front of the congress."[296] The program also included provisions concerning the abolition of large holdings (Article 14–26) and the abolition of all privileges (Article 3). Furthermore, it announced the "equality of all *nations*" of the state as elaborated in Chapter I/4.

Besides the abolition of large holdings and national equality, the principle of internationalism was also prominent in the new party program. Dezső Bokányi, a member of the party leadership and the most charismatic orator in the workers' movement, offered the official definition of internationalism at the Party Congress. He explained that capitalism was international and did not have a fatherland; thus, the workers' movement

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[294] Varga, *Magyar szociáldemokrácia kézikönyve*, 3–4.
[295] "Congresul nostru în Budapesta," *Votul poporului* 1, no. 13 (April 18, 1903): 1.
[296] "Congresul nostru în Budapesta," 1.

also needed to be international. "This has nothing to do with our national characteristics and language," he added. "Some might love the green grasslands and the Hungarian folk songs. Still, we are not committing capital treason if we, instead of hating them, support our Italian brothers extolling serenades, the yodeling alpine residents, our German brother humming the *Tannenbaum*, our Spanish brothers who love bull-fighter marches, our cheerful French and austere English brothers when they are oppressed by capitalism."[297] And as an illustration of this statement, three comrades translated Bokányi's speech into German, Romanian, and Serbian. Brotherly relations, however, did not remain this harmonious for long, since implementing or even interpreting these principles created serious fault lines within socialist circles.

4.3. "Nobody can stop a wolf from howling"[298]

"Our party is filling a long-standing void," the official newspaper of the SDPH announced in January 1903, "we will publish a weekly magazine for our brothers of Romanian nationality. Its goal is to lead millions of Romanians living in Hungary out of their mental and moral darkness."[299] It went on to formulate the objectives of the new publication: "The newspaper will voice the Romanian grievances and open the eyes of the public to the truth. It will be a weapon in the hands of the Social Democrats in their struggle for human rights, freedom, equality, and fraternity."[300] The Romanian newspaper was intended to be the party's mouthpiece in the countryside and among the Romanian-speaking population. "The editor is a tried and tested comrade," *Népszava* announced.

The first issue was published on January 24, 1903. "Our paper is international," *Votul poporului* wrote in line with the new party program, "since we do not recognize any nations, just frank and truthful people, be they Romanian, Jewish, or Turkish, as long as they want fraternity, freedom, and justice."[301] A report from March 1903 used the idea of national equality to speak out against ethnic stereotypes: "A communal juryman said at the court: '*Ja, das machen nur die Walachischen Räubern*,'" implying that Romanians genuinely tend to criminality. "But aren't we all equal, Germans and Romanians" the

[297] *MSZMM 1903*, 158.
[298] "Revoluţie în vis despre conferinţa Sudungară.," *Votul poporului* 1, no. 1 (January 24, 1903): 1.
[299] "Az elvtársakhoz!," *Népszava* 31, no. 14 (January 31, 1903): 5.
[300] "Az elvtársakhoz!," 5.
[301] "Polemie cu Tribuna poporului," *Votul poporului* 1, no. 20 (June 6, 1903): 1–2.

newspaper wrote.[302] Local problems translated well into the principles of internationality and national equality and could validate complaints of various natures. "Naïve cosmopolitanism," that is, rising above nationalism and advocating for equal rights for all nations, offered a language of empowerment for the Romanian editors.

The Romanian newspaper combined two different discursive traditions. On the one hand, *Votul poporului* picked up the language of class struggle and translated local grievances into the socialist idiom. This language transformed otherwise insignificant local actions into relevant matters for international and interconfessional [sic] social democracy. It placed them in a new context. In *Votul poporului,* any local disturbance or restrictions on mother tongue usage became an offense against internationalism. But, on the other hand, the newspaper was written in the spoken language, the language of the people. The narrative structure of the articles also followed the pattern of oral communication. From the very first issue of the paper, its articles used strong language and gave free reign to emotions. "Nobody can shut us up anymore like we are some wild cattle. Nobody can stop a wolf from howling and a nation in its right mind from talking in its mother tongue."[303] The newspaper was not afraid to use abusive language. The Hungarian ruling class, the government, priests, and teachers became enemies. The newspaper called them "useless," "damned," "fraud," "dolt," "donkey," "cows in boots," and "idiots," and the Kingdom of Hungary "a piggery" in the name of the international social democratic movement. It was this kind of anger that the government feared most. Surprisingly, the newspaper was compliant in not bringing up the issue of land distribution.

The authorities often confiscated newspaper issues and prosecuted the editors. Throughout his career as a newspaper editor and socialist agitator, Atanasie Voichescu was not only accused of inciting hatred against the Magyar ruling class and the Hungarian state and public defamation but was also arrested for owning a coin minting machine and later for flooding the countryside with fake Austro-Hungarian crown coins and even murder. Even knowing that the translation and inconsistent use of names at the turn of the century was not exceptional, it is striking in how many ways Voichescu's name was

[302] "Yes, only a Vlach robber would do that." Vlach is a derogatory name for Romanians. *Votul Poporului* 1, no. 9 (March 21, 1903): 2–3.
[303] "Revoluţie în vis despre conferinţa Sudungară.," 1.

misspelled in almost every article about him, and even within a single text.[304] His constant arrests greatly hindered Voichescu's editorial work. Police reports and newspaper articles suggest that Voichescu was indeed on thin ice. While the authorities and the government press read nationalist agitation (*nemzetiségi izgatás*) into everything, Voichescu's intentions are unclear even to today's reader. According to contemporary testimonies, he spoke out in favor of international social democracy at popular meetings and declared that Romanian peasant proletarians belonged to the SDPH, "Bokányi's party."[305] At the same time, others reported that he accused Hungarians of wanting to exterminate Romanians and advised his audience to emigrate to Romania.[306] He accused the authorities of poisoning the people with alcohol to shake them down.

These and similar controversies characterized Voichescu's entire operation and the period of the paper's existence. Voichescu's inflammatory speeches at popular assemblies and his conflicts with the high sheriff (*főszolgabíró*, *Oberstuhlrichter*) of Párdány/Међа (present-day Serbia) escalated. In December 1903, he was sentenced to three months in prison for a speech in Temesliget/Pădureni (present-day Romania). The King's Court in Temesvár/Timișoara/Temeswar asked for Voichescu to be found guilty of writing 25 incriminated articles. However, the court found him guilty on only six counts and sentenced him to one month in prison and a fine of 100 crowns. For an article published in June 1903, the Temesvár/Timișoara/Temeswar jury sentenced him to six months in jail and a fine of 500 crowns for public defamation in August 1904. Voichescu's problems gradually grew, not only with the authorities but also within the party. Contemporary articles and reports reveal a continuous loss of trust by both the central party and the editor in Temesvár/Timișoara/Temeswar. Although *Voltul poporului* formulated its agenda in the idiom of social democracy, the local (mis)translation of

[304] He appeared as Vojkeszku, Vojkescu, Voichesen Atanász, Atanáz, Athanász, Athanas, Athanasz.
[305] Voichescu probably used these words because the party had just split and the so-called Reorganized Social Democratic Party was constituted. After Voichescu's resignation from the editorial board, the newspaper passed into the hands of the Reorganized Party. *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korában IV. 1903—1906*, vol. IV., Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korába (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1966), 40–42.
[306] "The Hungarian's aim is to eradicate you, Romanians – the new Romanian newspaper reported a speech by Voichescu. They put poison in your drinks and fountains. You don't have legal protection and the authorities themselves are persecuting you. (...) So, I advise you to go to Romania and elect Romanian judges, they will be just. For Hungarians only ever seek to rip you off." "Foaia Adevărul și popii jidovilor din Budapesta.," *Votul poporului* 1, no. 30 (October 17, 1903): 1–2.

complex theoretical principles revealed the tension between the center and the countryside. The party wanted to control which people and issues it took up as its own.

The central party encouraged all Romanian comrades to distribute and read the newspaper in its first months of publication. The attacks on the editor-in-chief by the authorities were also initially seen as a sign of success. Several articles in *Népszava* came out in support of Voichescu. It took the central party some eight months to realize that the paper was not serving their interests. Then *Népszava* claimed that they had foreseen that the comrades in the provinces were too weak to maintain a Romanian newspaper in the face of the authorities' attacks. Scholarship backs up the idea that people in the countryside had mistaken socialist demands for the promise of land distribution. In August 1903, the SDPH backed out of the newspaper and decided to distribute *Adevērul* (The Truth), a Romanian newspaper edited in Budapest. "*Votul Poporului*, a newspaper published in Temesvár, ceased to be a party newspaper due to numerous complaints about its distribution and content."[307] Its subscribers automatically received the first issue of *Adevērul*. This issue clarified its relationship to its predecessor: "Voichescu is not a social democrat, and we have nothing to do with him."[308] After a two-month break, *Votul Poporului* reappeared until November 1903. In its final issues, the editors were invested in discrediting the now official party organ, *Adevērul*, mainly by adopting an anti-Semitic tone.

The ideological radar of the central party and the authorities did not work perfectly. In 1903-1904, there were frequently articles in *Népszava* promising the peasants that the socialists would support their struggle for land distribution.[309] In April 1904, at a ceremony in honor of the delegates to the party congress, Aurel Cristea (Krisztea), one of the editors of *Adevērul* recited in Romanian the poem *Noi vrem pământ* (We want land!) by the Romanian poet George Coșbuc.[310] In 1905, the same Aurel Cristea was prosecuted for publishing *Marseillesa proletarului român* (*The Romanian Proletarian Marseillaise*) in the newspaper *Adevērul*. The poem had already appeared in 1903 in *Votul poporului* and was not among the six articles for which Voichescu was prosecuted. *The Romanian Proletarian Marseillaise* appeared not only in newspapers in the countryside but also in

[307] "A román elvtársak figyelmébe," *Népszava* 31, no. 89 (June 8, 1903): 5.
[308] D. T. and G. U., "Voichescu nu este socialist," *Adevērul* 1, no. 2 (August 23, 1903).
[309] Farkas, *Agrárkérdés 1900 és 1914 között*, 102–13.
[310] "A pártgyűlés," *Népszava* 32, no. 38 (March 31, 1904): 1.

Budapest in a pamphlet entitled *Să fie lumină* (Let There be Light), and it did not lead to the imprisonment of the editors. Despite all this, Cristea was imprisoned for a month for publishing the poem.[311] He died of lung disease contracted in prison at 31.

The story above makes a convincing case that the tensions between the Magyar-dominated central party and the Romanian agrarian proletarians were not exclusively national. These tensions arose from the diverging interests of the center and the countryside. The attempts to make the party congress multilingual in 1903 and 1904 showed the internal tension between the different groups. The nationwide congresses in Budapest were dominated by Magyars, while the nationalities began to organize separately and among themselves in the regional centers. To obtain the right to vote, the central party contacted the Hungarian opposition parties, while workers belonging to the nationalities sought the support of the Romanian, Slovak, and Serbian national parties. The Romanians of Hungary held their first separate congress in Lugos/Lugoj/Lugosch (present-day Romania) in December 1905. At their second meeting, in 1908, a delegate from Szeben/Sibiu/Hermannstadt (present-day Romania) criticized the fact that Romanians were meeting separately. The Romanian social democratic leaders argued that the only reason for the separate meetings was that the Romanians did not speak Hungarian well enough. Since 1904, the delegates in Arad had been trying to move the headquarters of the Romanian workers' newspaper to a rural area inhabited by Romanians, such as Arad. They felt that the newspaper's editors had lost touch with the interest of its potential readership. In 1907, the editorial facilities were therefore briefly moved to Lugos/Lugoj/Lugosch, where the miners' union tried to take over editing and distribution. This was, of course, not in line with the direction of the central party.[312]

4.4. Lessons from a Rural Romanian Workers' Newspaper

The Romanian editors' self-translation into the language of the social democratic movement can be interpreted as an act of empowerment. The language of international class struggle offered their specific demands a universal frame of reference. Anthropologists observed a similar mechanism among the Dalits or untouchables of

[311] "Paragrafus mindenre akad.," *Népszava* 33, no. 73 (December 5, 1905): 6.
[312] Cicală, "Mişcarea muncitorească şi socialistă din Transilvania : 1900-1918," 88–215.

India, who used the universal language of Buddhism to overrule and replace the prevalent dominant language. The anthropologist Martin Fuchs defined such a language as a "third idiom."[313] A "third idiom" allows oppressed groups who aim at overcoming restrictions to bridge a social or cultural gap and to reach out to universalist ideas. *Votul poporului*, however, did not perform its act of self-translation perfectly. Its editors mixed the universal idiom of social democracy with offensive language. The inappropriate language and the (mis)appropriation of the key terms of the workers' movement to fit the local conditions was, of course, not to the taste of the central party. Budapest deprived Voichescu, the "tried and tested comrade," of his membership in the social democratic party.

The editors and the central party initially had a shared aim. *Votul poporului* wanted to integrate the rural proletarians of Banat and their demands into the workers' movement, which needed mass support. Therefore, the central party supported the Romanian newspaper financially, and the newspaper, in turn, adopted integrative language. Adopting the Marxist language carried the message that they are one. Voichescu and his comrades translated their particular local demands into principles unanimously accepted in the Second International, and the two shared symbols of membership: internationalism and national equality.[314] The paper was compliant with the norms of the party and was mostly silent on the issue of land distribution. Its narrative proved successful in the first months of its existence. It is also possible that none of the central party theorists had the language skills to read the paper. After eight months, Budapest-based Romanian Social Democrats might have read the newspaper since the central party's attitude changed, and Voichescu's enterprise failed.

The colorful details and scandals presented above showed some of the reasons why the SDPH leadership could not commit itself clearly to activating non-Magyar workers, primarily agrarian proletarians. As much as they needed the support of the non-Magyar masses, taking up their cause, which only partially overlapped with the goals of the party, was a delicate issue. The case of Voichescu showed how easily things could slip out of control. Voichescu's paper probably did not demand greater autonomy for the Romanians during its short existence because its readership's belonging to the movement was still in

[313] Fuchs, "Reaching out; or, Nobody Exists in One Context Only."(Fuchs 2009: 31; 38.)
[314] Givan, Roberts, and Soule, *The Diffusion of Social Movements*, 1.

question. At that time, the Romanian rural proletarians gravitated inwards toward the workers' movement to lend additional weight to their problems. The slogans of socialism—internationalism, national equality, and the struggle against the oppressive class—were inclusive enough to resonate with the grievances and demands of Romanian peasant workers. Whether Romanian workers in other regions of Hungary also gravitated to the SDPH is beyond the scope of this study. To answer this question would require a thorough analysis of the situation and demands of several local organizations. However, to underline the relevance of this unique but, in many ways, banal story, I will conclude this case study with more general remarks.

First, the language of social democracy functioned well as a "third idiom," a universal vocabulary into which particular demands could be incorporated. Second, the case also showed that negotiating a more autonomous position would have been difficult and counterintuitive without being accepted or desired inside the group. Third, Romanian workers' leaders in Southern Hungary were looking for practical solutions to multilingualism and the use of Romanian. In parallel to informal local solutions, they called for the observance of existing laws, national equality, and consistent compliance with the 1868 nationality law. This case study also offered me two new methodological reflections. First, affairs of local relevance can be so specific and sedentary that it is challenging to tie them into a universal system of meanings. Such "bad stories," which tend to become narrative dead ends, are often overlooked in historiography.[315] *Votul poporului* holds up a distorted mirror to political theories and offers a glimpse of what socialist agitation in the multi-ethnic countryside might have been like at the turn of the century. Second, this study forced me to question abstract notions of groups. The discourse of Atanasie Voichescu's paper does not represent all Romanian workers, not even those living in rural Banat. But it shows why communication between the center and Romanians in southern Hungary failed in 1903. In this case study, it was particularly challenging to grasp who was speaking and on whose behalf.

Votul poporului did not formulate a new position on social democracy, nationality,

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[315] Dan McAdams, "A történet jelentése az irodalomban és az életben.," in *Narratív pszichológia*, ed. János László, Narratívák 5 (Budapest: Kijárat, 2002), 158–59; Pierre Bourdieu, "The Biographical Illusion (1986)," in *Biography in Theory*, ed. Wilhelm Hemecker and Edward Saunders (De Gruyter, 2017), 210–16, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110516678-036. Jerome Bruner and Joan Lucariello, "A világ narratív újrateremtése a monológban," in *Narratív pszichológia*, ed. János László, Narratívák 5 (Budapest: Kijárat, 2002), 136–37.

or the agrarian question. My final remark is hypothetical: had the Second International, or at least the central party in Hungary or Romania, accepted the principle of national autonomy as a norm, *Votul poporului* would have proclaimed it in its columns. In this fictional case, joining the socialist camp would have been a form of devotion to national autonomy. The following case study of the Slovak section of the SDPH will provide some evidence to support this hypothesis. With the support of their Czech brothers, Slovak workers asked for an independent organization within the SDPH. Surprisingly, the Romanian rural Banat proved to be a less sympathetic context for adopting the idea of national autonomy. Rural workers struggled for equal treatment but did not demand more autonomy. Instead, they developed informal practices of multilingualism at the local level. Atanasie Voichescu and the editors of *Votul poporului* tried and failed to translate local grievances into the universalist language of social democracy.

5. "We do not want any guardianship; we are able to live independently." The Slovak Workers of Hungary and their Self-Government

5.1. "Uncertain and Timid"

In 1906, upon his return from studies abroad, Ján Lajčiak, the Slovak theologian, philosopher, and orientalist, started writing a new book on the Slovak national consciousness. The book *Slovensko a kultúra* (Slovakia and Culture) remained unfinished until he died in 1918.[316] Using the latest scientific tools he had learned abroad, he wanted to interpret the weakness of the Slovak national consciousness and the phenomenon of "denationalization" (*odnarodnovanie*) of the Slovak intelligentsia. Since the fin-de-siècle, the term "denationalization" had been broadly used by nationalities in multiethnic empires. The historian Yuki Murata pointed out that, unlike assimilation, "denationalization" always had a negative undertone. "Denationalization" refers to the process of gradually losing the objective or subjective characteristics of one's identity group.[317] In his endeavor, Lajčiak took inspiration from the new scientific methods of sociology: Herbert Spencer's social evolution theory and social Darwinism. He differentiated between the pre-modern and modern national characteristics of nationhood: religious ideas and patriarchal relations shaped pre-modern national life. In contrast, the modern national character depended on the extent to which national ideas governed people's lives. Based on the strength of national character, Lajčiak divided Slovak intellectuals into five categories: pure Slovaks, immature Slovaks, schizophrenic Slovaks, Slovak Magyaróns, and Magyarized Slovaks. When sources and national historiographies refer to Slovaks, they rarely make explicit whether the ethnonym includes denationalized individuals. In the second part of this thesis, I will address this question in the context of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination of nations and the study of Jewish loyalty patterns.

Pure Slovaks represented the ideal type of good patriots and potential nation-

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[316] Ján Lajčiak, *Slovensko a kultúra*, 2. úplné vyd (Bratislava: Q111, 1994). Ahmet Ersoy et al., eds., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945): Texts and Commentaries* (Budapest ; New York: Central European University Press, 2006).

[317] See the first pages of Chapter 2 of Yuki Murata's upcoming doctoral dissertation ("Nationalization in Revolutionary Ukraine, 1905–1923: Ukrainian Self-Determination and Russian Nationality") with the working title "Local Anationalism and Nationalists' Frustrations in late imperial Kyiv."

builders. They were the "embodiment of the nation itself," Lajčiak wrote.[318] Pure Slovaks, however, did not exist in reality. "Denationalized Slovaks" made up the other four categories: First, "immature Slovaks" hid their national conviction but had the potential to mature into pure Slovaks. The section about so-called "schizophrenic Slovaks," the second category of denationalized individuals, remained in torso. The third and fourth categories, which were not very distinct from one another, were the "Slovak Magyaróns" and the "Magyarized Slovaks." In Lajčiak's opinion, they were "Hungarians in their souls and hearts."[319] Slovak Magyaróns and Magyarized Slovaks acculturated in parallel with their social mobility and were loyal to the Hungarian state.[320]

Lajčiak sought an explanation for the weakness of the Slovak national movement and why Slovaks were "an uncertain and timid nation." He explained the lack of "pure Slovaks" by seven leading causes: the scarcity of favorable circumstances, tolerance for abuse, shame, economic dependency, poorly paid positions in Slovakia, lack of schooling in the mother tongue, and intermarriage. He recognized the latter three as the most severe causes of denationalization: first, the Hungarian state administration offered the most prestigious jobs; second, Magyar was the language of higher education; and third, educated Slovaks tended to marry Magyars.[321] Although the Czechoslovak path was not evident until 1918, it is striking that Lajčiak did not mention or analyze pro-Czech Slovaks in his categorization. The unambiguity of the Czech-Slovak brotherhood might have been reason for not mentioning Czechoslovakists among his categories. This ideology held that the Czechs were the Slovaks' "big brothers" from whom they could learn national consciousness.[322] Furthermore, the incomplete manuscript underwent numerous editing processes, which must have influenced its content.[323]

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[318] Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopeček, eds., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945): Texts and Commentaries. Volume III/1, Volume III/1,* 2013.
[319] Lajčiak, *Slovensko a kultúra,* 287.
[320] An example of this category could be the tax commissioner József Richter, who in November 1918 offered his services to the Hungarian government. He argued that he knew the psychology of the Slovak people, their moods and interests, and their grievances, because he *was born into them, raised among them* (emphasis mine) and had been in contact with them as a bank official. József Richter, "Richter József adóügyi biztos (Sopron) javaslatai a tót nép megnyerésére," November 24, 1918, K40-1918-VII-700, MNL OL.
[321] Ersoy et al., *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945),* 281–90.
[322] Lajčiak, *Slovensko a kultúra*. 25-28; 40.
[323] The unfinished manuscript of Ján Lajčiak has not been preserved. The book was first published in shortly after WWI edited by Samuel Štefan Osuský. The reprint from 1994 was reedited by Borislav Petrík and Kveta Dašková. The editors claimed that, "Despite the modifications […] it is unconditionally the author's text, so that there is not even a slight shift in meaning in his statements, dictum, incisive analysis, so that in

The five categories of Slovaks and the causes of denationalization, as presented by Lajčiak in *Slovensko a kultúra*, showed, in a nutshell, the issues I will address in this section.[324] Lajčiak hinted in his reasons for the weakness of Slovak national sentiment that modernization, social mobility, and competing national movements were closely related phenomena. There have been many studies on the assimilatory effects of education and state administration in late Habsburg Hungary.[325] Many measures that the Hungarian state implemented openly targeted the primacy of the Magyars in the state. Among these was the limitation to the use of the mother tongue, the dismantling of Slovak cultural institutions, and the fact that Hungarians owned most industrial facilities in Slovak counties. But other economic factors, such as increased mobility, labor division, and the acculturation of second-generation industrial workers, cannot be considered as features specific to Hungary. They were characteristic of the transition from an absolutist state to a modern one worldwide.[326] Amidst ethnic tensions, it was easy to interpret these economic phenomena as targeted national repression.

This chapter guides the reader through Slovak workers' struggle for autonomy, concentrated around the newspaper *Slovenské robotnícké noviny* within the SDPH.[327] It aims to point out the complex set of reasons why this autonomy experiment failed and to open a broader discussion about the preconditions of a compromise between the dominant nation and the minority. In 1905, the Slovak Social Democrats held their first regional meeting in Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg to adopt an independent program and elect the executive committee of the Slovak Social Democratic Party of Hungary. They invited the representatives of the Magyar and Czech workers to the meeting. After the Magyar representative left the meeting, the Czech delegate, Antonín Němec, delivered a speech suggesting a reorganization of the SDPH similar to the Austrian Worker's Party in which

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the book the sense of the time and the environment in which the author lived remained." Lajčiak.I am grateful to Luděk Němec for the translation from Slovak.

[324] Lajčiak.

[325] See: Dušan Kováč, *Szlovákia története*, 2nd ed. (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2011). Marián Hronský and Martin C. Styan, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon 1918-1920*, 1st ed. in English lang (Bratislava: VEDA, 2001).

[326] "...in the initial stages of national development regional inequality is likely to increase all the more sharply due to a number of disequilibrating effects," such as labor migration, capital migration, central government policy, interregional linkages Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Regional Inequality and the Process of National Development: A Description of the Patterns," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 13, no. 4, Part 2 (July 1965): 5, https://doi.org/10.1086/450136.

[327] Agnes Poitschek greatly helped me in the review of the newspaper. I am grateful for her translations of the excerpts from the journal.

Czechs enjoyed autonomy. After Němec's address, the attendees decided to support independence: financial and organizational separation from the central party. However, due to their lack of financial resources and organizational experience, the independent Slovak Section had to rejoin the SDPH after a year.

Was Slovak self-government (*spravovať sám seba*) within the party and as a national policy a goal *per se* or an intermediary step towards either assimilation or independent statehood? By analyzing the discourse of Magyar and Slovak workers' newspapers and the protocols of the party assemblies, I intend to shed light on why a compromise between the party leadership and the Slovak workers' representatives failed. To understand the problem of continuous misunderstanding between the central party and the representatives of the Slovak workers, I invoke the theory of political translation.[328] This chapter argues that the workers' movement in Hungary was not free from the competing discourse of the (Czecho)Slovak and Magyar national movements. The historical characteristics of the Slovak and Magyar consciousness entered the social democratic movement, in parallel to the idea of internationalism. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, I will briefly present some significant components of the modern Slovak national consciousness. In the second part, I will elaborate on the discourse of self-government in the Slovak section of the SDPH and explore the causes of misunderstandings between the Magyar and Slovak Social Democrats. In doing so, I will highlight the traces of the "bourgeois" nation-building narrative on both the Slovak and Magyar sides.

The international literature considers the social movement in Hungary negligible compared to the Austrian movement, which had broader social support and developed a national theory of its own, challenging the "naïve cosmopolitism" of the Second International. Furthermore, the activity of the Slovak social democratic movement in the Kingdom of Hungary has not received as much scholarly attention as the Czech movement in Austria. Still, there are four main trends in the literature on the Slovak social democratic movement. First, Hungarian national historiography often fails to be adequately critical of Magyar nationalism and supremacy after the *Ausgleich*. It adopts the narrative of the nation-builders of the time with regard to the pan-Slavism of the Slovaks. Second, the Leninist-Stalinist historiography in Hungary and Czechoslovakia,

[328] Doerr, "Between Habermas and Rancière: The Democracy of Political Translation."

which is otherwise rich and informative, assessed the social democratic movement retrospectively based on Stalin's ideas on nationality.[329] Third, (Czecho)Slovak nationalist historiography evaluated the Slovak social democratic movement based on its contribution to independent statehood.[330] The fourth historiographic tradition is more analytical and breaks away from explanations that interpret every historical event in light of the opposition between the bourgeois and proletarian or national struggles.[331] But even this analytical approach is not free of teleological reasoning. This recent narrative dismantles the complex causal relations between the state, social democracy, and nationality. The present study aims at contributing to the fourth type of historiographic tradition.

5.2. The Slovak Land, its People, and their Theorists

Present-day Slovakia was the northern part of historical Hungary referred to as Upper Hungary or Slovak Land (*Felvidék* / *Horná zem* / *Zem slovenská*). The north of Hungary was one of the most compact ethnic regions of the dualist Kingdom of Hungary. The region was home to 80 percent of the Slovak population in Hungary, while 20 percent of Slovaks lived in enclaves or industrial centers, mainly around Budapest. In 1903, the Czech ethnographer L'ubomir Niederle published the first ethnic map of the Slovak Land. In Upper Hungary, Slovaks were in the majority of ten counties. As the Slovak territory did not constitute a separate administrative unit, literature generally identifies it with sixteen counties where Slovaks constituted at least 20 percent of the population. These counties were: Trencsén / Trenčín, Árva / Orava, Túróc / Turiec. Zólyom / Zvolen, Liptó

[329] See for example the analysis of socialist responses to the nationality question in: "Nobody, not even in the leadership of the Slovak Social Democracy, came to a progressive Marxist understanding of the question of national equality and proletarian internationalism in Hungary at this time. Its policy was far removed from the views of V. I. Lenin." Frano Ruttkay, *Robotnícka žurnalistika v sociálnom a národnom hnutí Slovákov: (1897 - 1918)* (Martin: Matica Slovenská, 1980). 185. Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*.; Ladislav Tajták, "Vývoj robotníckeho hnutia na Slovensku na začiatku 20. storočia," *Historický časopis* 29, no. 6 (1981): 828–86. Ladislav Tajták, "Vznik oblastných organizácií Sociálnodemokratickej strany Uhorska na Slovensku a jej organizačný vývin," *Historický časopis* 34, no. 6 (1986): 851–84. Ladislav Tajták, "K otázke ľavicovej opozície v uhorskej a slovenskej sociálnej demokracii a vzniku tzv. Hornouhorskej sociálnodemokratickej strany," *Historický časopis* 38, no. 4 (1988): 561–95. Pavel Hapák, "K niektorým problémom dejín robotníckeho hnutia na Slovensku do roku 1918," *Historický časopis* 37, no. 4 (1989): 515—530. Stanislav Sikora, Viliam S. Hotár, and Karol Fremal, *Kapitoly z dejín sociálnej demokracie na Slovensku*, 1. vyd (Bratislava: T.R.I. Médium, 1996). I am grateful to Luděk Němec, who helped me gain a better understanding of the Slovak literature.
[330] van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*.
[331] See for example the books and articles by László Szarka.

/ Liptov, Szepes / Spiš / Zips, Sáros / Šariš, Pozsony / Pressburg, Nyitra / Nitra, Bars / Tekov, Hont, Nógrád / Novohrad, Gömör / Gemer, Abaúj-Torna / Abovsko-turnianska župa, Zemplén / Zemplín, and Ung / Užská župa.[332]

In 1910, 51 percent of the population in the sixteen counties mentioned above spoke Slovak as their mother tongue. The statistics of the time asked for the mother tongue—the contemporary indicator of nationality. In 1910, Slovak speakers comprised 10.7 percent of Hungary's population (Croatia and Fiume excepted).[333] The numbers from 1910 show a significant decrease compared to the previous decades: in 1850, 20 percent of the people of Hungary spoke Slovak; thirty years later, 13.5 percent did.[334] Since then, historians have tried to find an explanation for the significant decrease in the proportion of Slovaks. Contemporaries often argued that the Hungarian government economically oppressed Slovak territories compared to the regions inhabited by Magyars.[335] But it was common sense in the nineteenth century that the process of creating a unitary state inevitably entailed increased control which the nationalities interpreted as the forced imposition of the dominant culture. The historian László Szarka claims that although Slovak nation-builders and publicists were well aware of these processes, they also interpreted their vulnerability and defenselessness as a consequence of political decisions and forced Magyarization.[336]

Urbanization and migration brought about the spread of the dominant culture. The standardization of measurement units did not typically provoke reactions as intense and politicized as those to the standardization of state language. That higher culture was available in the language of the dominant nation often meant that those belonging to the nationalities acculturated. Consequently, industrialization indirectly led to Magyarization. But it would be an exaggeration to say that the government positioned the industrial facilities with the direct intention of Magyarization. Industry routinely

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[332] László Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés - magyar nemzetiségi politika. 1867-1918.* (Pozsony: Kalligram Könyvkiadó, 1995), 48. See also: László Katus, "Über die wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen der Nationalitätenfrage in Ungarn vor dem ersten Weltkrieg.," in *Die nationale Frage in der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie : 1900 - 1918* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966), 149–216.
[333] Gyáni and Kövér, *Magyarország társadalomtörténete*, 134.
[334] However, it should be noted here that the 1851 and 1880 censuses used different methods. The 1851 census asked about nationality while the 1880 census asked about language. In the 1850 data, it is not clear whether Transylvania was included, as Transylvania was still a separate crown province at that time. Gyáni and Kövér, 133.
[335] Ábrahám, *Megmaradni vagy beolvadni?*, 81.
[336] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 67.

flourished along the transversal railway line, which was also an ethnic contact zone. At the same time, industrial facilities in the north of the territory inhabited by Slovaks were closing and skilled labor was migrating to this linguistically diverse area.[337]

About 40 percent of the Slovaks of Hungary lived in urban areas by 1910.[338] Statistical data on bilingualism can show us the assimilatory potential of industrialization. The proportion of bilingual Slovaks was 20 percent, but there was a significant difference between urban and rural populations in this respect. In urban areas, the share of bilinguals increased from 27 percent to 49 percent between 1880 and 1910. The number of Magyars also rose strongly in the industrial regions due to the influx of Magyar and Magyarized Jewish workers. In contrast, among farmers, the proportion of people who mastered more than one language increased only by four percent between 1880 and 1910, when it reached 14 percent. Consequently, in Upper Hungary, the proportion of Magyars in cities increased by 16 percent and in rural areas by 2 percent. Yet it would be impossible to estimate what share of these figures represents acculturation and what share internal migration. Scholars estimate the number of acculturated Slovaks at 400,000 between 1880 and WWI.[339]

Recent studies have looked deeper into the relationship between industrialization and Magyarization in the late nineteenth century to question the narrative that claims that the state consciously oppressed and exploited economically the regions inhabited by non-Magyars.[340] The study of Gábor Demeter and his colleagues used tools in geoinformatics to combine a complex set of variables such as literacy rate, migration rate, health conditions, quality of houses, infant mortality, the number of industrial earners, distance from railway, doctor, and notary, etc. to detect the causes of economic deprivation more accurately.[341] While government-developed industrial policies and Magyar chauvinism

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[337] Based on verbal information from Gábor Demeter.
[338] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 54–55.
[339] By comparison, the number of Magyarized Jews was 700,000, while the number of Germans was 800,000. Szarka, 65-66.
[340] While some territories inhabited by the nationalities did indeed enjoy the benefits of modernity in a lower degree, some regions dominated by Magyars were also among the backward areas. At the same time, some regions dominated by the nationalities were among the more developed areas. Gábor Demeter, "Estimating Regional Inequalities in the Carpathian Basin - Historical Origins and Recent Outcomes (1880-2010)," *Regional Statistics* 10, no. 1 (2020): 18; 27. https://doi.org/10.15196/RS100105.
[341] This was possible based on the inputs collected for the 1910 census that included data broke down to the level of the 439 subcounty units (processus/Stuhlbezirk/járás) from which Demeter and his colleagues build a digital database.

were significant, systematic regional planning was typically absent in the late nineteenth century. Political thinkers at the fin-de-siècle interpreted regional inequalities as the natural consequences of labor division within a country. The Hungarian government was not innocent in making it difficult to set up industrial companies with Slovak interests.[342] Also, by keeping the land lease, the Magyar national movement sought to strengthen its regional position.[343] But it is equally important to consider an idea that many early twentieth-century Marxist thinkers and present-day scholars endorse: inequalities within social classes and regions usually increased in the early phase of capitalism. Modernization and Magyarization went hand in hand. The amalgamation of Magyarization and modernization could have led to both anti-modernist and nationalist reactions with anti-state overtones.

Thus, what was the answer that Slovak nation-builders gave to the question of modernization? Slovak historians, demographers, and economists in the nineteenth century recognized the need for modernization and economic rationalization to develop a Slovak national economy—which contemporaries considered a vital constituent of the modern nation—and offer a viable alternative to mass migration to America.[344] Yet nationalism often opposed modernization since to achieve social mobility, one had to sacrifice national aspirations. The traditional image of the authentic Slovak was still the agricultural worker. The migration of smallholders and landless people decreased the number of Slovaks in the region. At the same time, the cooperative movement activated the Slovak peasantry for national consciousness.[345] From the very beginning, the Slovak national movement imagined the nation territorially. This would have meant Hungary's decentralization and federal reorganization, in which Slovaks would be granted an autonomous region within Hungary called "Slovensko" or "Tatransko."[346] Territorial autonomy, however, did not mean separate statehood but often flirted with the idea of a Slavic brotherhood within the Habsburg Monarchy to counterbalance Pan-German ambitions. The Slovak national movement also aimed for the recognition of their

[342] Ábrahám, *Megmaradni vagy beolvadni?*, 47–48.
[343] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 56-57.
[344] Between 1900–1913, 387,472 Slovaks migrated to America. Ábrahám, *Megmaradni vagy beolvadni?*, 92.
[345] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 56–57.
[346] For example, the program *Žiadosti uhorských Slovákov a Rusínov* conceived by J. M. Hurban at the Slavonic Congress in Prague in June 1848 or the 1861 *Memorandum národa slovenského* expressed such desires.

"national individuality," that is, equal civic rights, the use of Slovak in public affairs and higher education, and equal representation in public institutions.[347] Lacking past statehood, Slovaks supported their demands based on natural law, their primacy on the Slovak territory, and economic arguments.

5.3. The Historical Characteristics of the Slovak National Movement at the Fin-de-Siècle

The criteria for a community to become a nation were controversial in the second half of the nineteenth century. When trying to prove the viability of their national existence, groups invoked various evidence: history and former statehood, constitutional arguments, and territorial and economic justifications. These lines of argument were deeply rooted in the nineteenth-century idea of progress and Social Darwinism.[348] Moreover, until the Paris Peace Treaties, international law acknowledged only state actors as international agents.[349] Former statehood was the necessary condition for autonomy rights. This subchapter will briefly review the key constituent elements of Slovak national consciousness that are relevant to this chapter. Below, my focus is strictly limited to those elements necessary for understanding the autonomy struggles of the Slovak Social Democrats.

The historian László Szarka claims that by the mid-nineteenth century, Slovaks had established the preconditions for modern national existence.[350] The leading promoter of this was Ľudovít Štúr, the most prominent figure of the Slovak national movement. The potential nation-builders—the nobility and the secular intelligentsia—were the most Magyarized of all social classes. Therefore, the church played an important role in shaping the Slovak national discourse. The secular Slovak intelligentsia was made up of the so-called *Národovci* and *Magyaróni* camps. Ján Lajčiak had called the former "pure Slovaks" and the latter "Slovak *Magyaróns*." The church offered conservative and anti-

[347] Kemény G., *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korában*, 28–35.
[348] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 26–42. In German: Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*.
[349] Palacký, too, recognized this in his 1865 opus, *The idea of the Austrian State*: "…the law between states and the law between nations were for centuries considered, and are for the most part still considered, identical", even though state and nation no longer overlapped in the nineteenth century. František Palacký, "The Idea of the Austrian State," in *Modernism*, ed. Ahmet Ersoy, Maciej Górny, and Vangelis Kechriotis (Central European University Press, 2010), 28, https://doi.org/10.1515/9786155211935-002.
[350] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 8.

modernist elements in the nation-building discourse.[351] Consequently, traditional Christian values and agriculture became essential elements of the Slovak national discourse in the nineteenth century. The church organized elementary education in the Slovak language. It was more difficult for the church to organize schooling in Slovak since Slovaks belonged to the Catholic and Lutheran Churches, but these denominations included several language groups. Roman Catholic Slovaks made up 15 percent of all Catholics in Hungary, and Slovak Lutherans 34 percent of all Lutherans. Thus, unlike Romanians and Serbs, Slovaks did not have an ecclesiastical autonomy in which the boundaries of the language and confession would coincide. In the period of dualism, Slovak-language education gradually declined. Since there was no Slovak-language higher education in Hungary, Slovaks held less than 15 percent of the 140,000 intellectual jobs in the sixteen counties they inhabited.[352]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the views of national and socialist intellectuals gradually converged. Secular Slovak intellectuals found it difficult to obtain jobs in the state administration, especially without becoming "Magyars in their souls and hearts." Hence, modernizing the Slovak Land was a shared interest of the intelligentsia and the Slovak workers' movement because modernization meant new jobs. Despite the rootlessness of socialist ideas, modernization resonated with the nineteenth-century narrative of the Slovak intelligentsia that positioned itself as the more "polished" version of the Slovak *Volk*. Consequently, the Slovak "bourgeois" intelligentsia gravitated toward industrial and agricultural workers, not least to obtain mass support for their claims of democratic and national rights.[353] Naturally, it was not acceptable to the leaders of the workers' movement that the leaders of the civic national movement appropriated socialist slogans for their own ends. At first, the social democratic press was critical of the Slovak National Party and its program. The workers' movement also considered itself the only true representative of the Slovak nation with a progressive agenda from which all classes of the Slovak nation would benefit.[354]

However, unlike in Southern Hungary, the Slovak national and socialist movements

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[351] Barna Ábrahám, "„Nationalreligionen" in Ungarn Im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Cirkvi a Národy Strednej Európy (1800 - 1950)* (Wien, 2008), 75-.
[352] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 61–64.
[353] Imre Polányi, "A szlovák szociáldemokrata nacionalizmusának és szeparatista törekvéseinek gyökereiről a századfordulón," *A Szegedi Tanárképző Főiskola tudományos közleményei*, no. 1 (1963): 214–15.
[354] Frank Kablík, "Je to pravda?," *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, May 1905.

were largely limited to the intellectual elite and had a narrow base. Therefore, not only the social democratic but also the national movement lacked a broad local support base.[355] The socialist movement in the Habsburg Monarchy was not free from conflicting national aspirations. I elaborated above on the modernization of Upper Hungary because contemporaries often read the internal migration of labor that followed the industrialization process as deliberate Magyarization. It was thus in the interests of the nation-builders to appeal to Slovak workers and activate their feeling of national belonging. Slovak intellectuals became interested in the social question to expand their social base. The Slovak nation-builder and journalist, the future prime minister of Czechoslovakia, Milan Hodža, argued that Slovak national politicians needed to integrate the socialists' progressive program to emancipate the masses in their political agenda but leave out class struggle.[356] All the more so, Hodža continued, because a small nation like the Slovak nation could not afford inner schisms.[357] At the same time, Slovak nation-builders saw socialism as a "foreign" ideology not rooted in the local culture.[358] Therefore, Hodža argued, Slovaks did not need class struggle but solidarity and cohesion. He concluded that the idea of internationalism that aims to overshadow the nation would not serve the national cause.

In 1909, Oszkár Jászi collected data on the study of the nationality question from local reporters. In *Huszadik Század*, he published a report from Liptó/Liptov county (present-day Slovakia) from the pen of an "economically independent Slovak gentleman who is far-removed from practical politics."[359] The gentleman noted that nationalities had no voice in municipal and county life, the administrative personnel addressed them informally (*tegezi*), and they had no representation. In court hearings, the judge would not understand the parties, the parties would not understand the judge, and the interpreter would be an incompetent clerk, he continued.[360] Half the judges were trying to learn

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[355] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 78–91.
[356] The Social Democrats also realized that nation-builders (mis)appropriated socialist ideas. "Even the leaders of the national movement, if they want to achieve a positive result, must adapt their policies to the proletarian social democratic policy." Borecký, "Národnostná politika v Uhorsku," *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, May 1908.
[357] Milan Hodža, "Slovensky socialisti v rozpakoch," *Slovenský týždenník*, May 1, 1906. Cited in: Ábrahám, *Megmaradni vagy beolvadni?*, 173.
[358] Svetozar Hurban Vajanský, "Socialismus v Slavianstve," *Národnie noviny*, January 28, 1882. Cited in: Ábrahám, *Megmaradni vagy beolvadni?*, 172–73.
[359] Oszkár Jászi, "Adatok a nemzetiségi kérdéshez," *Huszadik Század* 10, no. 1 (1909): 76.
[360] Jászi, 76.

Slovak; the other half did not care. He concluded that poor Romanians and Slovaks generally did not migrate to Romania and the Czech lands but to America. The gentleman also reassured Jászi that there was no gravitation outwards, "The Slovak people do not yet have a concept of national solidarity."[361] Ordinary people did not blame Magyarization and the proceedings against the Slovaks on the Magyars but on "the lords," the majority of whom happened to be Magyars. Since there was no education in their mother tongue, Slovaks learned to read either from the nationalistic press or in America, Jászi's informant reported. Contemporaneous data shows that in 1910, the illiteracy rate in county Liptó/Liptov was 7 percent, a figure that somewhat dampens the dramatic edge of the report.[362] He also noted that socialism was taking hold among the nationalities.[363]

Slovak demands, however, did not coincide with the perception of the Hungarian legislature, which would not give up on state unity, the crown principle, and administrative integrity.[364] Moreover, Magyar political interest has often been mistaken for state interest.[365] These priorities were visible in the debates preceding the Nationality Act in 1868, which codified nationality rights as individual rights. The liberal ethos of the time justified the preference for individual national rights. However, as László Szarka rightly pointed out, this logic disregarded the tradition of a Magyar sense of supremacy. Individual nationality rights might work in a democratic setting with a more balanced relationship between the nationalities. In Hungary, however, there was a dominant nation.[366] The Hungarian government used the alleged Pan-Slavism of Slovak-speaking intellectuals to keep them out of public service and dissolve their cultural institutions. After the turn of the century, Slovaks who were loyal to the Hungarian state ideology argued that it would be in the interest of Hungary to strengthen the independent Slovak

[361] Jászi, 76.
[362] T. Kiss Tamás, "Az analfabetizmus: a dualizmus kori Magyarország kulturális/politikai problémája," in *Kultúrkapuk*, by T. Kiss Tamás and Tibori Timea (Szeged, Hungary: Belvedere Meridionale, 2013), 42, https://doi.org/10.14232/belvbook.2013.58503.a.
[363] Jászi, "Adatok a nemzetiségi kérdéshez," 76.
[364] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 19.
[365] Szarka, 21.
[366] This was, of course, true not just for Hungary but also for Austria: "In Austria, for example, the Germans never felt ethnic oppression (národnostného útisku) and always considered themselves as the ruling nation (národ vládnúci). It is natural that this opinion, which has been implanted in the minds of the people from their earliest youth, should also leave its mark on the thinking of the German Social Democrats in Austria, so that they regard themselves as the only called leaders of Social Democracy in Austria (...)""Národnosť a medzinárodnosť," *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, 1907, sec. 2., 211-212.

national identity amidst "Czech irredentism."[367] Instead, the Hungarian state pursued a somewhat restrictive and discriminatory policy and hesitated to enforce the 1868 law.[368]

The Slovak civic national movement imagined the future of the Slovak nation as an autonomous territory within Hungary. But the national movement was characterized by passivity and resistance, at least until the turn of the century. The fact that Hungarian politicians regarded the leaders of the Slovak national movement as a problem of law and order made it unnecessary for Slovak leaders to formulate a realistic program. The historian József Demmel observed that the Hungarian government and the Slovak national movement provoked each other instead of seeking a compromise.[369] Therefore, the Slovak national movement did not present ideas of cultural self-government, nor were there any attempts at compromise like that in Moravia between the Czechs and Germans. There was no movement for the separation of institutions along national lines. The assimilation and cultural oppression experienced in everyday life, the narrative of deliberate economic oppression of the Slovak territory, and the blocking of social advancement for Slovaks had created resentments in the Slovak population that were difficult to overcome. The government feared national separatist movements threatening the country's integrity and Magyar supremacy. As we shall see, these grievances also seeped into the labor movement. Under these circumstances, the national and workers' movement turned to their Czech brothers for help. A Czech comrade took the lead in organizing the proletarians.

5.4. The Autonomy of 3,166 Slovak Workers

A thorough knowledge of the socio-political circumstances is indispensable for a fair interpretation of Slovak aspirations for self-determination. Did Slovak workers' leaders want to separate from the central party because it denied the equality of the Slovak movement and language? If so, did they consider the fact that the Slovak workers'

[367] László Szarka, "A szlovák kérdés a magyar kormány nemzetiségpolitikájában 1906–1918," *Történelmi Szemle* 35, no. 1–2 (1993): 59–77.; László Szarka, ed., *Párhuzamos nemzetépítés, konfliktusos együttélés: birodalmak és nemzetállamok a közép-európai régióban (1848-1938)*, Tudományos Konferenciák Az Országházban (Budapest: Országház Könyvkiadó, 2017).
[368] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 16–36.
[369] József Demmel, *A szlovák nemzet születése: Ľudovít Štúr és a szlovák társadalom a 19. századi Magyarországon* (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2011), 300.

movement lacked support and resources? Was Czech influence the prime mover? This chapter argues that the Slovak Section's desire for self-determination and federalization, while legitimate, was not realistic given the circumstances of the time. On the one hand, the Slovak party was unprepared to run the party organization independently and withdrew into the SDPH after a year. On the other hand, the party's organization depended heavily on Czech moral and financial support. Like in the context of the national struggles, the Hungarian and Slovak Social Democrats' positions became entrenched: the Slovaks demanded an equal distribution of power, but as their concrete demands were unrealistic, the Hungarian party leadership did not take them seriously. The party's extraordinary meeting in October 1918, when the nationalities and the Hungarians renegotiated the solution to the nationality question in the changed power relations, offers an excellent view of how the two sides actually understood each other all along. At that time, the Hungarians were already willing to share power more fairly. The Slovaks could agree to this, knowing that power was no longer in the hands of the Hungarians.

The beginnings of the Slovak worker's movement in Hungary: "…no room for the nationality question"[370]

In the Slovak counties, modern ideas infiltrated industrial and agricultural workers rather slowly.[371] The basis of both the national and socialist movements was recruited from the vicinity of industrialized towns.[372] Since Slovak socialists and nation-builders were mostly active in Pest and Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg, they lacked contact with most of the population.[373] This explains why on the territory of present-day Slovakia, the SDPH counted only 3,166 members.[374] Having said that, in the empire Budapest had the largest ethnic Slovak population due to the rapid industrialization of the city and significant labor

[370] "A karácsonyi munka. A nyugatmagyarországi szociáldemokrata párt kerületi értekezlete.," *Népszava* 36, no. 3 (March 1, 1908): 8.
[371] Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, 127.
[372] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 75.
[373] Peter Bugge, "The Making of a Slovak City: The Czechoslovak Renaming of Pressburg/Pozsony/Prešporok, 1918–19," *Austrian History Yearbook* 35 (January 2004): 210, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237800020993.
[374] Polányi, "A szlovák szociáldemokrata nacionalizmusának és szeparatista törekvéseinek gyökereiről a századfordulón," 220–21.

migration. Accordingly, Budapest became the center of the Slovak worker's movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. Like other industrial centers, Budapest did not guarantee the long-term preservation of the national identity. Surprisingly but logically, Budapest was also the birthplace of the Slovak political press. The capital was home to two Slovak publishing houses.[375]

The first workers' union in which Slovaks participated was founded in Budapest under the name the First Czech Workers' Union. The Slovak members split off from the Union in 1880. At the 1897 Congress of the SDPH, the Slovak workers of Budapest voiced their need for a Workers' Society of their own. The party had always debated establishing and maintaining a Slovak workers' daily newspaper. The debate was not about the need for a Slovak newspaper but about who would finance the venture. In 1896, Czech and Slovak workers launched *Nova Doba* (*New Age*). But the newspaper soon became the mouthpiece of the Hlasists, pro-Czech intellectuals who edited the journal *Hlas* (*Voice*). *Nova Doba* closed in July 1899, which the editors attributed to the Hungarian party's lack of interest in a Slovak-language newspaper.[376] Given the constant oppression that Slovaks experienced in public life, there are three other causes worth considering. The newspaper may have failed, first, due to the high illiteracy among Slovak workers. Second, the newspaper did not have qualified writers among its editors and collaborators.[377] The third possible cause is the uncertainty and timidity of Slovak workers when it came to using their language. In 1905, the more successful *Slovenské Robotnícke Noviny* put the Slovaks' hesitation to use their language this way: "a large part of the Slovak industrial workers is almost semi-Magyar and is ashamed to take a Slovak newspaper in hand."[378]

It was only after 1900 that the center of the Slovak labor movement moved to Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg.[379] The proximity of Vienna enabled stronger Czech-Slovak solidarity based on shared class and national interests.[380] These activities clearly did not target Czechoslovak independence. Czechoslovakist ideas were marginal in

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[375] Between 1848-1918 around 60 journals and newspapers have been published in Slovak language; from 1900 to 1918, 470 Slovak books appeared in Budapest. Ábrahám, *Megmaradni vagy beolvadni?*, 277–78.
[376] 25/05/2023 09*:02:00*
[377] Ruttkay, *Robotnícka žurnalistika v sociálnom a národnom hnutí Slovákov: (1897 - 1918)*, 175–76.
[378] "Ku novému roku," *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, January 1905, 21.
[379] Polányi, "A szlovák szociáldemokrata nacionalizmusának és szeparatista törekvéseinek gyökereiről a századfordulón," 231.
[380] van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, 132–34.

Czech political struggles in Austria.[381] But closer cooperation between the two "branches," their administrative unity, a critique of dualism, and advocacy for federalism had always been present in the discourse of the Czech and Slovak labor movements.[382] The Czecho-Slav Social Democratic Workers' Party was founded in 1878 within the Austrian Party. From 1893, it had autonomous status. The Czechs advocated for the federal transformation of the Austrian worker's party along ethnic lines. The federalization program was accepted in 1897. With the federal restructuring of the party, the nationality issue was resolved from a party organizational point of view. The next step was the empire-wide solution to the problem, which was on the agenda of the party congress in Brno/Brünn in 1899.

In Chapter I/3, I presented the structure of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary, which shared similarities with the Austrian Worker's Party in form but differed from it in many crucial aspects. The leaders of the SDPH believed that the nationality question should not prevail over the objectives of creating a mass party and winning the electoral struggle. General suffrage could equally give voice to Magyar and non-Magyar workers in Hungary—individually. Only after these goals had been achieved was the central party willing to think about inner federalization. Until then, multilingual propaganda served the interests of a solid central party to a sufficient extent. Both the leadership of the central party and the Slovak Social Democrats imagined social and national emancipation emerging hand in hand, but with different emphases. The central party's leadership emphasized workers' shared interests in obtaining general suffrage, irrespective of their nationality while the Slovaks underlined the primacy of national demands and the right to national autonomy.

The historian Pieter C. van Duin, who dedicated a monograph to the Slovak Social Democrats in late Habsburg Hungary, claimed that the Slovak movement had three main characteristics. First, the importance of Czech support; second, the emphasis on patriotism; third, gravitation towards the national movement.[383] The author's approach is

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[381] Even Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk considered the Czechoslovak solution as one of the many options to secure Czech national independence. Hollý, "Czechoslovakist Arguments at the Turn of the Twentieth Century 1," 102.

[382] Michal Kopeček, "Czechoslovakism: The Concept's Blurry History," in *Czechoslovakism*, by Adam Hudek, Michal Kopeček, and Jan Mervart, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2021), 5, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003205234-101.

[383] van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, 133.

not free from teleology when he emphasizes nationalism and Czech influence and sympathy—as if the Slovak workers' movement *ab ovo* tended towards Czechoslovak national unity. Indeed, thanks to the Czech influence, the leaders of the Slovak labor movement were familiar with the Austromarxist narrative.[384] Socialists were also hesitant to cooperate with the Slovak National Party and saw the church as a rival.[385] There are, however, two equally important characteristics of Slovak social democracy that I would like to add to van Duin's list: first, the small number of organized workers; second, the belated modernization of Upper Hungary. These two characteristics are essentially the result of the specificity of the Slovak national movement and modernization, which I discussed in subchapters I/5.2 and I/5.3.

In the Dual Monarchy, amid constant quarrels between opposing national interests, internationalism was a difficult principle to implement. Slovak Social Democrats were no exception. Among the Slovaks of Hungary, historians observed a parallel process of acculturation and national awakening in the second half of the nineteenth century. "Whereas we understand the high importance of preserving the peculiarity of each nation, we must not forget that the development of science and technology is now pushing all boundaries and enclosures so that, as a result, our economic, political and spiritual life has become increasingly international," wrote *Slovenské robotnícké noviny*, the Slovak workers' mouthpiece.[386] But the social democratic journal also pointed out the urban-rural divide in the effects of modern development: "from the fact that some Slovaks in the capital are Magyarized, one cannot conclude that this will happen to all Slovaks, about three million people in the Slovak countryside."[387] The newspaper was concerned of the effects of "violent nationalization" and emigration. They rejected the accusation that social democracy contributed to denationalization (*odnárodnovať*) and national indifference (*národnostní indiferentism*), the greatest danger for every nation.[388] The

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[384] Deák, Ágnes. "Anticipating Slovakia." *Books - Budapest Review of Books - English Edition*. Budapesti Könyvszemle Alapítvány, 1996.
[385] In 1905, the newspaper *Slovenské robotnícke noviny* put its position towards the Slovak National Party as follows: "… this [refusing to support the Slovak National Party] is a Magyaróni view that condemns everything that is Slovak. Well, no! (…) We want powerful national parties which work towards an honest goal by honest means. Such a party would seek not only ethnic struggles and hatreds to settle but to lift a nation as a whole, both from spiritual and homogeneous servitude. The national party that works for a good decisive and progressive program for its nation is identical with the socialist party." Kablík, "Je to pravda?" 51. See also: "Náš parlament." *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, June 1905.
[386] "Národnosť a medzinárodnosť.." 211-212.
[387] Matej Kováč, "Pár slov k maďarským súdruhom." *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, 1906, sec. 3, 122.
[388] Borecký, "Národnostná politika v Uhorsku."

changes that industrialization brought about were not unique to the Habsburg Monarchy. They were also true for other parts of Europe.[389]

In September 1906, the Slovak labor movement and workers' press won over the Czech Edmund Borek, an experienced journalist from Vienna interested in the Slovak national and social question. Borek had grown up in Kyjov, in southern Moravia (Moravian Slovakia), so he had no difficulty in quickly mastering the Slovak literary language. Already in Vienna, Borek was actively organizing the Slovak workers for the trade union and social democratic movement. In 1905, when the Social Democratic Party in Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg was proclaimed, he hailed it in the newspaper *Dělnické listy* (*Workers' Journal*): "We, the Czechs, are most interested in instilling in the Slovaks the teachings which we too have adopted as our own. They need to be organized to defend themselves against brutal and foreign exploiters. Moreover, we are equally interested in the Slovak proletariat becoming an essential player in the political struggle and the struggles directed towards national independence (*narodnostné osamostatnenie*)."[390] From 1906 to 1915, he edited the Slovak social democratic newspapers *Slovenské robotnícke noviny* and *Napred* (*Forward*) under the pseudonym Prokop Stupavsky and the supplement *Slovenský máj* (*Slovak May*) as Jan Chrobacinsky. He also actively organized the Slovak workers in Budapest in the 1910s. Borek was raised ideologically in the spirit of the Second International, knew Renner and Bauer, and was familiar with their writings. The articles criticizing the church and popularizing the foundations of Marxist philosophy were also mainly from his pen. He translated the central party's provisions on national equality and held the party leadership accountable for their consistent implementation. But in his journalistic work, he did not formulate a detailed nationality program.[391]

[389] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 75.
[390] Ruttkay, *Robotnícka žurnalistika v sociálnom a národnom hnutí Slovákov: (1897 - 1918)*, 178.
[391] Ruttkay, 175–86.

"We never trusted them before, we do not trust them now, and we will not trust them until they treat us as internationality requires"[392]

The conflicts between the Magyar leadership of the party and the Slovak socialists started around 1901. The leaders of the Slovak workers pushed for trilingual party administration (Magyar, German, and Slovak) and more prominence for the Slovak language.[393] Emanuel Lehocký suggested separating the workers along linguistic lines, echoing the Austrian party structure. Lehocký was a key figure of the Slovak social democratic movement. He worked as a tailor in Budapest and joined the SDPH. In 1896, he moved to Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg. He was the head of the Slovak Executive Committee until 1918. The central party clearly rejected his demand. For the SDPH leadership, the main question was whether the organization of non-Magyar workers was a profitable enterprise that the central party should undertake. Some party delegates argued that illiterate non-Magyar workers should be excluded from the movement.[394] Orators in the periphery were subject to physical attacks when they held popular assemblies. Taking up agitation among non-Magyar workers and making concessions to organize them often meant leaving the scope of legal action. But entering the field of illegality could have compromised the party's political ambitions.[395] Others wanted to educate and integrate workers belonging to the nationalities, irrespective of the high costs. They argued that organizing non-Magyar workers would be a more solid basis for the movement than collaborating with "bourgeois parties."

