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**THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY:**  
**HUNGARY IN AMERICAN DIPLOMACY AND PUBLIC OPINION**  
**DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR**

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ing wartime American policies in East-Central Europe and gave me several useful hints about the peace conference as well. I met George H. Nash, the prominent biographer of Hoover, on a couple of occasions and those discussions helped clarify my views on the role of the American Relief Administration in 1919. I have spent a perfectly enjoyable time researching for this dissertation and have 'tortured' many librarians with weird requests and questions about Hungarian-American relations all around the world. It would be impossible to list all the libraries and archives I have worked with, but I would like to thank them all. Special mention must be made of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America who own the Kende collection in Ligonier, PA. During my summer 1993 research trip to the States they provided me with all possible help and made me feel perfectly at home - several thousand miles from Debrecen. The names of President György Dózsa and Secretary Endre Csomán come to mind, as well as those of the Reverends László Posta and Aladár Komjáthy.

Last but not least I would like to thank my father for his enthusiastic support especially during the past two years. I have been freely using his time, computer and money (strictly for research, though), and he is yet to complain. Without his support this work would be much less convincing.

By way of anti-acknowledgement, I would like to point to the Library of Congress. They have proved to be most unhelpful on two separate occasions (1990 and 1993) and their mail order service is absolutely dismal - I really do not think that the preparation of a single reel of microfilm should take more than six months.

## **ABSTRACT:**

This is a study of American attitudes towards Hungary during the First World War. The focus is on the American images of Hungary and of key Hungarian politicians, such as Tisza, Apponyi, Andrásy and Károlyi. The opinions of President Wilson are given special attention both before and during the war. Other prominent Americans discussed include Theodore Roosevelt, various members of Wilson's cabinet (Lansing, Baker, Daniels) as well as his private advisors (Colonel House, Creel, the Inquiry), his Ambassadors (Penfield, Gerard, Stovall) and American intelligence agents. A second set of opinions has been obtained from dismemberment propaganda in America and from the survey of various American daily and weekly newspapers and the Hungarian-American press.

Another major theme is the re-evaluation of Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy, which was prompted by new developments in Wilson research on the one hand and by many observations during my studies on the other. It is argued that claims that Lansing, dismemberment propaganda and separatist politicians from the Habsburg Monarchy decided Wilson's actions do not hold water: the President made his decisions alone in the Habsburg case in response to a series of events between April and June 1918. It is also pointed out that despite the growing American involvement in the war the prewar lack of interest in Hungary was maintained, although the romanticized concept based upon the Kossuth myth was replaced by another extreme interpretation based upon dismemberment propaganda. The fact that no American authority decided to obtain a genuine picture of early twentieth century Hungary meant that American policies were based upon cliches and misconceptions, which were also carried into the Peace Conference period. Another thing to remember is the fact that Hungary was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the First World War, which ruled out a separate Hungarian policy on the part of the Wilson administration. To get around this awkward situation the focus of the thesis is constantly shifted between Hungary and the Monarchy, with concentrating on Hungary when and where possible.

## **A GUIDE TO ABBREVIATIONS:**

1. Note: these are either organizations or published sources and newspapers; the former are explained in the text, the latter are incorporated in the bibliography.

ACNP: American Commission to Negotiate Peace;

AEF: American Expeditionary Forces;

AHHL: American-Hungarian Loyalty League;

AMNSZ: Amerikai Magyar Népszava;

ARA: American Relief Administration;

BNA: Bohemian National Alliance;

CPI: Committee on Public Information;

DAB: Dictionary of American Biography;

FRUS: Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States;

FRUS LP: Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Lansing Papers;

FRUS PPC: Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Paris Peace Conference;

HEAEG: Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups;

IPCH: Intimate Papers of Colonel House;

MEU: Mid-European Union;

MIB: Military Intelligence Bureau/ Branch;

TR: Theodore Roosevelt;

WWPs: The Papers of Woodrow Wilson.

2. All other abbreviations refer to archival collections: the first group of letters describes the location, the second the particular fund (in case of names it is initials, otherwise the first letters of title of the collection. For full details see the bibliography.)

**BH:** Bethlen Home, Ligonier, PA, USA;

**HPL:** Harvard University, Pusey Library, Cambridge, MA, USA;

**LC:** Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., USA;

**NA:** National Archives, Washington, D.C., USA (RG stands for Record Group);

**OL:** Országos Levéltár (National Archives), Budapest, Hungary (K stands for Külügyminisztérium, i.e. Foreign Ministry);

**SML:** Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT, USA.

3. All works are cited by author and date of publication in the footnotes; for full details see the bibliography.



## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1989, Professor Zsuzsa L. Nagy of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy called my attention to the fact that American policies towards Hungary during the Paris Peace Conference have practically been neglected. On her suggestion, I wrote my first serious piece on the United States and the Treaty of Trianon. While doing so I discovered that nothing has ever been written about wartime American attitudes and policies towards Hungary: I found no assessment of the American press dealing with Hungary, nor a single account of dismemberment propaganda in the New World; there is no evaluation of the work of the American embassy in Vienna and of its reports on Hungary, nor of the attitudes of Wilson and his official and unofficial advisors. Clearly, there is a gap here, and the examination of these issues forms the backbone of my dissertation.

The dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of the Great War has been discussed from a variety of viewpoints. Valiani (1973) has done it with a focus on Italy, Calder (1976) and Goldstein (1991) with concentration on the British Empire. Ferenc Fejtő, in his award winning book (1990), presented the French attitude. Kann (1964) chose the point of view of the nationalities and the inner frailties of the Monarchy as his starting point, while Siklós (1987) is a fairly recent study in Hungarian. A number of other general studies include Zeman (1961) and Crankshaw (1963). May (1966) is the first major general study that devotes considerable attention to the policies of the Wilson administration.

However, these works carry only occasional references to the American contribution to the Allied war effort against Austria-Hungary; discussions of Wilson's East-Central

European policies are few and far between. The classic and still standard study was written back in 1957 by Victor S. Mamatey, son of Albert P. Mamatey, who served as the president of the Slovak League in America during the First World War. A similarly valuable account of Lansing's policies was written by George Barany in 1966. An unpublished dissertation (1958) by Gerald H. Davis is the only comprehensive account of American-Austro-Hungarian relations until the end of 1917, while May (1957) covers the same period, albeit with a much wider focus.

American attitudes and policies towards the various East-Central European nationalities have been discussed in more detail. These writings include Gerson's classic study of the making of an independent Poland (1953), the works of Josef Kalvoda (1986), D. Perman (1962) and Betty M. Unterberger (1989) on the Czechs and Slovaks, Prpić's (1967), Lederer's (1963) and Zivojinović's (1972) writings about the South Slavs, and Devasia's unpublished thesis (1970) on the Rumanians. These accounts carry some superficial references to Hungary, as well as to policies and attitudes towards Hungary, but the definitive study is yet to be written. The aim of the present work is to fill in this intriguing gap both in East-Central European and in American historical writing, as well as to offer a different and updated version of Wilson's policies towards the Danubian basin.

And although further historiographical details and considerations will be offered in each chapter, it is perhaps not entirely inappropriate here to introduce the two main interpretations of how the Allies came to support the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. According to Calder (1976), as the war dragged on, the Allies had to rely more and more heavily upon the military services of the Poles, Czechs, South Slavs, etc. In return, they made seemingly minor concessions which in the end added up to supporting dismemberment - without openly stating it before the spring and summer of 1918. This he calls 'commitment

by implication.' An alternative view is presented by Zeman (1961), who argues that the eventual Allied decision to break up Austria-Hungary was made in response to the ever-changing social, political, military and diplomatic realities of the war. While Calder's doctrine of 'commitment by implication' describes the policies of the Allies most accurately, it does not fit the Americans. As we will see, it is Zeman's interpretation that suits best the policies of Wilson, with the restriction that it does not apply to the Allies. Mamatey (1957) takes a position somewhere in between, while Unterberger (1989) attaches too much significance to the contributions of the Czechs and Slovaks.

\* \* \*

Before presenting my arguments and findings, it is necessary to clarify certain aspects of the problem at hand. This is a study of American attitudes and policies towards Austria-Hungary and Hungary during the First World War. But it is not a dismemberment study, inasmuch as the focus of attention is continuously narrowed to Hungary. Furthermore, issues which are part of the process of the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy but are not directly related to American policies towards Hungary (i.e. the future of Poland and the Italians of Austria-Hungary) receive only limited attention. It is not a study of World War One diplomacy and war aims, either: international relations, (including war aims and secret peace talks) are discussed only within the framework of American policies and attitudes towards Hungary. The above restrictions have been included and emphasized because I do not feel fully qualified to write a complete dismemberment study after only some six years of research.

The problem that is most likely to have kept historians from dealing with US-Hungarian relations is the seemingly difficult task of separating the Austro-Hungarian and Hungarian

aspects of the whole issue. This problem is best summed up as follows: although there was no independent Hungary, there was an American policy towards her during the Great War, albeit only through the prism of the Habsburg Monarchy. Therefore, if one wants to analyze American attitudes and policies towards Hungary, one also has to look at the Monarchy. What makes the case of Hungary still different from those of the Czechs, Slovaks, South Slavs, etc., is Hungary's special position within the Habsburg Monarchy between 1867 and 1918.

The Compromise of 1867 (the *Ausgleich*) between Austria and Hungary created a special constitutional system called 'dualism' and laid out the actual nature and details of the relationship between the two countries. Austria and Hungary became (supposedly) equal partners with a common sovereign (the Emperor Francis Joseph, until his death in 1916) and with common foreign and military affairs. This actually meant that Hungary enjoyed full autonomy within the Habsburg Monarchy but had no right to a national army or to an independent foreign policy. Consequently, Hungarian political life was divided between those who supported the dualist system and those who called for fuller independence by embracing the tradition of 1848. Those who opposed the dualist system (including Count Albert Apponyi) came to power between 1906-09 -- but failed to break away from Vienna. Apparently, by the coming of the World War, 'Kossuth's Hungary' had settled for a most favoured position within the realm of the Habsburgs.

Because of Hungary's special position in the Monarchy, the US had an image of Hungary<sup>ians</sup> in a way she did not have of any other nationality living within Austria-Hungary. However, as we will see later, this image was not based upon current political and international realities; instead, these more often than not were simply overlooked. That notwithstanding, American attitudes and policies towards Austria-Hungary necessarily applied to

Hungary as well, except in cases that involved the Austrian half of the Monarchy exclusively. (The two most obvious such examples were the future of the Poles and Italians of Austria-Hungary.) From a Hungarian point of view, the most important question was whether the US would accept Hungary as an independent player on the international scene, and if so, in appreciation of prewar attempts to achieve that (Apponyi's and Károlyi's visits to the US) or in response to the ever-changing political, diplomatic, and military realities of the World War.

During the Great War, any American decision regarding the integrity of the Habsburg Monarchy was necessarily a decision about the future of Hungary as well. As long as America's policy was to strike a separate peace deal with Austria-Hungary, dismemberment was out of the question. When in April 1918 this American policy ran into a *cul de sac*, the only alternative left was dismemberment. But by then, dismemberment meant the realization of the claims of practically all the nationalities of the Habsburg Monarchy to independence in the hope that common sense would lead these new countries into some sort of regional integration. Fiorello La Guardia's (later Mayor of New York City, where one of the airports is named after him) December 1917 proposal to provide undercover support for Count Michael Károlyi (an 1848-er who was looked upon as pro-Entente both at home and in the Allied countries, and who after the war became Hungarian Premier) was nothing less than a logical alternative to removing the Monarchy from the war through secret peace negotiations. In fact, it was also an alternative dismemberment proposal, insofar as it was meant to bring about a Habsburg - Hungarian break. This plan may have enjoyed some press support in the US, but Wilson rejected it -- and not because he knew that such a move in Hungary was practically out of the question. He did so because it did not fit his policy of secret peace talks and because he considered it immoral to use subversive means to interfere with the domestic affairs of the Monarchy.

The other field where the study of Austria-Hungary and Hungary can best be separated is that of dismemberment propaganda. It will be demonstrated that dismemberment propaganda against the Habsburg Monarchy targeted Hungary primarily. In the various calls for the reorganization of the Danubian basin, many propagandists accused the Hungarians of the worst abuses, of instigating the war, and of serving Germany unconditionally. (Both the La Guardia proposal and dismemberment propaganda are discussed in detail below.)

There is yet another aspect to be considered, and that is the nature of America's domestic and foreign affairs. By the turn of the century, the US was beginning to give up her diplomatic tradition of isolation in favour of economic expansion into Latin America and the Far East. At the same time, Americans distanced themselves from the conflicts of Europe, and it was obvious that they would not intervene in an all-European showdown. Still, the US could not afford to disregard the problems of Europe completely, especially those of the Southern and Eastern parts. This was because around the turn of the century over 20 million immigrants arrived in the US -- and most of them came from those parts of Europe. Immigrants from Austria-Hungary settled down in the same region and carried over old world conflicts to the new one. Initially, the Americans showed no interest in these conflicts; it was up to the representatives of the various nationalities to try to achieve a political status in America that would give them a say in decision making. (Immigration is dealt with in the first chapter below.)

Another distinction that must be made is between attitudes and policy, i.e. between public opinion and decision making. I chose to discuss both American attitudes and policies towards Hungary because I believe that a comprehensive study cannot be written if either of these two aspects is disregarded. The US, with its tradition of freedom of the press and with more than 2,000 dailies and 15,000 weeklies published, was a fertile field not only for

the presentation of conflicting views but also for all-out propaganda. However, the connection between public opinion and diplomatic decision making in the Habsburg case during the Great War was not as one might expect it to be in the US. America's democratic historical tradition might lead the reader to expect that policy decisions were made under pressure from the public and according to its wishes. Wilson's management of American public opinion was actually quite different: although there were dissident voices, in general it may be said that he controlled domestic public opinion and sometimes even spoon-fed it with information he wanted the people to read and believe. Therefore, it must be born in mind that public opinion was not part of policy making; instead, it occasionally promoted alternatives to Wilson's policies, while, more often, it supported the President.

Therefore, all through the present study, the discussion of both neutral and belligerent America begins with a detailed analysis of propaganda and public opinion, continues with (the more important department of) decision making involving official and unofficial advisors, and the whole piece concludes with an exposition on the views and conduct of President Wilson, the sole conductor of US foreign policy during the World War.

After some hesitation I decided to abandon the narrative form in favour of an analytical approach. What this really means is that in some cases (especially chapters 2, 3, 6, and 11) the chronological order is sacrificed for the sake of fully unfolding various arguments. Other than that, the thesis follows a chronological order with American entry into the war being its internal dividing line.

Unlike the Poles, the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Rumanians and the South Slavs, the Austro-Germans and especially the Hungarians have looked upon the First World War and the subsequent peace treaties as a national tragedy. No contrast can be more striking than the image of the Czechs erecting statues of and naming streets after Woodrow Wilson with the Hungarians, barely more than a couple of hundred miles to the south, mourning the loss of two thirds of the territory and of the population of the Kingdom of Hungary -- and with it the aspiration of becoming the leading regional power along the River Danube. The one aspect of the war that historians are quick to point out is the road the US travelled from the position of being an uninterested neutral country through actual participation in the war on the side of the Allies to bargaining for small villages in Europe at the peace conference. This dissertation was written with the aim of shedding some light upon the real nature and dimensions of this dramatic change.



## **CHAPTER ONE: PRELUDE: PREWAR CONTACTS**

An initial look at Hungarian-American contacts before 1914, when serious diplomatic relations were out of the question due to Hungary's position in the Habsburg Monarchy, suggests in general the lack of mutual interests and, consequently, superficial attitudes on both sides. Yet, however irrelevant these connections may seem, especially if compared to America's relations with the major players in world politics of the age, prewar contacts between the two countries provided the basis for the American approach to Hungary during the First World War, which, in turn, influenced heavily American attitudes and policies at the Paris Peace Conference.

American-Hungarian relations before the World War fall into two periods with the American Civil War and the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 providing an ostensible dividing line. The outstanding moments of the pre-Civil War period were the diplomatic interlude in 1848-49 and Kossuth's American visit during 1851-52, while other, mostly personal and cultural, contacts are of limited importance for the purpose of the present study. The five decades between the Civil War and the outbreak of the World War gave new dimensions to Hungarian-American relations. Hungary became a nominally equal partner in the Dual Monarchy, and large-scale migration, the so-called new immigration, provided a new basis for closer contacts. Other main features of the post-Civil War period were the development of several important personal connections and the evolution of a positive, yet superficial, image of freedom loving and democratic Hungary in the United States. This image was maintained despite the fact that it had been challenged seriously in Britain (Robert William

Seton-Watson, Henry Wickham-Steed) and in France (Ernest Denis, André Chéradame) while the Americans themselves confronted a different yet more real Hungary, which hardly lived up to American ideals. The following discussion first introduces American-Hungarian cultural and political connections before the Civil War, then outlines the period of new immigration with a broader view to include the various Habsburg nationalities living in the United States, and concludes with a summation of the images Hungary and the US had developed about each other. Woodrow Wilson's approach to (Austria-) Hungary, which has its roots in prewar times, together with the overlapping period between his inauguration as President of the United States (March 1913) and the outbreak of the World War, are discussed in subsequent chapters.

Together with the Irish, the Germans and the Poles, the Hungarians have always been among the better known immigrants in America and, like every immigrant group, they too tried to present an early 'colonizer' of their own. This task was performed by Eugene Pivány, a prominent banker and historian, who later turned to politics and propaganda in support of his native country. Basing his argument on a medieval Norwegian chronicle, Pivány claimed that the first Hungarian ever to set foot on American soil was called Tyrker, who sailed across the Atlantic from Iceland with Leif, son of Eric the Red, around A.D. 1000.<sup>1</sup> While this story was based upon one single source and extensive speculation, which Pivány himself freely admitted, the journey of Stephanus Parmenius Budaeus was better authenticated. Parmenius sailed from Newfoundland on a British ship and died on the way back in a storm in 1583. Captain John Smith, a famous early 'American', travelled extensively in Hungary (1600-02) and even fought the Turks there. By the coming of the American

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<sup>1</sup>. Pivány (1926) pp. 5-6. Note that this essay is the summation of Pivány's writings from the two decades before the World War. Pivány's Tyrker theory was published by Századok, the leading historical journal in Hungary, as early as 1909.

Revolution there were, at best, a few hundred Hungarians living in America, yet a handful of Hungarian officers, the most famous of whom was Colonel Commandant Kowatch of the Pulaski Legion, fought successfully for American independence, and received due appreciation.<sup>2</sup>

Although diplomatic relations between Washington and Vienna were established during the early 1800s,<sup>3</sup> Hungarian-American relations remained limited almost exclusively to cultural and personal encounters as Hungary was only a province of Austria. Nevertheless, many prominent Hungarians were influenced and impressed by developments in the New World. Sándor Bölöni Farkas travelled in the United States in 1831 and his travelogue, with an entire chapter on American democracy (which, in a sense, makes him the Hungarian Tocqueville), captured the imagination of Count István Széchenyi, the leading figure of the Hungarian Reform Movement in the 1820s and '30s. A year later, the mathematician and astronomer Károly Nagy also paid a visit to the New World where he made friends with President Andrew Jackson and established official connections between the Hungarian Academy (founded on Széchenyi's initiative in 1825) and Benjamin Franklin's American Philosophical Society. Another famous Hungarian scholar, János Xántus, spent more than a decade in America (1851-64) and, besides extensive scientific research, he entered government service and met President Fillmore. Xántus left a large collection of rare animals and plants for the Smithsonian Institute and became a member of the American Philosophical Society. After returning to his native Hungary he was appointed Director of the Ethnographical Division of the Hungarian National Museum and was also among the founders of the Budapest Zoo.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>. Pivány (1926) pp. 6-14; 18-20.

<sup>3</sup>. Barany (1967) p. 140.

<sup>4</sup>. Pivány (1926) pp. 27-28; 43-44; Kende (1927) 1: 207-26.

The 1848 revolutions in Europe brought about the only direct Hungarian-American diplomatic interlude before the World War. In December 1848, during the Hungarian War of Independence, Louis Kossuth asked William H. Stiles, the American Minister in Vienna, to mediate between him and the new Emperor Francis Joseph. Stiles' appeal to the Ballhausplatz was turned down and in June 1849 Kossuth sent an official delegation to Washington. At exactly the same time Secretary of State Clayton instructed Dudley A. Mann, an American secret agent in Europe, to go to Hungary and recognize her independence if possible. In his instructions to Mann (18 June 1849) Clayton condemned the Russian intervention which eventually forced the Hungarian surrender. When Mann's reports were published in 1850 Hülsemann, the Austrian Minister in Washington, sent a fiery note to the State Department claiming that had Mann been discovered he would have been treated as a spy. In his reply, the so-called 'Hülsemann Letter', Secretary of State Webster stated that any such move would have led to war.<sup>5</sup> Webster's action was clearly theatrical given America's rather limited role in world politics at the time. Another forgotten by-product of the Hungarian interlude was a minor diplomatic crisis between the United States and Austria in 1853 when Márton Koszta, one of the high ranking officers of the former independent Hungarian army, was captured by the crew of an Austrian warship in Smyrna, Turkey. Captain Ingram of the American warship U.S.S. St. Louis, moored in the same harbour, was informed and, as Koszta's naturalization as an American citizen was in progress, he felt it to be his duty to intervene. By threatening to open fire, he forced the Austrian warship to release the kidnapped Hungarian.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>. Pivány (1926) pp. 34-35; Kende (1927) 1: 56-64; Wriston (1967) 460; 462-64. Note that in 1910 Pivány published all the relevant documents and an analysis in Századok.

<sup>6</sup>. Pivány (1926) pp. 46-47; Kende (1927) 1: 252-56.

Kossuth's eight-month visit in America, which began in December 1851, led to a 'Kossuth craze'. Several contemporary accounts maintained that he was given a reception second only to that of Lafayette. Kossuth toured the United States, was invited to deliver a speech in Congress and met President Fillmore as well as Secretary of State Webster. He tried to secure American diplomatic support for Hungarian independence and his principle of 'intervention for non-intervention,'<sup>7</sup> but he was rejected on both accounts. Nevertheless, during his stay in America Kossuth stressed his republicanism and protestantism, knowing that those were key American ideals.<sup>8</sup> Hence, the real importance of Kossuth's American visit was that he helped create an image of a democratic Hungary, which continued to be identified with Hungary and Kossuth until well into the First World War by which time it had become largely false. Meanwhile, László Újházy, of Kossuth's entourage, stayed in America and founded a Hungarian settlement, New Buda, in Iowa. Later he became American Consul to Ancona, Italy and died in America after his retirement from active diplomatic service.<sup>9</sup>

At the beginning of the 1860s Hungarians in America numbered around 4,000. Some 800 of them fought for the Union with 53 ranking as captain or higher. Their contribution - often heroic, like Colonel Zágonyi's death ride at Springfield, Missouri, on 25 October 1861 - helped maintain the positive image of Hungary and the Hungarians and came to provide a

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<sup>7</sup>. Prompted by the Russian intervention in the Hungarian War of Independence in 1849, this meant that if a third party intervened in a conflict between two countries other powers should force her to withdraw. See: Headley (1854) 276-84.

<sup>8</sup> Headley (1854) is an enthusiastic contemporary account; the definitive work on Kossuth's visits to England and the States is Jánossy (1940; 1944; 1948), including a volume of narrative and two volumes of related documents. On Kossuth pressing his protestantism and republicanism see Headley (1854) pp. 251 and 254, respectively.

<sup>9</sup>. Pivány (1926) p. 41; Kende (1927) 1: 138-76.

rather spectacular point of reference for the wartime propagandists of the Hungarian case.<sup>10</sup>

\* \* \*

The end of the Civil War in America and the Habsburg-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 marked the beginning of a new era in the history of both countries. The link between the two was provided by large-scale migration from Austria-Hungary to America. In the history of American immigration, the period between the Civil War and the First World War is generally referred to as the 'new immigration,' and it saw an estimated 26 million people going to America. The term was applied to distinguish this period from the earlier ones: between the War of 1812 and the Civil War mostly Western and Northern Europeans, now predominantly Eastern and Central European peoples moved to the New World. Naturally, this transatlantic migration provided new dimensions for Hungarian-American contacts and must be looked at in some detail to introduce the various domestic American players coming from the Habsburg Monarchy and to assess their goals and political weight in American politics.

New immigration<sup>11</sup> provided cheap labour for the rapid development of American industrial capitalism during the 'Gilded Age.' While the overall figure of 26 million immigrants is generally accepted, the actual number of the people of the various nationalities migrating to the New World from the Habsburg Monarchy is still hotly debated. What we certainly

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<sup>10</sup>. Pivány (1926) pp. 48-55; Kende (1927) 1: 328-68.

<sup>11</sup> The following account is based upon the classic studies of new immigration, which include Handlin (1973), Jones (1957), Taylor (1971) and Wilcox (1929-31). Kraut (1982) and Fuchs (1990) were also found useful. Blumenthal (1981) is a unique little volume piecing together the story of new immigrants from quotes.

know is that most new immigrants from East-Central Europe went to America for a relatively short time in order to earn some money and return home.<sup>12</sup> In fact, return migration in most cases was around 30-40%. Economic distress at home and the desire to escape military service, combined with the possibility of easier success in America, served as the main driving forces behind overseas migration. Most of the immigrants were of peasant stock, single males under 30, who found work in the New World as unskilled industrial labourers in mines and factories along the East Coast, in the Mid-Atlantic region and in the cities of the Great Lakes area. Letters and returning migrants served as the main sources of information about life and work in America. Some, like the Slovaks, engaged in chain migration, which means that people from the same village, members of the same family, lived together in the US, too. Others, including the Magyars and the Rumanians, moved two or three times in America before finally settling down. Being used to mixing with other nationalities back home, immigrants in the New World settled down in the same regions, often in the very same neighbourhood in cities like Cleveland, Chicago, Pittsburgh and New York.<sup>13</sup>

Since most immigrants intended to return home after a few years' work in the US, they accepted the meanest and most dangerous jobs, and maintained an extremely low standard of living. This was in part due to the fact that immigrant workers were paid much less than native-born American workers (but still much more than back home), and also because these immigrants wanted to save as much and as quickly as possible. One typical way of saving money was living in a boarding house, which provided both cheap accommodation and

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<sup>12</sup> A typical Rumanian saying went like: 'a thousand dollars and home again'. HEAEG p. 880.

<sup>13</sup> Blumenthal (1981) p. 120 offers an ethnic map of Chicago in the 1910s: 'To the north of the Loop was Germany. To the northwest Poland. To the west were Italy and Israel. To the southwest were Bohemia and Lithuania. And to the south was Ireland.' She, however, forgot to mention the rather large Rumanian colony of the Windy City.

food. At the same time the tavern served as the cultural center of the immigrant community. There people could get together for a chat and a drink, could sing folk songs and recapture the atmosphere of their homeland. The church and the press helped maintain ethnic identity but in some cases religious and political affiliations served as disruptive factors within the community.

Immigrants arrived in the US with \$10-30.00 cash and began to save money as soon as they started working. They spent as little as possible and sent the rest of it home via banks. It was natural that they trusted their own bankers more than native Americans, and a banking elite, concentrated in New York and Chicago, soon emerged. Some of them, for example the Croatian Frank Zotti and the Hungarian Alexander Konta, came to play an all-important part in the life of their communities before and during the war.

Besides religion and the press, ethnic organizations also played an active part in holding the communities together. The vast majority of these organizations were sick benefit societies, providing the necessary insurance for the dangerous work of the immigrants. Those who never started the naturalization process and spoke no English at all were treated with contempt and condescension by the native Americans. New immigrants took the meanest jobs, the ones rejected by the Americans,<sup>14</sup> and were either denied representation by or refused to take out membership in labour unions. They also had to face religious discrimination: in a country which based its underlying principles upon Protestantism, Catholic and Jewish immigrants were not very welcome.

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<sup>14</sup> Blumenthal (1981) p. 96 cites the breakdown of a working week of a Russian steel worker in Pittsburgh in 1919: 'Time on the job, 91 hours; eating about 9; street car (45 minutes each way), 10.5; sleep (7 1/2 hours a day), 52.5; dressing, undressing, washing, and so forth, 5; that totals 168 or every single hour in the week, an it's how I slave.'



Naturally, these immigrants were the targets of Americanization, sometimes patient but most of the time impatient and even violent. Verbal and physical abuse, even direct attacks, were not uncommon. Their religious preferences, their reluctance to Americanize and refusal to stand up collectively for their rights encouraged the nativists,<sup>15</sup> who began to treat them as less-than-humans. One striking yet typical example is the story of the Slovak Josef Leksa. He immigrated to the US at the age of 19 and started working in a coal mine. He was crippled in an accident (this was by no means uncommon, since work security was given little attention where new immigrants worked) and cheated out of compensation while still in bed in hospital.<sup>16</sup> Verbal abuse was not uncommon, either. Native-born Americans called Ruthenians and Hungarians 'hunkies' in reference to the country of their origin and not to their physical appearance. Similar degrading terms used to describe new immigrants were 'polak' for the Poles and 'bohunk,' which was used for both Bohemians and 'hunkies.'

Nativism and anti-immigrant sentiments characterized the political-academic elite of the country, too. One such statement by Woodrow Wilson is cited and analyzed in chapter 2. Another good example is an 1896 speech in Congress by the Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, a close friend of TR's, and Wilson's chief opponent in 1918-19:

There is an appalling danger to the American wage earner from the flood of low, unskilled, ignorant foreign labor which has poured into the country for some years past, and which not only takes lower wages but accepts a

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<sup>15</sup> Nativism is a term applied to the conduct of native-born Americans who abused and insulted new immigrants in various ways for various reasons. The best brief account of nativism is Kraut (1982) pp. 150-57. Fuchs (1990) pp. 66-67 points to the Ku Klux Klan's role in mistreating the new immigrants. Ross (1914), quoted later in this chapter, is a typical nativist account.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in Blumenthal (1981) pp. 109-10.

standard of life and living so low that the American workingman cannot compete with it.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly, being a new immigrant in the United States of America around the turn of the century was no easy task and required a lot of commitment, courage and endurance.

As a result of the general desire to go home after a relatively short stay in the New World, most East-Central European immigrants prior to World War I tended to stay out of domestic American politics. Instead, they remained preoccupied with the internal affairs of their community and with the problems of their homeland. With immigrant groups from the Habsburg Monarchy numbering between 100 - 600,000 each (except for the Poles) and with the immigrants living scattered all over the country, American politicians showed little interest in winning their vote. Thus, interest in East-Central European affairs remained confined mostly to academic circles (Herbert A. Miller, Emily G. Balch, Archibald Cary Coolidge, etc.) and to individuals with direct connections to the region (TR and Apponyi, the Cranes and Masaryk).<sup>18</sup>

A look at social composition and political ties to the homeland at the same time offers most interesting conclusions about the various groups of the new immigrants. Non-Hungarian<sup>19</sup> immigration from Austria-Hungary more or less reflected the social composition of the compatriots left behind -- which was clearly not true of the Hungarians. Since the

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Blumenthal (1981) p. 162.

<sup>18</sup> Miller, Coolidge, TR, Apponyi, Masaryk and the Cranes are all discussed later in this and subsequent chapters. Balch wrote a classic study of Slavic immigration: Our Slavic Fellow Citizens (New York, 1910. Reprint: New York, 1969).

<sup>19</sup> Then, 'Magyars' was used to describe ethnic Hungarians, and 'Hungarians' was used to denote all inhabitants of the Kingdom of Hungary. The same distinction is avoided in this dissertation, the word 'ethnic' is added to Hungarians when needed.

Hungarian-Americans represented only the lower classes of Hungarian society (as we will see later, they were mostly of peasant stock), makers of Hungarian policy had little faith in them. While their financial contributions were welcome, they had no say in making the decisions about the future of their own country. This was due to Hungary's special position within the Monarchy: Hungarians could and did promote their case in a legally recognized way through their official government. Thus, during the war there was practically no political cooperation between the Hungarian-Americans and Budapest. (A similar attitude characterized the actions of the Rumanians and Serbs in America, who also had an official government to look after their future.)

In contrast, all other nationalities tended to be more active politically in America than at home. The various nationalities within Austria-Hungary represented the subordinate classes and their political liberties were often severely curtailed by both Vienna and Budapest; but no such restrictions were at play in America. Quite naturally, they conducted anti-Habsburg propaganda and joined without much hesitation the various independence movements started by their leading politicians in exile.<sup>20</sup> To counter the overall lack of interest in East-Central European matters, these immigrants had to become active in domestic American affairs and make themselves useful one way or another. To realize their dreams of independence, they needed Allied support during the war and favourable developments on the military, political and diplomatic scene. They also needed to introduce themselves and their demands to the American public. For better understanding of the wartime efforts of the various immigrant groups from the Habsburg Monarchy they must be introduced one by one.

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<sup>20</sup> Hungarian - non-Hungarian relations were also quite different: in America, unlike in Hungary, the Hungarians had to behave with no government to protect them. But since the Hungarian-Americans were unable and unwilling to stand up for Hungary, these conflicts remained local ones; this was not an issue during the war.

The largest Slavic group in the US on the eve of the Great War was the Poles. By 1914 some 2 million Polish new immigrants from three different countries (Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary) had entered the US. Poles have been among the earliest heroes of the US with Kosciuszko and Pulaski, and their voting power has long been considered significant. Chicago, having some 400,000 Poles, was called the American Warsaw, and other large colonies existed in Buffalo, Cleveland, New York City, and Pittsburgh. Language and religion served as the unifying forces within the Polish-American community, as well as a general desire for the restoration of Polish independence. Yet, apparently very few of the Polish-Americans joined the Polish legions in Canada and France. American Poles chose instead to support the Polish National Alliance (founded in 1880) with money and rallied behind Paderewski only when he had achieved most of what he wanted. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the issue of Polish independence was treated by both the British and the Americans separately from the future of the Habsburg Monarchy, which is why the Polish contribution to the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary is given little consideration below.<sup>21</sup>

The second largest Slavic community on the eve of the war in the US was the Slovak one. They emigrated from the Northeastern part of Hungary and carried anti-Hungarian sentiments to the New World. The some 600,000 Slovak-Americans maintained close ties with their homeland, where they even circulated Slovak newspapers printed in America. The Hungarian government encouraged Slovak emigration and discouraged remigration in order to improve population statistics in favour of the Magyars. The Slovaks settled down in New York, the Great Lakes area and the Mid-West. Their leading wartime organization was the Slovak League of America (founded in 1907). The Slovaks entered into an alliance with

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<sup>21</sup> See the relevant sections in Taylor (1971) and the entry on Poles in the HEAEG pp. 787-803. Wilcox (1929-31) discusses all the immigrant group listed here and provides very reliable statistics about them.

Czechs as early as October 1915 in order to create an independent federal republic out of the Slovak and Czech territories of the Habsburg Monarchy. This agreement was later confirmed by the Pittsburgh Convention of 30 May 1918, under the guidance of Masaryk. Thomas Bell's Out of This Furnace (1941) is a wonderful tribute to Slovak life in America.<sup>22</sup>

The Czechs turned out to be the most active group during the war. Czech immigration started after the revolution of 1848. Unlike the new immigrants, these early Czechs were skilled farm labourers who moved to the New World with their families and settled in the agricultural regions of the Mid-West and Texas. By 1914 some 350,000 Czechs had entered the US and settled with their fellow Slavs in the Mid-West and the Great Lakes area. Chicago, Cleveland and New York held 45% of all Czechs in America. Chicago became the third largest concentration of Czechs after Prague and Vienna, with 41,000 Bohemian-Americans. Standing out from among the other new immigrants, 40% of the Czechs were skilled labourers. The Bohemian National Alliance was created on 18 August 1914 and within a year it came to represent most of the Czechs in the New World. Its expressed aim was the creation of an independent Czecho-Slovak state out of the territories of Austria-Hungary. Its leaders, Ludvik J. Fisher and Emmanuel Voska, promptly established contacts with Masaryk and Beneš and provided most of the funding for the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris (some \$675,000) during the war. They also campaigned for the independence of their homeland in the US.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Mamatey (1967); HEAEG pp. 926-34; Alexander (1991); Roucek and Brown (1937) pp. 230-45. On the Hungarian government's policies towards the Slovaks see Glettler (1990) and Szarka (1995) chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>23</sup> Odložilik (1967); HEAEG pp. 261-72; Čapek (1920); Roucek and Brown (1937) pp. 230-45.

Carpatho-Ruthenians in the US numbered around 6 to 8,000 during the war and remained politically inactive until the summer of 1918, by which time it became clear that President Wilson would support the reorganization of the Danubian basin. Victor S. Mamatey's rather weak claim that they decided the future of their homeland is analyzed in a subsequent chapter.<sup>24</sup>

The South Slav population in the United States was composed of Croats (400,000), Slovenes (300,000), Serbs (200,000) and Montenegrins (20,000). Religious and political conflicts were carried over to the New World, which ruled out a unified stand for an independent South Slav state in the Balkans. Typical was the case of the Croats, some of whom supported the creation of a Yugoslav federation within the Habsburg Monarchy to minimize Serbian control, while others created the Croatian National Alliance (1912) with the expressed aim of destroying Austria-Hungary. Eventually, the Yugoslav National Alliance was established in Chicago and its headquarters were later moved to Washington, D.C. The Alliance established contacts with Ante Trumbić's Yugoslav National Council in London and South Slavs in America came to support the Yugoslav idea against the Serbian Premier Nicola Pašić's Greater Serbia project. Like the Czechs, the South Slavs contributed the funds for the work of their leaders in Europe.<sup>25</sup>

According to the census of 1920, Rumanian-Americans and their descendants numbered around 85,000. They displayed little activity in support of the Greater Rumania program of the Bratianu government until the arrival in the US of a Transylvanian-Rumanian

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<sup>24</sup> HEAEG pp. 200-10; Mamatey (1967) and Magocsi (1975).

<sup>25</sup> Prpić (1967); HEAEG pp. 247-55 (Croats); 916-26 (Serbs); 934-42 (Slovenes); Roucek and Brown (1937) pp. 245-53.

mission during the autumn of 1917. This, however, is hardly surprising since Bratianu bet his money on the French and eventually got most of what he wanted at the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>26</sup> When considering the work of the various immigrant groups in the United States, it must always be remembered that the Rumanians and the Hungarians had a country and a government of their own which was looking after the affairs of their respective countries. Thus, unlike the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles and South Slavs, they did not necessarily have to court the American public and the Wilson administration.

This was also true of the German speaking Austrian-Americans, who numbered around 275,000 in 1914, with, most interestingly, two thirds of them coming from the Hungarian half of the Empire. Austrian-Americans did not maintain a separate national identity in the New World but joined German societies and read German-American newspapers. They remained politically inactive during the war.<sup>27</sup>

In 1910 the vast majority (some 80%) of ethnic Hungarians in America lived concentrated in Ohio (97,962), New York (93,606), Pennsylvania (79,630) and New Jersey (59,962). The rest settled down in Illinois (29,401), Connecticut (21,093), Indiana (15,357), Wisconsin (7,338) and California (5,559).<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, no major urban concentrations developed; according to American statistical data, 35-50% of the Hungarian-Americans lived in 'rural non farming areas,' that is, in small mining towns just outside the big cities. In the 1910s Hungarians made up an estimated 10% of the population of Cleveland, Ohio, the 'American Debrecen,' which is still seen as one of the main centres of Hungarian immigration.

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<sup>26</sup> Devasia (1970), introduction; HEAEG pp. 879-85; Roucek and Brown (1937) pp. 319-30.

<sup>27</sup> HEAEG pp. 164-71.

<sup>28</sup> Puskás (1982M) p. 198.

The almost 30,000 Hungarians of New York lived scattered all over the city,<sup>29</sup> and Chicago, one of the major target areas of East-Central European migration, had only 13,253 Hungarians, as opposed to 400,000 Poles and 41,000 Czechs.<sup>30</sup>

The overwhelming majority of Hungarian immigrants were of peasant stock and went to America in order to raise some money and return home rich enough to start a new life. Hungarians in America led the lives of typical East-Central European new immigrants, settling down in industrial and mining areas and working as unskilled labourers in mines, steel and iron mills. They lived in boarding houses, which they called 'burdosház'. They had to take up jobs other Americans turned down, and earned very little money, usually not more than 40% of what a native-born American received for the same job.<sup>31</sup> Indicative of the mistreatment of the Hungarian-Americans is the following story: when a foreman was asked about the number of fatal accidents during the previous month, he reportedly said: 'Five men and twelve hunkies.' The historian Herbert Feldman, who cited this incident, maintained that this was an extreme case.<sup>32</sup> There is strong evidence to suggest that Feldman was mistaken. According to another contemporary account:

Fourteen Hungarians died because their platform collapsed beneath them. The workers had questioned the safety of the platform, but their foreman ordered them to use it anyway, adding the following comment: 'Never mind! There are many more Hungarians that will replace you!'<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Puskás (1982M) pp. 189-99; Puskás (1982E) p. 129.

<sup>30</sup> Fejős (1993) chapter 2.

<sup>31</sup> Tezla (1987) 2: chapters 5 and 8.

<sup>32</sup> Feldman (1931) p. 148.

<sup>33</sup> Bődy and Boros-Kazai (1981) pp. 8-9.



Albert Tezla, who edited a two-volume documentary account of Hungarian life in America between 1895 and 1920, also emphasizes the shockingly high number of industrial accidents and negligence on the part of native-born Americans.<sup>34</sup>

Although the Hungarian-Americans remained politically inactive in the New World - after all, they did not plan to stay long and most of them did not even start the naturalization process - nativist abuse, dismal working conditions and low wages convinced many of them of the necessity of joining the American working class movement. Of the various American labour organizations the one to welcome new immigrants was the Industrial Workers of the World, a radical, semi-revolutionary organization with a rather poor reputation among native-born Americans. By 1917, the I.W.W. had several Hungarian divisions all over the Great Lakes area and in New York.<sup>35</sup> Thus, people of peasant stock went to America to work in industry and mining, they had to abandon their earlier political apathy and seek representation by a labour union that, with its bad reputation, alienated them from both native-born Americans and their fellow Hungarians on both sides of the Atlantic.

Meanwhile, skilled labourers, artisans, intellectuals, etc., who formed only a small fraction of Hungarian immigrants, moved straight to the large urban centres of Cleveland, Chicago and New York City. They, together with the churches, established control over the Hungarian-American press and organizations. Thus, this intellectual elite, together with the earlier mentioned New York bankers, came to represent Hungarian ideas and immigrants by 1914. They also maintained connections with the home country and kept the concept of American-Hungarian cooperation alive. One such highly symbolic act was the erection of the

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<sup>34</sup> Tezla (1987) 2: 7-11.

<sup>35</sup> Puskás (1982M) pp. 214-17, 294-97.

first ever Kossuth statue in Cleveland, and a Washington memorial in Budapest in 1902 and 1906, respectively.<sup>36</sup> Their physical separation from the rest of the Hungarian-Americans meant that rapidly developing personal relations with the American political and economic leaders, especially after the turn of the century, remained the privilege of a handful of journalists, bankers and clergymen together with prominent visitors from Hungary. To understand the wartime performance of the Hungarian-Americans it is necessary to point out some characteristic features of their (1) societies, (2) press and (3) churches, and (4) to outline the position on and the policies towards immigration of the Hungarian government.

Firstly, in the light of the earlier presented facts about dangerous working conditions and ridiculously low wages, it is hardly surprising that the first Hungarian-American organizations were sick benefit (fraternal) societies. The first of these was the Hungarian Sick Benefit Society of New York, founded in 1852, which was followed by numerous others (the most famous one was undoubtedly the Verhovay Aid Association). Insurance and sick benefit societies remained the most important and most numerous ones during the period under examination: a 1917 survey of New York immigrants, for example, listed 22 Hungarian organizations, half of which were fraternal.<sup>37</sup> Other societies were also created in response to the specific needs of Hungarian immigrants. These included self-educating (önképző) and singing societies as well as literary and religious ones. Two important Hungarian-American political organizations, the Republican and the Democratic Clubs, were formed in New York City, under the presidency of Marcus Braun and Mór Czukor, respectively. The only attempt to create an organization representing all Hungarian-Americans came in response to the

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<sup>36</sup> Kende (1927) 2: 208-50. Note that at that time there was no Kossuth statue in Hungary and that 1902 was the centenary of his birth.

<sup>37</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 110. See the chapter on the Inquiry below. For similarly revealing general statistics from 1911 see Puskás (1982M) p. 231.

Hungarian constitutional crisis of 1905-06.<sup>38</sup> Then, the American-Hungarian Federation was established and it organized a rally in support of the Independence Coalition in Cleveland on 27 February 1906. But with the end of the crisis in Hungary this patriotic upheaval soon died away and the Federation, unable to realize its aim to unite all Hungarian-American societies, lost its importance.<sup>39</sup> Thus, at the outbreak of the World War no central Hungarian-American organization existed, due to the fact that no political issue was big enough to bring about a unified stand. As will be seen later, the only attempt to create one central Hungarian-American organization was promoted by a federal government agency after the American declaration of war on the Habsburg Monarchy.

Secondly, the first Hungarian newspaper in America was the short lived Magyar Száműzöttek Lapja (Bulletin of Hungarian Exiles), which was published during October and November of 1853. Similar attempts to maintain a Hungarian paper in the New World, such as the Magyar Amerika (Hungarian America) in 1873, also remained fruitless in the absence of a wide readership.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it was only during the 1890s, when large scale immigration peaked for the first time, that a viable Hungarian-American press began to emerge and by the end of the World War 28 newspapers were being published.<sup>41</sup> These newspapers represented a wide variety of interests,<sup>42</sup> but by the early 1910s two dailies, the Szabadság (Liberty) of Cleveland and the Amerikai Magyar Népszava (Hungarian-American People's Voice,

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<sup>38</sup> See Sugar (1981) and Stone (1967) for details.

<sup>39</sup> Puskás (1982M) pp. 223-49; Puskás (1982E) pp. 154-81; Vardy (1985) pp. 38-49.

<sup>40</sup> Vardy (1985) pp. 71-72; Puskás (1982M) pp. 285-86.

<sup>41</sup> Puskás (1982M) pp. 290-91; Creel Report (1920) p. 91. In 1922 Park listed 27; see Park (1970) p. 300. Note that this is a reprint of the 1922 edition.

<sup>42</sup> For details see Vardy (1985) pp. 76-85; Puskás (1982M) pp. 291-99. The socialist paper was called Előre (Forward) and was published in New York.

hereafter cited as AMNSZ) of New York City, rose to prominence. The Szabadság was founded in 1891 by Tihamér Kohányi, a first generation Hungarian gentry immigrant. Kohányi edited his paper, which became a daily in 1906, until his death in 1913 and was so outspokenly anti-Habsburg that the Szabadság was actually banned in Hungary. Edited by Martin Dienes between 1913 and 1915, the Szabadság received Hungarian government subsidies and became involved in Ambassador Dumba's sabotage campaign, which is discussed in chapter 3. In 1917 Endre Cserna married Kohányi's widow and gained control over the paper, which performed yet another political about face and began to promote the cause of the Allies and Americanization.<sup>43</sup> The other leading daily of the period, the AMNSZ, took a stand similar to that of the Szabadság, although its anti-Habsburg tone was considerably more moderate. It was founded in 1899 by Géza D. Berkó, who edited it until his death in 1927. The AMNSZ was launched as a weekly paper, became a semi-weekly in 1902, and was published daily after October 1904.<sup>44</sup> While the Szabadság remained a Cleveland paper the AMNSZ was published simultaneously in New York City, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago by the early 1910s.

According to the radical Hungarian-American journalist, Eugene S. Bagger (Bagger-Szekeres Jenő), 'the Szabadság, up to America's entrance into the war, was a Hungarian newspaper which happened to be published in the United States.'<sup>45</sup> This description, which fits the AMNSZ as well, indicates that the majority of political reports, as one may expect among immigrants who intended to return to Hungary, discussed events in Hungary. The style of the advertisements and the serialized novels by the likes of Mikszáth and Jókai in

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<sup>43</sup> Park (1970) pp. 347-49.

<sup>44</sup> Vardy (1985) pp. 74-75.

<sup>45</sup> Bagger-Szekeres quoted in Park (1970) p. 348.

the Sunday supplements<sup>46</sup> also made the leading papers look more Hungarian than American. Nonetheless, being the only strong link between most immigrants, these two dailies came to control Hungarian-American public opinion:

To be ignored or 'teased' by these papers means, for the Hungarian business or professional man making his fortune among his people, almost certain ruin. And the worst of it is that the injured party - unless it be a matter of criminal libel - has no way at his disposal to seek redress.<sup>47</sup>

The quality of early twentieth century Hungarian-American journalism left a lot to be desired. Most papers had neither a consistent policy nor a well-trained staff; in fact almost all Hungarian-American journalists of the period had learnt the trade in the New World and moved freely from one paper to another.<sup>48</sup> One such example was Géza Kende, the assistant editor of the Szabadság until 1911, who took the same position with the AMNSZ in 1912 only to write the history of Hungarians in America for his former paper between 1925 and his death in 1927. With the outbreak of the World War news from home became more and more scarce and the diplomatic break between the Monarchy and the United States in April 1917 cut them off completely. Thus, the attention of the Hungarian-American press shifted gradually towards domestic American issues and Hungarian-American affairs.

Thirdly, the vast majority of Hungarians in the New World, just like in the old one, belonged to the Roman Catholic and Calvinist churches. In the absence of authenticated statistics one may only say that there were proportionately more Calvinists among the immigrants than among their compatriots at home, which was due to the fact that the

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<sup>46</sup> Puskás (1982M) p. 300.

<sup>47</sup> Bagger-Szekeres quoted in Park (1970) p. 76. George Creel, the head of the CPI, also realized how important the control of the immigrant press was. See chapter 8 for details.

<sup>48</sup> Puskás (1982M) pp. 299-300.

centre of Hungarian emigration was the North Eastern part of the country, which was predominantly Calvinist.<sup>49</sup> The churches in America played an all important part in the life of the immigrants: they maintained ties with the homeland, kept nationalist sentiments alive, and provided service and teaching in Hungarian.<sup>50</sup>

The first Hungarian service in America was organized by Kossuth's former padre, the Rev. Gedeon Ács, in 1852.<sup>51</sup> Yet, the actual beginnings of Hungarian-American church life, like the press, date back only to the 1890s, when the first Catholic and Calvinist churches were established.<sup>52</sup> Since the organization of the Catholic Church automatically excluded the possibility of direct Hungarian control over the congregations in America (the first of which were founded by Charles Böhm in Cleveland in 1893), the mother church was limited to supplying politically correct priests with salaries and subsidies for church-building.<sup>53</sup>

Unlike the Roman Catholic, the Calvinist Church offered considerable leeway for interference from Hungary, which both the mother church and the government willingly accepted. In fact, the first ever Hungarian-American congregation was a Calvinist one founded by the Rev. Gusztáv Jurányi in Cleveland in 1891. Within a short time the Rev.

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<sup>49</sup> Puskás (1982E) pp. 181-82; Vardy (1985) pp. 50-54; Puskás (1982M) pp. 250-60.

<sup>50</sup> Puskás (1982E) pp. 201-15; Puskás (1982M) pp. 270-83.

<sup>51</sup> Vardy (1985) p. 52.

<sup>52</sup> Puskás (1982E) pp. 183-92. Note that other denominations attracted only a small fraction of Hungarian immigrants and played no significant part during the war. The second largest protestant denomination, the Lutheran one, is worth a brief glance. Hungarian Lutherans in the United States went to Slovak churches until as late as 1907 when István Ruzsa was sent to the New World to lay the foundations of Hungarian-American Lutheranism. On Hungarian government policies towards Slovak churches in America see Glettler (1990).

<sup>53</sup> Puskás (1982E) pp. 187-88; Vardy (1985) pp. 54-58.

Sándor Kalassay emerged as the leading figure of Hungarian Calvinism in America but seven years around the turn of the century (1898-1904) saw the break-up of the movement over the administrative issue of which church organization to join. Some decided to emphasize their connections to the homeland (after all Calvinists had long been the advocates of Hungarian nationalism) and the first American Diocese of the Hungarian Reformed Church was formed in 1904. Those who thus joined the mother church came to be called the 'joiners'. Others, giving in to American government and church pressures, joined the Reformed Church of America to emphasize their loyalty to their new home, and came to be known as the 'non-joiners'. Still others decided in favour of the Presbyterian Church of America, and became known as the 'presbyters'.<sup>54</sup> These disagreements sometimes led to shocking confrontations and prevented the reunification of the Hungarian-American Reformed movement.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, these hostile exchanges continued during the war and ruled out a unified Hungarian-American stand in support of the home country while giving rise to the dubious myth of Wilson's dislike of Hungarians, which is explained later.

Fourthly, with emigration figures reaching the one million mark around the turn of the century, Hungarian government intervention was a natural and logical development for several reasons.<sup>56</sup> Firstly, since most Hungarian-Americans intended to return home their national affiliation needed to be preserved and attempts to Americanize them had to be countered. Secondly, the emigration of the non-Magyar peoples, especially the Slovaks, from

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<sup>54</sup> Vardy (1985) pp. 58-61; Puskás (1982E) pp. 197-201; Puskás (1982M) pp. 264-69.

<sup>55</sup> Komjáthy (1984) p. 171 recites that on one occasion the wives of New Brunswick ministers, at the heat of an argument, displayed their bare bottoms in public to one another to show their mutual dislike. Note that the reunification of the Hungarian-American Reformed movement is yet to be achieved.

<sup>56</sup> The following discussion is based upon Puskás (1982M) pp. 260-69; and Vardy (1985) pp. 86-88. Additional information is footnoted.

Hungary offered an easy means of improving Hungarian population statistics by simply discouraging their re-migration.<sup>57</sup> Thirdly, from the 1890s onwards, Ambassadorial reports from Washington emphasized the anti-Hungarian propaganda of Slovak, Ruthenian and Rumanian immigrants and the anti-Habsburg tone of the Hungarian-American press. Finally, emigration offered numerous business opportunities. Hungarian-Americans sent their money home through New York banks, which resulted in the rise to political prominence of some Hungarian-American bankers, such as Alexander Konta, whose services could be (and actually were) secured by the Hungarian government. Meanwhile, the right of shipping emigrants to the New World was sold to the Cunard Line, and the money thus earned was channeled back into the development of Fiume, Hungary's main seaport at the time.<sup>58</sup> Hence, government action seemed not only necessary but held out promises of considerable yet easy political and financial profit.

Thus, in 1903 the 'Amerikai Akció' (American Action), a three pronged program was launched. The Slovak and Ruthenian branches intended to discourage the re-migration of non-Magyar peoples to Hungary and set out to prevent anti-Hungarian propaganda both in the United States and in Hungary, without much success.<sup>59</sup> The third and naturally most important branch was the Hungarian one. The obvious preference was securing the loyalty of Hungarian emigrants to the home country, which took the form of preventing their Americanization and encouraging them to return home. The American Action also made attempts

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<sup>57</sup> Glettler (1990) pp. 109-10.

<sup>58</sup> Csocsán de Várallja (1974) p. 141; and letter to the author dated 11 March 1994; Révai Nagy Lexikona (1914) 11: 719.

<sup>59</sup> For example, R. W. Seton-Watson recorded that the Slovaks had more newspapers in America than in Hungary: Seton-Watson (1908) pp. 202-03. Nonetheless, these were widely circulated in Hungary despite the fact that the Hungarian postal service was ordered to refuse their delivery: Glettler (1990) p. 115.



to suppress the anti-Habsburg tone of the press of the Hungarian-Americans, and to monopolize their financial transactions and transatlantic journeys. In 1911 all such efforts were centralized and the Transatlantic Trust Company was established in New York City. It subsidized both the press and the clergy, and tried to monopolize financial transactions between Hungary and the United States.<sup>60</sup> The Austro-Hungarian Consulates in America were instructed to protect immigrants as much as possible even by lobbying for industrial safety legislation in some of the states.<sup>61</sup> The American Action may have enjoyed the full backing of Budapest but it achieved little. Its activities were continued until 1918 and were partially revealed to the American public in various Congressional hearings after the war.

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Meanwhile, prominent Hungarian-Americans and important visitors from Hungary developed several personal connections in America. Instrumental in the development of such personal relations on the American side was Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States between 1901 and 1908. The Hungarian Republican Club of New York City was involved in Roosevelt's 1900 election campaign and Marcus Braun, the president of the Club, was appointed as special immigration inspector for the Department of Commerce and Labor. In 1904 Braun reported on immigration abuses by the Hungarian government. He charged the Hungarian Premier Count István Tisza with misconduct claiming that he forced non-Magyar immigration to the United States while cashing in on a deal with the Cunard Line, whom he

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<sup>60</sup> Park (1970) pp. 417-21. Park quotes the relevant Congressional hearing with some comment.