I have argued that the internal debates of the Social Democratic Party adopted reflexes of the so-called bourgeois national movement. Much like the way the Hungarian government identified the interests of the dominant Magyar nation with the interests of the country, the Social Democratic Party's leadership identified the interests of Magyar workers with the interests of the party. "We, the Slovak Social Democrats, say that everything they (*the SDPH*) did was done 'at home,' that is, they limited their activities to the Magyar labor force only."[396] The party leadership's attitude was perfectly in line

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[392] "Úvahy pred sjazdom. Pozor na zadnie kolesa," *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, 1906, sec. 3.
[393] *Jelentés a Budapest fő- és székvárosi állami rendőrség 1901. évi működéséről* (Budapest, 1902), 313–73.; Polányi, "A szlovák szociáldemokrata nacionalizmusának és szeparatista törekvéseinek gyökereiről a századfordulón," 226–27.
[394] *MSZMM 1905*, 247–48.
[395] Weltner, *MSZMM 1905*, 235.
[396] "Úvahy pred sjazdom. Pozor na zadnie kolesa."

with the spirit of the Second International. In practice, however, it provoked reflexes of passivity, resistance, isolation, and approximation to the Czechoslovak national ideology in the leaders of the Slovak workers: "Our Hungarian comrades have not felt in their own flesh what national oppression is. No wonder, then, that they, too, look jealously at every movement that intends to liven up non-Magyar workers in Hungary and that they see this movement as a national movement."[397]

The issue of agitation in the people's language was also continuously present in the press and at party congresses. Establishing a Slovak workers' newspaper had been a topic at almost every annual congress since the turn of the century. In 1903, the Construction Workers Union, which had many Slovak members, supported the launch of a Slovak newspaper called *Staviteľský robotník* (*Construction Worker*). The paper was published at irregular intervals. Popular assemblies and verbal education were also crucial because many workers were illiterate. Sometimes, even when orators sent from the central party to Upper Hungary mastered Slovak, they did not speak the local dialect, the people's language.[398]

In 1905, after the so-called executive committees or nationalities' sections had been established, the leadership attempted a reorganization of the party based on these new organizational units. The breakdown of the party into national administrative units was reminiscent of the internal structure of the Austrian Labor Party. However, there was no Magyar executive committee in the SDPH. Antonín Němec attended the annual meeting of the Hungarian Social Democrats on behalf of the Czech party and called for a complete organizational separation of the Slovaks in the party.[399] The Executive Committee for the Organization of Slovak Workers, or the Slovak section, was promised that *Népszava* would have a Slovak supplement. Still, since the support required to launch the Slovak supplement kept getting delayed, the editors turned to the Czech workers in Lower Austria for help and the monthly *Slovenské robotnícke noviny* was established. The paper was printed in Vienna. *Napred* (1906) and *Robotnícke noviny* (*Workers' Newspaper*) (1909) were two other newspapers that also appeared with financial support from the

[397] "Národnosť a medzinárodnosť," 211–12.
[398] *MSZMM 1905*, 282.
[399] Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 58.

Czech workers' movement.[400] The editor was officially Emanuel Lehocký, but the mastermind behind the newspapers was Edmund Borek, mentioned above.

What can we learn from the negotiations between the leadership of the central party, the Slovak workers' leaders, and the representatives of the Czech Social Democrats who saw in Slovak workers "our very own body and blood"?[401] In June 1905, for the first time, Slovaks workers gathered separately. They wanted to decide on financial and organizational separation from the SDPH so that the Slovak autonomous party would remain a member of the central party. This, in fact, called for a federal transformation of the party's internal structure. Delegates of the Czech and Hungarian Social Democratic Parties participated in the Slovak congress. The free Social Democratic Organization of Slovaks in Vienna (*Sociálne Demokraticka Volná Organizácia Slovákov vo Viedni*) was also present in the person of Borek. He, too, proposed separation.[402] This suggestion was most probably based on the organizational model of the Austrian Socialist Workers' Party. This was also Lehocký's understanding of the newly created *Slovak Social Democratic Party in Hungary (Slovenske Sociálni Demokratické Strany v Uhorsku)*. As the delegate of the Hungarian party left the meeting after the words of welcome, Antonín Němec, the representative of the Czech party, called for the formation of a separate party, referring to the position of his own party and the right to self-determination of every nationality (*práva sebaurčenia každej národnosti*).[403]

Consequently, the first attempt at self-government (*spravovat' sám seba*) of the Slovak workers in Hungary had an Austromarxist influence, transmitted mainly by Czech Slovakophils. The assembly voted in favor of a separate Slovak party. The leadership of the central party, however, ignored this decision. At the same time, they disbarred all the members who joined the independent Slovak party from the SDPH. This shows that the party leadership was not unimpressed by the Slovaks' move.[404] Moreover, one can also detect the reflexes of "bourgeois nationalism" both in Hungarian and Slovak workers: Hungarians feared separatism, and Slovaks feared Magyarization. The Slovak workers'

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[400] van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, 135-136., Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 65.
[401] František Soukup, "K jednomu cíli!," *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, May 1905, 48–49.
[402] Emanuel Lehocký, "Návrhy Ku Kraj.-Porade," *Slovenské Robotnícke Noviny*, June 1905, 61.
[403] "Slovo o nás. Pomer medzi slovenskými a maďarskými socíáldemokratmi v Uhersku," *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, January 1906, 107–8.
[404] Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 58.(Kende, 1973, 58)

newspaper summarized the dilemma as follows: "the others do not speak our language, and we rarely understand their instructive words, and they have no understanding of Slovakia at all. They also believe that the Slovaks, who partly speak Hungarian and partly German, have an open road to enlightenment. For those only who have not yet acquired these foreign languages, it is not worthwhile to start anything because supposedly, in 5-10 years, everything will be Magyarized. Many Slovak divisions still rule exclusively in their mother tongue."[405] As these fears grew, the mutual misunderstanding between the two parties hardened, both linguistically and politically. This happened despite the fact that both sides recognized the need for Slovak-language propaganda. The Slovak workers' newspaper often referred to their mistrust (*nedôvera*) towards Magyar comrades.[406] The Czech representatives did not act as mediators or political translators between the two parties to clarify the misunderstandings. The presence of Czechs at the meeting hindered rather than facilitated willingness to compromise.

During their year of autonomous existence, Slovak Social Democrats faced financial and organizational obstacles that were beyond their means to handle. The Hungarian party leadership also pressured the Slovak independent party by threatening to expel them from the trade union movement. On March 18, 1906, at the Second Extraordinary Assembly of the Slovak Socialist Party, the Slovaks and SDPH leadership came to an agreement, despite the discouragement of the Czech party in Austria. The Slovaks rejoined the SDPH. While underlining the temporary nature of the reunion, Lehocký pointed out the necessity of organizing Slovak workers within the framework of the SDPH.[407] The Regional Executive Committee of Slovaks, as the nationalities' sections were now called, maintained its linguistic autonomy within the single party and was empowered with the right to put items on the agenda and the right to vote at the party congress.[408] The new element in the name of the nationality section (regional) emphasized the territorial nature of the organization's competencies. At the same time, the 1906 regulation codified the practice of separate meetings of the nationalities' sections. The Slovak workers' exodus from the SDPH contributed to the clarification of the status of

[405] "Náš parlament.," 57–59.
[406] "Úvahy pred sjazdom. Pozor na zadnie kolesa," 121.
[407] "Po sjazde," *Slovenské robotnícke noviny*, April 1906, 127.; Mucsi, "Törekvések a magyarországi szociáldemokrata párt szervezeti reformjára (1890-1914)," 72.
[408] Polányi, "A szlovák szociáldemokrata nacionalizmusának és szeparatista törekvéseinek gyökereiről a századfordulón," 228.

the nationalities' sections at the 1906 congress of the SDPH, when the nationalities' sections gained greater autonomy.[409]

But soon, this autonomy proved insufficient, or the Hungarian party leadership failed to fulfill its promise. At the regional assembly of workers from Western Hungary in Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg in 1908, the leadership and the Slovak representatives of the SDPH clashed again on the nationality question. Both the Slovak representatives and the party leadership saw the Slovak movement as a failure but for different reasons. Emanuel Lehocký, who presented his view in Slovak, criticized the leadership for not considering the linguistic differences within the party. Lehocký proposed that the delegates of the "Slovak localities" leave the assembly and meet separately in the future. His proposal started a lengthy discussion on "national separatism." The Slovak workers' representatives felt that the central party was not supporting them enough. Furthermore, the party leadership blamed the Slovak workers for their lack of commitment. In their opinion, financial support for the Slovak movement was a waste. Dezső Bokányi, who attended the meeting as the delegate of the central party, also took the floor. He affirmed that "there is no room for the nationality question" due to the correlation between the liberation of Slovak workers and that of every worker in the country.[410] While the Slovak delegates considered their self-determination within the party as a prerequisite for cooperation, the leadership could quickly trot out the principle of internationalism to keep the nationalities out of decision-making. After 1908, the non-Magyar workers from the provinces who were not fluent in Hungarian stopped attending the meetings in Budapest and started organizing separate conventions.[411] Unfortunately, the literature and press of the time do not provide precise information as to which meeting the bilingual workers of Budapest attended.

In 1908, at the Third Congress of the Slovak Social Democrats, a heated debate unfolded between the leadership of the central party and the Czech and Slovak representatives. Manó Buchinger, the delegate of the Hungarian party leadership, and Dr. František Soukup, the representative of the Czech Social Democrats from Austria, had different views on the status of the Slovak organization within the party. Buchinger

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[409] Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 59.
[410] "Karácsonyi munka."
[411] Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 64.

emphasized the common interests of the Hungarian and Slovak working classes in achieving free and universal suffrage. On the other hand, Soukup and Emanuel Lehocký, now the head of the Slovak section of the SDPH, hastened the reorganization of the SDPH along lines similar to the Austrian party. They also demanded more unconditional financial support for the Slovak movement. Others asked the central party to send more Slovak agitators. They demanded "full liberty" for their comrades belonging to the nationalities. Soukup stressed that Hungary was not a nation-state but a nationalities state, similar to Austria. Thus, the party should be organized accordingly and the leadership should unconditionally support the evolution of the nationalities' organizations in the name of liberty and equal justice. "One can Magyarize individuals but not nations," Soukup concluded.[412]

Meanwhile, other significant changes took place that put the Czech-Slovak brotherhood in a new context. In 1907, Austria adopted universal, equal suffrage for men. The Social Democrats emerged as the strongest Czech party in the first election.[413] In 1908, the Czech František Soukup launched a new discourse, combining the right to use the Slovak language with the ethnic premise of the Czechness of Slovaks.[414] At the 1909 Congress of the Czech Social Democratic Party, Bohumír Šmeral also proclaimed the Czechs' brotherhood with "two million of the Czech branch of Hungarian Slovaks." I have already shown in the chapter on the nationality policy of the Social Democratic Party that Šmeral embraced Renner and Bauer's plan for reorganizing the empire. In his speech, he argued that if secret, equal, and universal suffrage were introduced in Cisleithania, the unity of Czechs and Slovaks would be solved by a common electoral body: "National autonomy, such as we request […] will unify us with the two million Hungarian Slovaks in a brotherly embrace and constitutional union and will form a single large federal domain."[415] Šmeral did not programmatically address the issue of Czech and Slovak unity.[416] However, he did, *en passant*, formulate an Austromarxist version of Czechoslovakism.

In 1910 the Hungarian Social Democrats tried to give a new impetus to the cause

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[412] Kende, 64. "A magyarországi tótajku szociáldemokraták Ill-ik országos értekezlete.," *Népszava*, March 17, 1908, 10–11.
[413] Šmeral, "National Question."
[414] Hollý, "Czechoslovakist Arguments at the Turn of the Twentieth Century 1," 85.
[415] Hollý, 85.
[416] Galandauer, "Šmerals Auffassung der Nationalitätenfrage," 75.

of suffrage. The SDPH allied with the oppositionist *Party of Independence and 48*, led by Gyula Justh, to introduce general suffrage and other socio-political reforms. The alliance entailed a more assimilationist and Magyar supremacist tone on the part of the party leadership. The author Van Duin disapprovingly remarked that "there can be little doubt that nationalist sentiments existed among more than just a few Magyar labor leaders" and interpreted the alliance as evidence that the SDPH was interested in creating a Magyar nation-state.[417] Since the party leadership had conceded to nationalism, the heads of the nationalities sections also became more and more open to collaborating with the "bourgeois" nationality parties. This was a completely new trend for the Slovak party, which until 1907 had not considered an alliance with the Slovak National Party desirable.[418] Although general suffrage was the first step towards equal treatment for the nationalities, they loosened their relationship with the SDPH.[419]

The party congress of 1911 brought back the old grievances. On the one hand, Jakab Weltner, the party secretary, claimed that the work of the nationalities' sections was effectively zero and that the party accorded them financial support that they failed to employ efficiently. "Where we see results, it is due to the work of the Magyar comrades, not the nationalities."[420] On the other hand, the Slovaks tried to convince non-Magyar workers to boycott the assembly.[421] From 1910 on, Slovaks worked virtually separately from the central party. In 1910, at the Copenhagen Congress of the Second International, the Slovak social democratic leaders stood with the Czechs on the issue of dividing the trade union movement along ethnic lines. Accusations that the party from Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg was being led from Prague were common at the party congress in Budapest. The Czech party also underwent an internal transformation and the spirit of Masaryk was increasingly visible in its principles and activities. To keep Slovak workers in the Hungarian movement, the central party offered them more financial

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[417] van Duin, *Central European Crossroads*, 117–19, 126.
[418] The Slovak National Party also reorganized itself around this time and broke with the tactics of passivity. Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 89. On the socialists' criticism addressed to the National Party: Borecký, "Národnostná politika v Uhorsku," 309–10.
[419] Kalmár, *Szociáldemokrácia, nemzeti és nemzetiségi kérdés Magyarországon (1900-1914)*, 164–67.
[420] György Kalmár, *Szociáldemokrácia, Nemzeti És Nemzetiségi Kérdés Magyarországon (1900-1914)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976), 171.
[421] Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 66.

support and a journal of their own in 1911.[422]

All of these misunderstandings resonate with present-day debates on the possibility of political deliberation in multilingual settings. Some researchers claim that cultural and linguistic diversity creates barriers in democratic public spheres, while others argue that democracy is possible in a framework of cultural heterogeneity.[423] Observing these debates not only as narratives but also as speech acts can help the historian understand what was really at risk of being won or lost. French philosopher Jacques Rancière defined disagreement as a situation "in which one of the interlocutors at once understands and does not understand what the other is saying." He argued that disagreement is a power-based misunderstanding where a more equal distribution is at stake.[424] In such cases, the political position of one party is not recognized and accepted and, therefore, also not understood as a matter of negotiation. Rancière's argument shows that disagreement is not a misunderstanding rooted in linguistic obstacles but in power differences. This is precisely what we see when both the leadership of the SDPH and Emanuel Lehocký, the head of the Slovak section, expressed their frustration at not being understood.

Interestingly, a moment of mutual understanding occurred on October 13, 1918 at the extraordinary meeting of the SDPH. The purpose of the meeting was to take a stance on the break-up of dualism and the country's future. Furthermore, Social Democrats needed to take a position on interpreting the Wilsonian principles. The opinion of the nationalities on the fate and unity of Hungary became important for the first time in the history of party assemblies. Curiously, the flaw in this approximation was that the Slovaks had already committed themselves to the Czechs and, two weeks later, proclaimed Czechoslovakia's independence. Unaware of this development, the leadership of the SDPH wanted the national representatives to declare that they had no intention of seceding from Hungary. Zsigmond Kunfi stated that the SDPH would openly and clearly recognize "the right of nations to self-determination, with all its consequences" and would

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[422] Mucsi, "Törekvések a magyarországi szociáldemokrata párt szervezeti reformjára (1890-1914)," 72.; Kende, *Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt nemzetiségi politikája*, 68. Polányi, "A szlovák szociáldemokrata nacionalizmusának és szeparatista törekvéseinek gyökereiről a századfordulón," 231.
[423] Doerr, "Between Habermas and Rancière: The Democracy of Political Translation."
[424] Jacques Rancière et al., *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1999). X.

not support a policy that uses the force of arms and coercion to keep people who do not want to stay.[425]

Adolf Horváth represented the Slovak party. He was not one of the prominent figures in the Slovak movement. Sending him to the party congress suggests that the leaders of the party did not want to compromise themselves by making a statement either supporting Hungary or declaring their desire to secede. After saying a few sentences in Slovak, Horváth addressed the congress, expressing his contentment at being able to express the Slovak Social Democrats' displeasure "here," where they had never had a voice. He announced that his speech would be "more chauvinist than the Hungarian comrades would expect… but now it is your turn to stand the ordeal of fire."[426] He reported that Slovaks have never been so calm. Now international interests will ensure that their rights will prevail based on the principles of natural and social rights. Slovaks were not enthusiastic about the Czech embrace, Horváth declared, nor about the promise of their Hungarian comrades, nor Wilson's promise. He also pointed out that if the SDPH wanted to lay the foundations of the new Hungary in alliance with the Hungarian bourgeois parties, they would "gravitate outwards." He expressed his opinion on the extent to which a national party can represent socialist interests. In his speech, he also reaffirmed the principle of double oppression: class and national. In concluding his speech, Horváth called everything he had just said a reflection; in other words, he did not commit to the SDPH, but he did not openly declare his separation.[427]

5.5. The Pathology of Chronic Misunderstandings

To understand the nature of disagreement and mistrust between the Slovak leaders and the central party, I earlier introduced Rancière's notion of "misunderstanding." In this spirit, I interpreted these discourses of misunderstanding as speech acts. If the Slovak leaders had "understood" the priority of the electoral struggle in the Hungarian argument, they would have had to submit to party discipline. Had the leadership of the SDPH understood the primacy of the Slovak workers' claim for autonomy and equality, they

[425] János Kende, "Az MSZDP nemzetiségi szekcióinak állásfoglalása a párt 1918 október 13-i rendkívüli kongresszusán.," *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 9, no. 1 (1963): 154.
[426] Kende, 158.
[427] Kende, 158–60.

should have radically changed their political agenda. Such an adjustment would have risked the success of the party's electoral struggles. The historian József Demmel observed this trend as early as the revolution of 1848. The fact that in 1848-1849, Kossuth regarded the Slovak national movement as a problem of law and order made it unnecessary for the Slovak leaders to formulate a realistic program.[428] The Hungarian government and the Slovak national movement provoked each other instead of seeking a compromise.

Both modernizing tendencies and conservatism characterized the Slovak national movement. Slovaks had no historical state to refer to when formulating their national demands. The Slovak movement invoked natural law, Slovaks' entitlement to their territory, and the economic unity of Slovak territory when it called for the sixteen counties inhabited by Slovaks to be organized into an independent administrative unit. As a result, the Slovak national movement had always striven for territorial self-government. For this reason, the primary explanation for why Slovak Social Democrats propagated the Austromarxist model of autonomy, which did not advocate self-government on territorial principles, can be found in the influence and presence of Czech Social Democrats. The proximity of Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg to Vienna and Prague and the activity of Bohemian, Moravian, and Viennese Czech Social Democrats in the Slovak worker's movement enabled the transmission of Austromarxist principles. The leaders of the Slovak social democratic movement were educated in Pest, Vienna, and Prague. Typically, there was little meaningful contact between the leaders and the working masses. The Slovak organization became partly independent after the turn of the century, but did not break away from the central party.

The Social Democrats often prided themselves on their annual congresses being Hungary's parliament, as it was the only place where the non-voting masses and nationalities could have a voice. At the same time, the Social Democratic Congress also inherited the ethnic tensions of Hungarian politics. More often than not, negotiations between the leaders reproduced the narrative of the "bourgeois" national movement. The legitimacy of both the Slovak section's desire to secede and the central party's refusal to do justice to their desire remained in question. First, the internal organization of the Slovak party was weak and lacked mass support. Second, the central party had not

[428] Demmel, *A szlovák nemzet születése*, 300.

developed a strategy for organizing non-Magyar workers that took serious account of actual conditions. Slovak workers' leaders easily read the Hungarian supremacy they experienced in their dealings with the government into the decisions and discourse of the central party, while the Hungarian party leadership was irritated by the nationalism of the nationalities' social democratic movement.

This case study of the Slovak labor movement is not a success story. Due to low support for the Slovak movement and the weakness of its internal organization, the autonomous Slovak party proved unsustainable. Although the Slovak labor movement adopted and used the language of the Austromarxist model of the party and national organization, it did not really evaluate the preconditions for the implementation of this program. The Austromarxist idea thus did circulate to the Slovak movement and its terminology was well-known in the Slovak labor movement. Yet the social, political, and economic constellations and local ideological traditions did not favor its appropriation. Consistent pursuit of the demand for a two-dimensional, national and territorial federalization would have implied a firm commitment to the struggle for electoral rights. As the Czech Social Democrat Bohumír Šmeral pointed out in 1909, universal and equal suffrage in both halves of the monarchy would have allowed Czech and Slovak citizens to be members of the same electoral curia. They could thus govern themselves under a common autonomous institutional system based on the personality principle. By contrast, in the SDPH, Hungarian-Slovak communication was stuck at the level of grievances and resistance. The parties did not choose the path of finding an agreement.

6. Conclusions

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the long-awaited dissolution of nationalism did not happen as the fathers of social democracy had predicted. It became the task of the Second International to analyze the contradictions and connections between internationalism and the principle of national self-determination for the world's proletarians. On the one hand, national sentiment was a rival to Marxism because nationalism could override class loyalty. On the other hand, Marxism opposed national oppression and thus supported national liberation movements. How did the Second International define the nation? Did the nation coincide with the state or ethnic groups striving for independence? In Chapter I/2, I argued that the Second International used an étatist definition in its internal organization. Identifying the nation with the state implied that the social democratic parties of the individual states would send representatives to the International and vote on behalf of the states. The state's dominant nation represented stateless nations and the nationalities of multi-national empires. Awakening nations such as the Czechs or Armenians were thus not considered nations with full membership in the International. The Second International supported national movements in the colonial context more than in Europe.

"Once you have the problem, you need to confront it," Vladimir Medem summarized the ambivalent attitude of Social Democrats towards the nationality question.[429] Chapters I/2.1, I/2.2, and I/2.3 explore the debate surrounding the need for a positive national agenda in social democracy, or if the rejection of national oppression and the promotion of internationalism alone were sufficient. Prominent social democratic thinkers tried to reconcile demands for national liberation with "the spirit of the [*Marxist*] teaching."[430] Academics today tend to read these disquisitions as theoretical texts. Contemporaries, however, aimed to develop practical solutions to the pressing questions of the present (*Gegenwartsprogramm*). Historians tend to evaluate Marxist thinkers' understanding of nationalism according to the internal logic of the texts rather than the social and political conditions of the time. What such an intrinsic approach reads as

[429] Medem, "A szociáldemokrácia és a nemzeti kérdés (Részletek)," 136.
[430] Adler, Friedrich, *Victor Adler : Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky sowie Briefe von und an Ignaz Auer, Eduard Bernstein, Adolf Braun, Heinrich Dietz, Friedrich Ebert, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Hermann Müller und Paul Singer*, 211.

incongruity might in fact be strategic flexibility. The central authority on the nationality question was the German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky. Because of the challenge from the Jewish Bund and the Armenian organization, the Russian Social Democrats also had to take a firm stance on the nationality issue. Kautsky and Lenin agreed that the struggle against national oppression was legitimate. They would nevertheless support it only if it served the interests of the working class. Subchapters I/2.1 and I/2.2 also showed what influence these thinkers had on the social democratic movement in Hungary.

Emerging national movements tested the unity of the Austrian Social Democratic Party. The Austromarxists Karl Renner and Otto Bauer developed a positive solution to keep the party together and accommodate the nationalities. The two thinkers deconstructed the étatist view of the nation, in particular when it came to the Eastern European states. They questioned the organic link between nation and territory by defining the nation as a matter of consciousness—just as religion was a private affair. In their view, the territory belonged to the state, not the nation. Renner and Bauer developed a two-dimensional, national and territorial plan to federalize Austria and grant cultural autonomy to each nationality indifferent of their place of residence. This theory was not to the taste of nation-builders who wanted territorial autonomy. Nor was it to the liking of Marxists, who accused Karl Renner and Otto Bauer of nationalism and Great Austrian propaganda. At the same time, even their critics agreed that the writing of these two Austrian thinkers and statesmen offered the most exhaustive analysis of the nationality question for Marxists. Subchapters I/2.3., I/2.4., and I/2.5. were dedicated to the Austromarxists' positive theory of the nation and their Hungarian reception.

Naturally, the Hungarian political elite disliked that Renner and Bauer sounded the alarm bell about Magyar dominance in Hungary. Although anti-Viennese sentiment and the idea of Hungarian independence were "bourgeois" ideas, Kossuth's personality made them popular with workers, too. As Bauer put it, it was part of the Hungarian collective psyche. The Hungarian state idea was the main reason why Hungarian Social Democrats also rejected national cultural autonomy, which would have meant the federalization of the *Gesamtmonarchie*. The federalization of the empire would have meant the end of Hungary's separateness. In times of internal political crisis, some voices would have supported giving up Hungary's special status for democratic rights in a *Nationalitätenstaat* that was no longer Germanizing, as I showed in subchapter I/2.4.

The federalization of the monarchy was also unpopular with Czech Social Democrats, who dreamed of an independent Bohemia. In a federalized *Gesamtmonachie,* however, the Czechs, would have found themselves in the same national cadaster as the Slovaks. Subchapter I/2.5 showed that Bohumír Šmeral recognized this when he expressed his views on the subject in 1909. However, just as the nationalities were too distrustful of Hungarians to give up the possibility of national separation for democratic rights, the Czechs and Hungarians were unwilling to modernize under German-Austrian domination. Interestingly, Hungarian Social Democrats at the time did not see a parallel between the argument of the nationalities and their own for resisting democratization under a dominant nation. Even in the autumn of 1918, the Hungarian political elite hoped that democratization under Hungary was a viable alternative for the nationalities. They believed that non-Magyars would favor democratic rights over unification with their fellow nationalities outside the borders of Hungary.

The analysis of non-territorial autonomy in the context of contemporary social relations and theoretical debates revealed two historiographical curiosities. First, the modernist paradigm of nationalism was already widespread under the fin-de-siècle Habsburg monarchy, mostly among Marxists who came in contact with the new discipline of sociology. Many historians and political scientists attribute this theory to Anglo-American academics in the second half of the twentieth century (including Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, or Eric Hobsbawm). The first part of my dissertation implicitly proves that the theory that posits a close relationship between the construction of nations and industrialization was widespread around 1900. Often considered exceptional, the multiethnic Habsburg empire was the nucleus of many ideas that later became mainstream. Reading the works of Marxist thinkers from the turn of the century showed that the modernist theory of nationalism was one of these ideas. Second, the division between so-called Eastern and Western European nationalism is also a thought rooted in fin-de-siècle Marxist reflections on nationalism. In a nutshell, in western societies, class struggle evolved within the boundaries of a nation. In the east, however, class struggle and national struggle coincided. This typology gained popularity through the study of the Prague-born American historian and philosopher Hans Kohn, entitled *The Idea of Nationalism*.[431]

[431] Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*.

Chapters I/3, I/4, and I/5 looked at the nationality question in the workers' movement in practical terms. These chapters presented ideas and practices on how to run the multiethnic SDPH from Magyar, Romanian, and Slovak perspectives. Chapter I/3 took a closer look at how the SDPH's nationality policy developed parallel to the spread of social democracy in Hungary. As the SDPH became a nationwide organization, socialism gained popularity among non-Magyar workers. In 1903, the party addressed the nationality question for the first time and accepted the equality of all nations. In 1904, when the ethnic composition of the party changed, the leadership created German, Romanian, Serbian, and Slovak national agitation and organizational committees. In form, they resembled the autonomous nationalities' sections in the Austrian workers' party. However, no Magyar section was created. Although the party used the word nation instead of the derogatory nationality, not forming a separate agitation committee for the dominant nation indicated that the Magyars were first among equals. The SDPH did not adopt a federal structure like the Austrian party and secured technical but not substantial autonomy for non-Magyar workers.

However, declaring national equality in principle and creating nationalities' sections revealed more hidden problems than it solved. Workers belonging to the nationalities wanted empowerment. But could the central organization of the SDPH give it to them? Chapters I/4 and I/5 delved into these problems in depth. Chapter I/4, based on articles from a Romanian newspaper established in 1903 in Temesvár/Timișoara/Temeswar, dissected the misunderstandings between the Romanian workers in Southern Hungary and the party leadership in Budapest and their causes. Although both the leadership of the SDPH and the Romanian newspaper *Votul Poporului* used the conceptual framework of socialism, its concepts were interpreted differently. Internationalism or national equality meant something different in Budapest than in a popular assembly among the peasants of the Banat region. Journal editors aspired to be seen as good socialists by those at the party center but their conflicts with the local authorities multiplied, their articles became increasingly angry, and the editors were constantly arrested. After eight months, the SDPH leadership could no longer support the Romanian newspaper in the Banat region and defend its editors. *Népszava* stated that the editors did not understand socialism and continued to publish the journal in Budapest.

This chapter showed that in 1903, the desire for belonging was more substantial than the desire for autonomy among Romanian agricultural workers in Southern Hungary.

The party could offer protection in the event of local clashes with the authorities. Indeed, belonging to the social democratic movement helped to interpret banal everyday squabbles as a universal struggle for socialism. This changed radically over the next two years. The high hopes that the multi-national party congresses of 1903 and 1904 had promised failed to materialize. The Hungarian party leadership was disappointed because rural and non-Magyar workers did not understand socialism, while provincial and non-Magyar workers felt that the party did not give them a voice and did not represent their specific problems. The social democratic congress inherited the ethnic tensions that had piled up in the Kingdom of Hungary over the centuries. Under the shadow of this frustrated mood, Chapter I/5 begins by outlining the failure of the Slovak workers' struggle for autonomy.

After 1905, non-Hungarian workers held their meetings separately. The Romanians gathered in Lugos/Lugoj/Lugosch in the presence of delegates from the Old Romanian workers' movement and the Slovaks in Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg in the presence of Czech workers' leaders from Prague and Vienna. That is how, in 1905, at the Slovak Social Democratic Assembly, on the proposal of a Czech delegate, the Slovak Social Democratic Party voted to separate from the central party. The attempt to federalize the party clearly shows the influence of the Austromarxist party organization and national policy. The central party did not support the Slovak nationality section becoming a separate party, and after a year, it returned to the national party. The chapter assessed the Slovak workers' demand for autonomy as legitimate in principle but farfetched and ill-considered. The workers' journal, edited by the Czech Edmund Borek in Vienna, produced a more complex interpretation of the national question. Comparing the Romanian and Slovak workers' newspapers and labor movements showed that there was not just one nationality question but multiple nationalities questions in the Kingdom of Hungary. It also showed how differently these questions were formulated in 1903 and 1905. The case studies highlighted the subtle changes in the political and social context that are crucial to whether a theory or practice will be successful in a new constellation.

The first part of my dissertation followed the idea of non-territorial autonomy in the social democratic movement in Hungary. By shifting the scale and perspective, I mapped how the idea traveled between the center and the provinces, between expert and non-expert groups, and how it traversed linguistic boundaries. I explained the unpopularity of non-territorial autonomy among Hungarian Social Democrats given their fear of plans for

Greater Austria and the implicit desire for an independent Hungary. The nationalities preferred territorial autonomy. Mistrust between nationalities weighed heavily on the people of Hungary. Mutual distrust was not conducive to redesigning the existing social order. The modernizing and democratizing Hungary lacked the participation of nationalities and the so-called proletariat when it negotiated the shared symbols of membership. The second part of my thesis examines how the reception of the "Renner-Bauer model" changed with the structural changes of 1918. In 1918, the dissolution of multi-ethnic empires and the birth of nation-states with minorities led to a paradigm shift. With this shift, the Austromarxist two-dimensional federation was often thought to be the best way to solve the "minority question."

PART II: FROM NATIONALITIES TO MINORITIES: THE NON-TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY MODEL IN HUNGARY (1848–1918)

1. JÁSZI READS KOSSUTH – AN INTELLECTUAL JOURNEY

1.1. Introduction – Milestones on an Intellectual Journey

Dominant nations come up with (con)federalist solutions to the nationality question when the territorial integrity of their state is at stake and minority nationalities strive for independence. The most heated debates among Hungarians on the non-territorial solution to the nationality question did not occur when Karl Renner started publishing pamphlets on the topic at the turn of the century. These debates actually began 50 years earlier when the émigré Lajos Kossuth, leader of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution, drafted his Danube Confederation plan in Kütahya, in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). Contemporaries in Hungary and beyond discussed the plan extensively up until 1867, when the Austrian-Hungarian compromise took Hungarian independence off the agenda. Kossuth's project became more topical only in 1918 when the collapse of dualism created a similar situation—Hungary's independence was in the offing, and its territorial integrity conflicted with the centrifugal inclinations of non-Magyar national movements. Under the guidance of Oszkár Jászi, an expert in the nationality question and the newly-minted Minister of National Minorities of the government of the First Hungarian Republic, Kossuth's Danube Confederation plan gained a new lease of life.

To find out in which political and intellectual context the idea of the Danube Confederation crystallized, I trace the journey of the idea in the work of Kossuth and Jászi. This chapter aims to understand how the autonomy projects of Lajos Kossuth and Karl Renner, which were similar in content but had radically different objectives, became almost identical in Jászi's reading. In 1918, Jászi affirmed that Renner's idea of non-territorial autonomy was "the rebirth of Kossuth's plan from his emigration."[432] In translation theory, domestication refers to the translator's choice to assimilate a foreign

[432] Oszkár Jászi, *A Monarchia jövője: a dualizmus bukása és a dunai egyesült államok* (Budapest: ÁKV-MAECENAS, 1988).

text's meaning into the culture of the target language. In contrast, foreignization breaks the conventions of the target language to keep concepts from the source language.[433] The hypothesis of this chapter is that Jászi managed to "domesticate" the Rennerian idea so that it became part of the Hungarian intellectual tradition. In the following pages, we will look at how this came about. Jászi argued that neither the 1851 Danube Confederation plan drafted by Lajos Kossuth nor its various translations and versions were known to Renner when he elaborated his ideas of national-cultural autonomy. At the same time, it is questionable whether Renner would have been disposed to refer to the most prominent representative of Hungary's independence, who built his Danube Confederation ideas on the ruins of the Habsburg Empire, as his source of inspiration.

Renner, however, often referred to a Hungarian political thinker, a contemporary of Kossuth, who also "invented" the non-territorial principle. This thinker was Baron József Eötvös (Joseph von Eötvös), an aristocrat, writer, and statesman who, like Renner himself, dedicated his work to solving the conflict between popular sovereignty and the multinational state. In Renner's opinion, Eötvös "included Hungary under Austria and took this inclusion as a matter of course," which, needless to say, pleased the Austrian politician.[434] Renner generously gave a pass to Eötvös's rejection of the reorganization of the Austrian Empire into non-territorial autonomies precisely because it went against the Hungarian (noble) conception of the nation. Eötvös argued in his book *Der Einfluss der herrschenden Ideen des 19. Jahrhunderts auf den Staat* (The influence of the ruling ideas of the 19th century on the state) that in a multinational state, it is problematic that the principle of popular sovereignty would only empower the majority. The majority rule would lead to absolutism, in which the principle of equality of all individuals could not be fulfilled.[435] Renner was undoubtedly intimately familiar with Eötvös' work on statehood and nationality since he mentioned three of his books in the bibliography attached to his 1899 essay *Staat und Nation* (*State and Nation*).[436]

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[433] Hannu Kemppanen, Marja Jänis, and Alexandra Belikova, *Domestication and Foreignization in Translation Studies* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, Verlag fur wissenschaftliche Literatur, 2012).
[434] Karl Renner [Pseud. Springer, Rudolf], *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele*, 30.
[435] József Eötvös, *A 19. század uralkodó eszméinek befolyása az álladalomra*, vol. 13, Báró Eötvös József összes munkái (Budapest: Révai Testvérek, 1902). Joseph Eötvös, *Der Einfluss der herrschenden Ideen des 19. Jahrhunderts auf den Staat*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1854). Joseph Eötvös, *Der Einfluss der herrschenden Ideen des 19. Jahrhunderts auf den Staat*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1854).
[436] Renner, *Staat und Nation: zur österreichischen Nationalitätenfrage; staatsrechtliche Untersuchung über die möglichen Principien einer Lösung und die juristischen Voraussetzungen eines Nationalitätengesetzes*.

One of the remedies Eötvös proposed in 1850 to resolve the contradiction between popular sovereignty and a multi-ethnic state was also similar to Renner's—the non-territorial principle or "descent-related entitlement" (*abstammungbedingte Berechtigung*).[437] "If the provinces of the Austrian Monarchy are to be divided according to the principle of nationality, this division can only be perfect if it is not made on the basis of territory but based on the population (*Bevökerung*). If each individual municipality (*Gemeinde*) exercises its political rights not in a community (*Gemeinschaft*) with its neighbors but with the members of its nationality (*Stammesgenossen*)."[438] However, unlike Renner, the Hungarian statesman immediately dismissed this solution. "If the inhabitants of a municipality who are, for example, half Slavic, half German, were to exercise the right of suffrage in special assemblies, this would be little more than applying the same principle to other conditions. (...) yet I do not believe it is possible to maintain these [principles] in an age like ours."[439] Eötvös probably rejected the reorganization of Austria based on nationality because he also refused to give up Hungary's historic rights.[440]

Jászi was also well acquainted with Eötvös' philosophy of the state and held it in high esteem. Kossuth's 1851 constitution plan, however, he discovered only later, years after reading Eötvös or the Austro-Marxists. Jászi "oversaw" Kossuth's project, probably because at the beginning of his career, Jászi, like many progressive thinkers of his generation, did not have a very positive image of the leader of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution. The hero of Jászi's generation was Eötvös. Jászi learned of the shift in Kossuth's perception of the nationality question only after 1905. When, in 1905, Jászi actively participated in preparing a law on general suffrage, he began to see Kossuth's idea of "inviting peoples into the arms of the Constitution" as the zero-point of a modern and democratic Hungary.[441] Only a democratic Hungary could survive as an independent state, he believed. In 1905, however, Jászi, like many of his contemporaries, considered Kossuth's plan for the Danube Confederation an illusion.

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[437] Eötvös, *Gleichberechtigung*, 83.
[438] Eötvös, 83.
[439] Eötvös, 83.
[440] Gángó Gábor, "Eötvös József Ausztria nemzetiségeinek egyenjogúsításáról című röpirata és 1848-49 nemzetiségi mozgalmainak néhány aspektusa.," *Századok* 132, no. 2 (1998): 392–93. Eötvös, *Gleichberechtigung*, 98–105.
[441] Oszkár Jászi, "Az új Magyarország felé," *Huszadik Század* 8, no. 1 (1907): 7.

Like others of his time, Jászi believed in "natural and humane assimilation" for those who strive for better opportunities. At the same time, Jászi also insisted that instead of forceful assimilation, forced singing of the anthem, and abuse of power in public administration, individuals belonging to the nationalities ought to thrive in their own language and culture in the spirit of the 1868 Nationality Law drafted among others by Eötvös. Jászi was also well aware of the shortcomings in the practical implementation of the 1868 law. Jászi's rhetoric of acculturation might sound naïve today, but not to a liberal in the early twentieth century. Moreover, social Darwinism, which was also a widespread belief in Jászi's time, advocated the view that humans and nations are subject to natural selection, much like organisms. Jászi believed that modernization would spontaneously solve the nationality question, as in the United States of America.[442] Capitalism would create an atmosphere in Hungary where all nationalities could further develop both economically and culturally in their own language. As a radical democrat, he believed that a strong economy, democratic rights, and social equality offered individuals belonging to the nationalities greater benefits than would separate administration.

This chapter first sets forth the non-territorial elements in Kossuth's draft constitution plan from Kütahya. It traces how its many variations and translations traveled from the Balkans to America. The first half of the chapter shows how politicians and political thinkers greeted Kossuth and his plan in various spatial and temporal constellations. I will then offer insight into how Jászi became an expert on the nationality question in the Kingdom of Hungary. This part of the chapter will analyze how Jászi appropriated Kossuthian and Austromarxist ideas into his own narrative and political goals. Both parts of the chapter will include a glimpse into the so-called Transylvanian question. Much like the so-called Polish or Jewish questions, the Transylvanian question in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries encapsulated the dilemmas of the transition to modernity in Transylvania, where Hungarians were politically dominant and Romanians were in the numerical majority. Transylvania became the site of debates about nation and nationality, statehood and citizenship, belonging and language, and individual and group rights during the period covered in this chapter.[443] The practical

[442] Péter Hanák, *Jászi Oszkár dunai patriotizmusa*, Nemzet és emlékezet (Budapest: Magvető, 1985). 36–39; 52–54.; Jászi, "Az új Magyarország felé," 13.
[443] Holly Case, *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea during World War II* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020), 11.

implementation of these views during Jászi's term as minister will follow in other chapters. In my analysis, I give special attention to the interplay between text and the political context, tracking small but significant changes in the narratives of Kossuth and Jászi. This chapter is imbued with the modernist understanding of the nation. Methods for the analysis of the diffusion of political ideas and practices and the theory of cultural transfer and translation greatly assisted me in finding right the conceptual framework for this endeavor. The careful reader can also trace the imprint of Reinhart Koselleck's essay *Erfahrungswandel und Methodenwechsel* in the narrative of this chapter.[444] The texts and plans analyzed in this chapter provide a snapshot of a condensed moment of past experience and future expectations.

1.2. A Parallel and its Historiography: 1848-1849 and 1918-1919

With the support of the English authorities, Lajos Kossuth, the hero of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–1849, crossed the Ottoman frontier at the Iron Gates with a new and unrecognizable face. As his contemporaries recalled, he trimmed down "his beautiful, big beard," known in the reform era simply as "the Kossuth beard," which many people wore as a sign of their political loyalty. To avoid being recognized at the border, he also shaved his mustache and combed his hair to reveal his baldness. Kossuth, who was traveling incognito, had all his belongings searched, smoked, and disinfected by the authorities in the Turkish quarantine in Orșova (present-day Romania). The legend that Kossuth took the Hungarian Crown with him into exile is thus not true.[445] A similar fate befell Mihály Károlyi, the president of the First Hungarian Republic following the Communist takeover and the creation of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (*Tanácsköztársaság*) in March 1919, led by Béla Kun. Károlyi was not as skilled a quick-change artist as Kossuth, and an ambitious Czechoslovak border guard recognized Károlyi and his wife and detained them. The couple had crossed the Hungarian-Austrian border in a potato cart dressed as peasants. When Jászi met Károlyi and his "heroic wife" in Melk to give them a forged passport registered in the name of

[444] Reinhart Koselleck, "Erfahrungswandel Und Methodenwechsel. Eine Historisch-Anthropologische Skizze," in *Zeitschichten: Studien Zur Historik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 27-77.
[445] [Vachot Imre] Imrefi, *A magyar menekültek Törökországban. Ismeretlen adatok az 1849-ki emigratio történetéhez* (Pest: Heckenast, 1850), 27.

Melchior Koplen, they gave Jászi the impression that they looked like "hunted animals."[446] The peasant who helped them across the border might have been right to say that, despite his disguises, Károlyi "looked too Jewish." Even though he was not Jewish but a Magyar nobleman, he could not pass as a peasant. Finally, the Károlyis were allowed into Czechoslovakia by order of the high command.

As these examples show, the leaders of democratizing Hungary left the country on the run, deprived of their real and symbolic power. Historians of Hungary often draw a parallel between the two traumatic experiences of the long nineteenth century: the surrender of the Hungarian Army at Világos in 1849 and the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. These two historical events radically changed the existing social and political structures. The so-called "fratricidal war" of 1848-49 confronted the Hungarian political elite with how dissatisfied the nationalities in the Kingdom of Hungary were. The Magyar liberal elites found it hard to understand why the nationalities preferred national autonomy to civic rights. It was difficult to regain a sense of normality in the moral hangover that followed the fratricidal battle. The historian Béla Borsi-Kálmán has argued that the events of 1849 were staggering not only for the Hungarian élites and the Magyar population but also for all nationalities in the region. They "jumbled up the relations between the nations of the region."[447] Each of these two collective traumata had caused a rupture not only in the careers of these politicians but also in their sense of who they were and what they stood for. Magyar political leaders saw the struggle with the nationalities not only as a professional but also as a personal failure. Consequently, during their time in exile, they dedicated themselves to correcting their past mistakes. Politicians in exile wanted to demonstrate to the civilized West how committed they were to universal values.[448] Kossuth, for instance, stressed in 1862 that "the Nationality Question (...) revolves around how we can apply our principles in all the branches of social public law and the

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[446] Oszkár Jászi and György Litván, *Jászi Oszkár naplója, 1919-1923* (Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete, 2001), 47. Mihály Károlyi, *Hit, illúziók nélkül*, Tények és tanúk (Budapest: Magvető, 1977), 180.
[447] Béla Borsi-Kálmán, *Nemzetfogalom és nemzetstratégiák: a Kossuth-emigráció és a román nemzeti törekvések kapcsolatának történetéhez*, 1. kiad (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1993), 64. György Szabad, "Lajos Kossuth's Role in the Conceptualization of a Danubian Federation.," in *Geopolitics in the Danube Region: Hungarian Reconciliation Efforts, 1848–1998*, ed. Ignác Romsics and Béla K. Király (Central European University Press, 1998), 61, https://doi.org/10.7829/j.ctv1wvms9m.
[448] Borsi-Kálmán, *Nemzetfogalom és nemzetstratégiák*, 66.; András Gergely, "The Hungarian Nationalities Act of 1849," in *Geopolitics in the Danube Region: Hungarian Reconciliation Efforts, 1848–1998*, ed. Ignác Romsics and Béla K. Király (Central European University Press, 1998), 49, https://doi.org/10.7829/j.ctv1wvms9m.

administrative institutions—a realization that we failed to implement in 1848-49 due to the fight that was forced on us."[449]

There is a vast literature regarding both Lajos Kossuth's and Oszkár Jászi's Danube Confederation plans. I benefitted greatly from the philological stringency of the small but substantial book by György Spira on Kossuth's draft constitution.[450] Miskolczy's article and Borsi-Kálmán's book on the dialogue about the possibility of a compromise between the Hungarian and Romanian 1848 emigration provided insights into the history of the reception of Kossuth's plan and the Romanian perspective on a Danube Confederation under Hungarian guidance.[451] For English-speaking readers, the English translation of the 1859 version of Kossuth's plan with an introduction that focuses on the broader context of the creation of the text can be of use.[452] Kossuth's draft constitution appeared in many different versions and translations, some of which I will present and analyze in more detail below.

To maintain the focus on the Danube Confederation plan's journey through time and space, I also needed to limit my investigation to a corpus of selected texts from Jászi's work. For this chapter, I consulted Jászi's political pamphlets, a selection of his newspaper and journal articles, and book reviews.[453] Jászi's correspondence and memoirs were also helpful in reconstructing his intellectual formation and how he encountered

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[449] The quotation is from 1862. Cited by: Borsi-Kálmán, "A Kossuth-emigráció és a nemzetiségi kérdés. Dilemmák és alternatívák," 3.

[450] György Spira, *Kossuth és alkotmányterve*, Haza és haladás (Debrecen: Csokonai, 1989).

[451] Ambrus Miskolczy, "Nemzetiség, szabadság, politika. Fejezetek a magyar és román emigráció párizsi dialógusának történetéből.," *Aetas - Történettudományi folyóirat* 11, no. 2–3 (1996): 5–39. And Borsi-Kálmán, *Nemzetfogalom és nemzetstratégiák*.

[452] Lajos Kossuth, "Proposal. Concerning the Future Political Establishment of Hungary," in *National Romanticism*, ed. Balázs Trencsényi and Michal Kopeček (Central European University Press, 2007), 268–76, https://doi.org/10.1515/9786155211249-038.

[453] Elemér Oszkár [pseud. Jászi, Oszkár], *Görgey Arthur 1848-49-ben* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1896).*;* Oszkár Jászi, *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* (Budapest: Grill Károly, 1912). Oszkár Jászi, *Magyariens Schuld, Ungarns Sühne: Revolution und Gegenrevolution in Ungarn* (München: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1923).; Oszkár Jászi, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary* (London: P. S. King and Son, 1924). György Litván and F. János Varga, eds., *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája: válogatás* (Budapest: Magvető, 1982).; Oszkár Jászi, "Kossuth Lajos emigrációja és az októberi emigráció," *Bécsi Magyar Újság* 4, no. 243 (1922): 1. Oszkár Jászi, "A Magyar Kultúra És a Nemzetiségek," *Huszadik Század* 9, no. 1 (1908): 195–200.; Oszkár Jászi, "Kossuth and the Treaty of Trianon," *Foreign Policy* 12, no. 1 (1933): 86–97.

Kossuth's writings.[454] I used György Litván's biography of Jászi as compass.[455] The arguments of Péter Hanák's book on the Danube Confederation plan in Jászi's works influenced the hypotheses of this chapter and were a great source of inspiration.[456]

Kossuth and Jászi have been the subjects of fiery debates in Hungarian historiography. Different eras have instrumentalized the events of the revolutions of 1848-1898 and 1918-19 and their protagonists according to their own political objectives. In the Interwar period, historians in Hungary were encouraged to justify irredentist tendencies using history. This historiography blamed the Károlyi regime and its minister of nationalities, Oszkár Jászi, for Hungary's disintegration.[457] The accusations included misjudging the political situation, disarming the military and failing to defend the borders, pandering to the West instead of consistently representing Hungarian interests, pacifism, and a pro-Entente attitude. The literature of the interwar period accused the Károlyi government of lack of patriotism, "rootlessness," and foreignness, and denounced its alliance with the Social Democrats for having handed Hungary over to the Communists.[458] After WWII, the victory of Soviet Russia silenced this type of criticism. Marxist-Leninist Hungarian historiography considered Kossuth's and Jászi's plans insufficient since it treated Stalin's idea of self-determination and territorial autonomy as the norm.[459]

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[454] Litván, Gy. (ed.) (1991). *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.* Budapest: Magvető; Jászi's diary: Litván, Gy. (ed.) (2001). *Jászi Oszkár naplója 1919–1923*. Budapest: MTA Történettudományi Intézete.

[455] György Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, Millenniumi magyar történelem Életrajzok (Budapest: Osiris K, 2003). English edition: György Litván, *A Twentieth-Century Prophet: Oscar Jászi, 1875-1957* (Budapest New York: Central European University Press, 2006).

[456] Hanák, *Jászi Oszkár dunai patriotizmusa*, 1985.

[457] For historiographic summaries, see: Peter Pastor, "A trianoni békekötés történetírásának színeváltozásai," in *Trianon*, ed. Miklós Zeidler, Nemzet és emlékezet (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 881–88. Zsuzsa L. Nagy, "Trianon a magyar társadalom tudatában.," *Századvég*, no. 3 (1987): 5–25. Steven Béla Várdy, *Modern Hungarian Historiography*, East European Monographs ; No. 17 [i.e. 16] (Boulder [Colo.] : New York: East European quarterly ; distributed by Columbia University Press, 1976). The most cited accounts from the interwar period: Gyula Szekfű, *Három nemzedék és ami utána következik*, A kir. magyar egyet. ny. (Budapest, 1934). Gusztáv Gratz, *A forradalmak kora* (Budapest: Magyar Szemle Társaság, 1935).

[458] Gyula Szekfű, *Három nemzedék. Egy hanyatló kor története* (Budapest: Élet. Irodalmi és nyomda r.t. kiadása, 1920), 311–12. Sándor Domanovszky, *Magyarország története a középisk. III. osztálya számára* (Budapest: Egyetemi Nyomda, 1926), 204. For an overview see: András Katona, "Jászi Oszkár és kora az elmúlt száz év középiskolai történelemtankönyveiben," *Könyv és nevelés* 13, no. 4 (2011): 33–43.

[459] Among Jászi's contemporaries at the turn of the century, the Marxist Ervin Szabó criticized Kossuth sharply in many instances. He wrote an introduction to the first Hungarian edition of Marx's writings on Kossuth. Furthermore, he published critical articles in *Népszava* on the anniversary of the 1848 revolution. sz. [Pseud. Szabó, Ervin], "Márcziusi napok," *Népszava* 28, no. 30 (March 15, 1900): 1. [Szabó, Ervin], "A Kossuth-ünnep," *Népszava* 30, no. 104 (September 18, 1902): 1–2. See also: John Komlos, "Karl Marx

Not only modern historians but also Jászi's contemporaries sensed that history was repeating itself. Accordingly, it was easy for them to draw a parallel between their political and personal careers and those of the heroes of the Reform Generation. Some authors saw a warning sign in Kossuth's national tolerance, which would endanger the existence of the Kingdom of Hungary, and distanced themselves from his federation plans.[460] Others, like Jászi, came to believe the opposite. Everything that oppresses, corrupts, and impedes the development of the economy and culture is "in effect, bent on destroying Hungarian culture, a culture that can only be built on brotherly cooperation between the Magyars and the nationalities."[461] Jászi and his circle shared Kossuth's two-pillar solution to avoid Hungary's dismemberment: first, to vindicate the territorial integrity of Hungary; second, to guarantee the equality of the nationalities within this territory, in the form of both territorial and non-territorial autonomy. These two pillars underpinned the future federation of the Danubian states. "Even today, [Kossuth's] conception is the foundation of the only solution to the Eastern European problem (…) I, myself, wanted to resurrect the plan of Kossuth in an up-to-date form," Mihály Károlyi confessed in the 1950s.[462]

Due to the geopolitical position of the Habsburg Monarchy, the need for a confederation in the Danube region to replace the dissolving Habsburg Empire had been on the agenda since the 1840s.[463] The historian Holly Case has argued that in the nineteenth century, nationalism and federalism were not mutually exclusive. She also pointed out that the differences between alliance, federation, and confederation plans were not as significant as the literature sometimes suggests. Nationalism was not an alternative to federalism but rather a driving force behind it, while federal projects aimed to counterweigh insecurity.[464] The author continued that a federation could achieve this goal in two ways: first, by bringing in ethnic kin from outside its border, and second, by creating a larger political unit near expanding empires. Finally, according to Case,

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and Friedrich Engels' Critique of Lajos Kossuth," *Austrian History Yearbook* 15 (January 1979): 62–75, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0067237800012613.

[460] Benedek Jancsó, *Szabadságharcunk és a dákó-román törekvések.* (Budapest: Lampel, 1895).

[461] Oszkár Jászi, "A magyar kultúra és a nemzetiségek," *Huszadik Század* 9, no. 1 (1908): 198; Jászi, "A Magyar Kultúra És a Nemzetiségek," 198.

[462] Károlyi, *Hit, illúziók nélkül*, 54–55.

[463] Borsi-Kálmán, *Nemzetfogalom és nemzetstratégiák*.

[464] Holly Case, "The Strange Politics of Federative Ideas in East-Central Europe," *The Journal of Modern History* 85, no. 4 (December 2013): 833–66, https://doi.org/10.1086/672531.

(con)federations did not aim to dissolve nations. Instead, they were built on them. All these features were typical of Kossuth's Danube Confederation plan.

In this chapter, my concern is not so much to judge whether the Kossuth's or Jászi's plan was timely or not, realistic or illusionary. I have not sought to determine whether the nationality policy of late Habsburg Hungary could have been better managed, or ultimately whether the two traumatic experiences of Világos and Trianon could have been avoided.[465] My analysis focuses mainly on the connection of these two plans to the Austromarxist idea of non-territorial autonomy, an aspect that is marginal in most of the literature. This focus served as the main selection criterion for my primary and secondary literature. This chapter contributes to the literature by connecting the dots between Kossuth, Eötvös, Renner, and Jászi concerning non-territorial autonomy.

1.3. Message from Kütahya – Kossuth's Danube Confederation Plan

1.3.1. Imagining Non-Territorial Autonomy by the Danube in the Aftermath of 1848

The road to the draft constitution of Kütahya

Kossuth's summary of the principles of the future political organization of Hungary is known today as the "1851 Draft Constitution of Kütahya." The draft included sections on how to create a Danubian Confederation, a federation of "old historical states" between the Carpathians and the Danube, the Black Sea, and the Adriatic Sea. Kossuth argued that, "…if Hungarians, Southern Slavs, and Romanians embrace the above plan, they will become a prosperous and powerful state of the first rank, with 30 million inhabitants, which will weigh heavily on the balance of Europe."[466] The draft developed from the correspondence between Kossuth and other members of the émigré community in Paris. This community's main objective was to obtain the Western powers' support to prepare for a civil war with the aim of creating an independent Hungary. The correspondence

[465] Some authors make the social democrats, the Jews, or the freemasonry responsible for the disintegration of Hungary: Ernő Raffay, *Erdély 1918-1919-ben: tanulmányok* (Budapest: Magvető, 1987). Ernő Raffay, *Országbomlasztó szabadkőművesség* (Budapest: Kárpátia Stúdió, 2022). Gyula Popély, *Felvidék 1914-1920*, 2. kiad (Budapest: Magyar Napló : FOKUSZ Egyesület, 2010).

[466] Béla Köpeczi, ed., *Erdély története három kötetben: 3, 1830-tól napjainkig*, 3rd ed., vol. 3, Erdély története három kötetben (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986), 1490, https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/ErdelyHun-erdely-tortenete-harom-kotetben-1/.

touched upon possible ways of solving the nationality question within Hungary by winning over the politicians of neighboring countries to the cause of an independent and democratic Hungary rather than that of a pan-Slavic union under the absolutist Russian Empire, a scenario that was the greatest fear of the Russophobic élites. Consequently, to accommodate the non-Magyar nationalities, foremost the Romanians of Hungary, Kossuth had to devise an arrangement that pleased their co-nationals outside Hungary's borders.

The challenge was knotty since the nationalities wanted autonomous territories. Kossuth needed to bring these autonomies to fruition while securing Hungary's territorial integrity, the cornerstone of the Hungarian national consciousness.[467] Yet Kossuth believed that, in the case of Hungary, a language-based territorial division and administrative system would contradict liberal principles. From the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the étatist concept of the Hungarian nation became crucial vis-à-vis a conception of a nationalities state. The noble *Regnum Hungariae* qualified as a state-nation in the post-1867 public nationalist ideology. However, since the connection between the feudal concept of the nation and the socio-political reality of the late nineteenth century was fictional, history became its primary source of justification. Hungarian nationalism based its rationale for territorial integrity on historical arguments that were, in fact, ahistorical.[468] The historicization of nationalism usually comes into play when there is no viable plan for the national future. This substitute was needed where the present did not offer a viable national consciousness.[469] András Cieger, a historian who studied the impact of Hungarian constitutionalism on the development of Hungarian national consciousness, argued that the interpretation of the Constitution played a significant role in shaping nineteenth-century patriotism. Specifically, the perceived historical importance of the Constitution influenced different political agendas. For instance, some used references to the old constitutionalism to justify maintaining feudal relations while others emphasized the democratic spirit of the old constitution to promote a liberal agenda of extending rights. Similarly, the 1867 Compromise and the idea of Hungarian supremacy with regard to the nationalities were also viewed through the lens

[467] Borsi-Kálmán, *Nemzetfogalom és nemzetstratégiák*, 10.
[468] Jenő Szűcs, *Nemzet és történelem*, Társadalomtudományi Könyvtár (Budapest: Gondolat, 1974), 19-20.
[469] Szűcs, 23.

of constitutionalism, with different interpretations leading to different political positions.[470]

Kossuth's task was to reconcile the ideal of Hungary's historical rights and territorial integrity with the nationalities' territorial demands. It must have been around 1848-1849 that Kossuth first envisioned non-territorial arrangements to solve the nationality question in Hungary. When Kossuth came up with the idea of national cultural autonomies, he combined two ideas: administrative decentralization and a confederation of the nationalities of East-Central Europe. However, he often retroactively projected this stream of arguments to the years before the 1848 Revolution.[471] He also proudly stressed the originality of combining the territorial and non-territorial principles—autonomy on the county level and extraterritorial self-administration of civic associations through representative bodies.[472] Kossuth at times embellished his memories: "It is my old conviction that I did not learn from others, for which I was often insulted and called a dreamer. My insistence on this conviction is not a concession resulting from the present sorrowful state of my homeland, but my old conviction, that I stood for with unshakable confidence amidst good and bad."[473] The historian György Szabad, however, argued that it was the Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini who first came up with the idea of a Central European confederation led by the Hungarians, a project with which Kossuth might have become familiar at the Hungarian Diet of Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg in 1832.[474]

Elements of this logic appeared first in the so-called "Reconciliation Project" (*Projet de Pacification*) between Kossuth and the Wallachian revolutionary Nicolae

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[470] András Cieger, "Alkotmányosság és nemzeti identitás – a magyar történelem kontextusában," in *Kötoerők: az identitás történetének térbeli keretei*, ed. András Cieger (Budapest: Atelier, 2009), 47–86.
[471] "It (the federation) has been, as long as I can remember, my firm conviction. If you asked me before the events of 1848-1849 (...) what I think about the future of Hungary, I would have answered: either it has no future, or if it has a future, it has a future in forming a federation with the smaller neighbouring nations. Such a federation would guarantee the political freedom and independence of all the smaller nations against the overwhelming weight of any great power, and their nationality against assimilation." Vö. Szabad, "Lajos Kossuth's Role in the Conceptualization of a Danubian Federation.," 62.
[472] György Szabad, *Kossuth politikai pályája. Ismert és ismeretlen politikai megnyilatkozásai tükrében* (Budapest: Neumann Kht, 2003), http://mek.niif.hu/04800/04881/html/szabadkpp0010.html.
[473] Szabad. N.p.
[474] Szabad, "Lajos Kossuth's Role in the Conceptualization of a Danubian Federation.," 61. *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái I. Országgyűlési Tudósítások I. 1832 december 17 - 1833 augusztus 4.*, vol. I, XV vols., Kossuth Lajos összes munkái (Budapest, 1948), https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Kossuth-kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-1/kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-i-71F5/orszaggyulesi-tudositasok-i-1832-december-171833-augusztus-4-71F6/?list=eyJxdWVyeSI6ICJrb3NzdXRoIGxham9zIFx1MDBmNnNzemVzIG11bmtcdTAwZTFpIGkifQ.

Bălcescu on July 14, 1849.[475] In this first document which served as a compromise between Romanians and the state-nation, Romanians were recognized as a separate nationality and, thus, implicitly as a subject of collective rights. Besides the delimitation of national jurisdictions and the usage of the Romanian language on the county level, elements of de facto non-territorial and cultural autonomy were granted through institutions of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which was now separated from the Serbian Patriarchate. The Orthodox Church, for example, administered schools and education. These arrangements were, however, based more on existing institutions than on the free association of equal citizens. The historian Gyula Szekfű also alleged in 1917 that the Orthodox Church functioned in Transylvania as a de facto political and national cultural autonomy, independently of the state.[476] The liberal élites of the Reform Era, however, categorically rejected the territorial demands of the nationalities for the sake of Hungary's territorial integrity.

Kossuth's letter to László Teleki, a statesman and member of the emigré community after the 1848 Revolution, gives us greater insight into the logic that led Kossuth to formulate his plan for the constitution of a Danubian confederation a year later.[477] In this letter from June 1850, Kossuth argued that nationality, like religion, was just one of the state-organizing constituents. Both religion and nationality deserved rights and equal treatment. However, neither of them should become the only state-organizing

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[475] István Barta, ed., "A magyar–román megbékélési tervezet," in *Kossuth Lajos összes munkái XV. Kossuth Lajos kormányzóelnöki iratai 1849 április 15. - augusztus 15.*, vol. XV, XV vols., Kossuth Lajos összes munkái (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1955), https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Kossuth-kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-1/kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-xv-150DA/kossuth-lajos-184849-ben-v-kossuth-lajos-kormanyzoelnoki-iratai-1849-aprilis-15-augusztus-15-150E3/431-szeged-1849-julius-14-a-magyarroman-megbekeles-alapjait-lerako-okmanyok-17320/a-a-magyarroman-megbekelesi-tervezet-17321/?list=eyJmaWx0ZXJzIjogeyJNVSI6IFsiTkZPX0tPTllfS29zc3V0aF8xIl19LCAicXVlcnkiOiAiYSBtYWd5YXIgcm9tXHUwMGUxbiBtZWdiXHUwMGU5a1x1MDBlOWxcdTAwZTlzaSB0ZXJ2ZXpldCJ9. Gergely, "The Hungarian Nationalities Act of 1849," 47–55.; János Beér and Andor Csizmadia, eds., *Az 1848/49. évi népképviseleti országgyűlés* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1954).

[476] "The Romanian- and Serbian-speaking Orthodox churches in Hungary have such extensive autonomy and such a large body of property that they can carry out national-political activities independently of the state. Their own public and secondary schools and teacher training colleges can cultivate a culture different from that of the Hungarian state, and the Romanian financial institutions can pursue their own Romanian land policy, by which they have indeed succeeded in recent decades in conquering a not inconsiderable amount of Hungarian and Saxon territory in Transylvania and the Mureș region for specific Romanian development." Gyula Szekfű, *A magyar állam életrajza: történeti tanulmány*, A Deutsche Verlags Anstalt Stuttgart-Berlin 1917-es kiadásának reprintje (Budapest: Maecenas Könyvkiadó, 1988), 197.

[477] Szabad, *Kossuth politikai pályája. Ismert és ismeretlen politikai megnyilatkozásai tükrében*.

principle.[478] Accordingly, in his plan, Kossuth rejected the idea of the right of ethno-confessional groups to form separate national bodies with territorial self-government. This would have meant the pre-eminence of nationality over other elements of statehood. Kossuth thus proposed something new: accommodating nationalities in a way similar to the autonomy granted to religious confessions. He took inspiration from the non-territorial autonomy of the Lutheran Church in Hungary, to which he belonged. In Kossuth's view, the Lutheran Church was an "essentially democratic" institution that worked on a "non-territorial principle." Following this line of argumentation, Kossuth rooted the rights of the nationalities in two general principles, similar to those of religious communities: first, the individual's freedom of association, and second, a democratic and highly decentralized state administration. These two general maxims were complemented with the consideration of protecting the "natural rights of the minorities."[479]

The "bulwark of the constitution:" the county

In the previous part of this thesis, I argued that one of the obstacles to a positive reception of Renner's plan in Hungary was the fact that he wanted to abolish the autonomy of Hungary's historic counties. Hungarians' resistance to changes that would restrict the counties' autonomy was deeply rooted. In Hungary in the 1840s, efforts to protect the counties' autonomy united politicians of very different backgrounds and political interests. The autonomy of the counties had started to expand in the sixteenth century, when the nobles prevailed in their power struggle with the king. The preponderance of the nobility created a process of decentralization. The county was responsible for issuing judgments, levying and collecting taxes, and enforcing laws. In each county, power was vested in the lord lieutenant (*főispán*), the *vice comes* (*alispán*), and the noble judge (*szolgabíró*), the most important public dignitaries. The nobility gradually came to elect the *vice comes* and the noble judge from among their own ranks while simultaneously broadening their respective fields of competence. The taxes they collected enabled the *vice comes* to institutionalize a county-level war and house treasury. Since the county

[478] "all nationalities may have claims on the state, but nationality is only one factor in the organization of the state, not the only one. It is like religion. It can claim rights and equality for itself ... in every state, but not that the state should be organized on religious grounds alone." Spira, *Kossuth és alkotmányterve*, 17.
[479] "All that is required is that the natural rights of the minority (*kevesebbség*) should also be adequately protected and that social rights (freedom of association) should be fully respected." Spira, 18.

officials were paid from this fund, they became independent of the central administration. Consequently, the county's autonomy was important for the nobility to protect their inherited power and control over public offices. At the same time, the new, democratically-minded generation, the so-called 'autonomists,' wanted to use county autonomy to enact social reforms to modernize the state, reforms that were blocked by the government.[480] The young democrats claimed that the intermediate-level organizational units of the state—such as the county—could not only implement the decisions of the central authority but must be also empowered to make decisions on specific issues. They argued that county autonomy should be built on the municipalities' autonomy. The group's opinion leaders included Lajos Kossuth.

By contrast, another group of the reform generation, the so-called "centralists," wanted to implement democratic reforms from the center.[481] They argued that the old feudal institutions, like the county, were an obstacle rather than a catalyst for reform. They believed in government accountability and popular representation through individual liberty and a single set of rights. However, as the historian Tamás Dobszay has argued, the "centralists" did not reject self-government. Despite their criticism of the "autonomist" group's idea of protecting the autonomy of the municipalities, they believed that centralization and self-government went hand in hand. They thought that "true autonomy" should be preceded by the individual emancipation of citizens, such as the liberation of serfs and equality before the law. Autonomy should stem from the municipal (*községi*) level and it should have a local scope.[482] The most prominent representatives of this path were József Eötvös and Antal Csengery.

The reformers finally reached a tactical agreement, and the April Laws of 1848 codified a compromise between these two viewpoints. Although the April Laws were followed by several administrative reforms during the nineteenth century, most notably in 1870 and 1886, their provisions shaped the constitutional and political structure of the

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[480] Sándor Zayzon, *A centralisták és a megye reformja* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1917), 3–8.
[481] Tamás Dobszay, "A centralisták reformkori községi önkormányzati koncepciójának kérdéséhez," *Aetas - Történettudományi folyóirat* 32, no. 2 (2017): 76–93.; István Stipta, "Der Kampf von Lajos Kossuth für das Selbstverwaltungssystem im Jahre 1848.," in *Von dem Vormärz bis zum 20. Jahrhundert. Tradition und Erneuerung in der ungarischen Rechtsentwicklung. Studien zu den Reformen in den 19-20. Jahrhunderten* (Würzburg - Budapest, 2002), 100–111.; István Fenyő, *A centralisták: egy liberális csoport a reformkori Magyarországon* (Budapest: Argumentum, 1997). János Varga, "Megye és haladás a reformkor derekán 1840-1843," in *Somogy Megye Múltjából. Levéltári Évkönyv 12.*, vol. 12 (Kaposvár, 1981), 186–87.
[482] Dobszay, "A centralisták reformkori községi önkormányzati koncepciójának kérdéséhez."

country for the next century.[483] The law called the county a "bulwark of constitutionalism," an old topos in the Hungarian political discourse. At the same time, the April Laws envisaged the reorganization of the county's representation and convened county assemblies. According to historian György Szabad, the conservative county officials who continued to hold their positions meant that counties continued to be reminiscent of feudal Hungary. However, legal historian István Stipta disagrees and argues that the provisions of the April Laws pertaining to the counties, even with their compromises and ambiguities, actually eliminated the noble privileges of the counties, decreased their administrative autonomy, and weakened the connection between municipalities and the county.[484]

Nationality rights: a legal puzzle for liberalism

Nineteenth-century Hungarian liberals were skeptical of group rights and a nationalism that considered national independence more important than individual rights. As a liberal politician, Kossuth based his legal and administrative model on the free and equal individual.[485] Consequently, the democratic representational instances of each nationality on every level of state administration provided the "groupist" elements in Kossuth's model.[486] "What an individual is free to do should also be free for many individuals together. In law, numbers cannot make a difference."[487] This logic led to Kossuth's

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[483] Cieger, "Alkotmányosság és nemzeti identitás – a magyar történelem kontextusában," 58.
[484] István Stipta, "Az első polgári kori vármegyetörvény (1848:XVI.tc.).," *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis: acta juridica et politica* 42, no. 5 (1992): 5.; Szabad, *Kossuth politikai pályája. Ismert és ismeretlen politikai megnyilatkozásai tükrében*. 123; Béla Sarlós, "A közigazgatás polgári jellegéről," in *A magyarországi polgári államrendszerek* (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1981). 276-279.
[485] I present the following in the version as published by György Spira. This version is based on the 1859 Hungarian version, which became popular in the French Irányi-Chassin version (Jenő Koltay-Kastner, *Iratok a Kossuth-emigráció történetéhez, 1859.* (Szeged: Universitas Szegediensis, 1949), 66–70.), that Spira compared with the 1851 Kütahyai manuscript in the Hungarian National Archives to show the differences.
[486] The term "groupism" refers to the notion that groups are clearly defined entities with homogeneous members who act collectively. For a comprehensive definition of "groupism," see: "Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups."
[487] "Irányi Dánielnek. Turin, 1870. május 5.," in *Kossuth Lajos iratai VIII*, vol. I, XIII vols., Kossuth Lajos összes munkái (Budapest: ATHENAEUM R. TÁRSULAT, 1900), https://www.arcanum.com/en/online-kiadvanyok/Kossuth-kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-1/kossuth-lajos-iratai-viii-4D95/1870-5215/iranyi-danielnek-52C3/?list=eyJmaWx0ZXJzIjogeyJNVSI6IFsiTkZPX0tPTllfS29zc3V0aF8xIl19LCAicXVlcnkiOiAiXCJBIG1pIGVneSBlbWJlcm5layBzemFiYWQsIHN6YWJhZG5hayBrZWxsIGxlbm5pIHRcdTAwZjZiYmVrbmVrIGlzIGVneVx1MDBmY3R0LiBTelx1MDBlMW0gYSBqb2diYW4ga1x1MDBmY2xcdTAwZjZuYnNcdTAwZTlnZXQgbmVtIHRlaGV0XCIifQ.

democratic conception of non-territorial autonomy. Much like churches, individuals belonging to specific linguistic groups could also associate with each other. Kossuth, however, did not address the issue of how national belonging could be tackled legally. Representatives of municipal (*községi, Gemeinde*) associations should form national associations (*communauté nationale*), Kossuth continued, so that they could develop their internal organization and elect national leaders according to their traditions (such as *Voivode* and *Hospodar*).[488] They could incorporate their national churches and educational institutions into their associations. They would have legislative power and full autonomy within their association to protect their "moral and social interest," that is, their "nationality."

Kossuth's plan also included elements of territorial autonomy, but he did not base it on ethnicity. In line with his earlier "autonomist" views, apart from the nationalities' non-territorial autonomy, municipal autonomy would be the other cornerstone of state administration. Kossuth provided exhaustive arguments for why nationality or language could not be the only criterion for statehood in linguistically or nationally diverse territories. I previously mentioned his conviction that nationality could not become the central principle on which a state, that is, a nation, is built. Furthermore, Kossuth argued that, where people of different ethnicities have lived with one another throughout history, state and nationality were not identical: "The State presupposes a nation, but language is not the only criterion for the existence of a nation. Linguistic unity is not enough to constitute national unity. Moreover, linguistic difference does not prevent national unity."[489] This claim supported the Hungarian nobility's self-consciousness. Kossuth, however, set forth modern examples, too—United States of America and Switzerland—without, of course, providing an assessment of the fundamental differences between American, Swiss, and Hungarian state-building. He argued that the division of state territory according to languages would be impossible without dissolving the state itself and compromising the individual rights of the territory's citizens who did not belong to the dominant nationalities.

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[488] The Irányi-Chassin French version, which was prepared under the supervision of Kossuth, translated the word "községi" as "municipal". I have followed this translation in English.
[489] Dániel Irányi and Charles-Louis Chassin, *Histoire politique de la Révolution de Hongrie 1847-1849* (Paris: Pagnerre, Libraire Editeur, 1859). 369.

Municipal autonomy also played an important role in Kossuth's plans for state-building. According to Kossuth's plan, general suffrage should constitute the basis for municipal autonomy. The introduction of universal suffrage in Hungary was another half-century away. Municipal office-holders would hold executive power in local matters and be responsible to the county and the central government. The municipality would have the right to decide on its official language and the language of communication with the county and the government. If the city's official language differed from that of the county, a translation must be attached. The minorities living in the municipality could file pleadings in their own language. Municipal schools could decide on their language of instruction independently from the county and the state. To ensure local minorities' rights to instruction in their own language, each individual and association would have the right to establish schools. The state would only define a minimum curriculum for all elementary schools, regardless of the language of instruction.

Similarly, the counties (*megyék*) would also be autonomous, but this autonomy would not have a feudal content. The county assembly members would be elected based on universal suffrage by the municipalities, which then would decide on the administrative language for the next term. To protect minorities' rights, each delegate could speak in his own language. Free language usage applied to juridical matters as well. Like the municipalities, each county's secondary educational institutions could choose their language of instruction and minorities could establish their own schools. Given the division of ethno-confessional groups on the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, Kossuth, like Renner, realized that municipal autonomy was meant to impose the federalist principle of territorial autonomy informally. In most instances, one of the nationalities formed a majority in each county.

The national assembly that held legislative power, the government that embodied the executive, and the courts of law that exercised juridical authority were designed in the same manner. The legislative, executive, and juridical power were all based to the same degree on four principles: the principle of sovereignty, autonomy, division of power, and nationality. Kossuth introduced a set of guarantees at every level of the administration so that the government could not oppress the counties or one nationality oppress another. In state-level matters, the legislative and executive bodies, in other words the national assembly and the government, would be the organs of popular sovereignty. The individual, the family, the municipality, and the county would be self-governance organs.

Similarly, the nation could exercise self-government in national matters. In short, Kossuth envisioned a state built on the principle of the people's sovereignty: the "self-governance" of citizens on every level of administration from the individual to the state, complemented by "human rights" and "liberty." Kossuth assumed that liberty was the most important trait of the Hungarian national character. The accountability of officers and protection from constraint complemented these principles. For example, the county could refuse to implement arbitrary government decrees.

Kossuth's plan thus rested on two pillars. First, it was built upon the principle of decentralization, which was the main organizational principle of the democratized autonomous county. Second, Kossuth based national autonomies on the right of free association. In this, he drew inspiration from the structure of the Lutheran Church, and all nations would have been entitled to elect their national representatives, who would have exercised autonomy in national issues. Kossuth thus pursued the principle of national self-determination—or the self-determination of individuals belonging to a nation—without compromising his liberal principles. At the same time, he did not lose sight of Hungary's territorial unity or even its position as a great power.

In the following, I will examine how Kossuth's Hungarian contemporaries, the representatives of nationalities, and posterity read his plan. How did changes in the political and ideological context affect the reception of the Danube Confederation project?

1.3.2. Kossuth's Draft Danube Confederation Plan

Kossuth stressed that his draft constitution was based on public opinion, historical knowledge, and tradition. He was confident that the Danube Confederation plan was free of idealism and utopianism—a belief that many of his contemporaries and successors questioned. Kossuth believed that his democratic principles would safeguard fraternity and guarantee the liberty of the entire population regardless of nationality, language, or confession. His belief that individual liberties in a democratic state could accommodate specific national and religious needs led him to reject the inner federalization of Hungary except for Croatia and Slavonia.

Kossuth's plan did not emerge in a void. He kept a certain amount of strategic flexibility to enable further negotiations with the representatives of the nationalities amid

changing political circumstances. Yet the principles underlying the Danube confederation were timeless and could be finetuned to fit fluctuating power relations. This might explain why he frequently edited the plan while at the same time repeatedly pointing to the firmness of its main principles. Many translations, transcriptions, and versions circulated in contemporary Europe, not least because Kossuth himself was invested in adjusting his plan to ever-changing political circumstances.[490] Judging by his logic of repeated editing, we can conclude that the more real the formation of a Danubian democratic state became, the vaguer Kossuth's plan became. Since both the Romanians and Hungarians later tried to create a smokescreen around the concessions they made in each other's favor between 1849 and 1867, it is difficult to clearly determine the authenticity of the drafts. Since many variations of the constitution plan circulated in different places and times, there is space for speculation concerning their authenticity and originality.

The presumably original version of the text was drafted in French. This first version is dated April 25, 1851. Two events triggered the elaboration of the draft constitution. First, in November 1850, Giuseppe Mazzini invited Kossuth to elaborate on his views on the nationality question in the Danube region. Mazzini wanted to recruit Hungarian, Romanian, and south Slavic politicians for his European Democratic Committee, an underground association of European democrats who had been expelled from their countries after 1848. As the informal leader of the 1848 exiles from Hungary, Kossuth's opinion on the relationship between the Magyars, the nationalities, and the neighboring states was crucial. Kossuth sent his answer to Mazzini from Kütahya in June 1851. The document sent to Mazzini has disappeared. However, the draft and an edited version are available in the Hungarian National Archive and the National Library.

Nicolae Bălcescu, the leader of the 1848 Wallachian Revolution, also worked out a confederation plan in March 1851. As previously discussed, Bălcescu and Kossuth had already negotiated over the nationality question in May 1849. These negotiations resulted in the document called *Projet de Pacification* and the new nationality law.[491] The document acknowledged, among other things, the "guarantee of nationality," in other words the use of Romanian in public administration, instruction, and courts, religious autonomy, freedom, and equal rights. It prohibited discrimination in hiring for public

[490] Spira, *Kossuth és alkotmányterve*. 7; 23.
[491] György Spira, *A magyar forradalom 1848-1849-ben* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1959), 566.

offices and included provisions on agricultural issues.[492] Bălcescu's confederation plan envisaged cooperation between three future states: a state consisting of a unified Wallachia and Moldova with Transylvania and territories from Hungary inhabited by Romanians; a unified south Slavic state encompassing Serbia, Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and southern Hungary; and state comprising what was left of the territory of Hungary.[493]

Hungarians needed to take a stance on the project outlined by Bălcescu. And since Kossuth had the last word on all critical matters, members of the Hungarian émigré community in Paris, particularly László Teleki, Bertalan Szemere, and György Klapka, pushed him to elaborate on the question—not least because there were diverging opinions among the 1848 emigré group on the best arrangement to solve contradicting national demands.[494] While the Paris group believed that the only satisfactory solution was the inner federalization of Hungary—in other words, territorial autonomy for the nationalities—Kossuth endorsed the idea of territorial integrity and historical rights. Consequently, Kossuth's draft also served as an implicit response to Bălcescu's proposal and as an authoritative program for Hungarian émigrés. Kossuth sent the draft from Asia Minor to both Mazzini and the Hungarian community in Paris.

In November 1851, Kossuth's secretary, Charles Fredrick Henningsen, published an English version of Kossuth's draft in *The Daily News*.[495] Around this time, Kossuth settled in London after his tour in America. An edited and abbreviated French version was published in 1859 in a book on the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 by Dániel Irányi, one of the 1848 exiles, and Charles-Louis Chassin, a French historian. The text was revised by Kossuth, who, among other changes, decided to cut out the parts about the autonomy of Transylvania and the southern territories inhabited by Serbs.[496] The version published by Irányi and Chassin in French is thus not identical to the French version sent to Mazzini from Kütahya, but is a translation from Hungarian.[497] This abbreviated version

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[492] See: Barta, "A magyar–román megbékélési tervezet."
[493] Borsi-Kálmán, *Nemzetfogalom és nemzetstratégiák*, 77–78.
[494] On Kossuth's position in the émigré community, see: Miskolczy, "Nemzetiség, szabadság, politika. Fejezetek a magyar és román emigráció párizsi dialógusának történetéből." Spira, *Kossuth és alkotmányterve*, 15.
[495] Lajos Kossuth, "Summary of the Principles of the Future Political Oragnisation of Hungary II.," *The Daily News*, no. 1719 (1851): 5.
[496] Irányi and Chassin, *Histoire politique de la Révolution de Hongrie*, 365–98.
[497] See footnote 48 in Spira, *Kossuth és alkotmányterve*, 32.

became widely known, and many authors throughout the 20th century published it as the original Danube confederation plan.

From 1861, Kossuth lived in the Kingdom of Italy, particularly in Turin/Torino. An Italian version of the confederation plan was published in Milan in 1860.[498] On March 23, 1862, a more detailed version appeared in the Italian newspaper *L'Alleanza,* founded by the Hungarian émigré Ignác Helfy. The title of the article was *Il programma ungherese*. At the same time, the independence movements in the Balkans captured the imagination of Italian and French leaders. In 1861, the French, Italian, and Greek started preparing a revolution in the Balkans. The leaders of the Hungarian emigration recognized that this could be an opportunity to achieve Hungarian independence and create a Danube Confederation or military alliance. The plan was that the nations in the Danube region, unlike in 1848-1849, would fight against Vienna. By doing so, they would also support the Kingdom of Piedmont to attain Venice. Victor Emmanuel II approved the plan.[499] The publication of the confidential discussions between Kossuth and the Venetian journalist Marco Antonio Canini in L'Alleanza threw cold water on the scheme.

A full Hungarian version of the confederation started circulating in 1859. This version formed the basis of the trimmed-down 1859 French variant in the political history of the 1848-1849 revolution in Hungary by Chassin and Irányi. After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, in 1878, an anonymous author, later identified as the journalist Imre Áldor, published the Hungarian translation of the draft constitution. Áldor commented that the thought of sacrificing Hungarian supremacy on the altar of national rights marked Kossuth's first step down the slippery slope of anti-patriotism and liberal obsession.[500] These two editions were cited in the 1895 book on the Hungarian Revolution and Daco-Roman ambitions by Benedek Jancsó, the Hungarian publicist and educator.[501] Oszkár Jászi most probably discovered Kossuth's non-territorial solutions to the nationality question in 1908 in Jancsó's book.

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[498] Lajos Kossuth, *Progetto di organizzazione politica dell'Ungheria la questione della nationalitá presa in consideratione da Luigi Kossuth a Kuteya con prefazione del colonello Stefano Türr.* (Milano, 1860), 9–40.
[499] Dániel Varga, "Il ruolo dell'Italia per la realizzazione del progetto della Confederazione Danubiana del 1862," *Italianistica Debreceniensis* 25 (March 29, 2020): 146–61, https://doi.org/10.34102/itde/2019/5559.
[500] Imrefi, *Magyar menekültek Törökországban.*, 65–99.
[501] Jancsó, *Szabadságharcunk és a dákó-román törekvések.* 205-

The Hungarian élites were not alone in developing scenarios for a possible alliance in the Danube region. Romanian and South Slavic political thinkers also drafted their own version of the region's future. I have already elaborated on Bălcescu's confederation plan from April 1851. The underlying reasons for these plans differed significantly, as they projected more prominence on their own nations. Kossuth's draft was soon translated into Romanian. The historian Ambrus Miskolczy has found a Romanian translation among the documents of Alexandru Constantin Golescu, a Romanian revolutionary from a Wallachian boyar family who was in exile in the Ottoman Empire in the 1850s. Romanians did not endorse his solution and were little interested in bridging the differences of interest in Hungarian and Romanian attempts at hegemony. Since politicians in exile often draft plans for constitutions, it is no wonder that Alexandru Golescu also proposed a confederation project in which Hungary, the Romanian Principalities, and eventually Serbia and Bulgaria would be equal members. Romanian historiography counts Alexandru Golescu and his plan as the pioneers of Romanian unification.[502] Others, like the Transylvanian Romanian revolutionary Alexandru Papiu Ilarian, favored a Szekler-Romanian population exchange in Transylvania.[503]

János (Ján Nepomuk) Bobula, a Budapest-based Slovak architect and publicist, was a central figure in the *Slovensky národnodemokraticky spolok* (Pest National Democratic Slovak Circle), founded in 1868. Before the publication of the first issue of the circle's newspaper, *Slovenské noviny* (Slovak Newspaper), Bobula sent a letter to Hungarian democratic politicians in exile, asking for their support for the newspaper's program. Bobula outlined a plan in his letter, including the confederal reorganization of Hungary and Slovak autonomy. The Hungarian politician, publicist, and 1848 revolutionary Virgil Szilágyi sent a supportive answer from Berlin.[504] After returning to Hungary in 1869, however, he became a member of the governing party. "Mr. Szilágyi was only a democrat while living in a foreign country. As soon as he came home, he went quiet as a fish in

[502] Constantin Iiescu and Vasile Novac, "Alexandru C. Golescu și unirea tururor românilor, în lumina unore scrisori inedite, din primăvara anului 1848," *Muzeul Național* 1, no. 8 (1994): 15–22.
[503] Miskolczy, "Nemzetiség, szabadság, politika. Fejezetek a magyar és román emigráció párizsi dialógusának történetéből."
[504] *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korában. I. 1867-1892.*, vol. I., Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korába (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1952), 70–74.

water," noted Bobula.[505] In his reply, Kossuth underlined that he did not wish any supremacy for the Magyars in Hungary and supported equality regardless of nationality, language, or religion. Furthermore, in a lecturing tone, Kossuth voiced his skepticism about whether Bobula understood the concept of confederation correctly.[506] Kossuth quipped that only states could form a confederation, not nationalities within a state. Thus, Bobula's confederation plan was directed against Hungary's territorial integrity since Slovak autonomy would have meant the dismemberment of the state's territory.[507] Another interesting feature of the letter, more so for historians than for Bobula, is the fact that he listed the versions of the Danube confederation plan that he recognized as authentic.[508]

Consequently, Kossuth's project included a new Hungarian revolution against the Habsburg Crown that would assert the independence of Hungary and pave the way for the Danubian confederation. The independent Hungary then would propose the creation of an association with its neighboring nations if they refrained from occupying each other's territories and violating each other's sovereignty. Parallel to this, Kossuth planned to solve the nationality problem within Hungary with cultural autonomies. In its time, Kossuth's plan was highly unpopular among all parties involved. The plans of Bălcescu, Golescu, and Papiu-Ilarian leave the historian with no doubt that Kossuth's proposal was unacceptable to Romanians. To Kossuth's surprise, the Romanian and Serbian representatives found his "maximum plan" too minimal. The nationalities did not want to retire their territorial claims. At the same time, Kossuth's Danube Confederation plan also outraged Hungarian politicians. They considered Kossuth's scheme an act of treason

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[505] József Demmel, *Magyar haza, szlovák nemzet: alkotmányos szlovák politikai törekvések Magyarországon (1860-1872)*, Kor/ridor könyvek 5 (Békéscsaba: Magyarországi Szlovákok Kutatóintézete, 2016), 100.

[506] I would like to express my gratitude to József Demmel for bringing Kossuth's letter to my attention. Demmel, 99.

[507] Kossuth's letter has not been preserved in its entirety. Unfortunately, the letter breaks off at the most exciting part, the assessment of Bobula's plan as compared to his Danube confederation plan. "Bobulának. Turin, 1867. deczember 24.," in *Kossuth Lajos iratai VIII*, vol. I, XIII vols., Kossuth Lajos összes munkái (Budapest: ATHENAEUM R. TÁRSULAT, 1900), https://www.arcanum.com/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Kossuth-kossuth-lajos-osszes-munkai-1/kossuth-lajos-iratai-viii-4D95/1867-4DA2/bobulanak-5024/.

[508] "I refer here to my plan for the organization of the state, published in 1851 (published in several translations since then), as well as to point 11 of the Danube confederation project, published in 1862. Furthermore, I have the honor to send to Your Lordship herewith a copy of the explanatory notes to the said project of the Danube confederation, and also a copy of the political journal "Negyvenkilencz", issues 4-5, of which I have the honor to bring to your attention the chapters 2, 3 and 4.
All of these shed clear and proper light on my views on the nationality question. It would only be a useless repetition to enter into a further discussion of them." "Bobulának. Turin, 1867. deczember 24."

against the Hungarian nation because of the concessions granted to the nationalities. In parallel, the impossibility of a new revolution against the Crown repeatedly postponed Hungarian independence and the realization of the Danube Confederation.

About the Transylvanian question

The most delicate part of Kossuth's project regarded the status of Transylvania. Kossuth changed this part of the draft constitution most frequently and even left it entirely out of some versions and translations of the text.[509] To comprehend the significance of the "Transylvanian question," it is essential to provide a concise overview of Transylvania's status and its historical connection to Hungary. Situated within the Carpathian Mountains, Transylvania is presently located in Romania. Throughout its history, Transylvania has been characterized by its multi-ethnic composition, where ethnic and religious affiliations frequently intersected. In the introduction, I briefly touched upon the compromise reached among the three Transylvanian nations.[510] The status of Transylvania has always been subject to heated political debates. In the Middle Ages, Transylvania was part of the Hungarian state. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the territory of Transylvania was at the intersection of the conflicts between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, and it became part of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1687 as a separate principality rather than as a part of Hungary. The idea of a cultural and social union of Hungary and Transylvania emerged with the centralizing policy of Joseph II. The Transylvanian Estates wanted to unite with Hungary to resist the central power in Vienna and protect the specific interests of Transylvania.

Before the nineteenth century, however, the Estates in Hungary did not imagine a "spiritual union" of the two kindred nations but rather a reincorporation of Transylvania to recover the lands of the Hungarian Holy Crown. Legally, the Habsburgs acquired the Principality of Transylvania as part of the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen. Still, in 1690, the decree *Diploma Leopoldinum* established Transylvania's administrative

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[509]For an in-depth philological analysis, see: Spira, *Kossuth és alkotmányterve*. 23-33; 35-

[510] For a more detailed analysis, see: Judit Pál, "Parallel Nation-Building in Transylvania and the Issue of the Union with Hungary Prior to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise," in *The Creation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*, by Gábor Gyáni, Katalin Rácz, and Bob Dent, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2021), 174–99, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003195160-7. See also Chapter "Non-Territorial Autonomy in Late Habsburg Hungary – Historical Context."

autonomy from the Kingdom of Hungary. The legal documents thus provided arguments for both independence and union. The "Transylvanian question" only took on nationalist overtones in the 1830s. With the emergence of modern national consciousness, a belief in the necessity of the union of Transylvania with Hungary replaced the tradition of a separate Transylvanian interest, and a new rhetoric of common origin and kinship emerged. During the Reform Era, Magyars referred to the Kingdom of Hungary and Transylvania as "two brotherly homelands" (*két testvérhaza*).[511]

The unionist movement began in Transylvania, but pamphlets warning of the dangers of the union were also published. The leading representatives of the unionists were the liberal and democratic Baron Miklós Wesselényi and Lajos Kossuth, who was a journalist and deputy at the National Diet at the time. The core argument in favor of union with Hungary was to increase the number and weight of Magyars. Moreover, Wesselényi also argued that because of the high degree of conservatism of the Transylvanian Estates and the weakness of Transylvania alone, the introduction of liberal reforms in conjunction with Hungarian liberalism was more likely to succeed. However, some Transylvanian politicians feared that the union would eliminate Transylvania's distinctiveness and specific laws. There were also skeptics in the Kingdom of Hungary. Their fears were precisely the opposite of Transylvanian concerns. They were worried that Transylvanians wanted to maintain the peculiarities of their constitution, which reform politicians from the Kingdom of Hungary considered retrograde. One of these critics was Kossuth, who, despite supporting the brotherhood and unity of the two nations, also criticized Transylvania's public law for its conservativism. He condemned Transylvania's unicameral parliament and the lack of autonomy in its administration. In Transylvania, the autonomy of the counties was significantly weaker than in Hungary. The counties had no financial autonomy and the election of key officials had to be confirmed by the king. We have already seen that the counties' autonomy was one of the essential pillars of Kossuth's thinking as well as his Danube Confederation project.

Parallel to this, from the end of the eighteenth century, the idea of unifying the territories inhabited by the Romanians also became a fundamental element in Romanian nation-building. In the eighteenth century, Romanians became the majority in Transylvania. Given that Romanians lacked political representation, the Habsburg

[511] Pál, 176.

government proposed to the Greek Orthodox clergy that they unite with the Roman Catholic Church under the Greek Catholic denomination. This, of course, also held the promise of strengthening Catholicism in Transylvania. The élites of the Greek Catholic church became the leaders of the modern Romanian national movement in Transylvania. This cultural movement is often referred to as *Școala Ardeleană* (Transylvanian School), which first strove for equal rights within the Habsburg Empire and then for the creation of a nation-state uniting all Romanians. In 1791, Greek Catholic bishops submitted the petitions titled *Supplex Libellus Valachorum Transilvaniae* to Emperor Leopold II, King of Hungary, asking for the recognition of Romanians as the fourth nation of Transylvania and the usage of Romanian in public administration. The Supplex Libellus thus sought to accommodate the Romanians within the feudal framework by giving equal rights to the Romanian clergy, nobility, and commoners. The Emperor left it to the Transylvanian Diet to decide on the petition.[512]

Transylvanian Saxons too disapproved of the "spiritual union" between the two brotherly Magyar nations. Most Romanian and Saxon politicians in Transylvania wanted to maintain Transylvania's autonomy and obtain collective rights for their respective nationalities.[513] The Saxons rightly feared that the chances of a German-speaking administration would cease with a unification between the two kindred states. Romanians, for their part, did not want to lose their numerical majority in Transylvania. In 1848, despite the opposition of the Saxons and Romanians, the Transylvanian Parliament declared the unification due to the majority of Magyars in the Diet—Article 1848:VII of the Transylvanian Law sanctioned the unification of Transylvania with Hungary. Consequently, the unification of Hungary and Transylvania did not occur as a result of a process of negotiation between the nationalities.

It quickly became clear that the Magyars would have to find a way to accommodate the nationalities. During his exile, Kossuth came to believe that the reciprocal protection of the rights of each nationality was the only appropriate way to deal with the "Transylvanian question." In his later works, Kossuth proposed keeping the nationalities'

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[512] Köpeczi, *Erdély története három kötetben: 2, 1606-tól 1830-ig*, 1117–18.
[513] Miklós Asztalos, *Kossuth Lajos kora és az erdélyi kérdés*. (Budapest: Collegium Transylvanicum, 1928). Judit Pál, *Unió vagy "unificáltatás"? Erdély uniója és a királyi biztos működése (1867-1872)*, Erdélyi tudományos füzetek 267 (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület, 2010). 1-53. Judit Pál, "Unió vagy autonómia? Erdély uniójának törvényi szabályozása," *Magyar Kisebbség* 14, no. 1–2 (n.d.): 64–80.

historical autonomies. This was a viable solution for the Saxons but not for nationalities without such institutions, like the Romanians. To repair this defect and safeguard the equal rights of all nationalities, he planned to establish democratic institutions such as general suffrage, equal representation in the national assembly, civic and political rights, and ecclesiastical autonomy. Kossuth believed that these measures would guarantee the Romanians' willingness to accept the unification of Hungary with Transylvania. He devised a similar solution for the Serbian Voivodeship and the Banat of Temeswar.

One could easily arrive at the conclusion that Kossuth drew the idea of cultural autonomy from the self-determination of nations in the Transylvanian constitution, the compromise between the three noble nations, as did Renner when he imagined national cultural autonomies similar to the Transylvanian Saxon's self-governing bodies called *universitas*.[514] On the contrary, Kossuth saw the compromise of three nations and four religions as a flaw of the Transylvanian constitution and considered the Hungarian constitution, which only recognized one state-nation, more appropriate for modern times. In the 1840s, the Transylvanian opposition politician Dénes Kemény also argued that the essence of the specific rights of the three nations and four religions could be transferred to the county system after unification with Hungary. In his judgment, he declared that "Transylvania is not a separate state (*polgárzat*) (…) We are not a country in any sense, but a province acting as a country, and we are not even a province of Hungary, (...) but a colony of Austria. Transylvania, as it is, is not a European country, but one of the most impoverished provinces of Austria, where there is neither material wealth nor constitutional life."[515]

The historians Miskolczy and Spira, however, argue that, on other occasions, Kossuth also surrendered to Serbian and Romanian territorial claims. He accepted the idea of an independent Transylvania or a plebiscite that would determine its status. Kossuth was, however, cautious about putting these ideas in print. In the plan that appeared in *L'Alleanza* in 1862, Kossuth included the autonomy of Transylvania and the territories inhabited by the Serbs. This would have implied the inner federalization of

[514] Karl Renner [Pseud. Springer, Rudolf], *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele*, 245. See also Chapter "Non-Territorial Autonomy in Late Habsburg Hungary – Historical Context" and Chapter I/3.3.
[515] Asztalos, *Kossuth Lajos kora és az erdélyi kérdés.*, 80–81.

Hungary.[516] However, even the inner federalization of Hungary did not satisfy the Romanian political élite, who were irritated by the Hungarians' "jovial-paternalist invitation" to enjoy equal rights.[517] Accepting this invitation would have meant tacit recognition of Hungarian supremacy and acceptance of the status of a nation without a history. Papiu Ilarian, for instance, called the leaders of the future non-territorial national autonomies in the Danube Confederation "Gypsy kings with crippled power." Furthermore, he interpreted Kossuth's constitution plan as a "poisoned apple," as Simion Bărnuțiu put it in 1848.[518] Hungarians like Aurél Kecskeméthy, a journalist who made a career in Schmerling's press agency, argued that the price of a compromise with the Dynasty was lower than what the nationalities requested: "The price of our reconciliation with Austria and its Monarchy is not so high as the nationalities' demand, which our clumsy revolutionaries would be ready to pay."[519] Thus, Kossuth's unpopular plan sought to solve one of the most pressing problems of the time by creating a greater Danube federation in which every nation would have self-government alongside Hungarian dominance.

1.3.3. Conclusion

With the emergence of the modern national consciousness, which promoted the principle of one nation, one territory, areas with a mixed ethno-confessional structure faced a difficult task. How could they ensure equal rights for all individuals and citizens while safeguarding their national specificities? Political thinkers in Europe, and in particular in the countries along the Danube, had developed answers to this problem based on three principles. The first principle was the territorial principle, which entailed the creation of ethnically homogeneous territories, even at the cost of population exchanges. We saw an example of this in Papiu-Ilarian's plan. The second principle was the modernization of historical (national) autonomies. We see this logic at work in Kossuth's plan, when he wanted to build on ecclesiastical autonomies or the institution of the voivodeship. The

[516] Miskolczy claims that Kossuth accepted the idea of an independent Transylvania for the sake of László Teleki, who was a dedicated advocate of the idea. Miskolczy, "Nemzetiség, szabadság, politika. Fejezetek a magyar és román emigráció párizsi dialógusának történetéből." 15.
[517] Borsi-Kálmán, *Nemzetfogalom és nemzetstratégiák*, 83.
[518] Borsi-Kálmán, 84.
[519] Szabad, *Kossuth politikai pályája. Ismert és ismeretlen politikai megnyilatkozásai tükrében*.

third principle was rooted in the liberal tradition and built on individual freedom and equality by making the individual right of association the basis of national equality. This line of thought was also rooted in liberalism's belief that individual democratic freedoms are superior to nationalism. Kossuth's Danube confederation plan was built on this third belief.

Kossuth based his plan on the individual and a democratic system of popular sovereignty. The municipal associations, which would hold executive power and the right to decide their internal and external language of communication, would have be elected based on popular sovereignty. This municipal autonomy was not based on nationality or language. But since in most of the municipalities, one of the nationalities formed the majority, these municipal associations could have served as the basis for countrywide national autonomies based on the personality principle. Kossuth safeguarded the minorities' rights by introducing guarantees, such as the protection of the minority language, individual rights and liberties, and the accountability of officers. These national autonomies would have incorporated the national churches and elected their own leaders. Municipal councils would appoint the county council members. The county councils would have been equally free to determine their external and internal administrative language. The national assembly and the government would thus have been elected by the counties. Even if Kossuth did not separate the representation of nationalities from the democratically elected national bodies as firmly as did Renner, there are many similarities between the two statesmen's models of thought.

The differences were also significant, since Kossuth's plan was based on Hungarian independence. The guarantee of Hungary's freedom would be staying on good terms with the neighboring states where the fraternal nations of Hungary's nationalities lived. This friendship was to be sanctified by the Danube Confederation. Depending on the political situation, numerous versions of the plan circulated through official and unofficial channels in the second half of the nineteenth century. The "original" plan was drawn up in April 1851 in Kütahya at the request of Mazzini and in response to Bălcescu's plan for a confederation of the Danube. A version was published in English in November 1851, followed in 1859 by the French version by Irányi-Chassin. From 1860 onwards, various Italian versions appeared, which Kossuth was obliged to accept as his own. The first Hungarian translation was published in 1859, followed by Imre Áldor's version in 1878 and Benedek Jancsó's in 1895. A Romanian translation is said to have been produced in

the 1850s. At the same time, Romanian and Serbian emigrants were developing their own plans for a regional settlement.

Chapter II/1.3. "Message from Kütahya – Kossuth's Danube Confederation Plan" also confirmed that (con)federation plans were an extension of nation-building plans, as Holly Case has also suggested. It was common for politicians of the time to seek to secure their own independent nations against Austria, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire by forming confederations with neighboring peoples. The *Načertanije*, the 1844 South Slavic confederation plan of the Serbian Ilija Garašanin, aimed at a leading role for an independent Serbia. The Polish statesman Adam Jerzy Czartoryski connected Polish independence with a Hungarian, Slavic, and Romanian confederation plan under Polish patronage. The next chapters explore how, fifty years on, Oszkár Jászi discovered Kossuth's confederation plan while seeking answers to similar questions as an aspiring sociologist and politician. I hypothesize that Jászi became familiar with Kossuth's plan after learning about the Austromarxists' non-territorialist plan for cultural autonomy. The similarity between Kossuth's and Renner's plans allowed Jászi to synthesize them and present them as his own answer to the nationality question, rooted in the Hungarian intellectual tradition.

1.4. Homo Danubiensis – Jászi's "Eastern Switzerland"

1.4.1. "Intellectual life or agitation: the two cannot be reconciled"[520]

Early years

Oszkár Jászi was born in 1875 as Oszkár Jakubinowits (or Jakubinovits), the son of Dr. Ferencz Jakubinowits, a Jewish medical practitioner in Nagykároly/Carei (present-day Romania). In 1881, Ferencz Jakubinowits submitted his request for a name change and the family converted to Calvinism, which was considered the most liberal among the confessions practiced in the region. On Oszkár's birth certificate issued in 1895, his classification is "Hungarian Calvinist," and this is the mentality in which he was raised.[521] Later, he reflected on his Jewish origins: "That we were Jews, I did not know. Religion had no significance in our life. (...) Today, I think it was a serious pedagogical mistake that they [*Jászi's parents*] did not explain to us the meaning and significance of changing our religion. They even avoided the subject in our presence when it came up at social gatherings. Thus, we felt unprepared when a few years later, the Christian-Jewish question and antagonism started to unfold in the society of our little town."[522] This attitude of minimizing their Jewish origin was not unusual in Jászi's generation. Jászi attended the local Piarist school and studied law in Budapest. Jászi's interests were broad. As one of his critics put it: "He has a lot, a lot of will, but he does not know what he wants. He must be a famous agitator, adored by the masses, a great statesman, admired by small politicians, or a great scientist, admired by the elite of the intellectual world."[523] The criticism turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, since Jászi experienced all three stages in his lifetime.

In 1896, under the pseudonym of Elemér Oszkár, the law student Oszkár Jászi published a study on Artúr Görgey, the military leader of the Hungarian Revolutionary Army, whom Kossuth and his circles scapegoated for surrendering to the Russian army in August 1849 at Világos.[524] In this booklet, intending to tell the "true story of the

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[520] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, 27.
[521] Litván, 18–19.
[522] György Litván, "Jászi Oszkár és a zsidókérdés," in *The Holocaust in Hungary: a European perspective*, ed. Judit Molnár (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2005), 45–53. 46.
[523] József Diner-Dénes, "Leszámolás Jászi Oszkárral.," *A munka szemléje* III, no. 19 (1907): 1.
[524] Elemér Oszkár [pseud. Jászi, Oszkár], *Görgey Arthur 1848-49-ben*.

Hungarian Revolution," the author sided with general Görgey because of "moral and national-political" concerns. The pamphlet depicted Kossuth's personality in a rather disadvantageous way and criticized his leadership and hunger for power.[525] Nonetheless, the booklet presumably allowed the young Jászi to study the events of 1848-1849 and reflect on their causes and consequences.

After graduating from law school in 1896, Jászi worked as an assistant drafting clerk and later as a ministerial draftsman (*Ministerialkonzipist*) at the Department of Economics within the Ministry of Agriculture. He quit this job in 1906—as we will see later in this chapter. His friendship with the syndicalist librarian Ervin/Erwin Szabó (born Samuel Ármin Schlesinger) and the socialist jurist Bódog Somló (born: Felix Fleischer) raised Jászi's interest in social issues and the social democratic movement. Jászi's letters and diaries testify that he hesitates between a scholarly and a political career in his youth, as his critic correctly pointed out: "Intellectual life or agitation: the two cannot be reconciled. There is no complete happiness for us, that's for sure. An unfortunate combination of political and intellectual urges makes it impossible."[526] Jászi, however, did not become a member of the social democratic party. He was concerned with the "rugged and foulmouthed" culture of the SDPH, which felt to him like a "cultural slap in the face."[527]

At the turn of the century, Jászi and his circle founded a scholarly journal of their own, *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century), and a sociological society (*Társadalomtudományi Társaság*).[528] The society organized debates on new directions in sociology and collected surveys on the most controversial questions of the time, such as the nationality question or the Jewish question. The 1917 survey and public debate on the Jewish question raised plenty of unexpected tensions, as discussed in Chapter II/3 "What Is Jewishness, Actually." *Huszadik Század* also reviewed the books of Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, which I frequently cited in the first part of my study. The organization also edited a series of sociological books, the so-called "Social Sciences Library," publishing members' own works and translations of recently published volumes in the young

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[525] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, 26–27.
[526] Litván, 27. Litván, 40.
[527] György Litván, ed., *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.* (Budapest: Magvető, 1991), 56–59.
[528] For an overview, see Attila Pók, *A magyarországi radikális demokrata ideológia kialakulása: a "Huszadik század" társadalomszemlélete, (1900-1907)*, 1. kiad, Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből, új sorozat, 112 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990).

discipline of sociology.[529] In 1905, Jászi held a series of lectures for "seventy socialist students."[530] Based on this experience, in 1907, the society launched a program similar to the French *Collège libre des sciences sociales* (*Társadalomtudományok Szabad Iskolája*), a series of seminars for students interested in socialism.

In 1905 Jászi visited Paris. A letter in the Victor Adler archives testifies that Jászi's friend Ervin Szabó asked Victor Adler, the chairman of the Austrian Social Democratic Worker's Party (SDAP), to help Jászi meet Jean Jaurès, the leader of the French Unified Socialist Party in Paris. His friend, "... a ministerial draftsmen (*Ministerialkonzipist*), is the purest radical spirit. His trip has not least the purpose of preparing for his political career. If he will then also—presumably—become my most dangerous opponent in the Hungarian socialist camp: he will always remain a sincere person. And today he is my friend. So may I ask you to give him some words of recommendation for Jaurès? […] His name is Dr. O. Jászi."[531]

Jászi attended socialist meetings, met prominent thinkers of the time, and interviewed some of them for the *Huszadik Század*. He met socialist activists and thinkers like Lucien Herr, the mentor of Jean Jaurés and was introduced to the revolutionary syndicalist Hubert Lagardelle, the pacifist socialist Gustav Hervé, and the members of the *Bourse du Travail* (Labor Exchanges), a working-class organization for social aid, education, and self-organization. Jászi had the chance to exchange ideas with socialist essayists and writers like Charles Péguy, Anatole France, and Romain Rolland. Interested in the new science of sociology, Jászi visited Felix le Dantec, the philosopher of science; the sociologists Marcel Mauss, Émile Durkheim, and Henri Hubert; and the psychologist Theodule Ribot. Jászi did meet Jaurésists, but I have not found evidence on whether he met Jaurés himself. His stay in Paris, his conversations with prominent scientists of the time, and his participation in socialist meetings confronted Jászi with his old dilemma: science or political activism? In France, he also experienced the professionalization of sociology. He realized that to become a professional sociologist, he should only gain expertise in a clearly-delimited field unless he wanted to risk becoming a pseudo-scientist. "The Franks' city demoralized me, as usual. The city took all my self-confidence

[529] Among others, they published books by Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Karl Kautsky, Friedrich Nietzsche, Beatrice Webb, Franklin H. Giddings, Gustav Ratzenhofer, etc.
[530] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.*, 120.
[531] "Briefe an Adler," November 12, 1904, VGA.

and drive to work," he lamented.[532] The young Jászi also realized the scientific backwardness in Hungary. "Our life, my friend, is just a caricature of life in Western Europe."[533]

Mastering the national and the social questions

Jászi's interest in the nationality question arose around 1904. We know little about whether he was familiar with the non-territorial elements in Kossuth's Danube constitution plan before 1908. It seems more likely that Kossuth's draft constitution had escaped his attention, since Jászi rarely mentioned Kossuth in his letters and articles. The literature does not give an unequivocal answer in this regard. The radical democratic thinkers of Jászi's generation considered themselves the heirs of the liberal ideas of József Eötvös and the Nationality Law from 1868: "Of the members of the great Reform Era generation, József Eötvös had the greatest influence on me. I admired his profound humanity: I have to thank him for striving for a humane solution to the question of national minorities, which was to become a decisive factor in my own life."[534] The young "radicals" considered the heirs of the 1848 ideas who gathered around the Independence party reactionary and chauvinistic.[535] Perhaps the only exception to this negative perception was the writer and politician Lajos Mocsáry, a fact well illustrated by his election as a deputy of the Romanian National Party in 1888.[536]

In 1904, the jurist Viktor Jászi, Oszkár's brother, visited him, and they contemplated why in Hungary social democracy was accused of antipatriotism.[537] During

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[532] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.*, 117.
[533] Litván, 84.
[534] Cited in: Litván, *A Twentieth-Century Prophet*, 9. See also Jászi's 1913 article on the philosophy of state and politics of Eötvös: Oszkár Jászi, "B. Eötvös József állambölcselete és politikája," *Huszadik Század* 14, no. 2 (1913): 313–49.
[535] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, 27; Peter Haslinger, *Arad, November 1918: Oszkár Jászi und die Rumänen in Ungarn, 1900 bis 1918*, Zur Kunde Südosteuropas 2, 19 (Wien: Böhlau, 1993), 22.
[536] Jászi, *Nemzetiségi kérdés*, 147. István Csucsuja, "Lajos Mocsary's Political Theory of National Minorities," in *Geopolitics in the Danube Region: Hungarian Reconciliation Efforts, 1848–1998*, ed. Ignác Romsics and Béla K. Király (Central European University Press, 1998), 161–76, https://doi.org/10.7829/j.ctv1wvms9m. Lajos Mocsáry, *Nemzetiség* (Pest: Ráth Mór, 1858), https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb10771744?page=4,5. Lajos Mocsáry, *Programm a nemzetiség és a nemzetiségek tárgyában* (Pest: Ráth Mór, 1860), https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Books_07_19dik20dikSzazadiTarsadalomtortenet_0537_Programm_a_nemzetiseg_es_a_nemzetisegek_targyaban_1218/?pg=119&layout=s.
[537] Chapter I/3.1. also reflects on this question.

this conversation, Oszkár Jászi connected the social and nationality questions for the first time and committed himself to solving them. "Among the socialists, I was the first person in Hungary who clarified the relation between the nation-state and socialism. I demonstrated that socialism does not lead to antipatriotism," he boasted in a letter to his friend, Somló.[538] In a letter written to Ervin Szabó in October 1904, he sketched a plan in the spirit of Eötvös and the 1868 Nationality Law. He started to develop a system that would satisfy the workers' needs in their mother tongue while conserving the "body of the Hungarian state and nation."[539] This is what the socialist national policy should be, Jászi argued: "to give a homeland to the tormented beast-men who had only *pálinka*, but no homeland."[540] One week later, he was already announcing to his friend that his idea had matured: a well-developed plan of action to create "Hungarian socialism" was now ready for implementation.[541] Jászi was searching for continuity with the liberal national tradition of the nineteenth century and for a way to disassociate it from allegations of anti-patriotism. Jászi's political program can be described as radical democratism. Radical democratism had set as its program the accommodation of socialism and the nationality question, striving for Hungary's independence and the equality of the nationalities in a new independent and democratic Hungary. The means to implement this program were economic self-sufficiency, popular local governments, educational reform, the secularization of church estates, a transfer of the health service and judicial system to state control, and complete freedom of thought, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom to strike.[542]

With the foundation of the *Huszadik Század*, Jászi created a medium of his own to propagate his political ideas. Now, in 1905 he put into shape a plan for a political party.[543] Jászi was ready to take the first practical steps toward politics by participating in the "League for Universal Suffrage by Secret Ballot" (*Választójogi Liga*) and the socialist Martinovics Lodge within the Freemasons in 1906.[544] This new endeavor was marked by

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[538]Litván, *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.*, 128.
[539] References to letters: Litván, 46–51.
[540] Litván, 262.
[541] Litván, 56–59.
[542] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, 66. For the English version: Litván, *A Twentieth-Century Prophet*, 59.
[543] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, 45–46.; Litván, *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.*, 46–52.
[544] For the blueprint of the plan, see: Litván, *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.*, 110–12. In the draft plan, Jászi builds his argument for according equal rights on the tradition of 1848. He argues that universal suffrage is the continuation of the nation-building process launched by Kossuth, Széchenyi, and Eötvös. See also: Litván, 116.

his authoritative article in the *Huszadik Század*, *Szocializmus és hazafiság* (Socialism and Patriotism). The article argued that the national and social questions were interconnected. In line with the Erfurt program of the German Social Democratic Party, Jászi claimed that socialism was ready to step into the shoes of nineteenth-century nationalism. He wanted to return to the origins of the national idea, as its liberal founding fathers understood it: economic and cultural advancement, the happiness of every citizen, and the sovereignty of all peoples.[545] These steps led to the formation of the ideology of "civic radicalism" and, in 1907, the institution of the Polgári Radikális Párt (*Civic Radical Party*).

In the letter to Ervin Szabó, Jászi argued that socialism had to be interpreted within a national framework. He wanted to win over the national superstructure (*Überbau*) for the cause of socialism. A true national policy had to be socialist by definition.[546] Assimilation would only succeed if a fair cultural policy that benefitted the nationalities were implemented, wrote Jászi. He claimed—probably incidentally echoing Kossuth's arguments in an 1849 letter to Teleki—that millions of people belonging to the nationalities would benefit from such a policy. Jászi concluded that except for a few thousand people belonging to the gentry, the nationalities lacked a national ideology (*haza-ideológia*). Sacrificing the cause for these few would be "sloppy sentimentality" (*Gefühlsduselei*), he concluded.[547] It is, however, unclear whether Jászi's humane assimilation policy was an end in itself. The historian Péter Hanák argues that Jászi regarded his minimal program drafted in *Szocializmus és hazafiság* (Socialism and Patriotism) as the first step towards the autonomy of the nationalities. For Jászi, the precondition of autonomy was democratic transformation. The road to autonomy would be paved with mutual compromises between the co-habiting nations.

After his return from Paris, Jászi started looking for alternative ways of making a living to "break free from the depressing Junker-milieu" and start active implementation of his political program, which had crystallized by then.[548] His political activity became less and less compatible with the spirit of his office. Apart from creating the institutional framework to implement his plan, Jászi also became invested in the nationality question from a sociological perspective. Inspired by his scholarly adventure in Paris, he proposed

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[545] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.*, 116.
[546] Litván, 24.
[547] Litván, 56–59.
[548] Litván, 118.

a dissertation on this topic as his habilitation, the highest academic qualification. The planned work would have involved completing his article *Socialism and Patriotism*.[549] He later abandoned this intention, but from 1907 on, he worked continuously on the topic and produced a book manuscript. In November 1905, Jászi received a fitting assignment from the Ministry of Agriculture: he was sent out to the regions inhabited by the nationalities to conduct on-site research on the situation of agricultural workers.[550] However, with the political crisis in the spring of 1906, Jászi's position in the Ministry became untenable, and in June, he resigned from his post.[551]

After his assignment at the Ministry of Agriculture had ended, Jászi continued combining field research and theoretical studies on the nationality question: "historical materialism puts the nationality question into perspective," he confessed to his friend Bódog Somló. In the summer of 1907, he set out again on a research trip to the multi-ethnic Lugos/Lugoj/Lugosch region (present-day Romania). In 1908, Jászi learned some basic Romanian. In May 1908, he reported to his friend about the progress he had made in collecting data for the proposed book. Jászi spent three hours daily on "nationality issues."[552] In September, he spent a week at his parents' house doing focused work on the book and finished writing half of the manuscript. He expected another year or two of concentrated work to bring the book to fruition.[553] In 1909, according to a letter to Georg Lukács, he conducted field trips in the Slovak regions.[554]

During his field trips, Jászi got to know the intelligentsia of the nationalities. In Lugos/Lugoj/Lugosch, inhabited mainly by Romanians, his guide and interpreter was Onisifor Ghibu, later a professor of theology and politician. In the region inhabited by Slovaks, he received guidance and support from intellectuals recommended by the Slovak nation-builder and journalist and future prime minister of Czechoslovakia Milan Hodža. Jászi developed a questionnaire to get acquainted with the status quo in each region where the nationalities were in the majority. The form included questions about social conditions, such as class structure, tenure modes, urbanization, industrialization, and the

[549] Litván, 115–16.
[550] Litván, 126, 136.
[551] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, 60–61. For the political crisis in Hungary see: Chapter "Non-Territorial Autonomy in Late Habsburg Hungary – Historical Context."
[552] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.*, 160..
[553] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár válogatott levelei.* 162; 166.
[554] Oszkár Jászi, "Régi és új hazaárulás," *Huszadik Század* 10, no. 2 (1909): 293–301.

spread of socialist ideas. Jászi was also interested in the relationship between representatives of state administration and the people and the percentage of employees belonging to the nationalities. He asked questions about the success of Hungarian elementary schools among the nationalities, national hatred, migration, inter-ethnic relations, assimilation, centrifugal tendencies, and the situation of the Jews. He was interested in what ordinary people enjoyed reading, who their national heroes were, and which political parties were popular. Jászi's questionnaire thus addressed some of the most critical aspects of an emerging national identity.[555] By the end of his research trips, Jászi believed that he understood the view of the nationalities' élites and earnt their confidence. Others, however, considered Jászi and his endeavor naïve. Either way, by regularly publishing essays and book reviews on the nationality question in democratic journals and publishing a book on the issue in 1912, Jászi became the top expert on the nationality question in the Hungarian part of the Monarchy.