<sup>61</sup> HEAEG p. 469.

granted practical monopoly of transporting these immigrants.<sup>62</sup> During his next visit to Hungary in the following year Braun was arrested by the police for supposedly insulting a detective and was released only after the Roosevelt administration had intervened on his behalf. On his return to America he resigned from his job but was reappointed later the same year on Roosevelt's recommendation. In his recollection of the affair,<sup>63</sup> Braun charged the American Ambassador in Vienna with not giving him the support he was entitled to as an agent of the American government. Roosevelt initially maintained that Braun was looking for trouble when going to Hungary after his report but when the issue was cleared up he extended his condemnation to Ambassador Storer as well.<sup>64</sup>

Roosevelt demonstrated his appreciation of the Hungarians with a symbolic gesture by signing the Charter of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America (the largest Hungarian-American Calvinist organization) on 2 March 1907. Passed by the second session of the Fifty Ninth Congress this document remains a unique one: no other immigrant organization has ever been granted the same privilege by President or Congress.<sup>65</sup>

However, of all his Hungarian connections, Roosevelt's friendship with the prominent Hungarian politician, Count Albert Apponyi, was by far the most significant. Not only was

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<sup>62</sup> This was true only in part. The deal with the Cunard Line did not work out as expected and the Continental Pool (of five other agencies) was drawn into the business in 1911. These companies agreed to pay 10 crowns for every emigrant into the Emigration Fund and to return to Hungary 1,000 poor immigrants at a reduced fee. Révai Nagy Lexikona 11: 718-19: Kivándorlás. Further information is provided in the 1909 volume of Corpus Iuris Hungarici, in the footnotes of Law No. 2 of that year (which was the second emigration act).

<sup>63</sup> Marcus Braun, Immigration Abuses. New York, 1906.

<sup>64</sup> Roosevelt (1952) 5: 43-45; 314.

<sup>65</sup> Béky (1970) 20-23.

it the strongest unofficial political connection between the two countries but it was also carried well into the war period, securing the sympathies of the leader of President Wilson's domestic opposition.<sup>66</sup> Apponyi led the Hungarian delegation to the conference of the Inter-parliamentary Union, held in St. Louis, Missouri in 1904. He scored a major success with his mastery of English and his addresses and was invited again by the New York Peace Society and the Civic Forum in 1911. During his first visit to America Apponyi was invited by Roosevelt to a private dinner where they made friends and the President promised to visit Hungary. They remained in touch through correspondence, sometimes in secret,<sup>67</sup> a precaution taken because of Apponyi's position in Hungary as a prominent opposition politician and his leading role in the 1905-06 constitutional crisis, which threatened the very existence of the Habsburg Monarchy. During his 1910 tour of Europe Roosevelt visited Hungary and returned Apponyi's earlier visit. The ex-President met several other prominent Hungarians, including the dying Ferenc Kossuth, and delivered a short speech in the Hungarian Parliament praising Hungary and her history, while in another address at the Washington memorial he expressed his appreciation of Hungarian-Americans. His visit was a sweeping success and the Szabadság reported on it extensively for Hungarians in the New World.<sup>68</sup> Apponyi's second American visit in 1911 was similarly successful. Besides meeting some prominent Americans (including Andrew Carnegie, Henry Cabot Lodge and William Jennings Bryan<sup>69</sup>)

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<sup>66</sup>. For an account of their contacts see: Kerekesházy (1943) 121-32; Apponyi (1933) 130-70; Kende (1927) 2: 477-88; Barany (1967) 141; Roosevelt (1954) 7: 374-79. Their correspondence was consulted in the Roosevelt papers at the Library of Congress.

<sup>67</sup>. Roosevelt (1952) 5: 314.

<sup>68</sup>. Szabadság, 18 and 19 April 1910.

<sup>69</sup> Carnegie was a famous millionaire who founded the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which later analyzed the war and sent an official mission to Hungary in 1930: Shotwell (1961) Chapter 15. Bryan was a leading Democratic politician who became Wilson's first Secretary of State. Lodge has already been introduced.

and his Civic Forum speech, he was invited to address the Congress of the United States, becoming the third non-American (after Lafayette and Kossuth) to be granted that honour. Learning belatedly of the Cleveland rally in support of his Independence Coalition during the Hungarian constitutional crisis of 1905-06, Apponyi decided to win the support of Hungarian-Americans for the opposition. This plan, however, never materialized as Apponyi rejected the 1914 invitation of the Hungarian-Americans, thus opening the way for Count Michael Károlyi. It was during Apponyi's second visit that he last met Roosevelt.

Theodore Roosevelt's involvement with Hungarian affairs was by no means limited to symbolic acts and personal relations. With Hungary becoming an official partner of Austria in the Dual Monarchy the first American Consulate was set up in Budapest in 1878; and it was Roosevelt who promoted it to Consulate General in 1904.<sup>70</sup> In June 1906, at the height of the Hungarian constitutional crisis, he instructed Ambassador Francis to contact Apponyi secretly and obtain the Hungarian position.<sup>71</sup> However characteristic this move was of American attitudes it passed practically unnoticed: the crisis died down and no further action was taken. The presidency of William Howard Taft, Roosevelt's successor, brought about the first twentieth century agreement between the United States and Hungary. 'Made necessary by the requirements of Hungarian procedure and law' a copyright agreement between the two countries was signed in Budapest on 30 January 1912 and was ratified by Congress on 23 July of the same year.<sup>72</sup> By 1914 several Hungarians were serving in the Habsburg diplomatic corps in America. Prominent among them were Alexander von Nuber, who later joined the Hungarian diplomatic service, and Consul General Ernst Ludwig in Cleve-

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<sup>70</sup>. Barany (1967) p. 141.

<sup>71</sup>. Roosevelt (1952) 5: 314-15; Roosevelt to Francis, 25 June 1906.

<sup>72</sup>. OL K 106, File 2. Further details of the negotiations are not available.

land, who published an important propaganda piece during the World War both in English and in Hungarian and later represented Hungary unofficially in Berne, Switzerland during 1919.

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Before turning our attention to wartime American attitudes and policies towards Hungary it is necessary to examine the mutual images the two countries had developed of each other by 1914. Interestingly enough, the most recent overall analysis of America's image in Hungary was written by the litterateur Iván Boldizsár while a comprehensive assessment of American views regarding Hungary, the Hungarians, and the Hungarian-Americans is yet to be written.

According to Boldizsár,<sup>73</sup> the pre-Civil War period saw the emergence of a highly idealized image of the New World in Hungary, which he attributes almost exclusively to the work of Sándor Bölöni Farkas. The Hungarian traveller depicted America as the New Eden, the land of unlimited opportunities and voiced hardly any criticism. This idealistic image of America was enhanced further when the young republic - symbolically at least - sided with Hungary in 1848-49 and during Kossuth's American visit. Boldizsár goes on to describe Hungarian attitudes towards the United States during the Reconstruction period (1865-77) as 'admiration mixed with disillusionment.' Hungarian travellers in America, still the chief source of information and opinion in this period, were primarily interested in industrial America, especially technological details. Nonetheless, the earlier idealized image of America was

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<sup>73</sup> The following account is based upon Boldizsár (1986). Boldizsár based his essay on the works of the prominent Hungarian scholars Anna Katona and László Országh.

modified with the addition of a touch of reality: the first descriptions of slums and poverty were also included.

Surprisingly, Boldizsár then states that the period between the 1880s and the outbreak of the World War brought no significant changes in the image of America in Hungary. He bases his argument on the fact that in this period immigrants from Hungary became the chief source of information for the home country, and that these immigrants failed to produce lengthy and realistic accounts of life in America. In fact, only accounts of extreme cases of disaster or success reached the Hungarian public. While this is a good point, it is still only part of the picture; Boldizsár overlooked at least two important aspects of the question. Firstly, Hungarians came to view America as a financial springboard rather than a model democracy; according to the Hungarian version of the American dream a few years of hard work held out the promise of a decent living once back home. Thus the earlier fascination with the American political system was replaced by economic calculation, which did transform, or at least coloured, America's image in Hungary. This attitude was accepted by the Hungarian government, which, as has been discussed above, did not refrain from interfering with domestic American affairs. Secondly, it is true that Hungarian-American immigrants did not write travelogues or other lengthy accounts of their experience in America but their information was not lost. What actually happened was that individuals, who went to America with the sole intention to give an account of life in the New World, were replaced by immigrants with other, primarily economic, interests. Most of them returned home and told their relatives and acquaintances about their life in America and their accounts of early twentieth century industrial America were certainly more realistic than those of the earlier travellers. However, these returning immigrants tended to emphasize the bright side

of living in America and often consciously overlooked the hardships awaiting newcomers there.<sup>74</sup>

Thus, the Hungarians had no detailed and realistic concept of the New World, only fragmentary images and dreams of a fairyland. Nor did the Americans have a realistic image of Hungary. In the absence of any such earlier attempt it is difficult to assess the various images of Hungary, the Hungarians and the Hungarian-Americans in the New World and the following account is necessarily based upon speculation and deduction. Hungary apparently had at least three different images in America. The still controversial image of the real Hungary, together with open and concealed challenges to America, such as the arrest of an American government agent or the campaign to prevent Americanization, played a very limited role in American policy making towards the Habsburg Monarchy. The real Hungary had no universal suffrage, nor did she appear to be willing to introduce it, but the Jews of Hungary were treated 'more liberally than anywhere else in Europe.'<sup>75</sup> This represented a peculiar balance in the eyes of many Americans: Hungary was more acceptable than, for example, Rumania, where the Jews were mistreated, but less acceptable than Britain or France, which were viewed as more democratic. It was largely due to immigration that the Americans became aware of the multinational nature of the Hungarian Kingdom (in TR's words: 'It was interesting to an American to pass successively through various villages each consisting only of Slavs, Magyars or Germans.'<sup>76</sup>) but the way these minorities were treated was clearly not an issue.

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<sup>74</sup> On this latest point see Puskás (1990).

<sup>75</sup> Ross (1914) p. 173.

<sup>76</sup> Roosevelt (1954) 7: 372. from his account of the visit to the Apponyi estate.

Another, and similarly marginal, image was that of the Hungarian-Americans or hunkies. A most comprehensive account was written by the sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross, one of the leading nativists of the time.<sup>77</sup> Ross cleverly identified the Hungarians' 'race pride,' which he also called a high sense of honour. He went on to describe their problems and intention to return home together with their love of wine,<sup>78</sup> and made a very important point about their crime statistics, which is the only condemnatory element of his discussion:

Their crime record is bad. No alien is more dreaded by the police than a vengeful or drink-maddened Magyar. The proportion of alien Magyar prisoners who have been committed for murder is 35.6 per cent., higher than of any other nationality save the Russians. Their hot-headed and quarrelsome disposition causes personal violence to bulk very large in their crime. In offenses against chastity their showing is bad, but their bent for gainful crime is slight.<sup>79</sup>

Similar statements in the works of Hungarian sociologists, such as Gyula Illyés in A puszta k népe (The People of the Puszta), suggest that Ross had a point. Interestingly, in a different context Ross' account matches the stereotypical image of the Magyar nobleman, which was part of the third, and most widespread, concept of Hungary in America.

Americans who visited Hungary contacted almost exclusively aristocrats and members of the gentry, collectively known as 'nobles', who even at the outbreak of the World War considered themselves the true political representatives of Hungary (hence the rejection of universal suffrage). These nobles were generally pictured as being chivalric, proud, good and

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<sup>77</sup> Kraut (1982) pp. 152-53 identifies Ross as one of the worst nativists and cites some shocking passages from the very same work that is used in this chapter.

<sup>78</sup> Ross (1914) pp. 173-75.

<sup>79</sup> Ross (1914) p. 175.



willing fighters (the Hussars, Kossuth's army, etc.), and fond of food, music and women. This stereotypical and in scope rather limited concept was enhanced by several factors such as Hungary's stand in 1848-49, Kossuth's American tour in 1851-52, the contributions of Hungarian officers in America's wars and personal connections. That this image was the dominant one may easily be demonstrated with the case of Theodore Roosevelt. A quick glance at his record outlined earlier clearly shows that he was living with the image of Kossuth's Hungary of some 60 years before and was more interested in the opinion of Apponyi, an opposition politician, than that of the entire Hungarian government in time of crisis, during 1905-06.

The years between 1906 and 1908 saw a minor Kossuth revival in America. William Lingelbach's Austria-Hungary (1906) was apparently the first book written by an American about the Monarchy, although it was a rewritten version of a French text. In the same year Marcus Braun also released a short piece on Hungarian history with a special emphasis on Kossuth.<sup>80</sup> Kossuth featured as 'Hungary's Washington' (together with Bem, Klapka and Dembinski) in Congressman Abraham Lincoln Brick's address in support of the Charter of the Reformed Federation in February 1907.<sup>81</sup> In 1908 the short-lived Bulletin of the Hungarian-American Federation was launched with articles from prominent American politicians and Hungarian-Americans alike. Eugene Pivány contributed an essay on Webster and Kossuth and another one on Kossuth's American visit.<sup>82</sup> C. M. Knatchbull-Hugessen's two volume study of The Political Evolution of the Hungarian Nation, published in the same year in Britain, nat-

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<sup>80</sup>. Marcus Braun, Glimpses of Hungary and Hungarians. New York, 1906. Note that Braun's two books cited in this chapter were reprinted in San Francisco in 1972.

<sup>81</sup>. Béky (1970) 21-22.

<sup>82</sup>. Puskás (1982E) 181.

urally attracted wider attention in the Anglo-Saxon world, and became apparently the only pro-Hungarian reference for wartime American government agencies. Curiously, British, French, and Slovak-American writers' attempts to challenge the liberal image of Hungary clearly failed to influence American politicians and public opinion of the time.

Prewar Hungarian-American contacts thus helped create a rather peculiar and clearly - not to say consciously - misplaced perception of Hungary in America by 1914. Based upon the protestant republican myth of Kossuth and his liberal Hungary of more than half a century before, it was complemented by the more general image of the merry Hungarian nobleman, the lover of liberty and the pleasures of life. Despite the fact that Americans confronted a different yet more real Hungary in the form of naturalization problems, immigration abuses and the arrest of an American government agent, they failed to modify their view. Early twentieth century Americans simply ignored the existing government of Hungary and went back to the Kossuth image which, at the same time, was cleverly kept alive by such symbolic moves as erecting his first statue on American soil on the centenary of his birth. Furthermore, the Hungarian-Americans were not identified with Hungary in this context while prominent Americans chose to establish contacts with opposition politicians such as Apponyi and came to view him and the 1905-06 Independence Coalition as the real Hungary and the rightful heir to the Kossuth tradition, irrespective of reality and without even trying to understand Hungary and the Hungarian mind.

Consequently in the United States, unlike in Great Britain and France, this superficial and misplaced image of Hungary and the Hungarians remained unchallenged and was carried well into the World War by the Wilson administration. Personal contacts, sympathies and myths were swept aside only after the American intervention against the Central Powers in 1917, only to be replaced by a different set of connections and myths. But before continuing

the evaluation of the image of (Austria-) Hungary in American public opinion and political circles a bypass will be taken to analyze Woodrow Wilson's view of and attitude towards Hungary, the Hungarian-Americans and some prominent Hungarian personalities.

## **CHAPTER TWO: WOODROW WILSON, HUNGARY AND THE HUNGARIANS**

It is necessary to outline Thomas Woodrow Wilson's views on (Austria-) Hungary and the Hungarians -- in part because he became the wartime President of the US and conducted the foreign affairs of his country single-handedly, and also because he offers an interesting case-study of what might be expected of a leading American political scientist in terms of understanding the problems of the Danubian basin. The aim of this chapter is to refute two fallacious assumptions about Wilson, namely that he was an expert of East-Central European affairs and that he had ill feelings about the Hungarians, and to cast some light upon the real nature of his attitude towards Hungary and the Hungarians. As these two issues are clearly interwoven, the following discussion is centered around the three main periods of Wilson's career: (1) the academic years; (2) the early political years; and (3) his presidency.

The difficulty of such an enquiry lies not only in the fact that practically nothing has been written about the question but also in the shortage of information. Besides Wilson's own writings, secondary sources, correspondence and contemporary newspapers were of considerable assistance in filling in this gap in Wilson research.

Since Wilson is the all-important figure of our investigation, it might be useful to provide some basic biographical information about him first. Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born in Staunton, Virginia, in 1856. His father was a Presbyterian minister, which accounts for Wilson's strong religious inclinations. He graduated from Princeton at the age of 23 and

had a short and unsuccessful spell as a lawyer. He then completed his doctorate at Johns Hopkins University in 1885. He taught political science at Princeton between 1890-1902, then served as President of the same university until 1910. Between 1910-12 he was governor of New Jersey and then went on to win the Democratic nomination for the Presidency in 1912. Being elected twice, he served as Chief Executive of his country until 1921. For his grand design of the league of Nations he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and after his second term he retired to his private home in Washington, D.C. He died in February 1924.

Of the three main periods of his active life, Wilson's academic career is the most revealing since he expressed his genuine opinion and attitude towards Hungary and the Hungarians without the outside constraints he had to consider later as a politician. Furthermore, his academic works have been cited as evidence for his good understanding of the problems of the Habsburg Monarchy;<sup>1</sup> and one of them got him into a lot of trouble during the 1912 election campaign. With all this in mind, it appears necessary to quote Wilson's academic works extensively in order to disprove the claims of his expertise on the Habsburg Empire and to point out some aspects of his character and views which later influenced his political conduct.

Wilson's earliest, and at the same time most detailed, academic reference to the Habsburg Monarchy, which naturally carried a discussion of Hungary and the Hungarians, was included in The State.<sup>2</sup> This work is generally seen as one of the highlights of the future president's academic career as a political scientist and is a lengthy discussion of the

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<sup>1</sup> May (1957) p. 214; Kisch (1947) p. 235; Unterberger (1989) p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> It was first published in 1889, hereafter the 1904 revised edition is quoted.

theory and practice of the state. Wilson devoted a fifteenpage chapter to the Habsburg Monarchy and wrote an impressive account of its constitutional structure. Unfortunately, some other aspects of his presentation are less convincing and give away his superficiality and prejudices.

He begins his discussion with a reference to the ethnic triangle of German, Slav and Magyar in the Monarchy. Of all the peoples of the Habsburg Empire he picked out the Czechs and the Magyars as the most ardent devotees of freedom and 'home rule'. He maintained about the Magyars that:

Dominant in a larger country than Bohemia, perhaps politically more capable than any Slavonic people, and certainly more enduring and definite in their purposes, the Magyars, though crushed by superior force in the field of battle, have been able to win a specially recognized and highly favored place in the dual monarchy. Although for a long time a land in which the noble was the only citizen, Hungary has been a land of political liberties almost as long as England herself has been.<sup>3</sup>

While this section may be interpreted in various ways another brief quotation proves that Wilson was somewhat off-target in his assessment of Hungary. He interpreted the 'rule of the Magyar gentry', one of the future wartime anti-Hungarian cliches, as a natural development in democracy:

As must always happen where there is real ministerial responsibility, the lower House [of the Hungarian Parliament] is the governing House. The Magnates yield, in the long run, every point upon which the purpose of the Representatives is definitely fixed.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wilson (1904) pp. 335-36.

<sup>4</sup> Wilson (1904) p. 347. This quote speaks for itself.

The fact that this fifteen page section in The State is Wilson's longest and most comprehensive reference to the Habsburg Monarchy and Hungary in itself disproves the claims that he was an expert on the matter. His appreciation of the Hungarians must be attributed to the Kossuth myth, which first reached him apparently through his father, the Rev. Joseph Ruggles Wilson, and in broader terms to his well-known sympathy for peoples living under foreign domination. The interesting reference to the parallel between the British and Hungarian constitutional traditions remained unclarified in The State and it was not until 1908 that the future president raised the issue again. In Constitutional Government in the United States he detected two 'remarkable differences' between the Magna Carta and the Hungarian Golden Bull, but again in a way which proves anything but his correct understanding of the problem:

For all she made a similar beginning, Hungary did not obtain constitutional government, and England did. Undoubtedly the chief reason was that the nobles of Hungary contended for the privileges of a class, while the barons of England contended for the privileges of a nation, and that the Englishmen were not seeking to set up any new law or privilege, but to recover and reestablish what they already had and feared they should lose. Another and hardly less significant reason was that the Englishmen provided machinery for the maintenance of the agreement, and the Magyars did not.<sup>5</sup>

This rather unscientific passage again shows Wilson focusing on broader issues at the expense of details and accuracy. At the same time, this is the first unconcealed manifestation of his WASP superiority complex,<sup>6</sup> which would reappear in one of his 1912 election speeches.

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<sup>5</sup> WWP's 18: 72-73.

<sup>6</sup> So far he has been only described as 'Anglophile' and his admiration for Gladstone is common knowledge. The above passage suggests that it is an understatement.

Wilson's only other academic work related to the Monarchy and Hungary casts no favourable light on his judgement, either. In the fifth volume of his A History of the American People (1902) he revealed his views about Hungarian, Polish and Italian immigrants with a then typical arrogance towards new immigrants, which earned him a lot of trouble in 1912. According to Wilson, after 1890:

there came multitudes of men of the lowest class from the south of Italy and men of the meaner sort out of Hungary and Poland, men out of the ranks where there was neither skill nor energy nor any initiative of quick intelligence; and they came in numbers which increased from year to year, as if the countries of the south of Europe were disburdening themselves of the more sordid and hapless elements of their population, the men whose standards of life and work were such as American workmen had never dreamed of hitherto.<sup>7</sup>

Wilson then referred to the problems and limitation of Chinese immigration in the same period and claimed that:

the Chinese were more to be desired, as workmen if not as citizens, than most of the coarse crew that came crowding in every year at the eastern ports. They had, no doubt, many an unsavory habit, bred unwholesome squalor in the crowded quarters where they most abounded in the western seaports, and seemed separated by their very nature from the people among whom they had come to live; but it was their skill, their intelligence, their hardy power of labor, their knack at succeeding and driving duller rivals out, rather than their alien habits, that made them feared and hated and led to their exclusion at the prayer of the men they were likely to displace should they multiply. The unlikely fellows who came in at the eastern ports were tolerated because they usurped no place but the very lowest in the scale of labor.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Wilson (1902) pp. 212-13.

<sup>8</sup> Wilson (1902) pp. 213-14.



It is clear from the above that Wilson, like most of his contemporaries, separated the image of the 'hunky' from that of Hungary: he felt justified in condemning the former without extending the same condemnation to the latter. He actually carried this tendency a step further during the war in the German case when he drew an arbitrary dividing line between the people and their government, very much the way he distinguished the unacceptable Hungarian-Americans from the 'real' Kossuth type Hungarians.

It was this incoherent, yet by no means unusual, attitude of praising 'Kossuth's Hungary' while denouncing the Hungarian-Americans that Wilson carried into his early political career, which extended over the eleven years between 1902 and 1912, his election as president of Princeton University and of the United States respectively. His Princeton years, which provided the first serious test of his political skills,<sup>9</sup> also brought about Wilson's first real Hungarian contact. Apparently, a Hungarian by the name of Rezső Kunfalvy was one of his students in New Jersey; yet even this episode would have escaped the attention of later historians had Kunfalvy not tried in vain to contact Wilson during the spring of 1919 in order to secure more favourable peace terms for Hungary.<sup>10</sup> During Wilson's tenure, although independently of him, Princeton was becoming one of the main targets for the 'Peregrins' (i.e. Hungarian Reformed theology students educated abroad) together with Utrecht, Basel, and Edinburgh in Europe; and it was also during his presidency that the first such student was admitted to the famous Ivy League university.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the details of Wilson's possible Hungarian connections in the New Jersey governorship period (1910-12), the later

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<sup>9</sup> For details and evaluation see Link (1947) pp. 37-92; Mulder (1978) pp. 158-228.

<sup>10</sup> Romsics (1991) p. 75; LC TWWps: Series 5B: Peace Conference Correspondence: Stovall to Wilson, 11 March 1919.

<sup>11</sup> Komjáthy (1984) pp. 154 and 115.

part of his early political career, are not available. This is quite surprising because, as indicated in the previous chapter, New Jersey was one of the main target areas of Hungarian immigration, and the Hungarian-American churches were accused of anti-Americanization practices, which certainly fell under the jurisdiction of the Governor. It would seem natural that Wilson had to deal with some of these issues but no definitive evidence has been found.

In sharp contrast with the lack of incidents and references from the period between 1902 and 1911, a study of the 1912 election campaign provides both in abundance. Wilson was repeatedly called on to account for his statements in A History of the American People, which have fully been quoted above, but instead of withdrawing them he got into lengthy and unnecessary public and private arguments about them.

Interestingly, his uncontrolled remarks were picked out not by immigrants but by the press magnate William R. Hearst, who decided to back Champ Clark for the Democratic nomination. Hearst and his associates launched their uncompromising attack on the would-be president as early as 29 January 1912.<sup>12</sup> Arthur S. Link, the leading expert on Wilson, noted that Wilson would not have written those remarks if he had been preparing for a political career.<sup>13</sup> Wilson's initial intentions, however, mattered little in 1912, especially when George F. Williams claimed in an open letter published in the New York Times that Wilson had not a single good word for any minority, ethnic or political, in the entire country.<sup>14</sup> Wilson rightly claimed that the Hearst papers 'misrepresented' him since he had condemned not the Hungarian, Polish or Italian peoples but some of their representatives in

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<sup>12</sup> Link (1947) pp. 380-90.

<sup>13</sup> Link (1947) p. 381.

<sup>14</sup> Link (1947) p. 381.

the New World; and in the light of the reference, as quoted above, to the unusually high crime rate among Hungarian-Americans, his remarks, if properly worded, would not have been completely unjustified. Yet, his unwillingness to withdraw his statements, an early manifestation of the importance he attached to principles, made his apologies look weak and easy to reject.

Hungarian-Americans were quick to join the anti-Wilson campaign. On 3 February 1912 Marcus Braun wrote an open letter to Wilson demanding the withdrawal of his statement regarding Hungarians and invited him to a public discussion of his views. In his polite reply four days later Wilson stated that he had nothing against the Hungarians and excused himself from the public meeting, claiming to have made prior arrangements for a campaign in the west. The Hungarian-American public meeting did go ahead without Wilson on 11 February in the Webster Hall, New York City, which in itself was a symbolic choice, Daniel Webster being the American Secretary of State who granted Kossuth a royal reception in 1851-52. The meeting condemned Wilson's statements and demanded their public withdrawal; and a copy of the resolution was forwarded to his office.<sup>15</sup>

This incident marked the beginning of an all-out campaign by Americans, Poles, Italians and Hungarians alike, who all expressed their reservations about Wilson's unfortunate remarks and requested clarification and withdrawal.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, Wilson was campaigning with the program of the New Freedom, a package of progressive domestic reforms, and refused to take decisive steps in the other matter until as late as 22 July. Then, brushing aside private apologies on the eve of the Democratic National Convention, he granted a long

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<sup>15</sup> BH GKps: Newspaper File: unidentified clipping; WWP 24: 135-36.

<sup>16</sup> For further details see WWP 24: 226; 241-43; 269-70; 404-07; 548-49.

interview to Géza Kende, a prominent Hungarian-American journalist and assistant editor of the AMNSZ. According to Kende, they chatted for hours about Wilson, his plans for the future and about his views on immigration. As expected, the Hungarian journalist brought up the quite delicate issue of the day and Wilson gave him the following written statement:

I believe in the reasonable restriction of immigration but not in any restriction which will exclude from the country honest and industrious men who are seeking what America has always offered, an asylum for those who seek a free field. The whole question is a very difficult one but, I think can be solved with justice and generosity.

Any one who has the least knowledge of Hungarian history must feel that stock to have proved itself fit for liberty and opportunity.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Kende had a first class scoop which he immediately leaked to an American journalist and on the next day, 23 July 1912, the AMNSZ and the New York Times covered the interview simultaneously. It appears that Kende and his editor-in-chief, Géza Berkó, together with some prominent New Yorkers, such as Mór Czukor, Alexander Konta and Edmund Gallauner, were instrumental in calming the storm raised against Wilson by the Hearst papers. Nevertheless, criticism did not cease after the Kende interview so Wilson decided to open the Connecticut state campaign on 25 September 1912 discussing Italian, Polish and Hungarian history. Quite unfortunately for him, he did so in typical Wilsonian fashion, which is clearly reflected in the passage on Hungary:

Why, in that ancient Kingdom of Hungary, for example, contemporary with the great Magna Charta, to which we look back as the source of our constitutional liberties, there was proclaimed upon a notable day the terms of the Great Golden Bull which ran almost in the identical terms of the Magna Charta. But Hungary never could get a foothold for the execution of those

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<sup>17</sup> AMNSZ 23 July 1912 pp. 1-2; WWP's 24: 562-64.

principles until she began to send eager multitudes across the ocean to find in America what they had vainly hoped for in Hungary.<sup>18</sup>

This passage is obviously a summation of Wilson's complacent and at times even anachronistic approach. It then is hardly surprising that he was again criticized and had to make more amends in a subsequent campaign speech,<sup>19</sup> which apparently settled the issue once and for all.

Of Wilson's several 1912 Hungarian supporters Gallauner and Konta deserve further attention. Surprisingly little is known about Gallauner who was called on in 1916 by Colonel Edward Mandell House<sup>20</sup> on Wilson's request, probably to provide similar services in Wilson's second presidential campaign.<sup>21</sup> The fact that Wilson had a special case file on the Hungarian suggests that he was found worthy of attention. Gallauner's services, however, had long been forgotten by 1919 when he tried in vain to secure official American intervention on behalf of a Hungarian aristocrat who had tried to recover his private yacht, the Tolna, seized by the French authorities as enemy property back in 1914.<sup>22</sup>

However, of all Wilson's 1912 Hungarian connections his association with the New York banker Alexander Konta, arguably the most controversial Hungarian-American figure of the war period, proved to be the most fruitful. Konta made himself acceptable to Wilson by

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<sup>18</sup> WWP's 25: 256.

<sup>19</sup> WWP's 25: 275-76.

<sup>20</sup> House was Wilson's closest friend, private advisor and 'super Secretary of State' during the war. Their friendship broke up during the Paris Peace Conference over the League of Nations issue.

<sup>21</sup> WWP's 35: 276.

<sup>22</sup> LC TWWps: Series 4: Case Files: No. 5080: Edmund Gallauner.

providing several important services without asking for anything in return. Their relationship may hardly be described as friendship; one may say instead that in Konta Wilson had a prominent Hungarian-American whom he could, and willingly did, use if needed. The details of their three post 1912 contacts cast more light upon some broader issues and, therefore, require further discussion.

Their first post-election contact was initiated by Konta, who asked Frank McCombs, Wilson's former campaign manager, to secure an interview for Károlyi with the President in April 1914. The request was flatly turned down and Konta took no further action.<sup>23</sup> If anything, this incident clearly showed the President's lack of interest in Hungarian politics and marked the beginning of a tendency on his part to refuse to meet separatist politicians from the Habsburg Monarchy until the summer of 1918.

The next encounter was prompted by broader issues in early 1916, and the President's reaction was more favourable this time. Because some Hungarian-Americans were involved in sabotage and the Dumba affair,<sup>24</sup> they were charged with disloyalty and had to face discrimination and physical abuse. Under the auspices of Konta, Berkó, Czukor and Braun, a convention was held in the Garden Theater in New York City on 30 January 1916 to protest against violent discrimination and to reiterate loyalty to the United States. The President's appointment of Kentucky senator Ollie M. James as his special representative to the meeting proves that the Wilson White House welcomed the initiative. Obviously speaking for the President, James reportedly stated that 'As for the hyphen, I do not care what is

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<sup>23</sup> WWP's 29: 404; 409.

<sup>24</sup> These issues are covered in the next chapter.

before it as long as there is true American spirit behind it.<sup>25</sup> When Konta secured a brief audience with Wilson and presented him with a copy of the declaration of the meeting the President made his complimentary reply public by authorizing its publication in the New York Times.<sup>26</sup> Some Hungarian-Americans, especially the press, were much less enthusiastic about the issue; the Szabadság went as far as telling Konta that he had made the mistake of his life by unnecessarily pressing loyalty to the United States. It appears that the Garden Theater meeting was a New York venture rather than an all-out Hungarian-American demonstration, and many thought that Konta was offering the Hungarian-American vote to Wilson. Konta's quite sensible reply, stating that he was acting with the best of intentions both towards the Hungarian-Americans and their new home country, was fully printed in the Szabadság but the issue remained unresolved.<sup>27</sup> While the events of February 1916 called the President's attention to Konta again, the attacks in the press, which played an all important role in the forming of Hungarian-American public opinion, clearly undermined Konta's position in immigrant circles.

The domestic and international situation had changed drastically by the end of 1917, when the third and longest Wilson-Konta episode began to take shape. At the end of November 1917 Konta, during a friendly conversation with the radical journalist Frank I. Cobb, suggested that the United States should declare war on Austria-Hungary and claimed that the Hungarian-American clergy was involved in sabotaging Americanization. When requested to provide further details, in a letter which was then sent on to Wilson, Konta

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<sup>25</sup> BH GKps: Newspaper File: cutting from either the AMNSZ or the Szabadság, dated 31 January 1916. The hyphen here refers to hyphenated Americans.

<sup>26</sup> WWP 36: 205 and n. 1; LC TWWps: Series 4: Case Files: No. 2898: Alexander Konta: Konta to James Patrick Tumulty (Wilson's secretary), 11 and 18 February 1916.

<sup>27</sup> Szabadság, 29 February 1916.

(very much like Marcus Braun in 1904) accused the Hungarian government and Reformed Churches of anti-assimilation agitation and espionage. Furthermore, Konta claimed that the Szabadság, which was directly involved in the Dumba affair and conducted a campaign against Konta personally, was the only truly loyal Hungarian-American organ.<sup>28</sup> This seemingly confusing statement must be seen as a tribute to Endre Cserna, the new editor of the paper, who, as has been indicated in the first chapter, had introduced a strong loyalist tone into the paper after his takeover in the spring of 1917.

Konta's revelations were not only deemed useful but also came at the right time: the Committee on Public Information (hereafter CPI), Wilson's own propaganda agency under the journalist George Creel, was just about to begin its 'work among the foreign born' to 'delete the hyphen', which above all meant the establishment of government control over 'enemy aliens', such as the Hungarian-Americans. During the early days of 1918, the American-Hungarian Loyalty League was organized under the supervision of Creel and the CPI, and on Cobb's suggestion Konta was named chairman.<sup>29</sup> The Loyalty League had no real chance of realizing its ultimate goal of unifying all Hungarian-Americans (its membership reached only 20,000) simply because Konta, with his rapidly declining prestige in immigrant circles, a hangover from 1916, was unacceptable as a leader. This did not seem to bother Creel who cleverly focused on controlling the press and selling Liberty Bonds. The League itself organized loyalty demonstrations, supported the Liberty Loans and Konta continued his attacks on the clergy.

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<sup>28</sup> WWP's 45: 135-40.

<sup>29</sup> Mock and Larson (1939) pp. 220-25; the CPI is discussed below together with other wartime Hungarian-American activities which were not linked directly to Wilson.



On 15 March 1918, the 70th anniversary of the 'Kossuth revolution,' Konta publicly accused the Hungarian-American churches of disloyalty and espionage.<sup>30</sup> While the accusation regarding espionage was unfounded, the fact that the Hungarian-American clergy, Catholic and Reformed alike, continued to receive subsidies from Budapest even after December 1917<sup>31</sup> may be interpreted as disloyalty. The subsequent house searches, however, provided no evidence and a delegation of Reformed Ministers, led by Mór Czukor of the Democratic Club of New York, was invited to a White House audience on 8 July 1918, which was the last occasion on which Wilson met Hungarians before the end of the war.<sup>32</sup> The Hungarian-American historian Aladár Komjáthy, himself an insider, argues that if Konta's accusations had the slightest foundation this visit would not have happened.<sup>33</sup>

An alternative explanation would be that Wilson decided to stay out of the internal struggles of the Hungarian-Americans and the audience was but a theatrical move to boost their loyalty; and there is a strong case for this interpretation. Wilson's chief concern at the time was the securing of the loyalty of enemy aliens, who formed a considerable proportion of the population of the United States. He understood the almost schizophrenic situation of these peoples: many of them intended to return home after the conflict to countries which were at war with the United States. The logic of the situation dictated that strong steps would have led to resistance and sabotage, which he was not willing to risk. Germans and Hungarians, for example, were exempted from conscription, and the property of the Hungari-

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<sup>30</sup> Komjáthy (1984) pp. 141-42.

<sup>31</sup> Note that the evidence for this is cited in the fourth chapter below.

<sup>32</sup> Szabadság, 9 July 1918.

<sup>33</sup> Komjáthy (1984) p. 144.

an Reformed Church in America was not seized by the Alien Property Custodian.<sup>34</sup> As for Hungarian-Americans, Marcus Braun was allowed to maintain his (rather unimportant) government job despite the fact that Wilson and Lansing were aware of the fact that his newspaper was financed by the Germans.<sup>35</sup> In the light of these facts Wilson's decision should be seen as evidence of his good political judgement of the situation and not necessarily of his ignorance of what was going on in immigrant circles.

Konta retired soon after this incident and the official explanation maintained that it was due to disagreements over funding the propaganda campaign among the Hungarian-Americans.<sup>36</sup> It follows from the above that Konta's unproven accusations and his limited popularity among the people he was representing may well have played their part in his decision. Yet, whatever reasons prompted his resignation, his replacement at the helm of the Loyalty League by Alexander Markus, on whom no information has been found, marked the end of Konta's association with the President. The December 1918 Senate hearings on enemy propaganda, the findings of which must be treated with caution, proved his prewar connections with Tisza and suggested that such links were maintained during the war.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Szabadság, 11 and 12 December 1917.

<sup>35</sup> WWP's 34: 528-29, Lansing to Wilson 27 September 1915.

<sup>36</sup> Mock and Larson (1939) p. 220.

<sup>37</sup> These are quoted in Komjathy (1984) pp. 144; 148 n. 1; his connection with Apponyi is cited in chapter four below.

Here, we must pause briefly and address the myth of Wilson's 'seemingly unfounded anti-Hungarianism,' which emerged from the disillusionment with his policies in post-war Hungary. The Rev. László Harsányi surprised many Hungarians during his 1920 visit to the home country by claiming that Wilson's attitude had dated back to the turn of the century. According to Harsányi, Wilson was the notary of the New Brunswick diocese when the debate between the Reformed Churches was going on and became disillusioned with the Hungarians after seeing incidents such as the one quoted in the previous chapter. Harsányi went on to argue that Wilson subsequently developed an overt dislike for the Hungarians, which accounts for his refusal to deal with Károlyi on several occasions as well as with Hungarian pleas during the Peace Conference. Komjátyy refutes this argument by simply pointing out that Wilson attended no conventions as a notary after 1904, and that the debates peaked after he had been elected President.<sup>38</sup> Yet, however unfounded the Harsányi interpretation may seem, it remained the only one for a long time since no attempt has been made to analyze Wilson's attitudes towards the Hungarians. Interestingly, the same misconception resurfaced after the recent political changes in Hungary in 1989. In his rather unhistoric but widely publicized account, József Vecseklőy describes the Treaty of Trianon as an attempt to commit genocide and accuses Wilson of a conspiracy with the French to destroy Hungary.<sup>39</sup>

In fact, the evidence presented here suggests that despite what he had written in 1902, Wilson nursed no hostility towards Hungary or the Hungarians,<sup>40</sup> not even after the

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<sup>38</sup> Komjátyy (1984) pp. 171-72. According to Komjátyy, Harsányi kept the myth alive by telling it even to 1956 immigrants.

<sup>39</sup> Vecseklőy (1993), esp. pp. 277-78.

<sup>40</sup> If anything, the following episode testifies to that. In September 1917 István Kender from Lorain, Ohio, asked Wilson to become the godfather of his new-born twin sons. Kender promised to

events of 1912. This makes the single most important Hungarian related question of the war, namely why Wilson ignored Károlyi in 1914, 1917 and in 1918-19, even more intriguing. A most thorough enquiry into the matter provided no definitive explanation but a few interesting conclusions did arise and to understand them it is necessary to look at some of the details.

Károlyi's two visits to the United States during April and July 1914 provided the first possibility of a contact with the American President. Károlyi, then a little-known figure in the Hungarian opposition, went to America to raise support for an independent Hungarian foreign policy favouring not Germany but France. Wilson's refusal to see him suggests that the Károlyi visits passed practically unnoticed and were looked upon with limited interest in Washington. This was true, since the entire controversy over Károlyi's visits developed after Wilson's refusal to meet him. The President's action was dictated by the logic of the situation, insofar as he had no reason to get involved in the internal affairs of Austria-Hungary. This attitude continued to be the basis of his approach to separatist politicians from the Monarchy seeking American support, at least until the summer of 1918, by which time he had also joined the dismemberment camp.

Nonetheless, the controversy which developed over the Károlyi visits did not escape the attention of the Wilson administration; in fact, it created the first, and rather unfavourable, impression of the Hungarian politician. Károlyi undoubtedly enjoyed the support of the Hungarian-American press and especially the services of Kende. Alexander Konta wrote

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raise the 'two Hungarian yankees' to be loyal citizens and ready to fight for 'world democracy' should the Germans or anyone else threaten it again. Wilson agreed and the two boys were named Roy and Robert Woodrow Wilson Kender. BH GKps: Newspaper File: unidentified clipping dated 14 September 1917.

a special article about him for the Sunday magazine section of the New York Times on 5 July 1914, in which the New York banker presented the Hungarian aristocrat as the heir apparent of Kossuth. On the other hand, Slovak-Americans gave the Hungarian aristocrat a hard time and, on top of that, Alexander Gondos (alias S. E. Glenn), acting upon orders from Budapest and financed by the Tisza government, started an all-out campaign to discredit Károlyi.<sup>41</sup> When the details were revealed by a report from the Budapest Consul-General Coffin, Wilson must have been shocked by the way in which domestic Hungarian issues were transferred to America. Marcus Braun's supposed involvement, also reported by Coffin (but merely as hearsay), hardly cast any more favourable light upon the politicians involved.<sup>42</sup>

By the end of 1917 Károlyi had become the fourth Hungarian politician, besides Apponyi, Andrásy and Tisza, to be repeatedly mentioned in the American press and the only one generally considered pro-Entente. This was because in July 1916 he established his own party with a platform of peace without annexations and sought Allied support for his program. Nonetheless, Wilson and Lansing refused to deal with him again in October 1917 when Károlyi tried to establish connections with the White House through Hugh R. Wilson of the Berne Embassy.<sup>43</sup> This American stand was due to several factors, most importantly to Wilson's reluctance to take further definitive steps in the Habsburg case just before the declaration of war. Two reports, which independently described Károlyi as pro-Entente but politically unimportant, also played their part. The first of these was a Seton-Watson

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<sup>41</sup> Mamatey (1967) pp. 230-32; NA RG 59: DFSD: M 708 reel 3: Glenn to Bryan, 20 May 1914.

<sup>42</sup> NA RG 59: DFSD: M 708 reel 3: Coffin to Bryan, 30 June 1914.

<sup>43</sup> The details of the Hugh Wilson-Károlyi and the Anderson-Apponyi negotiations, mentioned below, are given in the next chapter.

interview with Coffin, the second Anderson's report about his negotiations with Apponyi.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, Károlyi went to Switzerland to participate in a pacifist conference, which was watched with considerable distrust from Washington. And as if all that was not enough, Károlyi worked there with Rosika Bédy-Schwimmer, who was practically *persona non grata* in the White House due to an earlier incident. Before explaining the curious connection between the President, Bédy-Schwimmer and Károlyi, another December 1917 incident must also be described.

In the dying days of 1917, Fiorello La Guardia, then a Congressman serving as captain of the US Signal Corps in Italy, approached the American Ambassador, Thomas Nelson Page, with an ingenious plan. La Guardia suggested that the Americans should contact Károlyi and urge him to start a revolution which would lead to the separation of Hungary from Austria. While Page believed that the proposal was worthy of 'serious consideration,'<sup>45</sup> Wilson did not. His brief letter to Lansing in the matter on the very first day of the last year of the war explains his views better than any secondary analysis:

It seems to me that this would be very unwise and dangerous, and quite contrary to the attitude of honour which it has been our pride to maintain in international affairs; does it not seem to you? Too many irresponsible "agents" are at large, and they are apt to do a great deal of harm. This is worse than the Anderson case, about which there was at least nothing underhand and of the nature of intrigue.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Hajdu (1978) pp. 229; 234-35.

<sup>45</sup> NA RG 59: DFSD: M 708 reel 3: Page to Lansing, 29 December 1917. In May 1917, a similar proposal by Marcus Braun was also turned down. See Barany (1967) pp. 151-55.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, next document.

This letter indicates that Wilson's broader moral and political principles also played their part in not dealing with Károlyi during the war. Yet, it would be a serious mistake to underestimate the importance of personal dislikes in the matter, which take us back to Bédy-Schwimmer. Rosika Bédy-Schwimmer was a Hungarian born suffragette and pacifist of international fame. She first met the President in September 1914 and they discussed the war situation. After the interview, Bédy-Schwimmer, rather unfortunately, informed the press about the details of the interview. The President angrily denounced her and refused to see pacifists for several months.<sup>47</sup> On the insistence of Jane Addams, the American pacifist and suffragette, Wilson granted Bédy-Schwimmer another brief audience in November 1915, but the ice cold reception in the White House made it clear that she was not welcome in Presidential circles.<sup>48</sup> She then was instrumental in the organization of the Ford peace expedition, which was seen as a direct pacifist attack on Wilsonian policies. The young American journalist William C. Bullitt, also on board and reporting for the Philadelphia Public Ledger and the New York Times, made sure that everyone had a good laugh at the members of the mission.<sup>49</sup> It was after all this that Bédy-Schwimmer contacted Károlyi in Berne in late 1917, which was apparently reported to Washington.<sup>50</sup>

And the worst was still to come. Although the events of November-December 1918 extend beyond the scope of the present study, they are too closely related to Wilson's

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<sup>47</sup> Kraft (1978) pp. 10-11. That such incidents were unacceptable in American government circles was again made clear when Kende, for a similar offence, was banned from the Harding White House. BH GKps: Correspondence File: George B. Christian, Jr. (Harding's secretary) to Kende, 28 September 1921: 'In reply to your letter of September 26th, I beg to say that the President will not discuss the statements of one who ventures to quote the President's private conversations.'

<sup>48</sup> Kraft (1978) pp. 72-73.

<sup>49</sup> Kraft (1978); Brownell and Billings (1987) pp. 41-49.

<sup>50</sup> Hajdu (1978) pp. 229, 234.

attitudes to be disregarded. Károlyi, ignorant of the real nature of the connection between the President and Bédy-Schwimmer, appointed her as Ambassador to Berne, which was by far the most important Hungarian diplomatic post in post-war Europe. When challenged in the Council of Ministers, Károlyi argued that this was meant to be a gesture for the President.<sup>51</sup> The American Ambassador in Berne, Pleasant Alexander Stovall, whose distaste for women has been well documented by the CPI agent Mrs. Vira B. Whitehouse, forced Bédy Schwimmer's recall within a month. Most certainly acting upon orders from the White House, he thus cut off Hungary's only diplomatic lifeline.<sup>52</sup>

The one clear conclusion that emerges from the discussion above is that Wilson displayed little interest in Hungary before and during the First World War. As an academic, despite his own and later historians' claims, he was not familiar with the major problems of the Habsburg Monarchy. While he understood the dualist constitutional system better than any of his experts in the Inquiry, his other references are unfounded, superficial, and are based more upon myths and stereotypes than upon reality.

Another obvious conclusion, which follows logically from the previous one, is that Wilson's anti-Hungarianism is only a myth. If he was to develop any dislike for the Hungarians, then it was not around the turn of the century but in 1912; yet he never took revenge for the campaign against him and never said anything degrading about Hungary in general. That notwithstanding, personal dislikes, especially in the case of Bédy-Schwimmer, did indeed

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<sup>51</sup> OL K 27: Minutes of the Council of Ministers: Box 118: 18 November 1918.

<sup>52</sup> This incident alone is worthy of a lengthy discussion. The only such attempt was performed by the Hungarian-American historian Peter Pastor, who starts his presentation in 1918: Pastor (1975). Mrs. Whitehouse is discussed with the CPI in a subsequent chapter. Further information was obtained from the George D. Herron papers at Stanford University; see also Briggs (1932).



influence his decisions. Wilson's attitude towards Károlyi has been reconstructed with some speculation, but the reports questioning the Hungarian aristocrat's political weight and revealing his connections with Bédy-Schwimmer seem to provide a reasonable explanation for the President's conduct, which, on all three occasions, was naturally determined by broader issues.

Wilson apparently followed the then general American tendency, as pointed out in the first chapter, to view 'Kossuth's Hungary' as the real one and to disregard the conduct of the Hungarian Government and the Hungarian-Americans. The study of American public opinion during the neutrality period regarding Austria-Hungary, and of the various attempts to influence it, will provide further insight into the forces shaping American policies. But before that it is necessary to review American - Austro-Hungarian diplomatic relations during the World War, as the next step of our general enquiry.

**CHAPTER THREE:  
AMERICAN - AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN DIPLOMATIC  
RELATIONS, 1913-18**

Prewar American - Austro-Hungarian diplomatic relations revolved around economic debates and immigration issues which continued into the war period. A debate over tariff rates had actually begun back in 1878 with the Monarchy adopting a protectionist economic stand. The British blockade during the war rendered the issue purely academic and an agreement was finalized in January 1915.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, the issue of overseas migration was also raised on the highest level of Habsburg-American diplomacy as well as in the American Congress. The Naturalization Treaty of 1870 exempted re-migrating American citizens from service in the K und K Army. Considerable loss of manpower provided the incentive for an Austro-Hungarian diplomatic move to amend the treaty in 1890 which the Americans rejected as interference with their domestic affairs. The issue was raised again after the Braun affair in 1905, and the Monarchy scored minor successes in 1906 and 1907 when two acts of Congress made the withdrawal of American citizenship possible if a naturalized citizen took up permanent residence outside the United States. The issue became really hot after the outbreak of the First World War; it even gained a new dimension with thousands of Habsburg subjects intending to return home to fight, but unable to do so because of the British blockade. Nonetheless, the Wilson administration refused to go beyond the concessions granted in 1907 and the issue was dropped unresolved.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Davis (1958) pp. 1-7.

<sup>2</sup> Davis (1958) pp. 9-22; Ludwig (1921) p. 141.

At the same time, Vienna remained a rather unpopular diplomatic post in the eyes of many Americans; in fact, it took Wilson more than six months to find a suitable Ambassador to Vienna in Frederick Courtland Penfield. Unlike the President's other appointments, Penfield had some previous diplomatic experience (he had served in London and Cairo under the Cleveland administrations); still, his main qualifications were his large financial contribution to Wilson's 1912 election campaign and the fact that he was a Roman Catholic.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the Habsburg Monarchy was represented in the United States by Constantin Theodore Dumba, a wealthy and popular aristocrat with professional diplomatic training.

The sixteen months between Wilson's inauguration and the outbreak of the war passed without either country taking serious steps to develop closer connections. Wilson showed no interest in Count Michael Károlyi's two visits in 1914 and it was the Sarajevo assassination that eventually forced the two countries to deal with one another. Penfield dutifully reported the incident and President Wilson immediately sent a telegram of condolence to the Emperor Francis Joseph.<sup>4</sup> However, the significance of the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand was underestimated by all American Ambassadors in Europe, with the only serious warning coming from the Budapest vice-Consul Frank E. Mallett, on 13 July 1914.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, instructions for Ambassadors were not despatched until as late as 17 August 1914,<sup>6</sup> by which time the Austro-Serbian conflict had escalated to an all-out European war.

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<sup>3</sup>. WWP's 27: 110-11; 127.

<sup>4</sup>. FRUS 1914 pp. 24-26.

<sup>5</sup>. Bell (1983) p. 29; FRUS 1914 Suppl. p. 16.

<sup>6</sup>. FRUS 1914 Suppl. p. 740; Bell (1983) pp. 32-33.

Wilson's call for neutrality 'in thought as well as in action' not only met general agreement in America but it also set the stage for American - Austro-Hungarian relations. In August 1914 Dumba secured American consular protection for Austro-Hungarian subjects and property in Russia, France and Great Britain.<sup>7</sup> An American offer of 'good offices' and mediation was presented to Vienna on 4 August 1914, only to be rejected politely by the Ballhausplatz, which welcomed American mediation but only after the restoration of the 'honour of the Flag'.<sup>8</sup> On 8 December 1914 the United States and the Monarchy agreed to grant the inviolability of all diplomatic and consular correspondence.<sup>9</sup>

The events of 1914 hardly suggested what was to follow in the next year: diplomatic relations proved to be a lot more complex in 1915. Routine tasks like the representation of Austro-Hungarian interests and the inspection of POW camps with K and K soldiers in Allied countries were carried out by American representatives while Penfield supplied similar services for Allied governments in the Monarchy.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the period between May and December 1915 brought on no less than three serious crises in American - Austro-Hungarian relations. The first of these was but a side-effect of the German-American controversy over the sinking of the Lusitania, which resulted in the death of 105 American citizens. After an interview with Bryan about the incident, Dumba reported home that the 'American notes, however strongly worded, meant no harm, but had to be written in order to pacify the excited public opinion of America.' Vienna passed the message on to Berlin

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<sup>7</sup>. FRUS 1914 Suppl. pp. 732-33.

<sup>8</sup>. FRUS 1914 Suppl. pp. 42; 50.

<sup>9</sup>. FRUS 1914 Suppl. p. 543. As will be shown in chapter 5 below, the Americans did not always honour this agreement.

<sup>10</sup>. Davis (1958) pp. 73-84.

where the Foreign Minister Zimmermann showed it to the American Ambassador James Watson Gerard, whose consequent report to the State Department discredited both Bryan and Dumba, and contributed to the former's resignation.<sup>11</sup>

The other two crises developed over the broader issues of neutral trade and access to American contraband. The British blockade of the Central Powers, introduced in late 1914, cut them off from American contraband. Germany and the Monarchy repeatedly demanded equal treatment and the Americans were caught between two fires as the British refused to make concessions. A long debate over international law and neutral rights and duties developed but without the slightest hope of an acceptable solution. Realizing this, both Dumba and the German Ambassador Count Johann von Bernstorff embarked upon sabotage by calling for strikes and issuing warnings that working in American munition factories would be treated as treason once the offenders returned home. While the new Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, expressed his frustration over the fact that he could not find evidence against von Bernstorff,<sup>12</sup> Dumba was caught in the act. His report to the Austrian Foreign Minister Count Stephen Burián was intercepted and published by the British authorities acting upon information from a Bohemian-American secret agent, Emmanuel Voska. Dumba and the New York Consul-General Alexander von Nuber were declared *persona non grata* and recalled on 8 November 1915.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>. Chambers (1939) p. 206; May (1957) p. 217. Bryan resigned because of the provocative tone of the second American note to Germany. The only other twentieth century American Secretary of State to resign over a matter of principle was Cyrus Vance of the Carter administration, who thus protested against sending helicopters to rescue American hostages in Iran.

<sup>12</sup> LC RLps: Private memoranda: Character Sketches p. 21. This is a small volume of handwritten comments by Lansing on important wartime politicians.

<sup>13</sup>. This so-called 'Dumba affair' became a standard feature of wartime anti-Habsburg propaganda. May (1957) pp. 220-21; Davis (1958) pp. 114-55.

The third crisis, over the sinking of the Ancona, almost resulted in a diplomatic break between the two countries. On 7 November 1915 a submarine flying the Imperial and Royal flag torpedoed the Italian liner en route from Naples to New York and nine Americans died. Both Colonel Edward Mandell House, Wilson's private advisor, and Secretary of State Robert Lansing suggested a diplomatic break but the President refused to act partly because there were doubts about the nationality of the submarine. Later the American historian Gerald H. Davis discovered that the Ancona had actually been sunk by a German U-boat and that the Ballhausplatz had been denied access to the facts. Nevertheless, Burián accepted responsibility for the attack and issued a pledge to refrain from similar offenses. Thus, by giving in to the American demand presented in the form of an ultimatum he managed to postpone the German-American showdown, which then seemed likely.<sup>14</sup> Dumba's recall, diplomatic humiliation in the Ancona affair, and early military setbacks on the Serbian front<sup>15</sup> combined to degrade the Monarchy to the level of a secondary belligerent in the eyes of the Americans while, according to Penfield, anti-American sentiment in Vienna peaked in February 1916.<sup>16</sup>

Within a month of the sinking of the Ancona a second submarine offence increased tensions further. On 5 December 1915 another German U-boat flying the Austro-Hungarian flag held up the Petrolite, an American tanker. The two captains met and parted 'in the best of friendship' although some supplies were taken by the submarine. This time Burián refused to take responsibility, and further German atrocities, including the sinking of the Sussex, diverted attention. The issue was reopened in July 1916 in the form of another American

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<sup>14</sup>. Davis (1966) provides all the details.

<sup>15</sup> Armstrong (1971) p. 34 records the American attitude towards the debacles of the K and K army.

<sup>16</sup>. Penfield to House, 3 February 1916. WWP 36: 124.

note, which Baron Zwiedinek (the Austrian Charge d'Affaires, who in the absence of an ambassador was the highest ranking Austrian official in the United States) suggested had more to do with the coming presidential elections than with actual grievances. Accordingly, Burián promised a second investigation in his reply of 20 July 1916. The Ballhausplatz claimed that no new evidence was found (15 September 1916) and the debate died down.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from the Petrolite affair, 1916 proved to be a quiet year in American - Austro-Hungarian relations; Presidents, after all, do not take risks during the year when they are running for reelection. To balance the uneven diplomatic representation the State Department requested Vienna on several occasions to send an Ambassador to Washington. Eventually, Count Adam Tarnowski, a Polish aristocrat of considerable diplomatic skill and experience, was chosen<sup>18</sup> although many Americans had expected the appointment of Count Apponyi. The fact that the selection of Tarnowski was an open gesture to the pro-Polish Lansing was ignored by Washington. On 24 November 1916 the two countries mutually granted free radio communication between the Embassies and their respective governments, which seems to have been Vienna's condition for sending an Ambassador.<sup>19</sup>

1916 also brought about a semi-official Hungarian-American interlude. William Christian Bullitt, the same journalist who had reported on the Ford Peace expedition in late 1915, decided to spend his honeymoon in the Central Powers by interviewing key politicians including the German Foreign Minister von Jagow, Tisza, Apponyi and Count Julius Andrassy,

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<sup>17</sup>. Davis (1958) pp. 204-09.