1.4.2. Jászi and the Journey of a New Narrative

Discovering Kossuth

Where and how did the intellectual journeys of Kossuth, the Austromarxists, and Jászi cross? It seems clear that Jászi had known about Renner's publications early on. However, until 1905, the young radicals were more invested in a liberal policy updated with social reforms than in solving the nationality question. Even with Jászi's shift of attention, the *Huszadik Század* took seven years from its establishment to reflect on the Austromarxist solution to the nationality question. As I showed in Chapters I/2 and I/3, Renner and Bauer's ideas of cultural autonomy curtailed Hungary's chances of becoming a sovereign state. Moreover, the struggle for independence was one of the core ingredients of the Hungarian national consciousness. This meant that, for Hungarians, becoming one of the autonomous nationalities in a *Großösterreich* was not an attractive option. Yet the Hungarian radicals and Renner had more in common than one might initially assume. First, like Renner and Bauer, Jászi, too, took the nexus between modernization and nationalism as his starting point. Similar to Bauer, Jászi also concluded that since national

[555] For the concept of "national identity check-list," see: Anne-Marie Thiesse, *The Creation of National Identities: Europe, 18th—20th Centuries* (BRILL, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004498839.

hatred was in fact transformed class hatred, modernization rather awakened than removed national consciousness. Second, Jászi endorsed the idea that the masses could only be "civilized" in their native languages.[556] Third, Jászi also regarded the nationality question as a cultural issue more than a struggle for political power.[557] The stakes of the national struggle were, in effect, a struggle for instruction in the mother tongue that would enable equal chances in the labor market. All in all, in Jászi's opinion, nationalism was a characteristic of the non-Magyar intelligentsia (*lateinerek*) and aimed at language usage and equal opportunity on the job market.

Much like his contemporaries, Jászi believed that since Hungary was still an agrarian country, the "economic struggle" would not turn into intense national hostilities in the near future. Nevertheless, he was aware that as soon as the proportion of the intelligentsia among the nationalities increased, the new non-Magyar intelligentsia would interpret its struggle for positions in the public administration as a national struggle—all the more so because the Magyar gentry dominated these positions.[558] Typically of his generation, for Jászi, the primacy of the Magyar nation and its leading role in modernizing Hungary was self-evident due to the Hungarians' "historical role" as the state-nation. Jászi believed that democratic rights and liberties would transform Hungary into a home for all nationalities. One could also ask why Jászi and Kossuth designed a solution for the nationalities they would not have accepted for their own nation. Since there was a widespread belief in the primacy of the so-called historical nations, it probably did not occur to these Magyar politicians how strong the struggle for national independence among the nationalities had become. His informants from the nationalities, whom Jászi believed to be objective, also confirmed this view.[559] "There is certainly no hatred against Hungarians. (…) People call Hungarians their brothers. (…) There is no gravitation to the outside," the Slovak Peter Makovický reported to Jászi.[560]

Jászi had re-discovered Kossuth's ideas by 1905 while agitating for general suffrage. This may have been the point at which Jászi started seeing in the Hungarian revolutionary the politician who supported the nationalities' languages and cultures while

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[556] Oszkár Jászi, "Néhány szempont a nemzetiségi kérdéshez," *Huszadik Század* 8, no. 2 (1907): 889–905.
[557] Péter Hanák, *Jászi Oszkár dunai patriotizmusa*, Nemzet és emlékezet (Budapest: Magvető, 1985), 25–28.
[558] Jászi, "Néhány szempont a nemzetiségi kérdéshez," 900.
[559] Jászi, "Adatok a nemzetiségi kérdéshez," 76.
[560] Jászi, "Adatok a nemzetiségi kérdéshez."

safeguarding Hungary's territorial integrity and the primacy of Magyar as a language of mediation rather than a supporter of forced Magyarization. In 1908, however, Jászi still claimed that Kossuth wrote his Danube Confederation plan out of "sheer desperation."[561] Most probably, Jászi acquired in-depth knowledge of the draft constitution from Kütahya and its numerous variations and interpretations only when he started to deepen his understanding of the nationality question more systematically while researching and drafting his 1912 book, *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* (Emergence of the Nation-States and the NationalityProblem).[562] Since it was common to see Kossuth as the symbol of Hungary's independence and his Danube Confederation plan as his first step towards "antipatriotism," Jászi probably initially uncritically adopted this opinion from Benedek Jancsó's 1895 book.[563]

Based on Jászi's letters, diaries, biography, and publications, it is plausible that he discovered Kossuth's draft constitution in 1908. In 1907, Jászi had already published a review of Otto Bauer's book on the nationality question, the first synthesis of the issue from a Marxist perspective in the Habsburg Monarchy, in *Huszadik Század*.[564] What makes it even more likely that Jászi was not familiar with Kossuth's plan in 1907 is that in the book review, he did not reference the Draft Constitution from Kütahya, as he always did later when discussing the cultural autonomy project of Renner and Bauer. He presumably discovered the draft by the beginning of the following year. On another note, Jászi generally drew a parallel between Kossuth and Renner, rather than Kossuth and Bauer—probably because both Kossuth and Renner drafted constitution plans, whereas Bauer took a more theoretical sociological approach. I found Jászi's first reference to Kossuth's non-territorial arrangements in a 1908 book review on the nationality question.[565] The discovery of the similarities between the personal autonomy suggested by the two Austromarxist thinkers and Kossuth must have been eye-opening for Jászi. For Jászi, Kossuth's non-territorial solution and the plan for a Danubian Confederation placed Renner's idea of cultural autonomy in a new context: that of a sovereign Hungary. Reading the Austromarxists through the lens of Kossuth's draft constitution made the idea

[561] Jászi, "Magyar kultúra és a nemzetiségek."
[562] Jászi, *Nemzetiségi kérdés*.
[563] Jancsó, *Szabadságharcunk és a dákó-román törekvések.*
[564] Jászi, "Néhány szempont a nemzetiségi kérdéshez."
[565] Jászi, "A Magyar Kultúra És a Nemzetiségek."

of cultural autonomy part of the Hungarian intellectual tradition. Now, the idea became worth considering in this new setting of a Danubian Republic.

Fitting Hungary into the European history of nationalism theories

As mentioned above, it seems unlikely that Jászi was already familiar with the elements of cultural autonomy based on the personality principle in Kossuth's writing when he published his review of *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (*The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*), Otto Bauer's famous 1907 book on the nationality question.[566] This review, however, marked the beginning of a new narrative in Jászi's writing, which attributed international relevance to nineteenth-century Hungarian literature on nationalism. Jászi implied a certain continuity between the so-called reform generation of the 1840s and his own generation. By selecting and canonizing his spiritual predecessors, Jászi not only rooted his ideas in the Hungarian realm of experience (*Erfahrungsraum*) but also rewrote the past and made claims to shape the future.[567]

In the review of *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, Jászi spoke highly of Bauer's scientific approach. He stated that Bauer's book synthesized a century-long Austrian intellectual tradition. Among Bauer's forefathers, Jászi mentioned Karl Renner, the sociologist and jurist Ludwig Gumplowicz, and the statist and jurist Heinrich Rauchberg. It was important for Jászi to highlight that Hungarians, too, had contributed to the study of nationalism in the Habsburg Empire, even before their colleagues on the other side of the Leitha: "… we can proudly add that preceding these writers in the first phase of the national question (the transition of the feudal state into the liberal state) the deepest, most original, and the brightest theoretician was our Eötvös whose book is a standard work—and worldwide!—even today."[568]

The new narrative that Jászi developed in this review remained with him for decades. His new narrative inscribed the Hungarian political theoretical tradition in the intellectual history of the nationality question. Jászi pointed out the primacy of the

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[566] Jászi, "Néhány szempont a nemzetiségi kérdéshez.".
[567] Koselleck, "Erfahrungswandel und Methodenwechsel. Eine historisch-anthropologische Skizze," 41–54.
[568] Jászi, "Néhány szempont a nemzetiségi kérdéshez," 889.

contributions made by Hungarian authors who dedicated their attention to the national problem in the Habsburg Empire. His intention might have been to offset a Hungarian sense of "belatedness" compared to the developed West. This sense of "belatedness" was a widespread trope in contemporary Hungarian discourse.[569] Jászi's new intellectual history of the nationality question classified the Hungarian literature, too, as canonical and as part of a broader discourse within the Empire and beyond.

Jászi thought of the nationality question as being inherently the result of modern social and economic processes, that is, in modernist terms. Even the short quote on Eötvös above demonstrates this view. He sited the origins of nationalism in the transition from feudalism to liberalism. In his view, the emergence of nationality was closely linked to that of the nation-state: the nation-state preceded nationality.[570] Anglo-American and French sociologists' definitions of the nation-state and nation influenced Jászi's view. He firmly rejected and ridiculed the relevance of race to the national question. According to Jászi, it is an anachronism to project the terminology of modern nation-states back to the pre-modern era.[571] He corrected Bauer when he categorized tribal communism and the cultural consciousness of the ruling class in feudal societies among the developmental phases of national consciousness: "What I dislike in this periodization is that he applies the category of the nation to ages when, as a matter of fact, it did not exist. The collective consciousness that we call the nation is a later historical product that cannot be applied either to archaic tribal structures or to the Early Middle Ages," he stated categorically.[572]

The name of József Eötvös was soon overshadowed by that of Lajos Kossuth as Jászi connected the dots on his mental map of the theory of nationalism in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Jászi soon found an excuse to copy a lengthy excerpt in another book review in 1908 to demonstrate that Kossuth's idea of resolving the nationality question by analogy to religious freedom "anticipated Renner's conception by half a decade."[573] The book by Ernő Baloghy, a supporter of Hungary's independence and of a primordialist-assimilationist policy, focused on the relationship between Hungarian culture and the nationalities. In his review, Jászi filled an entire page—out of five—

[569] See: Nyíri, *Monarchia szellemi életéről*. 12.
[570] Jászi, *Nemzetiségi kérdés*, 2.
[571] Jászi, 29.
[572] Jászi, "Néhány szempont a nemzetiségi kérdéshez," 891–92.
[573] Jászi, "Magyar kultúra és a nemzetiségek."

presenting Kossuth's ideas on the non-territorial cultural autonomy of the nationalities in the Danube Confederation plan based on Benedek Jancsó's 1895 book. In this review, Jászi, for the first time, presented Kossuth's ideas linked to Rennerian cultural autonomy. Jászi wanted to demonstrate that Kossuth had "always" believed in the cultural and linguistic rights of the nationalities and rejected their forceful assimilation, even if he believed in the leading role of the Magyars in the Kingdom of Hungary.[574] The quotes from Kossuth and Renner were only partially relevant to the topic. Jászi was evidently looking for a pretext to popularize the primacy of Kossuth's ideas of cultural autonomy. Contemporaries considered Renner's theory "the most modern/radical national program of the social democrats," yet Kossuth had developed the same view 50 years previously, Jászi happily noted.[575]

In an essay from 1909, Jászi further refined the parallel between the solutions developed by the reform generation in the mid-nineteenth century and those put forward by his own generation. *Régi és új hazaárulás* (Old and New Treason*)* is an article in which Jászi, for the first time, explicitly connected Kossuth's spirit of compromise to that of the civic radicals.[576] The study of Kossuth's negotiations with the nationalities in 1848-49 revealed to Jászi the importance of dealing with the nationality question even as a social democrat. "[…] the only flaw of Kossuth's nationality law (of 1849) is that it came too late," he concluded.[577] He further developed his list of canonical authors on the nationality question by enumerating the names of politicians from the dominant nation and the nationalities who sustained this spirit of reconciliation (fr. *pacification*) over time: the Magyar revolutionaries of 1848-49 Dániel Irányi, József Madarász, Ernő Simonyi, the political writer and *comes* of Szabolcs county András Kállay; the Romanian politicians Alexandru Mocsonyi (de Mocioni), Iosif Hodosin (Hodoșiu), and Valeriu Branisce (Branište); and the Serbian lawyer and politician Szvetozár Miletics (Svetozar Miletić). Jászi wanted to present evidence about the existence of this tradition of pacification in the Kingdom of Hungary.

[574] Jászi, 194.
[575] See: Jászi, 194.and Jászi, "Régi és új hazaárulás."*;* Jászi, *Nemzetiségi kérdés*, 223–24.
[576] Jászi, "Régi és új hazaárulás."
[577] See: Jászi, 293.

Between Renner and Kossuth

By the time Jászi published his 1912 monograph *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés*, his interpretation of and solution to the nationality problem had fully developed.[578] The monograph focused on nationalism, its origins, and the nationality question. It was considered the first general, thorough, and pragmatic treatise on these topics in the Hungarian language that analyzed the evolution of nations in the context of "universal history." The author presented the changes in the economic and political structure throughout time from the perspective of what his contemporaries called sociology.[579] Indirectly, the monograph was a reply to Otto Bauer's 1907 book on the nationality question as Pál Szende, the reviewer of *A nemzeti államok kialakulása* in *Huszadik Század*, claimed: "Besides Otto Bauer's book, this is the only extensive book in the world that shows the connection between the formation of the nation states and the nationality question with the economic growth, the structure of production, and the modalities of the exchange of goods."[580]

Jászi again presented a narrative that supported not just a chronological but also a logical connection between the ideas of Kossuth and Renner, pointing out their striking similarities. Kossuth's resolution first appeared in the book as a footnote to Renner's thoughts in the chapter analyzing the development of the nationality question in Austria (*Az osztrák nemzetiségi kérdés fejlődése*).[581] Jászi presented excerpts from Kossuth's draft constitution according to Jancsó's 1895 book, which used Imre Áldor's 1878 Hungarian version as its basis.[582] Its second appearance was in the main text itself, repeatedly pointing out Kossuth's priority in designing a non-territorial solution to the nationality question.[583] Although Jászi praised the modern and liberal character and the humanitarian and placating tone of Kossuth's resolution, he argued that Kossuth completely misunderstood the main tendencies of state development. Despite ruling out

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[578] Jászi, *Nemzetiségi kérdés*.
[579] Pál Szende, "A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés (Book Review)," *Huszadik Század* 13, no. 1 (1912): 774–87.
[580] Szende, 785.
[581] Jászi, *Nemzetiségi kérdés*, 208–26.
[582]Jászi is talking about a plan from 1854, published by Irányi in 1870. I am not aware of such a version of the text. The version by Irányi and Chassin was written in 1859 and published in French in the same year. Jászi's footnotes are not complete, making it difficult to determine which version was known and quoted by Jászi. See: Jászi, 223–24.
[583] Jászi, 346–347.

Kossuth's solution, a confederation of the nations of southeastern Europe, the author called attention to the fact that his humanitarian tone was an inheritance from Kossuth to his own generation. Jászi passed a similar sentence upon Renner. While he considered Renner's autonomy plan "monumental" and "humanitarian," he also called it unrealistic, rationalist, and utopian. This was mainly due to its schematic character and the lack of vertical differentiations within society.[584]

Like Kossuth, Jászi wanted to put freedom of assembly at the center of his resolution.[585] The resolution sketched in this book stuck with Jászi until the dissolution of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1918. What Jászi mainly criticized in Renner's plan was that it completely cut off the historical administrative units of the state and disjointed the administration and education along national fault lines. Jászi instead proposed two general principles as the minimal program to solve the nationality question: first, good schools, good administration, and good laws on the language of the people; second, the right to free development of national languages and cultures. Implementation, however, would have to vary from situation to situation, Jászi continued. He was convinced that most of the nationalities' demands could be satisfied on the county or municipal level if only their feudal structure could be filled with the democratic spirit. In this, Jászi was following in Kossuth's footsteps and considered a reformed, democratized county and local governments to be the key to solving the nationality question. Jászi considered elementary schools as the key to solving the nationality question. He regarded instruction in pupils' mother tongue as crucial, but a basic knowledge of the state language should also be taught at schools. The state should also support the economic life of the nationalities.

His other critical remark addressed the schematism of Renner's solution, which did not consider the historical and structural differences between the nations of the Empire. Jászi did not believe in the equality of all nations. In his view, nations needed to be treated in accordance with their economic, spiritual, and moral weight. Jászi's main argument was that different cases required different solutions. As I analyzed in chapter I/2.5, the Czech social democrat Bohumír Šmeral would have modified Renner and Bauer's autonomy plan in 1909 based on this logic. Jászi gave the example of the weak, rural

[584] Jászi, 496.
[585] Jászi, 496–500.

Ruthenian nation—to whom he actually accorded cultural autonomy in 1919 when he became the minister of nationalities—where class differentiation was not prominent as in the Czech case, where a thousand-year-old tradition of legislative autonomy complemented the existence of a latifundial nobility and university intelligentsia. Elasticity and liberalism were part of his solution. The religious analogy was also inappropriate in Jászi's opinion: schools and public administration are of general interest. Unlike religion, nationality is not a question of the *forum internum.*

Finally, Jászi named five criteria to differentiate and finetune the resolution of the nationality question. These took into account the individual needs of each nationality: 1. The society's patterns. 2. The historicity of a nation. 3. Whether there is a tradition of centralized power or self-government in the society. 4. The size of the nation. 5. Its legal traditions. Consequently, Jászi proposed these criteria for consideration when a nationality formulated claims for autonomy. This autonomy could be awarded or rejected based on each nationality's scores in the five categories. Cultural autonomy thus might have been a feasible way to satisfy the needs of some nationalities, but it was not a universal answer to the nationality question. Jászi had already developed this argument in his 1907 book review when he compared the process of state creation in the Dual Monarchy, America, and the Balkans, claiming that the specificity of the Habsburg Monarchy was that the life of the nationalities developed in historical continuity. However, the actual institutions that this development created could take different forms: "How does this process manifest itself in concrete institutions, what results does it achieve, and what state of equilibrium does it reach with the forces of the present? This depends on the state's economic, historical, and cultural power relations and can vary between the most extreme latitudes—from the law on public schools to the cracking apart the state, from the Saxon university to Swiss federalism."[586] Jászi differentiated between the autonomy provided by territorial particularism inherited from Hungarian feudalism and true federalism with a democratic content.[587]

[586] Jászi, "Néhány szempont a nemzetiségi kérdéshez," 895.
[587] Jászi, "Régi és új hazaárulás."

The future of Hungary and the Danubian United States

Jászi's 1912 monograph did not receive the attention that its author aspired for. In the database of ANNO (AustriaN Newspaper Online), the virtual newspaper reader of the Austrian National Library, I could not find a single mention of it, although Jászi's activity and his work were known in Vienna as well as in Bohemia and Moravia.[588] Jászi's 1918 book on the future of the Monarchy, the failure of dualism, and the Danubian United States, however, turned out to be a best-seller—at least in Hungary. He finished *Magyarország jövője és a Dunai Egyesült Államok* (*The Future of Hungary and the Danubian United States)* in the spring of 1918, but it was published only in October.[589] A second edition came out by the end of the same month. The book focused on the future of Hungary in light of the new international developments. This book included a more thorough analysis of Kossuth's plan and a more positive account of the Danube Confederation. Moreover, the "whole book was impregnated with Kossuth's spirit," as one reviewer put it.[590] Even the title was a tribute to Kossuth's confederation plan, which, in Jászi's new appreciation, "was not an ahistorical utopia" but had come before its time. Accordingly, Jászi implied that the time to implement Kossuth's plan had now come.

In the first years of the war, Jászi still supported the *Mitteleuropa* plans, but around 1916 and with the February Revolution of 1917, this changed irreversibly. Compared to his previous appreciation, it is clear that between 1912 and 1916, Jászi dedicated more time to becoming familiar with Kossuth's ideas, their political context, the author's intentions, and the different variations of the text. The chapters dedicated to the Danube Confederation plan convey the impression that Jászi consciously chose to present and refer to the drafts written in the 1860s—the versions that included a more detailed outline of the Danubian Confederation. Jászi summarized Kossuth's plan in five arguments: 1. The only way to resolve conflicts with nationalities living in Hungary is to support the state-creation of their co-nationals outside the borders in parallel. 2. Only an alliance between these states would guarantee Hungary's independence. 3. Such an alliance would offer the only viable solution to the Oriental question after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. 4. The Danubian Confederation would guarantee a more secure balance of power

[588] ANNO (AustriaN Newspaper Online) https://anno.onb.ac.at.
[589] Oszkár Jászi, *Magyarország jövője és a Dunai Egyesült Államok*, 2nd ed. (Új Magyarország Részvénytársaság, 1918).
[590] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, 127.

in Europe than that guaranteed by Greater Austria. 5. Such an alliance would not diminish Hungary's sovereignty. Hungary would instead enjoy the benefits of mutual protection and free trade. It would make Budapest the center of trade between East and West, a position the city could never have under Austrian rule.[591]

Meanwhile, in 1918, Renner published *Das Setbstbestimungsrecht der Nationen in besonderer Anwendung auf Österreich* (The Right of Self-Determination of Nations in Special Application to Austria), a monograph on how to implement the principle of national self-determination in Austria. Jászi found Renner's study so important that he decided to respond to it within the framework of his already-finished book by adding an appendix to the manuscript. The appendix aimed to clarify his stance on the nationality question and formulate the similarities and differences between his ideas and Renner's. Over time, Jászi's interpretation of Renner's autonomy plan had also changed. On the one hand, Jászi still interpreted Renner's plan as an attempt to maintain German hegemony in Austria. On the other hand, by 1918, he had started to understand Renner's plan as a possible way to protect minorities and the diaspora in the democratic successor states of the Habsburg Empire—an Austro-German, a Czech, a South-Slavic, a Polish, and a Hungarian state.[592] The question of minorities would inevitably arise with the implementation of the principle of self-determination, Jászi continued, since the new nation-states did not have the potential to solve the problem of the minorities in the diaspora. Jászi concluded that only Renner's cultural autonomy plan could settle the issue of minorities and diasporas. Moreover, a federal government could safeguard the implementation of these measures. This was the first time when Jászi organically integrated Renner's plan to support his own solution to the nationality question. By naming Renner's idea of non-territorial autonomy "the rebirth of Kossuth's plan from his emigration," he rooted his answer in the tradition of Hungarian political thought to bring it closer to his audience.[593]

In the same year, Julius Bunzel, a German sociologist from Graz, published a book titled *Ungarn und wir* (Hungary and Us), focusing on the future of the two dominant nations of the Dual Monarchy—the Germans and the Magyars—after WWI. Bunzel

[591] Jászi, *A Monarchia jövője*. 92-93.
[592] Jászi, *Magyarország jövője és a Dunai Egyesült Államok*, 114–15.
[593] Jászi, 115.

claimed that although Dualism was originally feudalist in nature, it could be sustained after the transition to democracy under the aegis of the Dynasty that had always supported Hungary's democratization. Jászi, in a polemic with the author in *Huszadik Század*, disagreed with Bunzel.[594] The dominance of the Germans and Magyars was not sustainable in a democratic setting, and the sincerity of the Dynasty's democratism was also questionable. He approved of the right to self-determination of the five "historical nations" of the Empire and argued for the guarantee of long-term peace in the framework of a Danubian Confederation that comprised a German, Hungarian, Polish, Czech, and South Slavic democratic state. In the Danubian Confederation, minorities living on the German, Magyar, Polish, Czech, and South Slavic territories would receive non-territorial autonomy, as Renner suggested. Here Jászi combined Kossuth's plan for the Danube Confederation with Renner's non-territorial autonomy: namely, he applied Renner's plan to protect the territorial and administrative integrity of the Monarchy and maintain the German dominance to his own political ideas of democratization, national self-determination, Hungary's independence, and integrity, and the mutual protection of the minorities in the successor states of the Monarchy. Consequently, distinctly from Renner's initial intentions, Jászi interpreted cultural autonomy as a tool to protect minorities and the diaspora within nation-states.

The Transylvanian question reloaded

Even if Jászi's work did not resonate much in the Austrian press, some Romanian newspapers from Transylvania (*Telegraful Român*, *Gazeta Transilvaniei*) translated extracts from it. The so-called Transylvanian question was still on the agenda in the early twentieth century. Not only did Jászi's works appear in the Romanian press, but Romanians also published in progressive Hungarian press outlets such as *Huszadik Század*, *Világ* (World), and *Nyugat* (West). Hungarian and Romanian intellectuals were in contact both personally and intellectually. The Romanians who could participate in such an intellectual exchange were primarily those who wrote and read Hungarian. As an editor and an expert on the nationality issue, Jászi was in contact with Romanian intellectuals and tried to give them a voice in the newspapers and works he edited. Vasile

[594] Oszkár Jászi, "Dualizmus vagy demokratikus népszövetség," *Huszadik Század* 19, no. 2 (1918): 53–57..

Goldiș, a former parliamentary delegate and the leading figure of the Romanian National Party, the Romanian progressive thinker and writer Emil Isac, and the lawyer from Nagyvárad/Oradea (present-day Romania) Aurel Lazăr engaged in active dialogue with some Magyar intellectuals on the nationality issue.[595] Both Goldiș's and Lazăr's booklets on the nationality question came in response to the requests made during such exchanges. Goldiș also appeared in Jászi's 1912 book, *A nemzeti államok kialakulása,* where Jászi cited his arguments for mother-tongue education as a minimum cultural program.[596]

In November 1917, Mihály Károlyi, as the leader of the recently seceded pacifist United Party of Independence of 1848, traveled with Jászi to Bern for the pacifist congress of the *Organisation Centrale Pour Une Paix Durable* (Central Organization for a Durable Peace).[597] Károlyi recalled that it was then—and precisely in Switzerland—that he embraced Jászi's concept of an "Eastern Switzerland." As early as the autumn of 1916, Jászi had tried to win Károlyi over to his solution to the nationality question. Jászi argued that accommodating the nationalities should complement general suffrage and land distribution. In Hungary, "democracy cannot be born. This is because it has been confronted with the wrongly interpreted national postulate," Jászi wrote in a draft letter to Károlyi.[598] At the end of the letter, he recommended that Károlyi read the relevant parts of his 1912 book on nationality. This was not the writer's vanity, Jászi explained, but his conviction formed by years of research and reflection. "You could be the only man," he emphasized, "who could lead the country into a modern democracy."[599] Whether the letter actually reached its intended recipient is uncertain, as the copy I found in the Károlyi archive was a duplicate of the draft from the Jászi papers rather than a finished version ready to send to a distinguished gentleman.[600]

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[595] Vasile Goldiș, *A nemzetiségi kérdésről*, ed. Andrei Oțetea and József Hajós (Bukarest: Politikai Könyvkiadó, 1976). Aurel Lazăr [Lazar], *Chestiunea de naționalitate. Discurs rostit la ancheta de "Societatea pentru Științe Sociale" din Oradea Mare la 4 și 5 aprilie 1914.* (Arad: Românul, Concordia, 1914).
[596] Jászi, *Nemzetiségi kérdés*, 474.
[597] Assemblée de Berne pour la discussion des relations entre les peuples après la guerre, 19-22 novembre 1917. See: Jacques Fouques Duparc, *La protection des minorités de race, de langue et de religion: étude de droit des gens.* (Paris: Dalloz, 1922), 361.
[598] Jászi's biographer, György Litván, dated the document to the autumn of 1916. Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, 109–10. Oszkár Jászi, "[Méltóságos képviselő úrnak]" (n.d.), FOND 114/9/5, OSZKK.
[599] Jászi, "[Méltóságos képviselő úrnak]."
[600] Oszkár Jászi, "[Jászi levélfogalmazványa Károlyinak]" (n.d.), V/704/1/52/75-77, PIL.

Vasile Goldiș addressed a letter to Károlyi in response to his speech at the Christmas dinner of the Independence and 48 Party on December 18, 1917.[601] Under the influence of the pacifist congress in Bern from which he had just returned, Károlyi spoke about the urgency of peace, altruism, democracy, and a new concept of patriotism outside and inside the country. "[…] I will devote all my work, my whole life, to this ideal. […] I don't even care who follows me, who leaves me," Károlyi announced in his speech. "I am increasingly convinced," Goldiș started his letter in a similar vein to Jászi, "that fate has chosen Your Excellency to be the second István Széchenyi of Hungary, the founder of the truly new Hungary, an educated, free and, as a result, a rich and happy Hungary."[602] By comparing Károlyi to Széchenyi, Goldiș also contributed to the narrative that drew a parallel between the reform-era nation-builders and twentieth-century progressive leaders. Goldiș chose the moderate Széchenyi rather than Kossuth as a role model. Yet, to achieve such blissful development, to become truly altruistic, Goldiș continued, it would be essential to renounce violence and liberate the non-Magyar peoples of Hungary, "and the second happy Switzerland of Europe will be born […] At that moment, the ten million ethnically non-Magyar citizens of Hungary will join Your Excellency's banner, and an independent Hungary will be born."[603] Finally, with a gesture much like Jászi's, he closed the letter by pointing Károlyi to his book on the nationality question, which he attached to the letter.[604]

Jászi's mailbox was not empty either on his return from the Bern Peace Congress. He was greeted by a letter from Emil Isac expressing his appreciation for his efforts on the nationality question. "I am writing to you (...) for two reasons. One is that I have loved you for years, and the other—and this is more important—is that I now not only love you but have also watched you with admiration. Your prophetic work is now known all over Europe (...) For us people belonging to the nationalities, your name has sounded like an encouraging bell in recent months (...) it is through your writing that a democratic Hungary has found its voice."[605] The German historian Reinhart Koselleck illustrated the

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[601] "Károlyi a pacifizmusról," *Magyarország* 24, no. 310 (December 18, 1917): 2.
[602] László [Vasile] Goldiș, "[Jászi levélfogalmazványa Károlyinak]" (Arad, December 20, 1917), V/704/1/52/58-59, PIL.
[603] Goldiș.
[604] Goldiș, *A nemzetiségi kérdésről*.
[605] Erzsébet Vezér, "Emil Isac és a magyar progresszió levelezése Jászi Oszkárral," *Korunk* 37, no. 8 (1978): 643.

dialectic of the event and structure with the example of the letter. A letter is a singular event by virtue of the message it contains. However, the letter cannot reach its destination without the regular and predictable operation of the postal service as a repetitive structure. With the postal service faltering at the end of the war, the ideas of two Romanian and two Magyar nationalists aligned in a unique way, but also simultaneously—in perfect time with the ideals of the era: an Eastern Switzerland under the guidance of Károlyi and Jászi. The Romanian writers' good wishes for Jászi and Károlyi, expressed in their letters, did come to fruition, albeit briefly and belatedly. Károlyi became the president of the first Hungarian Democratic Republic and Jászi his minister of nationalities.

However, not even a year had passed, when in Arad (present-day Romania) on November 13, 1918, Goldiș, as a member of the Romanian Delegation, refused Jászi's Eastern Switzerland project. On December 1, 1918, it was Goldiș who pronounced the unity of Transylvania with Romania at the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia. As a member of the Ruling Council of Transylvania, Banat and the Romanian regions of Hungary (*Consiliul Dirigent al Transilvaniei, Banatului și ținuturilor românești din Ungaria*) in Szeben/Hermannstadt/Sibiu, Goldiș was in charge of regulating relations between the cohabiting nations and religions. Thus, in the new Romania, he held the office which Jászi had held in Hungary.[606]

Vasile Goldiș was one of the most important Romanian nation-builders in the Kingdom of Hungary. He had studied in Vienna and Budapest and taught history, Romanian, Hungarian, and Latin, first in Karánsebes/Caransebeș and later in Brassó/Kronstadt/Brașov (present-day Romania). He was a member of the Romanian National Party from 1905 and sympathized with socialism. Within the party, he consistently advocated political activism and shifted the party's orientation from the autonomy of Transylvania to the political autonomy of Transylvanian Romanians, i.e., "for the national autonomy of all Romanians under the crown of St. Stephen."[607] During the unsuccessful negotiations between Tisza and the Romanian National Party, Goldiș formulated the Romanians' demands, including the extension of the right to vote, the

[606] József Hajós, "Vasile Goldiș," in *A nemzetiségi kérdésről* (Bukarest: Politikai Könyvkiadó, 1976), 51–64.
[607] Sabina Fati, *Transilvania, o Provincie În Căutarea Unui Centru: Centru Şi Periferie În Discursul Politic al Elitelor Din Transilvania, 1892-1918*, Colecția Diversitate Etnoculturală În România 13 (Cluj: Centrul de Resurse pentru Diversitate Etnoculturală, 2007), 128–30.

official use of the Romanian language, a minimum number of Romanian-speaking civil servants, increased state support for Romanian culture, and the revision of the Apponyi education law—which Goldiș, as an experienced teacher, considered dysfunctional and criticized on many occasions.[608]

Goldiș wrote his book on the nationality question, which he later attached to his letter to Károlyi, in the autumn of 1911 at the request of the Darwin Circle (*Darwin kör*), the Nagyvárad/Oradea (present-day Romania) subsidiary of the Hungarian Association of Freethinkers (*Szabadgondolkodók Magyarországi Egyesülete*). The Association organized a series of lectures and round-table discussions on the nationality question. In 1911, the Slovak politician Milan Hodža spoke on the subject, and by 1914 several Romanian leaders had contributed to the debate. The meeting where Goldiș was to present his paper was either canceled or postponed. Goldiș, however, published the study in book format in 1912. The original language of the text was Hungarian. The book received some attention in the Romanian press: "The booklet is written with great skill and persuasiveness and can be read with interest and usefulness by those who know Hungarian."[609] Mihály Vajda presented it in Jászi's journal, *Huszadik Század*. Vajda found the booklet thoughtful, modern, and attractive in style.[610] A review in the Romanian literary magazine *Luceafărul* published in Szeben/Hermannstadt/Sibiu pointed out that Goldiș discussed the nationality question based on historical materialism, drawing primarily on the studies of Bauer and Jászi. The reviewer criticized the author for putting economic arguments rather than emotional ones at the center of his explanation of the emergence of national consciousness.[611]

Goldiș was familiar with Otto Bauer's 1907 book on the nationality question, Renner's various writings on the topic, and Jászi's 1911 booklet *The Nationality Question and the Future of Hungary*, based on a paper Jászi presented at the meeting of the Galilei Circle (*Galilei kör*).[612] Goldiș defined the nation following the intellectual tradition of the Austromarxists and Jászi's "sociological" (read: modernist) concept of the nation. He did not consider language, religion, and citizenship as the decisive criteria for belonging to a

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[608] Goldiș, *A nemzetiségi kérdésről*, 120–30.
[609] "Cărți și reviste," *Telegraful Român* 6, no. 125 (1912): 515.
[610] Mihály Vajda, "Új könyvek a nemzetiségi kérdésről," *Huszadik Század* 13, no. 1 (1912): 239–40.
[611] Hajós, "Vasile Goldiș," 44–45; Goldiș, *A nemzetiségi kérdésről*, 44–45.
[612] Oszkár Jászi, *A nemzetiségi kérdés és Magyarország jövője. A Galilei kör 1911. január 28-iki felolvasóülésén előadva.* (Budapest: Galilei Kör kiadása, 1911).

nation but defined the nation as a community of destiny and character (*Charaktergemeinschaft*). While Goldiș adopted Bauer's definition of the nation and used Bauer's book almost verbatim to describe the history of the emergence of the national sentiment, his text also contained arguments from the debates that preceded the 1868 Nationality Law in Hungary.[613] In this vein, he considered the term "people" (*nép*) derogatory and problematic in that in Hungary, the word *magyar* applied to ethnic, legal, and political understandings of the nation. He stressed that it is important to distinguish between the Hungarian nation and the Magyar nationality: the nation is the political nation, the totality of citizens, whereas the nationality is the totality of the members of the *Charaktergemeinschaft* (*jellemközösség*). Goldiș wanted to eliminate the fog around the definition of the Hungarian nation and Magyar nationality—both termed *magyar* in the Hungarian language. He argued that the Magyar nationality is just as much a component of the Hungarian nation as the Romanian, Serb, or Slovak nationalities.[614] Despite his familiarity with the Austromarxists' and Jászi's concepts and his aim of clarity, in the course of the text, Goldis repeatedly deviated from his own definitions, especially when he spoke of the national community of Romanians in Hungary and Romania based on their linguistic community.[615]

"So what should be done with these (non-Magyar) peoples?" Goldiș raised the challenge of his century. "Behold, this is what we mean by the question of nationality in Hungary."[616] It would be too late for the Hungarians to exterminate or assimilate the nationalities, Goldiș continued. The former could be done at best with alcohol, he elaborated. As for the belatedness of assimilation, the author argued that both the Magyars and non-Magyars already had their own national cultures. Moreover, if the Magyars succeeded in assimilating the nationalities, the new Magyar *Charaktergemeinschaft* would no longer be identified with the former Magyar nationality: the elements that merged into it would fundamentally change its nature. Goldiș ruled out the possibility of the existence of a bilingual nation. Individuals or even the entire intelligentsia could become bilingual, but he suggested that if every Romanian learned Hungarian, what need would there be left for the Romanian language?[617] He also depicted an imaginary

[613] Goldiș, *A nemzetiségi kérdésről*, 98–103.
[614] Goldiș, 90–98.
[615] Goldiș, 139.
[616] Goldiș, *A nemzetiségi kérdésről*, 118.
[617] Goldiș, 122.

scenario, an international constellation that would dismember the Dual Monarchy, under which Romanians would prefer to join their co-nationals across the border, which Romanians from Romania were already urging. Goldiș held that the irredentism of the peoples of the Habsburg empire was directly proportional to whether they felt themselves the most unfortunate or the richest nationality in the monarchy—and the Romanians felt that they were at the lower end of the spectrum.[618]

After offering a list of Romanian grievances in Hungary, Goldiș provided some measures to solve them. Yet he was reluctant to propose concrete solutions, arguing that his book was scientific rather than political. He suggested that the remedy would be to implement the principle of equal rights consequently. Romanians needed the guarantee of national, cultural, and political freedom in public institutions, institutional frameworks for language teaching, administration, and judiciary in the mother tongue, and general suffrage. These demands hardly went beyond the provisions of the 1868 Nationality Act, which was understandable and to be expected given the censorship at the time. Goldiș was familiar with Bauer's conception of the nation and the solution he proposed since 1905, and he had been advocating for political rather than territorial autonomy. His book did not mention the principle of personality, Jászi's canton model, or the modernization and broadening of the institution of the Saxon universitas as possible solutions, as Renner suggested. However, the editor of the booklet, József Hajós, interpreted Goldiș's concluding words in a footnote on the "need to secure the interests of the nationality" as if, between the lines, Goldiș had glimpsed a self-determination that would require separation from the Hungarian state.[619]

The Reader is justified in wondering whether Goldiș was a supporter of the Greater Romanian project all along. If so, should the historian question the integrity of his arguments? It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore this issue in-depth, but I would like to offer some perspectives for understanding its complexity. Scholars raise similar questions regarding Renner, who, despite being the founder of the non-territorial solution to the nationality question, supported the Greater German cause after WWI. Moreover, as the leader of the German-Austrian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, he ranked personal autonomy for Germans in Moravia and Bohemia as the third-best

[618] Goldiș, 137–45.
[619] Goldiș, 150–51.

solution behind the two territorial ones.[620] We saw similar tonal shifts in the theoretical and political Kossuth.

While breaking with Budapest, Goldiș passed on some elements of Austro-Hungarian political thought to the Romanian nation-state context. I have already pointed out that in Goldiș's book the fluctuation of the concept of the nation, especially concerning the Romanian nation, made the tension between theory and politics palpable. The autumn of 1918 was full of political uncertainties, and Romania's status before re-entering the war was uncertain. Goldiș actively prepared for Romanian unification while leaving the door open to the Hungarian government. In October 1918, while preparing the *Declarația de autodeterminare a românilor transilvăneni* ("Statement Regarding the Right to Self-Determination of the Romanians from Transylvania"), presented to the Hungarian government, the editors of *Aradi Hírlap* (Journal of Arad) reported to Károlyi that Goldiș and his party "honestly and sincerely stand on the basis of the integration of the Hungarian state and have no separatist aspirations in this plan."[621] The editors had planned to travel with Goldiș to Budapest to work out the nationality program, but Goldiș came down with the Spanish flu, forcing him to postpone the trip. Even in the midst of the Arad negotiations in November 1918, when Goldiș, as part of the Romanian delegation, refused the Hungarian government's plan for an Eastern Switzerland presented by Jászi, the mutual respect between the two statesmen remained intact.[622] Finally, after the unification with Romania, Goldiș wanted Transylvania to have a similar status within Romania as Hungary had under dualism.[623] None other than Goldiș formulated the resolution for national minorities in the Alba Iulia Points, in which he offered the Magyars in Romania what he had previously asked for the Romanians of Hungary.

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[620] *Bericht über die Tätigkeit der deutschösterreichischen Friedensdelegation in St. Germain-en-Laye. 1. Band. II. Teil, Abschnitt III, Anhang a. Kantonalverwaltung im tschechoslowakischen Staat.* (Wien, 1919), 338–41, https://digi.landesbibliothek.at/viewer/image/AC02620309/1/LOG_0003/. See also: Chapter 9 of the forthcoming monograph Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"

[621] Tibor Zima and Lajos Varjassy, "[Zima Tibor és Varjassy Lajos levele Károlyinak a román nemzetiségi párt álláspontjáról]" (Arad, n.d.), V/704/1/53/20-26, PIL. For more context, see: Diana-Maria Dăian and Mihai-Octavian Groza, "The Transylvanian Social-Democratic Movement in the Autumn and Winter of 1918," *Astra Sabesiensis* 3, no. 3 (2017): 209.

[622] Haslinger, *Arad, November 1918*.

[623] Eugen Gagea, "Aradul și intelectualii arădeni în anul 1918," *Studii de Ştiinţă şi Cultură* 14, no. 1 (2018): 25–30. Nándor Bárdi, "Az erdélyi kérdés mint közigazgatási probléma," *Magyar Kisebbség* 4, no. 11 (1998): 123–56. Köpeczi, *Erdély története három kötetben: 3.*, 3:1717.

Outlook—The interwar years

In March 1919, the Károlyi government resigned and the Soviet Republic was formed the next day. Jászi retired from politics and, fearing the impending White Terror, traveled to Vienna on May 1, 1919, arriving there on May 3. He considered his exile temporary. In Vienna, Jászi rented an apartment in the 6th district from the democratic women's movement leader Rosa Mayreder and joined the circles of the Austrian sociologist Rudolf Goldscheid. He also maintained contact with Karl Renner and Otto Bauer. In August, the Hungarian Soviet Republic fell and a so-called counter-revolutionary government was formed. In November, Miklós Horthy marched into Budapest as commander of the National Army. During his time in Vienna, Jászi was the editor and political ideologist of the *Bécsi Magyar Újság* (Viennese Hungarian Newspaper), the organ of the October émigré community in Vienna.

With Jászi's emigration, the similarities between the events of 1848 and 1918 became even more prominent in his narrative. In an article from 1922 on the occasion of the anniversary of the 1918 Aster Revolution, Jászi published an article in *Bécsi Magyar Újság*.[624] The article explored the parallel between the historical events of 1848 and 1918. Jászi claimed that the goals and principles represented by the Kossuth emigration and the October émigrés were "by and large completely identical."[625] His own struggle was, in fact, "the continuation and implementation of the goals of Lajos Kossuth."[626] Jászi was now more explicit than in his book from 1918. He argued that the dissolution of the Monarchy had created the possibility of a Danube confederation as Kossuth imagined it: the independence of Hungary, democratic liberty for all, and a peaceful and rational international order among the neighboring states. The implementation of the Danube Confederation had never been more pressing. It would enable the free exchange of material and cultural goods between the kin-state and minorities of the disengaged territories. Moreover, the national autonomies would eliminate every national hatred in the region.[627]

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[624] Jászi, "Kossuth Lajos emigrációja és az októberi emigráció."
[625] Litván and Varga, *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája*, 409.
[626] Litván and Varga, 409.
[627] Litván and Varga, 410.

The organic connection between the political plans and ideas of the post-1848 emigration, prominently Kossuth's and Jászi's belief in a fairer arrangement for the Danubian region, became even more prominent in Jászi's 1933 article published in *Foreign Policy*.[628] In 1925, Jászi moved to the United States and joined the faculty of Oberlin College in Ohio. His paper, *Kossuth and the Treaty of Trianon,* aimed to refute the opinion that the Treaty of Trianon was utterly arbitrary. Reading the 1850 correspondence between Lajos Kossuth and Count László Teleki, the enthusiastic exponent of "the Magyar national cause," Jászi found that Kossuth's most pessimistic case scenario had come true in 1919. In Kossuth's opinion from 1850, due to the inner centrifugal forces, an independent Hungary without the support of the Great Powers would disintegrate into six parts: "Secession of the Vojvodina to Serbia; of the Rumanian province of Transylvania, of the Bánát, and the counties Arad, Bihar, Szathmár, Mármaros, K. Szolnok, Zaránd Kraszna-Kővár to Wallachia; of the Slovak territory (a colossal province) to the Czechs; of the Ruthenians, with the Galicians, to Russia; of the Germans (Vas, Sopron, Moson) to Austria. And the Magyars to whom? To death."[629] Jászi was convinced that without mutual understanding, it would be impossible to correct the peace treaty's errors peacefully. Such a rectification would restore the economic unity in the region and enable a tariff union among Danubian countries without the domination of any "race."[630]

Jászi's book on the dissolution of the Monarchy was published in English in 1929.[631] In this volume, Jászi described Kossuth's idea as the "principle of the personality," a concept unknown to Kossuth but known by Jászi's audience. The term gained popularity with the spread of Renner's and Bauer's ideas on minority issues. For the English-speaking audience, Jászi called for the Austromarxists to translate the non-territorial elements in Kossuth's Danube Confederation plan, an idea that coincided with that of the Austrian Social Democratic Party. Between 1905 and 1929, Jászi's Kossuth narrative absorbed and assimilated the ideas of Renner and Bauer. Jászi could show all the important arguments in Kossuth's confederation plans to represent the Hungarian cause to an international readership: patriotism, commitment to national self-

[628] Jászi, "Kossuth and the Treaty of Trianon."
[629] Jászi, 94.
[630] Jászi, 96–97.
[631] Oszkár Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 311–13.

determination, equality, and economic unity in the Danube region. Consequently, in a narrative in which Kossuth came to author the idea of non-territorial autonomy, mentioning Renner became an explanatory remark.

1.4.3. Conclusions

As Jászi's name became increasingly linked with the concept of the Danube Confederation following WWI, he sought legitimacy by associating himself with Kossuth's reputation, as his emigrant group had a negative reputation in Hungary during the Interwar period. In the hope of a more positive perception, he drew parallels between the events of 1848 and 1918, thereby assigning Kossuth's role as a mediator between the Magyars and the nationalities to himself. In 1848-1849, Kossuth had failed to reconcile with the nationalities; in 1918-1919, Jászi failed as well. In Jászi's narrative, Kossuth was no longer just a footnote but at the core of his intellectual project. Jászi's 1918 book on the future of Hungary was "impregnated with his spirit." Moreover, the German and English edition of his 1921 book on the 1918-1919 revolution and counterrevolution in Hungary was dedicated to the *manes* of Lajos Kossuth, "the most far-seeing of Hungarians, who predicted his country's disaster and clearly discerned the path to her recovery."[632]

I argued earlier that when Jászi dubbed himself the heir of Kossuth in developing the project of a Danube Confederation, he found a contextual framework to integrate the tradition of non-territorial cultural autonomy from Austria organically while not identifying with its objectives. The Austrian version of non-territorial autonomy would have ensured the Habsburg Empire's salvation and the German element's dominance. Jászi wanted to apply a non-territorial understanding of national autonomy in a nation-state framework. Like Kossuth, he sought to create the basis for a Danube confederation led by Hungary by granting national autonomy. The embodiment of the Austrian tradition of the non-territorial principle was Karl Renner, whose writings Jászi preferred to Bauer's. With its two pillars, the Danube Confederation plan became Kossuth's

[632] „jenem Hellsehendsten der Ungarn, der die Katastrophe seines Landes vorhersagte und die Mittel zur Genesung klar erkannte" in the German edition. Jászi, *Magyariens Schuld, Ungarns Sühne: Revolution und Gegenrevolution in Ungarn*. Fort he English version see: Jászi, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary*.

intellectual property in Jászi's narrative. The first pillar was the alliance of independent nation-states to safeguard peace and grant the exchange of goods outside the borders. The second was cultural autonomy inside the state's borders as the most appropriate means of minority protection. A system of international minority protection should have fulfilled these two pillars. Jászi believed that this would remove irredentist tendencies among the nationalities. Jászi pleaded that Kossuth's plan was the only realistic and detailed plan in Hungary that scrutinized the consequences of Hungary's independence; he did not believe in territorial autonomy as the Romanian political thinker Aurel Popovici or the Austrian historian Richard Charmatz have suggested. In line with other liberal thinkers, he saw a conflict between the territorial principle, equality, and liberty. Such territorial autonomies would not mitigate but reproduce the nationality question on a smaller scale and produce "ethnographic autonomies incapable of living."[633]

Jászi argued that the specificities of each nation's needs could be identified with the help of five criteria: the way the society is built up, the history of the nation, the power structure, the nation's size, and its legal traditions. This approach explains why Jászi's opinion on the remedy to the problem of each nationality in Hungary continuously changed between 1907 and the Interwar period. Similarly, Jászi's assessment of Kossuth's and Renner's plans for autonomy and the non-territorial principle at their core also shifted. In Jászi's writing, his interest in the nationality question and the appreciation for cultural autonomy based on the personality principle emerged gradually. What seemed like an illusion in 1907 became the only fair solution after the dissolution of the Monarchy and Hungary's independence. The pivotal point of Kossuth's Danube Confederation plan was Hungary's independence. Jászi did not adopt the ideas of Renner and Bauer right away but systematically and critically integrated the non-territorial element into his thinking.

The nationality question was not just a question of principles but also one of tactics. By comparing the constitution plans with the political situation at the time of their birth, Jászi could identify a handful of structural similarities between the tactical-ideological choices available to Kossuth, Renner, and himself. At a given point in their careers, all three statesmen believed that the solution to the nationality question was non-territorial. What were, then, the similarities between Kossuth's and Renner's answers to the national issue

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[633] Jászi, *Magyarország jövője és a Dunai Egyesült Államok*.

based on which Jászi declared them almost identical? On what grounds did Jászi identify himself as the heir of Kossuth and implicitly of Renner?

First, all three statesmen aimed to protect their own nationality's primacy and insisted on their states' territorial integrity when centrifugal tendencies rose among the non-dominant nationalities. Second, they strove for an economically strong federal state in East Central Europe to maintain the balance of power. Third, they all believed the political nation was not identical with the cultural or linguistic groups living in a state. Fourth, all three considered themselves the heirs of the democratic principles of the Enlightenment (individual liberty, equality, and fraternity). Fifth, they believed that the rights of minorities within a given territory or administrative unit needed to be protected reciprocally. And finally, Kossuth, Renner, and Jászi supported decentralization and democratization while building upon existing legal and institutional traditions. In this spirit, they all took inspiration from the heritage of confessional tolerance and various pre-modern forms of autonomy for ethno-confessional groups. All in all, the three statesmen interpreted the nationality question as one of international relevance that could be solved based on the individual's right to freedom of association, irrespective of their place of residence within the state.

2. NAÏVE WILSON

2.1. Re-imagined Communities: Hungary 1918-1919

2.1.1. Hungary and the End of the Great War

(Dis)continuities amidst chaos

On November 23, 1914, the future ministerial official (*miniszteriális tisztviselő*) at the Ministry of Nationalities of the First Hungarian Republic Róbert Braun, who was serving as a commissioned officer at the front in present-day Serbia and Slovenia, reported enthusiastically to his friend, Oszkár Jászi, about how much progress he was making in learning Serbian from the Serbian POW squad he had been assigned to. "I hope to learn Slovak one day, and then I can read in all the languages of the nationalities."[634] He invited Jászi to visit him and report on the POWs. In parallel to his language studies, Braun tidied up the barracks, put wooden pots for flowers in every window, and produced 1,600 kg of vegetables on 3,000 square meters of land.[635] A goldsmith in the Serbian squadron said they had never had a commander as good as Braun, not even in the Serbian army. Braun had already predicted the German defeat in the summer of 1914. "I am a firmly convinced bad soldier," he wrote in a letter to Jászi. "During the bombardment, I couldn't shake the thought that perhaps it wouldn't be a great loss if we were to perish, myself and the others who had done so little to prevent this devastating war."[636] By the spring of 1916, he was learning Russian, and in October, he reported that he was "reading quite tolerably" in Slovenian. Thinking of his language studies, he was delighted to be assigned to two Russian POW squads that year. In June 1917, he moved on to learn Czech. "You will see, I shall come home an educated man," Braun wrote to Jászi from Ruma/Árpatartló (present-day Serbia).[637]

In the autumn of 1916, while repairing roads with his squad at the Isonzo/Soča, Braun studied Russian, read Slovenian folk history, and in the absence of current press reports, hoped that Wilson would be re-elected as president of the United States. Amid

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[634] Róbert Braun, "[1914. nov. 23.]" (November 23, 1914), 114/14/ 3, OSZKK.
[635] Róbert Braun, "[1916. április 7.]" (July 4, 1916), 114/14/16, OSZKK.; Róbert Braun, "[1916. augusztus 11.]" (November 8, 1916), 114/14/18, OSZKK.
[636] Róbert Braun, "[Ruma, 1915. október 15.]" (October 15, 1915), 114/14/13, OSZKK.
[637] Róbert Braun, "[Ruma, 1915. július 18.]" (July 18, 1915), 114/14/7, OSZKK.

his preoccupations as a commander, Braun took the opportunity to revisit Renner's older works after having finished reading and reviewing *Österreichs Erneureung*.[638] In light of the earlier books, Braun formed a somewhat more favorable opinion of Renner: "He is a clever man, but too lazy to get to the bottom of things, and his temperament and manners are those of an Austrian philistine (*nyárspolgár*), closer to Schröder and Wolf than to Marx."[639] While Braun was reading Renner's books at the front, Renner was directing the *Amt für Volksernährung* (Food Office) and negotiating with the German Social Democrats for a Central European Economic Union to allow free trade in the region.[640] As a future candidate for prime minister, he planned to save the multi-ethnic state in the non-territorial way described in his books.[641] In January 1916, Renner met Jászi in Vienna while attending Friedrich Naumann's talk on *Mitteleuropa* and the dinner afterwards.[642] Meanwhile, their comrade Otto Bauer, now an officer, had been taken prisoner by the Russians after the Battle of Horodok/Gródek (present-day Ukraine) and found himself in Siberia, where he worked on a comprehensive theoretical work on capitalism. He was in Russian captivity during the February revolution but returned to Vienna in September 1917 thanks to the intervention of Victor Adler.[643]

When the war broke out, Mihály Károlyi was returning from a lecture tour in America. Upon his arrival in Europe, he was interned in Le Havre, but thanks to his French connections, he was released and returned home through neutral Italy. In April 1915, he volunteered to join the 1st Royal Hungarian Honvéd Regiment in Budapest. Károlyi's regiment was stranded for months, and it was only later that he found out that he was the cause of the delay—at the intervention of his influential relatives, the Minister of War had withheld Károlyi's regiment from the Galician front until the birth of his daughter. Later, further efforts were made to keep Károlyi from the front lines. Károlyi was astonished to find that the excellent provisions for the officers were provided at the

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[638] For Braun's review sent from the front, see: Braun, "Ausztria megújhódása." For the reviewed work: Renner, *Oesterreichs Erneuerung : politisch-programmatische Aufsätze, I.* Renner, *Oesterreichs Erneuerung : politisch-programmatische Aufsätze, II.* Renner, *Oesterreichs Erneuerung : politisch-programmatische Aufsätze, III.*

[639] Róbert Braun, "[1916. december 10.]" (October 12, 1916), 114/14/24, OSZKK.

[640] Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, 400.

[641] Richard W. Kapp, "Divided Loyalties: The German Reich and Austria-Hungary in Austro-German Discussions of War Aims, 1914–1916," *Central European History* 17, no. 2–3 (June 1984): 120–39, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938900016435.

[642] Litván, *Jászi Oszkár*, 105.

[643] Ernst Hanisch, *Der grosse Illusionist* (Place of publication not identified: E-Content Generic Vendor, 2011), 86.

expense of the common soldiers' rations. At the front, his family was allowed to visit him and made a big impression at the Czernowitz/ /Chernivtsi/Cernăuți/Csernovic (present-day Ukraine) inns with their Parisian fashions. From the Galician front, Károlyi returned to the Chamber of Deputies where he tried to remedy the situation at the front by introducing social and national reforms.[644]

"'Self-determination' is not a mere phrase"[645]

Throughout the war years, our protagonists endeavored to establish order amidst their tumultuous times and to learn from the mistakes of the pre-war world, all the while unaware of the roles they would play in the final months of 1918. At the same time, the Entente powers were beginning to lay the groundwork for the dismantling of Austria-Hungary. The national movements within the Monarchy provided the Entente with reasons to dismantle it, and in turn the Entente's stance, commitments, and undisclosed treaties further emboldened these national movements. The Treaty of London of April 1915 fixed the border between Italy and the southern Slavic state, and the Treaty of Bucharest of August 1916 set Romania's post-war borders. Our protagonists, members of the Government of the First Hungarian Republic, were unaware of this. 1917 brought the Russian Revolution, the United States' entry into the war, and the Monarchy's proposal for a separate peace. During 1917, the Entente powers widely believed that internal centrifugal forces would tear the Habsburg Monarchy apart.

Although the decisions of the Entente powers were born out of military and diplomatic logic, as the historian Mária Ormos has pointed out, they contained the intellectual core of the later peace ideology: the idea of sanctions, reparations, and guarantees, and the principle of security and national freedom.[646] The different aims and interests of the Entente powers could be subsumed under the vague umbrella term of the national principle. A new idiom, the idiom of national self-determination, was born, and the Czech, Polish, Romanian, and South Slavic national leaders soon learned to translate

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[644] Károlyi, *Hit, illúziók nélkül*, 86–92.
[645] Woodrow Wilson's address to the joint session of Congress on February 11, 1918, known as the "Four Points" or "Four Principles" speech, cited in: Larry Wolff, *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2020), 79.
[646] Mária Ormos, *Padovától Trianonig, 1918-1920* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1983), 13.

their demands into this idiom. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson agreed to the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy in June 1918. However, he did not make a clear official statement until November 5, 1918, after its collapse.[647]

In the autumn of 1918, a series of events threw the Balkan front into disarray, while on the Eastern front, the French were attempting to re-engage Romania in the war. With the formation of German-Austria in October 1918, France perceived a looming threat of *Anschluss* and considered it imperative to disarm Austria. As a result, by the end of October 1918, a compromise was reached by the Entente Powers on how to effectuate the armistice. It is important to note that the armistices were military in nature and only applied to a single front line.[648] On October 31, 1918, Hungary surrendered and disarmament proceedings began. Meanwhile, Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire signed an armistice in Padova/Padua on the Italian front, which included the demarcation line set out in the 1915 Treaty of London. Additionally, point 4 of the agreement allowed for the occupation of certain territories. It is important to note, however, that the armistice was signed on behalf of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and not its successor states. Therefore, General Viktor Weber Edler von Webenau, a general of the Austro-Hungarian Army, signed the agreement on behalf of Hungary, despite the fact that dualism had already been abolished.

In the meantime, the Geneva meeting held on October 30 recognized the Czechoslovak National Council as a provisional government. In November, the borders of the occupation zone were delineated; this was of pressing concern to the Czechs, who were anxious that the Károlyi government would acquiesce to the Slovaks' quest for autonomy. Subsequently, the Hungarian government was instructed to sign an agreement with General Franchet d'Esperey on the Balkan front, while the Romanian king issued a mobilization order on November 10. On November 13, the Belgrade Convention fixed the demarcation lines on the southern front and authorized France to occupy strategic points.[649] By the beginning of November, French and Serbian troops had entered the south, Czech soldiers had advanced into the northwest of the Kingdom of Hungary, and the Romanian offensive was launched in mid-November. However, as per the Belgrade

[647] Wolff, *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe*, 100.
[648] Ormos, *Padovától Trianonig, 1918-1920*, 26–59.
[649] Ormos, *Padovától Trianonig, 1918-1920*.

Convention, the occupied territories were allowed to remain under Hungarian administration until the peace conference.[650]

"We do not know what is happening in our homeland"[651]

As the Entente powers negotiated an armistice with the Monarchy and delineated the demarcation lines, the internal political climate remained equally precarious. During the months of transition from empire to nation-state, it was difficult to see the competencies of state institutions.[652] On October 16, 1918, Austria became a federal state and the Monarchy was disintegrating. On October 18, Kálmán Tisza publicly acknowledged that the war had been lost. National councils had been formed to prepare for the creation of federal states on the territory of the Dual Monarchy. On October 20, dualism was abolished and Hungary became an independent state in personal union with the state of Emperor Karl I of Austria (King Karl IV in Hungary). Three days later, the national liberal government of Sándor Wekerle resigned, and on October 24, the Hungarian National Council, an interim legislative body that governed Hungary, was formed with the participation of the United Party of Independence of 1848 (often referred to as the "Károlyi Party"), the Civic Radical Party led by Oszkár Jászi, and the Social Democratic Party of Hungary, SDPH. The pacifist and pro-Entente Mihály Károlyi, the leader of the United Party of Independence, became the head of the National Council.[653] The National Council's twelve-point program accepted the right of peoples to self-determination and cultural and municipal autonomy for all nationalities. The program emphasized the preservation of Hungary's territorial integrity and the common destiny of the country's

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[650] Judit Pál, "Összeomlás 1918 : főispánok és prefektusok 1918-1919-ben : a közigazgatási átmenet kérdése Erdélyben," *Századok* 152, no. 6 (2018): 1179–1214.; Ormos, *Padovától Trianonig, 1918-1920*.

[651] "Magyar vasutasok Zagrebben," *Somogyvármegye* 14, no. 3990 (August 11, 1918): 2–3.

[652] The ERC project NEPOSTRANS addresses this issue in depth by looking at a set of local transitions in diverse regions (agrarian, industrial, commercial, urban, rural, multi- and mono-ethnic, borderland and mainland, coastal). They analyze how state, elites, identities and discourses were affected by changes in state territory. For more details: https://1918local.eu/about-us/. Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik, *Deutsche und Ungarn im südöstlichen Europa: Identitäts- und Ethnomanagement*, Zur Kunde Südosteuropas 43 (Köln: Böhlau, 2017), 121–217. Pál, "Összeomlás 1918 : főispánok és prefektusok 1918-1919-ben : a közigazgatási átmenet kérdése Erdélyben." Judit Pál and Vlad Popovici, "The Transformation of the Mid-level Civil Servants' Corps in Transylvania in the Aftermath of the First World War: The High Sheriffs between 1918 and 1925," in *Hofratsdämmerung?*, ed. Peter Becker et al., 1st ed. (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2020), 155–78, https://doi.org/10.7767/9783205211525.155.

[653] András Siklós, *Magyarország 1918-1919: Események, képek, dokumentumok* (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1978).The German version of the volume: András Siklós, *Ungarn 1918/1919: Ereignisse, Bilder, Dokumente* (Budapest: Corvina, 1979).

nations.[654] By October 31, all nationalities of the Dual Monarchy had proclaimed their independence. Nationality policy and diplomacy were therefore closely intertwined in the post-war months in Hungary.

The independent democratic Hungary was established during the so-called "Aster Revolution," and Károlyi was appointed prime minister on October 31, 1918. Local representatives of the ruling parties—the Independence, Civic Radical, and Social Democratic Parties—initiated the creation of local national councils. Since the end of October, local national councils throughout the country had joined the Central National Council. In multi-ethnic settlements, people belonging to the nationalities organized themselves into separate national councils. Many ethnic groups that previously had no distinct group consciousness organized themselves separately, such as the Swabians of Zsombolya/Jimbolia/Hatzfeld (present-day Romania), the Eastern Slovaks or "Slovjaks," and the Jews of Transylvania.[655] The lack of information regarding the competencies of the national councils gave rise to much confusion, as no one knew clearly which administrative task fell under the remit of which body.[656] Some civil servants appeared before the local National Council to swear allegiance to the new Hungary.[657] Not only national but also civic associations, such as educational or feminist organizations, joined national councils.[658]

Some local national councils, however, resented that the old government was still in place in the municipalities. The people who elected the national council believed they had taken over executive power. Yet the national councils had virtually no competencies, they complained. Representatives of the old government still had not taken the oath of allegiance to the people's government. They voiced their frustration: "…the judge said he doesn't give a [expletive] about the National Councilors; he has nothing to do with it."[659] Many of the materials submitted to the National Council and the Ministry of Nationalities show that there was a high degree of uncertainty among local councils about the scope of their competencies and what national self-determination actually meant. It

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[654] "Magyarország népéhez!," *Népszava*, October 26, 1918, 1–2.
[655] -, "Zsombolya, 1918. november 4. (A zsombolyai sváb nemzeti tanács tárgyában)" (1918), K440 3.d./1918-184., MNL OL.
[656] Tibor Hajdú, *Tanácsok Magyarországon 1918-1919-ben* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1958).
[657] Norbert Falusi, *Két nemzet határán: erdélyi magyar nemzetépítők az európai nagy változásban (1900-1925)*, 20. Század 2 (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület : Kriterion Kiadó, 2020), 139.
[658] "(Fosztogatások)" (November 14, 1918), K440, A/IX, T, MNL OL.
[659] "(Nemzeti Tanácsnak)" (1918), K440, B/VIII, 1918-1322, MNL OL.

was not clear whether the national councils had the right to deploy the police force to stop looting, address food and heating shortages, levy taxes, or support the seizure of goods.[660] The Hungarian National Council finally produced an official document on the powers, rights, and duties of local national councils by December 1918.[661]

Although the Hungarian government was aware of the gravity of the loss of the war and the nationalities' desire to secede, politicians believed that the Wilsonian principles would allow them to negotiate with the leaders of the nationalities. Hungarian political leaders did not know that the Entente powers had already recognized the claims of the nationalities, so they believed themselves to be in a more favorable negotiating position than they actually were. The ignorance of the Károlyi government and the propaganda that presented the situation of the independent and democratic new Hungary in a positive light created an illusory climate that favored the birth of utopian plans for the future. These plans often synthesized the experience of the nationality question during the dualist period and translated this old experience into the new language of the Wilsonian principles.

2.1.2. An Old Topos in a New Context: "Eastern Switzerland"

When we address the nationality or minority question during the months between the end of WWI and the Paris Peace Treaties, we have to bear in mind that economic, military, and humanitarian crises dominated everyday life at the time. Contemporaries often described these times as capricious, full of agonizing and humiliating despair when "the oppressed became oppressors."[662] Provisioning the soldiers returning from the front was beyond the capacity of local communities.[663] Contemporaries often lamented the lack of infrastructure and isolation. News was delayed in the countryside because of the poor postal service. The most pressing issues in the months after the war were related to the supply of wood, coal, food, and clothing. According to telegrams received by local national councils from Pest county, a man stole a dead woman's clothes and gave them

[660] "(Különböző címekre érkezett, de tartalmuknál fogva a Nemzeti Tanácshoz irányított táviratok)" (n.d.), K440 3.d., MNL OL.
[661] "A nemzeti tanácsok ügyköre és hatásköre," n.d., K440-1918-B/III. 3d., MNL OL.
[662] László Domokos, *Ruszka-Krajna a népek ítélőszéke előtt.* (Budapest: Ráth Mór, 1919), 5–10.
[663] Pál Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság: az 1918-as összeomlás és az őszirózsás forradalom története*, Modern magyar történelem (Budapest: Jaffa Kiadó, 2018).

to his wife.[664] In the county of Árva/Orava/Orawa (present-day Slovakia and Poland), a maidservant made off with her landlady's clothes and a maid's book with a foreign name.[665] In Losonc/Lučenec/Lizenz (present-day Slovakia), movie theaters closed due to the Spanish flu, depriving the poor of "a little cultural refreshment."[666] Any economic conflict could easily activate national grievances.

Hungary's future was shrouded in a veil of ignorance.[667] I previously noted that the Hungarians placed great emphasis on the principles laid out by Wilson, believing that they would bring about a positive outcome for Hungary's future. As a result, the First Hungarian Republic recognized the nationalities as constituent nations of the new state, which was a clear indication of Hungary's desire to maintain its territorial integrity and transform the country's territory into a federal system. In the late autumn of 1918, there was a general belief that the peace conference would be held within a few months.[668] Thus, the government's official position was to maintain the status quo until the peace treaty.

During the months of the First Hungarian Republic, the government made efforts to negotiate with the leaders of the nationalities with the aim of reaching a provisory agreement until the peace treaty was signed. As part of the negotiations, the government developed its own interpretation of national self-determination, which was intended to facilitate a smooth change in sovereignty and to maintain order while respecting the demarcation line. These negotiations were partially successful, with the German and Ruthenian nationalities agreeing to remain part of Hungary while the Croats, Serbs, Slovaks, and Romanians opted for secession.[669] This policy had three main objectives. First, it aimed to demonstrate to the peacemakers that the new democratic Hungary was different from the old Hungary, which had lost the war. Second, it was rooted in the thinking of Jászi and the federalist tradition of the Monarchy's political thought. Third, it was in harmony with the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination and the new

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[664] "(Tápiógyörgye/Tápiószele)" (1918), 606.f. 3/1. I. 383, 104, MNL OL.
[665] "(Árva)" (1918), 606.f. 3/1. I. 383, 112, MNL OL.
[666] "(Mozi bezárása szénhiány és a spanyol járvány miatt)" (1918), K-440, B/VII/a, 1918 – 1583, MNL OL.
[667] Here I deliberately allude to John Rawls's book, which attempts to rewrite the social contract based on the principle of justice as fairness. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice: Original Edition* (Harvard University Press, 1971), https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674042605.
[668] Károlyi, *Hit, illúziók nélkül*.
[669] András Siklós, *Magyarország 1918/1919. Események, képek, dokumentumok.*, Kossuth Könyvkiadó / Magyar Helikon, 1978, 165–85.

orientation towards the protection of minorities. In essence, it translated an old principle developed for the administration of national diversity in an imperial setting into the ideological basis for Wilsonian peace.[670]

The nationality policy of the Károlyi government rested on two fundamental pillars. First, the government sought to establish comprehensive minority rights by introducing universal suffrage and expanding the scope of national minority rights. Second, in the regions where non-Magyars constituted a majority, the government intended to establish local national governments, inspired by the Swiss model, with the aim of presenting an alternative to neighboring countries' excessive territorial demands at the upcoming Peace Conference. This idea was in line with what Jászi proposed in early 1918, in the ninth chapter of the *The Future of the Monarchy*.[671] The concept of an "Eastern Switzerland" would have entailed a partly federal, partly cantonal administration modeled on Switzerland.[672] In his *Kiáltvány a magyarországi nemzetiségekhez* (Manifesto to the Nationalities of Hungary), which was published in the newspaper *Világ*, Jászi urged the nationalities to "make peace with this new country [Hungary] and ally yourselves with it so closely that we may enrich and learn together in good cooperation and common work, and that Bohemia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary may become like one country."[673]

In November 1918 in Arad (present-day Romania), Jászi presented and the delegation of the Romanian National Council refused a proposal for the implementation of the idea of an Eastern Switzerland. Jászi's plan was to bring local affairs under the control of the nationalities, using the Swiss model of the state as a guide. He proposed a confederation of cantonal autonomies or an "Eastern Switzerland," in which the cantons would coincide with large national blocks enjoying autonomy over cultural and administrative affairs. To achieve this, these blocks would create shared bodies to represent their interests and have representation in the national government. Together, they would manage important matters such as the economy, transportation, food, and healthcare. However, since there would still be numerous enclaves where minorities live, these enclaves would be granted non-territorial autonomy according to Renner's principle

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[670] Bence Bari presents similar arguments in his doctoral dissertation. See: Bari, "Trans(National) Concepts of Self-Determination and the Future of Central Europe in the Late First World War, 1917–1918."
[671] Jászi, *A Monarchia jövője*.
[672] László Szarka, "A helvét modell alternatívája és kudarca 1918 őszén. Adatok, szempontok a Károlyi-kormány nemzetiségi politikájának történetéhez," *Kisebbségkutatás* 17, no. 2 (2008): 233–47.
[673] Miklós Zeidler, ed., *Trianon*, Nemzet és emlékezet (Budapest: Osiris, 2003), 37.

of personal cadastre. Jászi saw this as an earnest and coherent way to put the principle of national self-determination into practice.[674]

Consequently, the government aimed to replace the former Kingdom of Hungary with cantonal units based on linguistically homogenous territories and equal representation of the nationalities in the federal administration.[675] This concept merged the concepts of territorial and non-territorial autonomy in a manner that allowed the non-territorial principle to act as a correction mechanism in regions where multiple nationalities coexisted. Yet documents from the same period show that local representatives of the Hungarian government and, even more so, ordinary people often had their own ideas about what self-determination and autonomy consisted of.[676] Chapter II/2.2. "Everyday Wilson" presents a large variety of such interpretations. Difficulties in interpretation also arose regarding who was entitled to speak for the nation. Some would have left it to a referendum to decide which nation belonged where. But on what scale should that referendum be held? Should the majority decide town by town, county by county, region by region who should dispose of which territory? Contemporaries often thought that it would be fair to apply the principle of self-determination at the level of local communities. "This right of self-determination, granted to all peoples, has in principle no limit since so far no one has announced that its practice would be bound to a certain population size," a Zipser German wrote in November 1918.[677] The following subchapters will present several unexpected interpretations of the scale and ideas of self-determination and nation.

The possibilities in late 1918 and early 1919 were just as absurd as the impossibilities. In the following, I will briefly outline the various developments under the Károlyi government in some areas that the Entente powers had previously granted to neighboring nations in treaties or that were disputed in some respect. There is a vast literature on each of these regions and groups, which I do not intend to list here in full. Nor is it my intention to settle historiographical disputes. The purpose of describing the

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[674] Oszkár Jászi, "Visszaemlékezés a Román Nemzeti Komitéval folytatott aradi tárgyalásaimra (1921)," in *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája: válogatás*, ed. György Litván and F. János Varga (Budapest: Magvető, 1982), 311–28.
[675] Róbert Braun, *The Dismemberment of Hungary and the Nationalities* (Budapest: Hornyánszky, 1919), 22. See also Chapter II/2.2.2.
[676] Frie, "100 Jahre 1918/19. Offene Zukünfte," 100.
[677] Tibor Dr. Kéler, "Republik Scepusia," *Karpathen-Post* 39, no. 46 (November 14, 1918): 1.

political and military turmoil is, first, to reflect on the scale of national self-determination and the question of who is entitled to speak in the name of the nation. Second, I aim to provide a context and an interpretative framework for the proposals for solutions that I analyze in the second half of this chapter. Third, I propose to examine how the perception and reception of Austromarxist ideas changed as the threat of Greater Austria disappeared behind plans for cultural autonomy. In 1918, the dissolution of multi-ethnic empires and the birth of nation-states with minorities led to a paradigm shift. With this shift, non-territorial arrangements were often thought to be the best way to solve the "minority question."

2.1.3. Upper Hungary

In April 1918, politicians who had emigrated from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and represented the nationalities convened a nationality congress in Rome. The congress declared that the nationalities did not see their future within the framework of the Monarchy and demanded independent statehood. The émigré national councils were successively established and recognized as negotiating partners by the victorious powers at the end of WWI.[678] The decision in favor of Slovak separation and Czechoslovak national unity became apparent in the autumn of 1918, when England and France recognized the Czechoslovak National Council. Until that point, Slovak politics had been disorganized and passive. This passivity was partly due to a breakdown in communication between Czechoslovak émigrés and the Slovak political leaders based in various urban centers on the territory of the Dual Monarchy. Moreover, Slovak nation-builders like Milan Hodža, Matúš Dula, Vavro Šrobár, and Ferdiš/Ferdinand/Nándor Juriga had opted for a wait-and-see approach.[679] "Today the nationalities no longer ask, no longer demand. They wait," wrote the newspaper *Národnie Noviny*.[680] The massive propaganda in the area hints at the Czech and Hungarian competition for the territory of Slovakia.

On October 30, 1918, the Túrócszentmárton/Martin/Sankt Martin (present-day Slovakia) declaration announced Slovakia's independence and its desire to belong to the

[678] Csilla Fedinec, "Milyen legyen a ruszin autonómia? : A kárpátaljai vajdaság ügye," *Magyar Kisebbség* 14, no. 1 (2009): 106.
[679] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 198–211.
[680] Szarka, 202.

Czechoslovak state. Slovakia, however, did not yet exist as a separate political entity. Despite this, the Slovak national movement cherished an image of a national territory. In 1849, the Slovak national leaders declared to the Emperor in a memorandum: "Slovakia is only geographical, it does not exist politically."[681] This territory would have been an autonomous Upper Hungary where Slovak was the official language. The Slovaks' first petition on this matter was issued in 1848 in Liptószentmiklós/Liptovský Mikuláš (present-day Slovakia). Entitled the *Demands of the Slovak nation,* it targeted territorial autonomy but not separate statehood.[682] The 1861 memorandum (*Memorandum národa slovenského)* also demanded territorial autonomy for Slovaks (*hornouhorské slovenské okolie*).[683] The Slovak national movement argued for a separate territory based on natural law and, later, the economic unity of the Slovak Land thanks to its natural resources.[684] At the same time, the historian Tibor Pichler pointed out that the precise extent of the so-called Slovak territory was unclear up until the end of the Great War: "Before 1918 Slovakia appeared in the shape of an idea in the national literature. It was no territorial entity with firm contours."[685]

The historian László Szarka argued that at the time of the Martin Declaration, the Slovak leaders did not know that, two days before, the Czechoslovak Republic had been proclaimed and recognized. Czech and Slovak leaders could thus later argue that the counties inhabited by Slovaks were no longer part of Hungary at the time of the armistice. For this reason, they needed to redraft the passages in the text that laid down the foundations for Slovak autonomy. But there were differences of opinion between the Czechs and those Slovaks who supported a joint state.[686] The issue of Slovak autonomy remained a source of tension among Slovak politicians, first and foremost between the supporters of Vavro Šrobár, a Slovak politician and adherent of Czech and Slovak unity,

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[681] „Slowakei ist nur geographisch, es existiert nicht politisch... Es ist für das slowakische Volk nur einzige Hoffnung, und diese ist: die Abgrenzung der Slowakei als ein selbständiges Verwaltungsgebiet. Dann und nur dann ist ein Leben möglich." On 20 March 1849, a Slovak delegation visited Emperor Franz Joseph in Olomouc and presented him with the so-called March Memorandum. In it, they requested the creation of a self-governing crownland under the name of the Slovak Grand Duchy.

[682] The so-called *Žiadosti slovenského národa* or *Liptovské žiadosti* were adopted on May 10, 1848 in Liptovský Mikuláš.

[683] The Upper-Hungarian Slavic district was to include the "Slavic" parts of the counties of Bratislava, Nitra, Bars, Hont, Nógrád, Gömör, Torna, Abaúj and Zemplén, moreover Trencsén, Árva, Turócz, Zólyom, Liptó, Szepes, and Sáros counties in their entirety. Kemény G., *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez Magyarországon a dualizmus korában*, 28–35.

[684] Sándor Vájlok, "A szlovák önállóság kezdetei," *Magyar Szemle* 3, no. 3 (1994): 317–26.

[685] Cited in: Bugge, "The Making of a Slovak City," 208.

[686] Szarka, 212–15; 222–236.

and Andrej Hlinka, a Slovak nation-builder and Catholic priest, who opposed Czechoslovakism. Later, at the peace negotiations, these tensions led to a Slovak dissenting opinion questioning the idea that the Czech and Slovak nations were one and the same. The identical nature of the Czech and Slovak peoples was at the heart of the Czechoslovak arguments for an independent state that included Slovakia. Conversely, Hlinka called for Slovak autonomy based on the Wilsonian principles. If this was impossible, he demanded that Slovaks be recognized as a national minority in Czechoslovakia and thus have their own cultural and educational institutions.[687] Hlinka did not elaborate on the rights of other nationalities living in Slovak-inhabited areas.

The Martin declaration did not, however, mean an immediate and effective power transfer. The Hungarian administration held out except when popular anger forced it to flee. This happened in Poprád/Poprad/Deutschendorf (present-day Slovakia) in November 1918, when many civil servants took the Polish national oath while those who did not had to flee.[688] The French army did not enter Slovakia, as agreed in the Belgrade Convention. The Hungarian government therefore organized the National Guard, which was in charge of maintaining order. In doing so, it took into account the principle of nationality: in Slovak-majority settlements, Slovak guards kept order, and in Magyar-majority territories, Magyar guards did. Chapter II/3 "What Is Jewishness, Actually" elaborates on the disruption of order and violent events during this period. On November 5, a provisional Slovak government was formed in Szakolca/Skalica/Skalitz (present-day Slovakia) under the leadership of the Slovak nation-builder Vavro Šrobár, a strong supporter of the Czechoslovak cause. The Hungarian military presence was certainly not pleasing to the Czechs, and the reorganized Czech armies entered the territory of Slovakia. Initially, the Hungarian government did not use force against the Czech troops but protested based on the Belgrade Agreement, which left the administration of the counties inhabited by Slovaks to the Hungarians until the peace congress. The government naively hoped that the peace conference would soon settle the dispute.

Meanwhile, in November 1918, the Czechoslovak prime minister, Karel Kramář, instructed Milan Hodža to conduct liquidation negotiations in Budapest. By negotiating

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[687] Szarka, 222–36.
[688] "A szepesi népbiztos távirati jelentése az ólublói járás lengyel és tót lakosságának fenyegető magatartása tárgyában" (November 1918), K40-1918-VII-250, MNL OL.

in Budapest, the Czech leaders wanted to buy time to take over Slovakia's territory militarily and to prevent the referendums called for by Hungary in the name of self-determination.[689] Jászi offered Hodža far-reaching territorial autonomy, which he, of course, refused. In the meantime, minister of foreign affairs Edvard Beneš obtained the annulment of the part of the Belgrade Convention that concerned Slovakia's borders. The French lieutenant colonel and Entente delegate Fernand Vix vetoed this based on the text of the armistice. The annulment of the Belgrade Treaty threatened Károlyi's resignation and would have led to anarchy, which the French did not want. Therefore, they often sent contradictory messages to the Hungarian government. Hodža, who was the Czechoslovak Ambassador to Budapest at the time, and Albert Bartha, the Hungarian Minister of War, agreed on the demarcation line in early December. The Bartha-Hodža agreement was also a sign that the Károlyi government had practically renounced Hungary's territorial integrity and compromised on ethnic principles.[690] The French army did not enter Slovakia, while the Czechoslovak military crossed the demarcation line several times.[691] The chaotic situation also affected the local population, as evidenced by the countless letters and phone calls asking the authorities to forestall violence.

Some members of the intelligentsia in Eastern Slovakia, who preferred territorial autonomy in Hungary, saw the Czech occupation as violating the principle of national self-determination. Based on the Wilsonian principles, on November 2, 1918, Viktor Dvortsák formed the East-Slovak National Council in Eperjes/Prešov/Prjašiv (present-day Slovakia), which did not recognize Czechoslovak sovereignty and supported Jászi's concept of an "Eastern Switzerland." In the middle of the nineteenth century, the idea of an East Slovak dialect (*šariščina*) as a separate language was raised for the first time. This dialect formed the basis of the so-called Slovjak nation's distinctiveness. Because of the pro-Magyar sentiments of Slovak intellectuals in Eastern Hungary, Budapest initially supported the development of the Slovjak national movement. Since there was no substantive response from Budapest to the establishment of the Czechoslovak state, on December 11, 1918, an Eastern Slovak Republic—encompassing Abaúj-Torna/Abovsko-Turnianska Župa and Zemplén/Zemplín counties (present-day Slovakia)—became a reality for a few days as the result of the self-determination of the Slovjak nation. Its

[689] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 216–19.
[690] Ormos, *Padovától Trianonig, 1918-1920,* 103–11.
[691] Siklós, *Magyarország 1918/1919. Események, képek, dokumentumok.*, 168–73.

leadership even sent a telegraph to President Wilson asking him to recognize the new state, which even Hungary had not recognized, to avoid diplomatic ambiguities. The implicit goal of the founders was that as an independent republic, Eastern Slovakia would join Hungary and would apply cultural autonomy on its territory. The plan did not provide details on the rights of other nationalities living in Slovjak-inhabited counties. In late December, the Czechs invaded the region, Dvortsák fled to Budapest, and the republic ceased to exist.[692]

Similarly, the Zipser Saxons of Késmárk/Kežmarok/Käsmark/Kieżmark (present-day Slovakia) had announced even before the Martin Declaration that they did not want to belong to the future Czechoslovakia: "We do not wish to break away from the bonds of the countries of the Holy Crown of Hungary, [...] we protest [against] the Czechoslovak State Council speaking for the Hungarian, German, and Slovak populations of Zips, i.e., also in our name."[693] Other cities in the region soon seconded the announcement. In November, in the local newspaper, the Member of Parliament Tibor Kéler published an article on the idea of a republic of *Scepusia*, arguing that the Zipser *Volk* met all the criteria for recognition of a fully-fledged nation and urged the proclamation of the Zipser Republic.[694] Not surprisingly, he called the proposed state the "Switzerland of the Carpathians." In response to Kéler's article, the writer and literary scholar Johann Loisch considered national cultural autonomy a more realistic solution than a separate republic. The author did not mention the Austromarxists, but he promoted national rights were inspired by their spirit.[695] In December 1918, the National Council of the County of Szepes/Spiš/Zips (present-day Slovakia and Poland) announced its intention to declare the county an independent republic.[696] The Council wanted to meet the needs of five nationalities (Germans, Gorals, Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Greek Catholic Ruthenians)

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[692] István Janek, "Dvortsák Viktor álma, a Kelet-Szlovák Népköztársaság létrejötte és utóélete," in *Kérészállamok. Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022), 168–88.

[693] Gábor Sztancs, "A szepességi cipszerség önrendelkezési kísérlete," in *Kérészállamok. Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022), 190–91.

[694] Dr. Kéler, "Republik Scepusia."

[695] Johann Dr. Loisch, "Zipser Republik oder deutsches Verwaltungsgebiet," *Karpathen-Post* 39, no. 48 (November 28, 1918): 1.

[696] "A szepesi nemzeti néptanács elnökségének távirati tiltakozása a cseh-tót impérium ellen független köztársaság proklamálását kilátásba helyezve a magyar kormány védelmének elmaradása esetére.," n.d., K40-1918-VII-601, MNL OL.

following Wilsonian principles and Renner's ideas on cultural autonomy.[697] On December 17, however, Czech troops marched on Késmárk/Kežmarok/ Käsmark/Kieżmark and the republic failed to fulfill its promises.[698]

2.1.4. Transylvania

The Romanian National Council in Transylvania was established on October 30, 1918. Its first act was to issue a joint appeal with the Saxon deputies to maintain order. In the local context, the Romanian and Hungarian National Guard initially maintained order jointly. However, on November 9, the Romanian National Council, now based in Arad, called for the transfer of full executive power in the Romanian-inhabited regions, i.e., in twenty-three counties of the Kingdom of Hungary. As previously noted, on November 13 a meeting took place in Arad between a delegation from the Hungarian government led by Oszkár Jászi and representatives of the Romanian National Council. During this meeting, Jászi put forward a proposal for the autonomy of homogeneous national blocs based on the Swiss canton model. He also suggested that the Romanian National Council should take over the administration of municipalities where Romanians formed the majority to maintain order until the peace treaty was signed. The Romanian delegates rejected this and demanded full sovereignty because they had already been informed by Bucharest that negotiations were unnecessary.[699]

After the negotiations between the Hungarian government and the Romanian delegates in Arad failed, the Romanian National Council decided to convene a "great people's assembly" on December 1, 1918, in addition to the national assembly of representatives from the districts. A manifesto published in the Arad newspaper *Românul* on November 20, addressed to "the peoples of the world," proclaimed the principle of self-determination. The Romanian National Council encouraged local organizations to declare themselves in favor of joining the Kingdom of Romania to avoid a referendum

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[697] Gorals, aka Polish Highlanders. "Az iglói nemzeti tanács által előterjesztett memorandum Szepes vármegye nemzetiségi viszonyairól és mezőgazdasági reformok bevezetésének szükségességéről.," March 12, 1918, K40-1918-VII-602, MNL OL.
[698] Sztancs, "A szepességi cipszerség önrendelkezési kísérlete," 197.
[699] A more detailed account on the negotiations: Jászi, "Visszaemlékezés a Román Nemzeti Komitéval folytatott aradi tárgyalásaimra (1921).", Ignác Romsics, *Erdély elvesztése: 1918-1947* (Budapest: Helikon, 2018).; Haslinger, *Arad, November 1918*. Szarka, "A helvét modell alternatívája és kudarca 1918 őszén. Adatok, szempontok a Károlyi-kormány nemzetiségi politikájának történetéhez."

and a model declaration was circulated to local councils. Meanwhile, with the approval of the Entente, the Romanian army advanced into Transylvania in mid-November 1918 and reached Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg on November 24. The Hungarian State, which was perceived as "repressive," organized special trains for the Romanians on their way to the gathering. Prior to the assembly, there was no consensus on how the Romanian-inhabited counties should join the Kingdom of Romania. While the Socialists wanted a republic, Vasile Goldiș favored granting Transylvania the same status in Romania that Hungary had in the Habsburg Empire. On December 1, the Romanian National Assembly in Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia/Karlsburg (present-day Romania) decided in favor of unification with Romania and independence from Hungary and formed a Ruling Council.[700] The Hungarian government opposed the merger, citing the armistice agreement.

At the time, Romania's status was still uncertain, and it secured its claims to Transylvania only by taking military action. Romanian soldiers crossed the demarcation line established in the Belgrade Agreement but in line with the promises of the 1916 Treaty of Bucharest. The invasion of Transylvania was justified on the grounds of protecting the Romanian population from "Hungarian terror." Local leaders did not know how to deal with the situation and the Hungarian government was not officially notified. The Hungarian government set up the High Government Commission for Eastern Hungary in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg, led by István Apáthy, to protect the Magyar population.[701] The government's position was not to take armed action against the Romanian occupying forces. The occupied territories therefore continued to be subjected to constant looting and clashes. The Jewish population was one of the primary victims of the humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories. When the Romanian army crossed the demarcation line, the High Government Commission for Eastern Hungary, which was responsible for managing Transylvanian affairs, agreed to create a demilitarized zone. Finally, after the Romanian invasion of Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg, the Berthelot–Apáthy treaty established the demarcation line on the Kolozsvár/Cluj/Klausenburg—Nagybánya/Baia Mare—Déva/Deva line on December

[700] Gheorghe Iancu, *Contribuţia Consiliului Dirigent la consolidarea statului naţional unitar român* (Editura Dacia, 1985).
[701] Siklós, *Magyarország 1918/1919. Események, képek, dokumentumok.*, 174–81.

31, 1918. Meanwhile, the Entente powers recognized Romania as an ally.[702] The Romanian troops continued their advance and even reached Budapest in August 1919.[703]

The dissolution of the Monarchy brought a new political, economic and social order that required Germans in Hungary to rethink their loyalties.[704] The Germans of Hungary did not form a homogeneous community, so they clustered around three main institutions. On November 11, Transylvanian Saxons formed the *Deutsch-Sächsischer Nationalrat* (German-Saxon National Council). During the months of the change of sovereignty, Transylvanian Saxons sought to assert their own interests in the Romanian-Hungarian conflict. As a first step, they contacted both the Romanian and Hungarian National Councils.[705] On October 29, 1918, the Saxon Central Committee initially declared its loyalty to Hungary, but the Saxons soon began gravitating toward the Romanians. The *Deutscher Volksrat für Ungarn* (German People's Council for Hungary) was created on November 10, 1918 by the Transylvanian Saxon Rudolf Brandsch. It advocated for German cultural autonomy within Hungary. As they created regional Councils in Transylvania, Banat, Western Hungary, and Zips, the *Deutsch-Sächsischer Nationalrat* saw the *Deutscher Volksrat für Ungarn* as a rival rather than an ally. The *Volksrat der Deutsch-Ungarn* (People's Council of Hungarian Germans), led by Jakob Bleyer from Dunacséb/Čelarevo/Tscheb (present-day Serbia), did not consider the Saxons to be members in the first place. The *Volksrat der Deutsch-Ungarn* joined the Hungarian National Council on 1 November 1918. The starting point of Bleyer's political program was the double identity of Germans in Hungary: "My nation is the Hungarian nation. (...) But I also have a German *Volk*."[706] Bleyer asked for education in German, but did not support demands for autonomy.

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[702] Ormos, *Padovától Trianonig, 1918-1920*, 112–34. For a more detailed account of the developments in Transylvania see: Béni L. Balogh, ed., *Erdélyből jelentik: a Károlyi-kormány nemzetiségi minisztériumának válogatott iratai, 1918. november 3.-1919. január 29* (Kolozsvár: Iskola Alapítvány Kiadó, 2020).

[703] Béni L. Balogh, ed., *Erdélyből jelentik: a Károlyi-kormány nemzetiségi minisztériumának válogatott iratai, 1918. november 3.-1919. január 29* (Kolozsvár: Iskola Alapítvány Kiadó, 2020).

[704] Gerhard Seewann, *Geschichte der Deutschen in Ungarn*, Studien zur Ostmitteleuropaforschung 24 (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2012), 173.

[705] Pál, "Összeomlás 1918 : főispánok és prefektusok 1918-1919-ben : a közigazgatási átmenet kérdése Erdélyben," 1184.

[706] "Meine Nation ist die Ungarische Nation. (…) Ich habe aber auch ein deutsches Volk." Seewann, *Geschichte der Deutschen in Ungarn*, 178–79.

The position of Brandsch and Bleyer differed significantly from that of the Transylvanian Saxons, who believed that Saxon policy should not be determined solely in Budapest. As a result, the Central Committee (*Zentralausschuß*) of the *Deutsch-Sächsischer Nationalrat* sought a "fraternal agreement" with the Romanians in mid-November. There were three main reasons for this decision, in addition to feeling that Brandsch and Bleyer did not adequately represent their interests. First, Jászi's negotiations in Arad with the Romanian National Council had failed, making it increasingly unlikely that the Hungarians could retain control of the Transylvanian provinces. Second, Romanian troops had already begun their advance into Transylvania under the terms of the Belgrade Agreement. Third, the Romanians promised the Saxons more extensive liberties in Greater Romania than those offered by the Károlyi government in Hungary. When the Romanian National Assembly in Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia/Karlsburg decided to join the Kingdom of Romania and promised territorial and national autonomy to the Saxons, their decision to align with Romania was further reinforced. On January 8, 1919, the *Deutsch-Sächsischer Nationalrat* voted to join Romania and requested autonomy for their region (Königsboden/Királyföld).[707]

Another group that wished to transfer its former autonomy to the new sovereignty was the Szeklers. The Szeklers had arrived in southeastern Transylvania during the twelfth and thirtieth centuries, and historical accounts suggest that they were already Hungarian-speaking at the time of their arrival. Their primary duty was to protect the Eastern Carpathians, and as a result, the Hungarian king granted them significant liberties and privileges, which allowed them to govern themselves in special administrative units called "székek" instead of counties. This unique status continued until the end of the eighteenth century, when they were integrated into the modern Hungarian nation and became part of the county system, specifically the counties of Udvarhely, Csík, Háromszék, and Maros-Torda. Nevertheless, the so-called Szeklerland persisted as a distinct cultural region with its own identity.[708]

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[707] Harald Roth, *Der "Deutsch-Sächsische Nationalrat für Siebenbürgen". 1918/1919* (Südostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1993), 37–46.

[708] Csaba Zahorán, "„A semleges székely állam létesítése világkényszer." A Székely Köztársaság terve és a székely önrendelkezés kérdése 1918-tól napjainkig," in *Kérészállamok Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022), 115–28. Zsolt K. Lengyel, "„Keleti Svájc" és Erdély 1918–1919. [I, II]," *Korunk* 15, no. 1; 2 (2004): 1, 109–13; 2, 76–85.

The majority-Hungarian Szeklerland (*Székelyföld*) was located within the Transylvanian territory to be occupied by the Romanians in the name of the Allied Powers and the Belgrade Pact. However, the representatives of the Hungarian administration argued against the annexation efforts and insisted on waiting for the peace conference's decision on border issues. On October 30, 1918, the Székelyudvarhely/Odorheiu Secuiesc County Legislative Assembly (*törvényhatóság közgyűlés*) discussed the Transylvanian-Szekler question and emphasized the need for foreign propaganda to communicate to foreign countries that secession was not necessary and that the Szekler people wished to remain a part of the Hungarian State. To this end, the National Council of Székelyudvarhely/Odorheiu Secuiesc was established on November 1, 1918, under chairman Árpád Paál. The Romanian occupation of Szeklerland began in mid-November under the Treaty of Belgrade, and the local population did not resist. The National Council made an appeal to the local population, emphasizing the Wilsonian principles and stating that the territorial status of the region, where the non-Romanian population was in the majority, would be determined by the peace conference. The National Council of Székelyudvarhely/Odorheiu Secuiesc also entered into a written agreement with the Romanian army to maintain order.[709] Despite this, conflicts between the occupiers and the local population continued. Numerous grievances were reported, including instances of censorship, requisitioning, and looting.[710]

The transfer of power began with the Romanians taking over the region's administrative institutions. Old and new civil servants had to swear an oath of allegiance to the Romanian state.[711] The Hungarian-speaking elite in Szeklerland believed that they were entitled to self-determination according to Wilsonian principles. As a result, they remained in Szeklerland and started developing plans for an independent Szeklerland or a Republic of Transylvania that would be part of an economic federation with neighboring states. Unlike the Saxons, the Szekler officials did not swear allegiance to the Romanian state, and in January 1919, the Romanian authorities replaced the Hungarian high sheriff with a Romanian prefect. It was at this time that Árpád Paál wrote his *Emlékirat a semleges, független székely államról* (Memorandum on the Neutral, Independent Szekler

[709] Bárdi, *Otthon és haza*, 53–56.
[710] Bárdi, 46–56; Falusi, *Két nemzet határán*, 140.
[711] Pál and Popovici, "The Transformation of the Mid-level Civil Servants' Corps in Transylvania in the Aftermath of the First World War."

State), which was inspired by the Wilsonian principle of self-determination and the Swiss model. The proposed territory of the Szekler state would have gone beyond the four Szekler counties to include the areas around Brassó/Brașov/Kronstadt and Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg. However, Paál's draft did not elaborate on the nationality rights of Romanians, Germans, Roma, and Armenians living in the territory of the Szekler Republic. Although, this time, the republic was not proclaimed—partly because Paál was in custody when he wrote his plan—historian Csaba Zahorán argues persuasively that the idea of a Szekler Republic had popular support. Zahorán interprets Szekler self-determination as a contingency solution in response to the Romanian occupation and the end of Hungarian sovereignty.[712]

2.1.5. Western Hungary

The Károlyi government began negotiations with Brandsch's German People's Council for Hungary (*Deutscher Volksrat für Ungarn*), who spoke on behalf of the Germans living throughout the whole of historical Hungary. Their demands were moderate and targeted cultural and, wherever possible, territorial autonomy. Since acculturation among Germans was high and they lived dispersed across the territory of Hungary, cultural autonomy claims were prominent in Brandsch's program. At the same time, associations in Berlin and Vienna for the support of Germans abroad undertook nation-building efforts among Germans in Hungary, so that in the 1910s, a modest activity to defend the rights of Germans in Hungary was revived.[713] These negotiations and the resulting autonomy law bore the marks of these contradictions. At the end of January 1919, the law that recognized Germans as a nation in Hungary, *Über die Ausübung des Selbstbestimmungsrechts des ungarndeutschen Volkes* (On the Exercise of the Right of Self-Determination of the Hungarian-German People), was passed. Like Ruthenian autonomy, German autonomy was also territorial rather than cultural. Still, as most

[712] Zahorán, "„A semleges székely állam létesítése világkényszer." A Székely Köztársaság terve és a székely önrendelkezés kérdése 1918-tól napjainkig," 128–35.
[713] Such institutions in Berlin included the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulverein zur Erhaltung des Deutschtums im Auslande*, *Verein für das Deutschtum im Auslande*, *Allgemeiner Deutscher Verband*; respectively, the *Verein zur Erhaltung des Deutschtums in Ungarn* and the *Bund der Deutschen zur Erhaltung ihres Volkstums im In- und Ausland* in Vienna. See: Imre Tóth, "A Heinzenland Köztársaság," in *Kérészállamok. Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022), 248.

Germans did not live in a compact area, the law did not name the German autonomous territory and the territorial designation of German sovereignty. The implementation of the law therefore presented several difficulties.

The law envisaged seven autonomous territories, but only three were still under Hungarian sovereignty: Western Hungary, the Budapest area, and South-Eastern Transdanubia.[714] According to the January Law, the German Government Council (*Landesregierungsausschuss*), composed of four members of the German National Council and four from the *Deutscher Volksrat für Ungarn* led by Brandsch, together with two delegates from each German-speaking province, was entrusted with enforcement of the law. A *homo novus*, a judge from Banat, Johann/János Junker, became the Minister of German Nationality. The competence of the German Ministry included education, administration, and justice. Henrik Kalmár, a social democrat from Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg, and the Saxon Péter Jekel became State Secretaries.[715] Géza Zsombor, a journalist and former hairdresser, became the German governor (*Gaupräsident*) of Western Hungary. Elections would have preceded the introduction of the German administration at the end of March. In April 1919, the *Gaurat für Deutsch-Westungarn* (German West-Hungarian Directorate) was created but the proclamation of the Soviet Republic thwarted the implementation of the law.[716]

In light of these events, it is no surprise that the Germans in Western Hungary were not united in their views on how and where they wanted to exercise their national self-determination. The nascent German-Austria, too, made claims for the German-inhabited areas, although Austrians did not annex these territories. Otto Bauer insisted that during the peace negotiations, ownership of the territory should be decided based on the population's right of self-determination. On November 10, the *Deutsche Volksrat für Westungarn*, which supported the transfer of Western Hungary to Austria, was formed in Nagymarton/Mattersburg/Matrštof (present-day Austria), to demand territorial independence and the right to self-determination.[717] Géza Zsombor, the *Gaupräsident* of

[714] Gábor Sztancs, "Selbständige Zipser Republik: A szepességi németség parciális mozgalma 1918 őszén," *Fórum társadalomtudományi szemle* XX, no. 4 (2018): 21–42.
[715] Siklós, *Magyarország 1918/1919. Események, képek, dokumentumok.*, 185. Domokos, *Ruszka-Krajna a népek ítélőszéke előtt.*, 41.
[716] Béla Bellér, "A Magyar Népköztársaság és a Tanácsköztársaság nemzetiségi kultúrpolitikája," *Történelmi Szemle* 12, no. 1–2 (1969): 5–7.
[717] Tóth, "A Heinzenland Köztársaság."

Western Hungary mentioned above, fought to remain in Hungary. Karl Wollinger created the *Deutsche Freiheitspartei* and supported joining Austria, which the German nationalist organizations in Vienna welcomed. Support from Vienna, not only ideological but also armed, made it possible for Hans Suchard, a veteran from Nagymarton/Mattersburg/Matrštof, to proclaim the Heinzenland Republic on December 6: "Bei Ungarn wolln ma net bleiben. Nach Österreich lasst ma uns net. Na, dann ham ma halt a eigene Republik gmacht."[718] The aim was to take Sopron and make it the capital of the republic, but the Hungarian armed forces disarmed the rebels the next day. The Austrian government also distanced itself from this chaotic and failed operation.

2.1.6. Southern Hungary

The region of Vojvodina, encompassing parts of Temes, Bács-Bodrog, Torontál, and Szerém counties, boasted a diverse population, with Serbs and Croats accounting for roughly 40 percent, most of them living in Szerém county. There were also significant populations of Magyars, Germans, and various linguistic islands including speakers of Slovak, Romanian, and Ruthenian.[719] The framework of the Serbian national movement in Hungary was formed mainly by the autonomous national church and Croatian institutional support. The Serbian and South Slavic national movement in Vojvodina was silenced during the war. After the outbreak of WWI, there was increased mistrust of the South Slavic population throughout the Habsburg Empire.[720] In Vojvodina, the authorities banned national parties and arrested their leaders.

Some groups in Vojvodina still considered cultural autonomy in Hungary conceivable, with the guarantee of equality and cultural development. By the autumn of 1918, in the name of the principle of national self-determination, the secessionist movement had gained momentum, bringing with it the nineteenth-century dilemma of whether to secede as part of a Serb-dominated state or a Yugoslav confederation. Opinions differed on whether states or nations should unite into the new state of

[718] "We don't want to stay with Hungary. We don't want to go to Austria. Well, then we just made our own republic." Tóth, 257.
[719] A Magyar Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, *A Magyar Szent Korona Országainak 1910. évi népszámlálása*.
[720] Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, 397–98.

Yugoslavia. On November 5, the National Council of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs was formed in Zagreb and began to elaborate the constitutional character of the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs and the competencies of the provincial governments. In Zagreb, Vojvodina was represented by Vasa Stajić. The status of the Hungarian counties inhabited by Serbs in the future Yugoslav state was unclear, although they were already under the control of the Serbian army. The situation was particularly unclear since Romania, too, laid claim to Banat. The Serbian National Council, which had been established in the meantime, also could not decide whether Vojvodina should be united with Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, or directly with Serbia, as the pro-Serbian Jaša Tomić preferred.[721] Hungary recognized the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, but the situation of Vojvodina remained unclear until November 25, 1918, when it joined the Kingdom of Serbia. This decision doomed the initiatives aimed at achieving greater independence for Vojvodina and peaceful coexistence between the nationalities of the region to failure.[722]

The social and political constellation was equally complicated in the multi-ethnic Banat. It is not clear whether the Banat Republic was actually declared during the assembly held on October 31 in Temesvár/Timișoara/Temeswar. The meeting began with Government Commissioner Albert Bartha, who later became Minister of War, reading aloud a telegram from the Military High Command (Armeeoberkommando or AOK) in which the King released soldiers and officers from their oath. Then, Otto Roth, or according to other sources, Bartha himself, made a statement saying, "Gentlemen, the republic is officially declared," indicating that a new government had been formed in Budapest. However, contemporaries might have misunderstood the passive word construction and German syntax as the proclamation of the Banat Republic. After that, Roth urged the nationalities to establish their own national councils. On October 31, 1918, the Banat People's Council was formed, representing civilian power after the Serbian occupation of the territory in November. Its Executive Committee comprised Romanian, Serbian, Hungarian, German, and Jewish members, reflecting the nationalities' proportions in the populaton. The antedating of the birth of the Banat Republic became important when, in March 1919, the region was to be placed under French patronage. The

[721] Ranko Končar, "Vasa Stajić és a Vajdaság Szerbiához csatolása 1918-ban," *Létünk* 38, no. 3 (2008): 18–27.
[722] Siklós, *Magyarország 1918/1919. Események, képek, dokumentumok.*, 165–67.

political leadership saw the proclamation of the republic as a guarantee that the Banat could remain part of Hungary or a corpus separatum that would preserve its integrity. This would have also meant ensuring law and order and food supplies and preventing the territory from becoming a theatre of war until the peace negotiations. Its creators wanted to model the republic on the Swiss example in the name of national equity. On November 17, the Serbs occupied Temesvár/ Timișoara/Temeswar, and on February 20, 1919, they took over civilian power—marking the end of the Banat Republic.[723]

2.1.7. Transcarpathia

Neither the manifesto proclaiming Czechoslovakia nor the Martin Declaration made any provision for sovereignty over Transcarpathia.[724] In the counties of Máramaros/Maramureș, Ugocsa, Bereg, and Ung, Ruthenians (or Rusyns) comprised about 40 percent of the population.[725] Several national councils with different orientations were formed in parallel in the counties inhabited by the Ruthenian population. None of these organizations officially represented the Ruthenians in Transcarpathia. The Ruthenian National Council in Ólubló/Stará Ľubovňa (present-day Slovakia) was established under the leadership of the pro-Ukrainian Omelian Nevyts'kyi. On November 19, 1918, the Russophile Anton/Antonij Beskyd took over leadership of the Council and moved its headquarters to Eperjes/Prešov/Prjašiv (present-day Slovakia). The Ruthenian National Council, established in Kőrösmező/Iasinia (present-day Ukraine), was oriented towards the West Ukrainian People's Republic under the leadership of Stepan Klochurak. A National Council was also formed in Huszt/Khust/Hust (present-day Ukraine) under the supervision of Iulii Brashchaiko, which advocated unification with Ukraine. The Ruthenian National Council in Szolyva/Svaliava (present-day Ukraine) was headed by Mykhailo Komranyts'kyi and also advocated unification with Ukraine. The Ukrainophiles of Mármarossziget/Sighetu Marmației (present-day Romania), where Ruthenians comprised 2.5 percent of the population, also set up a separate national council in December, chaired by Mykhailo Brashchaiko. In mid-January 1919, Czechoslovak troops invaded the territory of Transcarpathia up to the Ung River. Beneš

[723] Marchut, "Bánáti Köztársaság: valóság vagy legenda?"
[724] Jan Rychlík, "Kárpátalja és Csehszlovákia 1918–1919-ben," *Aetas*, no. 2 (2018): 133.
[725] József Botlik, "Már Trianon előtt elvégeztetett," *Kisebbségkutatás* 9, no. 2 (2000): 267.

aimed to annex Transcarpathia to Czechoslovakia. The Russo- and Ukrainophile national councils would also have accepted membership of the Czechoslovak state as an alternative plan. Despite Czechoslovak and Hungarian agitation, on January 21, 1919, the Khust/Hust/Huszt National Assembly under Iulii Brashchaiko decided to unite with Ukraine. Still, there was no consensus on which Ukraine to join, and several popular assemblies protested against the decision. [726]

In November 1918, the People's Council of the Hungarian Ruthenians (*Magyarországi Rutének Néptanácsa*) was founded in Ungvár/Uzhhorod (present-day Ukraine). The head of the People's Council was the Russophile Simon Szabó / Symeon Sabov, while its secretary was the Ukrainophile and pro-Hungarian Avhustyn Voloshyn. In the Memorandum drawn up by the People's Council, the pro-Hungarian wing of Ruthenians made moderate demands under Voloshyn's guidance: they demanded national equality. This also included cultural and educational autonomy. They also demanded autonomy for the Greek Catholic Church and wanted local officials in the Ruthenian-inhabited counties.[727] With the Hungarian government's negotiations on Slovak and Romanian autonomy deadlocked, the model canton of the Ruthenians still seemed possible due to the weakness of the West Ukrainian Republic in Galicia. After a preliminary discussion between Jászi and the Ruthenian ethnographer and Ministerial Secretary at the Ministry of the Interior Dr. Oreszt Szabó / Orest Sabo, the latter was named government commissioner to prepare the right of self-determination of the Ruthenian nation in Hungary. With the Ruthenian autonomy law of 1918, an autonomous province was established on December 21, 1918 under the name Ruszka Krajna / Rus'ka Kraina. This province consisted of Máramaros/Maramureș, Ugocsa, Bereg, and Ung counties. On December 25, the Hungarian government published a law on the autonomy of the Ruthenian or Rusyn nation in Hungary.

In the autonomous area, the properties that were previously owned by the State Treasury, including lands, mines, and forests, were now being transferred to the legal representation of the Ruthenian political nation. The name of the autonomous region, Ruszka Krajna / Rus'ka Kraina, referred back to the name of the old frontier region with

[726] Siklós, *Magyarország 1918/1919. Események, képek, dokumentumok.*, 182–84.
[727] Rychlík, "Kárpátalja és Csehszlovákia 1918–1919-ben," 134–35.

its privileges.[728] Ruthenian self-determination concerned internal affairs, justice, and public education, while foreign affairs, military affairs, finance, citizenship, private and criminal legislation were handled in common with the Hungarian state, as were economic policy, transportation, and social policy. In autonomous matters, the legislative body was the democratically-elected Ruthenian National Assembly. In common matters, it was represented in the Hungarian National Assembly in proportion to its numbers. In this, the Croatian legislature served as a model. The government bodies were the ministry located in Budapest and the governorate based in Munkács/Mukačevo/Mukachevo (present-day Ukraine). Oreszt Szabó / Orest Sabo was elected head of the Ruthenian ministry, while the governor was the lawyer Stefán Ágoston.

Immediately after the law was passed, in February 1919, the *Ügyvédek lapja* (Lawyers' Journal) criticized the section of the Law on judicial self-government. Its criticism reveals the possible pitfalls of implementing autonomy. The author argued that while the law granted judicial autonomy, it kept private and penal law within the scope of the common legislature. According to the author, this risked disrupting the unity of economic law. For the author, the boundary between these areas of law was not clear: where would substantive and formal law fall? Where would credit-related rights, the laws regulating bills of exchange, bankruptcy, and cheques belong? The author preferred to see equality of national rights along the lines of individual rights.[729]

The autonomy law granted the non-Ruthenian population living in the area—Magyars, Romanians, and Slovaks—cultural autonomy "in the spirit of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination."[730] The canton aimed to serve as a model for other autonomies and to ensure order until the peace negotiations. The Law "is the first letter of recommendation which will best serve the cause of our invitation to the Peace Conference … The existence of Ruska-Kraina/ Rus'ka Kraina is a statement of redemption in the eyes of foreign countries," László Domokos, a member of Jászi's Ministry, wrote in his booklet in 1919.[731] At the same time, Ruthenian autonomy took over competencies from Greek-Catholic ecclesiastical autonomy, which aroused opposition from its representatives. Hungarian troops deployed in the Upper Tisza Valley

[728] Domokos, *Ruszka-Krajna a népek ítélőszéke előtt.*, 7.
[729] "Nemzeti autonómia és jogegység," *Ügyvédek lapja* 36, no. 6 (February 8, 1919): 1–2.
[730] Domokos, *Ruszka-Krajna a népek ítélőszéke előtt.*, 34.
[731] Domokos, 4, 15.

supported the enactment of the law.[732] During this time period, it was common for the establishment of the autonomous Ruszka Krajna / Rus'ka Kraina region to be announced with a delay in the major municipalities of the area. As a result, the formation of this autonomous region led to dual administration in many locations.[733]

Parallel to the Hungarian struggles, in Kőrösmező/Yasinia the Hutsul National Council led by the previously mentioned pro-Ukrainian Stepan Klochurak declared the Hutsul Republic, which wanted to join Ukraine, on January 8, 1919. The Hutsuls are one of the ethnic subgroups of the Ruthenians in the Verkhovyna region of Eastern Carpathian Ruthenia, and Kőrösmező/Yasinia was a border post where returning soldiers were constantly passing through, leaving chaos in their wake. With the support of the Republic of Western Ukraine, the Hutsul Republic recruited an armed force. This so-called Hutsul militia expelled the Hungarian armies and set out to "liberate" Máramarossziget/Sighetu Marmației from Romanian occupation. However, the West Ukrainian People's Republic wanted to remain on friendly terms with the Romanians, so the Hutsul militia withdrew. In June 1919, the Romanian armies occupied the area up to Kőrösmező/Iasinia, which marked the end of the Hutsul Republic.[734]

2.1.8. Conclusion

The subchapter II/2.1 "Re-imagined Communities" explored both successful and unsuccessful implementations of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination in the disintegrating Hungary. It delved into various regions of Hungary to showcase the diverse approaches taken by officials, nation-builders, and intellectuals to shape the future of their state. Among the many short-lived republics mentioned in this chapter, only three had explicit plans for accommodating national minorities within their sovereign territory. These included the "Zispser Republic," which proposed a multinational representative body, the "Banat Republic" which designed an Executive Committee representing

[732] Rychlík, "Kárpátalja és Csehszlovákia 1918–1919-ben," 135–36.
[733] Imre Szakál, *"Rend, fegyelem, összetartás, s nem lesz panasz többé a Kárpátok bércei között": iratok Ruszka Krajna történetéhez, 1918-1919* (Beregszász: RIK-U, 2018), 40–41. See also: Csilla Fedinec and Imre Szakál, "A Hucul Köztársaság: történelem és emlékezet," in *Kérészállamok. Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022), 206.
[734] Rychlík, "Kárpátalja és Csehszlovákia 1918–1919-ben," 136.

different nationalities, both using the metaphor of Eastern Switzerland, and the autonomous region of Ruszka Krajna / Rus'ka Kraina, which offered cultural autonomy for the non-Ruthenian population. On the other hand, plans for Slovak autonomy within Czechoslovakia, the "Slovjak Republic," Transylvanian Saxon autonomy, Szekler autonomy, German autonomy in the "Heinzenland Republic," the autonomy movement in Vojvodina, national councils in Transcarpathia, and the "Hutsul Republic" did not prioritize accommodating co-habiting national minorities. The Czech military presence in Slovakia, the Romanian occupation of Transylvania, the Slovjak Republic in Upper Hungary, and the Hutsul Republic in Transcarpathia, among others, aimed to present *faits accomplis* at the peace conference.

With the disappearance of the threat of Greater Austria after World War I and the emergence of autonomy plans, the perception and reception of Austromarxist ideas underwent a transformation. The dissolution of multi-ethnic empires in 1918 and the rise of nation-states with minority populations caused a paradigm shift, leading to a widespread belief that non-territorial arrangements were a viable solution to address the "minority question." However, despite the prevalence of non-territorial autonomy proposals in many plans, the territorial principle often prevailed. The territorial aspect of loyalty was reinforced by military occupation, and self-proclaimed nation-builders saw delimited national spaces as guarantees of national self-determination. The examples mentioned above highlight that within the former Kingdom of Hungary, it was typically the Hungarian government that initiated non-territorial solutions, while the nationalities tended to aim for territorial solutions. The new democratic Hungarian state, under the concept of "Eastern Switzerland," proposed territorial self-government augmented by cultural autonomy.

An important question for the study of nationalism is the extent of the actual popular base of these social movements. According to some historians, nationalism permeated all aspects of life and it became unthinkable for an individual to exist without a nationality.[735] Others argue that everyday life was possible without a daily referendum on national belonging, to paraphrase Renan's definition of nationalism.[736] Since nationalism was

[735] Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations*, 1–30.
[736] Renan, *What Is a Nation?*, 247–63. For the literature on indifference to nation, see: Tara, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis.", Ginderachter and Fox, *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*., Judson and Zahra, "Introduction."

typically an intellectual enterprise, the historian finds nationalism in the documents the élites left behind. To put it quite simply: if one reads the texts of nationalists, one will find nationalism omnipresent.

What can we learn from these failed nation-building projects? The success or failure of a nation-building venture is naturally more complex than there is space to go into here. These failed attempts nevertheless draw our attention to two broader issues, which are also important problems for successful nation-building attempts, such as the Czechoslovak or Yugoslav projects: the role of intellectuals' ambitions and the scale of national self-determination. First, the example of the short-lived states above showed that their proclamation, more often than not, was an enterprise motivated by personal ambition in the name of national self-determination rather than by mass support. Second, there was a debate among contemporaries regarding the scale at which the principle of self-determination should be applied. As the case studies above showed, there were various interpretations of self-determination and nation that emerged during this period, some of which held that self-determination should be applied at the level of local communities. The next subchapter will introduce new actors who offered a wider variety of models for rebuilding the region, Europe, or the world.

2.2. Everyday Wilson: Naïve Interpretations of National Self-Determination in Hungary at the End of the War[737]

2.2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on various interpretations of Wilsonian self-determination. It further explores two issues that have puzzled diplomats and politicians, intellectuals and ordinary people alike: first, who was entitled to speak in the name of the nation, and second, what should be the scale of national self-determination. The intellectual center where the implementation of the right of self-determination was prepared for all nations residing on the territory of Hungary was the Ministry of Nationalities, led by Oszkár Jászi. This study takes the reader even further into the world of utopian and dystopian ideas in the vacuum between the world war and the Peace Treaty, as it sets out ordinary people's world-changing plans. These plans were conceived as intellectual gymnastics and addressed to the Ministry of Nationality led by Oszkár Jászi. Their authors often lacked up-to-date information and knowledge of the internal and international political situation. Therefore, the assumptions presented in these plans may contradict what we know from political history and the mainstream press. At the same time, these plans often contained complex solutions to the nationality question, which testifies to the fact that, even if their authors were not in tune with the chaos of the moment, they were familiar with the literature on the nationality question of the long nineteenth century. Consequently, non-territorial solutions and the personality principle appear more often in these naïve interpretations of the Wilsonian idea of self-determination. The complexity of these mundane plans also points to the naivety of President Wilson in assuming that the successor states of the Habsburg Monarchy could be managed on the mere principle of national self-determination.[738]

If 1918 is an epochal milestone in global history, it is even more so in the history of the Habsburg Monarchy. But the rupture and structural change did not occur overnight. WWI was over in the West, but armed conflicts continued in Central and Eastern Europe.