<sup>18</sup>. FRUS 1916 Suppl. p. 800.

<sup>19</sup> FRUS 1916 Suppl. pp. 807-08. Penfield's relevant report is quoted extensively in the fifth chapter below.

another prominent Hungarian politician who later became the last Foreign Minister of the Monarchy. On his return to Washington Bullitt submitted a transcript of the von Jagow and Tisza interviews (which he was not allowed to publish) to the State Department and caused a minor sensation with his articles about the Central Powers in the Philadelphia Public Ledger.<sup>20</sup>

It was not until the end of 1916, after Wilson was reelected, that broader issues were introduced to the Habsburg-American agenda in the form of open peace drives. The initiative for a peace move on the part of the Central Powers came from Burián, who presented his plan to the Emperor Francis Joseph on 28 September 1916. With the Emperor's consent he met von Jagow at Pless (17 October) and the actual text of the communication was drawn up. However, Francis Joseph's death on 21 November 1916, followed by Wilson's telegram of condolence,<sup>21</sup> delayed action. The young Emperor Charles in his coronation speech declared peace to be his most immediate aim and reorganized his cabinet by appointing Count Ottokar Czernin as Foreign Minister and General Artz von Straussenburg as chief-of-staff.<sup>22</sup> The first open peace overture of the entire war, then, came from Germany on 12 December 1916, calling for an international conference to settle conflicting interests. Six days after the German note the President, also openly, requested all belligerents to state their war aims. Lansing flatly, and unfortunately for him openly, rejected Wilson's peace move, arguing that it might seem to have been worked out in cooperation with Germany. As a result of his open attack in the press he lost the President's

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<sup>20</sup>. Brownell and Billings (1987) pp. 49-65; SML WCBps: Bullitt to Frank Lyon Polk (then counselor of the State Department), 20 September 1916. Note that Bullitt's contribution is discussed in subsequent chapters.

<sup>21</sup>. FRUS 1916 pp. 30-31.

<sup>22</sup>. Chambers (1939) pp. 75-76.



confidence completely and was forced to recall his statement in the matter.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, even in Berlin there was little optimism about the German peace move<sup>24</sup> and, according to expectations, the Allies rejected it. The German reply to Wilson's peace note again called for an international conference prior to which Berlin was not willing to reveal her war aims. On the other hand, the Allies did enumerate their war aims, including the 'liberation of the Italians and also of the Slavs, Rumanes and Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination.' Czernin's public speech two days later focused on this sentence and for the first time Wilson was expected openly to take sides in the dismemberment question.<sup>25</sup> Instead, he delivered the 'Peace without Victory' speech (22 January 1917) probably as the last attempt to maintain American neutrality and secure the role of ultimate mediator for himself.

As a result of the failure of the peace moves the Central Powers switched from intensified to unlimited submarine warfare on 31 January 1917. The subsequent German-American diplomatic break was followed by a warning from Vienna that an American declaration of war on Germany would result in the severing of Austro-Hungarian - American diplomatic relations.<sup>26</sup> Simultaneously, Penfield inquired whether the declaration of unlimited submarine warfare meant the modification or withdrawal of the Ancona pledge, about which Tarnowski reported that the Americans were looking for a 'loophole' to maintain relations. Accordingly, a compromising reply from Vienna stated that the submarines of the Imperial

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<sup>23</sup>. Lansing (1935) pp. 174-90; Smith (1958) 149-50; Smith (1971) pp. 109-10.

<sup>24</sup>. Grew (1953) 1: 296.

<sup>25</sup>. Scott (1921) pp. 35-38; 42-44.

<sup>26</sup>. FRUS 1917 Suppl. 1 p. 193. Note that during the Ancona crisis the argument for and American-Habsburg diplomatic break was that it would leave one (the German) channel of official communication open. This time it was the Habsburg channel that was to be maintained. See WWPs 41: 188-89.

and Royal Navy were operating only in the Mediterranean where American ships hardly ever sailed, and the issue was dropped eventually when in March 1917 Czernin reinforced the Ancona pledge.<sup>27</sup> Relations, however, were far from cordial: despite Penfield's repeated assurances Tarnowski was never granted the opportunity to present his credentials and become Ambassador since he arrived in Washington at exactly the same time when the German note announcing unlimited submarine warfare was handed to the State Department. Instead, Wilson decided to recall Penfield to restore parity in representation. The American declaration of war on Germany was followed by the severing of diplomatic relations with Austria-Hungary, on the latter's initiative on 9 April 1917.<sup>28</sup> This meant, besides the inevitability of a Habsburg-American showdown, that the Monarchy had <sup>no</sup> ambassadorial representation in America for two years before the American declaration of war on her and three years before her dismemberment. This was a very clear indication of how rapidly the prestige of the Monarchy was declining in 'neutral' America. The refusal to send an Ambassador to replace Dumba for more than a year turned out to be a major diplomatic blunder on the part of the Ballhausplatz.

The period between February and December 1917 (i.e. from the American diplomatic break with Germany to the American declaration of war on the Monarchy) turned out to be a period of hesitation and transition. After the American entry into the war the Allied and Associated powers needed to coordinate their war aims; British and French war missions were sent to the United States. The British Foreign Minister Arthur James Balfour's visit proved to be extremely important: he informed the President, Lansing and Colonel House about the secret treaties and discussed maximum British war aims (including the cession of

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<sup>27</sup>. Davis (1958) pp. 247-48; 255-56; FRUS 1917 Suppl. 1 pp. 135-36.

<sup>28</sup>. FRUS 1917 Suppl. 1 p. 594.

Transylvania to Rumania and Czech trialism) with them.<sup>29</sup> Subsequently, Lansing asked Albert H. Putney, the head of the Near Eastern Division of the State Department, to prepare a memorandum on the Monarchy. Putney's report was the first official American document favouring dismemberment<sup>30</sup> and marked the first step of Lansing's gradual acceptance of that program. Despite all efforts, an Inter-Allied Conference, held in Paris in late November, failed to integrate war aims; not even a joint declaration was issued.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, the President denied audience to the leaders of separatist movements, applying the principle of not meeting politicians from the Monarchy who pursued a policy other than that of the Ballhausplatz. While Wilson waged an open propaganda war against the German Government (but not against the German people), secret peace talks were opened with Vienna.<sup>32</sup>

The President cleverly grasped the opportunity which was presented to him on a plate by the Allied note of 10 January: he could act as the ultimate mediator and bring the war to an end on American terms. This could be achieved by detaching the Monarchy from Germany through a separate peace, which was to be won by offering the Ballhausplatz the American rejection of the dismemberment of the lesser Central Power. Wilson's plan was based upon the correct assumption that the Monarchy needed peace and on the mistaken belief that she wanted it at any price. Little did the President know when he sent the

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<sup>29</sup>. IPCH 3: 43 and 46. Trialism would have meant the extension of the dualist system to either the Czechs or the Poles or possibly the South Slavs. Further discussion of the idea is provided in Chapter 9 below.

<sup>30</sup>. Mamatey (1957) pp. 91-93.

<sup>31</sup>. Seymour (1975) pp. 266-80.

<sup>32</sup>. As wartime Habsburg-American peace talks have been discussed sufficiently the following account points out the general tendencies and focuses on the two occasions when Hungarian negotiators were involved. For further details see Chambers (1939); Mamatey (1957); Forster (1941); and in Hungarian, Fejtő (1990).

necessary instructions to his Ambassadors on 8 February 1917 that the Habsburg acceptance of a separate peace would take another 21 months and direct American intervention in the war.

When Wilson's new program was initiated things looked promising. By the spring of 1917 the desire for peace was indeed very strong in the Monarchy. In his 'April Memorandum' Czernin expressed fear of revolutions, called attention to the grave domestic and military situation and stated that another winter campaign was 'absolutely out of the question'. The Emperor Charles sent Czernin's report to Berlin. The Imperial Chancellor Bethmann's reply was more optimistic, arguing that American supplies could be cut off by the submarines and that victory on land would be won before the arrival of American troops. This statement, however, failed to raise high expectations in Vienna. At the same time, Vienna's eagerness for peace did not mean the acceptance of a separate one. According to Czernin, a separate peace was 'a sheer impossibility'. He argued that it would mean changing sides and would transform the entire Monarchy into a theatre of war as a result of the almost inevitable German retaliation while Italy would never give up the territories promised to her in the Treaty of London at the expense of Austria-Hungary.<sup>33</sup>

In return for peace and commitment to non-dismemberment the Americans, who had initiated the first move via Penfield on 22 February 1917,<sup>34</sup> demanded separation from Germany, minor territorial concessions (some at the expense of Germany), Polish independence, and liberalization (federalism). Negotiations broke down when representatives of Vienna came up with two demands which, together or separately, were unacceptable: (1)

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<sup>33</sup>. Czernin (1919) pp. 21; 142; 146-54; 180; 325-36.

<sup>34</sup> WWP's 41: 267, Lansing to Penfield.

they insisted that Germany be informed; (2) and/or demanded the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum*.

On two occasions, which took place in quick succession during October and November 1917, important Hungarian politicians were also involved in secret talks with the Americans. The first of these encounters took place in Berne, Switzerland on 25 October 1917, between Károlyi and Hugh Robert Wilson of the American Embassy. It was an unarranged meeting initiated by Károlyi probably through a former member of the Vienna Embassy, Mr. Dolbeare. Károlyi offered to displace Czernin and force Germany into peace talks if 'Austria-Hungary would not be heavily penalized territorially,'<sup>35</sup> but considered a separate peace impossible because of Germany's hold over the Monarchy. While Hugh Wilson attached great significance to the meeting, the State Department did not, and no further action was taken.<sup>36</sup> This was due to the fact that Frank E. Anderson, Lansing's unofficial representative, was on his way to meet Apponyi. They were to meet in Vienna and discuss the possibility of a separate peace but the American declaration of war (7 December 1917), which apparently took Lansing by surprise, forced the Americans to reconsider Anderson's mission. He was instructed to stay in Berne and invite Apponyi there but, instead, Anderson secured an Austrian safe-conduct and departed for Vienna. Apponyi and Czernin, however, also rejected a separate peace and Lansing denied any connection between the Anderson mission and the State Department in the press.<sup>37</sup> While the Károlyi-Wilson and Apponyi-

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<sup>35</sup> One must point to the similarity between this report and one by Ambassador Penfield, which is quoted in chapter five below.

<sup>36</sup> FRUS 1917 Suppl. 2, 1: 322-25; Wilson (1941) pp. 39-43.

<sup>37</sup> See FRUS LP 2: 73-85 for Anderson's final report to the State Department. For further details see FRUS 1917 Suppl. 2, 1: 458 passim. Lansing's denial in the press: New York Times 12 April 1918, p.3.

Anderson talks were chosen primarily for their obvious importance for the present study, they represent the typical pattern of Austro-Hungarian - American secret talks: official and unofficial representatives of the Monarchy were willing to promise anything but giving up the German alliance. Thus, it remains one of the greatest puzzles of wartime American diplomacy why the Wilson administration continued its quest for a separate peace with the Monarchy, until as late as possible, when they could find not a single negotiating partner of any political stature to agree to it.

Actually, the American approach until April 1918 was fairly simple: while Germany was the main enemy, they could toy with the Monarchy. Her exit from the war was understood to be the key to Germany's defeat. Austria-Hungary's separation could be secured through peace negotiations and she could be liberalized at the same time. Wilson apparently did not wish to implement the logical alternative, the liquidation of the Monarchy through her nationalities. Thus, he supported peace negotiations, Lansing grew more and more convinced that dismemberment was the solution, while the Inquiry's report of December 1917 (which formed the basis of the Fourteen Points) suggested something in between: inciting domestic national tensions in the Monarchy without accepting her dismemberment.

The Monarchy's unwillingness to compromise over the most important issue, namely separation from Germany, was certainly one of the reasons for the American declaration of war in December 1917. Equally important were, however, (1) the domestic pressure (Lansing and some Republicans, such as TR, favouring dismemberment); (2) problems in Inter-Allied cooperation (With the U.S. not being at war with Germany's main ally, all coordination, including that of the Supreme War Council was *ipso facto* impossible); (3) Italy's military collapse (Caporetto); and (4) Russia's exit from the war (Lenin's Decree of Peace). The declaration of war turned out to be the first step towards accepting dismemberment, but it

was by no means an immediate turning point. Lloyd George's speech of 5 January 1918 and Wilson's Point X of the Fourteen Points (8 January 1918) did not call for dismemberment. Czernin's response to the Fourteen Points (24 January 1918) had a very positive reception in Washington in spite of his rejection of Point X as interference with the Monarchy's domestic affairs. On the other hand, dismemberment, as an alternative to federalization, gained more ground in France with Clemenceau's coming to power in November 1917. American - Austro-Hungarian peace talks continued despite the state of belligerency: after late January 1918 George D. Herron and Heinrich Lammasch met on several occasions and in February Czernin offered peace again, this time through the Spanish court.<sup>38</sup>

The actual turning point came as the result of a Clemenceau-Czernin showdown in April 1918. Secret negotiations had begun between France and the Monarchy through the two princes Sixtus and Xavier of Bourbon-Parma in December 1916, and during these talks the Emperor Charles recognized the right of France to Alsace-Lorraine. Meanwhile, another set of Franco-Austrian negotiations started in Switzerland in August 1917. During the so called Armand-Revertera meetings the French demanded that the Monarchy should agree to, among other things, the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France. In a speech delivered on 2 April 1918 Czernin remarked that another set of secret negotiations had been wrecked by French demands of that region. In return, Clemenceau charged Czernin with lying. Czernin published some details of the Armand-Revertera talks while Clemenceau published a letter by the Emperor Charles from the Sixtus file. Few realized that until that point both politicians were telling the truth. Czernin, however, overreacted and forced Charles to deny authorship of the letter. Further evidence from Clemenceau put all the blame on the Monarchy. Burián returned to the Ballhausplatz and the subsequent meeting of the two Emperors (William and

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<sup>38</sup>. Briggs (1932); Osuský (1926); WWP's 46: 440 passim.

Charles) in Spa on 12 May 1918 cemented the Central Powers into an inseparable complex.<sup>39</sup>

The next month and a half marked the President's slow acceptance of dismemberment as the only remaining means of forcing the Monarchy out of the war.<sup>40</sup> On 29 May Lansing was allowed to release a communication expressing American interest in the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was held in Rome in April 1918.<sup>41</sup> On 19 June 1918 Wilson received Masaryk and together they focused on the Czecho-Slovak legion in Russia, which played an all-important part in Wilson's change of policy. Masaryk also brought up the necessity of the dismemberment of the Monarchy and later recorded that the President had agreed with him.<sup>42</sup> Wilson finally gave in on 26 June 1918 and his decision was announced publicly two days later.<sup>43</sup> On 3 September he recognized the Czecho-Slovak National Council as *de facto* belligerent government.<sup>44</sup> On 20 September Wilson received Masaryk together with other minority politicians from the Monarchy, such as the Croat Hinko Hinković and the famous Polish musician turned politician, Ignac Paderewski, while encouraging notes were sent to Iasi, the seat of the Rumanian government, and to Belgrade.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>. Chambers (1939) pp. 387-93; Forster (1941) pp. 91-106; Lansing (1935) pp. 262-66; Fejtő (1990) 172-239.

<sup>40</sup> Note that chapter 11 below is devoted to the discussion of Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy and his views on dismemberment.

<sup>41</sup>. FRUS 1918 Suppl. 1, 1: 808-09.

<sup>42</sup>. Unterberger (1989) pp. 222-24.

<sup>43</sup>. Lansing (1935) p. 271; FRUS 1918 Suppl. 1, 1: 816.

<sup>44</sup>. FRUS 1918 Suppl. 1, 1: 824-25.

<sup>45</sup>. Prpić (1967) p. 195; Low (1963) pp. 16-21.



In September 1918 the only official American statement of war aims was still the Fourteen Points, although Wilson supplemented them with 'Four Principles' on 11 February 1918. This seemed to offer a way of escape for the Monarchy and Burián called for an international peace conference on 14 September. Wilson replied only in general terms ('Five Particulars' speech, 27 September). The Imperial Manifesto of 16 October 1918, federalizing the western half of the Monarchy, but leaving the Kingdom of Hungary intact according to the demand of the Hungarian government, came much too late since the general acceptance of dismemberment as an Allied war aim (in terms of rhetoric it was called the right to national self-determination) offered the nationalities an easy choice: with the impending collapse of the Central Powers they could opt either for secession and independence or for defeat and responsibility for the war within the Monarchy. In obvious desperation, Burián asked for an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points on 7 October through the American embassy in Sweden. Wilson's reply of 18 October included the first open nullification of Point X. Andrassy succeeded Burián as Foreign Minister on 25 October and two days later he asked for a separate and immediate armistice on the basis of Wilson's reply of 18 October. Meanwhile, Colonel House was sent to Paris as the chief American representative on the Supreme War Council of the Allied and Associated Powers. On his arrival in the French capital, House asked Walter Lippmann and Frank I. Cobb, two radical American journalists then serving in the American Military Intelligence, to write an explanation of the Fourteen Points. This was done by next morning and the so called Lippmann-Cobb Interpretation, also nullifying Point X, was released to the French press immediately.<sup>46</sup> The terms of the Austro-Hungarian armistice were decided on 31 October 1918 and it was signed in

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<sup>46</sup>. Steel (1981) pp. 149-50; IPCH 4: 162; 206-08.

Padua on 3 November 1918,<sup>47</sup> by which time the Monarchy had practically ceased to exist as the previous week had seen the emergence of national councils in Prague, Agram (Zagreb), Budapest and Vienna while Rumania reentered the war on the side of the already victorious Allies to justify her claims to Transylvania. On the last day of October 1918 Károlyi was swept into power by a popular uprising, Hungarian independence was restored and a military convention was signed with the French commander-in-chief of the Eastern Allied Armies, General Franchet D'Esperey, on 13 November. Meanwhile, the 'Successor States' attacked Hungary and by occupying the territories they had claimed during the war created a *fait accompli* for the Peace Conference. Thus, the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire went hand in hand with the dismemberment of the Kingdom of Hungary, although the detachment of territories with clear Hungarian majorities was not among the openly admitted war aims of the Allies.

The survey of American-Habsburg diplomatic relations during the war would be incomplete without an assessment of the war aims of the countries involved in the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. Having seen the 'raw facts' it is now time to survey Allied war aims against the Habsburg Monarchy and to estimate their effect upon Wilson's policies.

The first Allied country to publicly state its war aims against Austria-Hungary was Russia, the only Entente power which entered the war not against Germany but against the Habsburgs. As early as 12 September 1914, Sergei Sazonov, the Russian Foreign Minister, announced his 13 points and five days later issued a proclamation to the 'Peoples of Austria-

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<sup>47</sup>. House was informing Wilson daily from Paris about the Armistice negotiations: LC TWWps: Series 5C: Wilson-House correspondence. Cables from House to Wilson, esp. Nos. 5 (Lippmann-Cobb interpretation); 16 and 24 (details of the Austro-Hungarian armistice); and 38 (its signing).

Hungary', promising them 'independence and the realization of [their] national strivings.'<sup>48</sup> In his 13 points Sazonov supported Czech nationalism (a plan that Balfour introduced to Wilson and House in April 1917) and called for the restoration of Polish independence. Later suggestions by Sazonov's staff regarding the creation of an independent Czechoslovak republic fell on deaf ears in Petrograd. On the other hand, Sazonov's proclamation indicates that the explosive propaganda value of the Pan-Slav idea was also put to use right at the start of the conflict. Apponyi's articles for the New York Times in 1915, which are discussed in the next chapter, prove that Sazonov's threats were taken perhaps too seriously in Vienna.

Russia was in charge of the negotiations with Rumania of the Treaty of Bucharest, which promised the eastern neighbour of the Habsburg Empire large chunks of Hungarian territory in return for siding with the Allies. Indicative of the seriousness of the promises made to Rumania was a subsequent secret Franco-Russian agreement to re-evaluate Bucharest's claims at the peace table.

After the revolutions in 1917 Russia played no part in working out Allied war aims and concluded a separate peace with the Central Powers in Brest-Litovsk in March 1918. It must be noted that Russia never sought American diplomatic or political assistance for the realization of its war aims against Austria-Hungary.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Stevenson (1991) pp. 121-22.

<sup>49</sup> Stevenson (1991) pp. 118-22; see also: Lederer (1962) and the relevant passages in Spector (1962) and Zeman (1971).

The British and the French were much slower to formulate their war aims against Austria-Hungary than the Russians; in fact, London and Paris shared the fear that any early definition of war aims might threaten Anglo-French cooperation. Actually, the British Empire entered the war with the chief aim of restoring the European balance of power, using the German violation of Belgian neutrality as a *casus belli*. The first official call to define war aims was issued by Prime Minister Asquith in August 1916. In response, the Foreign Office submitted several memoranda discussing the requirements for a lasting peace. These papers, however, paid little attention to East-Central European matters: they called for an independent Polish state but ignored Czech and South Slav claims and the possibility of dismembering the Habsburg Empire.

In December 1916 Lloyd George came to power and he created the Imperial War Cabinet in March 1917. In charge of territorial war aims in the War Cabinet was Lord Curzon. Curzon saw no possible way of containing Germany in Europe and suggested taking its colonial holdings; he made only occasional references to the just solution of the Belgian, Serbian and Polish problems.

Meanwhile, separatist politicians from the Habsburg Monarchy worked hard to convince the Foreign Office of the necessity of reorganizing the Danubian basin. The Czechs started their all-out campaign in London but then decided to move their headquarters to Paris - a clear indication that Beneš and Masaryk considered the French a better bet. Ante Trumbić established his Yugoslav Committee in London. Trumbić decided to stay in London, considering British plans for the establishment of a Balkan League most promising. These politicians made themselves useful for the Allies in various ways (providing information, intelligence work, military service) and got into direct cooperation with the British government.

Very much like Wilson, Lloyd George's War Cabinet also sought to remove Austria-Hungary from the war through secret negotiations. Meanwhile, certain officials in the Foreign Office and members of Lord Northcliffe's propaganda agency, Crewe House, began to favour and even demand the reorganization of East-Central Europe. When the Sixtus affair ruled out a possible separate peace with Vienna, the War Cabinet gave in and in May 1918 agreed to grant full support to the nationalities. Calder maintains that British foreign policy arrived at this point through several 'shifts in emphasis' and that the 'decision to use the nationalities to destroy Austria-Hungary was never taken,' but 'a host of less significant decisions, combined in their historical context, had the same effect.'<sup>50</sup>

As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the British made serious attempts to have their views accepted in the New World. They launched an extremely effective propaganda campaign against Germany in America and won the unconditional support of the publisher-turned-diplomat American Ambassador in London, Walter Hines Page. On top of that, in Sir William Wiseman of MI 1c (Britain's foreign intelligence agency), the British had a representative in America who had unrestricted access to Colonel House and Wilson. Yet, however important Wiseman was in the development of Anglo-American connections, there is no indication that he engaged himself with East-Central European matters while in Washington.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Calder (1976) p. 174.

<sup>51</sup> This summary of British war aims is based upon: Calder (1976); Goldstein (1991); Fest (1978); Kennedy (1981) and Stevenson (1991). On Wiseman's role see: Fowler (1969); Willert (1952) and Andrew (1995) chapter 2. The statement that he played no part in the development of Wilson's East-Central European policies is based upon these secondary sources as well as upon a survey of both House's and Wiseman's papers in the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University.

France entered the war against the Central Powers in the hope of a quick victory against the old foe, Germany, and to recover Alsace-Lorraine. Indicative of the initial French disinterest in Austro-Hungarian matters are Premier Viviani's repeated references to the Ballhausplatz as 'Boliplatz' and 'Baliplatz'.<sup>52</sup> Of the two western Allies France was open to direct German attacks and the ever-changing military situation largely explains the often contradictory official and unofficial statements regarding war aims. Instead of developing a coherent policy towards Austria-Hungary, France used her as a bait in the war: to keep Russia fighting and to lure in the neutrals, Italy and Rumania.

Although supporters of dismemberment as well as of a separate peace were there among the highest circles from the very beginning of the conflict, the emphasis shifted with every change of government during the war. This game of musical chairs, a typical feature of French politics, ended with Clemenceau assuming control in late 1917. The unfavourable military situation in the spring of 1918 and the successes of the Polish and Czech legions on the various fronts eventually tipped the scale in favour of the nationalities. After some hesitation, the Tiger spectacularly ended all hopes of a separate peace with the Sixtus affair and started to support openly Polish and Czechoslovak independence.

The French apparently made few attempts to influence directly American war aims towards Austria-Hungary. After a brief visit in the United States by Viviani in April 1917, André Tardieu was appointed to lead the permanent French War Mission in America. His

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<sup>52</sup> Andrew and Kanya-Forstner (1981) p. 56.

contributions remained limited until the end of the war when he was named Commissioner Plenipotentiary of the French delegation to the peace conference.<sup>53</sup>

Italy and Rumania named the prize for their cooperation with the Allies and secured official promises in the Treaties of London and Bucharest respectively. Despite laying claims to certain Austrian territories the Italian Foreign Minister Sidney Sonnino, who was in charge of East-Central European matters, opposed the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. In doing so he was led by the consideration that recognition of an independent Czechoslovak state would encourage the South Slavs and that a strong and independent Yugoslav state would challenge Italy for most of the territories secured by the Treaty of London. He only surrendered his position under immense diplomatic pressure from London and Paris during the final stages of the war. Meanwhile, Rumania nullified the Treaty of Bucharest by signing a separate peace with the Central Powers but reiterated its claims by re-entering the war on the signing of the Armistice with Austria-Hungary. Like Russia, Italy and Rumania did not influence American policy towards the Habsburg Monarchy during the war.<sup>54</sup>

The outline of American-Habsburg diplomatic relations presented in the first half of the present chapter offers several conclusions about American war aims. Initially, American-Habsburg contacts in certain cases remained ordinary neutral-belligerent relations while in some other cases they became semi-hostile: until the end of 1916 Wilson worked with no coherent line of policy towards Austria-Hungary, he simply improvised. The Allied note of 10 January 1917 offered him a new possibility which he willingly grabbed. Wilson substituted

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<sup>53</sup> On French war aims extremely helpful was Pastor (1994) as well as Stevenson (1982); Stevenson (1991); Andrew and Kanya-Forstner (1981) and Wandycz (1962).

<sup>54</sup> Italian war aims are discussed in Zivojinović (1972) and Valiani (1973). The best account of Rumanian war aims is Spector (1962); see also Stevenson (1991) and Zeman (1971).

secret talks for a separate peace with Vienna for his earlier public calls for peace. Once he made up his mind he carried this policy as far as he possibly could; his sometimes dubious statements served only tactical purposes. Left with no alternative when Clemenceau pulled his trick in April 1918, Wilson had to and did go for dismemberment to escape from the *cul de sac* he had led himself into by insisting on a single-line policy. Yet, during the entire war he demanded fair treatment for the various peoples of the Danubian basin and insisted on regional integration in East-Central Europe.

It may be said with a considerable amount of conviction that Austria-Hungary played only a secondary role in the war aims of the Allied and Associated Powers (with the exception of Italy) during the war. Interestingly, the Habsburg Monarchy played the leading role in the history of the World War for two one-month periods: In July 1914 it launched the European conflict and in October-November 1918 it ended the war with unconditional surrender. In between, the Habsburg Monarchy, and with it Hungary, was not only treated as but actually was a secondary belligerent, a pawn in the game of genuine world powers.

This concludes the introductory part of our enquiries; the next two chapters assess the period of American neutrality while the remaining section of the present study is devoted to the examination of the post-April 1917 period, culminating in a reevaluation of President Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy.



**CHAPTER FOUR:  
PROPAGANDA AND PUBLIC OPINION DURING THE PERIOD  
OF AMERICAN NEUTRALITY**

Domestic public opinion has always been an important factor in American policy making, especially in time of international crisis. The First World War was no exception: several individuals and organizations, some private, others official, stepped up to satisfy the general American curiosity about the rapidly unfolding military and political crisis in the Old World. Even a quick glance at the relevant volumes of the index of the New York Times would reveal that the leading metropolitan (i.e. New York based) paper dealt with the war extensively from the early days of the conflict. Naturally, the Habsburg Monarchy was also discussed but the definitive study of the image of Hungary, based upon a thorough survey of the contemporary American press, is yet to be written. Likewise, surprisingly little has been written about Habsburg related propaganda in America during the war. Since any such enquiry would extend much beyond the limits of a dissertation the present chapter focuses only on key issues and on the image of Hungary and certain Hungarian politicians. An interesting aspect of the problem is that while Austria-Hungary did not figure in the front line of any propaganda campaign in neutral America, Hungary and Hungarian politicians were regularly discussed in the press. This offers a logical way of presentation with an ever narrowing focus from the broader propagandistic issues of the war to the image of Hungary. The following discussion is based primarily upon the American press and propaganda publica-

tions circulated in neutral America and to a smaller extent upon a handful of available memoirs and secondary sources.<sup>1</sup>

Much has been written about First World War propaganda and it is generally understood that the years between 1914 and 1918 saw the emergence of propaganda as an important means of influencing major policy decisions. During the war in Hungary the likes of Apponyi had pointed out the dangers of anti-Hungarian propaganda<sup>2</sup> and later this was seen as one of the most important factors in the dismemberment of Hungary;<sup>3</sup> even as late as 1982 the Hungarian-American historian Stephen Borsody expressed the opinion that 'the Trianon peacemaking was above all the triumph of propaganda.'<sup>4</sup>

Propaganda may have come of age during the First World War but propaganda regarding the Habsburg Monarchy and Hungary remained rather limited both in scope and in effect in the United States; and this was especially true of the period of American neutrality. Four years of war yielded some 100 propaganda pieces most of which were released and circulated by immigrant organizations and by some half a dozen publishers.<sup>5</sup> Of this by no means impressive output only a small fraction, at best two dozen pieces, had reached the American public before the declaration of war on Germany. Most of this propaganda was,

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<sup>1</sup> These include Lasswell (1927); Sanders and Taylor (1982); Viereck (1930); and the present author's recent piece, Glant (1993). Further references are given below.

<sup>2</sup> The Introduction to Gesztesi (1918) was written in 1917 by Apponyi, who very modestly overlooked his own contributions which are detailed towards the end of the present chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Apponyi Emlékkönyv (1926) pp. 124-25. This piece was contributed by the former Consul-General in Cleveland, Ernest Ludwig.

<sup>4</sup> Borsody (1982) p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> These general conclusions are, unless otherwise stated, are those of Glant (1993).

of course, printed material; the possibilities inherent in oral and film propaganda were practically ignored in the Habsburg case.

A comprehensive assessment of wartime Habsburg related propaganda in the United States is extremely difficult; the further we move away in time from the war the more difficult it becomes to reconstruct such efforts. Nevertheless, some general tendencies are relatively easy to identify. Together with the main attack on Germany both the pro- and anti-Habsburg campaigns were also launched in the United States as early as the autumn of 1914, although some of the methods applied so successfully against the Germans, most notably atrocity propaganda, had either failed or were simply dropped in the Habsburg case. The United States became a battleground for propaganda for two obvious reasons. Firstly, as the war progressed it became clear that her intervention, either as mediator or as actual belligerent, would be a significant if not the decisive factor in the outcome of the war, which made propaganda necessary. Secondly, the United States held the largest colonies of the peoples involved in the conflict outside their respective homelands, which made propaganda relatively easy to organize and conduct, although these efforts remained rather limited in the neutrality period. It should be noted that dismemberment propaganda and Wilson's own efforts with the CPI are discussed separately in subsequent chapters.

During the period of American neutrality Allied and Central Powers propaganda dominated the psychological battlefield of the United States; domestic campaigners tended to focus on the broader implications of the war. The main issue initially was responsibility for the war and later, with America's Entente orientation becoming more and more obvious, the winning of her military support for the Allies and the securing of her neutrality for the Central Powers.

It is generally understood that of all foreign propaganda in the United States prior to April 1917 the British campaign was by far the most effective. Conducted 'unofficially' by the Canadian journalist and novelist Sir Gilbert Parker from Wellington House, London, this campaign proved to be highly successful, not least because the American public was simply not aware of the involvement of the British government in it. Parker's able staff analyzed American public life and identified individuals to be approached. To maintain the academic and informal image of the campaign the use of the word 'propaganda' was banned and with every pamphlet mailed to the approximately 260,000 addresses a private letter from Parker was also enclosed.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Wellington House worked not only with pamphlets but also through the press. Having cut the German underwater cables to North America during the early days of the war the British had nearly complete control of war news although American correspondents were sent to Europe and the Germans kept forwarding reports via South American and neutral channels.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, Parker and his associates analyzed the American press on a weekly basis and supplied the right articles if they were deemed necessary. The overall aim of Parker's campaign was to have the United States intervene on the side of the Allies in the war. The best way to achieve that, Parker maintained, was to put the blame for the outbreak of the war on Germany and to present her to the American public in the worst possible light through atrocity propaganda, such as the infamous Bryce Report of - mostly invented - German abuses in Belgium or the execution of the British nurse Edith Cavell.<sup>8</sup> Thus, with Germany identified as the main enemy Austria-Hungary did not have a place in the front line of British propaganda in America. In 1935 the American

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<sup>6</sup> Sanders and Taylor (1982) pp. 169-72, is an excellent account; a copy of one such letter by Parker is printed in Peterson (1939), facing p. 52; see also Calder (1976) chapter 3.

<sup>7</sup> Desmond (1980) p. 293; von Papen (1952) p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> Two good discussions of atrocity propaganda are Ponsonby (1928) and Read (1972).

historian James Duane Squires published the list of the Wellington House pamphlets sent to America: of 231 different items only five dealt with the Monarchy or some of her peoples in any detail.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, only a handful of non-government British propaganda pieces that reached the American public through various other channels, including church connections and simultaneous publication (as in the case of some of the Oxford War Pamphlets), discussed similar issues. Thus, one of the most impressive chapters of World War One propaganda, the official and private British campaign for American intervention, hardly produced a dozen publications about the Monarchy and her peoples.<sup>10</sup> Some discussed Austrian foreign policy in general and in the Balkans (Woods), others introduced the Czecho-Slovaks (Namier) and the Rumanians (Leeper), and the first atrocity propaganda pieces were also circulated. Of those, the works of R. A. Reiss of the University of Lausanne deserve some attention. Reiss, posing as a 'neutral', actually worked on the request and under the friendly guidance of the Serbian Premier Nicola Pašić, wrote his first piece in 1915 and revised it twice by 1919, keeping the issue alive practically all through the war. Interestingly, the New Europe group, a semi-official British pro-dismemberment organization led by Robert William Seton-Watson and Henry Wickham-Steed, ignored the United States in this period.<sup>11</sup> Actually, the first issue of The New Europe enjoyed a good reception in The Nation, one of the leading political weeklies of the time, but there is no indication that further issues were circulated in the United States.<sup>12</sup> The work of Norman Angell, the author of the best selling The Great

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<sup>9</sup> Squires (1935), appendix.

<sup>10</sup> Note that all propaganda material cited in this and subsequent chapters is listed in the appendix below.

<sup>11</sup> The New Europe group has been studied sufficiently both in English and in Hungarian: Hanak (1962); Seton-Watson (1981); Arday (1990); Jeszenszky (1986). In the present and subsequent chapters only the American aspect of their work is discussed.

<sup>12</sup> The Nation, 23 November 1916, p. 480. My conclusion, drawn from the lack of evidence, was kindly confirmed by Mr. Christopher Seton-Watson.

Illusion (1911), stood out from the multitude of books and pamphlets discussing a postwar league of peace. In America and the Cause of the Allies (1915) he briefly mentioned the Monarchy as well, and described her as a German power to be challenged by international cooperation.

In sharp contrast with British propaganda, Italian and French efforts are hardly worth mentioning. In fact, the Italians seem to have produced not a single piece of propaganda in the neutrality period and the French showed a similar lack of interest; their preferences also lay elsewhere. Even the leaders of the 'Austria delenda' movement, the likes of Ernest Denis, Ernest Lavisse, Henri Bergson and Emile Durkheim, chose to stay away from the American campaign. Denis' famous journal, La Nation Tchèque, for example, was never released in English.

Meanwhile, German propaganda in America,<sup>13</sup> conducted by the special agent Dr. Bernhard Derenburg, Ambassador Count Johann von Bernstorff and the talented journalist, George Sylvester Viereck, had three clearly defined goals: (1) securing the loyalty of German-Americans to the home country; (2) refusing responsibility for starting the war; and (3) denying atrocity stories. German lecturers were invited to the United States to promote the case of their country and numerous pamphlets were produced for American public consumption. Yet, such an open campaign was apparently very much out of place in neutral America and the relatively poor English of the German pamphlets, together with the fact that they all carried the official stamp of the Imperial Government, was by no means enough to match the Parker campaign.

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<sup>13</sup> The following account is based upon the works of Roetter (1974) pp. 37-41, 54-59; Squires (1935) p. 45; Lasswell (1927) pp. 146-49; Dodd (1920) pp. 150-57; and the corresponding chapter in Viereck (1930).

The press campaign was orchestrated by Viereck who founded The Fatherland, the leading wartime German-American weekly, in order to secure 'fair play for Germany and Austria-Hungary' in August 1914. Continuing into 1920, the paper first took an open pro-German stand, switching after the diplomatic break in February 1917 to a loyalist tone and changing its title several times (it ended up as Viereck's American Weekly but everyone kept referring to it as The Fatherland); after the war it slowly faded away, being published monthly for some time. Despite the fact, as has been cited above, that the motto of Viereck's weekly was 'fair play for Germany and Austria-Hungary,' only a fraction of the paper was devoted to Habsburg matters; sometimes for several weeks the Monarchy was not even mentioned.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, only two German pamphlets have been found which discussed the Monarchy. One of these was not even translated into English while the other one consisted of general facts and figures about the lesser Central Power. Thus, while German propaganda in neutral America, with all its shortcomings, has been portrayed as second only to the Parker campaign, it clearly shared the British uninterest in Habsburg related matters.

Consequently, it was up to the Habsburg Monarchy to promote her own case in America, something her representatives failed to understand. There was simply no Habsburg propaganda campaign in neutral America and the only, and rather feeble, efforts came from two Hungarians: the New York Consul-General Alexander von Nuber and his colleague in Cleveland, Ernst Ludwig, both of whom entered the Hungarian diplomatic service after the war. Von Nuber and his staff compiled a 64-page general pamphlet about the Monarchy, which was very similar to the corresponding German one, and von Nuber himself discussed

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<sup>14</sup> One striking example is that the death of the Emperor Francis Joseph and the coronation of his successor were hardly mentioned while an entire special issue was devoted to Bismarck, who was presented as a devotee of universal suffrage, among other things: 7 April 1915 issue, esp. p. 24.

the Pan-Slav danger to the Monarchy (he called it 'The Menace of the Bear') in an October 1914 article for The Fatherland.<sup>15</sup> In early 1915 Ludwig published a short book titled Austria-Hungary and the War, which was also released in Hungarian. It was extensively advertised in The Fatherland and received some favourable reviews not least because its introduction was written by the then very popular Ambassador Dumba. According to Ludwig's own post-war account,<sup>16</sup> his book was the only attempt to explain the Monarchy's position to the American public. In his book, Ludwig claimed that with the defeat of the Allies 'England will lose her German and Austro-Hungarian customers to a very large degree and... this trade will shift to other countries, preferably to the United States.' This rather weak appeal was complemented with references to the friendly relations between the two countries before the war and to Hungarians fighting in the American Civil War.<sup>17</sup>

Other than that, Austrian propaganda in America targeted the Slavic communities and not the general public. According to Voska, Austrian propagandists even used films to hammer their message home:

For one thing, the Austrians showed in every Slavonic colony a motion picture titled in the native language. The plot was simple and obvious. A Slovak in the United States makes a shell for the allies. It goes to the Russian front, where, shot at the Austrians, it kills his brother.<sup>18</sup>

As indicated several times above, peaceful propaganda was not the main priority of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy and Consulates in the New World, and the unfortunate Dumba

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<sup>15</sup> The Fatherland, 21 October 1914, pp. 7-8.

<sup>16</sup> Ludwig (1921) p. 141.

<sup>17</sup> Ludwig (1915) pp. 187-88, 192-94.

<sup>18</sup> Voska and Irwin (1941) p. 131.



affair pulled the carpet from under Austro-Hungarian propagandists. Dumba's involvement in sabotage, which was but another clear indication that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador was ready to follow his German colleague in official and unofficial ventures alike, resulted in his forced recall and had severe consequences. While the diplomatic consequences of the affair are discussed elsewhere, its propagandistic effects should be examined here.

Dumba's conduct and dismissal was on the agenda on a daily basis in the press for more than a month<sup>19</sup> and did very little to enhance the reputation of the Monarchy in America. It also became a standard feature of domestic American propaganda after April 1917 and came to be identified, as well as the Hungarian-Americans, with German intrigues in neutral America. Meanwhile, the journalist Géza Kende summed up the Hungarian position in a letter to the New York Times. Kende pointed out the lack of genuine American neutrality, stated that Dumba was not very popular among Hungarian-Americans anyway, and then asked several revealing questions:

Did the American press and the American people stop to think only a minute what it means for Hungarians in America to manufacture munitions which are intended to kill their own brethren and destroy the houses in which they were born? Don't you see the dark, tragic side of the situation? Is it not a crime against the mother country to help willingly and knowingly the enemies who want to destroy it? Is it not the duty of the Ambassador of Austria-Hungary, even of every good American citizen, to help these poor Hungarians in their desperate situation, and show them a way to get some other peaceful occupation which is not in contrast with their feelings and sentiments?<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Especially in the New York Times and the New York World.

<sup>20</sup> BH GKps: Newspaper File: press cutting without date, September 1915; it appears to be from the New York Times, 19 September 1915 issue, Section II. p. 3.

His efforts came to naught chiefly because the New York Times published his letter with the headline 'Hungarian Defends Dr. Dumba's Course' and with the subheading 'Editor Kende Says Ambassador Did Right in Trying to Cripple Munitions Plants,' - which, together with a large number of cruel cartoons depicting Dumba's departure<sup>21</sup> give a clear indication of the general resentment in the New World. The only paper to print Dumba's apologetic denial was The Fatherland,<sup>22</sup> but its general anti-Administration stance *ipso facto* ruled out a favourable reception of its efforts in the matter. In many places Hungarian-Americans, whose involvement in the affair was obvious, were physically assaulted and were driven from their jobs and property. Under such circumstances, the exploits of Sándor Tarnos did little to improve their situation. In February 1917 Tarnos, armed to the teeth with revolvers and pocket-knives, walked into the Navy Department and insisted that he wanted to join the US Navy. He was arrested on the spot and American newspapers were quick to dub him as a spy, especially when it was revealed that the British had already jailed him for six months on the same charges.<sup>23</sup> (In fact, we do not know what he wanted then and there.)

The Hungarian-Americans took the only logical step to demonstrate publicly their loyalty to the United States, which remained the main feature of their activities until the Armistice.<sup>24</sup> Dumba's fall from popularity to disgrace reinforced the general tendency to view

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<sup>21</sup> Some of these were reprinted later in Dumba's own memoir, which was published in English in 1933.

<sup>22</sup> The Fatherland, 22 September 1915, pp. 118-19; 29 September 1915, pp. 134-35. The attitude of the other leading weeklies was understandably hostile: The Nation, 16 and 23 September, pp. 347-48 and 372 respectively; New Republic, 11 and 15 September, pp. 136 and 190 respectively.

<sup>23</sup> BH GKps: Newspaper File: unidentified cutting dated 12 February 1917 and headlined: Magyar Kém? (A Hungarian Spy?).

<sup>24</sup> Puskás (1982M) pp. 306-12; Vardy (1985) pp. 88-91.

the Monarchy as the sidekick to Germany in the war; Austro-Hungarian activists thus did more to ruin the reputation of their homeland than to promote her cause in the eyes of the American public.

Meanwhile, Hungarian government propaganda continued to target not the American public but the Hungarians in America. The Hungarian-American clergy and press continued to receive payments (even after the diplomatic break in April 1917, through the Red Cross and the Swedish Embassy<sup>25</sup>) to resist Americanization, to counter anti-Habsburg propaganda by other immigrants from the home country and to promote repatriation plans.<sup>26</sup> In a highly symbolic gesture the Hungarian Premier Count István Tisza sent an official letter to the Hungarian-Americans conferring thanks for their loyalty and financial contributions on 23 August 1915.<sup>27</sup> Thus, loyalty to Hungary was an issue but dismemberment most certainly was not; not a single voice was raised in favour of an independent Hungary.

At the same time, other immigrants from the Habsburg Monarchy attracted little attention in neutral America. For most of them, the thirty-two months of American neutrality was a period of frustration and gathering strength. Their activities remained limited to attempts to create a central organization, to public demonstrations, and to the continuation of local rivalries. The two exceptions to this tendency were the Czechs and some South Slavs, who therefore deserve some special attention.

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<sup>25</sup> OL K 26 1174. cs. XIV. tétel: folder no. 3441/1918; Puskás (1982M) p. 310.

<sup>26</sup> Vardy (1985) pp. 87-89.

<sup>27</sup> BH GKps: Newspaper File: undated press cutting titled 'Üzenet hazulról' (A Message from Home).

By the end of 1915 the Czecho-Slovak liberation movement abroad was in full flow with the Bohemian National Alliance in direct touch with Masaryk and Beneš under friendly British guidance. The Bohemian-Americans had three significant achievements during the period of American neutrality: Voska established an intelligence organization which worked in close cooperation with the British, they had their case heard in the House of Representatives and they managed to raise a minor storm in the American press over the arrest of Alice Masaryk.

In order to prove their loyalty to the US and to win some favours with the White House and the British, Bohemian-Americans organized an intelligence agency to unveil Austrian and German sabotage in the United States. Voska and his 'faithful eighty-five' had no less than four informants in the Austro-Hungarian Consulate-General in New York, which was a hotbed of sabotage activity. Voska's team scored several major successes including the Archibald case, which led to Dumba's recall. Voska worked with Sir Guy Gaunt, the Naval Attache of the British Embassy in Washington and the head British intelligence in America. Successful counter-intelligence work was a spectacular way for the Czechs to secure the sympathy of both the British and the Americans.<sup>28</sup>

The Bohemian-Americans also launched a campaign to educate the American public on Czech and Slovak issues. An early but spectacular breakthrough came in February 1916, when the Foreign Relations Committee of the House of Representatives heard the BNA leader Charles Pergler's call for an independent Czechoslovak republic. And although no further

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<sup>28</sup> Voska and Irwin (1941) is the best account; see also Willert (1952) and Andrew (1995) chapter 2.

action was taken by any official American agency, this clearly served as encouragement for the future.<sup>29</sup>

But the Czech related case that attracted most attention in America before 1918 was the arrest of Alice Masaryk. Back in 1878 Masaryk married Charlotte Garrigue of Brooklyn, NY, and they moved back to Prague. When Masaryk escaped to the west in late 1914, his daughter, Alice, stayed at home. In order to checkmate Masaryk, the Austrian authorities arrested his daughter in October 1915 and apparently sentenced her to death. Masaryk's American friends were quick to rally to her rescue. Charles Crane, a wealthy American and a major financial contributor to Wilson's election campaign whose son served as Lansing's secretary, promised Masaryk to turn his daughter's case into a second Edith Cavell case. The Bohemian-born Congressman Adolph J. Sabath of Illinois also lent his full support on the issue, and so did Herbert A. Miller and Mary McDowell. The story was extensively covered by the American press until August 1916, when the Austro-Hungarian Embassy officially announced Alice Masaryk's release.<sup>30</sup>

Just like the Czechs, the Serbians were also busily promoting their case in America. During the early days of the war Serbia was presented as the Belgium of the Balkans and the British, as mentioned above, circulated several Serbian related pamphlets in America. Soon after the outbreak of hostilities between Austria-Hungary and Serbia an American Red Cross mission headed by Colonel Edward F. Ryan was despatched to the Balkans. A Serbian

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<sup>29</sup> Pergler (1926) pp. 58-60.

<sup>30</sup> The best account of the Alice Masaryk case is Unterberger (1989) pp. 30-31; on Masaryk's American contacts see Unterberger (1989) pp. 24-31. Miller is discussed in chapter 7 below; McDowell worked at the University of Chicago. Edith Cavell was a British nurse caught 'spying' by the Germans. Her execution was presented as a barbarous German exploit against women by Parker and his team in America.

Relief Committee was also established and Americans gave freely to support the underdogs of the Balkans.<sup>31</sup>

Of all peoples of the world, apparently the Montenegrins were the first to secure the War Department's approval for recruiting in America, as early as 1915. On finding this out, the Serbian Premier Pašić quickly sent Colonel Milan Pribičević (later the first Yugoslav Minister of the Interior) to America. Ambassador Ljubo Mihajlović lent his full support to Pribičević, who was authorized to open a special recruiting office in Washington.<sup>32</sup> However, in the absence of a well-organized propaganda campaign to capitalize on the situation, interest in Serbia soon died away.

The fact that neither the Alice Masaryk case nor the trials and tribulations of Serbia could raise lasting interest in East-Central European matters indicated that neutral American public opinion was not yet ready for an all-out campaign.

President Wilson remained the chief American propagandist of the neutrality period and his call for 'neutrality in thought as well as in action' in August 1914 was met with more enthusiasm than his call to arms in April 1917. Nevertheless, the war, together with a variety of general issues, such as postwar international organization and disarmament, was being discussed freely from the early days of the conflict. Austria-Hungary earned only a few casual remarks; in fact the only book length first hand account of the Monarchy was

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<sup>31</sup> Armstrong (1971) pp. 33-34.

<sup>32</sup> Prpić (1967) pp. 182, 186-87. The broader implications of this episode are discussed in the next chapter.

incorporated into a vivid travelogue by the radical journalist John Reed.<sup>33</sup> Neutral America was apparently more interested in general than in particular issues. Coming closest to actually dealing with the Monarchy, George Louis Beer, later a member of the Inquiry, noted that the Central Powers were right when protesting against the British blockade which cut them off from neutral American contraband.<sup>34</sup> Beer's statement was among the few attempts to take a genuinely neutral stand; the majority of domestic American propagandists took a pro-British position. One good example was Nicholas Murray Butler, then president of Columbia University, who delivered a series of public addresses on British-American cooperation and disarmament, and discussed the war in a series of articles for the New York Times under the pseudonym 'Cosmos'.<sup>35</sup> His ideas were discussed by Apponyi in several open letters and his articles were published collectively in a small volume in 1917. Similar problems were in the front line of the efforts of the League to Enforce Peace, led by the former President William Howard Taft, and of James M. Beck, a Republican lawyer, working with the Pilgrim's Society, an unofficial British propaganda agency in America.

The shortage of references to (Austria-) Hungary in the various propaganda campaigns in neutral America was more than made up for by the coverage of a variety of related issues in the press. The Habsburg Monarchy, being one of the chief belligerents, was discussed practically on a daily basis, albeit with some bias, which was due to the general sympathies of the papers and the British control of news. It was within this framework that the views of leading Hungarian politicians, such as Tisza, Andrásy, Károlyi and Apponyi, were dis-

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<sup>33</sup> This was indeed the same Reed who wrote Ten Days that Shook the World about the Bolshevik Revolution.

<sup>34</sup> Beer (1916) pp. 1, 12-13.

<sup>35</sup> Tumulty described Butler's articles as worthy 'of the most earnest attention': WWPp 40: 24, Tumulty to Wilson, 21 November 1916.

cussed together with several other problems including the future of the Monarchy. Instrumental in this process were the leading metropolitan dailies (the New York Times and World) and the top political weeklies (New Republic and The Nation) but regional papers, in the case of Hungary The Philadelphia Public Ledger, also contributed some valuable information and opinion. Nevertheless, most of the information cited in the American press was second hand, sometimes hypothetical (Tisza as Habsburg Foreign Minister), sometimes based more upon expectations than upon reality (Apponyi's appointment as Ambassador to America), and only on a very few occasions did it originate with American correspondents in belligerent Europe. Of the several possible ways of presenting this subject the topical one has been selected with a view to an analytical approach.

The background of the conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, which triggered off the World War, was given very little consideration in the American press. Besides Apponyi's attempts, which are detailed below, the British historian George Macaulay Trevelyan's 'Serbia and Southeastern Europe' in The Atlantic Monthly appears to be the only such venture. Written with accuracy and without bias, Trevelyan's survey of the various peoples and conflicts of the Balkans and the Habsburg Monarchy does not deserve to be identified with what propaganda came to represent during the First World War.<sup>36</sup>

Another issue of greater significance, the future of the Habsburg Monarchy (and of Hungary), was given surprisingly much attention even during the early months of the war. As early as January 1915 the American journalist Frank H. Simonds discussed the possible

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<sup>36</sup> The Atlantic Monthly, July 1915, pp. 119-127.



dismemberment of the Monarchy in the New Republic.<sup>37</sup> He foretold that Austria-Hungary would lose one third of her territory, including Transylvania. Simonds concluded that the Habsburg Monarchy should be and would be transformed into an American type confederation of the four states of Austria, Hungary, Bohemia and Croatia. According to Simonds, while territorial losses were inevitable, dismemberment was to be avoided in the interest of international peace. The break-up of the Monarchy, he argued, would render the world war

but a prelude to a long series of wars, waged between the many nations and races who are heirs-at-law in history to the Hapsburg estate.

He also made an interesting statement regarding Hungary which, on the one hand, echoed the theory of Daco-Rumanian continuity and some anti-Hungarian cliches but, on the other hand, testified to some insight into the issues of the war. When discussing Transylvania, Simonds claimed that:

Historically it is a part of that Dacian province which sent thither the colonists to whom the Rumanians trace their descent. Finally the Hungarian nation, which has long ruled here, has earned the deserved hatred of the Rumanian population by employing precisely the methods which made Austrian rule odious in Italy. That Rumania will presently enter the war, occupy Transylvania, and thus add 21,000 square miles to its present area is inevitable.

It is easy to understand why this article marked the beginning of much ill-feeling between Simonds and the Hungarian-Americans; conciliation was achieved only in mid-1920 when the American journalist raised his voice against the Trianon Treaty.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> 16 January 1915, pp. 13-14. The two citations below are from p. 14 and p. 13 in that order.

<sup>38</sup> In the August 1920 issue of the short lived The Commentator, a Hungarian-American monthly established to win support for Hungarian revisionist claims in the New World, the following comment was printed about Simonds: 'Aside from small inaccuracies, Mr. Simonds is right. His present view

Like Simonds, the Englishman Henry Noel Brailsford, the author of several books and pamphlets on the war and a prominent advocate of the League of Nations,<sup>39</sup> also chose the New Republic for publicizing his opinion in the matter. In 'Hungary and Independence' (February 1915) he gave an impressive account of the pros and cons of Hungarian independence outlining the Hungarian position with utmost accuracy. On the other hand, he saw the 'only one sure way of escape' for Hungary from the melee of the possible dismemberment of the Monarchy in joining a Balkans federation, into which she would be driven against her own will. According to Brailsford, an independent Hungary would accept this solution because she would be to that federation 'what Prussia is to Germany,' even though 'the typical Magyar thinks of the Balkan races as Europe thinks of Africa.' The English publicist, however, refused to believe that things would go that far; even at the cost of severe territorial losses Austria-Hungary would survive the war:

[Austria-Hungary] may emerge a second-rate Power, destined for its great good to devote itself henceforward to the task of internal reorganization. But the economic and political reasons which forbid any real independence to Hungary - or to Bohemia - will make for its conservation. It inspires no love, but it arouses only local hates. It will survive as a convenience.<sup>40</sup>

In his other piece for the New Republic, which was written under entirely different circumstances in August 1916, Brailsford again dismissed the break-up of Austria-Hungary as

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of the Hungarian situation [printed in the June 1920 issue of The Review of Reviews] is the more significant because he was the most ardent supporter of the intolerant French attitude so conspicuously manifested in Versailles...' (p. 6.).

<sup>39</sup> Since no proof has been found regarding the circulation of Brailsford's works in America they are not listed in the appendix. One impressive example of his work is A League of Nations, London, Headley Bros. Publishers, 1917.

<sup>40</sup> In the 13 February 1915 issue, pp. 44-45. All quotes are from p. 45.

illogical and dangerous. Besides repeating his earlier argument about regional economic cooperation he also addressed the League of Nations idea:

To 'break-up' the Dual Monarchy means a dictated, an imposed peace. If you start the new era in the world's evolution by conference, negotiation and adjustment of interests, even though you may have had to fight a bitter war in order to bring the enemy to conference, you may on this foundation of conference build the superstructure of a league of peace. Within that league, as the rivalries of the Powers ceased to express themselves as mere violence, you might expect *pari passu* the decay of the local strife of the races. On the basis of a dictated peace, on the contrary, no future system of conference, and no league of peace could be erected without a miracle.<sup>41</sup>

Another solution to the future of the Habsburg Monarchy, Friedrich Naumann's *Mitteleuropa* plan, naturally attracted the widest attention in the American press and was discussed more extensively than any other Habsburg related issue with the possible exception of sabotage. Naumann's book, unquestionably one of the most significant pieces of wartime propaganda literature, was written during the first half of 1915 but was not released in English until the very end of 1916. Nevertheless, the concept of a German Central Europe appeared in the American press long before.