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[737] The title *Everyday Wilson* deliberately alludes to the chapter title *Everyday Empire, Our Empire* of Pieter Judson's *The Habsburg Empire: a New History*, since this chapter analyzes cases of citizen engagement with the principle of national self-determination suggesting models of power-sharing to national and international decision-makers in a moment of crises.

[738] See the Prague jurist Rudolf Laun's critique of Wilson in chapter 9 of Kuzmany's forthcoming book. Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"

The Habsburg Monarchy dissolved, but the representatives of the old system remained in place for a while longer and no one guaranteed the authority and competencies of the new local leadership and institutions.[739] Instead of democratic referendums, it was often arms that decided the fate of citizens who were waiting for their promised self-determination.[740] Power became fragmented, with the old county system, the national councils, and the military councils competing to maintain what they perceived as order in chaos.[741] Some historians interpret violence against the authorities, strikes, atrocities, and revolutions as attempts at state-building from below.[742] These civil war-like conditions of 1918-1919 manifested tensions that had accumulated during the long nineteenth century and the years of the Great War.

At the same time, legal standards also changed rapidly. International law had adopted a new logic of justice, and the norms of state legitimacy were also changing. The new actors of international law became nation-states—preferably democratic—housing minorities. The protection of the so-called national minorities and the principle of national self-determination inherited the definitional difficulties of the nation from the nineteenth century.[743] The language of the emerging international legal system after World War I started to conceptually enable non-state actors to participate as legal subjects. This new legal idiom of the Interwar years had the potential to "create" new legal subjects.[744] National minorities could now make claims to become subjects of international law. The League of Nations, still an idea at this point, was meant to fill the vacuum. During the months after the war, "the future seemed open."[745]

It may be that the Wilsonian principles were so popular in Eastern Europe because the president of the United States of America borrowed the key concepts of his Four Principles speech—the principle of the right of small nations to self-determination—from Eastern European political thinkers. The concept of the right to national self-determination was actually taken from Lenin's 1914 pamphlet entitled *The Right of*

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[739] Egry, "Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions."
[740] Böhler, *Civil War in Central Europe, 1918-1921*. Gerwarth, *The Vanquished*.
[741] Ibolya Murber, "A posztimperiális átmenet Nyugat-Magyarországon 1918– 1922," in *Kérészállamok. Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)* (Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022), 227–46.
[742] Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*.
[743] Fisch, *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker*.
[744] Wheatley, Natasha. "Spectral Legal Personality in Interwar International Law: On New Ways of Not Being a State." *Law and History Review*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2017, pp. 753–787.
[745] Frie, "100 Jahre 1918/19. Offene Zukünfte," 100.

Nations to Self-Determination.[746] The term "small nations" entered the president's vocabulary through Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the Czech political thinker and advocate of an independent Czechoslovakia. The self-determination of small nations was not mentioned in the President's Fourteen Points speech before the Congress on January 8, 1918, as many would intuit. It was, in fact, included in the Four Principles speech of February 1918. The Four Principles speech rejected the old diplomacy of the Congress of Vienna and proclaimed a new era in which national aspirations would replace the principle of a balance of power. In his book on Woodrow Wilson, Larry Wolff convincingly argued that Masaryk offered Wilson a ready-made rhetorical analogy to Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. When drawing up the role of Wilson in the liberation of small nations, Masaryk used the discourse from Lincoln's speech.[747] In the United States, Wilson's role in the war and the peace gained legitimacy by evoking Lincoln's ideology of emancipation.

In the Habsburg Monarchy, President Wilson's name soon became synonymous with the right to self-determination of "small nations." The term small nations referred not only to numerically small nations but also to nations with state-building ambitions. And since the Monarchy was a state that housed national movements with the desire to create their own nation-states, it was easy to interpret the President's words as if the moment of liberation and emancipation had come for all communities that had hitherto had no voice. After the horrors of the war, justice, equality, peace, and humanitarianism would define the new world: this was the implicit promise of "Wilson peace." The President's name became a metaphor, or, more accurately, a metonymy, for the hopes and expectations for a just and durable peace. By the end of 1918, streets named after Hungarian national heroes had been renamed after Wilson.[748] Posters with the President's face and the sign "We are for a Wilson peace only" appeared on the streets of Budapest. Wilson's name and the principle of national self-determination associated with it also opened a Pandora's box in the former Habsburg Monarchy. Chapter II/2.1 provided a plethora of illustrations showcasing the potential scale and diversity of nationhood.

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[746] Vladimir Il′ich Lenin, Derek Ford, and Curry Malott, *Learning with Lenin: selected works on education and revolution*, Marxist, socialist, and communist studies in education (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc, 2019), 291–345.
[747] Wolff, *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe*.
[748] "Dr. Sándor Jenő nyugalmazott járásbíró jelentése a Trencsén megyei állapotokról," December 19, 1918, K40-1918-VII-1044, MNL OL.

The end of the war and the months of the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy were difficult to interpret for contemporaries, and doing so is still a complex task for today's historian. As tends to happen during turbulent changes, time had sped up. By the Fall of 1918, it became clear that Hungary had lost the war, and its territorial integrity was in danger. However, it was not yet clear how much of the kingdom's territory could be saved and how. Documents from the same period show that local representatives of the Hungarian government and, even more so, ordinary people often had their own ideas about what self-determination and autonomy meant. The idea of an economic federation encompassing Eastern Europe or creating a united European state was also considered. To accommodate minorities, in the federations planned to be based on the idea of national self-determination, non-territorial arrangements would have been one of the major organizing principles.[749]

László Pethes, the lord lieutenant of Selmecbánya/Banská Štiavnica/Schemnitz (present-day Slovakia), made a proposal concerning the fate of his town, situated in Upper Hungary, which had just been surrendered to Czechoslovakia: "According to the Wilsonian principles, the cities with municipal rights (*törvényhatósági jogú város*) of Selmec and Bélabánya are and want to remain, Hungarian towns."[750] Pethes gave two main reasons why the population of Selmecbánya wanted to remain part of Hungary. First, the town was Magyar "in character," as he put it, due to emigration and the Magyarization of the local Slovaks. Second, half of the population was ethnic Hungarian, Pethes claimed. Moreover, the German population was "Magyar by virtue of emotions" (*magyar érzelműek*).

The expressions "Magyar in character" or "Magyar by virtue of emotions" were often used in late Habsburg Hungary to describe non-Magyars on their acculturation journey. Pethes's claim about the predominance of Magyars in Selmecbánya is, however, questionable. Statistical data shows that although Selmecbánya was one of the towns where the Magyarization process was the fastest, it had a Slovak majority. In 1900, only 20 percent of the population was listed as Hungarian-speaking; in 1910, that figure was

[749] Case, "The Strange Politics of Federative Ideas in East-Central Europe." Gennadii Korolov, "Between Intermarium and Eastern Switzerland: Belarusian and Ukrainian Federative Projects, 'Imperializing Nations,' and the Making of National Territories (1914–1920)," *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 42 (2021): 23–36.
[750] "Pethes László közélelmezési miniszteri megbízott előterjesztése Selmec- és Bélabánya város hovatartozása ügyében.," December 1, 1918, MNL OL.

41 percent. This ratio, however, implies that more than half of the population was Slovak. Surveys also showed that a large proportion of the population was bilingual. State officials interpreted this as if most of the population identified as Magyar but still spoke Slovak. Pethes also cited the census ordered by the Minister of Public Provision in 1917, when the proportion of Magyars crossed the 50% threshold. The fact that in 1921 only 5% of the population claimed to be Magyar somewhat mitigates the validity of this interpretation.

This is just one example among hundreds of others of how local leaders interpreted the Wilsonian principle of self-determination at the end of WWI. It can, however, highlight the practical difficulties of the Wilsonian principle. This subchapter deals with the translations of previously existing ideas into the Wilsonian language of self-determination. In what follows, I will present the way in which the representatives of the government and local communities, as well as everyday people, interpreted the idea of self-determination. The first part of the subchapter shows the official position of the democratic intelligentsia. It addresses the question of how the Hungarian government and democratic intelligentsia interpreted the Wilsonian principles in a way consistent with Hungary's territorial integrity (2.2.2 "How to Save the Territorial Integrity of Hungary in the Name of Wilson?"). In the second part, I will give examples of how the nation's self-determination was manifested at the local and regional levels (2.2.3. "'This is how we understand Wilson'"). This part explores the interpretation of the Wilsonian principles by representatives of local communities and state officials. In the third part, I turn my attention to how lay people interpreted self-determination (2.2.4 "Gods and Lay Patriots").

The wide range of interpretations of the Wilsonian thought is instructive regarding the space of experience (*Erfahrungsraum*) and the horizon of expectations (*Erwartungshorinzont*) of local communities in Hungary at the end of the First World War.[751] In the months of transition from an empire into nation-states, various communities formulated their desires in the idiom of national self-determination. The chapter is based on the hypothesis that the Wilsonian principles have served (at least in

[751] Koselleck introduced these two terms to capture the dynamic relationship between the past, the present, and the future. In his view our present experience and interpretation of the past shapes what we expect from the future. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 349–75.

part) as a legitimation of political ideas that were already circulating in Hungary. National self-determination served as an internationally accepted idiom that was in a position to legitimize long-held local and particular interests.

2.2.2. How to Save the Territorial Integrity of Hungary in the Name of Wilson? "We are no longer forced to be the pillars of oppression"

The new Hungarian government did not consider itself the heir of the "old Hungary" that had entered the war and lost it—at least not in a moral sense. For everything that had happened so far and would occur in the future, the philistine political "society of the lords" (*urak*) was accountable.[752] Despite the complex internal and external political situation, there was a general belief that not only the former nationalities but Hungary, too, would emerge as a post-Habsburg democratic nation-state. This distancing from the hegemonic ambitions of the old government and the negotiations about the change of sovereignty on the territories claimed by the Romanians and Slovaks (*impériumváltás*) would justify this belief. Károlyi and his government believed that these peaceful negotiations would make Hungary presentable before the Entente. The government hoped that internal democratization and federal transformation would keep the territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary together. On the first of January 1919, Hungarian Prime Minister Mihály Károlyi summed up this hope in the following three words: "Wilson. Wilson. Wilson."[753] Today, we know that this attempt came too late and that the territorial integrity of Hungary could not be protected.

The November 3, 1918 manifesto of Hungarian pacifist and pro-Entente intellectuals, entitled *A magyar intelligenciához* (To the Hungarian Intelligentsia), testified that a part of Hungarian society celebrated the dissolution of the Monarchy and the collapse of "the old Hungary" as national liberation and independence.[754] The pamphlet declared that this new situation had moved the Magyar nation out of its elevated position and put it on par with the other nations of the monarchy. "Magyars! We also consider ourselves a renewed nation (...) like our brothers and sisters, who happily rise from the ruins of the monarchy. We wake up relieved to know that we are no longer

[752] "Jászi Oszkár a jövőről. A radikális párt ünnepi lakomája," *Világ*, November 3, 1918, 9.
[753] Wolff, *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe*, 102.
[754] "A magyar intelligenciához," *Világ*, November 3, 1918, 12.

forced to be the pillars of oppression. (…) Let us all be free!"[755] The manifesto imagined the future of the small uprising nations of the former Monarchy in an economic confederation based on popular democracy and the Wilsonian principles. The authors proposed implementing the plan through an alliance of the national councils.

The idea of an Eastern European economic confederation was not alien to Hungarian political thought. I have already outlined how Jászi discovered Kossuth's Danube confederation plan while reading the Austromarxists' schemes for national personal autonomy. This plan for an "Eastern Switzerland" became the official nationality program of the first Hungarian republic. The revolutionary government aimed to continue Kossuth's "grand national policy" after a "seventy-year" break. This policy could consolidate millions of multi-ethnic citizens into a unified state.[756] By the end of the war, liberal nationalist, leftist, and pacifist circles had also rehabilitated Kossuth's person and policies. When I elaborated on the historiographic parallel between 1848-1849 and 1918-1919, I mentioned Károlyi's longstanding admiration for Kossuth. As a member of the *Függetlenségi és 48-as Párt* (Party of Independence and '48) Károlyi came from an intellectual background that idolized Kossuth. Moreover, Jászi greatly impacted Károlyi's views on the nationality question.

When the historian Gergely Romsics examined the speeches made in the Hungarian House of Representatives and the press in the last months of 1918 regarding the Wilsonian principles, he found that those who shaped Hungary's foreign policy at the end of 1918 legitimized and "domesticated" the Wilsonian peace and the principle of national self-determination through Kossuth's Danube Confederation plan. The fact that the political élite equated Wilson's principles with Kossuth's policy was also an opportunity to misinterpret the Wilsonian idea. Unlike Kossuth's plan in the aftermath of 1848-1849, Wilson's intention was not to vouch for Hungary's territorial integrity in the last months of 1918, since he gradually gave up on the Habsburg Monarchy between December 1917

[755] "A magyar intelligenciához," 12.
[756] Domokos, *Ruszka-Krajna a népek ítélőszéke előtt.*, 10.

and the summer of 1918.[757] The reference to Kossuth spared the Hungarian political elite from facing the loss of the war and the nationalities' desire to secede.[758]

In 1919, the government published an official position in English and French on the nationality issue and the official interpretation of the right of nations to self-determination, serving two objectives mentioned above: providing a reference for how the Magyars envisioned a provisory order until the peace negotiations and setting a good example in protecting minorities.[759] This document, *The Dismemberment of Hungary and the Nationalities*, which was written by Róbert Braun, contained a detailed analysis of the socio-economic conditions and a plan to reconstruct the Hungarian state based on the "right of nations to decide their own destiny," without any direct reference to Wilson.[760] The new administration would have been based on cantonal units formed on linguistically homogenous territories complemented by the equal representation of the nationalities in the federal administration. Much like how the Austromarxists imagined the reconstruction of pre-war Austria, the post-war Hungarian government envisaged national autonomies "exercised on the basis of personality." The taxpayers of each nationality would cover its expenditure on national culture and education.[761] The document contained, among others, the law on the autonomy of the Ruthenian nation in Hungary passed in 1918 and the law granting home rule to Germans from 1919.[762]

László Domokos, an officer at the Ministry of Nationalities, proposed in his booklet *Kis káté a Magyarországon élő nemzetek önrendelkezési jogáról* (A Small Treatise on the Right of Self-Determination of the Nations Living in Hungary) to create compact and homogenous national blocs based on districts or even smaller units instead of the historic

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[757] In 1917, Wilson still aimed at achieving a separate peace with Austria-Hungary. In January 1918, in his fourteen points, point ten underlined that the peoples of Austria-Hungary should enjoy autonomous development, which was possible within the constitutional framework of the monarchy. From February 1918 on, however, he became more and more critical of Austria-Hungary due to its role in the German-Austrian alliance and its "imperial artificiality." Robert Lansing, the United States Secretary of State under President Wilson, urged the President to formulate a clear stance on the monarchy's future. "…should we or should we not favor the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into its component parts?" he wrote in March 1918. Wilson was, however, cautious in formulating a definite Habsburg policy until October 1918, when he declared that point ten of the Fourteen Points was outdated. Wolff, *Woodrow Wilson and the reimagining of Eastern Europe*, 56–114.

[758] In this summary, I greatly benefited from the chapter *Kossuth Lajos utolsó diadala* of the book manuscript of Gergely Romsics.

[759] Braun, *The Dismemberment of Hungary and the Nationalities*. 22

[760] Braun, 22.

[761] Braun, 22.

[762] Braun, 47–54.

county framework. “These should form their own organs according to the Swiss model. These organs will be brought together in a larger unit for all the matters decided by common consent.”[763] Both the logic and the detailed elaboration of the planned administrative reform resembled Kossuth’s Danube confederation plan, and even more strongly echoed Renner’s version of cultural autonomy.[764] “Where, as in most of your cases, significant national minorities will be formed within the homogeneous settlement area, we shall have no choice but to guarantee the protection of these minorities mutually,” wrote Domokos, as he set down the principles of his model citing Jászi.[765] Furthermore, he mentioned that the practical implementation of these principles was not yet fully developed and the introduction of a new administrative system would be a complex and time-consuming task. Domokos thus vindicated the Hungarian government’s move to start the reform from the top down by replacing the old lord lieutenants.[766]

Domokos’s “Eastern Switzerland” (*Keleti Svájc*) model, went further in designing the future Hungary. The “Eastern Switzerland” model proposes a series of steps for creating a linguistically more homogenous administrative structure. First, the old counties would be dissolved to allow for the formation of linguistically or nationally homogeneous cantons or districts (*járás*). It is important for the population of the canton to be centered around a municipality (*község*) to maintain close connections between transport routes, railways, and industrial facilities. At the municipal level, democratically organized people’s councils (*néptanács*) would be established. These communal people’s councils would be linked to those at the district administrative center (*járási székhely*). As most cantons would be linguistically homogenous, people’s councils from various cantons using the same language could form higher-level organizations, which could serve as the basis for national autonomy. This would mean territorial autonomy for larger linguistic blocks and non-territorial autonomy for linguistic islands. Domokos illustrated this system with lines with zigzags and dotted indentations. The sovereign national territories (*impérium*) would meander around linguistic islands (*szigetek*). To ensure the rights of minorities throughout the state, Domokos proposed granting non-territorial autonomy

[763] László Domokos, *Kis káté a Magyarországon élő nemzetek önrendelkezési jogáról* (Budapest: Lantos A. Könyvkereskedése, 1919), 29.
[764] See Chapter: II/1 “Jászi Reads Kossuth.”
[765] Domokos, *Kis káté*, 29.
[766] Domokos, 31.

(*autonómia*) to linguistic islands, linking the representation of national autonomies and linguistic islands (*szigeteket alkotó más nemzetek*).[767]

Under this system, the Romanians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Serbs, and Slovenes, the Saxons of Transylvania, the Zipser Saxons of Upper Hungary, and the Swabians of the Banat could each establish their own separate national autonomy. Domokos wrote that in places where Hungarians were scattered, they should also establish such autonomies. These national autonomies would separately manage their own people and the territory's political, financial, religious, and cultural affairs. All citizens should be able to use their mother tongue (*anyanyelv*) up to the highest forum. National autonomies (*nemzeti autonómiák*) would be competent to elect their own officials and jurors and define their cultural needs. The autonomies would levy and collect taxes themselves. The council of the federation (*szövetségtanács*) would be based at the center and have authority over the common affairs.[768] Domokos's plan clearly echoes Jászi's plan for an Eastern Switzerland. He did not mention Renner or Bauer, but nonetheless combined territorial and non-territorial autonomy, a plan that is remarkably similar to the Austromarxists' two-dimensional autonomy model. There are also no references to Kossuth's Danube Confederation plan as a source of inspiration or justification for this approach.

Another misinterpretation of the Wilsonian principles arose when Hungarian intellectuals translated the notion of self-determination into cultural autonomy for the nationalities. The government intended to prove to the whole of Europe that the "old feudal Hungary" had been replaced by a new democratic state—a Hungary that wanted to solve the nationality question based on the Swiss model, a confederation of cantonal cultural autonomies.[769] Even on the eve of Romanian unification, the Hungarian officials assigned to Transylvania were confident that with a few administrative reforms, the territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary could be kept together. "In place of a Central European Balkans, what we want is an Eastern Switzerland," Robert Braun argued.[770] According to Alfonz Ráskai, the municipal notary of Brassó/Kronstadt/Brașov (present-day Romania), "the main grievance of the Romanian intelligentsia was that they could

[767] Domokos, *Kis káté*, 32-33.
[768] Domokos, 33-34.
[769] Litván and Varga, *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája*, 311–28.
[770] Braun, *The Dismemberment of Hungary and the Nationalities*.

not find their place in the administration and gain social positions."[771] Therefore, the situation could still be saved by appointing Romanian lord lieutenants (*főispán*) and high sheriffs (*főszolgabíró*), Ráskai wrote on November 30, 1918. The cultural autonomy to be granted to nationalities was in line with both the Kossuth tradition and the principle of self-determination but not with the current state of affairs.

While some people fully embraced President Wilson's ideas, others were more skeptical and questioned the extent of their applicability. These political thinkers believed that simply acknowledging the right to self-determination was not enough, and that more action was necessary. For instance, László Domokos, in a booklet published in 1919, expressed doubts about the practicality of Wilson's ideas, stating that even Wilson himself could not fully realize the right of self-determination for defeated peoples in the face of the overwhelming power of the victorious nations: "Not even a Wilson can rise to the ideological heights that can fully liberate the right of self-determination of defeated peoples from the terrible weight of the frenzy of the triumph of the victors."[772] On October 13, 1918, the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (SDPH) held an extraordinary party meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to take a stance on the break-up of dualism and the country's future and to take a position on whether to adopt the Wilsonian principles. With regard to the latter point, the president of the SDPH argued that Wilson's ideas alone could not lay the foundations for peace. Each nation itself is responsible for asserting its rights. The president of the social democratic party must have been an opera lover since he used the story of *Madama Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini to illustrate the possible consequences of adopting the Wilsonian principles. He urged his comrades not to deny their ancient faith for the sake of their American sweetheart, paraphrasing the opera's libretto: "America is far away, and I fear that the American god doesn't know us well enough."[773]

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[771] "dr Ráskai Alfonz brassói törvényszéki jegyzőnek hat oldalas kézzel írott memoranduma - javaslat a kormánynak a helybeli románsággal szemben alkalmazott nemzetiségi politikára" (Brassó/Brașov/ Kronstadt, November 30, 1918), K40/1918/IX. 696, MNL OL.
[772] Domokos, *Ruszka-Krajna a népek ítélőszéke előtt.*, 42–43.
[773] "A MSZDP 1918 október 13-án tartott rendkívüli pártgyűlésének jegyzőkönyve," in *Magyar Munkásmozgalom Történetének Válogatott Dokumentumai* (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1969), 461–89.

2.2.3. "This is how we understand Wilson." Representatives of Local Communities and State Officials on the Idea of Self-Determination

I mentioned earlier that it was a common belief among the Magyar élites that democratic referendums or popular assemblies would decide the fate of the disputed territories on the territory of the former Monarchy. The Wilsonian idea of self-determination was generally seen as the promise of an imminent plebiscite, where people could decide to which successor state they wanted to belong. "The issue of the referendum is firmly in the mainstream," a teacher from Zemplén county (present-day Slovakia and Hungary) wrote in his report to the Ministry of Nationalities.[774] Slovak nation-builders, however, were worried about the possibility of referendums.[775] Some ethno-confessional local communities declared themselves part of one of the nations of the former Empire and asked for rights as such. For others, the principle of national self-determination allowed them to adhere to a nation of their choice instead of their nationality of origin. For the rest, the referendum meant the freedom to choose in which nation-state they wanted to be a national minority. As a minority, they could determine whether they wished to be protected by territorial or personal cultural autonomy.

Some local leaders started collecting signatures, which the Hungarian delegation would hand over to President Wilson at the Peace Conference.[776] There were a broad range of interpretations regarding the scale of the referendum. Certain local communities or counties saw the right to self-determination as an opportunity to resist annexation to one of the successor states. They expressed their will through popular assemblies, declaring their desire to remain independent or autonomous. A few days after the proclamation of Czechoslovakia, a lawyer from Rimaszombat/Rimavská Sobota in Southern Slovakia reported that people wanted to stay with what they already knew: "The freedom enjoyed by peoples based on national self-determination is better in the Hungarian state than in the completely unknown Czech state."[777]

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[774] "Juhász János főreáliskolai tanár jelentése a Zemplén megyei állapotokról.," n.d., K40-1918-VII-230, MNL OL.
[775] Szarka, *Szlovák nemzeti fejlődés*, 213.
[776] "Dr. Gragger Róbert körmöcbányai egyetemi tanár javaslata egymillió tót aláírásának összegyűjtésére a csehek törekvései ellen.," n.d., K40-1918-VII-305, MNL OL.
[777] "Dr. Vitt János rimaszombati ügyvéd javaslata a tót luteránus papság és tanítóság az agitációba való bevonására, a községek társadalmi úton történő felhívására a magyar állameszméhez történő csatlakozásra.," n.d., K40-1918-VII-292, MNL OL.

The entirely Romanian population of the community of Mácsa/Macea in Arad County (present-day Romania) questioned the legitimacy of the Decree of Unification of the Alba Iulia National Assembly that declared the union of Transylvania with Romania, calling it a "violation of the Wilsonian principles." They proposed establishing an International Republican Party, "where everyone would be free to sacrifice their national aspirations in a republican form."[778] In November 1918, intellectuals also voiced the preferences of the population of Bereg/Berehovo county (present-day Ukraine). Several dozen county judges, teachers, and ministers declared that they did not want to belong to Galicia or a unified Ukraine: "We say it openly, loudly, so that Wilson, the wise president of the great, free America (...) will hear and understand (…) that we are no longer Ruthenians but Greek Catholic Hungarians. (…) The fact that we were Ukrainians or Ruthenians is a thing of the past."[779] The County commissioner forwarded their declaration to the Ministry of Nationalities.

Others translated the concept of self-determination as national territorial autonomy: "currently, the majority of the Slovak population wants self-determination within the territory of Hungary," the Lord Lieutenant of Zemplén/Zemplín county (present-day Slovakia) wrote.[780] The national council of the municipality of Hun [sic!] in Abaúj-Torna/Abovsko-turnianska county (present-day Slovakia and Hungary) filed a complaint with the Ministry of Nationalities saying that the nationalities, "foreign peoples settled here," misunderstood the right of self-determination when they made territorial claims. They were apprehensive that the principle of self-determination would be misinterpreted as a justification for mass migration and believed that the right of self-determination would lead to each nation being able to freely relocate to any desired territory. Such a territorial exchange could result in the dominance of a single ethnic group in the more prosperous regions, a prospect that they feared.[781]

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[778] "dr Schmidt Sándor ügyvéd jelentése, Mácsa színtiszta román község semmiképp nem akar a román királysághoz tartozni," n.d., K40-1918-IX-708, MNL OL. See also: "A medgyesi magyar nemzeti tanács azon óhajának add kifejezést, hogy - A Magyar államnak történelmileg kialakult és egy évezred viharainak /ellenállva ?/ egysége és területi épsége érintetlenül fennáll.," n.d., K40-1918-IX-862, MNL OL.

[779] "Bereg vármegye törvényhatósági bizottságának hivatalos jegyzőkönyve, melyben állást foglal az ország területi integritása ellen irányuló külső politikai törekvésekkel szemben.," n.d., K40-1918-X-836, MNL OL.

[780] "Dr. Darányi Kálmán, Zólyom vármegye főispánja jelentése a zólyomi állapotokról (a szlovák kérdés csehszlovák megoldását óhajtják, népgyűléseket tartanak és minden alkalmat megragadnak eszméiknek és a cseh szimpátiának a szlovák lakosság között történő terjesztésére.," n.d., K40-1918-VII-558, MNL OL.

[781] A Hun községi (Abauj-Torna) nemzeti tanács jelentése. MNL OL, K440-1918-140 3.d., 326-328.

Self-determination was also interpreted as the right to protection as a minority. The Wends (ethnic Slovenians of Hungary) of Muraszombat/Murska Sobota (present-day Slovenia) also appealed to the Hungarian government for language rights and their own institutions, referring to Wilson and the right to self-determination.[782] Romanian communities in Ugocsa/Ugocea county (present-day Ukraine and Romania) asked for equal rights in language usage and religious freedom in similar terms.[783] For others, the Wilsonian principles created the framework conditions for a new social contract: "…besides equality of living conditions, only a voluntary contract would hold us together in the noble pursuit of human perfection. This is how we understand Wilson, this is how we understand the great aim of mankind," as it was put at the Transylvanian Hungarian National Assembly in Marosvásárhely/Târgu Mureș (present-day Romania).[784]

Since these documents were addressed to the Ministry of Nationalities of Hungary, they were written on a subject that was thought to fall within the competence of the Ministry: registering and affirming the will of each "nation" or community and representing it at the "*Areopagus* of nations that is about to assemble."[785] Most of these documents were written either with the aim of representing the decision of a local community at the peace conference or to help the Ministry in its work in preparing referendums. In most documents, the authors explained why the national communities claimed loyalty to historic Hungary when most Romanians and Slovaks supported unification with Romania and Czechoslovakia, respectively. The examples illustrated the fact that these communities and their leaders grasped the essence of self-determination, albeit with varying interpretations regarding the scope and scale of sovereignty. Additionally, there was a competition to achieve monopoly on interpreting the Wilsonian principle. Each group's representatives believed they were the sole authority on truth, leading to the dismissal of opposing claims as invalid due to alleged misunderstandings of the principle of self-determination.

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[782] A muraszombati vendek 1918 december 2-án tartott népgyűlés határozati javaslata tárgyában /kívánságaik 3 oldal sajátkezű aláírásokkal/. MNL OL, K40-1918-XII-827

[783] "Benkő Gábor százados javaslata Erdély és a román lakta területeken a magyar-román együttműködés szükségességéről.," n.d., K40-1918-IX-740, MNL OL.

[784] "Az erdélyi magyarság naggyűlésének határozata Marosvásárhelyen.," n.d., K40-1918-IX-905, MNL OL.

[785] "Dula Máté, a Tót Nemzeti Párt elnöke a tót kérdés megoldása tárgyában.," n.d., K40-1918-VII-30, MNL OL.

2.2.4. Gods and Lay Patriots

On November 1, 1918, the Károlyi government entrusted Jászi with "the preparation of the right of self-determination of the nations living in Hungary" as minister without a portfolio.[786] Hundreds of documents were submitted to the Ministry of National Minorities, and some 150 of them dealt with practical issues related to the implementation of the principle of national self-determination. While the majority of these documents were official letters from state representatives and local communities, there were also contributions from everyday patriots who were concerned about the future of Hungary and the prospects for lasting peace. Despite the pressing humanitarian crisis, a small group of about a dozen patriots took the time to draft comprehensive plans for the future of Hungary, as well as for a potential Eastern European Confederation or United States of Europe. These plans were submitted to the Ministry of Nationalities in the hopes of shaping the post-war world to come. One might wonder why these individuals would bother to sit down and craft such detailed plans amidst the chaos and uncertainty of the time. Yet, for these patriots, the stakes were too high to ignore. They believed that a durable peace would require careful planning and cooperation on a global scale. Sending these plans to the Ministry of Nationalities reflected the deep sense of engagement felt by these individuals. They believed that their ideas could make a difference and help to shape the course of history in a positive direction.

The Hungarian government assumed that official representatives of all the nations involved would negotiate peace treaties, so domestic policy became intertwined with foreign affairs. Citizens who offered services or views to the Ministry of Nationalities expected to play an active role in shaping the framework of fair coexistence and possibly gain a position in the new political system. The sociologist Károly Méray Horváth, whom Minister Jászi knew personally, asked for a Swiss consular mandate at the end of his letter. By contrast, in his proposal, Emanuel Wagner stressed that his plan for a lasting peace could be worthy of the Minister's attention because he was not a politician but a simple engineer who was nevertheless well-traveled and cosmopolitan.

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[786] Szarka, *Keleti Svájc - illúzió vagy utópia? A Károlyi-kormány Nemzetiségi Minisztériumának működése*.

These constitution plans written by everyday citizens were filed between November and December 1918, among other documents concerning nationality issues written by state officials. The ministry staff made annotations on the topic, relevance, and urgency of the documents or commented on the credibility of the authors. Although most of the plans based their new political order on theories and practices that had been circulating in the Monarchy for decades, the only person referred to explicitly was Wilson. This was particularly curious because Jászi himself had been publishing plans to create an "Eastern Switzerland" for almost two decades, plans which had also became the official policy of the Károlyi government. It would even seem obvious to refer to Jászi since his ministry was the addressee of the plans. Yet the authors invoked only Wilson as a higher authority to justify the legitimacy of their proposals. On the other hand, it is also understandable why Wilson was seen as a more reliable reference than Jászi or Károlyi. The Prime Minister himself almost deified the American President. In early 1919, for example, he declared to Archibald Cary Coolidge, leader of an American mission to Eastern Europe: "Our only hope is in God and President Wilson."[787] The common idiom of everyday people and the government was the Wilsonian idiom.

In January 1919 a movement was launched for Hungary to join the United States of America as a federal state.[788] Moskovits outlined several advantages of joining America. First, he believed the geographical distance would allow Hungary to maintain its independence, autonomy, and national identity. Second, Moskovits argued that America would support Hungary in safeguarding its historical borders. Third, since communication with America would primarily be through sea routes, Hungary could keep its access to the port of Fiume/Rijeka (present-day Croatia). Fourth, America would even protect against the Bolshevik threat. And lastly, Moskovits pointed out that the economic position of Hungary in Europe would improve by joining the US. In conclusion, Moskovits envisioned Hungary remaining a free, democratic, happy, and predominantly Magyar nation. Moskovits also proposed practical steps to actualize the integration. He suggested conducting demonstrations and referendums throughout Hungary to declare accession based on the principle of national self-determination. The role of the

[787] Wolff, *Woodrow Wilson and the Reimagining of Eastern Europe*, 102. The aim of the mission was to brief the President on the opportunities and challenges for the American policy in the region.
[788] Miksa Moskovitz, "[Magyarország mint egyik szövetsége állam csatlakozzék az Amerikai Egyesült Államokhoz]" (Arad, January 9, 1919), K-440, D/II/, 1919 – 169, MNL OL. I am grateful to Gergely Romsics for drawing my attention to the document.

government would be to engage in diplomatic communication. Additionally, the Hungarian diaspora in the U.S. would assume a crucial role. They would organize demonstrations all over America in support of Hungary joining the United States. Miksa Moskovits' idea was not exceptional or singular in the aftermath of the Great War. Moreover, it contained all the important questions regarding Hungary's present and future.

Many proposals from "ordinary" citizens broke with the tradition of a territorial understanding of the nation. This is particularly true of the proposal by Emanuel Wagner, an engineer from Antalóc/Antalovci in Ung county (present-day Ukraine).[789] In his voluminous letter, Wagner explained that he wanted to build the peace in Europe on two pillars: first, a United States of Europe, and second, Nationalities States without unitary, hermetically closed borders. Wagner's United States of Europe would have been built on the equality of nations and non-territorial national bodies. Like Kossuth and the Austromarxists, Wagner used the analogy of religious peace to explain how to rise above territorial debates. The joint central parliament would have worked alongside national parliaments. He explained this using the personality principle: "Nationality states or bodies do not have a defined single closed territory, but can only be made up of individuals who voluntarily join."[790] Elections would were to be universal, including both sexes, equal, and secret, modeled on those in Switzerland or New Zealand. The United States of Europe would have a common legal system, and there would be no customs. Railways and major public institutions would be state-owned.

Wagner designed an educational system on the principle of equal rights for all languages. Each citizen would pay taxes to their own nationality, which must be used for national cultural and educational institutions. In education, too, his guiding principle was to keep each region's demographic proportions in mind when deciding on the language of instruction. School textbooks would be the same for all nationalities. Wagner's plan included an interesting proviso: national history could only be taught in higher education. He envisaged instruction in multiple languages, either with separate teachers or with the

[789] In 1910, the village had 725 inhabitants, of whom 9 percent were Hungarian, 17 percent Slovak, and 70 percent Ruthenian or Ukrainian. 17 percent of the population was Roman Catholic, 77.5 Greek Catholic, and 3.7 Jewish. Thus, one cannot clearly equate the categories of nationality and religion.
[790] "Wagner Emanuel [nép?] főhadnagy mérnök javaslata a békekötés kérdésében.," n.d., K40-1918-XVIII-418, MNL OL.

teaching hours distributed in proportion to the number of inhabitants. When it came to the social question, i.e., the situation of peasants and workers, he took the principles of socialism as his guiding principle. Wagner planned to employ multilingual civil servants in mixed-language areas. Like Renner, Wagner felt that it was important that police officers speak the language of the region. Incitement against religions and nationalities would have been prohibited under his plan.

In Wagner's proposal, minority rights were guaranteed by all means—even through arbitration, if necessary. The principle of the majority was also a much-discussed concept in the late Habsburg Monarchy. The political thinker József Eötvös and the liberal politician Adolf Fischhof were the leading voices when it came to questioning the majority principle. The ideas of the German public lawyer Georg Jellinek were also influential. In 1898, he gave a speech at the *Viennese Juridical Society* (*Juristische Gesellschaft zu Wien*) entitled *Das Recht der Minoritäten*.[791] Wagner also argued for the abandonment of the majority principle in all areas. "The right of the majority will always be unjust to the minority (…) even with equal laws, the minority with a different language will be at the mercy of the majority."[792] In his proposal, Wagner guaranteed minority rights in such a way that new laws could only be passed by a three-quarters majority or by referendum.

Wagner's plan is a beautiful example of how territorial and non-territorial elements can be interwoven in autonomy arrangements: national communities based on the principles of the free declaration of nationality and not on territory and consisting of local linguistic communities. As interesting as they might be, Wagner's education and readings are unknown. The lack of biographical information on Wagner means I cannot be sure whether he was an active socialist. His conception of the United States of Europe and that of states without territories could, however, potentially have had several sources: the newspapers, Kossuth's or Jászi's writings, the government, the Austrian Social Democrats, or the Zionists active in the region. Maybe, as the historian Börries Kuzmany argues, these theories were so widespread at the end of 1918 that everybody who was willing to do so could encounter them.[793]

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[791] Jellinek, *Das Recht der Minoritäten*.; Adorjáni and Bari, "National Minority."
[792] "Wagner Emanuel [nép?] főhadnagy mérnök javaslata a békekötés kérdésében."
[793] See: Chapter 5. in the upcoming book: Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"

The reverse is true of Károly Horváth Méray (C.H. von Meray): much is known about the Hungarian polymath and social Darwinist, but his proposal for creating a United States of Europe has gone missing.[794] According to the summary enclosed in the document, Méray's United States of Europe consisted of so-called "evolutionary spheres." Hungary, along with the South Slavs, Poles, Czechs, Austrians, and Germans, would have been part of the Central European entity. In 1918, while agitating for pan-European peace through the channels of the international social democratic movement in Switzerland, he published the book *Weltmutation. Schöpfungsgesetze über Krieg und Frieden und die Geburt einer neuen Zivilisation* (World Mutation. Laws of Creation of War and Peace and the Birth of a New Civilization).[795] The book was infused with the idea of "organic sociology" and allegedly held the core idea of a United States of Europe. The German historian Manfred P. Fleischer even called Méray the *Doppelgänger* of Oswald Spengler, the author of the *Decline of the West*.[796] However, Méray's proposal came too late, as the government did not envisage the future of Hungary along the lines of the Greater German ambitions.

While Wagner was primarily interested in national and linguistic equality, other "lay patriots" were more oriented towards economic union or ways to maintain Hungarian supremacy in the region. Károly Révay, a lawyer, and Vilmos Kovács, a merchant in the nut trade, submitted proposals for an alliance with neighboring nations. Incidentally, both Révay and Kovács wrote their proposals on November 14, 1918. The only piece of information I found about Révay was his address and phone number in Budapest. Kovács made his name in the contemporary horticultural press by breaking the market monopoly of Grenoble walnuts and making Hungarian walnuts popular in Vienna, Breslau/Wroclaw, Berlin, Copenhagen, and London. Kovács represented Hungary at the horticultural world expo in Düsseldorf in 1905. He was considered an authority on all walnut-related issues.[797] Unfortunately, no information is available about his lectures in political theory.

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[794] "Méray Horváth Károly beadványa Zürichből - javaslatot tesz az Európai Esgesült Államok megalakítására /a javaslat hiányzik/.," n.d., K40 – 1918 – XVIII – 623, MNL OL.
[795] C. H. Meray, *Weltmutation. Schöpfungsgesetze über Krieg und Frieden und die Geburt einer neuen Zivilisation* (Zürich: Rascher, 1918).
[796] Manfred P. Fleischer, "C. H. Von Méray: Ein Doppelgänger Spenglers," *Zeitschrift Für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 25 (1973): 316–35.
[797] Sz., "(Diótermesztésünkre)," *Gyümölcskertész*, no. 19 (June 25, 1909): 208.; Gy., "Kénezzük-e a diót?," *Gyümölcskertész*, October 25, 1908, 329–30.; "Kivonat a magyarországi kereskedelmi czégjegyzékből,"

The two proposals had many similarities. The two authors, however, started from exactly opposite premises. In his plan, Kovács wanted to defend the territorial integrity of Hungary, while Révay based his argument on the fact that the nationalities had already seceded. The lawyer, Révay, sought to offer post-war Hungary a lifeline from its hopelessness. Under contemporary circumstances, instead of maintaining the country's unity, the focus should be on economic prosperity, Révay argued. Thus, he envisaged a customs union between Hungary, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Poland, Romania, and the Yugoslav state. In contrast, Kovács drew up a plan to transform the old Hungary into a republic with proportional representation for the nationalities. He repeatedly mentioned the explicit goal of preserving the integrity of the historical borders of Hungary and maintaining the country's "Hungarian character." Both plans would have granted a high degree of autonomy to the constituent units of the confederation.

Révay imagined an economic confederation. The units would have had a joint customs administration, a single currency, and a common central bank, similar to how the dualist system worked between Austria and Hungary. The author envisaged a common system of commercial law and bills of exchange. Administrative and financial legislation would also have been unified. With an economic union on the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary and that of the other successor states of the Habsburg Empire, Hungarian losses in infrastructure and raw materials (timber, coal, and limonite) would not be vital, he argued. In Révay's confederation, the population would have been free to move between member states and citizenship would have been subject to a six-month residence requirement. He also expressed the conviction that such a plan would enjoy popularity at the Paris Peace Treaty. This proposal was similar to what Kossuth had suggested 50 years before in his Danube Confederation plan.[798]

The proposal that Kovács submitted was similar to Révay's in that it would have unified military, financial, and economic matters and the food industry. It was, however, even closer to the Austromarxist spirit since his proposal was intended to create fairer nationality relations within the historic borders of Hungary. However, he differed from

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Központi Értesítő, no. 38 (1913): 74.; Á. K., "Magyar kertészek a düsseldorfi művészeti és kertészeti kiállításon.," *Kertészeti Lapok* 20, no. 1 (January 1905): 20.; Gy., "Gyümölcsészet," *Kertészeti Lapok*, no. 20 (July 1905): 197.

[798] "dr Révay Károly ügyvéd javaslata a szomszédos népekkel való gazdasági szövetségre.," n.d., K40-1918-XVIII-985, MNL OL.

the Austromarxists in that his plan openly stated his desire to maintain Magyar predominance. He proposed, for example, that the republic's president should always be a Magyar (the number of Magyars would legitimize and ensure this), with a vice-president democratically elected by the four nationalities. Five ministers, one from each nationality, without a portfolio, would support the ministry and would be responsible for special nationality affairs. In suggesting a republican presidency, the author took inspiration from San Marino, which had two heads of state. Similarly, in Kovács's state, a Romanian, a Slovak, a German, and a Serbian vice-president would accompany the president. It is also possible that it was out of compliance with the norm that Kovács repeatedly stressed the need to maintain Magyar predominance, thinking that this would legitimize his plan in the eyes of the government. The proposal would have given the nationalities a say in the country's business and the government and would have given them each separate representation, while the country's affairs would be run by a specialized ministry, chosen solely based on knowledge and ability.

The constitution plans sent to the Ministry sought to "cut the Gordian knot" by offering a fair solution to the nationality question, which would be the key to a durable peace. Some of these lay constitutional drafts and proposals reflected the government's position, as the ministry staff noted when they filed the documents. Given the unrealistic nature of the ministry's foreign policy, a contemporary reader may struggle to discern any notable distinction between the plans deemed "fantastic but unfeasible" by the ministry staff and those they deemed realistic.[799] These plans, too, contained this dichotomy between the lessons from "the sins of the old order" and the hope of a better time to come. Whether idealistically or opportunistically, these proposals advocated the creation of a new international political order. In this way, they can be read both as products of the Wilsonian moment—with which all strata of the society were infused—and, inversely, as the revival of old ideas to save the composite monarchy, or at least the territorial integrity of Hungary.

[799] "Kovács Vilmos kereskedő javaslata nemzetiségi politikai szervezet létesítésére.," n.d., K40-1918-XVIII-244, MNL OL.

2.2.5. Conclusion

Imagine if Selmecbánya had been allowed to join Hungary in the name of the Wilsonian principles, while the surrounding areas were incorporated into Czechoslovakia. The Peace Conference would have had to plan the peace in Europe based on Emanuel Wagner's plan from Antalóc. During the months of transition, windows of opportunity opened up. The possibilities were vast, and the principle of national self-determination gave free rein to the desire for state-building. Moreover, the new language of international law enabled non-state actors to enter the system as legal subjects. Some communities interpreted the principle of national self-determination in a way that envisaged becoming an independent republic. Nothing illustrates this better than the creation of so-called mayfly or short-lived states.

In the months before the peace treaty, there was still hope that Hungary would emerge as a post-Habsburg republic. The economic and industrial arguments in favor of cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe nourished this hope. It was also encouraged by condemnations of forced occupations by the Entente powers. The Hungarian government also believed that the peacemakers would appreciate the quick implementation of democratic measures, the Wilsonian principles, and its efforts to maintain security and ensure public services. Long-cherished ideas developed in the late Habsburg period to save the Habsburg Empire came to light. In Hungary, the months of the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire were a time of both expectancy and action, a time of chaos and an opportunity to create a new order out of the chaos. Democratic politicians celebrated the fall of the two external pillars of the "old Hungary": dualism and the German alliance. They felt that the time for national liberation and independence had come. For this, they also needed to overthrow its two internal pillars: the oppression of the nationalities and the oppression of the working classes.[800] Various desires and ideas were able to fit under the banner of national self-determination. And referring to national self-determination had a strong legitimating force.

The chapter offered a deeper look into how the representatives of the Hungarian government, local communities, and everyday people interpreted and instrumentalized the idiom of self-determination in the months of the First Hungarian Republic. We had

[800] "A MSZDP 1918 október 13-án tartott rendkívüli pártgyűlésének jegyzőkönyve."

an almost intimate look into patriots' naïve and opportunist desires after the war. Members of the élites saw the dissolution of the Monarchy as an opportunity to reorganize Hungary into a democratic and federal state. The ideological basis and scale of the lay constitutional drafts submitted to the Ministry of Nationalities were not far from the spirit of the Hungarian government or international minority protection organizations. The interpretation of local communities and their leaders turned out to be much more heterogeneous. Their definition of self-determination was less idealistic. The local interpretations show how difficult it would have been to deal fairly with the nationality question based on the principle of national self-determination. The particular and nearly incidental examples above showed the difficulties of understanding self-determination from a less usual perspective.

This chapter also delved into the non-territorial solutions proposed for minority protection on regional, national, or European levels. These solutions aimed to either fulfill or correct the principle of national self-determination. In the former, each constituent nation of the state was given equal rights and representation through the non-territorial principle, as illustrated in the various utopian plans discussed in this chapter. In the latter, non-territorial arrangements were proposed as an amendment, particularly when a nation with its autonomous territory lived alongside national minorities. Such proposals were often made by the Hungarian government and directed towards the peace conference rather than the parties involved. The final chapter of the thesis explores a third approach to non-territorial solutions that originated from the bottom up as ethnic minority communities demanded non-territorial autonomy. Some Hungarian Jewish communities were among those who sought such autonomy.

3. "WHAT IS JEWISHNESS, ACTUALLY?"[801] THE CURIOUS SITUATION OF HUNGARIAN JEWS DURING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE HABSBURG EMPIRE

3.1. Introduction

The end of the war brought about a turbulent time of change on the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Posters with the inscription "Jews, go to Palestine!" appeared on streets recently renamed after President Woodrow Wilson—streets of cities that soon became part of new European states. Europe was in a Wilsonian fever. Everyone, from political leaders to ordinary citizens, talked about the right of nations to self-determination. National councils proclaimed new states based on the principle. They soon started to deliver the message about who was inside and who was outside the political body. A challenging question was how to be an outsider in a modern society defined as nationally homogenous. Jewish communities in the successor states were in a special situation. In this new situation, they needed to re-examine their previous loyalty patterns, regardless of whether they claimed to belong to the dominant, i.e. German or Magyar, nation, the Jewish nation, or the Jewish religious community. How did Jewish communities, communities that until then had perceived themselves primarily as a religious group, think about themselves in the emerging world of nation-states and national minorities?[802] First, with the shift of state sovereignty, Jews had to reconsider their loyalty and their relation to nationhood. Second, the post-war humanitarian crisis awakened anti-Semitism that escalated into violence. The pogroms after the war put Jews in an impossible position since the nations to which they were expected to be loyal saw them as outsiders.

The controversial nature of the situation pushed some Hungarian Jewish communities to present themselves as a nation to make claims for minority protection

[801] G. F., "Oroszországi levél: belső forrongás az orosz zsidóságban," *Magyar Zsidó Szemle* 25, no. 2 (1908): 195.

[802] I use the term Jewish communities to refer to heterogenous peoples of Israelite confession belonging to various national, linguistic and (Jewish) denominational groups. See: Tullia Catalan, *The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeastern Europe from the 19th Century to the Great Depression Combining Viewpoints on a Controversial Story* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&AN=1339039.

within the successor states or the international community. If Jews were now to form a nation—and thus a legitimate minority—on what basis would they argue for the status of nationhood? Furthermore, what would they use their right to self-determination for as a nation? To determine themselves as an autonomous nation within a nation-state, or should they leave their homelands and join a future nation-state of their own in Palestine? The paradigm shift in the language of international law also played a role in this process.[803] The new language of international law enabled Jews to enter this system as legal subjects on the condition that they formulate their demands in this new idiom: as a national minority. This chapter sheds light on the continuities and specificities of the months of transition. It also analyzes the answers that various Jewish communities on the territory of present-day Hungary, Slovakia, and Transylvania gave to these questions.

Living dispersed all over the world, one might assume that Jews were the national community *par excellence* for which a cultural autonomy that does not set up a claim for a separate territory was designed. Yet it was not self-evident in either part of the late Habsburg Monarchy that Jews could enjoy the rights to which minority nationalities are entitled. Nor was that the case in Imperial Russia or even Western Europe. Some Jewish communities, however, challenged this view. Chapter I/3.2. showed how the Jewish Bund in Imperial Russia advocated for such autonomy rights both within the social democratic movement and in the state. Most Jewish leaders living in the Russian Empire or in the Eastern provinces of Austria argued for accepting the Jews as a nation. More often than not, these communities spoke Yiddish, meaning that they were linguistically distinct from the rest of the population. This chapter argues that when Hungarian Jews claimed minority rights—like other emerging "small nations"—they reached back to the arguments that Jewish national activists in Russian and Austrian provinces had used before WWI to argue for group rights. The Russian and Habsburg imperial experiences offered them well-known ideas, many of which included a non-territorial form of autonomy and a cultural understanding of nationhood. In what follows, I will present these ideas, their "roots and routes,"[804] and how they found their new context among Hungarian Jewish élites.

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[803] Wheatley, "Spectral Legal Personality in Interwar International Law."
[804] Bachmann-Medick, "Translation – A Concept and Model for the Study of Culture," 5.

This chapter investigates how Hungarian Jews in the territories surrendered to the successor states responded to the new situation that recognized and distributed civic rights based on national minority status. I will first show what forms of loyalty were typical for the Jewish communities in the late Habsburg Monarchy, especially in Hungary—forms of loyalty that defined Jewishness as a religion and not a nation (Chapter II/3.2.1 "The Jewish Question in Budapest and Vienna"). Second, I will present ideologies of self-identification that define Jewishness in national terms. The most important of these ideologies were Jewish diaspora nationalism and Zionism. The distinction between the concepts of diaspora nationalism and a Zionism that concentrated largely on community work, youth organization, and education rather than statebuiding in Palestine was not set in stone at the beginning of the twentieth century. Herzlian Zionism imagined the Jewish nation's autonomy territorially. Diaspora nationalism and cultural Zionism were popular mainly in the Russian Empire and the Austrian provinces (Bukovina, Galicia) and aimed at recognizing Jewish communities as a nation, demanding autonomy without territorial claims. Diaspora autonomism and Zionism were, however, typically unpopular among Hungarian Jews. (Chapter II/3.2.2. "'Land der unbegrenzten Unmöglichkeiten'" and II/3.2.3. "Zionisms")

In the second part of the chapter, I will show how in Hungary a new discourse started to gain space by November 1918, officially declaring Hungarian Jews a nation. (Chapter II/3.3.1. "Hungarian Jews and their 'Great Historical Task'") This subchapter first traces the changes in the official discourse in Jewish communities in Slovakia and Transylvania during the months of transition. My hypothesis is that during these months, some Jewish communities turned to the autonomist discourse of Jews from Imperial Russia and the Austrian provinces and successfully applied it to articulate their own demands as a national minority. The fact that international Jewish organizations also saw cultural autonomy as a means of representing the interests of European Jewry simultaneously supported this process (Chapter II/3.3.2. "Minorities in 'Small Nations'"). I have examined declarations of institutions representing Jewish communities, the press, and documents submitted to the Ministry of Nationalities of the Hungarian Republic from November 1918 to March 1919. The chapter places and interprets these documents in the context of contemporary transnational debates on Jewish nationhood.

3.2. Modern, Urban, and Assimilated?

The internal stratification of the Jewish community, the uncertainties surrounding the definition of the nation, and the structural changes in society that generated by modernization are issues that interfered with the so-called Jewish question. "Be Jewishness a nation or a religion, it is difficult to assess its place in our society," the university professor Győző Concha mused in 1917.[805] Could Jews be part of the Magyar cultural nation, or could they form a separate *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* without a language and territory of their own? Did the Jewish religion possess a national character? Were Jews a threat to the dominant nation, or did Jewish success strengthen the country? These were some of the questions that preoccupied the intellectuals of Budapest at the fin-de-siècle. Many argued that in Hungary, Jews were not a nation but a religion. "(...) in our country, too, the vast majority reject all Jewish national ambitions on their own accord. They do so because it interferes with their fusion with the nation around them, a nation which they love and for which they are ready to make sacrifices."[806] In 1907, the Austromarxist Otto Bauer argued along very similar lines that the Jews did not constitute a nation in the modern sense.[807]

Within Jewish communities, there were different ideas of what Jewishness was. The emancipation of Jews in the Habsburg Empire started in the 1840s, and Jews acquired equal individual rights as citizens in 1867. In Hungary, the literature distinguishes between three confessional groups: Orthodox, Neologue, and Status Quo Ante Jewish communities. These names also reflect the relationship of these denominational groups to modernization.[808] Reform Judaism, or Neology, as it was called in Hungary, referred to Jewish communities in late Habsburg Hungary that adhered to the reform movement after the 1868 schism from Orthodoxy. This movement aimed at re-organizing Jewish institutions and community life. One can illustrate the religious distribution of Hungarian Jewry by a diagonal line drawn on the map of the country from northwest to southeast, from Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg (present-day Slovakia) to Brassó/Brașov/Kronstadt

[805] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," *Huszadik Század* 18, no. 2 (1917): 77.
[806] See the answer of Ferenc Mezey (lawyer, Vice President of the Israelite Office in Hungary). "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 24.
[807] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 291–308.
[808] Viktor Karády, "A magyar zsidóság regionális és társadalmi rétegződéséről (1910)," in *Zsidóság, polgárosodás, asszimiláció: tanulmányok*, Kontextus könyvek (Budapest: Cserépfalvi, 1997), 249–74.

(present-day Romania), according to historian Viktor Karády.[809] South of the line, the population was predominantly Neologue, and to the north, Orthodox. Neologue communities lived mainly in the urban centers, especially in Budapest. Budapest was also home to the largest Orthodox community, about one-fourth of Budapest Jews, numbering around 50,000. The most important Orthodox areas were in the Slovak and Ruthenian populated regions, the Alföld and Upper Tisza, and rural Transylvania. The term Status Quo Ante was applied to Jewish communities which after the schism at the General Hungarian Jewish Congress in 1868 did not join either the Orthodox or the Neologist organization. Social mobility characterized Reform Jews, while the communities in Orthodox areas kept more traditional social structures.

Ever since the turn of the century, scholars have continuously re-interpreted the role of Jews in the modernization of the Dual Monarchy and the relation of modernization to what contemporaries framed as "assimilation," that is unidirectional adoption of a "majority culture" perceived as static and monolithic by an alien "minority."[810] The term assimilation is, however, problematic as an analytical category. First, it implies that only singular national identities are possible. Second, it assumes a hierarchy between cultures, that is, a teleology that implies that the dominant culture would and should absorb cultures seen as inferior—the majority should imbibe the minority. Even today, there are enthusiastic advocates of the assimilationist paradigm when it comes to the challenges of ethno-confessional diversity. This view was also prevalent in nineteenth-century liberal thought. Not only liberals but Marxists, too, expressed pro-assimilationist views. Pre-eminently, Karl Marx, who was born to apostate Jewish parents and had been raised as a German Christian patriot, enunciated that capitalism "makes all Christians into Jews and thereby all Jews into Christians."[811] By this, he meant that the disappearance of the natural economy and the emergence of capitalist commodity production had ended the separation of the Jews as the sole representatives of the monetary economy.[812] Later, Karl Kautsky,

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[809] Karády.
[810] Tim Corbett et al., "Migration, Integration, and Assimilation: Reassessing Key Concepts in (Jewish) Austrian History," *Journal of Austrian Studies* 54, no. 1 (2021): 2, https://doi.org/10.1353/oas.2021.0001.
[811] Cited in: Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 294–95. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels. Volume 3, Karl Marx, March 1843-August 1844* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Electric Book, 2010), 170.
[812] For a more detailed explanation, see: Chapter "Voices from Vienna." Edward Andrew, "Marx and the Jews," *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 3, no. 1 (1968): 9.; Otto Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 294, 303.

Ernest Renan, and Lenin also defended this position. Marxist thinkers declared that nationality necessitates a common territory and language, neither of which Jews possessed in the early twentieth century. Nineteenth-century Marxist thought believed in the supremacy of the so-called historical nations and thus saw the assimilation of oppressed peoples into these nations as desirable.[813]

Since in the Habsburg Empire the legal emancipation, cultural adaptation, and social integration of Jews coincided with the creation of the nation, *Verbürgerlichung* or *embourgeoisement,* and modernization, Jewish citizens took the opportunities that the two capitals offered and became the driving force of these processes.[814] There was a general view, which both coevals and some historians today share, according to which the Magyar ruling class accepted the cooperation of the Jews both for economic reasons and to support its own assimilation policy towards the country's non-Magyar nationalities.[815] The sociologist Viktor Karády framed this as the "assimilation social contract," meaning that in Hungary, Jews were expected to "assimilate" in order to benefit from equal opportunities.[816] Jews learned Hungarian and joined the ranks of the Magyar middle class. Some Jewish families chose to convert to one of the Christian denominations. The unspoken agreement was that "the Magyar tolerates the Jew; the Jew supports the Magyar."[817] They participated in Hungary's professional and cultural life on a vast scale since Hungary was less prone to anti-Semitic outbursts during this period—although Hungarian society was never free of anti-Semitism. More recent studies, starting from a

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[813] For a detailed description of historical and non-historical nations, see Chapter "A Marxist story of Eastern European nationalism."

[814] Zygmunt Bauman, *Moderne und Ambivalenz: das Ende der Eindeutigkeit*, trans. Martin Suhr, 4. Auflage (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2017). Shulamit Volkov, *Das jüdische Projekt der Moderne: zehn Essays*, Originalausg, Beck'sche Reihe 1421 (München : C.H. Beck, 2001). Simone Lässig, *Jüdische Wege Ins Bürgertum: Kulturelles Kapital Und Sozialer Aufstieg Im 19. Jahrhundert*, Bürgertum Neue Folge, Bd. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

[815] For contemporary views see: Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 173., "Pék Dezső újságíró bizalmas jelentései a Liptó megyei eseményekről" (Budapest, November 16, 1918), K40-1918-VII-217, MNL OL. See also: Miloslav Szabó, "'We Must Abolish the Privileges, Too' : Revision of the Liquor and Tobacco Licenses in Slovakia after the First World War as a Form of Anti-Jewish Propaganda," *JUDAICA ET HOLOCAUSTICA* 10, no. 1 (2019): 74..

[816] Viktor Karády, *Zsidóság és társadalmi egyenlőtlenségek (1867-1945): történeti-szociológiai tanulmányok*, Replika könyvek 6 (Budapest: Replika kör, 2000).