The first such exposition was published in Viereck's The Fatherland, as early as December 1914. In a half-page article Franz von List outlined the possibilities inherent in an East Central European regional integration under German leadership.<sup>42</sup> The plan itself was regularly discussed in the American press, daily and weekly alike, but it was not until the publication of the English edition of Naumann's work that it was introduced in detail to the American public. In December 1916 Gustav Pollak reviewed the book in a nine-column article

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<sup>41</sup> From the 16 September 1916 issue, titled 'The Vicious Circle of Nationality,' pp. 157-59. The quote is from p. 158.

<sup>42</sup> In the 16 December 1914 issue, p. 13.

for The Nation.<sup>43</sup> Pollak took the plan apart and pointed to its apparent weaknesses - such as the possible frictions between Germany and Austria-Hungary, the resistance of the various nationalities, the problems of imposing the German language as the official one on such a large territory, etc. Little did he have to say about Hungary but one of his statements is worth quoting because it casts some light upon the depth of Pollak's analysis:

And even if Austrians and Germans allow themselves to be carried away by such glittering phrases, the sober-minded Hungarians may in due time be trusted to look at the situation after the war with a keen eye to their own interests. The Magyars have never fully relished the union with Austria, and, no matter what their present attitude may be, they will never allow the Dual Monarchy to enter into any scheme that may threaten to interfere with their future freedom of action.

With America's entry into the war the *Mitteleuropa* program soon became the 'Pan-German plot' for world domination and a major theme for both domestic and foreign propagandists.

The image of Austria-Hungary as a sidekick to Germany in general and in the war in particular was built from several themes. One of these was unquestionably the Naumann thesis; another one was the British campaign against Germany presenting her to be the one and only enemy dangerous enough to challenge even America in the near future; and yet another element was the emergence of dismemberment propaganda. As will be seen in the following chapter, American diplomatic representatives all around Europe also promoted this concept which, together with her early and spectacular military setbacks, relegated the Monarchy to the group of secondary belligerents in the eyes of the American press.

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<sup>43</sup> 'The Vision of a "Central Europe"', from the 14 December 1916 issue, pp. 557-60. This article was three times longer than the average piece in the paper. The citation below is from pp. 559-60.

This concept of the Monarchy as a secondary belligerent was a recurrent theme in the American press from the outset of the conflict; yet the first editorial in a major American paper to discuss it was not written until December 1915. Then, in The Nation, an unidentified member of staff claimed that Germany had fought Austria-Hungary's war and had drawn her under the complete control of Berlin. This article echoed yet another misconception about the Monarchy, namely that her affairs were guided not by Vienna but by Budapest; the author claimed that it was the Hungarian Premier Count Tisza who was pulling the strings.<sup>44</sup> This takes our discussion to the intriguing problem of the image of leading Hungarian politicians in the American press but before providing the details, the broader issue of Hungary's position in the Habsburg Monarchy must be briefly addressed.

By 1914, the interpretation of the delicate and unique nature of the Dualist system created by the Compromise of 1867 had long been a hotly debated issue within and without the Monarchy; and is still debated by historians.<sup>45</sup> The present author is of the opinion that Hungary was not the dominant partner in the Habsburg Monarchy; in fact one may say that there was no dominant partner at all. The Compromise of 1867 was neither a personal union nor the alliance of two equal countries. Neither side was willing to upset drastically this peculiar balance of power, not even after the outbreak of the war. Individual Hungarian politicians (Tisza and Burián in the early stages of the war and Apponyi in 1917) were most certainly influential in Habsburg policy making but, as has been emphasized in previous chapters, neither secession from Austria nor a break with Germany was considered a serious possibility in the highest Hungarian political circles. It was the New Europe group, and espe-

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<sup>44</sup> 'Austria's Future', in the 9 December 1915 issue.

<sup>45</sup> The presently 'official' Hungarian interpretation was written by Péter Hanák and is available in English in the 1967 volume of the Austrian History Yearbook.

cially Robert William Seton-Watson, who began to promote the ideas of Hungarian domination within the Dual Monarchy and of Tisza's sole responsibility for the outbreak of the war in the west, primarily in order to make Czech, Rumanian and Yugoslav dismemberment propaganda more credible and their territorial claims more acceptable.

However, the first European politician to accuse Tisza of starting the war, at least in the American press, was not Seton-Watson, but Károlyi, who during his second visit in 1914 gave a long interview to the Cleveland Leader on the causes of the war.<sup>46</sup> Károlyi's - actually false<sup>47</sup> - accusations were soon reinforced by various Allied sources and Tisza came to be viewed as one of the strong men of the Monarchy. Not only was he mentioned regularly by the press but he was also the target of much speculation. He was presented as the driving force behind Burián's policies and on no less than three occasions the New York Times broke the news that he would replace his protege in the Ballhausplatz.<sup>48</sup> His opinion was eagerly sought in times of crisis (Dumba, the sinking of the Ancona); his angry refusal to surrender the pride of the Monarchy was reported<sup>49</sup> together with his pro-American statements.<sup>50</sup> Tisza was never attacked seriously in the neutral American press,

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<sup>46</sup> Ludwig (1921) p. 142.

<sup>47</sup> It was revealed after the war that Tisza initially protested against the ultimatum to Serbia. A very good analysis of the problem is Diószegi (1984) pp. 278-87.

<sup>48</sup> 3 January, 9 March, and 25 May 1915.

<sup>49</sup> New York Times, 24 December 1915, front page: 'Advices [sic] from Budapest dated Dec. 15 convey the impression that the Austro-Hungarian Prime Minister [sic], Count Tisza is - or was - likely to overrule Baron Burian, the Foreign Minister, in case the latter should be desirous of meeting the American demands in regard to the Ancona sinking.' No quotation can be more telling than this one.

<sup>50</sup> New York Times, 24 September 1916, p.3: 'Tisza Proclaims Friendship for US.'

which was probably due to the expectation that if no one else then Hungary would stand up against the *Mitteleuropa* plan.

Another prominent Hungarian politician, Count Julius Andrásy, the son of the man who had built the German-Habsburg alliance and who as the last Habsburg Foreign Minister actually undid it in October 1918, was also discussed from time to time. Hardly suspecting his future role in the termination of the World War, the American papers mentioned Andrásy usually in relation to domestic Hungarian affairs. The only exposition of Andrásy's views on the war was the transcript, in the New York Times, of an article he wrote for the Neue Freie Presse of Vienna on 18 February 1917. Andrásy expressed his belief that the United States would not enter the World War only because some American citizens, who were well aware of the risks they were taking, were killed in various U-boat attacks. He also asserted that submarine warfare was a new and effective 'method of fighting on which we have decided, well knowing what we are doing is in order to defend ourselves and to break through the cruel starvation blockade after three years of war.' He issued a final warning stating that the Monarchy would not turn back; traditional sympathies for America would be abandoned should national interest dictate such a step.<sup>51</sup>

Károlyi may not have been very popular in the White House but no Hungarian politician, not even Apponyi, had a better press in America. This was, at least in part, the net result of Alexander Konta's April 1914 special article in the New York Times, which appeared with the telling headline: 'To seek American Sympathy for Hungarian Liberty' and the subheading: 'Remembering Kossuth's United States Visit, Members of the Independent

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<sup>51</sup> New York Times, 21 February 1917, p. 2: 'Andrásy Thinks We Will Not Make War.' Another lengthy discussion of his views was the Bullitt interview, which was printed in the Philadelphia Public Ledger on 19 October 1916. Bullitt is discussed below.

Party Are Coming to Ask Our Aid for Democracy's Battle Against Austrian Autocracy.' Károlyi's involvement in Hungarian politics was anxiously monitored thereafter and his numerous pro-American statements were promptly reported to the American public. The Károlyi publicity campaign, for which he himself did very little, peaked on 7 September 1916, when the New York Times applauded the formation of his new Independent Party with the headline 'For a New Hungary on American Plan.' The article faithfully introduced the program of the Károlyi party, which indeed stood for everything that had been expected from Hungary: universal suffrage, the equality of the various peoples of Hungary and her independence from Germany after the war. As will be seen in the chapters on post-April 1917 propaganda below, the pro-Károlyi campaign was continued well into 1918, although obviously for different reasons, only to be given yet another push by his emergence as the first Premier of postwar independent Hungary.

Unlike Károlyi, Apponyi may have had the odd bad review, but he was by far the best known Hungarian politician in American political and academic circles and the only one who actively promoted Austria-Hungary's case in America. Besides maintaining his connection with TR until the sinking of the Lusitania, he opened up other channels as well and secured access to the American press, which no other politician from the Central Powers could boast of. He was in the centre of some amazing gossip and was 'promoted' to the distinguished position, which he of course never held, of 'former Hungarian premier' by the New York Times in November 1916.



The Apponyi-Roosevelt friendship entered the war with the Hungarian aristocrat asking the former President to see Károlyi on his second American visit in 1914;<sup>52</sup> but this encounter never came about. Broader issues were also discussed between the two of them: they both agreed that the World War was not arbitrable, but, not surprisingly, disagreed over the question of Belgium.<sup>53</sup> The first touch of uneasiness developed between them when TR warned Apponyi that

as late as June you were writing to me somewhat reproachfully on the ground that I was not aiding you and your friends in your violent anti-Austrian crusade. As late as June the Magyars of your kind, including you, were using language about Austria which was in effect exactly like what you now say about those who are fighting Austria and Germany... For years all your complaints to me have been against Austria. You have not said one word about Russia; and this continued until within thirty days of the outbreak of the war. You say that this is a struggle against Russia.<sup>54</sup>

Their disagreements over some of the broader issues of the war would probably not have been enough to bring about a break between the two of them; it was provoked by the German sinking of the Lusitania. On 1 June 1915 the last letter, marking the end of a unique friendship of two such distinguished politicians, was written by TR, who made his position very clear:

I thank you for your long and interesting letter. I shall not attempt to go through over the points you raise. Since you have written, the Germans have sunk scores of American men, women and children on the high seas, committing what I cannot but regard cold-blooded murder; and I feel more strongly

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<sup>52</sup> LC TRps: Correspondence: TR to Apponyi, 6 July 1914. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to recover some of their correspondence since only TR's papers are available.

<sup>53</sup> LC TRps: Correspondence: TR to Apponyi, 17 September 1914; also printed in Roosevelt (1954) 8: 819-20.

<sup>54</sup> LC TRps: Correspondence: TR to Apponyi, 5 March 1915; also printed in Roosevelt (1954) 8: 906-07. The quote is from the first page of the letter; also p. 906.

than ever. The Germans themselves apparently feel very bitterly toward me. I do not feel bitterly toward them; and I have nothing but genuine friendship for the Austro-Hungarians. You do not need to be told my admiration for the Hungarians. Well, when this terrible war is over and when my friends among the warring powers have grown so that they are desirous of seeing me, I shall look forward to seeing them, and you one of the first among them.<sup>55</sup>

If this break was a severe blow for Apponyi's one-man American campaign, he did his very best to make up for the loss through other channels. Back in August 1914 he sent an article to TR and asked him to help have it published in some American newspaper.<sup>56</sup> When The Outlook, which TR had edited earlier, refused, Apponyi cabled the ex-President to send the article to Alexander Konta.<sup>57</sup> That piece, together with three more of his open letters, was published in the New York Times during 1915. In his first two pieces,<sup>58</sup> which appeared on the same day (17 January 1915, Magazine section), Apponyi contended that the war had long been planned by Russia against the Monarchy and Britain joined it willingly using the issue of Belgian neutrality as an excuse. In his next piece, also addressed to Nicholas Murray Butler, Apponyi discussed the lack of American neutrality in the conflict.<sup>59</sup> He predictably began with the contraband issue, warning that the lack of genuine neutrality would undermine America's credibility as a mediator in the long run. He went on to analyze Butler's thesis of the 'war between democracy and autocracy,' and pointed out that while Britain should be viewed as democratic, certain developments in France presented her in a different

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<sup>55</sup> LC TRps: Correspondence: TR to Apponyi, 1 June 1915.

<sup>56</sup> In the letter dated 17 September 1914, as cited earlier.

<sup>57</sup> LC TRps: Correspondence: Apponyi to TR, 24 October 1914.

<sup>58</sup> One was addressed to Nicholas Murray Butler, the other was the article he had sent to TR earlier.

<sup>59</sup> 28 March 1915, Section V: pp. 4 and 20. The quotes are both from p. 4; the discussion of the 'yellow peril' is on p. 20.

light. He acknowledged Butler's remark that 'the appearance of Russia among the Allies is an anomaly,' but again claimed that Russia was not simply 'among the Allies' but actually their leader:

I must repeat it over and over again: it is in origin a Russian war, with a clearly outlined Russian program of conquest.

Finally, he addressed the question of postwar international organization in a way which gave away another aspect of his political views, hitherto unknown to the Americans. He began with a warning against misleading analogies, using one of his 1911 American speeches:

The American Union's origin was the common struggle of several English colonies, now States, for their emancipation; unity of purpose was the main principle of their growth, union its natural result. Europe, on the other hand, is, in her origin and in her present state, a compound of conflicting interests and struggling potentialities. Mutual antagonism remained the principle of growth embodied in her several national lives.

Apponyi went on to suggest the establishment of a postwar 'western coalition' including the United States but excluding Russia, a country, in his opinion, representing 'eastern mentality, which implies an unadmissible [sic] spirit of aggression and of conquest.' Despite his apparent Russophobia, which stemmed mainly from the memories of 1849, Apponyi did not exclude the possible incorporation of Russia in the 'western coalition' at a later stage. Russia, however, might win admission to the coalition not through democratization, which would take her another couple of centuries according to Apponyi, but because the 'yellow peril' of Japan and China would force her into seeking assistance from the west. This racist attitude and fear of non-white peoples, although fashionable at the time, had not been characteristic of Apponyi's political writings and addresses earlier, and is somewhat puzzling.

The Hungarian politician's final open letter, printed on 12 October 1915 and addressed to a Mr. Allen, 'a member of the World Peace Foundation,' proved to be the least convincing one. He simply repeated his arguments about the lack of American neutrality ('the manifest unfairness of her so-called neutrality has unfitted America to act as peacemaker') and Russian aggression, but with more passion than ever before:

How on earth can you say that France and England are fighting for those principles which America upholds, when these two powers are in alliance with Russia...?

While this was a point which caused some problem to those who wished to present the war as one of democracy vs. autocracy until the March 1917 revolution in Russia, Apponyi touched the wrong nerve with one of his final statements:

What are the few hundred who went down with the Lusitania, deeply though we mourn their lot, in comparison to the hundreds of thousands who are killed by American bullets fired by Russians from American guns, by American explosives, a token of sympathy offered by a peace-loving democracy to the representative of darkest tyranny and wanton aggression?<sup>60</sup>

On several occasions Apponyi was criticized for his views as being 'made in Germany',<sup>61</sup> and the October 1915 article was his last stand in the American press during the war. Nevertheless, his pacifism and pro-American statements were continuously reported on, and he returned to the focus of attention, and to the front page of the New York Times, in September 1916, when he abandoned his earlier position regarding America's status as potential mediator in the war:

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<sup>60</sup> All three quotes are from p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> See for example the editorial on p. 8 of the 28 December 1914 issue of the New York Times.

We are all living in hope that when at last peace comes and when the time arrives for a neutral power to offer her services, it will be the great republic across the Atlantic as most fit for a work of such magnitude. We all hope the United States Administration will take the affair in hand sooner or later, when they deem it proper to do so.<sup>62</sup>

Subsequently, expectations were rising both in America and in Hungary that Apponyi would replace the humiliated Dumba, and this (actually unfounded) rumour repeatedly surfaced in the American press. If anything, this was a clear indication of the fact that Apponyi's prestige in America remained as high as ever, despite his break with TR, his occasional remarks, and despite the criticism he received.

As if to save much of the work of later historians, the two American journalists who visited Hungary during the war and reported on it to the American public summed up all the themes outlined above instead of making a genuine attempt to understand what was going on in Budapest. Their strikingly similar accounts, widely read as the only first hand information available, guided Henry Bayard Swope of the New York World and William Christian Bullitt of the Philadelphia Public Ledger, to entirely different fates.

Swope, whose single report, the thirteenth in a series about belligerent Europe, was printed in the 16 November 1916 issue of the prestigious metropolitan paper, later simply disappeared from the political scene. The ruthless press war between the World and The Fatherland soaked up most of his energy and, on top of that, he was roasted in the Hungarian-American press for what was considered a gross misrepresentation of facts.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> 23 September 1916, front page: 'America the Nation to Bring About Peace, Count Apponyi Tells Hungarian Parliament.'

<sup>63</sup> BH GKps: Newspaper File: cutting from a November 1916 issue of the Szabadság: 'Egy Amerikai Magyarországról' (An American about Hungary).

Bullitt, on the other hand, although writing for a less prominent regional paper, quickly rose to prominence, which makes this early chapter of his long (and rather hectic) political career even more interesting.<sup>64</sup> Newly-weds in 1916, the Bullitts decided to spend their honeymoon travelling in the Central Powers interviewing key politicians to boost William's career as a journalist. He had all the makings of a talented journalist: good insight, an enjoyable style, the ability to ask the right question and to interpret the answers 'correctly' even when he received none. Typical of his luck, they were in Budapest when Rumania declared war on the Monarchy and he interviewed Tisza, Apponyi and Andrassy. As indicated in the chapter on wartime diplomacy earlier, he submitted a copy of the Tisza interview to the State Department after he had been asked not to publish it. He cleverly skinned the same cat twice by publishing the rest of his interviews in the Public Ledger, which secured the attention of the highest circles for him. Colonel House had him appointed to the State Department and later he was named for the peace delegation as well. His 'adventures' at the Peace Conference are common knowledge as is the fact that after the war he teamed up with the famous psychologist Sigmund Freud to write a highly critical assessment of President Wilson.

He began his front page accounts for the Public Ledger on 15 October 1916, with a general introduction focusing mainly on Germany but already indicating that he had interviewed the 'Counts Tisza, Apponyi and Andrassy, the strong men of Austria-Hungary.' Four days later he devoted his entire contribution to Hungary. He claimed that during the week after the Rumanian declaration of war:

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<sup>64</sup> The following account has been reconstructed from his articles, the diary of his wife (which is listed in the appendix for reasons outlined elsewhere), and by using Brownell and Billings (1987) pp. 49-65.

I was able to interview the three strong men of the Habsburg monarchy and to record their reactions to the blow. On August 29 I talked with Count Albert Apponyi, the splendid old aristocrat who officially leads the Opposition party in the Hungarian Parliament. On August 30 I interviewed Count Julius Andrássy, the brilliant son of a great father, the candidate of the Opposition for the portfolio of Baron Burian and perhaps the cleverest man in Austria-Hungary. On September 3 I talked with Count Tisza, who since the day when he wrote the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia has guided the destinies of the dual monarchy.

The rest of the article is a transcript of his interviews with Apponyi and Andrássy, which are more about what Bullitt wanted to hear than about what he was likely to have heard. He went to Hungary with a full set of preconceptions and interviewed the three politicians the American public knew about; in a sense he was telling what he was expected to tell. Yet, it would be unfair to write Bullitt off with that since his third article for the Public Ledger, on 3 December 1916, was a valuable contribution. He wrote a vivid account of life in wartime Vienna and Budapest for the Magazine section of his paper, spiced with witty remarks 'about the special hospitals to care for men who have been bitten by Italians;' a typical, although quite morbid, wartime Hungarian joke. At the same time, his account, sometimes stereotypical, is always on target and his analysis of the economic situation of the Monarchy ranks with the similar reports of Ambassador Penfield. Better than any other American, Bullitt understood the motivation behind the refusal of a separate peace:

At the end of their resources of men, in swift economic decline, why do not the statesmen of the Habsburg monarchy strive to make a separate peace? Because they are gentlemen. In this day of 'real politik' such a statement seems ridiculous. Nevertheless, it is true. The Habsburg monarchy is an aristocracy, with all the vices of an aristocracy, but with all the virtues as well... I asked some scores of Austrians and Hungarians, among them Counts Tisza, Andrássy and Apponyi, the question, 'Why don't you save your own skin by making a separate peace?' Invariably the answer was, 'Because we are neither Italians nor Rumanians. We do not break our word.'

His message never got through to the White House and, as has been cited earlier, Wilson kept up his quest for a separate peace with the Monarchy even during the spring of 1918.

A look at propaganda and public opinion in neutral America hardly offers any far reaching conclusions. Austria-Hungary was yet to become the topic of discussion for propagandists while Hungary was portrayed rather stereotypically in the press. The Monarchy was depicted as a tired second class belligerent, with Hungarian politicians, especially Tisza, being the driving force behind her actions. This presentation defined *ipso facto* the image of Hungary as well, (1) being the dominant half of the Monarchy, with Tisza the starter of the war; but (2) the only possible blocker of German eastward expansion, regardless of her actual position in the war and her refusal to break her alliance.

The only politician to actively campaign in the American press for Austria-Hungary was, unquestionably, also the best qualified one, Count Apponyi. Yet, with the odds so heavily stacked in favour of British propagandists, he did not stand a real chance, and he enjoyed little help if any from both the Habsburg and the German diplomatic representatives in America. Besides his open letters the only first hand accounts that reached the American public were the reports of two American correspondents, both of whom wrote what they believed instead of what they may have seen. The intriguing aspect of this problem is that American diplomatic representatives all around belligerent Europe pictured the Monarchy in similar vein. Official American views of Austria-Hungary are the subject of the next chapter, which covers the relevant work of the State Department and of the various American intelligence agencies upto to April 1917, and which offers some concluding remarks about the period of American neutrality.



**CHAPTER FIVE:**  
**OFFICIAL AMERICAN VIEWS OF THE HABSBURG MONARCHY**  
**DURING THE NEUTRALITY PERIOD**

Having established in the previous chapter that propagandists and the press presented the Habsburg Monarchy to the American public as a second class belligerent, a satellite of Germany steered by Berlin and Budapest rather than by Vienna, attention here is devoted to the views of those official American representatives who were involved in Habsburg related decision making either as active participants or as suppliers of information. The fact that the United States was the leading neutral power in the war while Austria-Hungary was among the chief belligerents suggests several seemingly logical possibilities, especially in the light of Wilson's unconcealed ambition to act as the ultimate mediator in the war. One would expect, for example, that Wilson's official and unofficial advisors, the members of his cabinet and Colonel House respectively, developed a coherent opinion of and policy towards the Habsburg Monarchy. It also seems to be a logical expectation that the various Departments of Wilson's cabinet would play a leading role in this process by covering the political, diplomatic, military, naval and economic aspects of the problem. Regardless of the quality of such surveys, it is also logical to assume that within this framework Hungary would be given little attention, if any at all, which makes it necessary to widen the focus of our examination to the entire Habsburg Monarchy yet again.

A thorough survey of published and unpublished sources suggests that official American representatives did not analyze the Habsburg Monarchy during the neutrality period; the only exceptions were the reports of Ambassador Penfield in Vienna. Generally, the

Monarchy was dealt with on a day to day basis, and none of the Departments went as far as to summarize whatever information it had collected. It is hardly surprising that the popular image of Austria-Hungary remained unchallenged in administration circles; in fact, some ambassadorial reports even reiterated it. For various reasons outlined below, the Departments of the Navy and Commerce did practically no work on the Dual Monarchy and the contributions of the State and War Departments as well as of the various intelligence agencies under the auspices of the Treasury and Justice Departments fell well short of what may be called comprehensive. Following the discussion of these issues, and by way of concluding the analysis of the neutrality period, attempts will be made to explain the emergence and prevalence of this unfavourable image of the Monarchy, and to evaluate the actual nature of American neutrality.

Wilson's chief advisor during the war was the 'silent man of Texas,' the honorary Colonel Edward Mandell House, who never accepted any formal appointments with the exception of Commissioner Plenipotentiary of the United States at the Paris Peace Conference. House shared, not to say encouraged, Wilson's strong Anglo-Saxon sympathies and viewed himself as the ultimate behind-the-scenes operator in the White House. Back in 1911, House wrote an utopian novel, Philip Dru, Administrator, in which he portrayed the world as united in a global league of peace, led, of course, by the two Anglo-Saxon powers.<sup>1</sup> When Wilson invited him to be his private advisor, House willingly agreed and set out to realize his dream.<sup>2</sup> The World War provided him with the best possible opportunity and he acted as Wilson's 'super-secretary of state', which relegated William Jennings Bryan, the official

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<sup>1</sup> Cooper (1983) pp. 244-45.

<sup>2</sup> An entry in House's diary, dated 28 September 1914, proves this point: 'During one of our talks I was interested in hearing him outline some such form of government as I gave in Philip Dru.' WWP's 31: 95.

Secretary of State, and his successor, Robert Lansing, into the group of secondary advisors. House was sent on several important diplomatic missions to Europe and negotiated with leading politicians of both camps, although he never visited Vienna.

House, with his sights so firmly set on Britain and the West, displayed no interest in the Habsburg Monarchy at all; yet twice during 1915 he did take a stand on specific issues. First, he warned Wilson against accepting the first Vatican peace drive:

I suppose you know that the Pope was elected through Austrian influence and that he is largely guided by it... The Pope desires very much to be a mediator, and the Dual Alliance may so want to use him, but I am trying to make sure that the Allies will never accept him.<sup>3</sup>

House's advice was accepted and later it formed the basis for the American rejection of the second, and more widely known, Vatican offer of mediation in 1917 as well. House then suggested during the Ancona crisis that the American position made clear to Germany in the two Lusitania notes should be emphasized by a diplomatic break with the Monarchy.<sup>4</sup> For once, Lansing joined forces with House in this matter and Viereck asked with considerable anxiety in The Fatherland: 'Is the Administration deliberately provoking a break with Austria-Hungary?'<sup>5</sup> Viereck must have been relieved to find out that it was not; this happened to be one of the few occasions when Wilson overruled his confidant and best friend.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> WWP 32: 522; House to Wilson from Paris, 14 April 1915.

<sup>4</sup> WWP 35: 234; House to Wilson, 21 November 1915.

<sup>5</sup> The Fatherland, 22 December 1915, p. 352, editorial.

<sup>6</sup> WWP 35: 406-07.

House forwarded several short reports by Penfield to Wilson, which echoed not only the Vienna Ambassador's views but also Allied propaganda:

[Penfield] confirmed our belief that Austria-Hungary and Turkey are now but little more than provinces of Germany. The Central Empire runs from the Baltic to the Dardanelles and beyond. The Germans took charge during the troublous days of last spring when Russia was slowly overrunning Austria and by their efficiency and organization threw the Russians back. The Austrians are consequently grateful... The desire for peace is also prevalent, but there again the people are mere cogs in the great German war machine and as helpless to express their desires as the German soldier in the trenches.<sup>7</sup>

The striking absence of references to the German-Austrian relationship in the reports of Penfield, which are introduced below, indicates that House was projecting not only the Ambassador's views. A survey of House's papers, including his diary, has provided no evidence of any interest in the Habsburg Monarchy or Hungary during the war.

A similar day to day attitude characterized the approach of Wilson's official Secretaries of State, first William Jennings Bryan, then Robert Lansing. Neither of the two was supposed to have a say in decision making, anyway: Bryan's appointment was a reward for the veteran Democrat's services to the party, while Lansing was chosen because Wilson 'probably thought that he needed nothing better than a competent and experienced administrative assistant.'<sup>8</sup> During 1913, Bryan offered the Monarchy a cooling-off treaty, a move prompted not by the relationship between the two countries but by his somewhat idealistic quest for world peace. With a treaty of arbitration already in effect and having little admiration for Bryan, Dumba advised the Ballhausplatz against the offer but suggested that

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<sup>7</sup> WWP's 36: 124, House to Wilson, 3 February 1916.

<sup>8</sup> Bailey (1963) p. 88.

it be accepted 'in principle.' With the outbreak of the World War the issue was dropped<sup>9</sup> and Bryan, the only genuinely neutral member of the entire Wilson administration, duly organized neutral-belligerent relations between the two countries. He resigned in June 1915 because he considered the second American note regarding the sinking of the Lusitania too provocative.<sup>10</sup>

His successor, Robert Lansing, an international lawyer of considerable experience and former counsellor of the State Department, was openly pro-Entente and tried to push Wilson towards intervention more than once, which the President took with some resentment.<sup>11</sup> A look at Lansing's private memoranda and correspondence suggests that he too focused on Germany and paid little attention to the Habsburg Monarchy. His hostile attitude surfaced during the 1915 crises and later prompted him to take a pro-dismemberment stand long before Wilson's change of policy. When Dumba's activities were revealed Lansing immediately demanded his recall, hardly giving the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador a chance to come up with an explanation.

The contribution of the other members of the Wilson cabinet was similarly limited; the Departments of the Navy and Commerce practically ignored the Habsburg Monarchy, leaving her study to the State Department and Secretary of War Newton Diehl Baker's Military Intelligence Bureau, the so-called War College Division. Before providing the details of their contribution, the lack of interest on the part of the Departments of Commerce and the Navy must be addressed briefly.

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<sup>9</sup> Davis (1958) pp. 40-48; Dumba (1933) pp. 226 and 230.

<sup>10</sup> Challender (1961) pp. 97-98.

<sup>11</sup> Smith (1958). Lansing's role is discussed in chapters 10 and 11 below.

The Department of Commerce could have provided a comprehensive economic analysis of the Monarchy to complement similar efforts in the diplomatic-military field from other Departments. This task was not performed and, as will be seen shortly, the White House worked with assumptions instead of facts, most of which were provided by Ambassador Penfield. Although the Department had access to published statistics from the Dual Monarchy, which were later handed over to the Inquiry, it had no representative with the Vienna Embassy.<sup>12</sup> Josephus Daniels' Navy Department was obviously preoccupied with the submarine issue and transatlantic trade, in which the Monarchy played a rather limited part. Austria-Hungary was not a major marine power in the sense Germany and Britain were, consequently she was rarely paid much attention. The farthest Daniels' staff had gone was to complete a set of extremely detailed maps of the Adriatic coastline by the end of 1917.<sup>13</sup>

Practically all official information thus came from the State Department and Military Intelligence. Characteristic of the division of labour between them was the fact that Penfield hardly ever reported on the military situation which was left to Captain Allan L. Brigge, the American Military Attache in Vienna. A detailed analysis of their reports requires some introductory remarks about the Department of State and, in more general terms, the Wilsonian diplomatic corps.

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<sup>12</sup> The lack of interest on the part of the Department of Commerce was most certainly the result of the British blockade which cut off the trade between the two countries.

<sup>13</sup> NA RG 45: NRCONRL: Box 878: WX5 Enemy: Austria-Hungary, Coastal Defenses, corrected version. Likewise, no record of any reports by the American Naval Attache was found in the other relevant collection, NA RG 38: 78/A: NICC. In fact there seems to be no record of his name either, the only proof that there was such a person is an off-hand reference by Penfield: FRUS 1915 Suppl. p. 13.

According to the most comprehensive study of the Department of State during the Wilson years:

On the eve of the European war, Wilson was dependant on a Department whose leadership was almost entirely lacking in experience in foreign affairs and a group of appointed envoys overseas whose chief qualifications were their service and financial contributions to the Democratic party.<sup>14</sup>

In all fairness to Wilson, when these appointments were made in 1913, hardly any American could foresee the impending global war and the role the United States was to play in it. Consequently, at the outbreak of the war the Department had barely a couple of dozen employees.<sup>15</sup> In fact, it was so short on qualified personnel that the President, on the advice of House, requested William Phillips, a young Republican and a TR man (!), to reoccupy the office of Third Assistant Secretary of State.<sup>16</sup> When Bryan resigned during the Lusitania crisis, Robert Lansing, formerly second-in-command as counsellor, was appointed on 23 June 1915. While in office, Lansing tried to reorganize his Department without much apparent success, although he at least doubled its staff by the Armistice.<sup>17</sup> Austria-Hungary, together with Germany and Turkey, fell under the jurisdiction of the Near Eastern Division, headed by Albert H. Putney. Characteristic of the chaos within the Department was the fact that while Penfield and Gerard reported to Putney, other information regarding the Central Powers, coming from Allied and neutral sources, went to the West European Desk.<sup>18</sup> Steps to

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<sup>14</sup> Bell (1983) p. 27.

<sup>15</sup> The definitive study of the State Department is still Stuart (1936), for the purposes of the present study esp. pp. 91-104.

<sup>16</sup> Phillips (1955) pp. 25-26. Wilson's decision may also be seen as putting a token Republican into the Department, but that would have been an uncharacteristic move on his part.

<sup>17</sup> Bell (1983) pp. 35, 49-58.

<sup>18</sup> Stuart (1936) pp. 92-96; Bell (1983) pp. 22-24, 28, 55.

coordinate the work of these two divisions were not taken until July 1917, when Joseph Clark Grew, formerly with the Berlin and Vienna Embassies, was asked to take charge of the West European desk.<sup>19</sup>

On top of the apparent lack of organization and information within the Department, most Ambassadors, and especially Walter Hines Page in London and Penfield, tended to report directly to the President and Colonel House as well as to the Secretary of State, which made Lansing's job no easier. This is not to suggest that the State Department would have been more effective had it received all the incoming information: after all, several students of Wilsonian diplomacy have pointed to the fact that his Ambassadors also lacked expertise and were denied a say in decision making.<sup>20</sup> Although this policy was nothing new, still it was typical of Wilson that he made no amends after the outbreak and escalation of the war. Thus, it is not only unnecessary but would also extend much beyond the scope of the present study to introduce his key Ambassadors; yet a few striking examples must be mentioned. Gerard, in Berlin, failed to produce a single useful policy proposal regarding the Monarchy and reported mostly what Washington wanted to hear.<sup>21</sup> Stovall, in Berne, was so uninterested that George D. Herron, one of Wilson's self-appointed agents and interpreters in Europe, had to send his reports regarding the Monarchy from Switzerland to Washington via Paris.<sup>22</sup> Walter Hines Page in London was so pro-British that even Wilson

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<sup>19</sup> Grew (1953) 1: 326-30.

<sup>20</sup> See for example Calhoun (1986).

<sup>21</sup> An entry in the House diary on Gerard, dated 23 December 1913: 'The President was afraid of Gerard. He thought if we had any serious business with Germany, Gerard would fall short of the mark.' WWP's 29: 74.

<sup>22</sup> Wilson (1941) pp. 20-21; Briggs (1932) p. 29. Herron, living in Genève, began to interpret Wilson's speeches for the European public in such favourable manner that the President took notice of him. Herron began to supply information to Washington and, as mentioned above, negotiated



got fed up with his reports<sup>23</sup> while Thomas Nelson Page, holding the key post in Rome, hardly ever commented on the Monarchy and when he did so he chiefly used Italian military intelligence information. Charles J. Vopicka, Bohemian by birth and the joint American Minister to Rumania, Bulgaria and Serbia, was arguably the most biased of Wilson's Ambassadors and was described by Lansing as follows:

Vopicka is a perfect joy. His broken English and vanity make him enjoyably absurd.<sup>24</sup>

A staff with such qualifications hardly enabled the State Department to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Habsburg Monarchy. Its representatives drew heavily upon press reports, which were not very accurate, and the official Allied interpretation of Germany being the main enemy was accepted without much criticism. From the earliest days of the war, various reports from Europe pictured the Monarchy as inferior to and run by Germany, yet being 'one of the proudest Empires' in Europe.

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secretly with Heinrich Lammasch in 1918. Briggs (1932) is the definitive study; it also lists Herron's writings.

<sup>23</sup> LC GCps: Creel - Wilson correspondence: box 3: Creel's comment on Page: 'Walter Hines Page, like so many of our ambassadors, became more British than the British. As time went on, he complained bitterly that the President not only paid no attention to his dispatches, but there was ample evidence that he did not even read them. These complaints, reaching the United States, stirred a certain amount of criticism, and I called it to the President's attention. "Why should I read Page's dispatches?" he answered. "I can get the British point of view much more succinctly from the British ambassador.'" Initially, however, Page was viewed as a key member of the Wilson staff, mutual disenchantment must have developed later. Osgood (1953) pp. 154-60.

<sup>24</sup> LC RLps: Lansing's diary, 21 June 1919. Note that Lansing concluded that Vopicka 'has really done well at Bucharest.' He must have forgotten by that time that he had recalled Vopicka on the insistence of the German government, and reinstated him only after the German-American break. Mamatey (1957) pp. 122-23.

Yet, in American political circles the disenchantment with the Habsburg Empire, a conservative and Catholic monarchy, was apparent even before the outbreak of the war. In the musical chairs game of sorting out diplomatic posts Frank McCombs, Wilson's 1912 campaign manager, was offered the Vienna Embassy. A 19 December 1912 entry in Colonel House's diary reveals that McCombs was 'distinctly disappointed at [sic] the ambassadorial offer.' McCombs' position was further clarified when he:

said that the idea of 'being sent into darkest Austria' did not appeal to him, but he thought he would like to go to France.<sup>25</sup>

With the coming of the World War, Walter Hines Page, the American Ambassador in London, became a most ardent promoter of the low-key image of the Habsburg Monarchy. He introduced the topic as early as 2 August 1914:

In one way at least race-hatred is at the bottom of it [i.e. the war] - the Slav against the Teuton. The time to have that fight out seems favourable to Russia - the old Austrian Emperor is in his last years, the Slav States of his Empire are restive, not to say rebellious...<sup>26</sup>

Without submitting a comprehensive analysis of the British attitude towards Austria-Hungary Page went on to report in similar vein arguing that the 'Austrians mechanically follow the Germans' and that:

Austria is no longer thought of by the British as an independent power-only a German satrapy, like Turkey or Bulgaria.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> WWP's 25: 614, 19 December 1912; WWP's 27: 127, 21 February 1913.

<sup>26</sup> WWP's 30: 330, Page to Wilson.

<sup>27</sup> WWP's 31: 372, Page to Wilson, 30 November, 1914; WWP's 35: 415, Page to Wilson, 31 December 1915.

The Berlin Embassy under James W. Gerard, another financial contributor turned Ambassador, proved similarly ineffective. More a man of East Coast high society than a diplomat, Gerard was described by Mrs. Bullitt as

one of the most amusing men I ever met. Brusque, frank, quick-witted, a typically judicial mind, and a typically undiplomatic manner, he is the last person in the world whom a German would understand. His dry, slangy American humour, his sudden lapses into the comic in moments of solemnity, his irreverence for the great, shock the worthy German. That he treats the Emperor in any other way than as a business acquaintance is most unlikely.<sup>28</sup>

No evidence has been found to prove that Gerard submitted a single analysis of the German-Austrian relationship, although he may have done so when summoned to Washington for consultation in late 1916. Instead, his reports were filled with entertaining, but not very useful, gossipy remarks, of which the one regarding Count Julius Andrassy stands out:

Andrassy is rather old and tired but his wife is full of energy and pushes him on... It is possible that Andrassy through German influence may be made Minister of Foreign Affairs instead of Burian. This is to be the first step in a German Coup D'Etat to take place on the death of Francis Joseph - the throne successor to be given Austria alone, and Prince Eitel Fritz, the Kaiser's favorite son, to be king of Hungary with possibly a Czech kingdom in Bohemia.<sup>29</sup>

That the Habsburg Empire in Berlin was viewed with a British-type condescension was reinforced by the American Military Attache in the German capital, Walter Rockwell Gherardi, whose report was sent on to Wilson:

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<sup>28</sup> Bullitt (1918) p. 16. Note that this volume is listed in the appendix for reasons outlined later. Gerard was related to the Sigrays, one of the most prominent Hungarian families.

<sup>29</sup> WWP 38: 71, Gerard to Lansing, 8 August 1916.

More than the German, are the Austrian people desperately tired of war. The Austrian Government has not the ascendancy over the spirit and intellect of its subjects, nor have the people the national vigor which sustains Germany. In Austria the preventive measures in economic matters have been carried out only by half way methods and the conditions for living there are much worse than in Germany. It is to be expected that this will be a hard black winter for Germany and a worse one for Austria.<sup>30</sup>

With the American Embassies outside the Habsburg Monarchy supplying little useful information it was left to Penfield and the Vienna Embassy to provide the White House with the necessary inside views. Since Penfield is a little known member of Wilson's diplomatic corps, perhaps it is not out of place to pause briefly here and introduce him.

Born in 1855, Penfield was among the few Ambassadors who had previous diplomatic experience: he served as Vice-Consul General in London during 1885 and as Consul-General in Cairo during the second Cleveland administration. He wrote several books on the Near East and earned decorations from several countries and from the Pope. His connections to the Vatican and his previous diplomatic experience, but, above all, his generous financial contributions to the Wilson election campaign, secured him the post in Vienna. Appointed on 28 July 1913, he served for 44 months, much to the satisfaction of President Wilson. After his recall from Vienna (28 March 1917) Penfield returned to New York and died in 1922.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, he wrote no memoirs, which, together with the fact that it has been impossible to recover even the full list of his staff(!),<sup>32</sup> renders the task of assessing his contribution extremely difficult.

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<sup>30</sup> WWP 35: 131, Gherardi to House, 11 October 1915. A comprehensive account of wartime German-Austrian relations is Shanafelt (1985).

<sup>31</sup> DAB 7: 425-26; WWP 27: 111, n. 1.

<sup>32</sup> The State Department diplomatic list is apparently incomplete. Some of the gaps, such as the name of the Naval Attache, are discussed elsewhere in the present chapter.

Besides the regular despatches to the State Department Penfield often reported to Colonel House on the latter's numerous visits to Europe, and sent 'frequent confidential and personal letters' to Secretary of State Robert Lansing. His tasks in Vienna were necessarily diverse; hereafter only those shaping the American views of the Monarchy as a belligerent are discussed together with, of course, his occasional references to Hungary.<sup>33</sup>

In many of his short despatches to Washington and reports to House, Penfield tended to use the (by now familiar) dramatic tone to describe the internal situation of the Monarchy: he reported the appearance of various diseases and the impending military collapse of the Habsburg Empire in March 1915;<sup>34</sup> he claimed in April 1916 that general disillusionment with the war prevailed together with a strong desire for an immediate peace;<sup>35</sup> and contended in February 1917 that 'Economic life of Austria-Hungary seems paralyzed.'<sup>36</sup> Penfield, unlike his fellow Ambassadors, at least advised Lansing that he had arrived at this conclusion gradually:

I have dispassionately observed the gradual change in the public mood, from exaltation when the Central Powers were progressing in Poland a year ago and forcing Russia from Galicia to the current state of mind describable by no other words than utter and complete despair. The masses are thoroughly tired of the war and would welcome peace in any form that took but a reasonable amount of territory from them.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Davis (1958) carries a reliable general discussion of Penfield's activities in Vienna.

<sup>34</sup> WWP's 32: 440, House to Wilson, 27 March 1915.

<sup>35</sup> FRUS LP 1: 654, Penfield to Lansing, 15 April 1916.

<sup>36</sup> FRUS 1917 Suppl. 1 p. 39, Penfield to Lansing, 6 February 1917.

<sup>37</sup> FRUS LP 1: 662, Penfield to Lansing, 23 September 1916.

In his longer letters to Lansing, which covered the period between November 1915 and September 1916, Penfield provided a more detailed analysis of the Monarchy<sup>38</sup> and, alone of all Ambassadors involved in the matter, earned the praise of both Wilson and House.<sup>39</sup> In his letters, the Ambassador, of course, addressed the broader issues of the war (the entry of Bulgaria and Rumania, the future of Serbia, etc.) as well as the domestic Austrian reaction to the 1915 diplomatic crises. He dealt extensively with the return of Dumba, established that anti-American feeling peaked in Vienna in February 1916 due to the Dumba and Ancona affairs and the debate over contraband, and explained the Monarchy's unwillingness to send an Ambassador to Washington:

The Foreign Office believes it has a bona fide grievance against the American Government, preventing the Teutonic representatives from telegraphing by wireless in secret to their governments, while the Entente representatives have every facility of peace times.<sup>40</sup>

Equally significant is the fact that Penfield continuously informed Lansing about the economic situation. Although admittedly not an expert, he was the only official American source of information in matters such as war loans, the shortage of meat and fuel in Vienna, and the devaluation of the crown by 47 percent by the end of 1915.<sup>41</sup>

From a purely academic point of view, Penfield's main contributions were his six-monthly reports on the Monarchy, all typed, and ranging from 20 to 80 pages. These five

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<sup>38</sup> These letters are all printed in FRUS LP 1: 639-64.

<sup>39</sup> FRUS LP 1: 659, Wilson to Lansing, 27 July 1916: 'Thank you for letting me see this letter from Penfield. He always says something that is useful to keep in mind.' Characteristically, the letter mentioned by Wilson was more about Near Eastern affairs than about Central Europe.

<sup>40</sup> FRUS LP 1: 640, dated 4 November 1915.

<sup>41</sup> FRUS LP 1: 642-43, 648, 11 November and 9 December 1915.

reports are the longest and most detailed official American discussions of the Habsburg war effort before April 1917. He claimed that the Emperor Francis Joseph was running the affairs of the Monarchy single-handedly and with surprising vigour. He addressed the issue of Bohemian and South Slav unrest but never claimed that revolution was around the corner. He again discussed economic issues but admitted freely that he had no definitive information on the actual cost of the war, nor on the number of troops on the various fronts.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, he never wrote about the German-Austrian relationship; nor did he claim that the Hungarians were controlling the foreign affairs of the state or that Tisza had provoked the war.

At the same time, although not unexpectedly, Hungary was paid very little attention in the diplomatic correspondence between Washington and the Vienna Embassy. This notwithstanding, the first document to discuss the internal affairs of the Monarchy at length did come from Consul-General Coffin in Budapest. In his four-page memorandum for Bryan, the only one by Coffin on the subject, he put forward many of the ideas outlined in the previous chapter, which does not testify to a good understanding of the situation on his part. Coffin introduced his discussion by claiming that the 'general atmosphere is decidedly that of depression' in Hungary, which he attributed to the early military setbacks on the fronts and based upon information provided by an Italian correspondent who was not allowed to visit the trenches. The most important section of Coffin's report addresses three key issues:

My impression is that, while the war is supposed to be a Hungarian war in that Count Tisza, the Hungarian Prime Minister, and Count Forgach, Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs and also a Hungarian, are said to have drafted

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<sup>42</sup> The first two have been printed in FRUS 1915 Suppl. pp. 10-14 and 45-52. Copies of the other three reports have been found in the House collection at Yale. However, it appears that House did not read them: he does not comment on them and there are no marks on the reports. SML EMHps: Series 3: Political Papers: Box 178, folders 1/4-6.

the Servian [sic] note, the Hungarian Government and people are heartily sick of the war now and are beginning to be apprehensive that whichever side may win Austria-Hungary and especially Hungary are bound to be heavy losers. I have heard it said that should the Central European alliance win, Austria-Hungary will not be much more than a German grand duchy in the future. Even the expression of such opinion is an interesting indication of the frame of mind here. I consider that if Russian successes continue racial troubles are inevitable in Hungary and a serious falling out between the Austrians and the Hungarians would not surprise me.<sup>43</sup>

Further information, of similarly limited value, was provided by Consul Chase in Fiume, who repeatedly reported on South Slav unrest and Italian agitation in the region.<sup>44</sup> Penfield himself rarely mentioned Hungary and he too used second hand information: 'reaching me second hand' and 'a newspaper before me states' are typical introductions to Hungarian material in his communications.<sup>45</sup>

Ignoring Hungary and consequently relying heavily only on Austrian opinion - and speculations - are among the major shortcomings of Penfield's performance. Another apparent problem with Penfield's reports is that he often discussed Near Eastern and not Central European problems, which suggests that he might have preferred an appointment to that region and that he would have performed there better.<sup>46</sup> While trying to maintain an impartial position he also avoided numerous key issues, especially the German-Austrian relationship, which he clearly failed to understand. It also appears that in two cases he slightly overreacted. Firstly, he was anxious, perhaps too anxious, to secure the friendly attitude of the

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<sup>43</sup> NA RG 59: DFSD: M 708, reel 3: dated 27 September 1917. It speaks for itself that Coffin, although in Budapest, worked only with hearsay information. After the diplomatic break in April 1917 he was transferred to Copenhagen. He reappeared during the Peace Conference.

<sup>44</sup> NA RG 59: DFSD: M 708, reel 3.

<sup>45</sup> FRUS LP 1: 654, 656.

<sup>46</sup> FRUS LP 1: 640, 646-47, 652-53, etc.



Vienna papers for America and on one occasion he forced the withdrawal of a cartoon criticizing President Wilson.<sup>47</sup> Secondly, following the German-American diplomatic break, he stirred a minor storm by getting his staff ready to leave Vienna prematurely.<sup>48</sup> Within a couple of weeks time, when Wilson finally decided to restore diplomatic parity between the two countries not by accepting Tarnowski as Ambassador but by recalling Penfield, the American Ambassador in Vienna was rather reluctant to leave his post. According to Joseph C. Grew, who was transferred to Vienna from Berlin, it was Czernin's tactful intervention that saved Penfield public embarrassment.<sup>49</sup> Penfield apparently did not perform much better than any of his colleagues all around Europe but his reports, although of mixed quality, were certainly the only, and well received, source of first hand information about the Habsburg Empire.

Before drawing the final conclusions about the image of the Monarchy and Hungary in neutral America, the work of the various American intelligence agencies must also be looked at. The work of the American Military Intelligence during the neutrality period has not been discussed at length,<sup>50</sup> and in the light of the reports coming from Vienna, it was not

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<sup>47</sup> WWP's 37: 289, House to Wilson, dated 23 June 1916: 'I have a letter from Penfield in which he says: "On May 15th a low-class journal printed the enclosed cartoon against the President. I demanded an immediate interview with Baron Burrian [sic] and protested vigorously against the publication of such attacks against the sovereign ruler of a land with which Austria was not at war. Within twenty-four hours I had a written apology..." House's comment is revealing: 'If Penfield can do it in Austria, Page and Sharp can do it in England and France.'

<sup>48</sup> The New York Times, 28 February 1917, front page: 'Americans Ready to Leave Austria'; 'Penfield Completes Arrangements for All Diplomatic and Consular Agents to Depart'; 'Believes Break Imminent.'

<sup>49</sup> Grew (1953) 1: 320-25.

<sup>50</sup> Not a single secondary reference to American intelligence work in the Habsburg Monarchy has been found.

given priority. Captain Allen L. Briggs, 23rd Infantry, served as Military Attache and had a staff of three: two observers attached to the K und K Army (Major Clyde S. Ford, Medical Corps, and Captain Berkeley Enochs, Infantry) and an interpreter called L. H. Eisenmann.<sup>51</sup> Briggs' reports, numbering around 300 by the time of his recall in October 1916, were never digested by the War Department. Besides the regular weekly reports on the Austro-Hungarian Army and specialized communications covering a variety of issues from 'rolling kitchens' to the use of dum dum bullets, administrative questions were discussed in detail and Briggs submitted analyses and pictures of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff. The single indication in the records found that Briggs' staff considered Hungarian material is a letter by Eisenmann to Washington complaining that they had not managed to secure enough Hungarian dictionaries.<sup>52</sup> After Briggs was relieved from his post, his work was continued by Eisenmann,<sup>53</sup> which indicates that no replacement was named. This lack of interest also characterizes Briggs' reports on the Austro-Hungarian General Staff. His longest report, dated 6 January 1916, was based upon one single source, the 1914 edition of the Austro-Hungarian Army List, an official K und K publication, and carried no comments at all.<sup>54</sup> When requested to evaluate the performance of the General Staff, Briggs contacted the Imperial and Royal War Department for information and reported to Washington that:

1. The Organization of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff has fully come up to expectations. Its reorganization is not contemplated.
2. The strength of the General Staff as it was before the war has sufficed; in order to fill up gaps and to provide for new formations officers who had

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<sup>51</sup> NA RG 165: WCDGC was the only collection covering the issue. Note that on one occasion Penfield mentioned a Captain McIntyre, another military observer: FRUS 1915 Suppl. p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> NA RG 165: WCDGC: Box 265: no. 8108-42: letter by Eisenmann, dated 23 January 1917.

<sup>53</sup> NA RG 165: WCDGC: Box 259: no. 8039-60, dated 10 October 1916.

<sup>54</sup> NA RG 165: WCDGC: Box 428: no. 9286-F-1, dated 6 January 1916.

formerly belonged to the General Staff and had been transferred to the line have again be re-detailed in the General Staff. It is not possible to state the number of officers of the General Staff per 100,000 men.

3. The duties of the officers of the General Staff have not been changed by the present war.

4. The hypotheses under which the Austro-Hungarian General Staff was organized in time of peace have proved correct in time of war.<sup>55</sup>

He complemented the above report with a one-page schematic chart of the organization of the General Staff. While this limited amount of material offers no far reaching conclusions as to the qualifications and insight of American Military Intelligence personnel in Austria-Hungary, and one is even more reluctant to draw such conclusions in the total absence of naval intelligence reports, it is clear from the above that the general lack of interest in Habsburg, and in Hungarian, matters prevailed in War Department circles as well.

Domestic American intelligence work<sup>56</sup> was split between the Bureau of Information of the Department of Justice and the Secret Service of the Department of the Treasury, headed respectively by Bruce A. Bielaski and William J. Flynn. The chief concern for both organizations was German and Austro-Hungarian sabotage in America. Both agencies worked in close cooperation with the British, whose main source of information was Voska and his team. The heavy dependence of American intelligence work on the Bohemian-Americans, indirect though it may have been, served the cause of the Czechs better than anything else save for their Legion in Russia in the summer of 1918. Lansing's plan to create one single agency to coordinate all intelligence work was flatly rejected by Wilson. With American entry into

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<sup>55</sup> NA RG 165: WCDGC: Box 428: no. 9286-F-3, dated 7 February 1916.

<sup>56</sup> The only available account is Andrew (1995) chapter 2.

the conflict the emphasis gradually shifted towards intelligence work abroad, which is discussed in chapter 10 below.

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The low-key image of the Empire of the Habsburgs in America was not a wartime development, it had emerged long before. Austria-Hungary was everything America was not. It was a proud but shaken old monarchy and not a confident young republic; it was Catholic and not WASP; it stood for protectionism and not for the 'open door'; and it was reluctant to introduce universal suffrage. Austria-Hungary was a continental European power but not a major player on the global scene; the 'awakening giant' of America did not have to consider it as a potential ally or enemy. Before the war Americans showed nothing but indifference towards the Monarchy; even diplomatic relations were limited to the issues of trade and immigration. It also speaks for itself that the only really prominent American politician to visit the Dual Monarchy was the much travelled Roosevelt; and so does the fact that Wilson's 'travelling ambassador', Colonel House, never visited Vienna. Likewise, the leading American war correspondents were more interested in the western front and Germany than in the lesser Central Power. During the war, neither the members of Wilson's cabinet nor his ambassadors provided the President with accurate first-hand information. This was only partly due to the lack of enthusiasm and insight on their part, it was also because such services were not requested by the White House. The one Ambassador who could possibly have taken the initiative was Penfield in Vienna, but the striking similarities between his conclusions and the opinion of prominent politicians of the Monarchy indicate that he was

unable to form an independent view of his own.<sup>57</sup> It is apparent that both Penfield and Coffin read The Times of London with more interest than the Vienna and Budapest papers, which were of course not printed in English.<sup>58</sup> This brings up another intriguing issue, that of British propaganda.

There is a general tendency in secondary works on wartime propaganda to underestimate the British control of war news in America and the fact that British propagandists spoke, or more importantly wrote in, the very same language the Americans did. Thus, the reasons for the success of the British campaign for war in neutral America must be sought not only in the hundreds of pamphlets they circulated but also in the indirect British control of the American press. While the occasional German attempts to purchase various American newspapers were viewed with resentment, the majority of war news came from British sources. The aim of British propaganda, as put forward by Parker, was to lure the United States into the war on the side of the Allies by presenting Germany not only as the single most dangerous adversary but also as a dangerous challenger to American interests in the Western Hemisphere. Simply telling the Americans how dangerous the Germans were was not the way to pull off this trick, not to say miracle. The only two propagandists who had the insight to realize this were Parker during the neutrality period and, although under entirely different circumstances, Masaryk in the summer of 1918.

And this is where Parker's genius comes into the picture: he understood that American ideals should be targeted. The German violation of Belgian neutrality was cleverly

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<sup>57</sup> Compare Penfield's February 1917 report and Czernin's April Memorandum of the same year, or Károlyi's reference to territorial losses and the corresponding reference in Penfield's account.

<sup>58</sup> This appears to be the only logical explanation to the fact that Coffin used only second-hand information.

abused: the 'Huns' were presented as animals to the American public (Bryce report) while the Imperial German Government, for the benefit of the Wilson administration, was portrayed as a violator of international agreements and was exposed as a saboteur. When neither this nor the introduction of unlimited submarine warfare, which was indeed provoked by the British blockade, brought America into the war, London played the ultimate card: the Zimmermann telegram. Direct German interference in the Western Hemisphere, during and not even after the war, was an extremely provocative open violation of the Monroe Doctrine.<sup>59</sup> To be dubbed as a satrapy (notice the use of an oriental term by Page) of such a challenger to America was just about the worst thing that could happen to Austria-Hungary on the propaganda front.