[817] Livia Elvira Bitton, "A Decade of Zionism in Hungary, The Formative Years. The Post-World War I. Period: 1918-1928," *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (Ann Arbor, New York University, 1968), 18, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, https://uaccess.univie.ac.at/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/decade-zionism-hungary-formative-years-post-world/docview/302343407/se-2?accountid=14682. Carlile A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors : The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences : 1919 - 1937*, 1. publ., reprint.. (London [u.a.]: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), 459, https://ubdata.univie.ac.at/AC02582239.

more dynamic view of ethnic cultures, prefer to discuss the "Jewish question" using notions like pluriculturalism, situational ethnicites, or mingled identities.[818]

Given the context of the Habsburg Monarchy until 1918, it can be argued that the majority of Jewish and Christian intellectuals viewed the Jewish question through the lens of assimilation. A central issue during this period was whether a "Jewish question" even existed in Hungary. The arguments both for and against the existence of the Jewish question revolved around the Jewish community's relationship with assimilation. On one hand, some argued that there was no Jewish question because Jews had already assimilated into Hungarian society. On the other hand, others claimed that there was no Jewish question because Jews had not yet assimilated. A third perspective held that the Jewish question did not exist because assimilation itself was impossible. Problematic as it is, the concept and discourse of assimilation can help historians understand early twentieth-century identity politics and why the term "Jewish nationality" was absent from the statistical and legal language of Budapest and Vienna. It leaves us, however, bereft of tools when it comes to understanding the loyalties of different Jewish communities outside the urban centers.[819] Twentieth-century anti-Jewish violence, the Shoah, and the structural anti-Semitism that ran through the entire twentieth century also weigh heavily on the discussion of assimilation.

3.2.1. The Jewish Question in Budapest and Vienna

Voices from Budapest

At the turn of the century, Israelites constituted about 9% of Vienna's population and 23% of the population of Budapest.[820] Most of them considered themselves Germans or Magyars. Moreover, their claim to be German and Magyar was not openly contested. In the 1900 census in Hungary, all 900,000 people of Jewish confession (Israelites) were listed as Magyars. "Nothing pleased the Hungarian Jew as much as being taken for a

[818] Corbett et al., "Migration, Integration, and Assimilation," 4.
[819] Éva Kovács, "'Az asszimiláció ambivalenciái.,'" *Korall* 10 (December 2002): 200–207.
[820] Israelites is the statistical term that refers to confessional belonging. Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). George Magos and Don Yehuda, "The Demographic Development of Hungarian Jewry," *Jewish Social Studies* 45, no. 3/4 (summer/fall 1983): 189–216. A Magyar Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, *A Magyar Szent Korona Országainak 1910. évi népszámlálása*.

Magyar," contemporaries claimed.[821] It was also in the state's interest to increase the number of Germans and Magyars, or in other words to "statistically assimilate" Jews.[822]

In 1917, the Hungarian sociological journal *Huszadik Század* organized a survey on the so-called Jewish question, encompassing the issues of race, religion, economic situation, aesthetic and moral factors, advantages and disadvantages of Judaism, Hungarian culture, assimilation, exclusion, segregation, and preservation. The survey inquired about the existence of the Jewish question in Hungary, its causes, and possible solutions.[823] It targeted Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals, religious leaders, artists, scientists, historians, and journalists. The responses mainly reflected opinions of the Hungarian intelligentsia and were therefore not representative of the population as a whole. However, the survey can shed light on how the narrative of assimilation functioned and on the complexity of the Jewish question. It revealed the points of contention and rifts within the Jewish community and the hesitancy of some Christian intellectuals to incorporate Jews into their cultural community.

Some of those received the survey did not reply. Others, such as three Jewish journalists active in organizing the Jewish community along national lines—Henrik Guttmann, the Stockholm correspondent of the progressive journal *Világ* (World), Samuel Bettelheim, editor of *Ungarländische Jüdische Zeitung* in Pressburg, and Ernő Molnár, the editor of the Jewish youth magazine *Remény* (Hope)—sent in their answers "spontaneously." Many newspapers commented on the creation of the survey itself. The thematization of the Jewish question stirred up the Hungarian intelligentsia. The editorial staff of *Egyenlőség* (Equality), a Magyar language weekly launched in 1882 in the midst of the Tiszaeszlár ritual murder trial, which reflected the assimilationist views of Neologist Jews from Budapest, was outraged by the very assumption that there was such a thing as the Jewish question, that is, that Jews would cause problems to solve for Hungarian society.[824] Others found the time inappropriate to raise the issue since, in the face of the losses of the Great War, what Hungarian society needed was not new fault lines but unity.

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[821] Bitton, "A Decade of Zionism in Hungary, The Formative Years. The Post-World War I. Period: 1918-1928," 12.
[822] György Kövér, "'Statistical Assimilation' in the Hungarian Kingdom 1880-1910," *Romanian Journal of Population Studies* 10, no. 2 (December 2016): 71–117.
[823] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése."
[824] For the Tiszaeszlár ritual murder trial, see: György Kövér, *A tiszaeszlári dráma: társadalomtörténeti látószögek* (Budapest: Osiris, 2011). György Kövér, "Intra- and Inter-Confessional Conflicts in Tiszaeszlár in the Period of the 'Great Trial,'" *The Hungarian Historical Review* 3, no. 4 (2014): 749–86.

Still, others welcomed the opportunity to discuss the otherwise taboo issue openly. For some respondents, the question served as a pretext to openly express their anti-Jewishness and accusations against Jews and make comments on their physical appearance.[825]

As one might expect, the most hotly debated topics were assimilation and modern anti-Semitism. One of the respondents gave a history of the concept of anti-Semitism dating precisely to 1879, when the German journalist Wilhelm Marr used it for the first time.[826] Some thought that the rise of anti-Semitism during the war encouraged assimilation. Others, on the contrary, argued that anti-Semitism actually hindered assimilation. "In my twenties, I was completely indifferent to Judaism. In principle, I was a feverish and enthusiastic assimilator: naturally, I began assimilating by being baptized. I was awakened to my Jewishness by—what I perceived to be undignified—anti-Semitic pinpricks (I could not even call them dagger thrusts)," the writer Lajos Bíró wrote.[827] The university professor Dezső Buday saw this correlation differently: "Anti-Semitism is a German trend and will increase with the end of the war. This will trigger assimilation in the Jewish people."[828]

Most respondents identified isolation as the opposite of assimilation. They attributed the alleged tendency of Jews to isolate themselves, which irritated most respondents, with the tradition of the ghetto. Isolation was often read as arrogance and seen by many as the main cause of anti-Semitism. Others, however, did not have an issue with isolation. Instead, they were bothered by assimilation and the high proportion of Jews in white-collar jobs. Another recurrent topic was whether the otherness of the Jews was the result of centuries of oppression and ghetto life or whether it was a "racial" (read ethno-confessional) characteristic. Some respondents have noted the "schizophrenic" position of Jews within the Magyar cultural nation, as they both belonged to it and yet also distanced themselves from it: "To be Jewish is to be in a strange, pathologically agitated state of mind," confessed the writer Anna Lesznai.[829]

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[825] See: "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 155–64.
[826] See the answer of Dr. Blau Lajos, "director of Jewish Theological Seminary 'Francis Joseph'" *(Landesrabbinerschule "Franz Joseph")*. "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 4.
[827] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 55.
[828] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 70.
[829] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 105.

Another popular topic was the immigration of Galician Jews to Hungary, which all respondents viewed negatively. Many argued that immigration must be regulated, restricted, prevented, encumbered, or stopped. Magyars could not cope with "reworking" the immigrant Jews, socially, economically, or spiritually, the editor György Bölöni stated.[830] The survey raised the question of Jews' relation to nationhood. Bölöni concluded dismissively that immigrant Jews could be seen almost as a nation. "Non-Magyarized Jews should be considered a nationality," not as Magyars, suggested the university professor Jenő Cholnoky.[831] Jews and non-Jews most often argued that barely resettled Jews were harming the chances of social inclusion of the already integrated people. As much as we would like to see what the immigrant communities from Galicia thought about these opinions and their situation in Hungarian society, they were not represented in the survey.

Voices from Vienna

In Vienna, there was a strong message that Germanness, the German nationality, was the carrier of *Aufklärung*, culture, and progress. German culture prevailed over "regressive eastern cultures," which also included traditional Slavic and Jewish cultures. The Viennese rabbi, Adolf Jellinek summarised the relationship between the Jews and the state in these words "Jews are the standard-bearers of the Austrian idea of unity."[832] Progressive thinkers thus denied that Jews were a nationality. While most nineteenth-century thinkers disputed the Jews' nationality on the grounds that they did not have their own territory, in his book on the nationality question, Otto Bauer famously rejected the idea that territory was a constituent element of nationhood. Bauer nevertheless dismissed the idea that Jews were entitled to national cultural autonomy—at least in Austria, even though his idea of autonomy aimed precisely at guaranteeing the cultural development of scattered peoples belonging to an ethnic group.

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[830] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 60.
[831] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 76.
[832] Cited in: Malachi Hacohen, "The Limits of the National Paradigm in the Study of Political Thought: The Case of Karl Popper and Central European Cosmopolitanism," in *The History of Political Thought in National Context*, ed. Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 251-252, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511521317.014.

Like many of his contemporaries, Bauer argued that Jews did not qualify as a national group, and even if they did, national autonomy would not serve their best interests. "If we wish to answer this question [*the Jew's entitlement to national autonomy*], we cannot proceed from the cliche, attractive as it is empty, of the natural right of all nations to self-determination. Rather, we must determine the purposes of national autonomy and examine whether the needs of Jewish workers would be served by national self-administration."[833] Consequently, in Bauer's belief, the assimilation of the Jews was in accordance with modern times, and was in the interest of the Jews not to segregate their children in a modern society by sending them to the Jewish schools that cultural autonomy would guarantee them.[834] Contemporaries argued that German was the "emancipation language," and emancipation was the key to individual freedom, even if it meant the disappearance of historic Jewry.[835]

In the Austrian Social Democratic Party, nationalities could form separate sections, but since Jews were not considered a modern nation, there was no Jewish section in the party. Citing Marx, Bauer insisted that modern Jewish workers would be unsuccessful in a capitalist system with a worldview inherited from the Middle Ages and the ethos of a natural economy.[836] "National autonomy is not, as claimed in empty phrases, the legal form of the existence of the nation; it is rather a means to particular ends." In this case, the end was to enlist the Jews "in the great international army of the struggling proletariat."[837]

Bauer admitted, however, that Jews used to be a nation in the Middle Ages. They had communal bonds of cultural heritage, their own language, ideology, and customs. Blocked from participation in their respective states' political, social, and economic activities, Jews had been clearly distinguished from neighboring nations. Capitalism, however, had brought about radical changes in this regard, Bauer argued. Jews had started attending public schools and serving in the military. Because of this cultural integration,

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[833] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 304.
[834] "The legal and civil organization of national minorities fulfills essentially two tasks: the cultivation and administration of the national minorities' schooling system and the provision of legal assistance to those compatriots who have no knowledge or inadequate knowledge of the language of the authorities and the courts." Bauer, O. (2000). *The question of nationalities and social democracy.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 304.
[835] Stourzh, "The National Compromise in the Bukovina," 181.
[836] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 306.
[837] Bauer, 306. See also: "It is not a matter of achieving for all nations the same juridical framework, but rather of culturally elevating all nations." 306.

Jews could no longer be considered a separate nation, Bauer concluded. The Jews in Austria were a so-called non-historical nation since the upper classes, the bearers of the culture, had already assimilated into the dominant nations.[838] Only the "exploited and dominated" Jews of Eastern Europe had preserved their tradition, language, and ethos. The dominant tendency among Jews was assimilation, Bauer concluded.[839]

Although Bauer read national movements in terms of class struggle, he also saw that modernity and capitalism had awakened non-historical nations to national life. He often compared the Czech and Jewish cases to point out the constituent elements of nationhood in the so-called non-historical nations. The constant influx of unassimilated peoples to industrial centers could hinder assimilation, Bauer admitted. National communities without a compact territory, like the Jews, had a limited capacity to ensure the supply of unassimilated people in the urban centers. He was aware of a tendency visible in the Russian Empire, where the economic and legal preconditions for assimilation were still lacking, and moreover, anti-Semitism was fueling the idea of creating an independent, historical Jewish nation. "Will the twentieth century now also bring the Jewish nation the possibility of a new, independent cultural development?" Bauer wondered.[840]

Even if Bauer saw a connection between anti-Semitism and Jewish nationalism, he did not believe that in a capitalist society, Jews, living in the minority among other peoples, would be able to maintain their cultural specificity—thus to awaken as a modern nation. Otto Bauer himself was the son of a Jewish textile manufacturer from the historical border region between Moravia and Bohemia.[841] "In many respects, the Bauers are exemplary for a highly condensed, highly sensitive, productive, and effective social and cultural milieu that is constantly questioning itself," the historian Wolfgang Maderthaner evaluated the relationship of Bauer's family to Judaism.[842] Maderthaner saw Bauer's argument for the historical necessity of assimilation as a theory based on the practices of the Viennese Jewish bourgeoisie to which he belonged.

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[838] See Chapter "A Marxist story of Eastern European nationalism" about nonhistorical nations.
[839] See also: Osterkamp, "Vielfalt ordnen," 373.
[840] Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, 297.
[841] Wolfgang Maderthaner, "Otto Bauer Und Die Problematik Der Jüdischen Identität," in *Otto Bauer: Zur Aktualität Des Austromarxismus: Konferenzband 9. Juli 2008*, ed. Pavlina Amon and Stephan-Immanuel Teichgräber, Studien Der Dokumentationsstelle Für Ost- Und Mitteleuropäische Literatur, Bd. 1 (Frankfurt am Main ; New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 51–58.
[842] Maderthaner.

Henrik Guttman, the Stockholm correspondent of the Marxist journal *Világ* (World), took his train of thought further than Bauer. In his response to the *Huszadik Század* survey on the Jewish question, Guttman came to a different conclusion starting from a similar ideological basis. Guttman agreed with Bauer that national struggle was, in fact, class struggle. He argued, however, that one should not underestimate the tendency of class struggle to take the form of nationalism in practical politics. Guttman differentiated between the Jewish question of the bourgeoisie and the working class. For bourgeois Jews, there was a place in the social fabric of Hungary to assimilate—if they renounced their own cultural needs. For proletarian Jews, there was not. Thus, Guttman continued, proletarian Jews would translate their cultural needs as a political struggle for national existence. Guttman predicted that the goal of this struggle would be the "cultural, nationalistic autonomy conceived by Renner."[843] In the Austrian provinces and Russia, Renner's and Bauer's theories influenced many Jewish political thinkers in a way that was contrary to the authors' original intentions. As we shall see below, the Austromarxists did not convince them of the futility of cultural autonomy for Jews. On the contrary, many Jewish nation-builders believed that cultural autonomy was the best solution available for the Jewish diaspora.

3.2.2. "Land der unbegrenzten Unmöglichkeiten"[844]

Meanwhile, a different self-perception was in the offing. This perception contested the view that Jewish communities were solely religious communities. The most important political thinker who conceptualized a spiritual-historical Jewish nation was the Jewish-Russian historian Simon Dubnow.[845] Dubnow claimed that Russian Jews should constitute neither a part of the Russian nation nor an independent political nation. He thus rejected both assimilationism and political Zionism since he considered the colonization of Palestine unrealistic.[846] Instead, he proposed collective autonomy based on the traditions of Judaism in the Jewish diaspora within the existing political structure of

[843] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 87–89.
[844] "Wiener Brief," *Ungarländische Jüdische Zeitung*, February 24, 1911, 5.
[845] Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 3. ed (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks [u.a.], 2003), 415.
[846] Anke Hilbrenner, *Diaspora-Nationalismus: zur Geschichtskonstruktion Simon Dubnows* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

Eastern Europe.[847] This was similar to the Austromarxist idea of separating the state and the nation by giving the nation the legal competencies to organize education and culture in its mother tongue. Dubnow aimed to modernize, secularize, and democratize the historic Jewish self-governing bodies and revive them in a national guise.[848] It is difficult to tell from the contemporary press how familiar Jewish communities in Hungary were with Dubnow's diaspora nationalism.

The literature typically positions Dubnow's ideas between the Zionists and the General Jewish Labor Bund. American historian Walter Laqueur even argues that Dubnow rejected the idea of a Jewish state due to the lack of the necessary means to realize it: "If we had the power to transfer the entire diaspora to a Jewish state, we would do so with greatest joy. We acquiesce in the diaspora only because of historical necessity and we strive to preserve and develop the national existence of the greater part of the nation which will remain!"[849] Chapter I/2.2 "The opinion leaders of the Second International on the nationality question (Kautsky, Lenin, and the Bund)" discussed in detail the theory of a *Nationalitätenstaat* (state of nationalities) and national cultural autonomy put forwards by Vladimir Medem, the leading theorist of the Bund.[850] Although the Jewish press in Hungary often reported on the activities of the Bund, these reports were interested not in the intellectual debates on Jewish national self-understanding but rather in using Russian events as an excuse to reaffirm the authors' own stance. For instance, the article in *Egyenlőség* discussing Dubnow's advocacy of the Hebrew language and culture did not make a connection between Dubnow's activity and cultural autonomy.[851] However, a reference in the Transylvanian Zionist journal *Új Kelet* (New East) from 1919 gives the impression that Dubnow's ideas on the Jewish spiritual community did not sound entirely new to its Hungarian Jewish readership. This article celebrated the fact that Zionism had finally broken with orthodox Herzlism and accepted Dubnow's *golus* (or *galut*) nationalism in the Copenhagen Manifesto. The manifesto

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[847] David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939*, Oxford History of Modern Europe (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 521–23.
[848] See also Chapter 6. *Staatsreformdiskurs und nationale Vielfalt im Russländischen Reich* of the book manuscript Kuzmany, "'Nicht-territoriale Autonomie in Europa. Die Geschichte einer Idee auf Reisen, 1848-1938.'"
[849] Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 415–16.
[850] Roni Gechtman, "Jews and Non-Territorial Autonomy: Political Programmes and Historical Perspectives," *Ethnopolitics* 15, no. 1 (January 2016): 66–88, https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2015.1101843.
[851] "Kongresszus a héber nyelv és kultúra érdekében," *Egyenlőség* 28, no. 31 (August 8, 1909): 12.

entitled *The Demands of the Jewish People* reconciled the "assimilationist," Zionist, and diaspora nationalist ideas: Palestine as a Jewish national home, and in parallel equality of rights and national cultural autonomy for the Jewish population wherever they demanded it.[852]

Some Jewish intellectuals in the Habsburg provinces of Galicia and Bukovina also campaigned for Jewish national rights and a national curia. The autonomist movements all over Austria and the *golus* movement—in other words, Jewish diaspora nationalism in Imperial Russia—outlined a new idea: that Jews fulfilled the criteria of a nationality in the spirit of Article 19 of the December Constitution of 1867. Being recognized as a separate nation would have entitled the Jewish population to the rights that the other nationalities of Austria enjoyed, i.e. an institutional framework to preserve the Yiddish language and culture, a sort of cultural and "personal" autonomy.[853] Such a Jewish cultural community was what Bauer considered contradictory to the spirit of modern times. In Galicia, some Jewish social democrats tried to set up separate Jewish sections in the social democratic movement, which the Polish Social Democratic Party did not welcome. In 1907, some Yiddish-speaking activists seceded from the Polish Social Democrats and formed an independent Jewish Social Democratic Party that had Jewish national cultural autonomy among its goals. The Jewish Social Democratic Party of Galicia was never integrated into the larger *Gesamtpartei*.[854]

It is worth taking a close look at the arguments for and against Jewish nationality in the late Habsburg Monarchy. With the so-called Bukovina Compromise in 1909-1910, under which ethnic groups became represented in proportion to their respective numbers in the provincial parliament and administration, Jews were accepted as one of the five national electoral curiae. However, Jewish associations from Vienna and advocates of the German cause opposed a separate Jewish electorate. Echoing Bauer's rationale, Viennese Jews claimed that a separate Jewish nationality would undermine the individual equality of every citizen. Moreover, it would open the door to anti-Semitism. The official

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[852] Rotem Giladi, *Jews, Sovereignty, and International Law: Ideology and Ambivalence in Early Israeli Legal Diplomacy*, First Edition, The History and Theory of International Law (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2021), 57.
[853] Stourzh, "The National Compromise in the Bukovina."
[854] Antony Polonsky, *Polin: Jews and the Emerging Polish State* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, The, 2008), 440–42. See also: Henryk Piasecki, *Sekcja Żydowska PPSD i Żydowska Partia Socjalno-Demokratyczna, 1892-1919/20* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1982).

dismissal declared the Jewish nationality unconstitutional since the Austrian fundamental law recognized Jews as a confessional group. Also, since most Israelites spoke German, separating the two groups would have weakened the position of the Germans not just in Bukovina but in the other crownlands as well.[855] Ultimately, Jewish candidates from Bukovina were elected under German national colors.[856]

When legal scholar Max Diamant from Czernowitz/Csernovic (present-day Ukraine) asked for equal rights for the Yiddish language in line with other national languages in Austria (*landesübliche Sprachen*) and the acceptance (*Gleichberechtigung*) of the Jewish *Volksstamm* in Bukovina in 1909, he received similar responses. Dr. Diamant referred to the right of preservation and cultivation (*Wahrung und Pflege*) of nationality and to the practices in Galicia and Bukovina, where the local administration operated in Yiddish, among other languages.[857] To demonstrate the validity of his position, he submitted his request in Yiddish.[858] Moreover, he submitted a so-called *Musterklage* (legal test case) to ensure that the request would reach the Supreme Court. "The Eastern European Jew speaks his own language, has his own writing, and has his own literature," he argued.[859] The Imperial Court of Justice (*Reichsgericht*) rejected the request for Jews become a *Volksstamm* by referring to the Court's lack of competence to register new *Volksstämme*. The court also argued that the law already protected Jews as a religious group. The Imperial Court was also not convinced of the distinctiveness of the Yiddish language, which it considered a language for domestic use.[860]

The case of the Galician and Bukovinian Jews caused a stir not only in Vienna but also in Budapest. We have already seen in the survey by the journal *Huszadik Század* that Jewish and Christian public opinion in Budapest did not have a positive view of the

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[855] Stourzh, "The National Compromise in the Bukovina." Alon Rachamimov, "Diaspora Nationalism's Pyrrhic Victory: The Controversy Regarding the Electoral Reform of 1909 in Bukovina," in *State and Nation-Building in East Central Europe. Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. John Micgiel (New York: Institute on East Central Europe, Columbia University, 1996), 1–16.
[856] Kuzmany, "Habsburg Austria," 53.
[857] "Gerichtssaal," *Pilsner Tagblatt* 10, no. 298 (October 28, 1909): 6.
[858] He submitted this claim after the Imperial Court refused to consider his announcement on the creation of a Jewish Theater because it was not written in one of the official languages ("nicht in einer der im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreiche und Länder landesüblichen Sprachen war.") Tagesbote, 1909.10.27. p.2.
[859] "Sind die Juden ein Volksstamm?," *Tagesbote* 59, no. 503 (October 27, 1919): 2.
[860] Gerald Stourzh, "Max Diamant and Jewish Diaspora Nationalism in the Bukovina," in *From Vienna to Chicago and Back. Essays on Intellectual History and Political Thought in Europe and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 190–203. Osterkamp, "Vielfalt ordnen."

Galician Jewish communities. The Neologue Jewish press in Budapest wrote passionate articles about the Jewish electorate in Galicia and Bukovina, "the darkest provinces in Austria."[861] It took a stance similar to that of the Viennese Jewish associations, claiming that "the institution of a Jewish curia would also damage the position of those of the Jewish faith who are today unhindered in exercising their political and civil rights by nations and societies."[862] Hungarian Jews also followed the debates in the Austrian parliament and contested any opinion that considered Jews a nation, holding instead that Jews are a confession and religious institutions satisfy their specific needs.[863] Furthermore, the Hungarian press mistook diaspora nationalism for state-building Zionism. The authors used the umbrella term "Zionism" and called "Zionist" any idea that considered Jewishness a nationality. The *Ungarländische Jüdische Zeitung*, which was ideologically closer to Zionism, when reporting on the 1911 census in Galicia and Bukovina that prevented the adherence (*Bekenntnis*) to the Jewish language, called the two provinces the "land of infinite impossibilities."[864]

3.2.3. Zionisms

Jews from Budapest and Vienna widely shared and protected their idea of Jewishness. They did not welcome anyone who questioned the Germanness or Magyarness of Jews. Budapest was the birthplace of Theodor (Tivadar) Herzl, and Vienna was the birthplace of political Zionism.[865] The idea of Zionism, however, did not find fertile soil in either capital. Zionism was difficult to combine both with the Neologue assimilationist logic and Orthodox religious belief.[866] Like Viennese Jews, Jews who integrated into Hungarian culture and society wanted to see themselves as members of the Magyar nation

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[861] [K.S.], "Új zsidókérdés," *Egyenlőség* 24, no. 53 (December 31, 1905): 2.
[862] [K.S.], 3.
[863] [K.S.], "Új zsidókérdés."
[864] "Wiener Brief."
[865] Many historians, prominently Michael Silber and Jakob Katz, derive Zionism from the Pale of Settlement, yet Herzl himself liked to present Zionism as a movement that emerged from his 1895 pamphlet, *A Jewish State.* Herzl, indeed, had never been to Eastern Europe and was not familiar with the *Ḥibbat* (or: *Ḥovevei*) *Zion* (*Love or Lovers of Zion*) movement. At the same time, the *Ḥibbat Zion* movement was less political than Herzl's. Vital, *A People Apart*, 440.
[866] "Modern Zionism cannot be heir of either the traditional sentiments of Orthodoxy, or the well-known ambitions of the progressive Jews. One can't even square Zionism with the two." Ernő Mezei, "A modern cionizmus mint nemzeti eszme," *Egyenlőség (Melléklet)*, March 1, 1903, 1. Bitton, "A Decade of Zionism in Hungary, The Formative Years. The Post-World War I. Period: 1918-1928." VIII.

rather than as a *corpus separatum*.[867] "We do have a country. (…) And that is not Zion but Hungary."[868] Alternatively, Orthodox Jewish leaders argued that the "raison d'être," the prime mover of being a Jew, was religion. Orthodox Jews believed in a return to Palestine with the arrival of the Messiah. A political return thus seemed like heresy. For instance, the chief rabbi of Budapest, Samuel Kohn, called political Zionism "reckless foolishness" because there was no such thing as a Jewish nationality.[869]

The journal *Egyenlőség* reported on international Zionist events and ideas but always in a critical tone. While the editors advocated Jewish emancipation in Eastern Europe, they did not believe that Russian, Hungarian, and French Jews would belong to the same nation. They sympathized with the search for a home for Jews who lacked individual civic rights and were persecuted in their respective countries. They supported the activity of the Jewish Colonization Association, which relocated Jews from Eastern Europe to Ottoman Palestine, North America, and Argentina.[870] The authors, however, categorically rejected state-building Zionism. Ernő Mezei (born Grünfeld), a journalist and MP, rejected the idea that all Jews in the world formed a single race by ancestral descent, as Zionism claimed, because it seemed too similar to anti-Semitic arguments.[871] Hungarian Jews saw a binary opposition between state-building Zionism and humanitarianism.

Before the war, the Zionist idea became popular mainly in the provinces. Levente Olosz argued that Zionism in Hungary found fertile soil in the multi-ethnic countryside or regions that, after 1918, became part of the new successor states.[872] We can find Zionist centers in Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg. Transylvanian towns such as Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg, Nagyszeben/Sibiu/Hermannstadt, Beszterce/Bistrița/Bistritz, and Balázsfalva/Blaj/Blasendorf were also home to Zionist activities. In Vojvodina,

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[867] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 4., Dr. Blau Lajos the director of *Jewish Theological Seminary "Francis Joseph" (Landesrabbinerschule "Franz Joseph").*

[868] "Nekünk van hazánk (...) És az nem Cion, hanem Magyarország." Spector, "Zsidóság és magyarság," *Egyenlőség* 27, no. 45 (November 8, 1918): 2.

[869] Bitton, "A Decade of Zionism in Hungary, The Formative Years. The Post-World War I. Period: 1918-1928," 27.

[870] The Jewish Colonization Association, JCA (in Hungarian *IKA*) was created in 1891. Its aim was to facilitate the mass emigration of Jews from Russia and other Eastern European countries to form agricultural colonies in North America, South America, and Ottoman Palestine.

[871] Ernő Mezei, "A cionismus mint nemzeti eszme," *Egyenlőség* 22, no. 9 (January 13, 1903): 1–3.

[872] Levente Olosz, "'A cionizmus kezdetei Erdélyben (1900-1918).' In and Csaba Fazekas, eds. (Budapest: Milton Friedman Egyetem, 2019), 107-120.," in *Tanulmányok a magyarországi zsidóság történetéből*, ed. Lajos Gecsényi and Czaba Fazekas (Milton Friedman Egyetem, 2019), 107–20.

Szabadka/Subotica and Versec/Vršac housed Zionist organizations. These organizations were not numerous. The first Zionist institutions in Hungary were primarily invested in local Jewish and Hebrew culture and education, which contemporaries referred to as *Gegenwartsarbeit* or *golus*-politics.[873] "East European Jews must build their national future in countries where they have already lived for centuries, rather than in Palestine, where Jews have been completely absent for nearly two millennia."[874] This provoked fierce criticism from Herzlian Zionists. From 1908, humanitarianism became more and more prominent in the Zionist movement, especially during the years of the Great War. Zionists worldwide became more interested in national autonomy than in state-building in Palestine.

Hungarian Zionists saw the specificity of the Jewish situation in Hungary as something more complex than the Reformist press suggested. Dr. Ernő Molnár (born Morgenstern), a teacher and editor of the Jewish youth magazine *Remény* (Hope), clarified the situation of the Jewish nationality in 1917 as follows: "The Jewish nationality in Hungary is not comparable to any other nationality in Hungary (Slovak, Romanian), nor to the Jewish nationality in Poland or Russia."[875] Jews in Hungary, Molnár pointed out, did not have national aspirations of their own, and the language of Hungarian Jewry was Hungarian. He contended that Hungarian Jews simply cherished their ancient traditions and ideals and wanted to maintain a spiritual connection with the Jewish community. Like Otto Bauer, Molnár recognized the assimilationist aspiration of the time but interpreted it differently. He argued that "modern times" and the war endangered the current spiritual connection between Jews. Molnár also realized that without Zionism and a center in Palestine to ensure the supply of unassimilated peoples, as Bauer worded it, the spiritual unity of Jews would likely be exhausted in five decades.

Samuel Bettelheim, a Zionist from Pozsony/Bratislava/Pressburg, the founder of the Federation of Hungarian American Jews, and a contributor to several Jewish newspapers abroad, considered anti-Semitism another important threat to the Jews in Hungary. Bettelheim vigorously warned Hungarian Jews to take anti-Semitism seriously. Anti-Semitism was as much a result of the war as were hunger and inflation. "We are

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[873] Jan Rybak, *Everyday Zionism in East-Central Europe: Nation-Building in War and Revolution, 1914-1920*, First edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).
[874] Gechtman, "Jews and Non-Territorial Autonomy," 66–67.
[875] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 114.

facing an anti-Semitic era in Hungary," he stated. Bettelheim believed that since Hungarian Jewry was fragmented, the "timid 'Israelites'" of Hungary, as Ernő Molnár called the assimilationist Jews, might not have been up to the task.[876] This line of argument was similar to how Ján Lajčiak evaluated Slovak Magyaróns as too uncertain and timid to resist acculturation, as I elaborated in Chapter I/5.1 "Uncertain and Timid." According to Bettelheim, Hungarian Jews needed a leader who would help them overcome their fragmentation. In his novel *Világló részletek,* the Hungarian writer Péter Nádas reconstructed the 1903 correspondence between Theodor Herzl and the brother of his assimilationist great-grandfather, the abovementioned journalist and MP Ernő Mezei.[877] Herzl warned Mezei that anti-Semitism would strike Hungarian Jews too, and the later, the more vehemently. "Dann können Sie mit Ihrem Patriotizmus [sic] Schabbes machen," Herzl concluded his letter.[878]

Like Dubnow, Molnár envisioned a spiritual community for Hungarian Jews that could coexist with being responsible citizens: "Today, when the recognition of the right of existence of small nations and nationalities is "in the air," Jewry, which in its given political situation fully represents the state ideals of Magyarhood, must be allowed to express its full spiritual and moral strength. Only then can Mendelssohn's maxim become a reality: "Be a good citizen in public life, a good Jew in your family!" The great man could only have meant: strive for the good of your country in all your actions, but inwardly, in your soul, keep the continuity of Jewish tradition."[879] János Rónai, a Zionist from Balázsfalva/Blaj (present-day Romania), similarly balanced between the ideals of the good citizen and the good Jew: "Let us continue to be good patriots, but let us be reserved in political matters. So that we do not give non-Magyar nationalities any powerful reason for hatred; so that we do not direct our young people into being merchants, tavern-keepers, or similar business careers, but turn them towards real work and technical fields. Let us use our organizational strength to defend our fallen against

[876] "szégyenlős 'izraeliták' "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 53–54.
[877] The title *Világló részletek* has not yet been translated into English and the book is usually referred to by the original Hungarian title. Possible translations could include: "Shining Episodes," "Illuminating Parts," "Illuminated Details."
[878] "Then you can exercise Shabbat with your patriotism." Péter Nádas, *Világló részletek: emléklapok egy elbeszélő életéből* (Budapest: Jelenkor, 2017), 115–16. The letter is published in: Géza Komoróczy, *"Nekem itt zsidónak kell lenni": források és dokumentumok (965-2012): a zsidók története Magyarországon I-II. kötetéhez: szöveggyűjtemény*, Első kiadás, Hungaria Judaica 28 (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2013), 854.
[879] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 114.

the authoritarianism of the authorities. Let us preserve our Jewish heritage and nurture our institutions. And, finally, let us follow the Zionists in spirit, support them financially and morally, or at least not be hostile to this noble and great movement."[880]

Before 1918, the Hungarian Jewish press did not refer to ideas from Russia, Galicia, and Bukovina as models or practices that their communities should adopt. Jews in Hungary were equal citizens with individual rights and liberties. The press reported on the struggles of their fellow believers as regrettable events or topics of general interest. Due to a lack of direct references, it is difficult to know whether the conceptual model of Jewish national cultural autonomy had circulated among Hungarian Jewish elites from various groups during the two decades preceding WWI. In the aftermath of the War, arguments inspired by cultural/spiritual and political Zionism, Dubnowism, and Bundism started appearing in Hungarian Jewish elites' discourse.[881] Jewish soldiers returned from Galicia, Austria, and Germany with a new sense of Judaism. Inmates in Russia organized Hebrew courses and gave lectures and issued a weekly, entitled *Jüdische Rundschau* (Jewish Review). After WWI, Hungarian Jews from territories that were ceded to the successor states looked to these models of self-organization as examples to follow. Despite the absence of explicit references from the pre-war period, it is remarkable that by November 1918, the concept of Jewish national cultural autonomy had already been adopted by certain groups that aimed to define the Jewish people as a nation. Many Hungarian Jews had been introduced to the idea of Zionism and Communism as POWs in Russian captivity. Their publications suggest that the idea of national autonomy after the war integrated ideas and debates from imperial Russia, ideas that resurfaced with a new international order governed by national self-determination. Legal historian Rotem Giladi argues that the Versailles arrangements came to an ideological synthesis of Dubnow and Herzl, or at least to a pragmatic compromise to be adopted as a political program: a Zionism that was invested in minority politics at home.[882]

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[880] János Rónai, "Czion és Magyarország (részlet az első magyar cionista manifesztumból)," *Múlt és Jövő* 4, no. 4 (1993): 35. The German version: János Rónai, *Zion und Ungarn* (Balázsfalva, 1897).
[881] For a detailed study on the political and ideological schism between the Zionism of Herzl and Ahad Ha'am, see: Yossi Goldstein, "Eastern Jews vs. Western Jews: The Ahad Ha'am–Herzl Dispute and Its Cultural and Social Implications," *Jewish History* 24, no. 3–4 (December 2010): 355–77, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10835-010-9119-6. For the differences between Diaspora Nationalism and Zionism, see: Giladi, *Jews, Sovereignty, and International Law*, 36–60.
[882] Giladi, *Jews, Sovereignty, and International Law*.

3.3. A "Withered Olive Branch"[883]

3.3.1. Hungarian Jews and their "Great Historical Task"[884]

On November 6, 1918, the general assembly of the Hungarian Jewish people ended in scandal, the journal *Egyenlőség* (Equality) reported. The Hungarian Jewish community had convoked a nationwide assembly (*országos naggyűlés*) to set up a Jewish rights and self-defense organization in the face of growing anti-Semitism at the end of the Great War. The week before the assembly, the Hungarian Republic was born, and the new situation prompted the assembled Jews to officially declare their adherence to the Magyar nation in accordance with the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination. While the assembly members were busy drafting the resolution that called for the help of fellow believers worldwide to preserve Hungary's territorial integrity, which "at all times" respected the rights of Jews, Zionist youths disrupted the meeting, shouting "We do not belong to the Magyar nation! We belong to the Jewish nation! Long live the Jewish nation! We are Jews!".[885] The day before the meeting, the Zionist youth, including Zionist soldiers returning from the front, had asked for 100 tickets to the meeting, which the organizers refused. "Then we will attend without tickets," they declared, and kept their word. The Orthodox declined to participate.[886]

To the surprise of the editor of *Egyenlőség*, the minister of agriculture, Barna Buza, representing the independent Hungarian Government of the People which had been born only a few days before took the floor next. Buza also started his speech with the slogan "Long live the Jewish nation!" The minister of the new Hungarian state, indeed, could not question the right of any nation to exist: "We want to and are able to live together not only with Hungarian Jews but also with Jews belonging to the Jewish nation. Just as we can live together with Romanians, Slovaks, Serbs."[887] Then it was the turn of the Reformist Jews to interrupt the minister's speech with the words: "We do not want to be

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[883] Attila Gidó, ed., *Úton: Erdélyi Zsidó Társadalom- És Nemzetépítési Kísérletek (1918-1940). Források a Romániai Magyarság Történetéhez.* (Csíkszereda: Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, 2009), 112.
[884] "A magyar zsidóság országos naggyűlése," *Egyenlőség* 37, no. 45 (November 9, 1918): 4.
[885] "A magyar zsidóság országos naggyűlése," 2.
[886] "Az országos naggyűlés," *Zsidó Szemle*, November 8, 1918, 10.
[887] "A magyar zsidóság országos naggyűlése," 2.

a nationality!" The minister eventually found a compromise, as neither the Neologist nor Zionist representatives wished to secede from Hungary.[888]

But the point of what the Minister had to say was yet to come. In Buza's view, the purpose of the general meeting was not to debate the question of Jewish nationality but to invite Jews to find out what they could do to save Hungary through their international ties. Someone from the audience interjected, "Magyars are exterminating the Jews!" and pointing out the initial reason for convoking the assembly. It would be contradictory if the government asked the Jews for help while not protecting them from the terror imposed by their fellow citizens. Paradoxically, while the Hungarian government was asking the Jews to help save the country, Jews in the multi-ethnic countryside were subjected to anti-Semitic violence that the historian Michael Miller calls "the forgotten pogroms" of 1918. Forgotten because subsequent events, like the White Terror (1919–1921) and the later Shoah have since overshadowed them.[889]

"This is now the great historic task of Hungarian Jewry,"[890] the minister continued. If the Jewish community fulfills this task, it would also contribute to reducing the hatred against Jews due to "misunderstandings" and "mistrust" by Hungarians of other faiths. The recognition of Jews, whether as Magyars or Jews, was thus still conditional and depended on their support for the cause of the Hungarian state. The Minister's speech also hinted at the idea that Jews were responsible for anti-Semitism. Both the Zionist and Reformist participants left the remark about the "great historic task" of the Hungarian Jews, which for today's reader would be impossible to ignore, unchallenged. As later documents show, it was precisely in fulfilling this "historical task" that Hungarian Jews came into contact with international Jewish organizations and with the set of arguments to champion Jewish national minority rights.[891] After the minister's departure, tempers flared over nationalism to the point that the Reformists left the assembly hall. After emotions had settled down, they returned to discuss the "atrocities against the Jews." The

[888] "A magyar zsidóság országos naggyűlése," 2., "A Magyar Nemzeti Tanácshoz," *Zsidó Szemle*, November 8, 1918, 6.
[889] Michael L. Miller, "The Forgotten Pogroms, 1918," *Slavic Review* 78, no. 3 (2019): 648–53, https://doi.org/10.1017/slr.2019.226.
[890] "A magyar zsidóság országos naggyűlése," 4.
[891] "A Tagespost szenzációja," *Új Kelet* 2, no. 33 (September 4, 1919): 3.

meeting concluded with creation of the Jewish Self-Defense League, which was eventually changed to the neutral Central Association of Hungarian Jews.

The representatives of various interest groups at the general assembly of Hungarian Jews, such as the weakening reformists, the emerging Zionists, and the new Hungarian state, used or made reference to current idioms in order to negotiate their position in the new political situation. This allowed them to communicate effectively with each other and make sense of each other's perspectives.[892] The most obvious reference point was the universal principle of national self-determination, which each party interpreted differently. The Reformists wanted to maintain their status within the Jewish community and, also, as members of the dominant nation, refused to see themselves as a national minority. The Zionists wanted to enjoy the benefits of separate cultural institutions that were granted to national minorities. The new Hungarian state wanted to maintain territorial integrity. To do so, the new government had to demonstrate that it was willing and able to ensure the legal protection of minorities. Buza correctly pointed out that all parties present at the Jewish people's assembly wanted to negotiate their status within the newly independent and democratic Hungarian state. Magyars of the Christian faith, Magyar Jews, and Jewish Jews wanted to be part of the Hungarian community—an imagined community since a sort of Hungarian political nation had come into existence in the nineteenth century. But also an imaginary community because, in parallel, the representatives of other nationalities (Romanian, Serb, and Slovak) opted against belonging to the Hungarian state-nation at their general assemblies and proclaimed new states.

Giladi pointed to the organic relationship between the competing models of Jewish emancipation and the history of the emergence of international law, especially international minority law. After the creation of the *Institut de droit international* (Institute of International Law) in 1873 in Ghent, European Jews, benefitting from the fact that emancipation had given them access to legal education and practice, entered the scene of international law. International law became an arena where various answers to the Jewish question circulated—an "extension of Jewish politics."[893] The historian Klein-

[892] Martin Fuchs, "Reaching out; or, Nobody Exists in One Context Only: Society as Translation," *Translation Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 2009): 31; 38, https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700802496191.
[893] Giladi, *Jews, Sovereignty, and International Law*, 32.

Pejšová has also argued that the new category of Jewish nationality synthesized "a broad range of late nineteenth-century Jewish national movements."[894] The *Comité des Délégations Juives (auprès de la Conference de la Paix)* (Committee of Jewish Delegations) brought together both Zionist and autonomist leaders.[895] The historian Erwin Viefhaus went even further in saying that the 1919 minority treaties resulted from the political activism of American and Eastern European Jewry. This activity aimed to provide a legal framework for the political and cultural development of Central and Eastern European Jewry.[896]

Buza's hopes for the influence of Hungarian Jews in international institutions were thus well-founded, since many of the leaders of international Jewish institutions, such as Max Nordau or the chief rabbi of Palestine, were of Hungarian origin. Additionally, delegates from international Jewish organizations showed their readiness to represent the interests of Hungarian Jews in international forums that were limited to delegates from the Entente states.[897] In the case of Transylvania, it was easy to argue for remaining in Hungary. At the Zürich International Israelite Congress in March 1919, which was presumably the inaugural meeting of the *Comité des Délégations Juives*, even the representative of Romanian Jewry agreed that while in Hungary Jews "enjoyed the widest freedom," their fellow Jews in Romania "suffered the harshest repression."[898] Jewish emancipation in Romania, as agreed in the resolution of the Berlin Congress of 1878, was delayed. Civil and political emancipation in Romania remained deferred. This triggered a major wave of migration to America. Erwin Viefhaus argued that, for America, holding Romania to account in the name of humanity, "international law and eternal justice" for the Berlin Congress resolution in 1902 and 1913 offered a precedent. America could build

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[894] Rebekah Klein-Pejšová, *Mapping Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Slovakia* (Indiana University Press, 2015).
[895] Giladi, *Jews, Sovereignty, and International Law*, 57–58.
[896] Viefhaus, *Die Minderheitenfrage und die Entstehung der Minderheitenschutzverträge auf der Pariser Friedenskonferenz 1919 : eine Studie zur Geschichte des Nationalitätenproblems im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, 49.
[897] [Gyula] Szilassy, "[Nemzetközi Izraelita Kongresszus Zürichben]" (Bern, October 3, 1919), V/704/1/54/71-72, PIL.
[898] Szilassy.

on these precedents of involvement in minority affairs in Eastern Europe in Paris when it came to the Minority Treaties.[899]

There was less agreement regarding the Jews of Upper Hungary. The Jews of Czechoslovakia advised the Jews living in the Slovak counties against identifying as Magyar to avoid persecution. The Hungarian delegation and the Zürich Congress rejected this proposal.[900] At this point, it is likely that the Jews had formed a clear stance on the issue of minority protection, which they would stand for at the Peace Congress. They came to a unanimous recommendation that Hungary should address the matter of its Jewish population through a "confederation."[901] By confederation, they probably meant cultural autonomy or, more generally, recognition of the Jews as a nation and, as such, participation in state power. Previously, Jewishness was officially considered a religious matter. The prevalence of the discourse of Jewish nationhood illustrates a profound transformation in the self-perception of Jewishness in the post-WWI situation.[902] The Zürich Congress sent a telegram about the discussion to President Wilson, who was already familiar with the Jewish question due to a series of conversations with the delegates of the American Jewish Congress.[903]

3.3.2. Minorities in "Small Nations"

While the Jews were expressing their loyalty to the Hungarian state, Czechoslovak, Romanian, Ukrainian, and Serbian troops were advancing steadily into the territory of historic Hungary, where their co-nationals were living. With the proclamation of Romania and Czechoslovakia, Hungarian Jews living on the territories ceded to these states needed to relocate their loyalty and reconsider their relationship to nationhood. Remaining loyal to the Hungarian nationality was a severe hardship for the Jews in areas

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[899] Viefhaus, *Die Minderheitenfrage und die Entstehung der Minderheitenschutzverträge auf der Pariser Friedenskonferenz 1919 : eine Studie zur Geschichte des Nationalitätenproblems im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, 49-.
[900] Szilassy, "[Nemzetközi Izraelita Kongresszus Zürichben]."
[901] Szilassy.
[902] Klein-Pejšová, *Mapping Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Slovakia*.
[903] Oscar I. Janowsky, *The Jews and Minority Rights (1898–1919)* (Columbia University Press, 1933), https://doi.org/10.7312/jano93672; Viefhaus, *Die Minderheitenfrage und die Entstehung der Minderheitenschutzverträge auf der Pariser Friedenskonferenz 1919 : eine Studie zur Geschichte des Nationalitätenproblems im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, 111. Carole Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878 - 1938*, Digitally printed paperback version (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2006).

occupied by the Romanian or Czechoslovak troops, since the chairperson of the newly established national councils was not always willing to recognize and safeguard Jewish rights. Romania had already gained international notoriety for not resolving the Jewish question—in other words, for not granting equal rights and citizenship to Jews living on its territory. The new leaders also "had to respect the anti-Jewish sentiment" of the majority population in the area.[904] They additionally wanted to demonstrate to the nations they represented that times had changed. Magyars and Jews could no longer oppress them. Meanwhile, they also expected Jewish communities to show their loyalty to the new state power immediately. What arguments did various Jewish communities use when they defined themselves as national communities for the first time? In the following, I will examine the responses of Jewish communities in Slovakia and Transylvania to the new situation.

Historian Rebekah Klein-Pejšová rightfully noted that the end of 1918 marked the first time that Slovakia had been defined as a separate administrative entity, rather than as part of sixteen counties and four municipalities in northern Hungary.[905] The Jewish communities residing in present-day Slovakia and the Hungarian territories ceded to Romania were not uniform in nature. While some Jews were identified as Magyars, not all of them fell under this classification. "The Zionists will not sit with the Orthodox. The Orthodox will not sit with the Neologues, etc.," reported Harry Gell, the representative of the Joint Distribution Committee in Europe.[906] On the territory of "Unterland," as Jews referred to the region in present-day eastern Slovakia, Prikarpatia Oblast of present-day Ukraine, and northwestern Transylvania in Romania, Jews spoke Yiddish and to some extent Ruthenian. These primarily rural communities had their origins in migration over the border from Galicia following the Edict of Tolerance (1782), and they maintained cultural ties with their former homeland. The territory of "Subcarpathian Ruthenia" was home to approximately 100,000 Jews, the majority living in rural areas, Yiddish-

[904] Szabó, "'We Must Abolish the Privileges, Too' : Revision of the Liquor and Tobacco Licenses in Slovakia after the First World War as a Form of Anti-Jewish Propaganda," 74.
[905] Klein-Pejšová, *Mapping Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Slovakia*, 24. The sixteen counties were: Trencsén / Trenčín, Árva / Orava, Túróc / Turiec. Zólyom / Zvolen, Liptó / Liptov, Szepes / Spiš / Zips, Sáros / Šariš, Pozsony / Pressburg, Nyitra / Nitra, Bars / Tekov, Hont, Nógrád / Novohrad, Gömör / Gemer, Abaúj-Torna / Abovsko-turnianska župa, Zemplén / Zemplín, and Ung / Užská župa
[906] Klein-Pejšová, *Mapping Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Slovakia*, 26. Yeshayahu A. Jelinek and Paul R. Magocsi, *The Carpathian Diaspora: The Jews of Subcarpathian Rus' and Mukachevo, 1848-1948*, East European Monographs 721 ([Boulder, Colo.] : New York: East European Monographs ; Distributed by Columbia University Press, 2007).

speaking, and Orthodox. In "Oberland" (roughly Western Slovakia and Burgenland), there was a significant number of Magyarized Jews. They declared themselves as Magyars in the census, adopted the Hungarian language, in some cases Magyarized their names, adhered to Neologue Judaism, and engaged in intermarriage.[907]

In 1910, about 182,000 Israelites were living in the territories of Eastern Hungary, later annexed to Romania, constituting approximately 3.5 percent of the population. By 1918, Jews in Hungary had already successfully integrated into Hungarian society. The historian Attila Gidó, when analyzing the loyalties of Transylvanian Jews in interwar Romania, found that in Transylvania, the rate of Magyar Jews was somewhat lower than in Hungary. 72 to 73 percent of the Jewish population (about 132,000) spoke Magyar. While in Bihar/Bihor (present-day Romania), 97.2 percent of Jews were Hungarian speakers, in the Máramaros/Maramureș (present-day Romania and Ukraine) region, only 17 percent of Jews spoke Magyar, while the others mainly indicated German as their mother tongue in the 1910 census.[908] In addition to all the other factors mentioned above, the urban-rural divide also shaped the formation of Jewish loyalties. In Transylvania, 44 percent of the Jewish population lived in urban areas. "To make a living for years in the countryside as an industrialist, a merchant, or even as a doctor, lawyer, technician, or bureaucrat, is a life of so much struggle and bitterness that a rabbi, banker, journalist, etc., in a comfortable capital or a large rural center cannot imagine," contemporaries lamented.[909] The problems that the Jews faced in Máramaros/Maramureș, for example, differed greatly from those in Budapest or Vienna. In Máramaros/Maramureș, the distribution of occupations among Jews and Christians was very different from the rest of the country. Máramaros/Maramureș Jews were characterized by economic conservatism, lack of social mobility, and the inheritance of a traditional occupational structure. Whereas in Hungary, the proportion of industrial workers among Jews was 46 percent, their proportion in Máramaros/Maramureș was only one percent, while the proportion of agricultural workers was as high as 20 percent.[910]

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[907] Klein-Pejšová, *Mapping Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Slovakia.*
[908] Attila Gidó, "Transylvanian Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Romania," *Jewish Culture and History* 22, no. 3 (July 3, 2021): 1, https://doi.org/10.1080/1462169X.2021.1956784.
[909] Rónai, "Czion és Magyarország (részlet az első magyar cionista manifesztumból)," 35.
[910] Karády, "A magyar zsidóság regionális és társadalmi rétegződéséről (1910)."

Czechoslovakia: organizing Jews as a national minority

Czechoslovakia was created on October 28, 1918, and sanctioned by the Treaty of Saint-Germain in September 1919. The first minister with plenipotentiary power for the administration of Slovakia, Vavro Šrobár, followed an anti-Semitic policy. Posters with the inscription "Jews go to Palestine. *Magyaróns* go to Asia. Dirty *Magyaróns*"[911] appeared on Wilson Street—formerly named after Lajos Kossuth, the Hungarian national revolutionary of 1848—in a town in Trencsén/Trenčiansky komitát/Trentschiner Komitat, showing who belonged and who did not belong to the nascent Czechoslovak nation. Making Jews second-class citizens caused serious loyalty conflicts in the Jewish population.[912] First, the new leadership identified the Jews with the Magyars when they called them to account for the mistakes of the old regime and Magyarization. Second, however, they would not recognize the Jews as Magyars to avoid increasing the number of Magyars living in Slovakia. In the old Hungary, Jews had usually declared themselves as Magyars in the census. The new Czechoslovak state needed the Jews' loyalty for its international reputation as a democratic republic—all the more so because the American Jewish community supported Masaryk's state-building ambitions during and after WWI.[913]

Licenses for pubs and shops, alcohol, tobacco, and cinema were taken from Jewish hands during the *Prevrat,* when the territory of today's Slovakia was incorporated into Czechoslovakia.[914] The progress of Jewish people in industrial and intellectual fields that were not always available to the Slovak population created resentment towards them. Slovaks perceived Jews as tools for Magyarization during the Dualist period, while also questioning their moral integrity by viewing them as exploiters, war profiteers, usurers, or innkeepers. The Slovak national activist Anton Stefánek blamed economic and social anti-Semitism on forced Magyarization: "Today they [Jews] are regarded as the exponents of the Magyars, the volunteer auxiliaries of the officials, notaries, and the

[911] "Trencsén megyei állapotokról."
[912] See: Ilan Zvi Baron, "The Problem of Dual Loyalty," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 4 (December 2009): 1025–44, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423909990011.
[913] Klein-Pejšová, *Mapping Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Slovakia*, 23.
[914] Szabó, "'We Must Abolish the Privileges, Too' : Revision of the Liquor and Tobacco Licenses in Slovakia after the First World War as a Form of Anti-Jewish Propaganda," 77.

gendarmerie, and are thought to be up to no good."[915] Not only did the successor state consider it expedient to "oust" Jews from their positions as merchants, industrialists, and public employees, but so did some of those who still hoped that parts of Slovakia could be saved for the Hungarian state if a referendum were held.[916] They wanted to fill these positions with "Hungarian-minded Slovaks."[917] The population was also not shy about taking vigilante action.[918] In particular, soldiers returning from the war gave way to their anti-Semitic sentiments and the Catholic clergy fueled anti-Semitic pogroms.[919] "The clergy should not incite Jewish pogroms. The Czechoslovaks are anti-Semites anyway because they see the Jews as the followers of Magyarism," a Magyar journalist from Upper Hungary warned the Hungarian government. The so-called "November pillages," the robbery and looting of Jewish stores and pubs, were so common that the authorities dismissed the owners' complaints.[920] Jewish representatives compared their worsening situation to the oppression of Jews in Russia and Poland. Miller claimed that anti-Jewish violence aimed at demarcating the exclusive criteria of membership in the successor states.[921]

The loyalty of Jews living in Slovakia was not solely claimed by the Czechoslovak state. In fact, there were six other interest groups competing to win their loyalty. The first of these entities was the Hungarian Jewish press in Budapest, which encouraged Jews to maintain their loyalty to Hungary. Jewish journalists from Budapest were most concerned with the new paradoxical situation in which Jews in Slovakia found themselves. The assimilationist Budapest newspaper *Egyenlőség* reported that if Jews lost their industrial licenses in Slovakia, they would rather emigrate than give up belonging to the Magyar

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[915] "A zsidókérdés Magyarországon. A Huszadik Század körkérdése," 139. See also: "The Zemplén Slovaks hate the old administration and are anti-Semites." "Juhász János főreáliskolai tanár jelentése a Zemplén megyei állapotokról."

[916] Even though Czechoslovakia's creation was announced on October 28, 1918, Slovakia had not yet officially joined Bohemia and Moravia. The Hungarian government and its representatives interpreted the right of national self-determination as giving the people of Slovakia the power to decide on their belonging in an upcoming referendum.

[917] "Dr. Balázs Emil törvényszéki bíró javaslata a kormány nemzetiségi programját tartalmazó propagandafüzet sürgős kiadására az északnyugati vármegyékben" (Budapest, December 1918), K40-1918-VII-291, MNL OL.

[918] „the returning soldiers are caught up in propaganda promising revenge against the old regime, liberation, or in line with their bigoted hatred of Jews." "Dr. Boross Géza Gyula budapesti lakos jelentése a Trencsén megyei állapotokról" (Budapest, May 11, 1918), K40-1918-VII-75, MNL OL.

[919] "Pék Dezső újságíró bizalmas jelentései a Liptó megyei eseményekről."

[920] Klein-Pejšová, *Mapping Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Slovakia*. 22.

[921] Miller, "The Forgotten Pogroms, 1918," 651.

nation. The second interest group was that of Jewish nationalists from Prague (*Nationaljuden*), who were also interested in organizing Jews from the territory of Slovakia. Their program combined the Herzlian and Dubnowian ideas in claiming that the project of a home for Jews in Palestine and the protection of the rights of the Jewish minority were complementary.[922] They clustered around the Jewish National Council and aimed to become the sole representatives of Jews in Czechoslovakia. In December 1918, they sent an agitator named Markus Ungar to organize the Jews living in Slovakia as members of the Jewish nation, rather than identifying with any particular national group such as Hungarian, German, or Czechoslovak.[923] In April 1919, *Selbstwehr* (Self-defense), the German-language Zionist newspaper from Prague, had already reported on the growing adherence to the national Jewish point of view in Slovakia.[924] The third interest group competing for the loyalty of Hungarian Jews living on territory of Slovakia were the Zionists, who were engaged in establishing Hebrew language schools in Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Fourth, local Hasidic leaders who protested against the Hebrew schools also wished Hungarian Jews to support their cause. Fifth, assimilationist Czech-Jews, critics of Zionism, also agitated on the territory of Slovakia, trying to convince the Jewish population there to integrate into the Czechoslovak nation. They wanted to avoid a fight on two fronts, against both anti-Semitism and Zionism. Sixth, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which carried out humanitarian activities in the Subcarpathian region, also showed interest in organizing the Jews of Slovakia.[925] Even this brief account shows that the organization of the Jews in Slovakia did not come from within.

The treaty concluded between the Allied Powers and Czechoslovakia on September 10, 1919 provided general minority rights but did not include Jewish provisions similar to clauses 10 and 11 of the treaty with Poland. Kateřina Čapková has thoroughly analyzed how the 1920 Constitution of Czechoslovakia both recognized and was silent on the recognition of the Jewish nationality. The constitution avoided taking a stance on disputes within the Jewish communities in Czechoslovakia. Most Jews who declared Jewish as

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[922] "Das Memorandum des Jüdischen Nationalrates an den Národní Výbor," *Österreichische Wochenblatt*, November 15, 1918, 727–28.
[923] Marsha L. Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria in World War I*, Studies in Jewish History (Oxford: Univ. Press, 2004). 146.
[924] "Annäherung an der nationaljüdischen Standpunkt in der Slowakei," *Selbstwehr*, April 4, 1919, 3.
[925] Klein-Pejšová, *Mapping Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Slovakia*, 27.

their nationality in censuses in the 1920s were from Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia. Jewish nationality was a viable option replacing Hungarian or German nationality for Hasidic Jews from the latter region.[926]

In Czechoslovakia, an exchange of loyalties was necessary for Hungarian Jews.[927] After the violence of the post-war period came calmer years that favored rapprochement. However, no complete acculturation took place since Slovak politics and culture did not offer Jews the same advantages as their Austro-German or Hungarian predecessors. Jewish communities from Slovakia shifted their economic and political loyalty to the Czechoslovak state. Jews in Slovakia learned the state language to some degree but did not integrate into the Slovak ethnocultural community. This was especially true for the Jews in *Unterland*, who did not identify with any specific national identity because none of the existing categories accurately represented their beliefs or mindset.[928] Jewish loyalties continued to develop in two main directions in the Slovak territories. The first was a kind of national indifference, the preferred choice of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities. The second direction was self-organization as a national minority, inspired by cultural Zionism, and claiming that only national politics could protect Jewish people in the Czech state.[929] The reason why Jews in Slovakia did not form a unified non-territorial cultural community was the diversity of their communities (Zionist, assimilationist, Orthodox, and Hasidic) and their lack of internal organization, having been previously integrated into the institutional life of Budapest or Vienna. The case of Jewish communities on the territory of Slovakia shows how various Jewish loyalties converged, merged, or were able to coexist. Similar trends can be observed in Transylvania during the months of transition.