Lacking the insight of Parker, the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic representatives in America did very little to educate the general public or the political elite. The Dumba affair and the sinking of the Ancona very nearly proved to be the last straw to break the camel's back. It was not until the succession of Charles to the throne and of Czernin to the Ballhausplatz that the Monarchy swallowed its pride and, more than a year after Dumba's recall, an Ambassador was sent to Washington. This move was prompted not only by the wholesale changes in Vienna but also by the general mood of appeasement (the December 1916 open peace drives) and the symbolic American guarantee of undisturbed wireless connection between the Washington Embassy and the Ballhausplatz.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the

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<sup>59</sup> Hardly ever has the significance of this aspect of the problem been given sufficient consideration, although a simple reference to the other two similar occasions in the 20th Century, namely to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and to the Cuban Missile Crisis, is sufficient to prove this point.

<sup>60</sup> Although according to Penfield Vienna attached much significance to this issue it appears that it was used as an excuse for not sending an Ambassador. It might also have been viewed as a possible easy diplomatic victory to restore dynastic pride. Note that these conclusions are merely speculative.

selection of Tarnowski by Czernin was a good decision: it implied that Vienna was not against Polish independence, and it was also a gesture towards Lansing. There is no indication that Apponyi had wanted the post in Washington or that his appointment was seriously considered at any point. Czernin, in fact, handled the Americans with confidence even after the American declaration of war on the Monarchy, and if not for his poor showing in the April 1918 Sixtus affair, he may well have been looked upon more favourably by later historians.

Another question to be addressed is how Hungary fits into this framework. During the war Hungary was looked at through the prism of the Habsburg Monarchy and her idealized pre-war image was gradually replaced by a two-track attitude. On the one hand, the concept of a liberal Hungary, or rather, the expectation that it was around the corner, was kept alive. In this case the New York Times article on Károlyi's program is very telling, as was the general expectation that Hungarian self-interest would eventually thwart the *Mitteuropa* plan.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, the Americans were gradually coming to terms with a more real Hungary, which was presented with some exaggeration as the dominant partner in the dual alliance, a natural ally of Germany and the bringer of the war. This concept was apparently taken for granted and promoted by the two American correspondents who did go to Hungary during the war. Slowly, this new image of Hungary, although as much off target as the other one, began to dominate American public opinion, paving the way for the post-April 1917 dismemberment campaign. During the period of American neutrality, however,

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<sup>61</sup> On one occasion an editorial in The Nation, amusingly, based this expectation on a passage in Gibbon's work on the Roman Empire: 'While the force of circumstances links the fortunes of the Hapsburg Monarchy to those of the German Empire, the Magyars are certain, no matter what the outcome of the war, to pursue their ends with a view chiefly to Magyar interests. That shrewd sense of the practical which Gibbon long ago recognized in the Magyar race has again and again... manifested itself...' 8 February 1917 issue, p. 1.

neither Wilson nor Penfield subscribed to this interpretation, which was more due to their indifference than to their insight.

The gradually declining prestige of Austria-Hungary was but one of several open manifestations of the lack of American neutrality. Wilson's initial refusal to ban the export of contraband was due not to any dislike of Germany but to the cherished American principle of *laissez faire*, or if we want to be cynical, to raw business interests. However, once that decision was made there was no turning back: the Allies, who sustained the blockade of the Central Powers, insisted that trade be kept up while Germany and Austria-Hungary demanded either equal access to war material coming from America or a complete ban on sales. This was a situation the Wilson administration could not cope with. Unwilling to cut off trade with the Allies, Wilson began to protest against the blockade, but did so rather half-heartedly. Thus the British policy, which was based upon an accurate assessment of Wilson's WASP sympathies, forced the Central Powers into acts (of sabotage and submarine warfare) by which they discredited themselves in the eyes of everyday Americans and policy makers alike. Added to that was the all-out atrocity campaign against Germany. These factors combined to secure American sympathy for the Allies.

But in some cases the Americans went beyond mere demonstrations of sympathy or dislike. The present author, for example, finds it rather difficult to believe Lansing's statement that Gerard opened accidentally one of von Bernstorff's officially sealed reports to the German Foreign Office, which was sent in the diplomatic pouch, in September 1915, at the height of the Dumba crisis.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> WWP's 34: 528, Lansing to Wilson, 27 September 1915.



Although this Gerard - von Bernstorff incident was not made public, it was apparent that Wilson's America was neutral neither 'in thought' nor 'in action'. The more politically conscious Slavic elements in the US were quick to grasp the possibilities inherent in the situation and acted accordingly. Pergler's hearing <sup>before</sup> the House Foreign Relations Committee provided further encouragement.

Another indication that the belligerents were not treated equally by the White House was the issue of recruiting in America. German and Austro-Hungarian subjects were not allowed to travel home and join the army back home. Meanwhile, Czech, South Slav and Polish-Americans simply had to jump the longest unguarded border in the world to join the Serbian divisions of the Allied armies or the French Foreign Legion, which were then recruiting in Canada.<sup>63</sup> Wilson took no steps to put an end to this indirect British recruiting in America. Moreover, Montenegrins and Serbs, the latter then at war with Austria-Hungary, were allowed to recruit in America openly as early as 1915 and May 1917 respectively. This set a precedent to follow, and the War Department granted similar privileges to the Poles and the Czechs in October and November 1917, that is before the United States declared war on the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>64</sup>

Interestingly, no action was taken either when Sir Guy Gaunt, the head of British Naval Intelligence in the US and the Naval Attache of the British Embassy in Washington, was found reading official secret German documents.<sup>65</sup> To put this case more bluntly:

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<sup>63</sup> Calder (1976) pp. 58-59, 226.

<sup>64</sup> Mamatey (1957) p. 132.

<sup>65</sup> Viereck (1930) pp. 77-80. Viereck claimed that they had consciously trapped Gaunt to test Wilson's reaction. The German Embassy must have been bitterly disappointed with the result.

calling for strikes in munition factories in America was enough reason to demand the immediate recall of an Ambassador while being caught red-handed spying in neutral America on Germany was excusable.

One is under the impression that Wilson's decisions in these two cases (i.e. recruiting and Gaunt's exploits) were a kind of indirect reward for the invaluable services rendered by Voska and Gaunt to the United States of America. Another and more obvious motivation was Wilson's well-known sympathy for peoples living under foreign domination, to which he testified publicly in his June 1917 Flag Day address.<sup>66</sup>

Yet those who thought that these concessions by Wilson were the first steps towards his acceptance of the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy were badly mistaken. After the initial *ad hoc* responses to diplomatic crises, Wilson developed a one-track policy towards Austria-Hungary and stuck to it as long as he possibly could. And this policy was not dismemberment, but negotiating the Monarchy out of the war while securing fair treatment for all the peoples living within its boundaries. It was a combined military, diplomatic and ideological crisis that eventually made him change his mind. The remaining chapters of the present study deal with the various attempts to convince the President of the necessity of reorganizing the Danubian basin along ethnic lines, with that April-June 1918 crisis period and with Wilson's own conduct.

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<sup>66</sup> This address had broader implications and is discussed in chapter 11 below.

## **CHAPTER SIX: DISMEMBERMENT PROPAGANDA**

In this opening chapter on the period of American belligerency, foreign and immigrant propaganda for the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy will be discussed. However, before that is done a few general introductory remarks should be made. The entry of the United States into the conflict on the side of the Allies was among the major turning points of the First World War, and it triggered off a series of realistic as well as unfounded expectations both in Europe and in America. The Allies received an enormous moral and military boost; their victory seemed to be but a matter of time. Berlin, on the other hand, did not panic; the Imperial Chancellor Bethmann firmly believed that the German Army would crush the Allies before the American military build-up could affect the situation. The fact that the Americans due to their slow build-up expected the war to run well into 1919 indicates that Bethmann's expectations were not necessarily unfounded. Vienna was less confident: Czernin expressed the general feeling of disillusionment and fear in his 'April Memorandum', and contended that even another winter campaign would far overstretch the limited resources of his country. Propagandists both in Europe and in America were relieved to find that after Russia had, at least supposedly, taken a democratic turn in the March revolution, the conflict could now be presented as one between democracy and autocracy, which was exactly what Wilson did in his speech in Congress when asking for a declaration of war on Germany. The leaders of the various national movements for independence also felt that the time had come to secure American support for their programs and cash in on Wilson's rhetoric about the right to national self-determination.

Such expectations were based upon the assumption that the state of belligerency would sooner or later force the Wilson administration into a face to face showdown with the Habsburg Monarchy. With this in mind, Andre Cheradame, the leading French dismemberment propagandist in America, very much like Apponyi in 1915, set out to present his country's case to the public. Chéradame's books and articles about the Pan-German danger, unlike Apponyi's earlier warnings against the 'Slav peril', were well received not least because this was also the theme of Wilson's domestic propaganda campaign; the Chief Executive's repeated references to the 'One Central Empire' indicated that the White House would not change its pre-April 1917 position of viewing the Habsburg Monarchy as a second class participant in the conflict. But bitter frustration was in store for those who failed to see the gap between Wilson's rhetoric and intentions, at least until the early summer of 1918. Then and only then did Wilson agree to the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary.

The present and the following two chapters analyze the various aspects of wartime propaganda in America, in order to support the above arguments. In the present chapter the work of various Allied and immigrant propagandists is considered; in the next one the subject is American public opinion and the press, while in the final chapter on wartime propaganda Wilson's own campaign is introduced and evaluated.

The British propaganda campaign proved to be the most effective in the post-April 1917 period as well. Having successfully completed his task with the American declaration of war on Germany, Parker resigned and his undercover campaign was replaced by an open one orchestrated by the charismatic press magnate Lord Northcliffe from Crewe House, London. In due course, British propaganda in America was adapted to the new situation. Northcliffe's staff continued to manipulate the American press by controlling war news, promoting the British position on several key issues and preserving the spirit of the Atlantic

Alliance.<sup>1</sup> As for anti-Habsburg propaganda, the New Europe group was given a free hand but domestic American developments rendered an all out dismemberment campaign unnecessary. In September 1917 the Inquiry, President Wilson's task force for policy planning and peace preparations, was established and naturally became the target of the efforts of Seton-Watson and his colleagues. With some of its members involved in British peace preparations, the New Europe group could openly press its views on the Inquiry. Ethnic maps, weekly reports and memoranda, including the relevant Peace Handbooks, were sent to New York through the State Department and various individuals, such as Douglas W. Johnson of Columbia University, who served as a liaison officer between the Inquiry and similar French and British organizations.<sup>2</sup> While most of these pieces discussed the replacement of the Monarchy with a chain of independent nation states, the education of the American public was continued. Seton-Watson's famous war books, German, Slav, and Magyar (1916), discussing 'ruthless Magyarization', and Rumania and the Great War (1915), including the first ever discussion of the theory of Daco-Rumanian continuity in English, were released and widely circulated. The British propaganda campaign undoubtedly reached important American personalities and reinforced the anti-Habsburg and anti-Hungarian tendencies within the Inquiry, but there is no evidence that it influenced, or even raised the interest of, President Wilson, who had acted as the sole conductor of American foreign policy during his tenure in office.

Meanwhile, the Italians continued to ignore the possibilities of an American campaign: they produced one single piece of atrocity propaganda about how barbarously K und K soldiers destroyed various Italian churches. Nor did the French government believe that propaganda could help its cause in America. The French High Commission in the United

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<sup>1</sup> May (1966) 2: 604-05.

<sup>2</sup> The Inquiry is discussed in a separate chapter below.

States, led by the young journalist André Tardieu who later played an all important role in the reorganization of the Danubian basin at the Peace Conference as one of the five French Commissioners Plenipotentiary, refrained from large scale propaganda activity; Tardieu himself wrote it off as 'indiscreet and dangerous'.<sup>3</sup> Thus, it was up to the historian turned publicist André Chéradame to take up the challenge single-handedly and conduct the French campaign for dismemberment in the United States.

Chéradame, described by Seton-Watson as 'the gallant pioneer', was clearly obsessed with the Pan-German danger. He launched the initial campaign against the German plan of the Berlin-Baghdad railway line and spoke out against the Habsburg Monarchy as early as 1901 in his L'Europe et la Question d'Autriche. He viewed Austria-Hungary as but a toy in the hands of Prussian policy makers and as an instrument of 'ultra reactionary oppression.' He claimed that the Pan-German plan of an empire reaching from Berlin to the Persian Gulf could only be frustrated by the liberation of the 'martyred peoples' of the Monarchy, including the Magyars, and by the reshaping of the region into a 'United States of Central Europe.' With the publication of Naumann's *Mitteleuropa* plan Chéradame undoubtedly saw his, and the world's, worst nightmare coming true. He embarked upon a one-man American campaign and published several articles and three books.<sup>4</sup> In his wartime American publications Chéradame put forward the same arguments he had used before, but cleverly adapted them to American issues: by July 1917 Pan-Germany had come to threaten the 'independent existence of the United States.'<sup>5</sup> He introduced the Austrians, the Magyars, the Bulgarians

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<sup>3</sup> Tardieu (1927) p. 237.

<sup>4</sup> May (1966) p. 554; Gesztesi (1918) pp. 47-52. Chéradame's articles are listed as pamphlets in the appendix below.

<sup>5</sup> 'The United States and Pan-Germanism' The Atlantic Monthly, July 1917 issue, p. 720.

and the Turks as the 'vassals' of Germany; he called this a 'four-play feudal spirit.'<sup>6</sup> Chéradame argued, in public and in private, that the 'best way to crush Pan-Germany' was by

organizing scientifically an insurrection of the peoples oppressed by the Germans, and Magyars in Central Europe.<sup>7</sup>

In one of his discussions of the 'vassals of Germany' he explained the case of Hungary as well:

Of 10,000,000 Magyars, there are - a fact not generally known among the Allies - 9,000,000 poor agricultural laborers cynically exploited by a million nobles, priests and officials. These 9,000,000 Magyar proletarians are exceedingly desirous of peace... They would be quite capable of revolting at the last moment against their feudal exploiters, if the Allies, estimating accurately the shocking social conditions of these poor Magyars, were able to assure them that the victory of the Entente would put an end to the agrarian and feudal system under which they suffer.<sup>8</sup>

Chéradame was among the collaborators of the first issues of the New Europe<sup>9</sup> and the only member of the group to pay considerable attention to the education of the American public. The release of his first discussion of the Pan-German plan in The Atlantic Monthly, although written before April 1917, coincided with the President's 1917 Flag Day address which led the Bohemian-Americans of the time as well as the (Slovak-) American historian Victor S. Mamatey to believe that the Frenchman's views had an immediate impact on Wilson.<sup>10</sup> This

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 726.

<sup>7</sup> LC TRps: Correspondence: Chéradame to TR, 2 July 1918.

<sup>8</sup> 'How to Destroy Pan-Germany' The Atlantic Monthly, December 1917 issue, p. 829.

<sup>9</sup> Hence his connection with Seton-Watson. The collaborators of the New Europe were listed on the inside cover of every issue.

<sup>10</sup> Unterberger (1989) p. 51; Mamatey (1957) p. 104, note.

was simply not the case: Wilson himself wrote to a friend that he had no time to read Chéradame's articles,<sup>11</sup> and the two had apparently never met. Nor did Chéradame manage to establish links with the Inquiry or the CPI. His association with Theodore Roosevelt was also rather fruitless: the most he got from the ex-President was some private encouragement.<sup>12</sup>

German and Austro-Hungarian propaganda in America came to an end with the departure of the official representatives of the Central Powers and the immigrant press took a pro-American stand. Only one post-April 1917 piece has been found, von Schierbrand's discussion on Austria-Hungary, the Polyglot Empire (1917). More a journalist's than a historian's account, the book is centered around the dramatic not the factual, especially when describing domestic politics. An anecdotal survey of the provinces of the Habsburg realm, (spiced with references to the difficulty of having to speak four to eight languages in order to be sure of getting even a beer) is followed by von Schierbrand's proposed solution: the federalization of the Monarchy. The real significance of the volume lies not in its contents but in the fact that it was published in America after the diplomatic break.

The Monarchy may not have engaged itself in a far reaching campaign in America but Slav propaganda in the New World was anxiously monitored first by the diplomatic corps and after May 1917 through Berne. In fact, a special stamp, reading '*Slavische Umtriebe*' (Slavic Agitation), was used to mark such reports, which were also sent to Budapest.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Mamatey (1957) p. 104, note. The author speculates that Wilson did not remember well! Wilson's promotion of the concept of the One Central Power was a conscious propaganda move on his part, which is discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>12</sup> LC TRps: Correspondence: TR to Chéradame 11 July 1918. Further details are provided in the following chapter.

<sup>13</sup> OL K 26 XII. res. tétel, for every war year.



Wartime immigrant movements and propaganda for dismemberment followed similar patterns in America. Every immigrant group made attempts to create a central organization in America, to win the support of prominent Americans and to educate the American public. They also approached the War Department with the plan of establishing immigrant 'legions' and provided counter-intelligence services to prove the disloyalty of German- and Hungarian-Americans.

This propaganda was predominantly anti-Habsburg and anti-Hungarian in character and may be grouped around four major themes: (1) general information about the origins of the war and the establishment of responsibility for it; (2) atrocity stories; (3) the introduction of the nationalities of the Habsburg Monarchy to the American public (including their history, grievances and aspirations); and (4) proposals for the reorganization of East-Central Europe. The Monarchy, but especially the Magyars and Premier Tisza, were blamed for the outbreak of the war (Beneš) and the conflict was often described as yet another chapter in the long history of the cooperation of Teutonic and Magyar Huns<sup>14</sup> to destroy Slavdom (Namier, Beneš). Since the American public knew practically nothing about the various Slav peoples involved, they needed to be introduced. This was done with a special emphasis on their history and culture, and facts were, more often than not, 'modified' to fit the individual claims of the given propagandists. Meanwhile, the Magyars were pictured as a bunch of Asiatic barbarians who not only had robbed the Slavs of their lands (Beneš, Hinkovič) but also ruthlessly oppressed and 'Magyarized' them. The Magyars were shown as being 'more

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<sup>14</sup> The word 'Hun' requires some explanation: in the usual tendency of scapegoating British propagandists put the label 'the Hun' on Emperor William II because of his notorious speech delivered to German troops sent to put down the Boxer rising in China in 1900. On the other hand, it is one of the popular misconceptions of Hungarian history, dating back to Medieval chronicles, that the Hungarians were descendants of Attila's Huns. This co-incidence was also noticed and abused by Czech propagandists.

Prussian than the Prussians themselves'; it was claimed that the Slavs had 'taught the Magyars the art of peace - agriculture, industry, and statecraft' (Vošnjak). These activists, in accordance with the New Europe group, suggested the 'complete regrouping of Central and South-eastern Europe' (Seton-Watson). This was to be done along ethnic lines and would result in the reunion of the various 'branches of the same nationalities' in 'democratic nation states' with the added benefit of thwarting the German plan of eastward expansion. Claims for territories with clear German or Magyar majorities were, of course, not introduced as yet. To further their case these propagandists also produced details of several shocking atrocities committed by the Magyars during the centuries in their ruthless attempt to destroy the various nationalities living in Hungary. Besides these similarities, the various campaigns of the different nationalities produced interesting individual features as well which must also be discussed before drawing the balance of wartime dismemberment propaganda in the United States.

The Czecho-Slovak campaign in America set the standard for all other dismemberment movements, and set very high ones indeed. The campaign itself, of course, was supervised by the Czecho-Slovak National Council in Paris (led by Beneš, Masaryk, and the Slovak Milan Štefánik) and promoted the program worked out by Seton-Watson and Masaryk.<sup>15</sup> The Bohemian National Alliance of America (hereafter BNA) was established as early as 18 August 1914 under the leadership of Ludvik J. Fisher and Emmanuel Voska. Within a year it came to represent most Bohemian-Americans and embraced the program of Masaryk and his colleagues. On 27 October 1915 the BNA and the Slovak League of America, presided

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<sup>15</sup> The best summations are Pergler (1926); Čapek (1920) pp. 265-78; and the relevant parts in Mamatey (1957) and Unterberger (1989).

by Albert P. Mamatey, agreed to join forces towards the establishment of a federal Czecho-Slovak state. According to the Bohemian-American historian and propagandist Thomas Čapek:

The American Čechs [sic] played a double role in the drama which ended in the humbling in the dust of the Hapsburgs and the final disruption of the Dual Monarchy. In the first place they financed the external revolutionary movement. They are considered the richest, as they are admittedly the strongest, branch of the race outside the motherland. Secondly, it was expected of them that they would present the cause of the Czechoslovaks before the country and would endeavor to win for it [the] American public opinion.<sup>16</sup>

Two paths were taken to win American public opinion and support for the cause of the Czecho-Slovaks: (1) counter-intelligence activities and (2) propaganda. As discussed in chapter 4 above, instrumental in the former was Emmanuel Voska, a first generation immigrant who had made himself a modest fortune around the turn of the century, rose to prominence among the Bohemian-Americans, and joined forces with Masaryk at the outbreak of the war. He worked for Sir Guy Gaunt and Sir William Wiseman, the chiefs of British intelligence in America. In early 1918 Voska was appointed as Director of the Central European Division of the CPI by George Creel, who described him as 'the greatest secret agent of the war.'<sup>17</sup>

The propaganda campaign was launched in 1915 and the words Wilson had used to describe the Czechs in The State, 'no lapse of time, no defeat of hopes, seem sufficient to reconcile the Czechs of Bohemia to incorporation within Austria,'<sup>18</sup> became the slogan of the movement. An early success was scored when on 25 February 1916 the House Foreign Relations Committee heard the Czech case presented by Charles Pergler, the vice-president

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<sup>16</sup> Čapek (1920) p. 265.

<sup>17</sup> Voska and Irwin (1940); Willert (1952); Unterberger (1989) pp. 27-29; 124.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Unterberger (1989) p. 16.

of the BNA.<sup>19</sup> Pergler's speech was later printed as the first American pamphlet of the BNA. In due course the Czech-Slav Press Bureau was set up in New York and Vojta Beneš, Edvard Beneš' brother, was sent to America. The BNA published or circulated about every fifth propaganda piece discussing the Monarchy in the New World! Indicative of the scope of their efforts is a report by Vojta Beneš to Masaryk, which states that the BNA had circulated some 20,000 pamphlets before December 1916.<sup>20</sup> The contents of this propaganda were generally in line with the well known ideas of Beneš and Masaryk.<sup>21</sup> The one exception was Pergler's Should Austria Exist?, which was reprinted from the January 1918 issue of the Yale Review. Pergler introduced ideas which may have been familiar within the Habsburg Monarchy but some of which certainly shocked its readers in the New World:

Metternich once called Italy a mere geographical expression. This statement was never really true of Italy, but it may be applied to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Who ever heard of anyone calling himself an Austrian? Even Francis Joseph, the late Austrian Emperor, once asserted that he was a German prince. There is no Austrian language, no Austrian literature, no Austrian nationality, no Austrian civilization. Still, states do not come into being without the aid of powerful social, economic, and political factors. Austria's main justification for existence may be found in Asiatic invasions, that is, of the Huns (Magyars) and later the Turks. German Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia became a federation of independent states, bound together only by the person of a common king, for the purpose of more efficiently resisting Turkish pressure, when in 1526 the Hapsburgs were called to the Bohemian throne by the free choice of the Bohemian people...<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Pergler (1926) Chapter III.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Seton-Watson (1943) pp. 96-100.

<sup>21</sup> They summed up their views in Bohemia's Case for Independence (Beneš) and in The New Europe (The Slav Standpoint) (Masaryk). Borsody (1982) offers a comprehensive analysis.

<sup>22</sup> Pergler (1918) p. 1. It was my supervisor, Dr. Okey, who called my attention to the fact that this was not simply extreme propaganda.

The best piece of introductory propaganda was a small volume of eight essays, some by Americans, edited by Čapek and titled Bohemia Under Hapsburg Misrule. Interestingly, Hus propaganda, with which the entire campaign was launched in Geneva in 1915, was hardly used in America. Maps, postcards and public meetings, especially after Masaryk's arrival in May 1918, were among the other methods used and Vojtech Preissig, of the Wentworth Institute of Boston, prepared recruiting posters for the Czecho-Slovak Army.<sup>23</sup>

In June 1917 Dr. Milan Štefánik went to the United States to win American support for the Czecho-Slovak National Council. He found only closed doors and on leaving the United States in December of the same year he voiced his disillusionment with President Wilson. He, nonetheless, managed to get the permission of the War Department for recruiting in America.<sup>24</sup> But it was the arrival of Thomas G. Masaryk that changed the picture completely. He arrived on the West Coast via the Far East in late April 1918 and, on his way to Washington, was given an enthusiastic reception in Chicago, which was reported to both Vienna and Budapest in detail.<sup>25</sup> Using the Czecho-Slovak Legion fighting in Russia as the point of departure, he launched an impressive propaganda campaign to educate the American public, secured the support of several important American politicians and signed a symbolic agreement of cooperation with the Slovaks in Pittsburgh on 31 May 1918.<sup>26</sup> The Czech leader's four visits to the White House (between 19 June and 15 November) gave rise to the myth of the two well-informed professors working in close cooperation with Masaryk

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<sup>23</sup> Čapek (1920) pp. 272-73.

<sup>24</sup> Mamatey (1957) pp. 129-35.

<sup>25</sup> OL K 26: 1172.cs. XII. res. tétel: Z1.200. Berne, 28 June 1918. One of the 'Slavische Umtriebe' reports.

<sup>26</sup> Mamatey (1957) pp. 280-87; Unterberger (1989).

convincing Wilson about the necessity of the dismemberment of the Monarchy.<sup>27</sup> The historians Zeman and Mamatey have comprehensively refuted this theory by pointing to the obvious disillusionment in the Czech leader's own account of their meetings and by calling attention to the fact that he was first received as a Russian expert.<sup>28</sup> In actual fact, he was the nominal head of the Czecho-Slovak Legion in Russia and had first hand information of the situation which was undoubtedly in the focus of Wilson's attention. The first interview had taken place just before Wilson announced his decision to join the dismemberment camp and they did discuss the issue but not even Masaryk himself claimed that he had influenced the President's decision.<sup>29</sup> It appears that it was Wilson who used Masaryk for his own ends, namely to promote some regional integration to replace the Monarchy, and not the other way round. When Wilson recognized the Czecho-Slovak National Council as a *de facto* belligerent government on 3 September 1918 Masaryk swung into action again. To counter the Imperial Manifesto federalizing the Monarchy he issued the Czecho-Slovak Declaration of Independence on 18 October 1918. He returned home as the first elected president of the newly created Czecho-Slovak Republic at the end of the year.<sup>30</sup>

One final aspect of the Czecho-Slovak program, the question of Ruthenia, must also be looked at briefly. Mamatey has gone as far as to claim that the Ruthenian-Americans had decided the future of their homeland; in his words 'the tail did wag the dog.' According to Mamatey, the Ruthenian-Americans approached Masaryk with the plan of joining the Czecho-Slovak state if autonomy was granted only four days after the President had received their

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<sup>27</sup> See for example Miller (1940).

<sup>28</sup> Zeman (1976) pp. 111-12; Mamatey (1989).

<sup>29</sup> Masaryk (1927) p. 283.

<sup>30</sup> Unterberger (1989) Chapter 18.

delegation in the White House. This solution seemed expedient to all parties involved with a say in the matter and the plan was realized at the peace conference.<sup>31</sup> On closer examination of the facts, however, a different picture takes shape. Masaryk initially expected that the Ruthenians of northern Hungary would join the Russians but when the Bolshevik revolution redrew the entire political picture he changed his mind. On the analogy of the 'western corridor' between the Czechs and the South Slavs, he now envisaged an eastern one linking up Slovakia with Rumania thus completing the encirclement of Hungary. According to the historian D. Perman this was the only significant addition to Masaryk's plans after 1915.<sup>32</sup> Thus the Czech leader went to America, as correctly pointed out by the Hungarian historian Magda Ádám, with the intention of securing the consent of the Ruthenian-Americans to his plan.<sup>33</sup> The American National Council of Uhro-Russins was founded in Homestead, Pennsylvania as late as 23 July 1918, and its resolution called for full independence, saw union with Galicia and Bukovina as the second best solution and was not willing to consider anything less than autonomy. Their delegation, led by Gregory I. Zatkovič, was received by the President on 21 October 1918, who suggested that they should seek autonomy. After the President's open nullification of Point Ten in his reply to the Austrian peace note, the Ruthenian-Americans signed the Scranton Resolution of 12 November 1918 (that is after the Armistice), which promised their compatriots at home autonomy within Czecho-Slovakia.<sup>34</sup> Back in Carpatho-Ruthenia, however, four national councils were established advocating four different solutions and the decision to join to Czecho-Slovakia was not made

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<sup>31</sup> Mamatey (1967).

<sup>32</sup> Perman (1962) pp. 14-15; 26.

<sup>33</sup> Ádám (1993) p. 27.

<sup>34</sup> Mamatey (1967).

before 9 May 1919.<sup>35</sup> There are also serious doubts about Mamatey's other claim, namely that the Ruthenian-American decision defined Wilson's stand in the matter. The detailed boundary proposals for the peace conference were worked out by the Inquiry in mid-October 1918 and the authors of the final report did not take sides in the question. True, the 'Black Book' of 21 January 1919, the revised boundary proposals, suggested the incorporation of Ruthenia in the Czecho-Slovak state but the several reasons provided did not include the Ruthenian decision to do so.<sup>36</sup> Masaryk well understood that self determination for Wilson meant regional integration more than the establishment of economically and politically unviable small states.<sup>37</sup> During his stay in America he secured the support of both the Slovaks and the Ruthenians for his program summed up in The New Europe (The Slav Standpoint) (1918) but this did not mean that he influenced Wilson's policies or decisions.

The South Slav movement for independence and unification was by far the most complex problem the Wilson administration had to face when the future of the Habsburg Monarchy was being considered. South Slav immigrants in America belonged to four different nationalities, spoke three different languages, practiced three different religions and used two different alphabets.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the only thing they all seemed to share was uncompromising anti-Hungarianism. However, their efforts in America cannot be understood without a brief exposition on the South Slav movement in general. By the turn of the century several solutions had been developed for the unification of the South Slavs living in South-Eastern Europe and two of those emerged as serious alternatives during the war. The centralist

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<sup>35</sup> Magocsi (1975).

<sup>36</sup> Miller (1924) 4: 231-32.

<sup>37</sup> This issue is discussed in chapter 11 below.

<sup>38</sup> Prpic (1967) pp. 174-75.



Greater Serbia program was developed and promoted by the Serbian Premier Nicola Pašić. The alternative, the establishment of a federal Yugoslav state, was represented by the Croatian politician Ante Trumbić, who set up his Yugoslav Committee in London in May 1915. While the Greater Serbia program was backed by Serbia, often presented as the Belgium of the Balkans in atrocity propaganda, the West looked more favourably at Trumbić's federation plans. The questions of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, together with Turkish, Greek and Rumanian claims to certain regions of the Balkans made the picture even more complicated. On top of all that, the South Slav program was the only one which conflicted with the interests of a major Allied country, namely with those of Italy.<sup>39</sup> That the Italian government meant business when it demanded the fulfillment of the secret London agreement of 1915 became very clear when after September 1918 the Italians made several attempts to have the Slovenians and Croats declared enemies as Austrian subjects.<sup>40</sup>

The Italians could go that far, although their plea was rejected, only because Pašić and Trumbić had made no genuine attempt to work out a compromise solution. Both the Corfu Declaration (20 July 1917) and the Geneva talks (5-9 November 1918) were generally seen not as an attempt to develop a South Slav program but to sell territorial demands to the Allies. Thus, the Serbo-Croat-Slovene state, also including Montenegro, was established on 1 December 1918, but American reservations were maintained until 6 February 1919, when recognition was eventually granted.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See the relevant passages in Mamatey (1957) and Lederer (1963); Pleterski (1983); Zivojinović (1972).

<sup>40</sup> Lederer (1963) p. 40; Prpić (1967) p. 197; Miller (1924) 1: 56.

<sup>41</sup> Prpić (1967) p. 200.

The vast majority of the South Slavs in America had immigrated from the Habsburg Monarchy and favoured the federal solution while Pašić's plans were represented by the Serbian Minister in the United States, Ljubo Mihajlović. The Wilson administration favoured the federalist solution but the President, quite consistently, refused to see separatist politicians before the reversal of his Habsburg policy. This mixed American position was exposed when a South Slav mission arrived in Washington in December 1917, that is after the United States had declared war on the Monarchy. The mission was composed of representatives of both Pašić and Trumbić but Wilson received only Milenko Vesnić, the Serbian Ambassador to Paris, the leader of the delegation. Vesnić was consulted on East-Central European matters and was granted the honour to address both Houses of Congress before Wilson delivered his Fourteen Points speech. This move on Wilson's part served tactical reasons: Vesnić, who knew what the President was about to say could not call for the dismemberment of the Monarchy.<sup>42</sup> Further complications arose in August 1918 when Pašić decided to recall Mihajlović who by that time came to stand more for federalism than for a Greater Serbia.<sup>43</sup> This was most embarrassing since after the favourable turn in American policy most immigrant groups busily drew up plans for cooperation and produced documents of unification while Pašić demonstrated yet again his uncompromising attitude.

A movement so divided was unlikely to create a central organization in America; the only such attempt was the reorganization of the ardently anti-Habsburg Croatian League into a Yugoslav National Council in Chicago on 10 March 1915.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, the Serbian Relief

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<sup>42</sup> LC TWWps: Series Four: Case file no. 2855: Serbia, contains all the documents related to the mission including its initial screening; Armstrong (1971) pp. 37-42.

<sup>43</sup> Mamatey (1957) pp. 312-13.

<sup>44</sup> Prpić (1967) pp. 176-77.

Committee was established in New York in 1916 and its posters were prepared by the famous French artist Thèophile Alexandre Steinlen. However, it appears that the British circulated more propaganda material in America about Serbia than the Serbs themselves, although Mihajlović scored a major success on the military front. In May 1917 he secured the authorization of Newton D. Baker, the Secretary of War, for the opening of a recruiting office in Washington for the Serbian Army.<sup>45</sup> This was a sweet victory for Pašić since the Yugoslav war effort had passed unnoticed in Washington until September 1918.<sup>46</sup>

The South Slav movement in America had other peculiarities as well. Its contribution to the American war effort did not seem to extend beyond the usual subscription to the Liberty Loan campaigns and there is no indication of any Voska-type counter-intelligence activities either. They could not secure a say in decision making regarding the Monarchy although in one of the most amazing incidents of the entire war period they not only claimed that their vote had secured Wilson's re-election in 1916 but also sent him a telegram to the White House to remind him of it.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, their main contribution to the South Slav movement was limited to providing manpower for the Serbian Army and financial support for Trumbić's Yugoslav Committee.

South Slav propaganda in America reflected the divided nature of the whole movement. For a very long time anti-Habsburg declarations were almost immediately followed by

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<sup>45</sup> Prpić (1967) pp. 186-87.

<sup>46</sup> Mamatey (1957) p. 313. Note the difference between Serbian and Yugoslav here: Serbia was a belligerent, the 'Belgium of the Balkans,' with all its implications, while the Americans continued to view the Yugoslav movement with suspicion until Wilson's turnaround in 1918.

<sup>47</sup> Prpić (1967) pp. 182-84.

pro-Habsburg ones.<sup>48</sup> The South Slavs in America also had their fair share of atrocity propaganda by circulating the works of R. A. Reiss and publishing a pamphlet both in Britain and America titled Austro-Magyar Judicial Crimes. One of the very few pro-Monarchy, but at the same time anti-Hungarian, pamphlets was also written by a Croatian-American, the Rev. Krmptić. In Italy's Claims... he rejected the 'Pan-Serb illusion' and argued:

If after this war the Austro-Hungarian empire is desmembered [sic], of which, so far, there is not the slightest indication, the only successful adjustment among the Southern Slavs would consist in a federalization of the states on the basis of equality, and in not allowing any one state to absorb any other...If, on the other hand, when the cloud of war has cleared, Austro-Hungarian sovereignty and monarchical integrity is not broken down, it is most certain that a new policy of federation must be carried out, which will give the Slavs in the Monarchy full power in the government of their respective countries.

The lack of trialism in the Monarchy, argued Krmptić, was the sin of the Magyars, but

democracy is coming; she shall break the Magyar oligarchy. The price for the long existing oppression of Croats by the Magyars is to be paid.<sup>49</sup>

Despite Krmptić's efforts South Slav propaganda reached new heights only with the arrival of Hinko Hinković and Bogumil Vošnjak. Hinković, a former Croatian representative of the Hungarian Parliament, was sent to America by Pašić but he soon reverted to the federal idea.<sup>50</sup> In The Yugoslavs In Future Europe Hinković discussed 'Magyar misrule in Croatia' and argued for dismemberment, claiming that if Austria-Hungary, 'this monstrous phenome-

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<sup>48</sup> Prpić (1967) pp. 175-87.

<sup>49</sup> Excerpts from this piece have been found in SML CDps: Inquiry: Box 61, folder 97; it was also quoted by Max Handman, who wrote a long report for the Inquiry about the Rumanians in Hungary. These issues are all addressed in the chapter on the Inquiry. According to the transcript in the Clive Day papers the above quotes are from p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> Mamatey (1957) pp. 115; 117; 312-13.

non,' survived the war it would 'repeat itself in yet another war.' He also echoed the German-Magyar conspiracy theory:

The Magyars have always sought and found in Berlin support for their Imperialistic fancies just as, on the other hand, in Germany they have always been considered a most important pawn in the Hamburg-Baghdad game.<sup>51</sup>

He described Károlyi's efforts within and without Hungary as the 'Karoly Comedy', claiming that his anti-German stand and calls for Hungarian independence were but mere theatrics.<sup>52</sup> After a similar discussion on Bulgaria, Hinković summed up the Yugoslav idea in the following words:

That ideal is the unity in one single State of all the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, who are one nation, with the same language, and the same tendencies, and whom only adverse fate has divided.<sup>53</sup>

Bogumil Vošnjak, Trumbić's representative in America, was Slovenian by birth.<sup>54</sup> He was also one of the most talented dismemberment politicians to set foot on American soil. In A Dying Empire, easily his best piece, Vošnjak argued that an independent Yugoslav state would hold the key to hitherto unseen economic development in the Balkans. Such a state would also thwart German eastward expansion by cutting her off from the Near East and would deny her control over Central Europe by frustrating her plan to connect the Danube and the Rhine. Of the Magyars he maintained that the

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<sup>51</sup> Hinković (n.d.) p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> Hinković (n.d.) pp. 31-34.

<sup>53</sup> Hinković (n.d.) p. 51. The passage was printed in italics in the original.

<sup>54</sup> Mamatey (1957) pp. 22-23; 115; 117.

world knows no shrewder falsification of history than the Magyars. Careful historical research will prove the great share of Slavdom in the foundation of the Hungarian State... The tie holding together this artificial State was the Latin language. Slovenes taught the Magyars the art of peace-agriculture, industry, and statecraft. The Magyars were in the beginning the most unoriginal people for progressive civilization. They were warriors and nomads bearing their home and their constitution on the backs of their horses. Slav civilization changed them, and gave them more Western notions.<sup>55</sup>

The Magyars, however, did not realize their indebtedness to the Slavs. They were always a minority in their own country and they 'began with brutal denationalization' in the late 18th century to change this situation. The only Magyar to be respected was Kossuth who suggested the creation of a Danubian Confederation based upon racial equality. Instead, the *Ausgleich* of 1867 secured Magyar domination in the Eastern half of the Monarchy and the Magyars 'became worse than Prussians, their ideology became more Prussian.' He suggested the creation of an independent South Slav State together with an independent Bohemia and the reduction of Hungary to her ethnic boundaries.

By contrast with Czech but even with South Slav efforts, Rumanian propaganda activities remained rather limited all through the war period<sup>56</sup> although the Rumanians were possibly in the most favourable position. Rumania entered the war on the side of the Allies in return for the Treaty of Bucharest which guaranteed its ultimate aim of realizing Greater Rumania by, among other things, the annexation of Transylvania and the adjacent territories of Hungary to as far west as the river Theiss. All they needed to do was to secure Wilson's consent. With the Joint American Minister to Bulgaria, Rumania and Serbia, Charles J.

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<sup>55</sup> All quotations are from Vošnjak (1918) pp. 140-45.

<sup>56</sup> The only accounts available in English are Devasia (1970); Constantinescu and Pascu (1971) pp. 127-43; and the relevant passages in Mamatey (1957).

Vopicka, seated at Bucharest they naturally opted for diplomatic methods<sup>57</sup> and the mobilization of the Rumanian-Americans, who had almost exclusively immigrated from the Habsburg Monarchy, was not even considered until the American declaration of war on Germany. A Transylvanian-Rumanian mission, including Ion Mota, Captain Vasile Stoica, and the Rev. Vasile Lucaciu, was then sent to America in June 1917, with the double aim to win support for Greater Rumania plans and to establish a Transylvanian Legion within the American Army.<sup>58</sup>

However, when a report by William H. Andrews, the American Charge d'Affaires, from Bucharest revealed that the members of the mission were Austro-Hungarian subjects,<sup>59</sup> Wilson refused to meet them and the War Department turned down their plea for the legion. Meanwhile, in August 1917 King Ferdinand of Rumania wrote privately to Wilson listing Rumanian grievances and asking American support for his Greater Rumania plan. The President's polite rejection was limited to an expression of sympathy for the sufferings of the Rumanians. At the same time Queen Marie of Rumania asked for State Department permission for an American propaganda tour, which Lansing flatly rejected.<sup>60</sup> Thus, left with no better option, the members of the mission stayed in America and launched their own propaganda campaign. They achieved little success and their counter-espionage activities also remained fruitless. Rumania's exit from the war, which automatically nullified Allied promises, naturally gave a push to the American campaign. On 5 July 1918 the Rumanian National

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<sup>57</sup> Spector (1962) Chapter I.

<sup>58</sup> Mamatey (1957) p. 123.

<sup>59</sup> Mamatey (1957) pp. 124-125. His discussion of Andrews' attitude is unfair; he charged the American representative with 'malice, bias, and ignorance.'

<sup>60</sup> Mamatey (1957) p. 123. Note that she spelt her name 'Marie' and not 'Mary'.

League of America was founded and declared the education of the American public to be its main goal. Public meetings were held in the Mid-West and along the East Coast and Rumanian related material was provided for various Boston, Cleveland, New York and Washington papers. The League launched its own journal, The Periscope, and circulated some 6,000 copies of six pamphlets and several maps.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the Rumanian propaganda campaign peaked after the President had reversed his Habsburg policy and, as in the case of the Serbs, British activists apparently circulated more pamphlets and books about Rumania than the Rumanian-Americans themselves.

Neither the scope nor the quality of this Rumanian propaganda campaign matched the efforts of the Czechs or South Slavs in America. Rumanian territorial aspirations and war aims provided the central themes for these efforts and were complemented by anti-Hungarian atrocity propaganda. As for the causes of the war, on one occasion Lucaciu went a step beyond the claims of Beneš. Interpreting the details of the Sarajevo assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand with unique flexibility he claimed that the idea was conceived in Berlin, developed in Vienna, and carried out by Budapest. While this amazing revelation secured him large scale press coverage it failed to open up the doors of the White House for him. He introduced this theory in a Rumanian-American public meeting at Youngstown, Ohio, but was never granted the opportunity to present their memorandum, including a demonstration of loyalty to the United States and Rumanian territorial claims, to Wilson.<sup>62</sup>

All through the war the Wilson administration refused to deal with Rumanian territorial aspirations for several reasons. Rumanian anti-semitism had led to diplomatic con-

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<sup>61</sup> Devasia (1970) pp. 207-25.

<sup>62</sup> BH GKps: Newspaper File: undated press cutting: Lukácsiu munkában (Lucaciu at Work).



frontations even before the war, the Americans also charged the Rumanian government with unfair business practices, and Rumania was viewed as considerably more backward than the territories she claimed.<sup>63</sup> The prestige of Rumanian representatives was ruined by the facts that the Bratianu government had sought French diplomatic support for the Transylvanian mission, by Andrews' report on its members, and by Stoica's open cooperation with Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, Wilson refused to take wartime secret agreements into consideration and Rumania's exit from the war was by no means welcomed in Washington. Even in the entirely new situation created by Wilson's new Habsburg policy and the Armistice negotiations the President was waiting for a public demonstration. When that was provided by Vaida-Voevod's speech in the Hungarian Parliament (announcing the union of Transylvania with Rumania), and Rumania reentered the war against Hungary, the American recognition of the Greater Rumania program was finally offered to Bucharest but again without territorial commitments.<sup>65</sup>

Drawing the balance of dismemberment propaganda in the United States during the First World War is no easy task in the absence of impartial contemporary and secondary accounts. Such a step would also be somewhat premature at the present stage of our discussion, without first introducing the opinion of the leading newspapers and prominent Americans. The discussion of these issues forms the backbone of the next chapter, which also provides some reflections on domestic American public opinion.

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<sup>63</sup> Devasia (1970) pp. 40-89.

<sup>64</sup> Mamatey (1957) p. 124 sheds some light upon the French contribution to the Mission and Lansing's suspicions; Devasia (1970) pp. 214-17 sums up TR's cooperation with Stoica. The pre-sent author has serious doubts about that claim since Roosevelt's papers carry but a few indifferent letters between the two politicians.

<sup>65</sup> Spector (1962) p. 60; Low (1963) pp. 16-21.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: DOMESTIC VOICES AND THE PRESS**

In the present chapter our enquiries into the field of World War One propaganda are continued by summing up the views of various domestic American campaigners and offering an analysis of the final changes of the image of Hungary in the press. While some of the tendencies from the pre-April 1917 period were transferred into the period of American belligerency, one major new development must be emphasized: with the declaration of war on Germany the United States had taken sides in the conflict, after which impartiality, real or pretended, could be and was abandoned. Realizing this, Viereck's The Fatherland became Viereck's American Weekly, the Szabadság performed a similar turnaround, and the only paper to listen to some argument from the other side was the New Republic. Consequently, by the summer of 1918 not the preservation but the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy became a 'necessity,' the *sine qua non* of peace. As before April 1917, American publicists discussed the broader issues of the war, but now with the added dimension of American intervention. New contributors took the centre stage, most notably TR and former Ambassador Gerard, together with a number of wartime organizations. Similarly, the press continued to be the chief source of information about Hungary, but the diplomatic break and later the declaration of war cut off the flow of first-hand information through visiting correspondents and Berlin. Thus, while before April 1917 reports on the cabinet changes in Hungary were quite reliable, after the diplomatic break this accuracy disappeared. Furthermore, the earlier pro-Hungarian statements were gradually replaced with anti-Hungarian ones - the final disintegration of the positive and idealized prewar image of Hungary was one of

the most distinctive developments of the period. Another, equally significant, change was the 'discovery' of the Czecho-Slovak Legion in Russia, which secured the interest and sympathy of the American public for the Czech cause exactly when Masaryk arrived in Washington. Supporting the Czech cause became fashionable in Washington, especially after Wilson's similar decision, and the whole movement culminated in the establishment of the Mid-European Union (hereafter MEU), under the aegis of the CPI in late September 1918. The latter issue is addressed in the next chapter.

The American public responded to the declaration of war on Germany with much excitement. The increased interest in the various issues suddenly on the agenda encouraged several individuals and organizations to express their opinion. A variety of war reference books were published in due course, among them a compilation of Two Thousand Questions and Answers About the War (1918) by the Review of Reviews, a leading monthly, and a similar Handbook (1918) by the National Security League, an interventionist organization under the leadership of Elihu Root, TR's former Secretary of War and State. Most of the questions raised were about Germany, but the various nationalities living in the Habsburg Monarchy were also given considerable attention; Tisza was portrayed as an arch-reactionary, an annexationist and the bringer of the war. Dumba's 1915 misadventures were beginning to backfire: not only were they discussed at length in these reference books but John Price Jones, in The German Spy in America (1917), a book published with TR's introduction, devoted an entire chapter to the activities of the former Habsburg Ambassador.

Another interesting development of the post-April 1917 period was that while the state of war cut American correspondents off from German and Habsburg news sources, the returning Ambassadors became the main suppliers of first-hand information. Quite understandably, their opinion was eagerly sought and widely publicized, and no one was more active

than the former Ambassador to Berlin, James Watson Gerard. His Face to Face with Kaiserism (1918) was among the most effective American propaganda books; excerpts from it were published even in Viereck's paper. Gerard addressed a variety of issues from gossip (which he seemed to like a lot) about the Kaiser through anti-American agitation to German plans to attack the United States. He devoted a full chapter to the Habsburg Monarchy (titled 'Austria-Hungary: the Kaiser's Vassal State'<sup>1</sup>), which is a unique record of an insider's - by no means unbiased - opinion. Gerard's nineteen-page section is a mixture of familiar clichés and declarations of sympathy, which is hardly surprising given his family ties. On the one hand, Gerard contended that the Monarchy was the weakest of the Central Powers, that she was on the verge of economic and military collapse, and that her affairs were guided by the German General Staff. On the other hand, he maintained a high opinion of the Hungarians, but also charged Tisza with provoking the war. These two undercurrents met in a passage which looks like an earlier paragraph from Wilson's The State spiced with war propaganda:

Since then [1849], by superior political talents and taste for intrigue, the Magyars have not only held the Slovaks, Rumanians, etc., of their own country in political subjection, but have held much of the power in the Dual Monarchy. Their danger lies, however, in the predominance of German influence; and some day the gay, easygoing, pleasant Hungarians may awake to find the Prussian Eitel Fritz seated on their throne and to learn what Prussian efficiency means when applied to those whom [the] Germans consider an inferior people.<sup>2</sup>

In sharp contrast with Gerard's piece, the belated publication of Mrs. Bullitt's diary of her 1916 visit with her husband to Berlin, Vienna and Budapest stands out as the only pro-Hungarian view. Her statement about the POW situation:

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<sup>1</sup> Gerard (1918) pp. 165-83.

<sup>2</sup> Gerard (1918) p. 170.

We decided that if we were going to be interned we'd choose Austria or Hungary,<sup>3</sup>

as well as the one about the Hungarian reaction to the Rumanian declaration of war:

Billy and I heartily agreed that it was disgusting. One likes the Hungarians so much that a calamity to them seems a calamity to all,<sup>4</sup>

indicates that her opinion was perhaps too complimentary, but certainly one-sided. The rest of the book is anecdotal in style and is centered around the sharp contrast between life in wartime Germany and Austria-Hungary, with her preferences lying with the latter. Several passages on the Monarchy correspond word for word with Bullitt's third article for the Public Ledger, which makes one wonder who the author actually is.

While Mrs. Bullitt's unconditional support for Hungary remained an isolated voice, the TR turnaround, starting with the letter to Apponyi about the sinking of the Lusitania, attracted much attention and largely contributed to Hungary's loss of prestige in America. The ex-President took a gradually escalating bellicose stand against the Central Powers and began to promote the idea of the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary in the early spring of 1917. Before presenting the details of TR's campaign for the 'liberation of the Slavs' two general remarks are necessary to cast more light on his actual contributions.

Firstly, it is generally understood that TR's wartime conduct was to a large extent determined by his attitude towards Wilson. There are several clear indications of the fact that Roosevelt was jealous of the opportunity which was offered to Wilson on a plate, namely to raise America's international prestige by bringing the World War to an end on

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<sup>3</sup> Bullitt (1918) p. 246.

<sup>4</sup> Bullitt (1918) p. 250.

American terms, and to cash in on that in terms of personal prestige.<sup>5</sup> The fact that Wilson did not take a stand against the Habsburg Monarchy when he asked for a declaration of war on Germany offered TR an easy shot at the incumbent President, which the ex-President gratefully accepted. Secondly, from a Hungarian point of view, the TR turnaround was nothing short of tragic. Before that, and of his own accord, Roosevelt had been the most enthusiastic supporter of Hungary; after it he became a leading dismemberment propagandist. Since he was clearly unable to influence the Wilson administration TR's support would not have helped the cause of Hungary directly; but his public support as the leader of Wilson's domestic opposition would have kept an alternative position, possibly even an alternative policy, alive. At worst, he might have secured a hearing for the Hungarians at the Paris Peace Conference, had he lived that long.

In National Strength and International Duty (1917), which was in part written before the declaration of war on Germany, TR expressed sympathy for 'the mass of men of different races to whom liberty is denied by the dual tyranny of the Germans and Magyars of Austria-Hungary,' and concluded that

The war has shown that Austria has become a subject ally of Germany and an enemy of freedom and civilization. Unless we resolutely intend to break up Austria and Turkey, and insist on liberty for the subject races in the two countries, our talking about 'making the world safe for democracy' is a sham.<sup>6</sup>

A look at TR's private correspondence offers the obvious conclusion that this was not a one-off remark. While before his break with Apponyi there is no record of any contact with dismemberment politicians in America, after the diplomatic break with the Monarchy he was

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<sup>5</sup> Cooper (1983) and Elleston (1965) are the two definitive studies.

<sup>6</sup> Roosevelt (1917) pp. 89, 91.

regularly in touch with Mihajlović, Vošnjak, Chéradame, Stoica and representatives of the BNA including Pergler, Vojta Beneš and Fisher.<sup>7</sup> The above passage demonstrates that TR, like everyone else, identified the Monarchy with Germany and the Hungarians with the Germans. In the light of his knowledge of Hungarian history, which he had demonstrated more than once earlier,<sup>8</sup> this must be seen as a convenient step, one which allowed him to discuss broader issues without having to bother with the details.

Roosevelt's press campaign against Wilson also seems to prove the above point. His criticism of Wilson's hesitant Habsburg policy in a series of editorials for the Kansas City Star was only part of a larger campaign. Between October and early December 1917 he attacked Wilson for not declaring war on the Habsburg Monarchy and pointed to the obvious contradiction in the President's policy:

If we really are at peace with Austria, we are flagrantly violating our duty as a neutral and we ought to be condemned in any international court. But if we are really at war, then we are committing the cardinal crime of hitting soft. If we had gone to war with Austria when we broke with Germany and had acted with proper energy, the disaster of Cadorna [an Italian defeat] would probably not have occurred.<sup>9</sup>

When Wilson did ask Congress for a declaration of war on the Monarchy, Roosevelt changed tactics and began to focus on the details. On 7 December 1917 he wrote:

The Austro-Hungarian and the Turkish empires must be broken up if we intend to make the world even moderately safe for democracy. There must

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<sup>7</sup> LC TRps: Correspondence: under the names of the individuals listed. The earliest such contact was initiated by the BNA on 27 August 1917.

<sup>8</sup> This was recorded during his visit to Hungary. Nicholas Roosevelt, Coolidge's representative in Budapest before the Kun takeover, claimed that TR had a photographic memory.

<sup>9</sup> 'A Fifty-Fifty War Attitude', dated 20 November 1917; in: Roosevelt (1921) p. 56.

be a revived Poland, taking in all the Poles of Austria, Prussia and Russia; a greater Bohemia, taking in Moravia and the Slovaks; a great Jugo-Slav commonwealth, including Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, while the Rumanians in Hungary should become part of Rumania and the Italians in Austria part of Italy. The Turk must be driven from Europe and Christian and Arab freed. Only in this manner can we do justice to the subject peoples tyrannized over by the Germans, Magyars and Turks.<sup>10</sup>

He then dropped the issue for almost a year and resumed his attacks on Wilson's policy during the Armistice negotiations. While demanding unconditional surrender from the Central Powers TR also criticized Wilson's Point Ten of the Fourteen Points using practically the same argument and disregarding the fact that Wilson himself notified Vienna that in the new situation it needed to be revised:

Again, the talk of merely giving autonomy to the subject races of Austria amounts to [a] betrayal of the Czecho-Slovaks, the Jugo-Slavs, the Italians, and the Rumanians. The first should be given their independence and the other three united to the nations with which they really belong. Moreover, it is a betrayal of civilization to leave the Turk in Europe and fail to free the Armenians and the other subject races of Turkey.<sup>11</sup>

While these passages testify to a genuine interest on TR's part in the future of the peoples involved, it must also be remembered that all his references to the reorganization of the Danubian basin were included in attacks on Wilson's policies, which indicates where his preferences really lay. This point can be carried a step further by arguing that he did not come up with a single alternative for Wilson's program; he was, in fact he could easily be, a step ahead of the President who had to mobilize the entire country for such decisions. TR cleverly capitalized on this situation, but the only issue in which there was a clear-cut difference of opinion between the two of them was the League of Nations, which, in return, had

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<sup>10</sup> 'Four Bites of a Cherry'; in: Roosevelt (1921) pp. 65-66.

<sup>11</sup> 'War Aims and Peace Proposals,' 12 October 1918; in: Roosevelt (1921) p. 228.



no bearing upon the future of Hungary. One of the many indications that Roosevelt did not give sufficient attention to the problems involved is the fact that he mixed up the Yugoslav idea with the Greater Serbia program.<sup>12</sup>

Roosevelt was among the few dismemberment propagandists who efficiently utilized books and the press alike; his articles indicate the changing attitude of the leading American newspapers towards (Austria-) Hungary. This again was part of a broader tendency: as suggested earlier, the final stages of the war brought about the eventual destruction of the idealized myth of Hungary which had dominated the prewar scene and was strongly present during the twenty months of American neutrality.

However, this drastic change did not happen overnight. The New York Times, for example, printed a special article by a Dr. Gerster titled 'No Hymn of Hate for United States in Hungary.' The author pointed to the long tradition of Hungarian-American friendship and brought up the statues of Washington in Budapest and of Kossuth in Cleveland as evidence for that. He further argued that Hungary had been dragged into the war by Russian expansionism: 'Hungary had to choose between going in with Austria and Germany and being swallowed up by Russia.' In the final passages Gerster drew a (false) parallel between the Magna Carta and the Golden Bull, and concluded that most Hungarians wanted peace more than anything.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> His connections with Mihajlović and his utterances suggest that he meant Yugoslavia when he wrote: 'The Southern Slavs should be made into a greater Serbia.' In: The Metropolitan, July 1917, with map.

<sup>13</sup> 15 April 1917 issue, Section 6 p. 11.

Thus, it was not the diplomatic break between Austria-Hungary and the United States that brought about the first change in the image of Hungary in the American press but the events between May and August 1917: Tisza's resignation over the issue of universal suffrage<sup>14</sup> pushed Hungary into the focus of attention for the first time during the war. When Tisza reportedly commented on the subsequent changes that they were nothing short of a revolution,<sup>15</sup> optimism began to rise in America: another special article was printed in the New York Times, titled 'Hungary May Cause Rift in Teuton Ring', which was based upon an interview with Konta. The prominent Hungarian-American maintained that

Hungary wants peace. Hungary could have a revolution within twenty-four hours if she wanted it, but she can see that the entrance of the United States into the war, with its sympathetic policy toward nations struggling to be free, is a guarantee that Hungary, the largest of the nations struggling for independence, will gain her ends more quickly through coming peace than through revolutionary methods.

Konta then protested against the various Allied promises to detach Transylvania from Hungary and warned that 'Before this could happen every woman in Hungary would go into the trenches.' Finally, Konta reiterated the Kossuth-Károlyi link and introduced the program of the Károlyi Party. Esterházy and Wekerle were also mentioned briefly but it was again Andrásy, Károlyi and Apponyi who were identified as the 'three men who direct popular opinion in Hungary.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Tisza resigned on 23 May 1917; the Emperor Charles appointed Count Maurice Esterházy as the new Premier of Hungary on 15 June. Esterházy reorganized his cabinet on 18 August, then resigned two days later. Finally, Wekerle was appointed and remained in power for the rest of the war.

<sup>15</sup> New Republic, 16 June 1917, p. 169.

<sup>16</sup> New York Times, 16 September 1917, Section 7, p. 6.

The radical Hungarian-American journalist Eugene Bagger-Szekeres chose the New Republic for discussing 'The Hungarian Upheaval.' He described Tisza as the chief representative of 'Hungarian junkerism' which had been oppressing not only the various non-Magyar peoples of Hungary but also the vast majority of the ethnic Hungarians. He welcomed the changes in Budapest as 'the climax of a democratic upheaval' and argued that Hungary, if given a fair chance, could, and willingly would, end the war. According to Bagger-Szekeres, an Allied guarantee of Hungarian territorial integrity in this new situation would not only reinforce democratic tendencies within the country but would also remove the single reason Hungary was fighting for. Hungary's exit from the war would bring about an irreparable break within the Central Powers, and, on top of that, a democratic Hungary would be a willing participant in a Kossuth type Danubian Federation with a unified South Slav state (including Croatia) and with Rumania and Bulgaria. Such a federation, as Bagger-Szekeres concluded in a well-written exposition, would be 'the only safe barrier against a possibly revived Prussian "Drang nach Osten."' <sup>17</sup>

Other Americans, however, were less enthusiastic about the developments in Hungary. An unsigned editorial in the New York Times, for example, attacked both Esterházy and Wekerle:

Reform the franchise as much as you please, so long as the Magyar minority continues to rule Hungary. A military 'decision' is the only honest and effective reformer of the Hungarian franchise. Not Wekerle, the stop-gap Premier, nor his successor, whoever he may be, but General Cadorna [of the Italian Army] will bring democracy to Hungary and to Austria. <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> New Republic, 22 September 1917, pp. 211-13.

<sup>18</sup> 18 September 1917, p. 8: 'Hungarian "Democratic Lines."'

A more comprehensive analysis of the changes in Hungary, which at the same time was a critical assessment of the Bagger-Szekeres piece, was printed in the New Republic. The Serbian-American Voyslav M. Yovanovitch argued that the 'democratic Hungary' pictured by Bagger-Szekeres was but a myth. Not only had it been discredited when the Kossuthite Independent Party was previously in power during 1906-09 (he cited the Lex Apponyi, which drastically restricted non-Magyar education, as an example) but there was still not one single Hungarian politician who would extend democracy to the non-Magyar peoples of the country:

Not only has Hungary failed to solve the problem of the non-Magyar nationalities, but she cannot even give true liberty, democratic liberty, to her own Magyar population until her national frontiers are reduced so as to contain only the compact mass of Magyars. An electoral franchise which would place on an equal footing all the inhabitants of Hungary, would send to the Parliament of Budapest a majority of non-Magyars, which would signify the end of Magyar hegemony in Hungary, a thing which not only 'democrats' of the Karolyi type but even the demagogues of the most advanced kind... could not permit.

Yovanovitch concluded his persuasive piece by warning that instead of 'making advances to a "democratic Hungary"' the 'thirty million allies in the Austro-Hungarian Empire' (i. e. all the non-German and non-Magyar peoples) should be given encouragement.<sup>19</sup>

It appears that while information about Hungary was not always reliable (for example the New Republic reported that Andrásy had replaced Tisza) these assessments were based upon a transcript from the 10 June 1917 edition of the Az Est (The Evening, a leading Budapest daily), quoting Esterházy saying that 'democracy in Hungary can only be Magyar democracy' and an utterance by Wekerle that he would carry out his predecessor's franchise program.

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<sup>19</sup> 10 November 1917, pp. 48-49; the quote is from p. 48.

The two key events around the turn of 1917-18, the American declaration of war on Austria-Hungary and Wilson's Fourteen Points speech, received a very limited response in the press, which again proves the point that the American public was not especially interested in the Monarchy and her domestic affairs. In a letter to the editors of the New Republic, G. H. Mika of the Czech-Slav Press Bureau challenged Wilson's refusal to take drastic steps against the Habsburg Empire. He pointed out that Wilson's decision not 'to impair or to rearrange the Austro-Hungarian Empire' served the interests of the ruling Magyar-German combination and not those of the Allies. He suggested that Wilson's hesitation might have been due to isolationist tendencies in the White House and claimed that rearrangement in the form of dismemberment would be inevitable.<sup>20</sup> In the same issue of the New Republic, an editorial addressed Wilson's Point Ten (which demanded the federalization of the Monarchy) and maintained that dismemberment would be a drastic step but a federalized Danubian basin would serve the interests of European, and global, peace better.<sup>21</sup>

Two articles in the 10 February 1918 edition of the New York Times, both printed on the same page, temporarily reopened the debate over Point Ten. An unidentified German contributor described 'Austrian Break-Up as Only Solution' and concluded his piece with the following passages:

Austria, which since 1848 has lost its individual capacity for existence, will before long have ceased to exist entirely unless propped up by all the Governments of Europe.

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<sup>20</sup> 12 January 1918, pp. 314-15.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 294.

To permit her to live after this war through any petty political opportunism[,] which alone pertains to governments and not to peoples[,] would be to betray the peace of the future.<sup>22</sup>

The other article, 'Slavs in Austria Appeal to Allies', is even more interesting. It is based upon an interview with Mika and Pergler, who openly challenged Wilson's (and Lloyd George's) decision to maintain the Monarchy, claiming that its Slavs wanted not autonomy but independence; basing their appeal on Wilson's very own demand the peoples involved should decide their own future. This appears to be the first major breakthrough of the Czech-Slav Press Bureau in the leading American dailies, and forecasts what was to come after the Sixtus affair and after Masaryk's arrival in America.

But before turning our attention to that final stage of the general American reevaluation of (Austria-) Hungary, a unique piece of press propaganda must be introduced. In the 17 March 1918 issue of the New York Times the Rumanian-American K. Bercovici attacked Hungary and the Hungarians in an unprecedented, and un-repeated, manner. He began his piece, 'Hungarian Lust for World Power', with the prediction that 'at the close of the war we shall hear the death-knell of the Dual Monarchy.' He then proceeded with an emotionally overheated accusation of Hungary, reinterpreting her entire history, most amazingly, as one uninterrupted quest for the control of the Balkans and the Near East. Some of the other highlights are:

The cruelty and intolerance of the Magyars is as proverbial in the Balkans as is their arrogance and stupidity. Long of arms, bowlegged, with fierce mouth and deep-seated, small eyes, the Magyar is the typical savage of history. Like his brother, the Teuton, he is an abject slave and a horrible master... [After the war, the] mad passions, the blood lust so long repressed of all those thinly veneered barbarians, will be given free play.

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<sup>22</sup> Section 2, p. 3.

Bercovici, like all American dismemberment propagandists, concluded his piece with a call for federation, which is the only constructive element in his writing:

There is only one way to prevent terrible bloodshed in the Near East at the close of this war - the United States Government must see to it that all the nations of the Balkan Peninsula form a federated republic like our own. This would prevent future wars and save the Balkan peoples of the Kultur of the Teuton, Turk and Magyar.<sup>23</sup>

The tone of this piece, together with the accusations of Lucaciu introduced earlier, cast more light upon why the Americans refused to deal with Rumanian claims. The dismemberment propaganda of the New Europe group was presented in a credible way, but these Rumanian efforts were not only too emotional but also hardly credible. That notwithstanding, the fact that such a piece was published in a leading Metropolitan paper clearly indicates that the times were changing.

The final six months of the war brought about Wilson's great Habsburg turnaround: the events starting with the Clemenceau - Czernin showdown prompted the President to reconsider his earlier views of the future of the Monarchy. This major review of American foreign policy went hand in hand with a similar change in the attitude of the American press. This, by no means accidental, coincidence has led many historians to believe that the press campaign for the Czechs played a decisive part in Wilson's decision.

While this argument will be challenged in the next chapters, it must be emphasized that the final reinterpretation of the prewar image of Hungary was but a sideshow to this Czecho-Slovak publicity campaign. The presentation of the numerous calls for the 'liberation of the Slavs' and the destruction of the Monarchy, together with the making of the Masaryk

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<sup>23</sup> Section 4, p. 5.

myth, would extend much beyond the scope of the present study;<sup>24</sup> but it must be remembered that Hungary was discussed in this - newly developed - context after the spring of 1918 in the American press.

Besides the off-hand references to the 'band of Teuton-Magyar conspirators' running the Monarchy<sup>25</sup> the myth of Kossuth's liberal Hungary was openly challenged for the first time in the American press. An unsigned editorial in the 30 June 1918 issue of the New York Times used an earlier pro-Hungarian statement from the (New York) Evening Post to take the myth apart:

Instead of being nourished on the Kossuth legend and the fable that the Magyars are friends of freedom, 'every schoolboy' ought to know the facts about modern Hungary. He ought to know that of the 22,000,000 in Hungary only some 9,000,000 are Magyars and 13,000,000 are of the non-Magyar races, treated by the Magyar magnates and ruling caste with systematic injustice, oppression and cruelty... There are few more curious myths than this myth of Magyars of Hungary as lovers of liberty other than their own.<sup>26</sup>

With the American press continuing to focus on Masaryk on the one hand and American-Habsburg diplomatic relations on the other, references to Hungary were few and far between. Nevertheless, the destruction of the Kossuth myth was followed by a reevaluation of the leading Hungarian politicians. A New York Times editorial on 28 October 1918 discussed the 'Arch-Magyars',<sup>27</sup> starting with the familiar description of Tisza and Burián:

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<sup>24</sup> For discussions: Unterberger (1989); May (1967); Odlozilik (1967), etc. The first major paper to publish a pro-Czech editorial appears to have been the Washington Post: 'A Time for Revolution' 16 April 1918; in Bennett (1921) pp. 205-06.

<sup>25</sup> Washington Post, 3 July 1918, 'Nations Becoming Free'; in Bennett (1921) pp. 261-62.

<sup>26</sup> Section 2, p. 2. 'The Real Hungary.'

<sup>27</sup> Page 10; all quotes are from that page.



A month after his accession, Karl the Sudden dismissed Baron Stephen Burian, the echo of the arch-Magyar absolutist, Count Tisza, a chief architect of the war, and installed Count Czernin in his place as Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The next target was Andrásy:

Old Count Andrassy, associate and rival of Bismarck and Gortschakov, was an iron man committed to an iron policy. Count Julius is but papier mache. So far as his talent goes, he is a Magyar of the Magyars... There is an insolence, intolerable or amusing, according to the point of view, in the rise, however temporary, to power of this Magyar Chauvinist.

And finally, together with the myth of Kossuth's liberal Hungary, out went the positive American image of Apponyi as well:

Apponyi is the too notorious Minister of Education who shut up the Serbian schools, who prohibited the reopening the Rumanian teachers' training colleges, whose 'aim is to strengthen everywhere the national Magyar State,' who in ecclesiastical and educational questions seeks by all means and without scruple to Magyarize.

The author finished his piece with a poetic exclamation:

Wild is the folly that sets up hunkers like Andrassy and Apponyi in the agony of decrepit States.

One thing that is clear from the above is that Károlyi continued to receive positive reviews, especially after his takeover in Hungary. This was largely due to the efforts of Bagger-Szekeres, who promoted Károlyi's program in America. Bagger-Szekeres, alone of all Hungarian-Americans, stood up in public for Hungary, using the New Republic, apparently the only paper willing to listen to the other side of the story. In 'Because I Am a Magyar'<sup>28</sup> Bagger-Szekeres suggested that

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<sup>28</sup> 20 July 1918, pp. 338-41; the quotes are from pp. 338, 340, 341 and 341 respectively.

The only sane course open to the Allies is to announce a detailed uncompromising program for the breaking up of the Habsburg empire and the establishment of the independent Czecho-Slovak, Yugoslav and Hungarian states in its stead.

Such an Allied declaration should also emphasize the necessity of regional integration as well as guarantee

the independence and rights of the Magyar people proper, and define the boundaries within which the right of the Magyars to live their own national life and to cultivate their independent statehood is unassailable. To omit this would be a grave strategic error as well as an infringement upon justice and the integrity of the principle underlying the declaration.

Given that, Bagger-Szekeres continued:

the breaking up of the territorial unity of Hungary, involving as it does exploding the cherished fiction of historic rights, will in the end benefit the Magyars themselves no less than their Slav neighbors... There can be no happy and secure Hungary in the midst of an unhappy and insecure Europe, and Europe will continue to be unhappy and insecure as long as the menace of Slav irredentism darkens its south-eastern horizon.

The conclusion is emotional and explicit:

I believe in the full victory of the Allies and Czecho-Slovak and Yugoslav independence, not in spite of being a Magyar, but because I am a Magyar. And I believe... that the time will come when all my countrymen will think as I do.

An article like that was there to be replied to, and the famous Serbian-American Vladislav R. Savić, the author of South Eastern Europe (1918) and an outside contributor to the work of the Inquiry, did so. Also in the New Republic, Savić applauded Bagger-Szekeres' position.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> 24 August 1918, pp. 109-10, 'Because I Am a Yugoslav'; the quotes are from p. 110.

If all the Magyars should be animated with the spirit as expressed by Mr. Bagger, many territorial questions between them and the Slavs would be easily solved. The principles set forth by him of future readjustments among the races of Southeastern Europe I have been propagating since the war started and must be among the first to accept them.

Savić also had reservations about specific details (such as the future of the Bánát) and one general comment:

However, it is not enough to recognize just principles, but it is necessary to fight for them. The truth and the victory of the Allies are 'on the march,' and the Magyars here in America would do a great service to themselves and to the world if they should immediately organize and express themselves for complete independence and equality of all the races of Hungary. The attitude of the Magyars in this country may influence their people in Hungary and save the world many thousands of lives and billions of money.

When Bagger-Szekeres wrote his piece in July 1918 hardly any Hungarian would have approved of it, not even Károlyi. But with the Central Powers losing the war, barely three months later, things changed dramatically, and it was up to the newly established Károlyi regime to prove Bagger-Szekeres and Savić right.

The nineteen months of American belligerency, spreading over the period between April 1917 and early November 1918, completed the transformation of Hungary's image in the eyes of the American public. The foreign and immigrant propaganda campaigns failed to influence the American public and policy makers in the desired way, despite the comprehensive contents of such efforts. A glance at the figures of the Parker campaign and the various Czech and Rumanian ones testifies to this; and so does the output of the CPI, which is introduced in the next chapter. The general public was more interested in the war, in Germany's conduct and possible threat in the future, than in the largely introductory campaigns of the various national groupings of the Habsburg Monarchy, which explained real

or imaginary grievances accumulated over hundreds of years and which laid claims to territories most Americans had not even heard of before.

The limited number of publications (about two thirds of the pieces listed in the appendix were published or circulated in America after April 1917), together with the fact that the best known American to support such claims was Wilson's chief domestic opponent, explains the limited success of dismemberment propagandists in belligerent America. It must also be remembered that TR campaigned in a regional and not a leading daily; and that newspapers like the New York Times changed their attitude towards the Habsburg Monarchy exactly when the President did so. Although it is anticipating one of the major conclusions of the present study, it must be pointed out, even before discussing the CPI, that Wilson's strong hold over the domestic propaganda front indicates that dismemberment propaganda in America peaked when the President deemed it necessary in orchestrating the war effort.

Of course, dismemberment propaganda was not a post-April 1917 development. As indicated in the first chapter, it was present even before the war and it gained a new impetus with the Parker campaign for American intervention. Yet, even during the neutrality period it attracted little attention outside immigrant circles. The general belief that the Monarchy was the weakest of the Central Powers and that she could be removed from the war by a separate peace led the American press and policy makers to maintain a relatively moderate tone regarding Austria-Hungary. Roosevelt and Chéradame proved to be the pioneers of the campaign against the Monarchy and Hungary that was to follow the failure of secret peace talks (the Sixtus affair). This tendency was boosted by the fact that the Russian intervention, defined by Wilson as a key element in America's national security, came to be linked with the Czecho-Slovak Legion, thus offering an automatic link between high politics and dismemberment. Thus, dismemberment propaganda peaked during and after June

1918 but not because the various publication began to sell well overnight but because the press picked up the issue. Unterberger attaches too much significance to Masaryk's American friends, especially to Charles Crane; but, in fact, with the CPI censoring the American press and Creel consulting Wilson daily, it is obvious that this change was brought about by the Wilson administration itself.

Parallel with the emergence of dismemberment propaganda, and by no means independently of it, went the review of the prewar image of Hungary in the American press. Before the summer of 1918 the Kossuth myth held strong, propped up by the expectation that Hungary might break up of the Habsburg-German alliance system. Thus it was neither the diplomatic break in April nor the declaration of war in December 1917 but the fall of Tisza and the failure of the 'revolution' to follow in Hungary that actually brought about the first step of this review of opinion. Slav and Rumanian protests against Wilson's Point Ten received little publicity, and produced only a handful of articles; including possibly the most extremist one. The newly developed expertise of the leading American dailies after June 1918 must be attributed to the work of the Czech-Slav Press Bureau and Masaryk, and, in more general terms, to the interest in East Central European affairs created by the news of the Czecho-Slovak Legion. The two articles quoted about the Kossuth myth and the 'Arch-Magyars' appear to prove these points.

One last remark seems appropriate about Hungarian-American efforts, although further support for this claim is provided in subsequent chapters. A look at the articles by the three Hungarian-Americans who found access to the American press, namely Gerster, Konta and Bagger-Szekeres, indicates that the survival of the Kossuth myth until as late as the final six months of the war was largely due to their efforts. It must be noticed that they represented the Kossuth myth and the program of the Károlyi party to the American people,

which was, like every other effort so far introduced, only one side of the problem. Early twentieth century Hungary was neither the hell on earth presented by dismemberment propagandists, nor the fairyland described by Mrs. Bullitt and the Hungarian-Americans, but a curious mixture of the two. This was apparently not realized by the American public or the press.

The remaining chapters discuss the views of Wilson's semi-official and official advisors (the CPI and the Inquiry, and the Departments of State, War and the Navy respectively), and our enquiries are concluded with an overview of Habsburg related issues through the eyes of the President himself. The work of Wilson's semi-official propaganda agency, the Committee on Public Information, is assessed first.

**CHAPTER EIGHT:  
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION  
AND AUSTRIA-HUNGARY**

Having completed the examination of unofficial propaganda in America during the World War our attention must now be turned towards the Committee on Public Information, Wilson's own propaganda agency, which promoted American national interests as interpreted and defined by the President himself. The CPI has been discussed freely but its efforts to control hyphenated Americans and its dismemberment propaganda abroad have received little attention.<sup>1</sup> In earlier discussions of propaganda it has been pointed out that most World War One propaganda targeted Germany and the *Mitteleuropa* plan, and this was also true of the CPI. This in itself would explain the limited attention paid to Habsburg related issues but the fact that most of the relevant documents have been lost or destroyed<sup>2</sup> largely contributed to this unfortunate tendency.

The present chapter discusses the domestic campaign of the CPI among the Hungarian-Americans, its dismemberment campaign conducted from Italy and Switzerland and the establishment of the Mid-European Union (hereafter MEU), which for reasons given below, offers not only a general conclusion to the work of the CPI but also far reaching conclusions about the attitude of the Wilson administration.

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<sup>1</sup> See the works of Vaughn (1980), Mock and Larson (1939), Cornebise (1984), etc. Creel's own accounts are cited below together with further references.

<sup>2</sup> See the bibliographical essay in Vaughn (1980), esp. p. 339.

The CPI was created by an executive order on 4 April 1917, that is two days before the American declaration of war on Germany. Its four-man leadership consisted of the radical journalist George Creel as head of the bureau, and the Secretaries of State (Lansing), War (Baker) and the Navy (Daniels).<sup>3</sup> Characteristic of Wilson's attitudes was his decision to finance it from a special presidential defense fund which exempted Creel's Committee from Congressional control.<sup>4</sup> Its task was to sell the American war both at home and abroad, and the CPI worked most effectively until its dissolution in the summer of 1919. Yet, all was not well. Creel, a former muckraker, was too radical for the liking of the general public; and the fact that his qualification for the job was his unconditional support for Wilson's election campaigns also failed to raise his popularity.<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, he met resistance on all fronts: he was continuously attacked in the press and in Congress and Lansing was also rather unwilling to cooperate.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, Creel's appointment raised broader issues besides the personal one. It was one thing that the New York Times questioned his ability and willingness to establish a working relationship with the leading newspapers<sup>7</sup> but the introduction of censorship and

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<sup>3</sup> Creel (1947) p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> Mock and Larson (1939) p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Creel (1947) pp. 156-58; Sullivan (1933) pp. 367-68, 423-28.

<sup>6</sup> Creel's comment on Lansing: 'Mr. Lansing was terribly upset for fear that people might think that he was "under" me.' Creel (1947) p. 158. The bone of contention between the two was the right to publish diplomatic correspondence. Normally, that is the task of the Secretary of the State, but Wilson decided that Creel should do it, which was another demonstration of his unfavourable attitude towards Lansing.

<sup>7</sup> Vaughn (1980) p. 21.



the accusations that Creel actually manufactured war news<sup>8</sup> involved Constitutional and legal issues. In justice to Creel one must point out that America's entry into the war necessitated some sort of censorship and that Creel's record in this matter is much better than those of his successors during World War Two and the Vietnam War. Creel apparently did not invent war news; he, nevertheless, sometimes presented it in a dramatic way to boost public support for the Wilson administration. While the morality of such conduct may be questioned, it cannot be denied that Creel was doing his job, and was doing it effectively.

The domestic campaign of the CPI was well orchestrated and sweeping. Creel's bureau published the first ever federal daily, the Official Bulletin, which reached circulation figures over 100,000 by the end of the war. The CPI also prepared 94 different pamphlets in at least a dozen languages and circulated some 75 million copies of them. Alone of all propaganda agencies in America, the CPI also made extensive use of film and oral propaganda. The Division of Films produced some twenty feature films, including 'Pershing's Crusaders', 'Under Four Flags' and an official weekly 'War Review.' Oral propaganda was carried out by the so-called Four Minute Men: by the end of the war some 75,000 government agents had delivered 755,190 four-minute speeches to a total audience well over 300,000,000 people in cinemas before the main feature show. To the 47 Official Four Minute Men Bulletins 3 Army-, 4 Junior Four Minute Men-, and 6 News Bulletins were also added.<sup>9</sup> The CPI thus extended its reach over the entire American society and, according

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<sup>8</sup> The American political scientist Walton E. Bean has refuted these charges in Bean (1941).

<sup>9</sup> Creel Report (1920) pp. 15-18, 32-43, 47-61, 63-67. The definitive study of the Four Minute Men (whose name also carries a clear-cut reference to the American War of Independence) is Cornebise (1984). Further first hand information may be drawn from the privately published Four Minute Men of Chicago (1919).

to the sound assessment of the American historian Stephen L. Vaughn, not only conducted a successful anti-German campaign but also defined a new national ideology along the lines set down by President Wilson and other Progressives.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of war propaganda the most striking aspect of the CPI's domestic work is that it focused almost exclusively on Germany. This was by no means accidental and the way it was carried out testifies to the fact that Creel's abilities were largely underestimated by his contemporaries. It is common knowledge that Wilson's initial call to arms was met with little enthusiasm when it came to volunteering for the army. Besides the logical step of introducing conscription, Wilson embarked upon a sweeping propaganda campaign. Having already defined the war as the final showdown between autocracy and democracy in his call for a declaration of war on Germany, he then introduced the concept of the 'One Central Power' in his 1917 Flag Day address and kept it alive by repeating it in his call for a declaration of war on the Monarchy.<sup>11</sup> Creel well understood his task: on the one hand he had to define what America stood for (democracy, making the world safe for democracy) and, on the other hand, had to manufacture an enemy which could be seen as a serious challenger to America. Individually, neither Germany nor Austria-Hungary would have been strong enough, but a united autocratic *Mitteleuropa* reaching well into the Near East, especially if spiced with ambitions in the Western Hemisphere, did do the trick and proved to be frightening enough to mobilize the American public under the flag.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the CPI

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<sup>10</sup> Vaughn (1980) is devoted to this often overlooked aspect of the work of the CPI.

<sup>11</sup> These addresses are discussed below in the Wilson chapter.

<sup>12</sup> St. Clair (1919) is a pictorial account of the Liberty Loan campaigns. It reveals that Creel's effort was supported by a variety of prominent Americans, ranging from the millionaires Morgan and Schiff, through the Tafts and Pershing, to Charlie Chaplin.

completed the work started by Parker back in 1914, but did so with the Wilsonian reservation of drawing a dividing line between the German people and government.

This again made the Habsburg Monarchy a secondary target and not a single CPI publication was exclusively devoted to it. Some of the most famous CPI pieces, however, did mention it. Wilson's 1917 Flag Day address, for example, was printed and circulated in the famous 'Red, White and Blue Series' (referring to the national colours). The War Cyclopaedia, the CPI's 300-page reference war book, carried entries on Austria-Hungary, Magyarization, Tisza, Transylvania and the various national minorities of the Empire. Some of the Four Minute Men Bulletins also touched upon the issue occasionally and no. 24, 'The Danger to Democracy' (18 February 1918) was devoted entirely to the study of the *Mitteleuropa* plan, following the arguments of Chéradame and Wilson.

Besides raising public support for the Wilsonian war effort by describing (and overstating) the German menace to mankind in general and to the United States in particular, another key task for the CPI was to secure the loyalty and support of immigrants from the Central Powers and neutral countries, or as one pamphlet put it, of 'those who are neither hot nor cold.'<sup>13</sup> The chief targets of the work of the Creel bureau were the German- and Hungarian-Americans, but Bohemians and South Slavs, who for a long time qualified as enemy aliens, were also taken care of.<sup>14</sup> As Vaughn points out, most of the relevant material has been lost or destroyed; consequently the following account, which focuses on the Hungarian-Americans, necessarily involves some speculation.

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<sup>13</sup> Mock and Larson (1939) pp. 213-32. The pamphlet in question was American and Allied Ideals, from February 1918.

<sup>14</sup> Creel (1972) pp. 191-99.

The American declaration of war on Germany and the work of the Creel Committee revived anti-immigrant tendencies countrywide. With the memories of 1915 still fresh, this tendency hit the Hungarian-Americans very seriously. In response, the Hungarian-American papers drafted and published 'The Ten Commandments of the Situation' (May 1917) warning against making provocative statements or falling for them.<sup>15</sup> With the United States being at war with Germany but not with Austria-Hungary many felt insecure and the opinion of the members of the administration was eagerly sought. On 17 October 1917 Secretary of War Baker visited Cleveland, Ohio, and was interviewed by József Reményi of the Szabadság. Baker refused to comment on the government's policy towards Hungary but stated that President Wilson had not the slightest doubt about the loyalty of the Hungarian-Americans and expressed his appreciation for the support the Szabadság had lent to the American war effort.<sup>16</sup> An equally welcome source of information was James W. Gerard, who was interviewed by the same paper a week later. Gerard expressed his appreciation for the Hungarians and stated that the administration did not intend to dismember Hungary. He refused to comment on Károlyi and his program but recited the few Hungarian words he had learnt from the Sigrays.<sup>17</sup>

These occasional demonstrations of sympathy were replaced by a coherent policy only after the American declaration of war on the Habsburg Monarchy. The Hungarian-Americans had to face the shock of their new country going to war against the old one, something Julianna Puskás, the leading authority in the field, defined as 'the crisis of loyal-

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<sup>15</sup> Puskás (1982M) pp. 306-07.

<sup>16</sup> BH GKps: Newspaper File: Szabadság, 18 October 1917.

<sup>17</sup> BH GKps: Newspaper File: Szabadság 24 October 1917.

ty.<sup>18</sup> Wilson made the blow easier to take by not using the term 'enemy aliens' in his war proclamation and by granting to immigrants from the Habsburg Monarchy full freedom of action, with the exception of leaving and entering the country without permission. Hungarian-Americans were also exempted from military service in the American Army and those already conscripted were sent home from the training camps.<sup>19</sup> Nothing reflects better the general American expectations of these immigrants than another special article for the New York Times, with the telling subtitle 'Law Puts Them on Par with Germans Here, but Many Will Be Favored Because of Their Loyalty to America and the Allies.'<sup>20</sup> Endre Cserna, the editor of the Szabadság, testified to a similar attitude in his editorial 'After the Declaration of War.' He maintained that all Hungarian-Americans should and would lend full support for the American war effort and interpreted Wilson's decision as a demonstration of sympathy for Hungarian independence.<sup>21</sup>

It was at this point that the CPI decided to intervene. For reasons outlined earlier, Konta was selected to organize and lead the American-Hungarian Loyalty League (hereafter AHLL) in the early days of 1918.<sup>22</sup> This move, however, was part of a broader plan: Creel's bureau had its sights firmly set on completing the Americanization of all immigrants, which was seen as the key to 'holding fast the inner lines.' The 'work among the foreign born' in order to 'delete the hyphen' was started by the Foreign Section of the CPI and was

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<sup>18</sup> Puskás (1982M): 'The Crisis of Loyalty: World War One', pp. 303-15.

<sup>19</sup> This proclamation was published simultaneously in English and in Hungarian in the New York Times and in the Szabadság, on 12 December 1917.

<sup>20</sup> New York Times, Magazine Section, pp. 3 and 14; 'Austro-Hungarian Alien Enemies.'

<sup>21</sup> In the 10 December 1917 issue.

<sup>22</sup> Some of this material has already been presented in chapter two, but with the focus on Wilson. Hereafter the CPI - AHLL relationship will be discussed.

continued by the Division of Work Among the Foreign Born. 23 different loyalty leagues were organized and various national bureaus were also set up.<sup>23</sup> The Hungarian Bureau was headed first by Alexander Konta and then by Alfred Markus.

The Creel - Konta cooperation yielded an impressive propaganda effort. Several public meetings were held in places where Hungarians lived in large numbers and declarations of loyalty to America were published in the leading American dailies.<sup>24</sup> The Hungarian-Americans purchased their fair share of the Liberty Bonds not simply because they wanted to prove their loyalty that way but because the CPI placed advertisements in the leading immigrant papers and some Liberty Loan posters were printed in Hungarian as well.<sup>25</sup> The CPI produced some one million pamphlets for the immigrants, and two of those, A Message to the Hungarian-Americans and Friendly Words to the Foreign Born, were also issued in Hungarian.<sup>26</sup> Impressive as this effort may seem the chief success of the CPI was the establishment of government control over the immigrant press. This is another indication that Creel's insight has been underestimated: he quite rightly realized that the way to control Hungarian-American opinion was not to organize a national loyalty league but to manipulate the ethnic press. In his final report to Wilson Creel proudly quoted the telling figures that '54 articles based on Government material were released by the [Hungarian] bureau and published in practically all the 28 Hungarian papers extensively.'<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Mock and Larson (1939) p. 220.

<sup>24</sup> Puskás (1982M) pp. 308-09; Mock and Larson p. 224; New York Times 3 June 1918.

<sup>25</sup> Mock and Larson (1939) p. 220.

<sup>26</sup> Creel (1972) pp. 457, 459.

<sup>27</sup> Creel Report (1920) p. 91.

Konta's rather shaky position in immigrant circles, the continuous attacks on Creel and the general distrust of immigrants from the Central Powers made it certain that the CPI and the AHLL had both hands full most of the time with issues they did not necessarily want to deal with. Konta's prewar connections with the Hungarian government, which were brought up again in September 1918, were quickly revealed by the Department of Justice and Creel was informed. Frank I. Cobb of the New York World, who had originally recommended Konta to Creel, explained to the CPI chief that

There is a campaign going on against Konta. Some of it originates from Bohemian and Yugoslav sources due to the inveterate enmity toward the Hungarians... But, from my own personal experience, I have never known Konta to do or say anything that did not measure up one hundred per cent loyalty to the United States.<sup>28</sup>

On another occasion a representative of a firm in Port Henry, New York, wrote directly to Creel asking him whether the AHLL really belonged to the CPI. Creel's reply was a testimony of his support for Konta:

The Hungarian Loyalty League is an organization in which this Committee is vitally interested. What we are trying to do is to form these people into a patriotic body so that we can reach them with literature, with speakers, with motion pictures, and in every other way try to bring them into closer touch with America. Anything that you may do for Mr. Konta will be appreciated.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Cobb to Creel, dated 27 March 1918, quoted in Mock and Larson (1939) pp. 222. Note that Cobb's recommendation was the best possible guarantee: as discussed earlier, his paper was the chief spy-hunting organ during the war.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Mock and Larson (1939) p. 223.

The lack of harmony within the CPI was demonstrated by a statement of the chief of the Italian Bureau that the Hungarian-Americans, representatives of an oppressing race, should not be allowed to take part in the 1918 Independence Day celebrations.<sup>30</sup>

Konta's resignation in August 1918 was loudly applauded by the Hungarian-American press and it also brought about a most bizarre proposal. Writing directly to Lansing, E. J. Kovatch of New York City pointed out that the AHLL had failed because of the lack of genuine leadership, and stated:

I would like to see it [Konta's post] filled only temporarily, that is until we could have Count Karolyi, the Ungarian Independant Leader [sic], or some one else come here from Hungary.<sup>31</sup>

While Kovatch's letter bears witness to Károlyi's continued popularity in Hungarian-American circles, in the light of Wilson's earlier outlined attitudes, it is hardly surprising that the administration refused to deal with this fantastic proposal. Kovatch's letter, however, marked the beginning of an all-out assault on both Konta (by the immigrants) and on Creel (by the Republicans in Congress), which culminated in the December 1918 hearings of the Senate Judiciary Committee on German Propaganda in America during the War.

The CPI dismemberment campaign abroad ran into different sorts of problems, relied upon other sources of information, and attracted little genuine interest both during the war and among later historians. The following account offers only an outline of such work because sufficient documentation and memoirs are lacking.

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<sup>30</sup> New York Times, 26 June 1918, page 3.

<sup>31</sup> NA RG 59: DFSD: M 708 reel 3: Kovatch to Lansing, dated 23 September 1918.



Propaganda work abroad was orchestrated by the Foreign Section of the CPI, under another muckraking journalist, Will Irwin. The CPI developed no program for propaganda in the enemy countries and it was not until July 1918 that James Keeley, the editor of the Chicago Herald working for the Paris office of the CPI, was put in charge of that work.<sup>32</sup> American dismemberment propaganda was distributed from Switzerland and Padua, Italy. In Switzerland the CPI was represented by the special agent Vira B. Whitehouse, assisted by George B. Fife, Frank Bohn and Lieut. F. B. Mostowski. The Padua section, attached to one of the three main Allied Propaganda Boards, was headed by the Harvard architect G. H. Edgell, who was assisted by John F. Bass and Lieut. Walter F. Wagner. Other prominent contributors to the CPI effort were the young diplomat Hugh Gibson and Captain Walter Lippmann of the Military Intelligence Bureau (hereafter MIB), both stationed in the French capital.<sup>33</sup>

Until August 1918 the main activity of the CPI was attempting to demoralize the K und K troops on the Italian front. Balloons and airplanes were used to spread various leaflets on the enemy lines. On 6 June 1918 Gibson warned Irwin that some of these leaflets needed further improvement to become more credible: besides translation problems, K und K soldiers were unlikely to believe that they would really be transported to America upon surrendering and would enjoy the same rights as President Wilson 'within one hour of landing.' Gibson concluded that

The foregoing is not meant to be carping but it does show that the stuff to be sent over the line must be carefully combed out if we are not to have it turned against us by the Germans... The field for this work in Austria seems

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<sup>32</sup> Mock and Larson (1939) p. 258.

<sup>33</sup> Mock and Larson (1939) pp. 243-44.

to be getting better every day, and a great deal can doubtless be accomplished both through airplane work and the Swiss papers.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, the work in Switzerland was based upon the realization that the manipulation of the Swiss-German press offered a direct route to the Austrian public. Accordingly, the CPI news bulletins were placed in the leading Swiss papers by Mrs. Whitehouse's staff, but no records of contacts with Germans or Austrians have been found.<sup>35</sup>

August 1918 proved to be a turning point in the history of Allied propaganda during the First World War. Between 14 and 17 August 1918 an Inter-Allied Propaganda Conference was held in London, with Keeley and Lippmann among the five American observers. It was agreed that the Allies would concentrate their propaganda efforts on the break up of Austria-Hungary and the reorganization of the Danubian basin along ethnic lines.<sup>36</sup> This decision was in accordance with the generally accepted view that the key to the defeat of the Central Powers was the liquidation of Austria-Hungary, the weakest link in the *Mitteleuropa* scheme, which pushed the Padua board into the focus of attention. Italian and Yugoslav disagreements marred the work of the Board and the Americans remained onlookers rather than active participants; and the distribution of leaflets remained their chief activity.

The Foreign Section of the CPI relied heavily upon War Department material. The Military Intelligence Bureau was finally activated and Colonel R. H. Van Deman of the Gener-

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<sup>34</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 17 A-6, Box 1.

<sup>35</sup> Whitehouse (1920) offers a reliable account. She was selected by Creel with Wilson's approval, but much to the dislike of Lansing and Stovall's staff in Berne. Her difficulties with Stovall and Hugh Wilson caused the President to intervene on her behalf. For further details see Creel (1972) pp. 317-26.

<sup>36</sup> Seton-Watson (1981) pp. 297-98.

al Staff was appointed as the liaison officer between the CPI and the War Department. The MIB prepared one of the longest and most comprehensive assessments of the Habsburg Monarchy: a typed 77-page 'Psychological Estimate.'<sup>37</sup> The document introduces the various nationalities of the Empire, and outlines the unifying factors at work. An assessment of domestic Habsburg propaganda is followed by the introduction of the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav movements. The concluding section of the document outlines the 'American Program.' The author claims that

The most interesting phases of the present Austro-Hungarian situation to the psychologic worker are the Cezech-Slovak [sic] and Yugoslav movements for independence. In the absence of any immediate hope of detaching Austria from her alliance to Germany, encouragement of these revolutionary movements will add to Austria's reasons for seeking peace even if they do not result in actual dissolution of the Empire.<sup>38</sup>

After a brief exposition of America's assets, Hungary is also assessed:

The trouble about working upon any proposition to democratize Hungary is that to be anything but hostile to all Hungarians is to excite suspicions of the Yugoslavs, who are convinced that no good can come out of any Magyar. To a less extent this applies also to the Czechs-Slovaks [sic]. If one thing must be sacrificed to the other, the Hungarian prospect is certainly less favorable than the Yugoslav and the Czechs-Slovak.

At the same time, it is true that many American Hungarians in America and many who have returned to their native land are sincerely democratic and anti-German. The stronger these people are, the less time Tisza and Buria[n] will have to devote to strengthening the German alliance. Hungarians should be approached with the idea of a Hungary dwelling at peace within her own limits, and enjoying profitable intercourse with free neighbor states, and with Western Europe. In the present state of misery among the Magyar poor, such a prospect will look good to them, and for America to hold it out to them will not alarm the Slav peoples. Cooperation with loyal Hungarian ele-

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<sup>37</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 17 E-1: 'Austria-Hungary. Psychological Estimate', dated June 1918, no author.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 69.

ments in this country will be the first step in undertaking such a program.<sup>39</sup>

The author of the report suggests that agitation against Austria-Hungary should be conducted from Padua and the Ukraine, which means that the other logical choice, Rumania was not even considered. Further suggestions included:

The efforts of this Padua force will naturally be directed first toward increasing disaffection in Slav national elements of the Austrian army in Italy, and second to encouraging the spirit of resistance in the Slave [Slav] elements of the Austrian civilian population...

It is impossible that American propaganda in Austria-Hungary at this stage of the war will do any good if it is merely propaganda. Fine words about the beauties of democracy and the evils of German rule will not be enough unless they are backed up by evidences of actual physical support and assistance. The recent utterances of Secretary Lansing are an evidence of this sort. Still more valuable for propaganda purposes would be news of the actual establishment of Czecho-Slovak and Jugoslav units in the United States army. And most valuable of all would be news of the actual participation of these units in the Italian, or of course in the Serbian, campaign against Austria. Of secondary value of news of this sort will be reports of nationalistic activity of the South Slavs, Czechs, Poles, etc., in the United States.<sup>40</sup>

There are further indications that the CPI seriously considered the possibility of inciting revolutions within the Central Powers. Frank Bohn in Switzerland suggested such action against Germany<sup>41</sup> and John Kaba, a Bohemian-American member of the MIB submitted a detailed plan to bring about 'labor troubles, strikes, etc., in Austria-Hungary.' Kaba suggested that 'some of the East Side (N.Y.) loud, big mouthed Hungarian Jewish and other foreign socialists' be organized into 'some sort of secret society.' These socialists, together with the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 70.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. pp. 72-73.

<sup>41</sup> Mock and Larson (1939) p. 261.

various oppressed peoples of the Monarchy would sabotage the Austro-Hungarian war effort and 'accelerate the fall of Germany.'<sup>42</sup>

Besides outlining such impressive and ambitious campaigns, other MIB reports consisted of more specific recommendations regarding the text of the leaflets to be used.<sup>43</sup> One of the most amusing proposals was transmitted to Creel on 30 March 1918. Albert L. Williams of Madison, Wisconsin, suggested the following line of action:

Already we have offered terms of peace which the common people are anxious but powerless to accept, therefore let us offer to them direct a  
TREATY OF INDIVIDUAL PEACE.<sup>44</sup>

Various individuals, including Allen T. Burns of the Carnegie Corporation and Nicholas Klein, a Hungarian-American from Cincinnati, Ohio, also advised the CPI on the course of action to be taken. Burns suggested that a revolution in Austria-Hungary could be stimulated by immigrants in America.<sup>45</sup> Klein outlined the situation in Hungary and claimed that 'a political revolution is a matter of months.'<sup>46</sup> It was characteristic of Lansing's unwillingness to cooperate that the State Department contributed only a single Habsburg related report, which was of little use for the Creel bureau.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 17 A-6, Box 1: Van Deman to Creel, 18 May 1918, Kaba's memorandum is dated 12 May.

<sup>43</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 17 A-6, Box 1: H. Richmond Armour to Baker, 14 June 1918, is a good example.

<sup>44</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 17 A-6, Box 1: Van Deman to Creel; capitals in the original.

<sup>45</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 17 A-6, Box 1: not dated.

<sup>46</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 17 A-6, Box 1: 30 April 1918.

<sup>47</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 17 A-6, Box 1: Thomas Nelson Page to Lansing, dated 14 February 1918.

The actual scope and effect of the CPI dismemberment campaign have been impossible to establish. Neither Creel's final report to Wilson nor the CPI collection carried any overall assessments of such work, and there are only three reports available which cast some light upon the American effort. A 28 April 1918 report by Bass lists the personnel of the Padua board, discusses Italian-Yugoslav conflicts at length, and quotes the American military representative in Padua, Colonel Palmer, as saying that 'it would be impossible for us to conduct an independent campaign of publicity across the lines.'<sup>48</sup> Another report by Wagner, dated 4 August 1918, provides a diagram of the organization of the Padua Board.<sup>49</sup> The third report, probably by Wagner, is a set of instructions and advice for Edgell on his taking over the American section of the Padua Board. The report consists of the following indication of the scope of American efforts:

I believe that you will find there is need for large scale activity without much delay. I do not know the exact figures on the work being done, but as compared with the French front [I] believe we are far behind... The opportunities are far greater on the Italian front because of the large number of connections through the Czecho and Jugo Slavs, which make possible a wide variety of approaches to the very heart of the enemy country. This is especially true of American propoganda because of the number of Czecho and Jugo Slavs in America. The whole situation is full of possibilities, and it is extremely unfortunate that the work has been delayed for so long. No more time should be lost in getting the machinery into effective action.<sup>50</sup>

The fact that this report is dated 13 September 1918, together with the lack of any further information in the matter, suggests that the CPI played a very limited role in the demoralization of the K und K units on the Italian front, and there is strong ground for suspicion that

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<sup>48</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 20 B-3, Box 2.

<sup>49</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 20 B-3, Box 1.

<sup>50</sup> NA RG 63: CPI 20 B-3, Box 2.

CPI activists, in spite of the various proposals introduced above, were not involved directly in inciting revolutions within the Habsburg Monarchy.

Nevertheless, the final chapter of American dismemberment propaganda was written by the CPI back in the United States. The history of the Mid-European Union has been discussed at length both by participants, such as Masaryk, and by historians, chief among them the American Arthur J. May. But this has been done without paying sufficient attention to the CPI in this exceptional venture.

If the CPI was unwilling to incite revolutions within the Central Powers, similar reservations did not seem to apply back in America, where considerable support was lent to separatist politicians agitating against the Habsburg Monarchy. The idea of creating an organization representing all dismemberment propagandists in America, with the exception of the few Hungarians, originated with the Czech leader Thomas G. Masaryk.<sup>51</sup> On his arrival in America Masaryk revived his contacts with the sociologist Herbert A. Miller of Oberlin College, New York. Miller contacted Irwin and Creel and the CPI agreed to lend its support to Masaryk and his colleagues.<sup>52</sup>

The MEU was born on Sunday, 16 September 1918, in New York City. Masaryk was elected president and Miller was named executive director, drawing his salary straight from the Creel bureau. The MEU consisted of the leading dismemberment politicians then in America (Masaryk, Hinković, Stoica, Paderewski) as official members and several prominent

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<sup>51</sup> Masaryk (1927) p. 237.

<sup>52</sup> May (1967) pp. 254-55. Note that this is the only comprehensive summary of the work of the MEU and is based upon some invaluable privately held materials.

Americans (Senators Lodge and Hitchcock, ex-President Taft) and the Ambassadors of the three Allied countries as honorary members. Its aim was to coordinate and harmonize the aspirations of the various peoples represented and, as Colonel House suggested, to sort out their disagreements before the peace conference.<sup>53</sup> A general program was agreed upon during what proved to be the last formal session of the Union, and on 26 October 1918 Masaryk read out the 'Declaration of Common Aims' in a well directed public meeting in the Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The next day, perhaps a bit prematurely, the Philadelphia Public Ledger applauded the 'safe Mitteleuropa', made in America.<sup>54</sup>

But the initial enthusiasm was soon replaced by discord. The Italian Ambassador di Cellere described the MEU as a Slav scheme to nullify Italian claims in the Adriatic and protested against Miller's involvement. Subsequently, the State Department severed official connections with the Union and Miller's salary was discontinued by the CPI.<sup>55</sup> Soon after, Italian-Yugoslav and Polish-Czecho-Slovak rivalries also surfaced<sup>56</sup>; the American historian Arthur J. May chose the perfect quote to conclude his discussion of the MEU:

The story of the Mid-European Union shows not only Masaryk's wisdom and foresight. It reveals the fact that the New Europe which he had in mind refused to be born.<sup>57</sup>

It follows from the above that the CPI lent its support to the establishment of an organization on American soil which aimed to destroy and replace a major European power, then at

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<sup>53</sup> May (1967) pp. 256-60.

<sup>54</sup> May (1967) pp. 250-51. See also Miller (1940).

<sup>55</sup> May (1967) p. 260.

<sup>56</sup> May (1967) pp. 265-70.

<sup>57</sup> May (1967) p. 271.



war with America. Thus, while Wilson, acting as the moral leader of the world, had earlier refused to do anything 'that would directly or indirectly bring about revolution, even in an enemy country,'<sup>58</sup> by the final months of the war he abandoned this policy. The involvement of the CPI in the organization of the MEU, regardless of its actual performance, is a unique chapter in American history. The establishment of the MEU must be seen as the crowning of all dismemberment propaganda efforts in America during the First World War. It was initiated by Masaryk, possibly the most talented separatist politician from the Habsburg Monarchy, but it must be noted how well it was received on the domestic American scene, which had been prepared by Creel and the President. The idea of the MEU was based upon the realization that Wilson expected some sort of regional integration to take place after the liquidation of the Habsburg Monarchy. The public acceptance of this plan was clearly demonstrated by the enormous press support to the venture and the assistance of several prominent Americans, who before the war had held a different view.

The first and broadest conclusion emerging from the examination of the work of the CPI is undoubtedly that it was not only meant to sell the American war at home and abroad, it also controlled and supervised all propaganda efforts in America. The CPI successfully monopolized the domestic propaganda front and gained indirect control of the immigrant press, which was the most likely source of discord. For example, the way the CPI managed the Hungarian-Americans was exemplary, at least from the point of view of the Wilson administration. On top of that, Creel's bureau boosted and centralized dismemberment propaganda efforts in the MEU, thus establishing control over those as well, and carried out its own, rather limited, campaign against Austria-Hungary abroad. These considerations suggest that it was not dismemberment propagandists who manipulated the President; to the

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<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Mock and Larson (1939) p. 261.

contrary, it was Wilson who, through the CPI, controlled the efforts of dismemberment propagandists in America. It must be emphasized yet again that dismemberment propaganda in America in general and in the press in particular, peaked after Wilson's change of policy; in fact it may be said that it was allowed to peak when Wilson deemed it necessary.

While the control of domestic American public opinion and propaganda was thus established through the CPI, another semi-official organization, the so-called Inquiry, was also established with the more specific task of policy and peace planning. This group of experts and their work regarding (Austria-) Hungary is the topic of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER NINE: THE INQUIRY: PREPARATIONS FOR A SCIENTIFIC PEACE**

Besides a comprehensive study by Lawrence E. Gelfand, surprisingly little has been written about the Inquiry. Biographies and autobiographies carry the odd chapter<sup>1</sup> and some of its memoranda have been discussed in articles in various periodicals.<sup>2</sup> These studies have focused on wartime American plans about the reorganization of the Danubian basin or on some members of the Inquiry but its work on the Monarchy is yet to be fully assessed. This chapter intends to provide that analysis with a strong focus on Hungary through a look at the organization of the Inquiry, its Austro-Hungarian division, and its memoranda and proposals.

By definition the Inquiry, so named by one of its leaders, the Canadian historian James T. Shotwell<sup>3</sup>, was President Wilson's private task force entrusted with preparations for a 'scientific peace' and with working out detailed policy proposals. The initiative for such an organization came from the State Department following the establishment of similar research groups during the previous year in Britain and France under the aegis of the Foreign Office and the Quai d'Orsay respectively.<sup>4</sup> Actually, Lansing began to organize his own peace planning staff, but failed to inform the President. He then was caught by surprise when

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<sup>1</sup> See: Steel (1981); Martin (1968); Martin (1980); Shotwell (1937); Seymour (1965). Further references are provided in the footnotes below.

<sup>2</sup> Jeszenszky (1988); Ádám (1987); Romsics (1992); Svoboda (1989).

<sup>3</sup> Shotwell (1937) p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Arday (1990) pp. 128-29; Gelfand (1963) p. 124.

Wilson let him know that House had been entrusted with such work.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, the Inquiry was a typical and logical element of the Wilsonian foreign policy framework. For reasons of expediency it was placed under the supervision of the State Department, but that was as far as Wilson was going to go.<sup>6</sup> The President financed the Inquiry from the same special defense fund he was using to finance the CPI,<sup>7</sup> in order to minimize Congressional and State Department control. Besides appointing Colonel House as director to secure his own control over the Inquiry Wilson even intended to keep the entire venture secret but the news was broken by the press before long.<sup>8</sup>

The organization of the Inquiry was launched with much enthusiasm. House named Sidney Edward Mezes, his brother-in-law and the former president of the University of Texas and the City College of New York, as director. David Hunter Miller, a New York lawyer and the partner of Gordon Auchincloss, House's son-in-law, was appointed treasurer, and Shotwell research coordinator while Walter Lippmann, whom Wilson considered to be the only radical he could work with, became secretary.<sup>9</sup> The only significant change in the leadership of the Inquiry was the replacement of Lippmann with Isaiah Bowman, the president of the American Geographical Society (hereafter AGS), in mid-1918.<sup>10</sup> Instrumental in the selection of the research staff, besides the official leaders, was Archibald Cary Coolidge of Harvard, the best

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<sup>5</sup> Gelfand (1963) pp. 1-31.

<sup>6</sup> Shotwell (1937) p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Gelfand (1963) pp. 99-100.

<sup>8</sup> See the 29 September 1917 issue of the New York Times; Gelfand (1963) pp. 39-41.

<sup>9</sup> Floto (1981) pp. 61-62; Seymour (1965): Introduction.

<sup>10</sup> On Bowman's role see Martin (1980): Chapter Five.

qualified American expert on East European affairs of the Inquiry, who later led the American mission in Vienna in the first half of 1919.<sup>11</sup>

During its existence the Inquiry employed 126 research fellows and administrative workers and spent approximately a quarter of a million dollars from the President's defense fund. The predominantly East Coast based researchers, coming mostly from the Universities of Princeton, Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and the AGS, were paid up to 541 dollars per month with the likes of Mezes, Miller, Coolidge and Bowman drawing no salary at all. The headquarters were set up on the second floor of the building of the AGS, which also provided the Inquiry with staff, equipment and maps. The Inquiry collected some 2,000 memoranda, of which only every fourth was written by the regular staff, about 1,500 maps, some of which were later used in military training, and ran a card catalogue of all available sources without actually having a library of books of its own. Reports were prepared in four copies with one each staying with the author and his division chief while two were catalogued at the headquarters by author and topic. The research committee, headed by Shotwell, was responsible for reviewing every document submitted, which became practically impossible by the summer of 1918 with the growing number of memoranda and the lack of qualified reviewers: thus the Inquiry had overextended itself much before the Armistice.<sup>12</sup> Regular progress reports were also prepared and fields of regional research were clarified to include: (1) the Western Front; (2) Austria-Hungary; (3) the Balkans; (4) Russia; (5) Turkey; (6) the Far East; (7) the Pacific islands; (8) Africa; and (9) Latin America.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The correspondence file of the Inquiry in the National Archives testifies to Coolidge's role in the selection of personnel; see also Shotwell (1937) p. 6. As for his expertise, see his Nationality and the New Europe in Coolidge (1927) pp. 221-40.

<sup>12</sup> Gelfand (1963): Chapter Three.

<sup>13</sup> FRUS PPC 1: 104: Organization of the Inquiry.

As for information, the Inquiry had access to a wide range of sources. Among government agencies it was linked with the Departments of State, Commerce, Agriculture and the Interior, and with the War Trade Board and Military Intelligence Headquarters. Other, non-government agencies besides the AGS, such as the National Research Council, the American Economics Society and the National Board of Historical Service, also provided invaluable help.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, after the spring of 1918 Douglas W. Johnson of Columbia University served as a liaison officer between the Inquiry and similar British and French organizations, collected memoranda, such as the British Peace Handbooks or de Martonne's essay on the Ruthenians of Hungary, and interviewed a wide range of politicians.<sup>15</sup> Not surprisingly, advocates of dismemberment both in Europe (Beneš, Seton-Watson, Temperley, Vesnić, etc.) and in the United States (Masaryk, Pergler, Stoica, etc.) had direct access to the Inquiry which ruled out an unbiased approach not only to the Monarchy but also towards Hungary: the principle of *audiatur et altera pars* was clearly disregarded.

According to Mezes, 'the bulk of the work of the Inquiry dealt with Mittel Europa, indeed, with the distracted areas of Central Europe and the Near East',<sup>16</sup> which in itself may be seen as Wilson's admittance of his ignorance of these regions. In actual fact, more than half of the regional research divisions, as listed earlier, dealt with the Monarchy with, quite naturally, the Austro-Hungarian division, placed at Yale under Charles Seymour, being the centre of such work. Before discussing the proposals of the Inquiry regarding the future

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<sup>14</sup> Shotwell (1937) p. 14; Gelfand (1963) pp. 44-45, 131; FRUS PPC 1: 107-08: Cooperation with Other Government Organizations. This indicates that the work of the Inquiry was considered more significant than that of the Foreign Section of the CPI, which received only MIB information.