Transylvania: "Against common sense"

Before WWI, the state's attitude towards Jews was radically different in the old Hungary and in the Kingdom of Romania. In Transylvania, Jews were considered to be part of the

[926] Kateřina Čapková, Derek Paton, and Marzia Paton, *Czechs, Germans, Jews? National Identity and the Jews of Bohemia*, English-language ed (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012). 30-38; 52-53.
[927] Kovács, "'Az asszimiláció ambivalenciái.,'" 204.
[928] Klein-Pejšová, *Mapping Jewish Loyalties in Interwar Slovakia*.
[929] Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*, 114.

Hungarian nation and were often classified as Magyars. In Romania, however, Jews were seen as outsiders and were not granted citizenship. In Romania, Jewish emancipation had yet to arrive with the finalization of the 1919 Paris Peace Treaties, when Romania promised to guarantee both citizenship and minority rights to Jews, a promise finally kept in the 1923 Constitution of Romania.[930] The speech of the Hungarian Minister Buza at the general assembly of Hungarian Jews on November 6, 1918, analyzed in detail above (II. 3.3.1. "Hungarian Jews and their 'Great Historical Task'") showed that Budapest was still interested in Jews from Transylvania. In February 1919, *Egyenlőség* voiced this as it ridiculed the tendency to shift loyalty towards the Jewish nationality: "In every village where there are one or two Jews, should these one or two Jews organize themselves on a national basis and should these one or two Jews form a separate body, or what do I know? Well, that would be against common sense."[931] The Neologue press still interpreted the Jewish question through the old discourse of assimilation. This discourse showed little understanding of the new situation of Magyar Jews in Romania or Czechoslovakia, which were not keen on safeguarding the rights of Jews who showed loyalty to the Magyar minority.

Like the Hungarian Government and the Reformist community in Budapest, the Romanian National Council, too, voiced its expectations regarding how Hungarian Jews should classify themselves in this new situation. In November 1918, the Romanian National Committee of Kisküküllő/Târnava-Mică/Klein-Kokelburg county (present-day Romania) wrote a letter to "members of Jewish origin" on the Hungarian National Council of the county, urging them to be transparent in their loyalties. The Romanian Committee inquired whether they represented the "free Jewish nation" or were "private individuals." The Romanian Committee discussed the issue of political freedom in reaction to the news from Vienna and "all the countries," they wrote. The Romanian Committee stated that they had already declared Jews a free nation like other nationalities. On this occasion, they welcomed the Jews of Kisküküllő/Târnava-Mică/Klein-Kokelburg

[930] Emanuela Constantini, "Neither Foreigners, Nor Citizens: Romanian Jews' Long Road to Citizenship," in *The Jews and the Nation-States of Southeastern Europe from the 19th Century to the Great Depression Combining Viewpoints on a Controversial Story*, ed. Tullia Catalan (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 21, http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&AN=1339039.

[931] Jób Paál, "Vass János miniszter nyilatkozik az Egyenlőség munkatársának a zsidóság aktuális kérdéseiről," *Egyenlőség* 38, no. 5 (January 2, 1919): 8.

among the free nations. The Romanian Committee would negotiate with the Jews as such if they only knew how the Jewish members of the Hungarian Council identified themselves. The document was a clear invitation to the Jewish people of Transylvania to become one of the constituent nationalities of the nascent Romania. Transylvania's unification with Romania was proclaimed ten days after the letter, on December 1, 1918.

However, the Jewish members of the Hungarian National Council were not yet ready to accept the invitation. The note attached to the registration number shows that the Jewish members of the Hungarian National Council discussed the question with the Hungarian Ministry of Nationalities. Perhaps because the Transylvanian Jews still hoped for Hungarian rule in Transylvania, should a referendum be held, the Hungarian National Council of Kisküküllő/Târnava-Mică/Klein-Kokelburg drafted a highly diplomatic answer: "The members belonging to the Jewish nation, namely Dr. Erdős, Révész, Dr. Ligeti, Werner, and Marton partake in the organization of the National Council as the delegates of the Radical and Social Democratic parties. They aim to realize the international ideals and the program of their respective parties, regardless of being Jewish or not."[932] The response both acknowledged the Jewish nationality of the members and testified to the Hungarian government's pro-Entente stance in referring to international principles. It also showed their loyalty to the Hungarian nation by committing themselves to the political program of Hungarian parties in their reply.

In the months after the war, the oscillation between the loyalty to the Hungarian and Jewish nations and the general insecurity of the period is also evident in the personal life of Ernő Marton, mentioned above. His biographer observed that Marton, as a believer in Jászi and the Aster Revolution, boarded the train to Budapest in the first days of December 1918 to take part in the democratic transformation in the capital. In Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg, Czech soldiers removed him from the train. "The train was almost ready to depart when a large group of Czech soldiers suddenly rushed towards it. These soldiers had just come from the "Regat" [the colloquial name of the territory covered by the first independent Romanian nation state, Wallachia, Moldavia, and Dobruja] and were in a hurry to reach their young republic, which had only been established a few days prior. Without much thought, the soldiers gave the order:

[932] "Beregi Ármin javaslata a zsidók önrendelkezési jogáról," November 20, 1918, K40-1918-XVIII-239, MNL OL.

'Civilians, get out of the train!'"[933] Marton approached the Zionists in the city who were starting a new newspaper, even though he himself was not a Zionist. He joined the editorial team since, being stuck in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg, he did not have any other job prospects available to him.[934]

Meanwhile, stronger winds blew from Máramaros/Maramureș. In November 1918, when national councils all over Hungary were constituted, the Zionist Illés Blank asked Minister Oszkár Jászi in a note if there were any obstacles to establishing a Jewish National Council, which would have implied the de facto recognition of the Jewish nation.[935] In the document, Jászi officially acknowledged the Jews' entitlement to their own national council. Transylvanian Jews who came to think about themselves in national terms often referred back to Minister Buza's speech at the Jewish assembly of November 1918 as if the government had recognized and celebrated the Jewish nation. The context, the actual message of Buza's statement, gradually faded in these references. In their view, Buza's statement was put on par with Wilson's principles and the Balfour Declaration. It came to serve as a legal foundation for the Jewish nation.

On November 20, 1918, the *Erdélyi Zsidó Nemzeti Szövetség, EZSNSZ* (Transylvanian Jewish National Alliance) was founded in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg. The inaugural meeting was marked by a hesitation between the protection Jewish minority rights and the at the time seemingly illusory work in Palestine. In its activity, the EZSNSZ combined religious, cultural, economic, and Zionist political endeavors, and it soon developed its local organizations all over Transylvania. Their declaration "What do we want?" was issued on December 19, after the change of power in Romania. In this declaration, the Alliance had clearly committed itself to belonging to the Jewish nation. The Romanian state's desire to separate the Jews from the Hungarian community made the choice obvious.[936] "The world war is over. From the bloodshed, a new source of national and human rights has emerged. (...) One historic revelation follows another," the declaration commenced. It continued by listing the stages of recognition of the Jewish nation in recent months: "First, the Foreign Secretary of England, Lord

[933] Ernő Marton, "Tizenöt év ormáról," *Új Kelet* 17, no. 74 (March 31, 1934): 1.
[934] Levente. Olosz, "Marton Ernő életrajza" (Eger, Eszterházy Károly Egyetem, Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola, 2021), 44–45.
[935] "Dr. Blank Illés, a máramarosszigeti Zionegylet ügyvezető alelnöke táviratilag kérdezi, hogy zsidó nemzeti tanács megalakításának van-e akadálya," n.d., K40-1918-XVIII-408., MNL OL.
[936] Olosz, "Marton Ernő életrajza," 46.

Balfour, recognized the claim of the Jewish nation to Palestine (…) and made a solemn pledge to establish a Jewish national home. Balfour's declaration was followed by formal resolutions by Wilson, Orlando, and then by the French and Italian chambers, which clearly recognized the national character of the Jews and the legitimacy of their national aspirations. Wilson's fourteen points guarantee the rights of minority nations."[937] The Jews were thus a legitimate national minority entitled to the guarantee of their rights as such.

Transylvanian Jews thus avowed themselves as part of the fourteen million Jewish people that, in their view, the "governments of the Western states" had accepted as a nation spread over the entire world. Since Palestine could be home to only four million Jews, ten million would continue living as a national minority. The line of argument in the declaration of the Jewish National Alliance of Transylvania shares many similarities with the Memorandum of the Jewish National Council in Prague, issued on October 28, 1918, and differed from the narrative of Jewish organizations based in Budapest and Slovakia. "With the victory of the idea of self-determination of peoples, the just, historical claims of the Jews were also realized," the Jewish National Council in Prague stated. "He [Balfour] regards the Jews as a nation, and (…) he will support their efforts aimed at the establishment of a national home in Palestine, without thereby abridging the civic rights of the Jews in their previous places of residence." [938] Max Brod, the vice president of the Jewish National Council, argued that the project of a home for Jews in Palestine and the protection of the rights of the Jewish minority were complementary.

The EZSNSZ admitted that the Jewish national idea was new to them, and their resolution joined the universal Jewish movement almost too late: "While foreign Jewry, proud of its national identity, has for decades been involved in the realization of the aspirations of universal Jewry in an organized way, the majority of Hungarian Jewry was a 'withered olive branch' on a tree which the storms of 2,000 years could not uproot. This is the reason why Hungarian Jewry was caught unawares by events, and now, when the nations are demanding their rights when the Jewry of foreign countries is already laying the foundations for the independent Jewish state of the future, it has only now, belatedly,

[937] Gidó, *Úton*, 112.
[938] "Das Memorandum des Jüdischen Nationalrates an den Národní Výbor."

become aware of its Jewish national consciousness."[939] This train of thought shows how naturally the authors combined the organic view of the nation expressed in the olive tree metaphor with the modern idea of the national awakening and the post-war concept of national self-determination. The text also shows that Hungarian Jews were aware of the Jewish national movements abroad but had not adopted these ideas until recently.

Both declarations from Transylvania and Bohemia underlined that Jewish minority rights would in no way mean a new ghetto, suggesting that Jewish communities recognized and were ready to be loyal to the new state power. They insisted that their rights as a national minority would not be based on premodern religious consciousness but on Western democratic principles. Apart from a quick reference to international pronouncements, the Prague Declaration did not elaborate on the justification for recognizing the Jews as a nation. Bohemian and Moravian Jews were familiar with the concept of a Jewish nation. Thus, they argued in this spirit that Jews were a constituent nation of Czechoslovakia, as the historian Hillel Kieval has shown. Knowing Masaryk's familiarity with the Jewish cause, Bohemian Jews formulated their claims in a language that spoke to him. They asked for national minority rights as a "small nationality," a concept that Masaryk himself contrived and popularized during his stay in the United States.[940] In contrast, the Transylvanian Declaration devoted about a quarter of the text to dismissing arguments that deny that Jews are a nation. First, in a democratic people's republic, religion was a private matter given the lack of state funding. Consequently, religious Jews could no longer maintain their educational institutions as a religious community. Second, since Romanians and Hungarians were struggling for hegemony, the situation of Transylvanian Jews was special. Third, the Jews' two-thousand-year survival was proof of the continuity of their national existence. Fourth, they assured the other Transylvanian minorities of their support in the struggle for their rights. Finally, if Jews had been discriminated against up to then, they "should not be assimilated when they are entitled to their rights" as a national community.

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[939] Gidó, *Úton*, 112.

[940] Hillel J. Kieval, "Negotiating Czechoslovakia: The Challenges of Jewish Citizenship in a Multiethnic Nation-State," in *Insiders and Outsiders: Dilemmas of East European Jewry*, ed. Richard I. Cohen, Jonathan Frankel, and Stefani Hoffman (Portland, Or: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010), 110.

The Prague declaration interpreted self-determination as the right to administer education, social welfare, and relations with the Jewish national homeland in Palestine. The national minority rights it asked for were, first, the democratization and secularization of the current *Kultusgemeinden* (religious communities), whose work would be national-cultural, according to the declaration. Second, the declaration demanded the right to impose taxes on the members of the *Kultusgemeinden*. Third, it asked for a democratically-elected joint representation of these communities with seats in Prague. Fourth, the same financial support was requested for Jewish cultural institutions as for any other cultural endeavor. Rozenblit remarked that the council did not ask for full-blown national autonomy, such as Jewish voting curiae and delegations.[941] Although the EZSNSZ had only recently been formed, its demands went further than those of the Prague organization. It interpreted Jewish national self-determination as "personal autonomy, i.e., the constitutional endowment of national minorities with rights in political and economic life, education, and the cultivation of their national culture."[942] The reason why the Bohemian Jews did not refer to Renner's personal autonomy as a precedent, while the Transylvanian Jews did, might be that the Hungarian democratic government supported autonomy on non-territorial principles. At the same time, however, neither the government nor the Jewish community had any direct experience of cultural autonomy in the Rennerian sense. It is also noteworthy that the declaration used the term "personal autonomy," a term used mostly outside the Hungarian context. In Hungary, political thinkers referred to non-territorial autonomy as national cultural or simply Rennerian autonomy.

It is worth noting that while the addressee of the Prague declaration was the Government of the Czechoslovak State (*Národní Vybor*), the declaration of the Hungarian Jews of Transylvania had no specific addressee. The last third of the Prague Council's statement dealt with anti-Semitism. It asked the venerable National Committee to make official declarations to ensure that Czechoslovak state-building did not see Jews as an enemy within. It also suggested other concrete measures which the National Committee should take to prevent anti-Semitic violence. This aspect was less prominent in the

[941] Rozenblit, *Reconstructing a National Identity*, 114.
[942] Gidó, *Úton*, 114.

Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca/Klausenburg declaration, which, however, also mentioned the pogroms and the violation of the human rights of Jewish citizens.

Transylvanian Jews realized that they literally needed to determine themselves in the changed situation. Hungarian Jewish intellectuals of Transylvania gradually opted for the solution that *Egyenlőség* had ridiculed as "against common sense" just a few weeks before. They started orienting themselves towards cultural autonomy and asserting their rights not as a Magyar but as a Jewish national minority. They explained their own national self-determination as personal autonomy.[943] President Wilson's universal principles were flexible enough to enable Hungarian Jews from Transylvania to declare themselves part of the Jewish nation. Furthermore, they could ask for the protection of their rights as a national minority in the Romanian successor state, which previously had a policy of dissimilation and treated Jews as foreigners. Jewish nationalist leaders thus turned to concrete historical experiences to formulate a minority agenda. In the period between the two world wars, the EZSNSZ mainly carried out its cultural, social, and political activities through local organizations. On December 19, 1918, a Hungarian-language Zionist newspaper was launched under the name *Új Kelet* (New East).[944] We saw above that some of the founding members hesitated to commit themselves to the Jewish nation in November. By December, this position was changing. Much like the German-speaking Jews in Prague mentioned above, Hungarian Jews in Transylvania felt safer declaring themselves part of the Jewish nation as they sought to secure their civil and group rights. On the one hand, the principle of national self-determination provided a sufficient legal basis to formulate a minority agenda. On the other hand, the growing international acceptance of creating a Jewish home in Palestine held the promise of a political center for the Jewish culture that would support the diaspora. Both declarations invoked national self-determination to argue for full civic equality and the right to administer Jewish cultural affairs.

[943] Gidó, 114.
[944] Unfortunately, issues of the newspaper published during the transition months (December 19, 1918 – March 13, 1919) have been lost.

3.4. Conclusions

A common assumption among those less familiar with the region is that the situation of Jews in Hungary was similar to that of what is typically portrayed in the literature as "East(-Central) European Jewry." Whereas Jews living in Romania or the Russian Empire were deprived of political and civic rights, Jews in Hungary were equal citizens from the second half of the nineteenth century on, much as in Austria. Jewish emancipation in Hungary coincided with the country's modernization in all areas of social and economic life. As in Austria, where most Jews identified with German or other dominant cultures in the region, the majority of Hungarian Jews considered themselves part of the dominant national group. This led to their active participation in the modernization in Hungary and contributed to the increase in the number of Magyars. Hungarian and German Jews were aware of Zionist and autonomist aspirations but did not consider it a strategy to follow. These typically urban Jewish communities were unwilling to give up the emancipation opportunities offered by assimilation. Moreover, they did not perceive anti-Semitism as a threat. The idea of Jewry as a nationality or nation was present in late Habsburg Hungary but only marginally. Hungarian Jews needed to revise this position with the change of sovereignty in November 1918 in the regions where the language of power shifted.

In an emerging world of nation-states and national minorities, the Jewish question was no longer about assimilation but the demand for minority rights and their enactment into law. To achieve this, Jewish communities had to define themselves as a nation. Jewish communities underwent a shift in their self-perception, particularly in the successor states where changes in state power and language forced them to think and talk about themselves in new ways. This shift in self-perception intersected with the discursive traditions of different communities in various ways. In cases where Jewish communities were homogeneous enough to organize themselves from within, they claimed cultural rights as a national minority. This was the case for Hungarian-speaking Jews in Transylvania or German-speaking Jews in Prague. In Slovakia, where Jewish communities were more heterogenous, they did not create an organization that could have united most Jewish inhabitants. The need to rethink loyalties was not so pressing in Hungary, since the state language remained Hungarian. Nonetheless, cultural Zionism in Hungary also became stronger after 1918.

This chapter aimed to address the origins of the arguments used by Jews who identified themselves as a nation or national minority and relied on this self-definition to secure their rights. First, the examples above suggested that Hungarian Jews were no supporters of, yet also no strangers to, Jewish national ideas. Diaspora nationalism and Zionism were Jewish ideological traditions available to source arguments when defining themselves as a national minority. Second, and most interestingly, Hungarian Jews started to familiarize themselves with and empathize with these ideologies while advocating for the integrity of Hungary's territory in the framework of international Jewish organizations. These institutions, prominently the *Comité des Délégations Juives*, sought to bring the tradition of Jewish autonomism and Zionism into the language of international law. Both "national minority" and "Jewish nationality" were new international legal concepts born after the First World War but rooted in a broad range of late nineteenth-century Jewish autonomist ideas. The definition of Jewry as a cultural national community did not seem timely for Hungarian Jews before 1918. The new international legal language that created the legal personality of national minorities and the Jewish nation was in tune with the domestic political logic of the late Habsburg discursive sphere. These explain why some Hungarian Jewish communities could translate their demands into the language of the new times and demand national cultural autonomy.

CONCLUSIONS

Ways to Run a Multinational Social Democratic Party

The first part of my dissertation, entitled "How to Run a Multinational Social Democratic Party?" aimed to explore how the Social Democratic Party of Hungary (SDPH) managed the complexities stemming from the party's multinational or multilingual composition. This challenge was not unique to the Hungarian or Austrian parties. During the period of the Second International (1889–1914), Marxist thinkers confronted the challenge of reconciling the concept of nationality as a competitive social identity for workers with the maintenance of party unity amidst the emergence of national separatism and aspirations for self-rule. As a result, addressing the nationality question became an inevitable consideration for both the theoretical and practical pursuits of the social democratic movement. I argued that most prominent thinkers of the Second International thought about the nationality question in terms of similar principles yet arrived at different practical solutions.

The Austrian Social Democratic Workers' Party distinguished itself by developing and implementing a model of inner federalization of the party based on linguistic divides. Moreover, many social democrats promoted a non-territorial form of autonomy as the party's official nationality policy. However, the Hungarian party, which, as my research demonstrated, perceived its own progress as lagging behind its Austrian sister party, did not display the same degree of proficiency in developing theories. In addition to grappling with the nationality issue, the party also had to address other pressing challenges such as organizing a mass party, transitioning from illegality to a parliamentary political framework, and, most importantly, fighting for the right to equal and secret suffrage. The chapters of Part I, "How to Run a Multinational Social Democratic Party?" addressed whether, under these circumstances, the Austromarxist model could find fertile ground in the Hungarian social democratic movement.

The Renner-Bauer Riddle: Embracing, Rejecting, or Transforming

To investigate whether the Hungarian social democratic movement successfully adopted the Austromarxist model, my research broke this inquiry down into five distinct but

intertwined components: First, I started my inquiry by analyzing the extent to which Marxist political thinkers in Hungary were familiar with the Austromarxist model of party structure and nationality policy. Although the Renner-Bauer model was not frequently referenced, it was evident from a few mentions that the Hungarian and Austrian parties were well-acquainted with each other's affairs. Additionally, while Hungarian social democrats preferred to follow Kautsky's writings and advice, they still read Renner's and Bauer's works. Notably, the creation of nationalities' sections in 1904 led Serbian workers to misunderstand this move as the inner federalization of the party, indicating their familiarity with the Austromarxist model. Furthermore, the Slovak labor movement's leaders were also familiar with the language and terminology of the Renner-Bauer model through Czech mediation.

Overall, I suggest that the differences in how the Austrian and Hungarian parties addressed the nationality question were primarily strategic and based on pragmatic considerations. In Hungary, the issue of nationality only became a priority in the workers' movement after the turn of the century, when socialism gained popularity among non-Magyar workers. Consequently, in the first years of the new century, the SDPH adopted a nationality program that Bauer termed a "negative nationality program" or "naïve cosmopolitanism," promulgating "only" the principles of internationality and the equality of all nations.

Second, I addressed the complex question of whether the SDPH accepted or rejected the Austromarxist party organization model and the non-territorial principle. The challenge of determining the extent to which the SDPH adopted the Austromarxist model lies in the fact that while the party did not intend to federalize its structure based on linguistic fault lines, its leadership made decisions that exhibited clear influence from the Austromarxist model. The most important of these decisions was the establishment of nationalities' sections included in the 1904 party program. However, if we understand change as a part of the diffusion process, we can argue that the SDPH did indeed adopt the Austromarxist model, or at least elements from it. This transfer was, however, critical and tailored to the SDPH's internal development logic. To highlight both the similarities and the differences between the two organizational models, I have labeled the SDPH's tactic "technical autonomy," borrowing the term from Lenin's critique of the autonomism of the Jewish Labor Bund. According to Lenin, the Bund differentiated between two types of autonomy: "substantial" and "technical autonomy." "Substantial autonomy"

empowered nationality sections by granting them autonomy, as seen in Austria. The term "technical autonomy" referred to the central party providing support and liberty for the language-specific agitation needs of regional or national organizations. The "technical autonomy" which the SDPH implemented also implied that the German, Romanian, Serbian, and Slovak sections were not separate parties. Moreover, the 1904 party program, which created the nationalities' sections, did not establish a Magyar section, whereas the Austrian party had a German section.

Regarding the implementation of the non-territorial principle in the inner organization of the SDPH, it can be noted that the party assembly used a combination of both territorial and non-territorial organizational principles. At the annual party assembly, local organizations sent a delegate for every 500 members, and one delegate represented each nationality section. The party's main press organs and women workers were also represented based on the non-territorial principle. Overall, it can be concluded that the Hungarian political party drew inspiration for its internal organizational structure from its Austrian sister party by adding nationality as an organizational principle to the territorial principle. However, if we view empowerment and autonomy as important components of the Renner-Bauer model in addition to the non-territorial element, then the extent of its adoption was limited. The following paragraphs will delve into further potential reasons for the limited level of autonomy granted to the nationalities within the SDPH's party organization.

In the third strand of my research, I examined whether granting non-Magyar workers national autonomy, as proposed by the Austrian Social Democrats at the Party Congress in Brünn/Brno, could have effectively empowered them. I explored this question from two perspectives: first, how the SDPH tackled the nationality issue within its party organization, and second, the party's policies towards nationality. On the one hand, in my analysis of the factors that contributed to the internal federalization of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, I identified three crucial preconditions. First, the existence of powerful workers' parties that spoke languages other than the dominant language; second, the need to engage in agitation in several languages; and third, the goal of preserving party unity. While the latter two factors were also present in the Hungarian movement, the first was not. In Hungary, workers belonging to the nationalities did not initially organize themselves from the bottom up. Hence, I posited that the party's constant confrontation with the authorities initially overshadowed nationalistic tensions

within the organization. The provincial workers' movement primarily required assistance from Budapest rather than increased autonomy. My two case studies also supported this argument. At the same time, the historian János Kende also made a valid argument when he contended that the nationalities within the SDPH could have successfully pressured the party if they had joined forces in 1904 to demand autonomy. As the labor movement relied on workers from various nationalities, their combined demand for autonomy would have been a considerable force.

On the other hand, I argued that the leadership of the SDPH did not find the Renner-Bauer model a feasible option for their nationality policy. The lack of a national autonomy program in the SDPH cannot be entirely attributed to the alleged chauvinism or short-sightedness of its leadership, as most literature suggests. This argument, as explained in the relevant chapters, was more influenced by the dominant ideology of the era rather than factual evidence from historical sources. Not only nationalistic Magyar politicians and Hungarian Social Democrats but even Renner and Bauer realized that implementing national curiae in both parts of the Habsburg Monarchy would threaten the territorial distinctiveness and special status of Hungary in the Dualist system. Consequently, in the Hungarian public consciousness, the Renner-Bauer model was perceived as an attempt to establish a multinational federal *Grossösterreich* and eliminate Hungarian statehood in favor of cultural autonomy for the non-Magyar population. The idea of an independent Hungary was deeply ingrained in fin-de-siècle political thinking and Social Democrats respected it, preferring to advocate for modernization and democratization in the framework of the Kingdom of Hungary. First, they believed that general suffrage would emancipate non-Magyar workers sufficiently. The Social Democrats viewed national struggles as covert class struggles and therefore believed that providing non-territorial autonomy to the nationalities would not resolve the fundamental social issues. Consequently, the Hungarian Social Democrats considered the Austrian sister party's solution an example of its inability to tackle the nationality issue.

Fourth, in Chapter I/2.4. "The Magyar Psyche on the Couch of Dr. Bauer," I analyzed the rare cases in which Hungarian Marxists, despite all the arguments discussed above, did consider adopting the policy of non-territorial autonomy. I singled out the subtle or paradigmatic changes in political and social life that had to take place so that the milieu of the workers' movement in Hungary suddenly became receptive to the Austromaxist solution. I found three examples in social democratic discussion forums of

open statements in favor of national autonomy. First, Ervin Szabó regularly supported the right of nationalities to self-determination, even at the cost of secession. This position, however, went further than the proposal of Renner and Bauer and had different origins, so I have not dealt with it in detail in this thesis. Second, Jenő Varga, who had previously spoken out against the Austromarxist model, changed his mind in 1909. After general suffrage was introduced in Austria and failed in Hungary, some politicians pondered the idea of securing democratic rights not necessarily in an independent Hungary but in a federalized *Grossösterreich*. Varga argued that the Hungarian working class would benefit economically from being part of a Greater Austria that did not aim to Germanize its citizens. But even for Varga, the *Grossösterreich* alternative functioned as a second-best plan. Third, the moment to start a dialogue with the nationalities about the Austromarxist solution to the nationality question arrived in 1918. On the one hand, this dialogue was timely because Hungary had become an independent democratic republic. On the other hand, however, it was overdue because, as it soon became clear, Hungary had already lost most areas with non-Magyar communities. In 1918, when Wilsonian national self-determination was on everyone's lips, the SDPH was willing to grant the nationalities wider self-determination than non-territorial autonomy.

Finally, I explored why the nationalities in Hungary did not insist on the internal federalization of the party organization and strive for national cultural autonomy within the state organization. The first part of the thesis explored this issue in more detail by looking at Romanian and Slovak workers' newspapers. In Chapter I/4, "Fluency in Marxism," a detailed examination of the short-lived Romanian workers' newspaper *Votul poporului*, published in Banat in 1903, made it evident that the language of international class struggle served as a universal framework for the particular demands made by Romanian activists in these rural regions. The Romanian editors' self-translation into the language of the social democratic movement can be interpreted as an act of empowerment. Still, it was limited to the best-known slogans of the Social Democratic movement. From the case of *Votul poporului*, two hypothetical conclusions can be drawn. First, during the newspaper's short existence, the editors did not demand greater autonomy for Romanian workers because the inclusion of non-Magyar, rural workers from the countryside in the Social Democratic movement was still uncertain. Second, if the Second International, or at least the central party in Hungary or Romania, had accepted national autonomy as a norm, *Votul poporului* would have featured it in its

columns. Further research to investigate how site-, time-, and editor-specific the narrative of the Romanian newspaper was beyond the scope of this thesis.

Chapter I/5, "'We do not want any guardianship; we are able to live independently,'" scrutinized the reasons behind the failure of the Slovak autonomy experiment within the SDPH. I argued that the Austromarxist model of autonomy propagated by Slovak Social Democrats was influenced mainly by Czech Slovakophils. The Slovak Section adopted the idiom of Austromarxism, demanding autonomy within the party and as the party's nationality policy without evaluating the preconditions for its implementation. This desire for self-determination and federalization was legitimate but not realistic, given the circumstances of the time. The Slovak party was unprepared to run the organization independently and relied heavily on Czech moral and financial support. However, there were deeper causes behind this unsuccessful attempt at autonomy. The discussions between the leaders often reflected the competing narratives of the (Czecho)Slovak and Magyar nationalist movements, which both emphasized social and national liberation, albeit with varying priorities. The leadership of the central party stressed the shared interests of workers in achieving universal suffrage, regardless of ethnicity, while the Slovaks highlighted the importance of national demands and the right to self-determination. The Slovak representatives saw their autonomy within the party as a prerequisite for collaboration. Still, the party leadership could quickly cite the principle of internationalism to keep the nationalities out of decision-making. Furthermore, the chapter argued that negotiations between leaders often reproduced the narrative of the "bourgeois" national movement, perpetuating the conflict between the nationalities. Therefore, the failure of the autonomy attempt can be attributed to various factors, including the unpreparedness of the Slovak party to operate independently, its dependence on Czech support, and the divergent perspectives of the central party and Slovak Social Democrats regarding workers' interests and national demands.

Outlook

The first part of the dissertation, dedicated to the question of "How to Run a Multinational Social Democratic Party?" also called for dialogue on some broader issues that were not the narrow subject of my research. In Chapter I/2.2. "The opinion leaders of the Second International on the Nationality Question," I presented Kautsky's response to Bauer's

book on the nationality question, in which Kautsky argued that the nationalities had "entered into the sphere of modern international culture" in multinational states such as Austria. According to Kautsky, the proletariat could gain access to modern culture through their national language, and therefore, it was the responsibility of social democratic parties in such states to establish mechanisms that would enable different nationalities to collaborate peacefully. Kautsky challenged Marx's belief that the advancement of the global economy and market would inevitably result in assimilation and the hegemony of a single language. Instead, he presupposed that it was crucial to preserve cultural diversity and promote the use of multiple languages. Hence, my argument was that the concept of non-territorial autonomy can only be comprehended in the framework of modern nationalism since it addresses a question that assumes the existence of the modern nation, and its merits and limitations can only be evaluated in that context.

Drawing on Bauer's and Kautsky's insights into the nationality question within Marxist discourse, I argued that the modernist theory of the nation, which gained currency among Anglo-American scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century, was a fully formed concept that originated in the late Habsburg Monarchy. Notably, thinkers such as the Prague-born Hans Kohn and Ernest Gellner, as well as Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and the Czech historian and political theorist Miroslav Hroch contributed to this discourse. Additionally, the Marxist thinkers of the time were also the pioneers of the theory of "Eastern" and "Western European nationalism." Bauer, Kautsky, and Lenin, among others, asserted that while in nation-states like Germany and France, class struggle remained within that nation, in multinational states, it merged with the national struggle. The Marxist thinkers believed that the tendency to create large economic units and national awareness overlapped in the West. However, in the East, where opposing national aspirations hindered the formation of large nation-states, the situation was more complicated. Further studies are required to investigate the origins of the modernist concept of nationalism and its evolution in the United Kingdom and the United States during the 1960s.

The first part of my dissertation offers a contribution to the interpretation of the Austro-Marxist model of autonomy in Hungary. Specifically, it represents the first systematic exploration of the reception of the Austromarxist model within the internal structure and nationality policy of the Hungarian sister party. The section "How to Run a

Multinational Social Democratic Party?" examines the broader discourse of the Second International, the spread of elements of the non-territorial autonomy model within the socialist movement, and the arguments for its adoption or rejection in Hungary. By expanding the spatial, linguistic, and scalar dimensions, we could better evaluate the representativeness of the conclusions drawn in this chapter. Further research using digital discourse analysis and digital humanities methods could refine the answers to the questions posed in this chapter and our understanding of this topic. Since the regime change in 1989, relatively few new voices have entered into conversation about this topic, particularly in Hungarian research. One of the goals of this section was to contribute and offer a fresh start to the dialogue on the responses to the nationality question during the Second International by peeling off the Stalinist-Leninist husk from the topic. Through such a dialogue, we can deepen our understanding of the Austro-Marxist model of autonomy and its place in the history of socialist movements.

Ways to Project a Multinational State

The second part of this dissertation explored the reception and dissemination of the idea of non-territorial autonomy in Habsburg Hungary's political climate. It focused on moments when the territorial integrity of the state was threatened and minority nationalities sought independence, often leading to the consideration of accommodating various ethnic and confessional groups with elements of non-territorial autonomy. My analysis zoomed in on moments between 1848 and 1918 that favored thinking about the future of Hungary starting from the principles outlined in the Renner-Bauer model. The first chapter ("Jászi Reads Kossuth") traced the evolution of non-territorial autonomy in Hungarian political thinking and historiography from Kossuth to Jászi. The second chapter ("Naïve Wilson") examined the intersection of non-territorial autonomy with international law and minority protection during the 1918-1919 period. The third chapter ("What Is Jewishness, Actually?") focused on non-territorial autonomy demands from some Hungarian Jewish communities at the end of 1918. The second part of the dissertation assumed that the period between 1918-1919 was a pivotal moment in the evolution of the nationality issue, as it marked the confluence of long-standing ideas with new advancements in international law and minority rights.

Kossuth Revisited: Jászi's Historical Expedition

In Chapter II/1, entitled "Jászi Reads Kossuth—an Intellectual Journey," I delved into how Oszkár Jászi became familiar with the non-territorial autonomy models proposed by Lajos Kossuth and the Austromarxists and how he blended the two, despite their divergent objectives, to develop his own solution to the nationality question. To achieve this, the chapter explored nineteenth-century Hungarian intellectual history and the historiography of the idea of non-territorial autonomy. The chapter examined the emergence of a non-territorial form of autonomy as a potential solution to the nationality question in the aftermath of the traumatic events of the surrender of the Hungarian Army at Világos in 1849 and the end of WWI. It drew on a common thread in Hungarian historiography that links these two "fratricidal wars." The chapter mainly focused on two key figures: Lajos Kossuth, the revolutionary leader of 1848-49, and Oszkár Jászi, a radical political thinker and Minister without a portfolio tasked with preparing for the implementation of the right of self-determination. Both Kossuth and Jászi proposed models of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence that included non-territorial elements, such as Kossuth's Danube confederation proposal and Jászi's "Eastern Switzerland" plan, both centered around a form of non-territorial autonomy.

The chapter provided a brief historical background on how Austro-Hungarian thinkers came to embrace non-territorial solutions to the nationality question and also gave an overview of their specific plans, with a particular emphasis on their non-territorial elements. Kossuth and József Eötvös, like Renner himself, arrived at the conclusion that the nationality question could not be solved based on the territorial principle but only if the inhabitants of each territorial unit exercised their rights in community with the members of their nationality (*Stammesgenossen*). Jászi argued that Renner was neither familiar with Kossuth's 1851 Danube Confederation plan, nor with its various translations and versions when he elaborated his ideas of national-cultural autonomy. It is uncertain if Renner would consider Hungary's prominent advocate of independence as a source of inspiration. However, Renner was well acquainted with Eötvös' writings on statehood and nationality, as evidenced by the inclusion of three of his books in the bibliography of his 1899 essay, *Staat und* Nation (State and Nation).

As for Jászi, in his writing, an interest in the nationality question and appreciation for cultural autonomy based on the personality principle came gradually. Furthermore,

my inquiry showed how Jászi's interpretation of Kossuth, Eötvös, Renner, and Bauer shifted over time and how he gradually constructed their ideas into his own. This process started in 1905, when Jászi became active in the struggle for universal and equal suffrage. The chapter traced Jászi's view of the non-territorial model from 1905 to the Interwar period. What seemed illusory in 1905 became the only fair solution after the dissolution of the Monarchy and Hungary's independence. Jászi did not adopt the ideas of Renner and Bauer right away but systematically and critically integrated the non-territorial element into his thinking. Thus, my analysis gave special attention to the interplay between text and the political context, tracking small but significant changes in the protagonists' narratives.

The chapter argued that Jászi gradually started dubbing himself the heir of Kossuth in developing the project of a Danube Confederation. From a footnote, Kossuth journeyed to the core of Jászi's intellectual endeavor. Jászi's project, much like Kossuth's, was based on two pillars. The first pillar was the alliance of independent nation-states to safeguard peace and enable the exchange of goods outside national borders. The second pillar was cultural autonomy inside national borders as the most appropriate means of minority protection. A system of international minority protection would have completed these two pillars. In the German and English editions of his 1921 book on the 1918-1919 revolution and counterrevolution in Hungary, Jászi dedicated the book to Kossuth, "the most far-seeing of Hungarians, who predicted his country's disaster and clearly discerned the path to her recovery."[945] Jászi created a contextual framework to integrate the Austromarxist tradition of non-territorial autonomy into Hungarian historiography organically while not identifying with its original objectives. Consequently, the chapter presented the historiography of non-territorial autonomy in Hungary from 1848 to 1918, offering new insights and analysis that add to the existing literature in the field.

While other scholars have analyzed these plans in detail, my contribution is in recognizing and exploring Jászi's "domestication" of the Rennerian idea, which allowed it to become part of the Hungarian intellectual tradition. According to Jászi's interpretation, Renner was the one who recognized, fifty years later, what Kossuth and Eötvös had realized in the early 1850s: the non-territorial solution to the nationality

[945] See: Jászi, *Magyariens Schuld, Ungarns Sühne: Revolution und Gegenrevolution in Ungarn*. Fort he English version see: Jászi, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary*.

question. It was Kossuth who innovatively proposed accommodating the nationalities in a way similar to the autonomy granted to religious confessions. He took inspiration from the non-territorial autonomy of the Lutheran Church in Hungary, to which Kossuth belonged. In Kossuth's view, the Lutheran Church was an "essentially democratic" institution that worked on a "non-territorial principle." Jászi thus managed to integrate the Renner-Bauer model of autonomy into the Hungarian intellectual tradition by aligning it with Kossuth and Eötvös's views and presenting a chronological and developmental account of their intellectual legacy. At the same time, Jászi established Kossuth, Eötvös, and himself as integral components of the international literature on the nationality question.

Finally, in my analysis of the texts of Kossuth, Renner, and Jászi, as well as of what Jászi appreciated in Kossuth's and Renner's ideas, I identified six main similarities between Kossuth's Danube Confederation plan, Renner's non-territorial autonomy model, and Jászi's Eastern Switzerland project. First, while accommodating cohabiting nationalities, all three thinkers aimed to maintain the dominant nation's primacy and existing state borders. Second, they were united in their belief that to preserve the balance of power, maintaining a solid economic (con)federation in East-Central Europe was necessary. Third, all three statesmen differentiated between political and cultural nations, that is, the totality of citizens and the totality of members of a cultural-linguistic group. Fourth, all three took the legacy of the Enlightenment seriously and struggled to reconcile the principles of individual liberty and individual equality with the equality of national communities. Fifth, they all believed that the only peaceful solution to the nationality question in a region where nationalities live intermingled is the mutual protection of local minorities. Sixth, while building on existing constitutional traditions, they wanted to reform, decentralize, and democratize the state.

Multiscalar Interpretations of Non-Territorial Autonomy

The aftermath of WWI brought about a vision of a new world characterized by justice, equality, peace, and humanitarianism. This vision was implicit in the promise of a "Wilson peace." The President's name became a metaphor representing the hopes and expectations for a fair and long-lasting peace. Additionally, the concept of national self-determination, associated with Wilson's name, created a complex situation in the former

Habsburg Monarchy. This situation was akin to opening Pandora's box, leading to numerous unforeseen and challenging consequences. The first part of the chapter traveled to all corners of the former Kingdom of Hungary, but primarily to the multi-ethnic regions, to trace how the loyalties of different national-linguistic groups evolved with the break-up of the Monarchy. The subchapter 2.1 "Re-Imagined Communities—Hungary 1918-1919" examined the emotions, ideologies, and political aspirations unleashed by the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination. The subchapter "Everyday Wilson" focused on various interpretations of the Wilsonian idea of self-determination on three levels: the democratic intelligentsia (2.2.2 "How to Save the Territorial Integrity of Hungary"), the local and regional state representatives (2.2.3. "'This is how we understand Wilson'"), and ordinary citizens (2.2.4 "Gods and lay patriots").

This chapter is based on a source corpus consisting of documents received by the Ministry of Nationalities from November 1918 to March 1919, which are stored in the Hungarian National Archives. On November 1, 1918, the Károlyi government appointed Jászi as a minister without portfolio and entrusted him with preparing to implement the right of self-determination for the various nations living in Hungary. The ministry's mission was to work out means of peaceful coexistence until the peace negotiations with the leaders of the Romanian, Slovak, German, Ruthenian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, and Jewish national movements in the territories which the neighboring states had already claimed as their own and had begun to occupy militarily. With these attempts at compromise, Jászi sought to counterbalance the Entente's hostile policy towards Hungary and to draw up a blueprint for the coexistence of nationalities that could be presented at the Peace Conference. The Magyar elites commonly believed that the fate of the disputed territories within the former Monarchy would be decided through democratic referendums or popular assemblies. The Wilsonian concept of self-determination was generally seen as the assurance of an upcoming referendum, wherein people could determine which successor state they wished to be a part of. As the sources analyzed in this chapter were specifically directed to the Ministry of Nationalities of Hungary, they pertained to a subject that was deemed to be within the jurisdiction of the Ministry: the registration and affirmation of the will of each "nation" or community, as well as their representation at the peace negotiations.

The chapter argued that the aftermath of WWI created an environment that amplified the fascination with new models of minority protection. Hungary, in particular,

became a laboratory of autonomy plans due to a combination of factors that included changing legal standards, the ignorance of the Hungarian government, and the chaotic conditions in Central and Eastern Europe after the war. These factors resulted in various realistic and utopian plans for autonomy being proposed and discussed in the hope of shaping the future of Hungary and other regions according to the new principles and ideologies that were expected to emerge after the war. While the success or failure of these nation-building ventures is more complex than can be discussed here, the role of intellectuals' ambitions and the scale of national self-determination were two significant aspects that emerged from the abundance of nation-building projects. Furthermore, in the majority of the cases, fear for the existence and integrity of their own nation was an important motivation for the authors of the plans to speak up for the protection of "small nations" and minorities.

The "Naïve Wilson" chapter examined how the idea of non-territorial autonomy took on the guise of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination at the end of 1918, alongside other theories from the late Habsburg period that aimed to solve the nationality question. The chapter sought to answer five interrelated questions. First, why did Hungary become a laboratory of autonomy plans at the end of WWI? The leaders of the Hungarian government were unaware of the undisclosed treaties made by the Entente powers with the nationalities, which created an illusory climate favoring the development of utopian plans for the future. Furthermore, the emerging international legal system after WWI enabled national minorities to participate as legal subjects, with the future League of Nations intended to fill the legal vacuum. This allowed Hungarians and other nationalities to make claims to become subjects of international law. Also, the continuation of the war in Central and Eastern Europe created a chaotic situation where armed conflicts often decided the fate of citizens awaiting self-determination. This led to various state-building attempts and revolutions, reflecting the tensions accumulated during the long nineteenth century and the years of the Great War. These factors created an environment in which various utopian plans for autonomy were proposed and discussed in the hope of shaping the future of Hungary and other regions in accordance with the new principles and ideologies that emerged after the war.

Second, what was the scale of national self-determination, and who was entitled to speak in the name of the nation? The case studies examined in this chapter revealed conflicting opinions on the appropriate scale at which self-determination should be

applied and the size of a group that can legitimately declare itself a nation. Some argued for a local approach, enabling decisions to be made at a town, county, or regional level. Meanwhile, the examples of short-lived states and local declarations of nationality demonstrated that such proclamations were often fueled by personal ambition rather than a genuine desire for national self-determination. Ultimately, these complexities contribute to the ongoing discourse regarding self-determination and underscore the difficulties of applying and defining this principle in practice.

Third, among these autonomy plans, how prominent was the Renner-Bauer model, and how did its interpretation change at the end of WWI? Those tasked with implementing the Wilsonian principles in Hungary were well-versed in the Renner-Bauer model of addressing the needs of national minorities. They themselves were esteemed authorities on the issue of nationality. Robert Braun was familiar with Renner's works and even wrote reviews of them. Oszkár Jászi, for his part, had reviewed Otto Bauer's book and authored two volumes of his own on the topic of nationality. Even Prime Minister Mihály Károlyi was familiar with Jászi's perspective on the nationality question. He was also aware of Vasile Goldiș's booklet, which circulated the Bauerian definition of a nation. Based on the archival and press materials reviewed, it can be said that by the end of 1918, the Renner-Bauer model had become so well-known that even those who had not read the original works or did not know that the idea of non-territorial autonomy had originated with the Austromarxists referred to it. Since our protagonists, members of the government of the First Hungarian Republic, were unaware of the Entente's commitments and undisclosed treaties with the nationalities, they believed their room for maneuver was wider than it actually was. As the threat of Greater Austria disappeared behind plans for cultural autonomy, the perception and reception of Austromarxist ideas changed in Hungary.

Fourth, which groups, institutions, and individuals proposed the implementation of the Renner-Bauer model and with what intentions? The chapter explored different perspectives and uses of the principle of self-determination during the First Hungarian Republic, including official interpretations and the aspirations of ordinary citizens. It aimed to shed light on how this concept was understood and employed by various stakeholders. At the same time, the progressive élite saw the dissolution of the Monarchy as an opportunity for democratic and federal reorganization. The ideological basis of the constitutional drafts submitted to the Ministry of Nationalities aligned closely with the

government and international minority protection organizations. However, the interpretations of local communities and their leaders were more diverse and less idealistic. These local perspectives highlight the challenges in dealing with the nationality question on the basis of the principle of self-determination. The examples presented shed light on the difficulties of understanding self-determination from unconventional perspectives.

Finally, which groups, institutions, and individuals did not formulate non-territorial solutions? Despite the lessons to be learned from the fall of multinational empires, many of the architects of short-lived states, autonomies, and constitution plans that emerged after WWI neglected to prioritize the accommodation of national minorities within their sovereign territories. Examples of such plans include the proposals for Slovak autonomy within Czechoslovakia, the Eastern Slovak or "Slovjak Republic," Transylvanian Saxon autonomy, Szekler autonomy, German autonomy, the "Heinzenland Republic," the autonomy movement in Vojvodina, national councils in Transcarpathia, and the "Hutsul Republic." These plans failed to adequately address the issue of accommodating cohabiting nationals on their sovereign territories.

The diverse interpretations of Wilsonian thought provided insight into the experiences and expectations of local communities in Hungary during the end of WWI. As the transition from empire to nation-states took place, different communities expressed their aspirations using the language of national self-determination. This chapter assumed that the Wilsonian principles legitimized political ideas that were already present in Hungary. By providing an internationally accepted idiom, the principle of national self-determination enabled long-held local and individual interests to gain legitimacy. While numerous researchers have examined the material of the National Councils and the Ministry of Nationalities, their analyses have tended to focus on a territorial, national, or other thematic perspective. However, despite the abundance of literature on this topic, and perhaps due to my own limitations, I have not come across any studies that delve into the naïve and utopian plans of ordinary citizens that espoused a non-territorial principle. My chapter therefore filled a gap in the existing scholarship by shedding light on these overlooked aspects of the historical record.

The chapter's extensive scope made it challenging to explore fully the intricacies of individual cases and nation-building endeavors. Despite this limitation, the broad territorial, linguistic, and societal foundations of the various interpretations of the

principle of national self-determination, as well as the intersection between possible and utopian plans, may have served as ample compensation for the reader. The chapter's broad horizontal and vertical spectrum delineated a distinct type of intricacy: The pervasive use of Wilsonian language; the never-ending supply of its (mis)interpretations according to specific local interests; the conflicting arguments of competing nation-building; and the contradictions of minority rights that would come to the fore in the Interwar period are all vividly demonstrated by the plans reviewed in this chapter.

Demands for Non-Territorial Autonomy from Within

Chapter II/3 explored how Jewish activists in present-day Hungary, Slovakia, and Transylvania responded to the change of sovereignty after WWI. The majority of Hungarian Jews had not previously had national aspirations and were loyal to the Magyar nation, but the emergence of nation-states created a unique and challenging situation for Jewish communities. As modern nation-states defined themselves as nationally homogenous, the question of how to belong as an outsider became a pressing concern, and Jewish communities needed to re-examine their loyalties. The chapter showed how these communities, which previously identified primarily as a religious group, navigated an emerging world of nation-states and national minorities. It explored how some Jewish activists translated the principle of national self-determination and minority protection as non-territorial autonomy for their own community.

The argument presented in this chapter was that the new language of international law allowed Jews to enter the system as legal subjects, but only if they framed their demands in the new idiom of a national minority. Parallel to this, international law became an "extension of Jewish politics." Some Hungarian Jewish activists sought to present their community as a nation to claim minority protection within the successor states or the international community. My analysis shed light on how Hungarian Jews, like other emerging "small nations," invoked the arguments previously used by Jewish national activists in the Russian and some Austrian provinces to argue for minority rights. The chapter traced the journey of the Jewish national idea to Jewish activists in Hungary from various directions: diaspora nationalism, different versions of Zionism, and Bundism.

Chapter II/3.2. delved into the "Jewish question," a term used by contemporaries in the late Habsburg Monarchy to describe the challenges posed by Jewish emancipation in modern societies. Debates over whether Jews belonged to the Magyar or Austro-German cultural nation or had a distinct character were prevalent. Even within Jewish communities, there were different ideas of what Jewishness entailed. The subchapters examining the loyalty patterns of Jews from Budapest and Vienna then presented arguments against Jewish national aspirations at the turn of the century. Like many of his contemporaries, Otto Bauer rejected the notion of Jews as a national group, claiming that they did not qualify for nationality rights, including national cultural autonomy. He maintained that because of their cultural integration, Jews could no longer be seen as a separate nation. Progressive thinkers thus denied that Jews were a nationality. While this study views the concept of assimilation as problematic given its static view of culture, it was a key interpretive framework for contemporaries in understanding the Jewish question. Sociologist Viktor Karády termed this the "assimilation social contract," which stipulated that Jews in Hungary were expected to "assimilate" to enjoy equal opportunities.

Meanwhile, a distinct self-perception was emerging, challenging the notion that Jewish communities were exclusively religious communities. Viennese Jews rejected the notion of a separate Jewish nationality, arguing that it would undermine individual equality and fuel anti-Semitism. In contrast, the Bukovina Compromise of 1909/1910 aimed to recognize Jews as one of the five national electoral curiae and to allow them to be represented in proportion to their numbers in the provincial parliament and administration. Similarly, Max Diamant requested equal rights for the Yiddish language and acceptance of the Jewish *Volksstamm in Bukovina*—a request that Viennese Jews did not embrace. The Marxist journal *Világ* also noted that the Jewish question differed for the bourgeoisie and the working class, with proletarian Jews lacking a place to assimilate in Hungarian society. Their prognosis was that proletarian Jews would translate their cultural needs as a political struggle for national existence, such as non-territorial autonomy, as Renner and Bauer imagined. Before 1918, the Hungarian Jewish press did not refer to ideas from Russia, Galicia, and Bukovina as models or practices that their communities should adopt.

The Russian Empire had a strong tradition of a separate Jewish nationality. Simon Dubnow believed in a spiritual community that could coexist with responsible citizenship.

The Jewish Bund argued for national cultural autonomy for Jewish communities. Meanwhile, Zionism was gaining prominence, but the first Zionist institutions in Hungary focused mainly on local Jewish and Hebrew culture and education, referred to as *Gegenwartsarbeit* or *golus*-politics. Political Zionism did not find fertile ground in the Hungarian capital due to difficulties in combining it with the Neologue assimilationist logic and Orthodox religious belief. Despite this, Hungarian Jews sympathized with the search for a home for Jews who lacked individual civic rights and were persecuted in their countries, supporting the activity of the Jewish Colonization Association, which relocated Jews from Eastern Europe to Ottoman Palestine, North America, and Argentina.

In the second part of the chapter, I argued that despite the unpopularity of the idea of a separate Jewish national existence until 1918, in the aftermath of the War, arguments inspired by cultural and political Zionism, Dubnowism, and Bundism started appearing in Hungarian Jewish élites' discourse. This was particularly true for Hungarian Jewish activists from the territories occupied by the successor states. The fact that, for example, some Transylvanian Hungarian Jews asked for non-territorial autonomy in early December 1918 indicated that the concept was more popular than the written sources would suggest. Non-territorial autonomy, therefore, must have been already considered before WWI by those who sought to identify Jews as a nation.

The chapter presented three main arguments to explain this paradigm shift. First, the perception of the Hungarian government underwent a significant change, exemplified by Minister Barna Buza's speech at the general Jewish assembly. The government saw the international ties of Hungarian Jews as instrumental in protecting the territorial integrity of Hungary and presenting the country as a democratic state to the Entente powers. Second, Slovakia and Romania were unwilling to safeguard the rights of Jews who showed loyalty to the Magyar minority. This pushed Hungarian Jews to explore other loyalty options. Third, international Jewish organizations, such as the Committee of Jewish Delegations to the Paris Peace Conference, helped introduce the idea of Jewish nationality into the language of international law. This new legal language aligned with the late Habsburg discursive sphere and enabled some Hungarian Jewish communities to demand national cultural autonomy.

In Chapter II/3.2.2 "Minorities in 'Small Nations,'" I compared the decisions made by Hungarian Jewish activists and communities in Romania and Slovakia. The objective was to analyze why some of these activists favored the policy of non-territorial autonomy

while others did not. This policy combined the Wilsonian principle of self-determination with the idea of international minority protection. In Transylvania, Hungarian Jewish activists adopted a national policy that demanded non-territorial autonomy. In contrast, Jewish communities in Slovakia could not create a unified organization and synchronize their policies. The diversity of the Jewish communities in Slovakia and the divergent interests of various Jewish groups explain why the Hungarian Jewish communities in the two new nation-states reached different decisions at the end of 1918. Interestingly, German Jews from Prague shared similar views to those of the Transylvanian Jewish National Alliance in Romania. A comparative analysis of the manifestos of the two organizations showed how the synthesis of minority protection, non-territorial autonomy, and political and cultural Zionism emerged at the end of World War I. This chapter's main achievement is examining this paradigm shift from multiple perspectives and identifying the domestic and foreign constituents that collectively shaped the new loyalties of Hungarian Jews at this complex historical moment.

The second part of my dissertation explored the path of the concept of non-territorial autonomy in late Habsburg Hungary's political thinking through three case studies. The thesis traced elements of non-territorial autonomy through various parts of Hungary, guiding the reader from the minister's desk to that of a nut merchant. The mosaic character of the cases under study was due the fact that the reception of the theory of non-territorial autonomy in Hungary during the period under study was not exclusively linked to one intellectual circle or a law. While working on the dissertation project, however, I gradually began to see the advantages of this mosaic-like nature and to consciously make this feature the method and mission of my thesis. By analyzing both top-down and bottom-up interpretations, I implicitly addressed the issue of *cui bono*, that is, who benefits from non-territorial solutions. By adopting multiple perspectives and scales, my dissertation transcended the limitations of national historiographies and disciplinary boundaries.

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation project, "Interpreting Non-Territorial Autonomy in Late Habsburg Hungary (1848–1918)," focuses on multilayered interpretations of the idea of non-territorial autonomy in the ethnically diverse and socially stratified Kingdom of Hungary during the late Habsburg period, from 1848 to 1918. In the nineteenth century, as multinational empires faced the complexities of national diversity, political thinkers and legal scholars employed the concept of religious tolerance as a framework to address the needs of national groups residing across a common territory. This approach aimed to provide political representation and self-governance in cultural affairs to these dispersed communities. This theory, referred to as non-territorial autonomy, is the focus of my research. The dissertation project identifies the mediators of the idea of non-territorial autonomy and analyzes the social, political, and ideological constellations that favored the idea's appropriation in the Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy.

The thesis traces elements of non-territorial autonomy in two spheres of intellectual exchange. First, I analyze the labor movement, specifically the multiethnic Social Democratic Party of Hungary, with a focus on its ideology and internal organization. Second, I follow how the idea of non-territorial autonomy traveled in the context of the wider context of the Hungarian state. With a particular focus on the paradigmatic change that WWI brought about, this part of the thesis examines non-territorial autonomy as one of the possible answers to what contemporaries referred to as the nationality question. While scholars have thoroughly analyzed the emergence and appropriation of the idea of non-territorial autonomy in the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy, the Hungarian context has not received consistent attention up to now. My dissertation fills this gap in historiography. Based on English, French, German, Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovak sources, my study transcends the limits of national historiographies. In doing so, I combine the fields of *Begriffsgeschichte*, intellectual, legal, and social history, as well as cultural and translation studies methods, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the complex historical forces that shaped the interpretations of non-territorial autonomy in late Habsburg Hungary.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Mein Dissertationsprojekt „Die Interpretation nicht-territorialer Autonomie im Ungarn der späten Habsburger Monarchie (1848–1918)“ untersucht die facettenreichen Interpretationen der Idee der nicht-territorialen Autonomie in einem ethnisch vielfältigen und sozial gegliederten Königreich Ungarn von 1848 bis 1918. Als sich multinationale Reiche im 19. Jahrhundert, als mit den Herausforderungen nationaler Vielfalt konfrontiert sahen, nutzten politische Denker und Juristen das Konzept der religiösen Toleranz als Bezugsrahmen, um den Bedürfnissen nationaler Gruppen gerecht zu werden, die gemeinsam auf einem Gebiet lebten. Das Ziel bestand darin, diesen verstreuten Gemeinschaften politische Vertretung und Selbstverwaltung in kulturellen Angelegenheiten zu ermöglichen. Diese Theorie, bekannt als nicht-territoriale Autonomie, bildet den Schwerpunkt meiner Forschung. Die Arbeit folgt den Vermittlern der Idee der nicht-territorialen Autonomie und analysiert die sozialen, politischen und ideologischen Konstellationen, die zur Aneignung dieser Idee im ungarischen Teil der Doppelmonarchie führten.

Die Dissertation untersucht Elemente der nicht-territorialen Autonomie in zwei Dimensionen des intellektuellen Austauschs. Zunächst analysiere ich die Arbeiterbewegung, insbesondere die multiethnische Sozialdemokratische Partei Ungarns, mit Fokus auf ihre Ideologie und innere Organisation. Zweitens verfolge ich, wie sich die Idee im weiteren Kontext des ungarischen Staates verbreitete. Mit besonderem Fokus auf den Paradigmenwechsel, den der Erste Weltkrieg mit sich brachte, untersucht dieser Teil der Dissertation nicht-territoriale Autonomie als eine der möglichen Antworten auf das, was Zeitgenossen als die Nationalitätenfrage bezeichneten. Während die Entstehung und Aneignung der Idee der nicht-territorialen Autonomie im österreichischen Teil der Doppelmonarchie gründlich erforscht ist, hat der ungarische Kontext bisher nicht die gebührende Aufmerksamkeit erhalten. Meine Arbeit schließt diese Lücke in der Geschichtsschreibung. Basierend auf englischen, französischen, deutschen, ungarischen, rumänischen und slowakischen Quellen geht meine Studie über die Grenzen nationaler Geschichtsschreibungen hinaus. Meine Forschung verknüpft die Bereiche der Begriffs- und Ideengeschichte, genauso wie der Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte, sowie kultur- und translationswissenschaftliche Methoden.