<sup>15</sup> Gelfand (1963) pp. 126-30; SML Ips: Box 3: Folders 8 and 21 include Johnson's detailed reports to Bowman.

<sup>16</sup> Seymour and House (1921) p. 5.

of the Monarchy and Hungary - as these two issues remained inseparable until the end of the war - the Austro-Hungarian division must be introduced and evaluated.

As stated above, Charles Seymour of Yale was appointed head of the division, which was located at the Ivy League university to have quick access to its library.<sup>17</sup> An assistant professor of history studying the electoral systems of the world Seymour was entrusted with the examination of the nationality problems of the Monarchy.<sup>18</sup> Despite Gelfand's surprising claim,<sup>19</sup> he was not qualified for such a task, and openly admitted it:

But Day, and Lunt [the Italian expert], and I, myself had not special knowledge of the regions to which we were assigned...We were kept on because Bowman liked our reports.<sup>20</sup>

His two closest assistants were the American Clive Day, also of Yale, and Robert J. Kerner, a Czech nationalist, drafted from the University of Missouri. Day, an economic historian and the author of The History of Commerce (1907), in which he did not discuss the Monarchy at all, was nevertheless asked to prepare an economic survey of the Danubian basin while serving also as the head of the Balkans division.<sup>21</sup> The appointment of Seymour and Day thus was due to their personal acquaintance with Bowman, as Seymour himself pointed out almost 50 years later, and not because they were real experts.<sup>22</sup> In fact, the only real

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<sup>17</sup> Gelfand (1963) p. 103. Note that the Italian experts of the division, William E. Lunt and Austin P. Evans, are not discussed since they submitted no work on Hungary.

<sup>18</sup> Gelfand (1963) p. 57.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Gelfand (1963) p. 315: thus he actually contradicts himself.

<sup>21</sup> Gelfand (1963) p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> Seymour (1965) p. xxiii.

expert, albeit a rather biased one, of the division was Robert J. Kerner, a Czech born historian who compiled the first Slav bibliographies in the United States.<sup>23</sup> His command of most languages of the region and specific knowledge of not only Bohemia but also the South Slav problem made him indispensable although his colleagues were aware of his strong bias.<sup>24</sup> A three-page critique of his reports stated that his writings

are seriously affected in value by the author's tendency, already mentioned, to inject into his statement of facts, at frequent intervals, the partisan tenets of the Czechs. Without references and authorities by which to control his statements the reader always distrusts the fidelity of his statements to the actualities. The revision of the papers should look particularly to the exclusion of the party dogmas.<sup>25</sup>

It is the case of Kerner that proves that the Inquiry, like Lansing with his diplomatic notes, was working with guidelines provided by the President. Kerner, a Czech nationalist, naturally favoured the establishment of an independent Bohemia, yet he submitted several reports discussing federalization and not dismemberment. This must be seen as the result of outside constraint since at least on one occasion he did indeed give away his real views. In reaction to the Spa agreement he wrote a short piece, A New Policy for the United States in Central Europe (16 May 1918), in which he argued that:

Within a very short time (a week or two) a public declaration of a new policy of the liberation of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe should be made and all possible material and moral assistance offered to them.

As a result, small nations would revolt against German and Magyar rule and they

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<sup>23</sup> Gelfand (1963) p. 57.

<sup>24</sup> Gelfand (1963) pp. 57-58.

<sup>25</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 306, unsigned appendix. Note that a full list of the memoranda relevant to this chapter is provided in the appendix below.



should be given de facto recognition and definite assurances that the great disinterested power of the United States will be thrown on the side of democracy and justice in a careful delimitation [sic] of ethnic boundaries with just compromises in regard to military, economic, and political considerations.<sup>26</sup>

Several authors have argued that this was an all important policy making document<sup>27</sup> but there is no evidence that Kerner was asked to write this piece or that it ever reached the President. Furthermore, Wilson's letter to House dated 2 September 1917 made it clear that individual members of the Inquiry were not expected to write policy proposals: 'Under your guidance these assistants could collate all the definite material and you could make up the memorandum by which we should be guided.'<sup>28</sup> In the 10 May 1918 report on the work of the Inquiry Kerner, Day and Seymour were described as 'an unusually strong combination which should be kept intact for the final peace conference.'<sup>29</sup> During the autumn of 1918 Richard B. Barrett, Florence A. Hague, Charles Sweeney and Thomas Burk (who also worked for Day's division) were added to the staff of the division, but their contributions proved to be less important. They were involved mostly in typing and compiling statistical data and neither the Washington nor the Yale collections of the papers of the Inquiry contain a single memorandum written by either of them. Besides Day, two other regular members of the Balkans division also contributed to the work on Hungary and the Monarchy. Paul Monroe, formerly director of the School of Education at Columbia University, was asked to report on the educational system of the Monarchy. In his single piece on the subject Monroe introduced the 1868 and 1907 Hungarian education laws without any comment and presented the

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<sup>26</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 839.

<sup>27</sup> Jeszenszky (1988) pp. 658-59; Svoboda (1989).

<sup>28</sup> WWPs 44: 120-21.

<sup>29</sup> FRUS PPC 1: 85.

'Language Question and Education' by simply quoting R. W. Seton-Watson's German, Slav, and Magyar.<sup>30</sup> Another, more comprehensive contribution came from Leon Dominian, a native of Turkey. Dominian was initially invited by the AGS to write a book on linguistic frontiers in Europe and, being available at the right time, he was attached to the Balkans division. As will be seen during the discussion of the suggestions of the Inquiry, linguistic frontiers, as worked out by Dominian<sup>31</sup>, were the starting point for boundary proposals.

The division was supplied with a wide variety of material by different outside sources. The State Department provided several reports by Ambassador Stovall and Seton-Watson on the Monarchy and a memorandum by Putney discussing Slav aspirations. Dismemberment propaganda was also available in abundance: besides pamphlets, wartime declarations and interviews by Johnson, special reports for the Inquiry were also written by the likes of Hinković, Masaryk and Stoica. The relevant British Peace Handbooks and various French memoranda were acquired through Johnson, the Embassies and by Coolidge, who visited several European countries during the summer of 1918.

At the same time, the Inquiry paid little attention to the Rumanian and Hungarian positions. Max S. Handman, a Rumanian born sociologist mistakenly identified by Gelfand as a member of the Balkans division,<sup>32</sup> produced the only pro-Rumanian memorandum ever used by the key members of the division. Meanwhile, William Howell Reed, the actual Rumanian

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<sup>30</sup> SML Ips: Box 7: Folder 63.

<sup>31</sup> See: Dominian (1917).

<sup>32</sup> Gelfand (1963) pp. 59-60. A look at the correspondence file under Handman's name in the National Archives makes it very clear that he was denied an appointment because of his direct connections with the Rumanian government.

expert of the Balkans division,<sup>33</sup> focused on Rumanian aspirations outside Hungary until the end of November 1918. As for Hungary, the Inquiry has not a single memorandum presenting the Hungarian position. In October 1917 an unidentified Dr. Green, who spoke Hungarian, approached the Inquiry offering his services. In a letter to Shotwell dated 3 November 1917 Coolidge put forward the following proposition:

I am sending along Green's Hungarian article. To tell the truth it does not impress me... At the same time a man who knows Hungarian is not to be found every day and I am not sure we may not want to use Dr. Green. Owing to his training he would be able to investigate the subject and we need not particularly accept his conclusions.<sup>34</sup>

The issue was dropped without further comment. Similarly, during July 1918 Day made a vain attempt to enroll someone who read Hungarian to deal with statistical information.<sup>35</sup> Another, more revealing, incident also implies that the Austro-Hungarian division displayed very little interest in the Hungarian position. At Bowman's request during August 1918 Miss Mary T. Scudder of the National Research Council interviewed several New York immigrants, including Kende, Konta, the Reverend László Harsányi (the inventor of the myth of Wilson's anti-Hungarianism), and Charles Feleky. According to Miss Scudder Feleky was

the possessor of a most unique library on works pertaining to Hungary, all the books being in English. The library has cost him a great amount of money although he does not emphasize that point. He spent a very sultry afternoon climbing up a small ladder and selecting books that pertained to our subject and those [th]at were the best authority... Through Mr. Feleky we have secured references that could only have been obtained after a great

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<sup>33</sup> See under his name in NA RG 256: Inquiry: Card Record of Personnel and Personal Assignments, 1917-1918. Note that Handman is not listed here.

<sup>34</sup> HPL ACCps: Correspondence: Box 1: The Inquiry: Peace Aims. Also in NA RG 256: Inquiry: General Correspondence, under Coolidge's name.

<sup>35</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry: General Correspondence, under Day's name.

amount of research and some of these sources we would never have located without his aid.<sup>36</sup>

There is no evidence to prove that this survey was ever digested by the Inquiry or that the references provided by Feleky were used. In fact, the only pro-Hungarian reference ever used was Knatchbull-Hugessen's work. At the same time, maps and official statistical publications from the Monarchy were acquired and used most extensively.

The work of the Inquiry regarding (Austria-) Hungary clearly falls into two periods, the dividing line being July and August of 1918, which, by no means accidentally, coincided with Wilson's change of policy. Characteristic of the first period was the collection of all available material (most of which was never digested) and an attempt to cover all imaginable aspects of the region and its problems. The focus of the work was considerably narrowed down in the second period when mostly boundaries and economic issues were considered and recommendations were finalized.

The vast majority of the memoranda and statistical surveys in any way related to Hungary were prepared during the first period. With the widest possible focus, these reports ranged from discussions of Habsburg foreign policy and territorial acquisitions through specialized surveys, such as the one on the forest resources of Austria-Hungary, to the first actual proposals discussing the future of the Monarchy. As indicated earlier, this work was almost exclusively carried out by Seymour, Day and Kerner.

The analysis of Austro-Hungarian politics and government, nationality problems and the representation of the nationalities on various levels of administration was the task of

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<sup>36</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 110.

Kerner. He produced more than twenty reports (including resumes and revised versions) and he deserved most of the criticism he received. He introduced the Dualist system simply as a personal union, not because he was unaware of its actual nature (he could have checked out Wilson's own work on it) but to make the separation of Hungary and Austria look easier, providing further ground for the separation of Bohemia: in brief, to promote the idea of dismemberment. He described the Slavs as 'more democratically inclined' than either the Germans or the Magyars and claimed that the survival of the Monarchy was in the interest of only the Catholic Church, the Jews and western pacifists.<sup>37</sup> He presented only one side of the problem of the nationalities and did so with unconcealed bias. According to Kerner the non-Magyar peoples of Hungary were denied the freedom of religion, education, speech, press and assembly. Even the non-Magyar primary schools had been closed down and legal action had been taken against 938 non-Magyar newspapers between 1886 and 1908. Hungary was ruled by the Magyar 'landed gentry' and the non-Magyar peoples were subjected to Ku Klux Klan-like persecution.<sup>38</sup> He hardly ever provided references to back up his statements, and none other than his own reports and published statistics. A similar lack of impartiality characterized his political evaluations, which included the following and numerous similar statements:

Corrupt practices, bribery, forgery, diet-packing, and career-exploding practiced by the Bans and their henchmen in Croatia, as in Hungary, reduce the institutions of both to so much paper.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 306.

<sup>38</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 311.

<sup>39</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 306. Underline in the original.

It is little wonder then that besides the above cited critique of Kerner's memoranda, which pointed out his poor command of English as well, one of the progress reports also stated that

Owing to the fact that Professor Kerner is himself of Czech descent and an enthusiastic Czech nationalist, it is felt that his work requires careful checking up by men of cooler judgement.<sup>40</sup>

After Seymour's initial and rather unsuccessful venture into the field<sup>41</sup> the economic survey of the Monarchy and Hungary was left to Day, who produced two reports (one of them unfinished) and several statistical compilations. In his first report (1 February 1918) he examined Hungarian river and railway transportation, exports and imports, crop production and mining. He concluded that the Hungarian economy matched only that of the Balkans; and he disregarded, among several other things, animal husbandry and food industry. In his other, unfinished, memorandum he discussed Hungary only as the trading partner of Bosnia-Herzegovina. His statistical compilations, covering exports, imports, religion, industry and forest resources, were based upon sources published in German in the Monarchy and carried no critical evaluations. Day's reports thus reflect a complete lack of interest and insight together with the fact that the plan of a systematic economic analysis of the region was dropped around the end of February 1918 and that work was never completed.

The discussion of Slav aspirations within the Monarchy and plans for her reorganization were undertaken by Kerner and Seymour. These reports constitute the division's main contribution to the work of the Inquiry during the period and carry special significance for

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<sup>40</sup> FRUS PPC 1: 85.

<sup>41</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 519. For example, Seymour mistakenly concluded that the economic centre of Hungary was the so called 'Duna-Tisza köze' (that is the territories between the Rivers Danube and Theiss).

students of Hungarian history. It was Kerner's, by American standards, unique knowledge of Bohemian and South Slav history that made him not only indispensable for the Inquiry but allowed him to write his best memoranda. Displaying considerable historical and theoretical knowledge he discussed federalism with or without the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary and, among other things, supported the idea of the Czech-Yugoslav corridor (a claim put forward by Masaryk and Beneš both during the war and at the Peace Conference, which the Yugoslavs never embraced) on strategic grounds.<sup>42</sup> Seymour attended to the same issues from a statistical viewpoint in three convincingly written pieces. He correctly identified South Slav claims to the Bácska, Baranya and the Bánát but refused to take sides by simply establishing that these were ethnically mixed territories. Driven by ethnic and economic considerations, he flatly rejected the Czech-Yugoslav corridor and successfully defended his position not only during the war but also at the Peace Conference. For reasons he did not reveal, he considered the attachment of the territories of Hungary with a Rumanian majority to the Kingdom of Rumania inadvisable, which influenced his federalization plans as well.<sup>43</sup>

Seymour regarded both trialism and federalism as possible means of reorganizing the Danubian Basin. He believed that the political balance of the Monarchy could best be restored by granting the Poles or the South Slavs, the two largest Slav national groupings within her boundaries,<sup>44</sup> equal rights to those of the Austrians and Hungarians. He preferred Polish trialism on the grounds that it could be carried out during the war and would drive

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<sup>42</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Documents 310; 312; 316.

<sup>43</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Documents 516; 517; 520.

<sup>44</sup>. This statement is obviously not true and is yet another demonstration of Seymour's superficiality. The Poles and the South Slavs are the largest national groupings (if we consider the latter to be such) in the region but the Habsburg Monarchy included only a segment of both. The largest Slav grouping within Austria-Hungary was, of course, that of the Czechs.

a wedge between the Germans and the Habsburgs, which could be capitalized upon by the Allies.<sup>45</sup> That notwithstanding, he considered the South Slav solution as almost equally feasible and described four different versions of it; with Hungary, in all four cases, losing Croatia-Slavonia and Fiume.<sup>46</sup> As an alternative to trialism Seymour also discussed the federalization of the Habsburg Monarchy. His 25 May 1918 memorandum is not just the only detailed American federalization plan but also the only disinterested one of any significance from the entire war period. Seymour suggested that the following six states replace the Monarchy: Austria, Bohemia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland-Ruthenia, and Transylvania. Despite the fact that this 'division can hardly be called one which would satisfy the different ethnic and political groups of the Dual Monarchy,' Seymour argued, it 'has the practical advantage of combining existing administrative units without cutting boundaries' and it 'provides federal states based to some extent on history, each of which has a definite if not a pure racial character.' In terms of size and population Hungary would be by far the largest federal state, argued Seymour, although she would have to cede Transylvania and Croatia-Slavonia, that is 22,000 square miles of her territory and 4.8 million of her inhabitants.<sup>47</sup> From a Hungarian point of view this was still by far the most favourable wartime proposal drafted outside Hungary.

Wilson's new Habsburg policy in the summer of 1918 also marked the beginning of the second period of the work of the Inquiry. Mezes explains:

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<sup>45</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 507.

<sup>46</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 506.

<sup>47</sup> *Ádám* (1987) pp. 50-56; NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 509. Note that Seymour is inaccurate here: the territorial figure correctly refers to Croatia, the population figure to Transylvania. This, however, was probably not an effort to make Hungary's losses less dramatic; Seymour's writings indicate that he was often just inaccurate.



It became evident, namely, that many kinds of information bearing on the drawing of boundary-lines would be needed, and that no information that did not bear on such settlements, excepting general economic information that would be needed in drafting the economic clauses of the treaty, would be of any value. In August, therefore, the staff of The Inquiry was asked to confine its consideration to such data, and soon after the work clarified and definite objectives were established. Only the regions along or adjacent to probable boundary lines were now studied.<sup>48</sup>

This was the period of organized and coordinated work on the future of the Danubian Basin; in fact, actual preparations for the peace negotiations were started. The division submitted an ambitious research program for the period between August and November, according to which plans for: (1) dismemberment; (2) federalism (either along ethnic or historic lines); (3) trialism; and (4) reformed dualism were to be developed considering racial, religious, cultural, economic, political and historical factors. Statistics, maps, and the presentation of the positions of all parties concerned were also included.<sup>49</sup> A look at the output of the division during the second period under examination reveals that this program was far too ambitious and work was actually limited to the topics outlined by Mezes. The enrollment of Burk, Sweeney, Hague and Barrett around September 1918 was a clear indication of the significance the leaders of the Inquiry attached to the work on the Monarchy. In due course, the division collected and reviewed some 150 maps, built a reference card catalogue and finalized its recommendations during the last three months of the war.

The shift from writing memoranda to building reference card catalogues was one of the most clear-cut changes in the work of the Inquiry and its Austro-Hungarian division, although the collection of information and reports was continued. A comprehensive Who's

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<sup>48</sup> Seymour and House (1921) p. 5.

<sup>49</sup> SML Ips: Box 7: Folder 62.

Who was compiled which identified over 60 politicians in any way connected to the dismemberment of the Monarchy. The other general catalogue, of political parties and the press, is far less impressive. However, it does prove that the Americans identified the most important Hungarian newspapers and closely monitored the changes in the Austrian and Hungarian governments, while the attempt to profile some politicians (like Andrassy and Khuen-Héderváry) through their newspaper articles proved less successful and was abandoned in due course. As for Austria-Hungary, three detailed sets were created surveying (1) population density, (2) religious and language statistics and (3) industry. These compilations, which like all such records were typed or handwritten on 5 by 8 inch cards, are broken down to districts (járás) and are based upon official Austro-Hungarian statistical publications. These card records were made good use of not only during the war but also during the peace negotiations.<sup>50</sup>

The best summation of the map program, described by Mezes as 'one of the largest undertakings' of the Inquiry<sup>51</sup>, may be read in the relevant chapter of the biography of Chief Cartographer Mark Jefferson.<sup>52</sup> In late August Bowman secured his services for the Inquiry to boost the rather slowly unfolding map program.<sup>53</sup> As a result of Jefferson's enthusiastic efforts some 1,500 maps were piled up, of which every tenth covered some or all the territories of the Habsburg Monarchy. The division's maps have never been indexed or catalogued and constitute a curious mix. The majority of these maps are printed and carry

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<sup>50</sup> These card records are catalogued separately in NA RG 256: Inquiry, which in itself is sufficient proof that they were taken to Paris.

<sup>51</sup> Seymour and House (1921) p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> Martin (1968): Chapter Eight. DiMauro (1991), an unpublished Masters thesis, is the only other such reference.

<sup>53</sup> Martin (1968) pp. 169-71.

statistical information. The more important ones, some of which naturally come from the first period, are the so called 'base maps', which are hand made, display boundary proposals, and were attached to key memoranda.

The beginning of the Armistice negotiations in early October indicated that the peace negotiations were at hand and a detailed and comprehensive 61-card inventory to all material related to the Habsburg Monarchy was created. More importantly, the division also submitted its final recommendations acting upon instructions dated 1 October 1918. The actual report is not dated but Mezes provides a clue, stating that by mid-October 'tentative boundaries for the whole of Mittel Europa had been worked out' and submitted to House. This almost 100-page report, including several maps, is of enormous significance for a number of reasons. The report, entitled Epitome of Reports on Just and Practical Boundaries within Austria-Hungary for Czecho-Slovaks, Jugo-Slavs, Rumanians, Poles, Ruthenians, and Magyars discussed the proposed boundaries from the point of view of dismemberment.<sup>54</sup> For the first time the Hungarian position was also considered; the authors suggested the reconsideration of that solution and warned that the

proposed boundaries would dismember a historic state. They [the boundaries of Hungary] have existed for two hundred years. 'Just and practical' boundaries are unjust from the Magyar point of view. The Magyars have been masters of Hungary for eight centuries. To place a large proportion of them (nearly 25 per cent) under the control of nationalistic groups whom they have regarded as serfs and inferiors would start violent irredentism and create future dissension and war.

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<sup>54</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 514; Document 512 is an 11-page resume.

In the introduction the principles applied in the drawing of the boundaries were outlined as follows:<sup>55</sup>

The determination of the linguistic frontier by reference to a majority speaking a given language appears to be consonant with the accepted principles of modern democracy; and gives a perfectly definite line as a basis for further work... The boundaries of language thus established, marked out for the committee a definite block for each of the projected states, whose outlines had then to be shaped with reference to other considerations.

A study of topography showed, as was to be expected, that the line of division between language groups is, in many districts, entirely impracticable as a national frontier. The committee sought then to find the line nearest to it, which would serve the needs of defence. With this consideration alone in mind, (and lacking, it may be proper to state, the judgement of a military expert), it modified the original line, sometimes extending it to include regions of alien speech (Magyar districts in Czecho-Slovakia), and sometimes restricting it and thereby excluding regions of kindred speech (Slovene districts in the north and west of the Jugo-Slavs).

The line thus fixed by a compromise between the conflicting demands of nationality and military topography, may be regarded as a first approximation to the demand for 'a just and practical boundary'...

This proposed boundary has been tested with reference to demographic considerations, (density and movement of population in the frontier zone), and to the distribution of religions... Conditions are such in Austria-Hungary that no serious danger to the new states need, apparently, be apprehended from either of these sources.

The economic element in the problem of delimitation [sic] of new states deserves, in the opinion of the committee, more detailed consideration. Analysis in this field was necessarily postponed until lines had been struck, based on simpler factors, within which the statistical investigator might work, and the conclusions were used rather to test and criticize the proposed boundaries, than to modify them in a constructive way.

The authors also voiced serious reservations against their very own proposals:

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<sup>55</sup> Note the significance of Leon Dominian's work, as indicated earlier.

The committee is forced to the conclusion that the frontiers supposed [sic] are unsatisfactory as the international boundaries of sovereign states. It has been found impossible to discover such lines, which would be at the same time just and practical. An example of the injustice that would result may be instanced in the fact that a third of the area and population of the Czecho-Slovak state would be alien to that nationality. Another lies in the placing of a quarter of the Magyars under foreign domination. But any attempt to make the frontiers conform more closely to the national line destroys their practicability as international boundaries. Obviously many of these difficulties would disappear if the boundaries were to be drawn with the purpose of separating not independent nations, but component portions of a federalized state. A reconsideration of the data from this aspect is desirable.

The real significance of this report lies in the fact that it includes the only detailed wartime American boundary proposals regarding Hungary. The boundaries outlined here are practically identical with the ones presented on the map of Seymour's earlier introduced federalization plan, although modifications were incorporated. The revised American position on the region prompted the authors to suggest the incorporation of Slovakia not into Hungary but into a new Czechoslovak state and to leave open the future of the Ruthenian territories of northern Hungary while the plan of an independent Transylvania was abandoned for its incorporation into Rumania. Full details are provided in the appendix below.

A thorough analysis of the Inquiry and its work regarding (Austria-) Hungary offers several far reaching conclusions. First and most important is the fact that it was not the Inquiry that influenced Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy but it was the President who set out the guiding lines (first federalization, then dismemberment and regional cooperation) for his task force and granted it free access to all available information. Before the change of the President's policy the emphasis was on reforming the Habsburg Monarchy either through trialism or by federalizing her and Kerner's overt and covert calls for dismemberment were swept aside. Wilson's new policy of dismemberment and the coming of the Armistice set

new requirements for Seymour and his colleagues. The inventory and the final report may be seen as the culmination of the efforts of the Austro-Hungarian division although it was pointed out that economic problems needed further attention and that the authors of the report had reservations about their own suggestions. This awkward situation was largely due to outside constraint but it was also the result of the division's overall inability to tackle the issues in a satisfactory way. This offers a second conclusion: as has been pointed out the work of the division had a strong anti-Hungarian bias and its 'experts' could live up to the standards they had set for themselves neither in terms of quality nor of impartiality. Thirdly, economic issues were disregarded: the plan for the complete economic analysis of the Danubian Basin was practically dropped as early as February 1918. Fourthly, the Inquiry worked on all the logically possible solutions (having a compromise peace or the defeat of the Central Powers in mind) to the future of the Habsburg Monarchy and Hungary. From a Hungarian point of view the most favourable boundary proposals were put forward by Seymour, who, nonetheless, failed to comprehend several important issues, such as the significance both the Hungarians and the Rumanians attached to the possession of Transylvania. Furthermore, Seymour finalized his suggestions by May 1918 and all later modifications were added not in the light of knowledge gained through research but in response to the changes in Wilsonian high politics. This can best be demonstrated with the case of Slovakia: in the May memorandum Seymour suggested that Hungary should retain that region, but indicated, with a dotted line on the map, that alternatively it might be added to Bohemia. Dismemberment became a foregone conclusion by October 1918 and Masaryk's agreement with the Slovak League settled the issue: the final report suggested that Slovakia should join Bohemia. Finally, the fact that the Inquiry worked under instructions from the President and produced detailed proposals (regardless of their actual value) disproves Lansing's often cited claim that Wilson went to Paris without a detailed program. As for the later contribution of the members of the Austro-Hungarian division to the Hungarian peace treaty, Seymour and

Day served on the territorial committees which drew Hungary's post-1919 boundaries while Kerner was attached to the Coolidge mission and was sent to Prague as its representative.

Many historians have argued that peace preparations may have been removed from the jurisdiction of the State Department, but that Lansing nonetheless played a decisive role in the shaping of Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy after April 1917. The following chapter assesses the work of the State Department, refutes the claims of Lansing's influence and concludes the discussion of the work of the War Department; all that with a view to setting the stage for the reinterpretation of Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy and the final conclusions of the present study.

## **CHAPTER TEN: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WILSON'S CABINET**

The previous two chapters indicated the great significance Wilson attached to semi-official organizations which he could control without interference. This, together with the lacklustre performance of his cabinet in Habsburg matters during the neutrality period, implies that his official advisors continued to play a limited role in decision making, especially in East Central European affairs. The careful examination of various memoirs, primary and secondary sources strongly suggests that this was indeed the case. The following is an introduction to the work of the Departments of State, War and the Navy, with a special emphasis on the contribution of Secretary of State Lansing and of Military and Naval Intelligence.

Several authors, approaching Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy from various aspects, have claimed that Lansing was instrumental in reversing the American policy regarding the future of the Danubian basin. Often drawing heavily on one another's work these authors have claimed that Lansing, as Secretary of State, was in an excellent position to pressurize Wilson towards the acceptance of dismemberment, which he himself had embraced during the spring of 1917. Lansing developed his own solution of replacing the Habsburg Monarchy with a chain of independent states forming a barrier both against Germany and Soviet Russia, and, it is argued, persuaded Wilson to accept it by the summer of 1918. Some of these authors realized Lansing's limited say in policy making but instead of drawing the logical conclusion, claimed that he was given a free hand in the Habsburg case, an issue of secondary impor-



tance.<sup>1</sup> While these interpretations seem coherent and impressive, on closer examination of the facts they prove to be far less convincing. These authors have disregarded Wilson's concept of the Presidency and of the conduct of foreign affairs as well as the actual nature of the Wilson-Lansing relationship. The revision of this Lansing myth is one of the key aspects of this chapter, which is followed by a discussion of the work of Military and Naval Intelligence. The War Department, as has been indicated in the chapter on the CPI, activated the MIB and additional information was also expected from the intelligence section of the American Expeditionary Forces (hereafter AEF). Naval Intelligence continued to focus on Mediterranean matters and monitored the Yugoslav movement. The nature of our enquiry makes it necessary to widen its focus to the entire Habsburg Monarchy once again.

Before analyzing Lansing's role in Wilsonian policy making towards the Habsburg Monarchy we need to take a brief glance at the State Department during the period of American belligerency. As has been mentioned earlier, in July 1917 Joseph C. Grew, formerly with the Berlin and Vienna Embassies, was placed in charge of the West European desk. He was asked to digest the Habsburg related information coming in from the Embassies, and William C. Bullitt, who came to be seen as an expert on the Central Powers on the strength of his 1916 articles for the Philadelphia Public Ledger, was appointed assistant secretary of state in order to help Grew. Meanwhile, Putney, the chief of the Near Eastern division, was requested to write detailed analyses of the Habsburg Monarchy and especially of the various nationalities within her boundaries. Putney, a friend of Masaryk, did so with apparent bias,

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<sup>1</sup> See: Barany (1966); Smith (1961); Hartig (1974) and the relevant passages in Mamatey (1957).

and his reports not only helped Lansing shape his Habsburg policy but they were also sent over to the Inquiry.<sup>2</sup>

The declaration of war on Germany and diplomatic break with Austria-Hungary transformed American diplomatic representation in Europe. With the withdrawal of the Berlin and Vienna Embassies the American Legations in neutral capitals north and south of the Central Powers gained a central role both in organizing various secret meetings and in collecting information. Bordering on both Germany and Austria-Hungary and having a German language press, Switzerland was in a key position, which was realized not only by the CPI but also by Lansing. Hugh Robert Wilson of the Berlin Embassy and Allen Welsh Dulles and Dolbeare of the Vienna staff, were transferred to Berne to strengthen Stovall's team.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the Budapest Consul-General Coffin was sent to Copenhagen and slowly faded out of the picture.<sup>4</sup>

Despite Lansing's efforts to respond to the state of American belligerency his Department continued to be under-informed and neglected. Ronald Steel, the acclaimed biographer of Walter Lippmann recorded:

That fall [1917] Lippmann frequently went to Washington to confer with officials. On one trip he stopped by the State Department to see the people in the Near Eastern division. The division turned out to be one man, who had never been to the area, and a small filing cabinet. Lippmann then went upstairs to talk to the Secretary of State. He explained to Robert Lansing

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<sup>2</sup> Mamatey (1957) pp. 92-93; Pergler (1926) pp. 77-93; Putney's reports were found in the Yale collection of the Papers of the Inquiry.

<sup>3</sup> Wilson (1941) p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Only one post April 1917 report by Coffin has been found: on 1 February 1918 he commented on cabinet changes in Hungary. See: NA RG 59: DFSD: M 708 reel 3.

what the Inquiry was doing and how it had to deal with the problems of the Balkans, such as the borders of Yugoslavia and the Macedonian issue. 'Let me show you on the map,' Lippmann suggested to the secretary, pulling down one of the big roller maps attached to the wall. The map was fifty years old, showing the frontiers that existed before the first Balkan wars.<sup>5</sup>

That the situation did not improve much for almost a year is indicated by the fact that in June 1918 Bullitt had to contact the Inquiry to obtain a full list of the members of the Austrian and Hungarian cabinets.<sup>6</sup>

President Wilson was certainly aware of the situation prevailing in the State Department and it is hardly surprising that he did not rely too heavily on it. Lansing, nonetheless, developed his own policy towards Austria-Hungary and wrote a series of memoranda for the President to convince him of the necessity of dismembering the Habsburg Empire and replacing it with a chain of independent nation states which would serve as a barrier both against Germany and Soviet Russia. To understand Lansing's position and his role in bringing about the Wilson turnaround in the Habsburg case, it is necessary to take a closer look at the man and his views and beliefs.

Born into an upper-class New York family, Lansing was trained as an international lawyer, graduated from Amherst College in 1886 and entered the New York bar three years later. After 1892 he was a regular American representative in international arbitration tribunals and made several important friends. Socially active, he was among the founders of the American Society of International Law and edited its periodical until his death in 1928. His growing fame earned him the appointment as counsellor of the State Department on 1

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<sup>5</sup> Steel (1981) p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> NA RG 256: Inquiry: General Correspondence: Lippmann to Bullitt, 26 June 1918.

April 1914. In June 1915 he replaced Bryan as Secretary of State, served for almost five years and was forced to resign on 12 February 1920. He then returned to legal practice and wrote several articles and two important recollections of his years in office.<sup>7</sup>

Behind this illustrious career there stood a man of contradictions, a man of extremes. The 'official' Lansing was cold, calculating, logical and accurate, the characteristics of a good lawyer.<sup>8</sup> His cooperation with Wilson was based upon a rather peculiar interpretation of loyalty, which meant working in harmony with the President when they agreed and maintaining 'public neutrality' when they did not.<sup>9</sup> Despite his personal charm, which impressed several foreign diplomats in Washington, most of his compatriots, including the President, his second wife, House and Creel, had serious reservations about him; Tumulty on one occasion fabricated evidence to prove his disloyalty and to get rid of him.<sup>10</sup>

The 'private' Lansing was sour and witty, and often felt frustrated and humiliated for being neglected. He returned criticism secretly in morality plays, poems and general remarks, which he penned into his highly revealing private notebooks;<sup>11</sup> he also voiced his disillusionment, albeit in more moderate terms, in two lengthy memoirs. A striking aspect of the 'private' Lansing is the fact that he viewed Germany on the level of the worst atrocity propaganda.<sup>12</sup> Had he kept that inside he would have spared himself much embarrassment

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<sup>7</sup> DAB 5: 609-11.

<sup>8</sup> Smith (1961) p. 103; Mamatey (1957) pp. 79-80.

<sup>9</sup> Lazo (1985) p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> Smith (1961) p. 103; Lazo (1985).

<sup>11</sup> Brands (1985) on the topic is pioneering.

<sup>12</sup> Brands (1985) pp. 30-31.

and criticism, but he let it out on several occasions. The Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, for example, recorded in a private letter that during a cabinet meeting Lansing, with apparent conviction, confirmed the obviously unfounded rumour that the wives of the American diplomats, before leaving Germany in February 1917, were bathed in acid by the Germans to find out whether they had any official secrets written on their skin in invisible ink.<sup>13</sup> On another occasion, at the Princeton graduation ceremony in 1917, he called Germany 'the wild beast of Central Europe' and described the Germans as 'butchers and assassins,' much to the amazement and dislike of the attending correspondent of the New York Tribune;<sup>14</sup> all that at a time when Wilson was carefully drawing a dividing line between the German people and their government.

Lansing's background and utterances reveal strong Anglo-Saxon sympathies and an almost paranoid fear of German intentions in the Western Hemisphere. Not surprisingly, Lansing saw his worst fears realized in the Zimmermann telegram, which offered Mexico large chunks of US territory in return for entering the war on the side of the Central Powers.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Lansing came to view Germany as the chief enemy of peaceful global democratic development and it was in this context that he began to consider the necessity of dismembering the Monarchy. However, Lansing's view of the German issue only makes sense as part of his broader concept of national security, international order, and the use of force. For him:

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<sup>13</sup> Lane (1922) pp. 239-40; F. K. Lane to George W. Lane, 25 February 1917.

<sup>14</sup> LC RLps Box 70: Scrapbook No. 6: press cutting from the 17 June 1917 edition of the paper.

<sup>15</sup> Smith (1958) pp. 162-63.

National safety is as dominant in the life of a nation as self-preservation in the life of an individual. It is even more so, as nations do not respond to the impulse of self-sacrifice.<sup>16</sup>

With a mild form of idealism, Lansing viewed democracy as inherently peaceful, but threatened by Prussian militarism. He believed that the world was slowly developing into a universal federal state but, unlike Wilson and House, maintained that this process should not be hurried by the premature establishment of a League of Nations.<sup>17</sup> The international lawyer in him prompted him to consider traditional diplomacy and the strengthening of the then existing worldwide arbitration more expedient.<sup>18</sup> This peaceful attitude, however, as in the case of Wilson, did not exclude the use of force:

Force is the great underlying actuality in all history, which, regardless of the higher intellectual or spiritual impulses affecting human conduct, must be recognized and reckoned with in international and national relationships.<sup>19</sup>

This, when applied to American foreign policy, meant that all democratic forces in the world, and especially Germany, must be met by force if necessary. This was Lansing's own version of 'making the world safe for democracy' but while for Wilson the use of force was the last resort - which he nonetheless took to on several occasions and all around the globe - Lansing thought it to be a natural, common and necessary means of conducting international relations.<sup>20</sup> This difference in their political philosophy made Lansing and the President unlikely companions: as Daniel M. Smith, Lansing's most prominent biographer put it, 'The

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<sup>16</sup> Lansing (1921) pp. 102-03.

<sup>17</sup> Brands (1985) pp. 29-30; Smith (1961) p. 106.

<sup>18</sup> Smith (1961) pp. 120-21.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Smith (1958) p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Smith (1958) pp. 7-9; Smith (1961) pp. 102-03.

amazing feature of the Wilson-Lansing relationship is that it lasted so long.<sup>21</sup> The Secretary of State always seemed to have been a step ahead of the President in leading the American people into the World War, which has been seen by several historians as the clearest evidence of his actual influence. That this was not the case may be demonstrated through the development of Lansing's Habsburg diplomacy and by outlining Wilson's attitude towards him.

Before the American declaration of war on Germany Lansing and Wilson worked together quite effectively.<sup>22</sup> Before the spring of 1917 there was one single occasion when Lansing took the initiative in a Habsburg related matter: as has been discussed, during the Ancona crisis he suggested a diplomatic break with the Monarchy. When Wilson refused to go that far Lansing retreated. It took him another year and a half to begin to consider the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy and develop his alternative policy, since he was apparently not satisfied with Wilson's conduct. On 6 May 1917 Lansing had a long interview with the British Foreign Minister Arthur James Balfour and his secretary, Sir Eric Drummond, the leaders of the first British war mission to the United States. Balfour gave the Secretary of State a copy of his own October 1916 memorandum, The Peace Settlement in Europe. Very much along the lines set out in his memorandum and during his earlier conference with House and Wilson, Balfour suggested the partial reorganization of East Central Europe along ethnic lines to Lansing.<sup>23</sup> Wanting to know more about the details, Lansing then asked

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<sup>21</sup> Smith (1961) p. 103.

<sup>22</sup> Smith (1958) is the definitive work. Other references are Hartig (1974), an unpublished dissertation which adds but little to Smith's work, and Pratt (1928), which is a semi-contemporary account.

<sup>23</sup> Mamatey (1957) pp. 89 and 91; Balfour's memorandum was found in SML EMHps: Series 3: Political Papers, box 181, folder 1: I/103. Note that this was the Czech trialist proposal coming originally from Sazonov.

Putney of the Near Eastern division to draw up a memorandum on Slav aspirations and the future of the Monarchy. Given his connections not only to Masaryk but also to Pergler and Mihajlovic, it is hardly surprising that Putney suggested the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the real significance of Putney's memorandum and its supplement, dated 26 May and 5 June respectively, lies not only in the fact that these were the first official American documents suggesting dismemberment but they also mark the beginning of Lansing's interest in the matter. Lansing, however, kept quiet for the rest of the year, although the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and the beginning of the Brest-Litovsk peace talks certainly gave him second thoughts. When Wilson announced his intention to maintain the unity of the Monarchy (Point Ten) Lansing wrote a short memorandum, possibly for his own use, which he did quite often, titled The Nationalities of Austria-Hungary (10 January 1918), in which he contended that the President

will have to abandon this idea and favor the creation of new states out of the imperial territory and require the separation of Austria-Hungary. This is the only certain means of ending German power in Europe.<sup>25</sup>

This was more an indication of the line Lansing would take during the critical period between April and July 1918 than a real attempt to influence Wilson's decision.

Lansing, without understanding the French Premier's motivations, described Clemenceau's conduct in the Sixtus affair as 'a piece of the most astounding stupidity' and came to be convinced that it ended all hopes of a separate peace with the Monarchy. This, in Lansing's opinion, called for a review of American policy towards the Habsburg Empire:

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<sup>24</sup> Mamatey (1957) pp. 91-93; Pergler (1926) pp. 77-78.

<sup>25</sup> Lansing (1935) p. 261. The only comprehensive analysis of Lansing's Habsburg related memoranda is Barany (1966). Note that some of Barany's conclusions are contested in the present chapter.



if she could not be removed from the war by a separate peace she then must be liquidated through her nationalities, argued the Secretary of State in another memorandum, dated 10 May 1918.<sup>26</sup> The German-Habsburg agreement at Spa and Burián's return to the Ballhausplatz led him to the conclusion that dismemberment had become inevitable:

When, therefore, the Emperor Karl showed that a separate peace was vain and when he became the vassal of Germany, a revision of policy became necessary. From that moment Austria-Hungary lost its right to exist as an Empire including these oppressed races... In view of the new state of affairs it seems to me that Austria-Hungary must be practically blotted out as an empire. It should be partitioned among the nationalities of which it is composed. As a great power it should no longer exist.<sup>27</sup>

Lansing then presented the same ideas to the President in yet another memorandum on 24 June 1918, arguing:

That would mean in effect the dismemberment of the present Austro-Hungarian Empire into its original elements, leaving these independent nationalities to form such separate states as they might themselves decide to form, especially if the severance of Austria and Hungary resulted.<sup>28</sup>

Lansing proudly acknowledged Wilson's reply two days later as his personal triumph and it was the same letter that convinced many historians of Lansing's influence on the President:

I agree with you that we can no longer respect or regard the integrity of the artificial Austrian Empire. I doubt if even Hungary is any more an integral part of it than Bohemia. I base this judgement in part upon a very interest-

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<sup>26</sup> FRUS LP 2: 127-28.

<sup>27</sup> Lansing (1935) p. 265.

<sup>28</sup> Lansing (1935) p. 270.

ing and illuminating conversation I had a month or two ago with a group of Magyar Americans, who spoke very plainly to that point.<sup>29</sup>

Despite this seemingly strong evidence, Lansing's influence on Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy is hardly more than a myth, based upon deduction. It can be refuted on several grounds; one way of doing so is by pointing to the obvious difference in opinion between the two of them: Lansing's leave-them-alone attitude hardly fit the President's plans for regional cooperation, which he expressed more than once.

Another way of proving Lansing's limited role in Habsburg related policy making is by analyzing Wilson's attitude towards his Secretary of State. Here a strong case can be presented to prove Lansing's rather limited influence in the White House. The American historian Thomas A. Bailey has already been cited as saying that Wilson chose Lansing 'to succeed Bryan in mid-1915 primarily because he believed that he needed only a skilled international lawyer to frame his policy decisions,'<sup>30</sup> for which Lansing was certainly highly qualified, although the President 'never really trusted or admired him.'<sup>31</sup> With the rules thus set at the very moment Lansing entered office, they worked together effectively and without problems until December 1916. Under detailed instructions, Lansing drew up diplomatic notes and Wilson edited them before sending or publication. After minor friction in March 1916, which nonetheless revealed some of Lansing's frustration,<sup>32</sup> the Secretary of State was very nearly sacked in December 1916. He not only criticized the President's peace note but

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<sup>29</sup> LC RLps: Memoranda, vol. 1: 155-56. Lansing's memoranda are available in handwritten and typed form. The above reference applies to the typed version.

<sup>30</sup> Bailey (1963) p. 88.

<sup>31</sup> Smith (1961) p. 103.

<sup>32</sup> Hartig (1974) p. 290.

did it publicly, intimating that war with Germany was at hand.<sup>33</sup> Justifiably enraged, Wilson forced him to withdraw his press statement publicly and told House, somewhat unjustly, that Lansing had 'no imagination, no constructive ability, and but little ability of any kind.' Wilson, furthermore, seriously considered replacing Lansing with Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, who was known to be a pacifist.<sup>34</sup> But House, in order to secure his own favourable position, intervened on Lansing's behalf. A revealing entry from House's diary from 1919 sheds further light upon the situation:

[Lansing] has not been entirely considerate, after what I have done for him. On the other hand I always appreciate the fact that I have been what Gerard once termed 'super-secretary of state,' and Lansing has played a minor part and has done it without complaint.<sup>35</sup>

After this incident the President gradually restricted Lansing's jurisdiction over diplomatic matters even further and informed him about several major decisions, such as the Peace without Victory address and the declaration of war on the Monarchy at the very last moment.<sup>36</sup> Three further incidents during the first six weeks of 1918 also indicated Lansing's limited influence on Wilson.

Until the very last minute, the President did not inform his Secretary of State that he was going to deliver the Fourteen Points address, the first (and only) public declaration

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<sup>33</sup> Hartig (1974) pp. 290-91; Smith (1961) pp. 109-10. Lansing's own account can be consulted in Lansing (1935) pp. 186-87.

<sup>34</sup> Hartig (1974) p. 291.

<sup>35</sup> SML EMHps: Series 2: Diary, vol 14 pt. 2: pp. 62-63.

<sup>36</sup> Smith (1961) pp. 109-10; Barany (1966) pp. 226-27 and 232. Note that the only logical reason for withdrawing Anderson's official credentials in December 1917 only a couple of days before the declaration of War on the Monarchy seems to be that it was only then that Lansing was informed about Wilson's decision.

of American war aims; it appears that the visiting Serbian Minister to Paris, Vesnić, knew more about it than Lansing.<sup>37</sup> Nor did Wilson seek Lansing's advice on the most important secret American-Habsburg peace overture, the Herron-Lammasch talks. Instead, he summoned Voska to the White House for the first time, probably on Wiseman's suggestion, and asked him about the Austrian professor-politician. It took several days for Voska to identify his man; had Wilson asked Lansing he immediately could have told his boss that they had worked together on several 'Congresses of International Law' before the war.<sup>38</sup> Wilson also did not bother to inform Lansing until a couple of hours before his speech on 11 February 1918 that he was going to outline the 'Four Principles' of peace to Congress.<sup>39</sup> Thus, several months before Lansing ever considered dismemberment, he lost the remnants of Wilson's confidence in him. He never seemed to be able to recover it and the next time he did take the initiative, in Mexican affairs in 1920, he was asked to resign.

Two other aspects of the Lansing myth must also be introduced to complete our argument. It has been argued that Lansing manipulated Wilson with his memoranda carefully worded to appeal to the President's idealism, and that Lansing was given a say in Habsburg matters because they were only of secondary importance. The first claim is based upon a suggestion that Lansing was intellectually superior to Wilson, well understood his weaknesses and abused them. The problems with this interpretation are that it is impossible to say which reports actually did get to the President on the one hand and that it disregards Wilson's view of Lansing on the other. The other claim, that the future of the Habsburg Monarchy

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<sup>37</sup> Barany (1966) pp. 226-27. On Lansing's reaction see: Barany (1966) p. 232.

<sup>38</sup> Unterberger (1989) p. 107; Voska and Irwin (1941) pp. 117-21; Osuský (1926) p. 661 quotes Lammasch on his knowledge of Lansing.

<sup>39</sup> Unterberger (1989) p. 106.

was an issue of secondary importance, is also questionable. The limited American interest, which has been emphasized during our enquiries, indicates the same thing but the events between April and July 1918 pushed the Habsburg issue into the foreground. It is discussed in the next chapter how the Russian intervention and the spring 1918 German offensive on the Western Front, together with the Sixtus affair, brought about Wilson's change of policy and it is also argued there that these issues brought the future of the Danubian basin into the centre of Wilson's attention. Having said that, any evidence that Lansing's influence in the White House grew during the last months of the war would support the claims that his opinion was well received; but, in fact, Smith contends that 'by the time of the Armistice, Wilson held his secretary in rather low regard.'<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile, after the Bolshevik revolution Lansing came to view Soviet Russia in very much the same light as he did Germany (he even wrote about it in his notebooks in the same vein) and considered it to be single most serious challenge to be faced after Germany's defeat.<sup>41</sup> He thus came to the conclusion that the Successor States of the Habsburg Monarchy would serve not only as a *barriere de l'est* against Germany but also as a *cordon sanitaire* against Bolshevik Russia. It was with these additional considerations in mind that Lansing drew up the final recommendations of the State Department for the Peace Conference. In his 21 September 1918 memorandum he contended that the German control of Russia opened up another route to the Persian Gulf, and it offered the Germans 'the opportunity to develop an alternative or supplemental scheme to their "Mittel-Europa" project.' According to Lansing, this should not be allowed: 'The treaty of peace must not leave

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<sup>40</sup> Smith (1961) p. 121.

<sup>41</sup> Brands (1985) p. 31; LC RLps: Correspondence, vol. 40: Lansing to Richard S. Hugenford, to Edward N. Smith and to Elihu Root, all dated 14 November 1918.

Germany in possession directly or indirectly of either of these routes to the Orient.' Having set out these guiding lines Lansing then discussed the necessary territorial changes that would secure international peace in twenty-eight points, of which eight dealt with the Monarchy.<sup>42</sup> The details are given in the appendix below, which allows the reader to compare Lansing's proposals with those of the Inquiry.

The examination of the available records of American military and naval intelligence work after April 1917 testifies to little improvement compared to the period of American neutrality, although certain steps were taken to upgrade both domestic and foreign intelligence.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, intelligence work is discussed not because of its significance but to offer a complete round-up of American efforts during the war. However, it must be emphasized that some of the related documents have apparently disappeared and that the earlier statement regarding the lack of secondary sources applies to this period as well. The following account of Habsburg related American intelligence work must be read with these restrictions in mind. A brief reference to the work of the MIB, which has been introduced above, and of the intelligence section of the AEF is followed by an assessment of naval intelligence.

An overview of the entire war period and a look at the nineteen months of American belligerency suggests that the Americans did not use their own agents in intelligence work, at least not in the Habsburg case. The reports of the MIB cited in the chapter on the CPI appear to be the only evidence of any such work. The lack of regular summaries (weekly or monthly) even in the AEF collection, together with the limited scope of these reports, clearly

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<sup>42</sup> Lansing (1921) pp. 192-97; the quotes are from pp. 192-93.

<sup>43</sup> Andrew (1995) pp. 53-57.

indicate the lack of interest on the part of the War Department. Self-appointed informers, mostly immigrants (Klein), and Bohemian-American members of the MIB (Kaba) together with a handful of press cuttings from Swiss papers and a few Italian intelligence summaries - and all that undigested - hardly lifted the War Department and Secretary Baker to the status of prominent advisors to the President in Habsburg matters.<sup>44</sup>

The record of naval intelligence, while far from impressive, is somewhat better. Drawing upon practically the same sources of information as the War Department staff, Daniels' assistants at least came up with policy proposals and uncovered an undercover Austro-Hungarian propaganda effort involving Madrid and Mexico. That notwithstanding, the majority of the reports of the Office of Naval Intelligence were as limited in quality and quantity as those of the War Department, but with a focus, quite understandably, on the Yugoslavs instead of the Czecho-Slovaks.

The story of the undercover Austro-Hungarian propaganda effort is hardly more than a sideshow to the main propaganda campaigns and is not being discussed with similar efforts because the material used was apparently in German, Spanish and Hungarian, and was meant more for continental European and Mexican than for American consumption. It was revealed by the American naval Attache in Madrid in late December 1917, who apparently opened a letter by a German propagandist called Oscar Schurmacher to the Austro-Hungarian Consul in Tampico, Mexico. Acting upon this information, the American authorities opened the mail-

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<sup>44</sup> No further MIB reports have been found which are in any way related to Habsburg affairs. The AEF records are similarly disappointing: a card catalogue of reports on immigrants in America, seven Inquiry reports, press cuttings, and an undated and unsigned introductory note to the population statistics of Hungary appear to be the AEF's only contributions: NA RG 120: AEF, entries 1619 and 1620.

bags of the S.S. Alfonso Thirteenth, probably a Spanish ship, in Havana and thus obtained a list of people involved. An 11 March 1918 report from Madrid explains it all:

Andre Revesz and Oscar Schnuermacher [sic], who have their office in Calle Belen, 16, publish an Austrian propaganda review of no great importance. It appears every two months in German, Hungarian and Spanish.

Revesz, of Hungarian nationality, collaborates with various Spanish newspapers, subventioned [sic] by the Central Powers. It is also probable that he is occupied in the offices of his Embassy.

With that, the issue was practically dropped and there is no evidence that any Hungarian-Americans were involved in any way; it was certainly not brought up during the Konta hearings in the Senate in December 1918.<sup>45</sup>

A far more interesting and revealing aspect of the work of the Department of the Navy was a set of policy proposals prepared by the Planning Section. The Planning Section of the Department of the Navy was set up in London in January 1918 on the request of Admiral Benson, the Chief of Naval Operations of the United States Navy. During 1918 it worked in close cooperation with the planning division of the British Admiralty and with both British and American Naval Intelligence.<sup>46</sup> Of its four score memoranda five dealt with Austria-Hungary. Numbers 9, 16 and 27 were bi-monthly updates on the Adriatic situation, the only such regular intelligence summaries prepared by any American authority.<sup>47</sup> More important were numbers 62 (4 November 1918) and 63 (3 November 1918) which discussed

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<sup>45</sup> NA RG 38/ 78: A: NICC: file no. 20988/ 377, four documents in all.

<sup>46</sup> NA RG 45: NRCONRL: TX: Planning Section: box 668: Memoranda no. 2 (2 January 1918) and no. 45 (10 August (1918)). Note that these memoranda are bound together in one volume, while separate copies are scattered in boxes 669-71. An index to these reports may be found in box 662.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, dated 30 January, 7 March, and 16 May 1918.



respectively the American participation in the execution of the Austro-Hungarian Armistice and the steps necessary to keep the revolutions in the Monarchy under control.<sup>48</sup> As for no. 62, it is common knowledge that the Americans participated only as observers in the execution of the naval terms of the Padua Armistice. The Imperial and Royal Navy was handed over to South Slav authorities by Admiral Nicholas Horthy, the *future* Regent of Hungary, on 31 October 1918 at Pola; and the Americans played no part in removing 'obstacles and mines' from the River Danube.

No. 63, 'Proposed Decisions in the event of a Revolution in Austria-Hungary - from a Naval View Point,' is an interesting document. It must be noticed that it was written after the revolutions had taken place in the Monarchy, which it actually did acknowledge in the Czech case. Its central theme was encouraging a similar 'democratic' turn in Germany and the establishment of a pro-American Yugoslav government while preventing a possible Yugoslav-Italian conflict, which then seemed likely and which materialized within a short time. The report suggests the ordering of an American flagship and two destroyers into the area, the American occupation of some coastal fortifications, and the despatch of American military and naval observers into the debated territories. The examination of the extent to which this rather ambitious plan was carried out goes beyond the scope of the present study but it must be noted that the observers mentioned in this report later played an all-important role in organizing food relief in the region and in the various local commissions of the peace conference.

The above examination of the three key Departments of Wilson's cabinet suggests that they continued to play the same very limited role after April 1917 as they did before.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Lansing's attempt to reorganize the State Department brought little improvement in the absence of qualified personnel and accurate information. Grew and Bullitt may have qualified as experts by American standards but a brief spell in Vienna and a few interviews hardly make experts overnight. Besides Penfield, who immediately retired, not a single member of the original Vienna staff was called back to Washington after the diplomatic break; and asking Dulles, still in his early twenties, to do all the work in the field alone was certainly a tall order.

In Washington the two key members of the State Department who developed and expressed their opinion in the Habsburg matter were Secretary of State Lansing and chief of the Near Eastern division Putney, who both subscribed to dismemberment at the outset of American belligerency. Putney wrote long memoranda but his only audience was Lansing; true, his reports were sent over to the Inquiry but there is no evidence to prove that any of them was ever used. Lansing, on the other hand, embraced Putney's conclusion, prompted by Masaryk and other separatist politicians, that the Habsburg Monarchy should be dismembered. Lansing's initial concern was Germany and Soviet Russia entered the picture only during the summer of 1918, when intervention in Siberia became a central issue. He came to accept the then fashionable concept that a reorganized East Central Europe would block both the *Mitteleuropa* plans and the spread of Bolshevism into Western Europe. Lansing promoted this program most enthusiastically and many historians came to see him as the driving force behind Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy. However, the nature of the Wilson-Lansing relationship, as described above, rules out such a combination *ipso facto*; Lansing was not a major force in policy making.

The American Military and Naval Intelligence also continued to play a limited role in Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy. This indicates the complete lack of interest in Habsburg

matters and, in broader terms, the fact that Military and Naval Intelligence played a far more limited role in the First than in the Second World War.

The following chapter concludes our enquiries into the official and public American attitudes towards (Austria-) Hungary during the First World War not only by summing up our earlier conclusions but also by placing them in the broader framework of President Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN: A NEW LOOK AT WILSON'S HABSBERG DIPLOMACY**

Having reached the end of our enquiries into wartime American attitudes towards (Austria-)Hungary it is now time to present the missing piece: Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy, which places the above discussions on several topics in a broader perspective. But first, some historiographical comments. In the 1950s and 60s Woodrow Wilson's approach to the Habsburg Monarchy was the subject of several scholarly enquiries.<sup>1</sup> Some more recent studies of the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary have also touched upon Wilson's wartime policies and his contribution to the postwar reorganization of East-Central Europe.<sup>2</sup> Common to all these writings, sometimes with little attempt at further analysis, has been a portrayal of Wilson as the open minded professor-turned-politician, understanding the problems of the region and influenced largely by Robert Lansing, his second Secretary of State, and by immigrant politicians and propaganda. Meanwhile, the past 25 years have brought new developments in Wilson research due to easier access to most of the related but unpublished archival material and to the extensive publication of the Woodrow Wilson Papers by Princeton University on the one hand and the invaluable contribution of a new generation of historians on the other.<sup>3</sup> The revised image of Wilson the politician, making his major political decisions alone while working on the realization of a new regulated international capitalist world order, provides potentially an entirely different framework for the analysis of his approach to the

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<sup>1</sup> See especially Barany (1966); Mamatey (1957) and May (1957).

<sup>2</sup> May (1966); Zeman (1961); Valiani (1973) and, in Hungarian, Fejtő (1990).

<sup>3</sup> Levin (1968); Gardner (1987). See also the works of William Appleman Williams and Arno J. Mayer, as listed in the bibliography.

Habsburg Monarchy. So far, however, no one has stepped forth to offer an analysis along these lines.

The aim of the present chapter is to provide that new look both at Wilson's prewar approach and wartime policies towards the Monarchy and to challenge the misconceptions in this matter. Wilson as an academic showed little interest in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As President he did make his decisions alone and the consent to the dismemberment of the Monarchy was no exception; the influence of Lansing and the immigrant movements upon him has been vastly exaggerated. A survey of Wilson's published and unpublished papers suggests that he neither fully understood nor paid much attention to the problems of the Habsburg Monarchy. He projected a liberal capitalist progressive image of the United States onto the world, christened it the League of Nations, and made it his own and, consequently, America's main war aim. In this broader framework Austria-Hungary was of secondary importance; it was part of the world to be transformed and liberalized. Wilson's lack of understanding did not have a serious bearing upon his conduct during the war in the Habsburg case simply because he never realized it. The analysis of whether it mattered at the Peace Conference in 1919 goes much beyond the scope of this investigation.

Another interesting aspect of the problem is the contradiction between Wilson's personal sympathy for the peoples of East-Central Europe living under foreign domination and his diplomatic conduct with regard to the Monarchy, together with the fact that the former was never allowed to override the latter. Wilson decided to change his policy during the spring and summer of 1918 when, as a result of a series of dramatic events, he saw the collapse of his earlier Habsburg diplomacy and when broader considerations also pointed in that direction. Both before and after his option for dismemberment of the Monarchy, however, he remained a proponent of regional integration in East Central Europe.

The claims that Wilson fully understood the problems of the Monarchy<sup>4</sup> are based upon two elements: his academic career as a political scientist and historian and the influence of immigrant propaganda and propagandists in exile. While the latter issue is discussed towards the end of the present chapter, a look at Wilson's academic output regarding the Monarchy offers the best possible point of departure.

Without going into unnecessary repetitions about Wilson's academic writings it appears to be sufficient to point out that he mentioned the Habsburg Monarchy, in any context, in four of his works<sup>5</sup> and devoted to it a sum total of some thirty pages. In his writings Wilson testified not to a genuine interest or understanding of the problems of the region but to a good insight into constitutional issues (which played a very limited part during the war) and to a set of unconcealed prejudices. He displayed a romantic attitude towards Hungary, and also towards Bohemia, which was well in line with broader American tendencies. His superficiality and casual remarks got him into trouble more than once in 1912, peaking in his campaign speech discussing the Magna Carta and America's success as opposed to other peoples' failures in their quest for democracy. This lofty condescension was going to be one of the underlying motifs of his political thinking and it helps explain the rather superficial treatment the problem of the nationalities within the Empire was going to receive at his hands.

The fact that Wilson became President of the United States, together with the outbreak of the World War, necessarily transformed his approach to Austria-Hungary. While

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<sup>4</sup> May (1957); Kisch (1947); Unterberger (1989).

<sup>5</sup> Three have been discussed earlier; the fourth, which in fact was the first one, was a rather mediocre essay on Bismarck, the significance of which has also been over-emphasized.

his academic and early political career reflect Wilson's own views without any serious constraint, his conduct as President of the United States was affected by, above all, the constantly changing international situation in the war and his rapidly developing concept of a new liberal postwar world order. Before discussing the dual nature of his wartime approach towards the Habsburg Monarchy it is necessary to outline the ideological framework within which Wilson was working.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson may have entered the White House with no elaborate foreign policy concept but his belief that a strong interdependence existed between foreign and domestic politics made him ready to deal with international affairs.<sup>6</sup> He shared the Progressive belief that the inherent harmony of interests within the capitalist system had been upset by the misapplication of individualism and *laissez faire*. In his opinion, the need to restore and safeguard this harmony of interests and to adapt to the realities of industrial America, together with an economic depression and the vanishing of the old (continental) frontier, called for government action through orderly reform. Wilson based his presidential campaign on domestic reform (the New Freedom), and carried it out in less than two years. However, as early as 1912 he urged that 'government and business must be associated' in order to seek new markets, new frontiers overseas, primarily in Latin-America and the Far East. He believed that it was the task of the American government to promote and safeguard overseas economic expansion. His foreign policy, idealist and realist at the same time, was anti-imperialist, inasmuch as it rejected colonization, and was based upon international cooperation and the open door on the one hand and democracy and self-determination on the other.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cooper (1983) p. 266. Williams (1962) offers some extra considerations on this issue.

<sup>7</sup> Williams (1962) pp. 86-88.

Wilson's idealism was firmly rooted in Calvinism and American liberal exceptionalism. He believed that he was acting according to God's will and consequently refused to compromise over significant issues.<sup>8</sup> He was also convinced that morality and welfare went hand in hand and was willing to force his version of morality onto other peoples:

If I cannot retain my moral influence over a man except by occasionally knocking him down, if that is the only basis upon which he will respect me, then for the sake of his soul I have got occasionally to knock him down...[and] sit on his neck and make him listen.<sup>9</sup>

He also accepted the concept of American exceptionalism claiming that the United States was the only truly democratic country in the world; the Americans were God's New Chosen People destined to bring about a new Golden Age.<sup>10</sup> Although he refused to interfere with the domestic affairs of other countries, when it came to the realization of his new world idea he conducted a series of military interventions from Mexico through Europe to the Far East, 'to make the world safe for democracy'.<sup>11</sup>

Between December 1915, his first recorded reference to a league of nations,<sup>12</sup> and the Fourteen Points in January 1918, when he defined it as America's war aim, Wilson developed in detail his concept of a new liberal world order, by applying his own image of America to the world. He envisaged a regulated capitalist system based upon disarmament, collective security, and the open door providing for the orderly development of white peoples

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<sup>8</sup> Heckscher (1991) pp. 23-24.

<sup>9</sup> WWP's 37: 38. This is one of Wilson's most regularly cited utterances, and is very revealing.

<sup>10</sup> Levin (1968) pp. 2-5.

<sup>11</sup> Calhoun (1986) is the standard, and the best, study.

<sup>12</sup> Ambrosius (1987) p. 19.



and the securing of an international harmony of interests. According to Wilson, international cooperation would exclude the possibility of future wars and revolutions and supply the framework for teaching the less developed (i.e. non-white, and occasionally even non-WASP white) peoples of the world democracy and self-determination. As *primus inter pares* in this system, the United States would find and secure new frontiers and markets in abundance in a world made safe for democracy.<sup>13</sup>

Wilson believed that the coming of a new order was inevitable as the old order had entered an irrational state of war, a war of self-destruction between autocracy, represented by the Central Powers, and the balance of power (Britain and France) in alliance with autocratic Russia. Aware of his powerful position as President of the United States, Wilson first tried to mediate between the two alternative camps hoping that he would be able to force his own views on them at the peace table. His final effort in that direction was the December 1916 peace overture, culminating in a somewhat desperate call for a peace without annexations and indemnities. Delivered on 22 January 1917, the Peace without Victory address was possibly Wilson's best and certainly his most idealistic speech. With his efforts at mediation frustrated and under the influence of blatant demonstrations of German hostility (unlimited submarine warfare, and the Zimmermann telegram offering Mexico large chunks of US territory) together with the liberal revolution in Russia in March 1917, Wilson decided to intervene. In his call for a declaration of war on Germany in Congress he described American intervention in the World War as a crusade for democracy against autocracy. He could do so only because Russia, the odd one out in the Entente camp, had supposedly adopted democracy in the March Revolution. Consequently, Wilson viewed the March Revolution as the first victory of his new world ideals and was the first head of state in the

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<sup>13</sup> Levin (1968) pp. 1-10.

world to recognize the new Russian government. At the same time, he defined the United States as an Associated Power in order to emphasize the difference between American and Allied war aims. It took him another eight months to declare war on Austria-Hungary.

It follows from the above that Wilson's wartime Habsburg diplomacy was unlikely to reflect a high opinion of the traditionally conservative and Catholic Monarchy. Characteristic of broader American attitudes was that it took more than half a year to find a suitable Ambassador to Vienna in Frederick Courtland Penfield after Wilson's first choice, Frank McCombs, had flatly refused to be 'sent into darkest Austria.'<sup>14</sup> During the period of American neutrality Wilson himself also came to hold the Habsburg Empire in rather low regard. In his eyes, the Monarchy had demonstrated its preference for autocracy by fighting on the side of Germany as well as its unwillingness to terminate the conflict on American terms. Wilson's reservations were further strengthened by the reports from the American legations in London, Berlin and Vienna, which described the Monarchy as a sidekick to Germany and as a country unable to maintain even domestic control.

The first manifestation of this negative attitude was a December 1914 interview with Henry Bruce Brougham, an editor of the New York Times, which then was overtly anti-German. Brougham quoted Wilson saying among other things that 'Austria-Hungary will go to pieces altogether - ought to go to pieces for the welfare of Europe.'<sup>15</sup> This statement reveals that Wilson considered the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary desirable. That this was part of a broader revulsion against the nature of Habsburg rule is suggested by Wilson's

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<sup>14</sup>. WWP's 27: 127, an entry in House's diary, dated 21 February 1913.

<sup>15</sup> WWP's 31: 459. The interview is dated 14 December 1914. On the position of the New York Times see Knightley (1975) pp. 119-20.

only other public reference to the issue of forced solidarity before his change of policy. It came during his 1917 Flag Day address, in which he focused on the realization of the German *Mitteleuropa* plan:

It rejected the idea of solidarity of race entirely. The choice of peoples played no part in it at all. It contemplated binding together racial and political units which could be kept together by force,- Czechs, Magyars, Croats, Serbs, Rumanians, Turks, Armenians,- the proud states of Bohemia and Hungary, the stout little commonwealths of the Balkans, the indomitable Turks, the subtle [sic] peoples of the East. These peoples did not wish to be united ... They would live under a common power only by sheer compulsion and await the day of revolution. But the German military statesmen had reckoned with all that and were ready to deal with it in their own way.<sup>16</sup>

Wilson's tacit approval of indirect British recruiting among the American Slavs and his authorization of Montenegrin, Serbian, Czech and Polish conscription in the US before his official declaration of war on Austria-Hungary also seem to support the above argument.

The fact that President Wilson privately favoured the cause of the nationalities but did not allow his personal feeling to overcome his diplomatic goals shows him to have been a very disciplined politician. But Wilson was not only disciplined in this matter, he was also quite uninterested. As shown earlier, both as the head of the largest neutral state and as war leader of the United States on the side of the Allies his main concern was forcing his rapidly developing new world order idea onto all other belligerents. His famous catch phrases, such as collective security, disarmament, League of Nations, etc., suggested global and regional integration rather than disintegration. He viewed even self-determination in the framework of international cooperation, which was made clear only by his 1918 diplomacy. With these broader considerations in mind it was relatively easy for him to maintain his discipline in the

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<sup>16</sup> WWPs 42: 501.

Habsburg case even despite the occasional personal or diplomatic attempts to confront him with the question of dismemberment, not to speak of certain American-Habsburg diplomatic crises in the neutrality period.

But escalating diplomatic tensions, especially the three incidents in 1915, and the rapidly declining prestige of the Monarchy did not lead to an open American attack on its territorial-political integrity. On the contrary, stemming partly from his lack of interest and also from the desire to maintain his neutral image, the President refused to meet any of the separatist politicians from the Monarchy who visited the United States. He turned down the Hungarian aristocrat Count Michael Károlyi in 1914 as well as the Transylvanian-Rumanian Vasile Stoica and the Slovak politician but French citizen Dr. Milan Štefánik in 1917 on the grounds that they were 'conducting an active agitation against the present policy of the Austro-Hungarian government.' The treatment of the December 1917 South Slav mission to America testifies to the fact that Wilson, interestingly enough, maintained this tendency even after the American declaration of war on the Monarchy.

The Chief Executive's approach to open peace moves sheds further light upon his diplomatic preferences. As indicated earlier, his initial aim was to terminate the war on his own terms. The details and failures of his offers of mediation in 1914 and House's peace missions to Europe are a standard feature of studies on Wilson.<sup>17</sup> The interesting aspect of the problem is that all other peace overtures, with the obvious exception of the President's peace drive in December 1916, came directly or supposedly (in Colonel House's interpretation the Vatican peace drives were dictated by Vienna) from the Central Powers. Wilson chose to reject or ignore these simply because they would not have guaranteed the

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<sup>17</sup> See for example Smith (1965).

unconditional acceptance of his program of a new liberal world order. A glance at the December 1916 peace moves both provides a good example of Wilson's conduct and takes the discussion of his Austro-Hungarian diplomacy a step further. The background for the peace moves was provided by events in Vienna. In November 1916 the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Francis Joseph died. In his coronation speech the young Emperor Charles defined peace as his immediate aim, promised democratic reforms within the Monarchy, and reorganized his cabinet accordingly. The subsequent open peace overture coming from Berlin, but conceived in Vienna, was simply ignored by the President. By issuing his own peace feeler only six days after the German one (12 and 18 December 1918 respectively) Wilson obviously tried to regain the initiative so as to have his own program accepted. The President actually called on the belligerents to announce their war aims openly. The Entente reply of 10 January 1917, among other things, called for the liberation of oppressed peoples living in the Monarchy and Turkey. It confronted Wilson, for the first time diplomatically, with the idea of the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. He evaded the question by demanding a peace without annexations.<sup>18</sup>

Idealist as it was, the Peace without Victory speech of 22 January 1917 marked the beginning of a new approach to the Monarchy. The President eagerly grasped the possibility inherent in the Entente reply and the new policy of the Ballhausplatz, which was initiated by Count Ottokar Czernin, the new Habsburg Foreign Minister. Here was a realistic chance, for the first time during the war, to break up the German-Habsburg alliance by appealing to the Monarchy's desire for peace. Wilson's position as potential mediator was further strengthened by the Entente note calling for the dismemberment of the Monarchy: its refusal by Washington was expected to become the President's strongest card in dealing

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<sup>18</sup> For the full text of the speech see WWP's 40: 533-39.

with Vienna. The first move was made as early as 8 February 1917, when Lansing informed Ambassador Page in London that the President was:

trying to avoid breaking with Austria in order to keep the channels of official intercourse open so that he may use her for peace. The chief if not the only obstacle is the threat apparently contained in the peace terms recently stated by the Entente Allies that in case they succeed they would insist upon a virtual dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Austria needs only to be reassured on that point, and that chiefly with regard to the older units of the Empire. It is the President's view that the large measure of autonomy already secured by those older units is a sufficient guarantee of peace and stability in that part of Europe so far as national and racial influences are concerned and that what Austria regards as the necessities of her development, opportunity, and security to the south of her can be adequately and satisfactorily secured to her by rights of way to the sea given by the common guarantee of the concert which must in any case be arranged if the future peace of the world is to be assured.<sup>19</sup>

In due course, secret peace negotiations were started between Washington and the Ballhausplatz. The Americans demanded a break with Germany and the federalization of the Empire together with the - at least from the American point of view - relatively minor concession to restore Polish independence. In return the Americans offered what they believed Austria wanted most, namely peace and official rejection of its dismemberment.

The only thing Wilson failed to understand was the fact that Vienna's eagerness for peace, strengthened by Czernin's 'April Memorandum' in which he concluded that another winter campaign was 'absolutely out of the question,' did not mean the acceptance of a separate one. Czernin later argued, quite sensibly, that the Monarchy could have won nothing by signing a separate peace. Besides these considerations he shared, among others, Apponyi's moral reservations about breaking up the German alliance. With neither side willing

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<sup>19</sup> WWPs 41: 158-59.

to yield, all secret talks failed and the frustration over the break-down of the peace talks largely contributed to Wilson's decision to declare war on the Monarchy in December 1917. Naturally, a series of other considerations were also involved. Mounting domestic pressure as well as the problems of inter-Allied cooperation (the fact that the United States was at war with Germany but not with any of her allies) likewise played their part. Furthermore, the President's decision was influenced by the weakening of the military position of the Allies, especially by the Italian collapse at Caporetto and Russia's exit following the bolshevik revolution in November 1917.

In the transition period between the American declarations of war on Germany and the Monarchy (April and December 1917 respectively), two further developments deserve special attention. First, the President introduced the concept of One Central Power into his rhetoric. When discussing the American declaration of war on Germany in his 1917 Flag Day Address Wilson stated that the government of Austria-Hungary had

acted, not upon its own initiative or upon the choice of its own people, but at Berlin's dictation ever since the war began. Its people now desire peace, but cannot have it until leave is granted from Berlin. The so-called Central Powers are in fact but a single Power.<sup>20</sup>

He repeated the same argument almost word for word in his 1917 Annual Message on the State of the Union, when he asked Congress for a declaration of war on the Monarchy:

The government of Austria-Hungary is not acting upon its own initiative or in response to the wishes and feelings of its own peoples but as the instrument of another nation. We must meet its force with our own and regard the Central Powers as but one.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> WWP's 42: 501.

<sup>21</sup> WWP's 45: 200.

This new element in Wilsonian rhetoric was to serve two different goals. First, mounting open pressure on Vienna on the one hand and offering her the same old peace terms on the other was expected to raise Austria's willingness to step out of the war in order to save the Empire. Secondly, it was a clever propaganda move. One way of selling the war to the American people was presenting an enemy mighty and dangerous enough to be taken seriously even by the United States. To that end Wilson not only presented the One Central Power as reaching from the heart of Europe well into the Near East but he made it one of the main themes of his domestic propaganda campaign. He had created his own ministry of propaganda, the Committee on Public Information, two days before the declaration of war on Germany. The CPI industriously promoted this concept by repeated references to it in the Official Bulletin, its daily publication, by circulating the Flag Day Address as a pamphlet, and by oral propaganda.

A look at the other important development of the period between April and December 1917, namely the beginning of peace preparations in the United States, also takes the discussion of Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy into the last year of the war. On 2 September 1917 Wilson instructed House to organize a peace planning research group, which came to be known as the Inquiry. Besides scientific preparations for peace its other task was to provide policy proposals for the President. The first such memorandum was completed by the end of December and was revised on 2 January 1918. Drafted in a hurry by House together with Sidney Edward Mezes and Walter Lippmann, the section of the memorandum on the Monarchy suggested that nationalist discontent should be incited within the Monarchy without accepting its dismemberment. The authors expected that such a move would raise the willingness of the Ballhausplatz to negotiate a separate peace.<sup>22</sup> House and the President dis-

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<sup>22</sup> WWP's 45: 463-71.



cussed the memorandum in detail on 4 January and Wilson began to work on his Fourteen Points.<sup>23</sup> On the very next day British Premier David Lloyd George delivered his famous Trade Union speech in which he declared that the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy was not the war aim of his government. Thus the final version of Wilson's Point Ten ('The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.'<sup>24</sup>) was consciously left open for different interpretations. Wilson told Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels that the United States 'could not undertake to dictate the form of government of any country or dismember' it.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, he indicated to French Ambassador Jules Jusserand that it meant dismemberment.<sup>26</sup> Czernin's encouraging public reply to the Fourteen Points on 24 January was welcomed in Washington and secret negotiations were reopened in Switzerland and through the Spanish Court.

Thus, neither the American declaration of war on the Monarchy nor the Fourteen Points brought a change to Wilson's earlier policy towards Austria-Hungary. The President's flat rejection of the La Guardia plan at the turn of 1917 and 1918 also confirms this conclusion. The significance of the La Guardia plan was that it raised the logically possible alternative, also favoured by the American press, of causing a Habsburg-Hungarian split. Wilson found undercover activity in the middle of Europe unacceptable both morally and politically; it clearly did not fit his plans at that time.

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<sup>23</sup> WWP's 45: 459, n. 1.

<sup>24</sup> WWP's 45: 537.

<sup>25</sup> WWP's 45: 559.

<sup>26</sup> WWP's 46: 78 and 83.

The causes of President Wilson's political turnaround should then be sought in the period between April and June 1918 which, therefore, must be subjected to a detailed analysis. It was a combination of diplomatic, military and ideological factors that eventually brought about Wilson's spectacular reversal of policy. Developments in Russia created both the ideological and the military aspects of the problem while the diplomatic crisis was the net result of a heated Clemenceau-Czernin exchange.

The bolshevik revolution of November 1917 transformed Wilson's Russian policy. The failure of 'democratic Russia' was a serious blow to the Wilsonian new world order since its success would have proved the practicability of his program. Instead, the President had to face a serious ideological challenge from the left and the possible collapse of the Eastern front. The ideological challenge came from V. I. Lenin, the revolutionary leader of the bolsheviks. His alternative solution of anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist revolutionary socialism attacked the very foundations of the Wilsonian program. Unlike Wilson, Lenin argued that war was the natural rather than the irrational state of capitalism because at the core of capitalism there were inherent contradictions and not a harmony of interests. Ignored or suppressed, these contradictions would sooner or later erupt in yet another war. This implied that instead of orderly reform from above, world revolution was needed to bring about a really new world order based upon international cooperation among socialist countries and devoid of nationalism and imperialism.<sup>27</sup> This was a challenge Wilson, as the moral leader of the Allies, had to take up.

Initially, the military aspect of the problem hardly troubled the Chief Executive who believed that American intervention on the Western front would guarantee the eventual

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<sup>27</sup> The first historian to compare Lenin's and Wilson's programs was Levin (1968) pp. 13-73.

defeat of Germany, even if the war dragged on until 1919. The possible reopening of the Eastern front had little appeal for Wilson who saw no possible means or reason for dividing the American army and its transport facilities between the Far East and Western Europe. Actually, the military problem in the Far East was not the reopening of the Eastern front but keeping Japan out of Siberia and supporting anti-bolshevik forces with minimum open military commitment.

The bolsheviks stabilized their position at home by signing a separate peace treaty with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk on 3 March 1918. Despite the civil war between the Red and several White Armies Wilson began to believe that intervention was needed. Brest-Litovsk not only meant the expected collapse of the Eastern front, it also granted the Germans free access to Russian supplies making the success of their plan to finish off the Allies before the American intervention could be felt more likely. France, Britain, and Japan, although for different reasons, demanded drastic action: intervention in Siberia, arguing that the United States should join them in the name of Wilson's very own call for collective security. Keeping in mind that America's Far Eastern interests could be impaired if Japan took over Siberia and led by anti-bolshevik feelings, President Wilson was ready to intervene.<sup>28</sup> Intervention, however, would be meddling with Russia's right to self-determination, interference with her domestic affairs. Wilson clearly needed an excuse good enough to connect military intervention disguised as collective security with non-interference.

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<sup>28</sup> Calhoun (1986) pp. 189-210; Gardner (1987) p. 186. Several historians who took Wilson's statements regarding non-interference on their face value have been misled into believing that he did not want to intervene: see esp. Unterberger (1982) and (1989). It has been demonstrated by Calhoun and Gardner that he did intend to intervene but wanted to stop short of an out and out war. Foglesong (1991), an impressive doctoral dissertation based upon American and recently opened Russian archival sources, agrees with Calhoun and Gardner.

Meanwhile in Britain, Lloyd George's War Cabinet reiterated the old balance of power policy by publicly rejecting the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy. The Premier's Trade Union speech served two purposes. It was meant to be a gesture towards Vienna which was expected to encourage the Ballhausplatz to continue secret peace talks. At the same time, it aimed to contain the advocates of the radical reorganization of East-Central Europe along ethnic lines, who began to dominate the Foreign Office and Crewe House by early 1918, and challenged the War Cabinet for control over British foreign policy. This struggle came to a stalemate towards the end of March 1918 when the British realized what the French had already known and the Americans would never understand: Czernin was not willing to negotiate a separate peace.<sup>29</sup>

In France the veteran politician Georges Clemenceau, the Tiger, came to power in November 1917 and retained control until well after the Armistices. His main aim was defeating Germany and creating an international system which would guarantee French security. He championed the dismemberment of the Monarchy in order to replace her with French satellites on the Eastern border of Germany (i.e. *barriere de l'est* in the form of the Little Entente). By the end of March 1918, nonetheless, French morale was sinking due to a German offensive on the Western front and the collapse of the Eastern one. More than ever, France now was badly short of manpower and needed the various Czechoslovak and Polish legions. Domestic opposition was also mounting.<sup>30</sup>

The whole international scene was set ablaze by the so called Sixtus affair, a heated Franco-Austrian showdown. By jumping at a public statement by Czernin and revealing the

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<sup>29</sup> Fest (1978) pp. 191-220.

<sup>30</sup> Watson (1974) pp. 283-90.

details of earlier Franco-Habsburg negotiations, Clemenceau dramatically cut off all secret peace talks. He took the situation to the limit, forced Czernin's resignation and pushed Emperor Charles into surrendering Habsburg military control to Berlin. Lansing called Clemenceau's move 'a piece of the most astounding stupidity,'<sup>31</sup> while the general feeling in France was that this move was dictated by the French premier's notorious temper.

There are strong grounds for suspicion that this was not the case. When called on to give an explanation in the Foreign Relations Committee of the French Parliament, the Tiger stated that it was a premeditated move. He claimed that a half-peace with the Monarchy was no guarantee of either French security (which by then depended heavily upon the military contributions of the Czechs and the Poles) or the fulfillment of promises made to the Czechs, Poles and Yugoslavs.<sup>32</sup> If this was really true, Clemenceau's action was anything but stupid. Intentionally or not, with a single masterstroke he created a *fait accompli* in France, Britain, and the United States. His action boosted French morale, in the midst of the last major German offensive of the war on the western front, and forced his own policy on his domestic opponents by slamming the door on any other solution. He upset the stalemate in Britain in favour of the dismemberment oriented Foreign Office and Crewe House and, by cutting off secret peace talks, removed the cornerstone of Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy.

At exactly the same time the propaganda front was also activated. The Congress of Oppressed Nationalities convened in Rome. Initiated by the French and Italian governments together with certain members of the Foreign Office, the Congress accepted resolutions

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<sup>31</sup>. Lansing (1935) p. 265.

<sup>32</sup> Watson (1974) quotes Clemenceau's revealing testimony of 19 April 1918: see p. 292. On the significance of the nationalities in military matters see Calder (1976) p. 218.

demanding the dismemberment of the Monarchy in the name of self-determination.<sup>33</sup> Lord Northcliffe's propaganda agency, probably with the unwritten consent of the CPI, made sure that the details reached the American public. Meanwhile, Lansing was industriously preparing memoranda for the President advising him to change his policy towards Austria-Hungary.

Thus, by the end of April 1918, Wilson was facing two dilemmas. More significant was the problem of Far Eastern intervention, to which Wilson was continuously seeking the best possible solution. With the Russian problem on his mind he paid little attention to his other project: ending the war by removing Austria-Hungary from it. Wilson must have understood that his single-line policy of secret peace talks had run into a *cul de sac* when Clemenceau cut off all ties with Vienna, but he was still reluctant to consider the other alternative, dismemberment. Such a drastic reorganization of East-Central Europe was by no means part of his new world order program. Wilson decided to wait, and there was no indication that these two issues would ever be linked in any way.

That link, however, was eventually provided by the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia. It was this 50,000 strong military force organized in Russia from former POWs who were willing to fight against the Central Powers that eventually linked the issue of dismemberment with Wilson's concern over bolshevism and Siberian intervention. In February 1918 the Legion, fully armed and under the nominal leadership of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, set out for Vladivostok to be shipped to the Western Front by the French. *En route* to the Far East they clashed with bolshevik forces for the first time on 25 May 1918. This was the lifeline Wilson had been waiting for.<sup>34</sup> He could justify American intervention in Russia by aiding

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<sup>33</sup> Valiani (1973) pp. 199-256 is an outstanding account.

<sup>34</sup> Calhoun (1986) pp. 210-13; Perman (1962) pp. 40-43.

the Legion against German and Austro-Hungarian POWs armed by the bolsheviks on the one hand and, in the new diplomatic situation created by Clemenceau, could reward the Czechoslovaks with independence on the other. The news of the Legion's first decisive success reached Washington on 29 May 1918, and the very same day brought two indications of what was to come. An official communication expressing the American Government's interest in the Rome Congress of Oppressed Nationalities was released while Wilson privately informed Sir William Wiseman that he 'intended to support the Czechs, Poles, and Jugo-Slavs' against the government of Austria-Hungary because the Sixtus affair had ended all hopes of a separate peace.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk arrived in the United States and launched an all-out propaganda campaign for Czechoslovak independence. Characteristic of Wilson's hesitation was the fact that it took Masaryk several weeks and the full support of his many friends in America to secure an audience with the President. Eventually, they met on 19 June and, according to Masaryk, they discussed the Czechoslovak Legion and the future of the Habsburg Monarchy. Masaryk's program was based upon the Wilsonian principles of self-determination and collective security: it consisted of the establishment of a non-German anti-German Central Europe of independent nation states, instead of Austria-Hungary, under Slav (and naturally Czechoslovak) leadership. This plan for regional cooperation, packaged in a way to appeal to Wilson, achieved its aim. Interestingly, the President overlooked many of its weak points: no questions were raised about the probable Austrian and Hungarian objections, nor about the possibility of drawing boundary lines acceptable to all the peoples living in the Danubian basin. Furthermore, there is no indication in the writings of the Czech leader that he presented his 'New Europe' idea to the President as not only a *barriere de l'est* against

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<sup>35</sup> WWP's 48: 437, n. 3; and 48: 205-06, respectively.

Germany but also as a *cordon sanitaire* against Soviet Russia. Not that it mattered by then. Wilson finally consented to the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy on 26 June 1918 when he also suggested that 'Hungary should also be considered an independent nationality, no longer united with Austria.'<sup>36</sup> An official statement, released two days later, simply confirmed this decision. The two broader issues, namely the removal of the Habsburg Monarchy from the war and the intervention in the Far East, thus came to be linked and solved by the Czechoslovaks. Those two issues ensured that the future of the Monarchy, for the first and only time during the war, became Wilson's chief concern. His decision was not the result of the efforts of either Lansing or separatist politicians, nor of dismemberment propaganda; it stemmed from the collapse of his earlier Habsburg policy, which was brought about by Clemenceau's move, and the role of the Czechoslovak Legion in solving Wilson's seemingly more and more pressing Far Eastern problem.

After the end of June events followed one another in a straight line: the representatives of the nationalities were invited to the Independence Day (4 July) celebrations, Wilson urged South Slav Americans to adopt the Yugoslav idea and told a Ruthenian-American delegation to seek autonomy within the new Czecho-Slovak state. The Czechoslovak National Council in Paris was recognized as a *de facto* belligerent government and encouraging despatches were sent to Belgrade and Rumania. The Committee on Public Information, meanwhile, came to be involved in the Allied dismemberment propaganda drive within the Monarchy and organized a Mid-European Union of American and visiting dismemberment politicians in the New World. Eventually, with Wilson's former sympathies for the Hungarians swept aside, Austria and Hungary were declared separated and defeated powers and treated accordingly.

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<sup>36</sup> Lansing (1935) p. 271; WWPp 48: 456 and 464.



Another misconception related to this period comes from Hungarian historians. It has been argued that even after July 1918 Wilson hesitated to carry his new program to its extreme and complete the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. This argument is based upon the realization that he did not want to contribute to the establishment of small and economically unviable states between Germany and Soviet Russia, and upon his supposed hesitation during the Armistice negotiations.<sup>37</sup> This interpretation (very much like the one regarding intervention in Siberia) is based upon taking Wilson's public statements at their face value. After his decision he did expect some regional cooperation to take place in the Danubian basin (hence the involvement of the CPI with the MEU) and he reiterated his new policy in private more than once. The fact that he communicated his decision to Vienna only during the final stages of the Armistice negotiations must be seen not as proof of hesitation but as cool calculation. Wilson had been frustrated by Vienna's diplomatic tricks more than once between February 1917 and April 1918. This time he wanted to, in fact he had to, make sure that this Habsburg peace drive was a sincere one. The Ballhausplatz also had to demonstrate its acceptance of the fact that instead of guaranteeing the integrity of the Habsburg Empire the American program now was its dismemberment. The element of hesitation was there between April and June 1918 and not afterwards in Wilson's Habsburg policy.

Wilson was the last Allied leader to accept dismemberment and, despite claims that the Monarchy fell apart after the collapse of the Central Powers, he largely contributed to the outcome. The fact that Wilson, the prophet of a new world order, decided in favour of the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary in the summer of 1918, when the end of the war seemed by no means within reach, presented the nationalities with the following choice in

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<sup>37</sup> *Ádám* (1989) pp. 23-26. Note that this book is also available in English.

case the Central Powers were defeated: they could stay with either Austria or Hungary and suffer the consequences of a lost war, or join one of the newly established or enlarged successor states on the side of the victors. The fact that Austria-Hungary 'fell apart' in late October 1918 proves that the leaders of the nationalities had taken the logical choice.

The issue of various influences on Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy must be addressed again and a few final thoughts should be offered. Wilson's entire performance during the World War justifies Arthur S. Link's conclusion that the President made his policy decisions alone. At best, he shared them with his private advisor and friend, Colonel House, but the latter's lack of interest has been demonstrated; he played practically no part in shaping America's Habsburg diplomacy. The Inquiry is a good example of Wilson's general tendencies to disregard his official advisors on the one hand, and of his reluctance to take advice from his very own advisors on the other. While both the British and French peace preparatory organizations were created and functioned within their respective foreign offices, the Inquiry was only nominally attached to the State Department. It was actually controlled by House and reported not to the official but to the 'super-secretary of state'. The one point that was not made in the chapter on the Inquiry concerns wartime policy proposals. The Inquiry's only general proposal regarding the course of action the United States should take during the war was submitted in the very early stages of its work, in December 1917. True, it did have an influence on the Fourteen Points but it did not suggest anything Wilson was not thinking of himself anyway. It must be noted that the next such proposal was prepared on 21 January 1919, on the President's direct request. The fourteen month gap tells an entire story: Wilson did not expect policy proposals even from his private policy planning staff.

The influence of wartime dismemberment propaganda and propagandists is especially interesting from the point of view of the present work, since these efforts focused on

Hungary and emphasized 'forced Magyarization.' But again, there is no evidence to prove that Wilson nursed any anti-Hungarian feelings, and nor did he show any interest in such efforts. In fact, the work of the CPI suggests that, instead of reading the works of dismemberment propagandists, he rather utilized these efforts to serve his own ends. This is an all-important aspect of wartime American policies towards Hungary: the sole conductor of such policies was working with a set of misconceptions which he had developed before the war, and took no steps to obtain a better picture of the situation. It may be argued that wartime dismemberment propaganda or the disinterested reports of his Ambassadors and intelligence staffs would not have provided him with a better and more impartial picture anyway. What really matters is the fact that Wilson failed to realize the limitations this situation imposed upon his decision making process.

Lansing's decisive contribution to Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy is hardly more than a myth, which stems from his own exaggerated remarks, from projecting post-1945 tendencies in the White House onto the period of the First World War,<sup>38</sup> and from the fact that Lansing, as Secretary of State, was continuously in the limelight and signed most of the official public statements in the matter. The Lansing myth disregards the sharp difference of opinion between Wilson and Lansing and the fact that Wilson had little admiration for his Secretary of State.

The final point to be addressed is the role of American attitudes towards Hungary in Wilson's Habsburg diplomacy. Before the war, Hungary's image in America was one-sided, romanticized and often out of touch with reality. The outbreak of the World War offered a

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<sup>38</sup> It must be remembered that John Foster Dulles was Lansing's nephew. Dulles seemingly ran US foreign policy alone, which apparently led many historians to draw that parallel.

chance to revise that image but no steps were taken during the entire period of American neutrality in that direction. While the United States was neutral and the Habsburg Monarchy was a belligerent, such a review was optional; with America joining the Allies against the Central Powers an analytical look at Hungary, as the lesser part of the lesser Central Power but tied to Austria in a unique way, should have become a necessity. This is all the more important since there was a logical alternative to dismemberment: to break-up the Habsburg-Hungarian compromise in order to remove the Monarchy from the war, which was seen as the key to the defeat of Germany.

But there is another side to the same coin. During the entire course of the war there was not a single Hungarian organization or agency working in the Allied and neutral countries towards the realization of Hungarian independence. While other nationalities from the Habsburg realm were industriously educating Allied and neutral public opinion and politicians from the very beginning of the war, the Hungarians expected to sort out the future of their country between Vienna and Budapest, and not abroad. When dismemberment (a distinct possibility in 1914 but a more and more serious threat as the war dragged on) became a joint Allied war aim during the summer of 1918 no one was there to promote the case of Hungary in the United States.

Thus, the revision of the prewar image of Hungary was carried out not before but after the American decision in favour of dismemberment and not by the real or supposed experts of the Administration but in the press. The lack of Hungarian participation in this process naturally resulted in another set of extreme interpretations instead of a genuine understanding not only of Hungary but of the entire Danubian region.

La Guardia's plan to separate Hungary from Austria and thus force the Monarchy out of the war was nothing more than a logical rather than a real possibility. This was due to several factors including timing and attitudes on both sides. Firstly, La Guardia's proposal came at the wrong time: the American public and the press might have been supportive of such a course of action, but Wilson was not. At the turn of 1917 and 1918, he was launching his last covert diplomatic campaign for a separate peace with Vienna. Any indication of American plans to separate Budapest from Vienna would surely have ended all talks. Secondly, there was hardly any support for such a policy even in Hungary: no unified stand by the Opposition and no diplomatic activity abroad. Thirdly, nor did the Hungarian-Americans lend their full support to the cause of Hungarian independence. Divided over political and religious issues and under immense pressure to prove their loyalty to the US, they did not stand up for Hungarian independence and failed to seek contacts with the White House.

This continued to be the case until the very end of the war; thus Wilson's June 1918 reversal of policy passed practically unnoticed in Hungarian political circles and no steps were taken to counter it. The Bagger-Szekeres articles of summer 1918 suggest that a campaign for Hungary would not necessarily have been impossible even during the closing stages of the war. Under no pressure from anyone, Wilson in June 1918 went as far as his preconceptions about Hungary allowed him to go, and he himself called for the separation of Hungary and Austria. The various Hungarian-Americans calls for such a step, few and far between anyway, were not detailed during our enquiries simply because the State Department chose to disregard them. The first move was made by Braun in May 1917; the others came during and after September 1918.<sup>39</sup> By that time Károlyi had come to represent the

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<sup>39</sup>. Barany (1967) pp. 151-55; NA RG 59: DFSD: m 708, reel 3: 864.00/22-23.

only alternative policy but, unknown even to himself, he was not considered to be an acceptable solution in the White House.

Thus, overlooking the weak points in the Seton-Watson-Masaryk plan for the creation of a 'New Europe' and seeing Hungary in black and white largely contributed to the shaping of an unbalanced East-Central European diplomacy on Wilson's part. This American diplomacy backfired not only during the Peace Conference period but, on a much larger and tragic scale, in another World War. As for the President, he did not nurse any anti-Hungarian feelings, he was too uninterested for that, but he did have certain reservations about certain Hungarian politicians, which influenced some of his decisions during the Peace Conference period.

Most ironically, during the entire period between 1914 and 1918, Hungarian attitudes towards the US and American policies and attitudes towards Hungary shared the same problems: lack of information, misunderstanding, and uninterest. Hungary's attempts after the Armistice to win a favourable 'Wilsonian peace' also proved to be based upon a set of misplaced expectations; the realization, when it eventually came, proved to be very a painful one for the Hungarians.

### **SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK:**

During the second half of the nineteenth century the Americans developed a romanticized attachment to the liberal Hungary of 1848-49, which was reinforced by Kossuth's immensely successful American visit during 1851-52. And although by the turn of the century that image of Hungary had become largely outdated, the Americans still maintained their earlier view. While events in Hungary during 1905-09, together with a minor Kossuth revival in America (1906-08), appeared to justify the American position, there were other signs as well: the arrest of an American government agent (Braun) in Budapest and open anti-assimilation propaganda by the Hungarian government among the immigrants in the New World indicated that the Americans were facing a more real and quite different Hungary. It was genuine and overall lack of interest on the part of the Americans that prompted them to maintain that earlier romantic attitude and disregard the real Hungary.

Then came the First World War, a global conflict, which forced the Americans to reconsider their position; but the adjustment to reality, or rather, the acceptance of an alternative view of Hungary, did not happen overnight. During the period of American neutrality and the eight months between April and December 1917, the Wilson administration had the option to deal with Hungary separately, but did not take it up. After the American declaration of war on the Monarchy the President and his advisors might have dealt with Hungary separately, but again failed to engage with the Hungarian issue: uninterest continued to be the underlying element in American attitudes.

Wilson conducted American foreign policy towards East-Central Europe singlehandedly but with his sight firmly set on broader issues (including the League of Nations and 'making the world safe for democracy'); he devoted little attention to (Austria-) Hungary. Under no pressure from the President, members of his cabinet also failed to take the necessary steps to obtain reliable information about Hungary, the lesser half of the lesser Central Power, especially before the end of 1917. The discussions of the work of the Departments of State, Commerce, War and the Navy as well as the lacklustre performances of Military and Naval Intelligence appear to prove this point.

At the same time, however, non-Magyar immigrants from the Habsburg Empire, encouraged by the obviously non-neutral stand of the Wilson administration, began to promote their opinions and territorial claims openly. And although minor successes were scored - especially by the Czechs who had their case heard in Congress and secured press coverage for the Masaryks - they had to wait for a favourable turn in global high politics to stand a real chance of achieving their goals. It might be said that early attempts at dismemberment propaganda yielded poor results but they certainly set the stage for the all-out campaign in 1918.

Following American entry into the war, both the President and Secretary of State Lansing came to view Austria-Hungary as the weakest link in the *Mitteleuropa* project and considered the removal of the Habsburg Empire from the war to be the key to Germany's defeat. Lansing soon took an open pro-dismemberment stand and steered the entire State Department in that direction. He continually pressurized the President to accept this policy but, for various reasons, Wilson refused to take the advice of his official advisor in foreign affairs. (See chapter 10 on both issues.) Instead, the President responded to the state of belligerency in his own way: by continuing secret peace negotiations with Vienna and by



creating his own semi-official policy and peace planning task force, the Inquiry. But after a single policy proposal, which was written in part by his own private advisor, Colonel House, the President instructed his research team to focus on peace planning instead, and provided them with the proper guidelines and with all available information. If anything, this proves that Wilson was reluctant to take the advice even of his very own task force; he continued to orchestrate America's foreign affairs alone, and refused to share the responsibilities of decision making.

The lack of interest in Austro-Hungarian matters, displayed by the President who at the same time monopolized decision making, led wartime American diplomacy into a *cul de sac* when things suddenly began to speed up and change. Wilson's continuing reluctance to deal with (Austria-) Hungary backfired during the critical period of April-July 1918 when a series of military and diplomatic developments removed the cornerstone of his Habsburg diplomacy: the offer of territorial integrity for a separate peace. It must be remembered that Wilson and Lansing firmly but mistakenly believed that the Sixtus affair had ended all chances of a separate peace. Ironically, in this issue of overall importance it was not the actual truth but what Wilson thought to be the truth that really mattered. (See the relevant discussions in chapters 3 and 11.)

During the war, the possibility of bringing about a Habsburg-Hungarian break in order to remove the Monarchy from the war was given practically no consideration by the White House, which was due to the earlier mentioned lack of interest on Wilson's part. For a variety of reasons, the President did not ask his staff for up-to-date information on (Austria-) Hungary. As he himself stated during his 1912 interview with Kende (chapter 2), he considered himself to be an expert of the matter -- and apparently saw no need to revise his views. And the emphasis here is on 'saw no need to revise his views.' The Emperor Charles

seemed ready to negotiate with Wilson, and the separation of Austria-Hungary from Germany seemed a considerably easier and less radical option than knocking the Habsburg Monarchy out through her nationalities. Why should Wilson have bothered with Hungary and the Hungarians when not one Hungarian politician offered him a clearcut alternative? (Károlyi seemed to be the only possibility and was picked up by the US press. However, for reasons outlined in chapter 2, Wilson refused to deal with him.)

Thus, with no alternative in store following the Clemenceau-Czernin showdown, and with Allied diplomats stepping up the pressure on the Chief Executive, Wilson went for, had to go for, the option he had tried to avoid: dismemberment. And with no one there to promote the case of Hungary, dismemberment came to mean for Wilson what the Czechs and other separatist groups wanted. Wilson's summer 1918 decision was due to the fact that the President's chief concerns of the moment, including the French termination of the secret peace talks, the German offensive on the western front, and the Siberian intervention, all came to be linked with dismemberment by the Czechoslovaks. When Masaryk demonstrated that he, like Wilson, wanted regional integration in the Danubian basin, the President reversed his Habsburg policy.

Public opinion and propaganda, while providing a sometimes alternative and sometimes supporting set of opinions, failed to play a key role in the above developments. The overall lack of interest rendered dismemberment propaganda practically impossible, even after Wilson's turnaround. American, immigrant and Allied propagandists continued to focus on introducing the region to the general public and on enumerating real and imaginary grievances, some of which dated back to medieval times. Dismemberment propaganda had yet another serious handicap in America: first the Parker campaign and then the CPI described not the Monarchy but Germany as the main enemy. Actually, dismemberment propaganda in

America peaked not before but after Wilson's change of policy, which indicates that it was probably the White House that controlled public opinion and not the other way round.

Meanwhile, the press industriously monitored events in Hungary, albeit with mixed results, and during the early stages of the war even presented Apponyi's views. In general, the prewar positive myth of Hungary remained unchallenged in the American press until Wilson's turnaround, which indicates that the press, like propaganda, also followed the President's lead in most cases.

Wilson may have believed that he well understood the developments within the Habsburg Monarchy (and his initial claim has been taken up by several historians) but it is obvious that the press knew more about Hungary than the entire cabinet, including the President. (Which, in light of the rather strange press statements presented in chapters 4 and 7, is even more striking.) Besides uninterest on the part of leading Americans, this was also due to the lack of Hungarian propaganda abroad (as pointed out by Apponyi) and to the views and conduct of the Hungarian-Americans, who remained divided over the issues of religion and loyalty. This prevented them from taking a unified stand in support of the home country; calls for an independent Hungary were few and far between. From a Hungarian point of view, this was rather tragic since the publication of the writings of the Hungarian-American journalist Jenő Bagger-Szekeres indicate that a properly worded Hungarian propaganda campaign in America would not have been entirely out of the question even during the fall of 1918. (Although Bagger-Szekeres went much beyond what even Károlyi would have offered then.)

The dismemberment of Austria-Hungary went hand in hand with the dismemberment of the former Kingdom of Hungary. The Allied War Council, which drafted the terms of the

various armistices with the Central Powers, declared the newly created Republic of Hungary, without any hesitation or discussion, to be a defeated party in the war. The period between November 1918 and June 1920 saw the realization of the territorial claims of the Successor States, which were justified *post facto* by the Treaty of Trianon. Meanwhile, Hungary sank into the quagmire of revolutions and coups, and it took several years to stabilize the political and economic life of the country; and even today, many Hungarians still find it difficult to cope with the Trianon verdict.

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Finally, we must summarize how the tendencies and attitudes outlined above continued during the Armistice and peace conference periods. It is obvious that in the entirely new setting of the peace conference new tendencies surfaced, but it is equally obvious that old tendencies also survived. Most importantly, Wilson's summer 1918 reversal of policy set the guiding line: the Americans came to consider the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy to be fair and necessary, and the satisfaction of the reasonable territorial claims of the Successor States not only just but a well-deserved compensation for their contributions to Allied victory in the Great War. The period between November 1918 and December 1919 (the signing of the Armistices and the final American withdrawal from Paris respectively) saw the Americans, for the first time ever, getting directly involved in Hungarian affairs. Wilson's summer 1918 commitment to the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy practically meant that the Americans assumed the role of peacemaker in the region. Furthermore, with the President's popularity reaching new heights, the Americans were expected to be not only peacemakers but also bringers of justice -- all in a region of which they knew very little and for which they cared even less.

The two key features of America's Hungarian, and in general terms East-Central European, policies in this period were (1) the continued lack of interest and (2) the disintegration of Wilson's overarching control of American diplomacy. Other tendencies of the period worthy of consideration include (3) the Hungarian reactions to this American policy, (4) American public opinion, and (5) the promotion of regional integration (one of the cornerstones of Wilson's diplomacy during the war) in East-Central Europe in 1919.

The continued lack of interest displayed by the Americans during the fourteen months under examination should perhaps not be too striking after what we have found out about the war period. On the top level it was due to the fact that Wilson's attention was otherwise engaged, while on lower levels it was manifested in the continued lacklustre performance of Military Intelligence as well as in the conduct and utterances of Lansing and of the various members of the American field missions. Wilson travelled to Paris as the head of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace (hereafter ACNP) with the primary aim of creating a League of Nations and ending the war with one general treaty. He expected that the treaty would set out the guiding principles of postwar international cooperation and the League would solve all the minor regional disputes, including those of East-Central Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Similar lack of interest among the rank-and-file of the ACNP highlighted many of the earlier mentioned contradictory elements of American attitudes and policies towards Hungary and East-Central Europe. On one occasion, for example, Lansing remarked that the Peace Conference had been convened to draw the boundaries of the Successor States and that Austria and Hungary would get whatever was left after that; later he himself protested against the severe decisions affecting Hungary. Meanwhile, intelligence summaries were pre-

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<sup>1</sup> Walworth (1986) and Bailey (1963) are two good accounts of that.

pared by Bullitt between November 1918 and January 1919, who also briefed the five Commissioners Plenipotentiary on a daily basis. When Bullitt was sent on his infamous mission to Russia, the MIB took over intelligence work and performed it very much the same way as it did during the war. The lowest point of American Military Intelligence work in the entire period came on 29 March 1919, when a report stated that there was no immediate danger of a bolshevik takeover in Hungary.<sup>2</sup> (Eight days after it had actually taken place!) As the Peace Conference dragged on endlessly, more and more Americans, including for example Nicholas Roosevelt, (relative of TR and member of one of the field missions in Vienna) expressed their desire to go home and leave everything behind.<sup>3</sup> House never developed any interest in Hungary and Wilson continued to be otherwise engaged; and after signing the German peace treaty, most of the ACNP packed up and went home.

While overall lack of interest continued to determine American attitudes towards the Danubian basin, the other main feature of wartime American diplomacy, Wilson's one-man control of foreign affairs, began to disintegrate after his arrival in Europe. Between November 1918 and December 1919 Wilson had to share decision making not only with his fellow negotiators from Europe but also with his own staff. For the first and only time in his life (with the possible exception of his Mexican failure in 1916) Wilson could not dictate -- he had to negotiate. Had he convened a powerful task force during the war or if at least he had been more sensible and less stubborn in selecting the personnel of the ACNP, he clearly would have stood a better chance of realizing his hopes and of leaving the White House on

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<sup>2</sup> LC TWWps: Series 6M: Weekly and Daily Reports on the Central Powers by Bullitt; Series 6N: War Department General Staff: Daily and Weekly Intelligence Summaries.

<sup>3</sup> SML WGDps: Diary. Davis recorded on several occasions that Roosevelt was completely fed up and wanted to go home. Similar references may be read in practically all the contemporary recollections.

a high note in March 1921.<sup>4</sup> With Wilson trying to stay in control, American diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference got turned inside out: during the war there had been a variety of opinions and one single line of policy; now there were several opinions and a variety of policies. In a sense, American diplomacy in 1919 began to look like its European counterpart: something Wilson refused to acknowledge and failed to cope with. The ACNP broke up into three rival groups of the State Department representatives, House's staff (members of the Inquiry) and Hoover's team (the American Relief Administration, hereafter ARA), all working at cross-purposes most of the time. This was a most unfortunate situation for the President: his relations with Lansing would alone have given him enough problems but the subsequent breaks with House and later with Hoover resulted in his complete isolation in Paris.<sup>5</sup> This atomization of American foreign policy, together with Wilson's fight against the odds for the treaty at home, broke down his health, made him even more uncompromising and resulted in the complete failure of his plans. It is hardly surprising that under such circumstances Wilson devoted little attention to issues of secondary importance; the future of Hungary, even when combined with the threat of bolshevism, was dwarfed by the broader issues of the League of Nations in Paris and the treaty fight at home.<sup>6</sup>

Further indication of Wilson's loss of control of East-Central European and Hungarian affairs in Paris is the freedom of action members of the Inquiry and the field missions enjoyed. In late January 1919, Wilson asked the Inquiry to prepare a brief outline of boundary, economic and labour proposals for the ACNP to follow during the impending negotiations. This the Inquiry did, and the volume (which was based almost exclusively upon the

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<sup>4</sup> Bailey (1963) chapter 6 is an entertaining account.

<sup>5</sup> Floto (1981); Walworth (1986).

<sup>6</sup> The definitive account of the treaty fight is still Bailey (1945).

October 1918 report outlined in chapter 9 and presented in part in Appendix C) came to be called the Black Book. It was later amended with the addition of two Red Books, one dealing with colonial the other with European matters. Since the Americans were the only disinterested party in East-Central Europe, their position was by far the most fair, and they acted, all through 1919, as moderators. One obvious example for that is the frustration, chiefly by Seymour and Day, of the proposed Czech-Yugoslav corridor.<sup>7</sup> The lack of any suggestion that the American negotiators (Seymour, Day and Allen Welsh Dulles among them) consulted the President on territorial issues indicates that Seymour and his colleagues worked with the guidelines they themselves had worked out during the final year of the war and which they summarized in the Black and Red Books.

Somewhat surprisingly, the Americans got involved in regional politics, too. The Peace Conference not only decided the terms of the Hungarian peace treaty but it also interfered with the domestic affairs of Hungary. In this the Americans were as active as their fellow peacemakers. The ARA's Captain Gregory's negotiations with the Social-Democrat leaders from Budapest in Vienna to bring about the downfall of the Communist regime of Béla Kun in Hungary (while Albert Halstead's State Department mission was instructed to stay out of such talks) indicate that by July 1919 American diplomacy had travelled far from the old Wilsonian premise of non-interference.<sup>8</sup> While in December 1917 subversive means were unacceptable to Wilson, by the spring of 1919 they became an integral part of American policy towards Hungary. The East-Central European performance of the ACNP must be evaluated with these considerations in mind; this aspect clearly requires further research.

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<sup>7</sup> L. Nagy (1965); Deak (1941).

<sup>8</sup> There is more research to be done on the various American field missions. Their documents are among the ACNP records in the National Archives and in Stanford.



Hungary at the same time was going through perhaps her most severe diplomatic, political and social crisis in the twentieth century. The Successor States (of the Habsburg Monarchy) launched attacks on Hungary in the hope of securing the territories they had laid claims to by the use of arms, thus presenting the peace conference with *faits accomplis*. With Károlyi's belief in Wilson unshaken, Hungary refused to fight, which, in the long run, proved to be a fateful decision.<sup>9</sup> Hungary's only possible diplomatic link to the Allies, the post in Berne, was also wasted. Károlyi, unaware of the President's actual feelings towards her, appointed Rosika Bedy-Schwimmer as Hungarian Ambassador to Switzerland. Quite unimpressed, not to say hostile, Sotvall forced her recall through Herron in the last days of 1918. The appointment of the experienced diplomat the Baron Ladislaus Szilassy in mid-January 1919 came way too late.<sup>10</sup> The Berne connection, however, was not completely wasted. Many prominent Hungarians, including Andrassy, Count Paul Teleki (later twice Premier of Hungary) and Ludwig (as Red Cross representative), travelled to the Swiss capital and carried on a pro-Hungarian campaign, mostly in English and in French.<sup>11</sup> That notwithstanding, Károlyi's stubborn insistence on the one-sided observation of the Armistice and the Belgrade military convention (13 November 1918), together with the diplomatic fiasco in Berne and the limited American interest in the cause of Hungary, significantly reduced his chances of realizing his ambitious program to secure a favourable peace for the new Republic.

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<sup>9</sup> Horváth (1939).

<sup>10</sup> Pastor (1975).

<sup>11</sup> The only account of the post-1918 Hungarian propaganda campaign is the present author's forthcoming piece in the Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies.

All this became clear with the opening of the Paris Peace Conference (18 January 1919) when it was announced that the defeated countries, Hungary among them, would only be invited to sign their respective treaties -- and not to discuss them. The Paris Peace Conference drafted a peace treaty for Hungary and demanded the establishment of a government representing all factions of society, which would then be recognized and invited to sign that treaty. The Hungarian boundaries were approved by the Council of Four on 12 May 1919 and were cabled to Budapest on 13 June. The subsequent invitation to Paris (1 May 1919) was withheld by the Allied representatives in Vienna (including Coolidge and Nicholas Roosevelt) and was eventually cancelled on their insistence.<sup>12</sup> The fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (1-2 August 1919) was followed by the Rumanian occupation of the eastern half of the country and Budapest. The Peace Conference eventually decided to intervene and sent an Allied Mission of four generals to Budapest. When that mission had also failed, Sir George Clerk was instructed to go to Hungary and produce an acceptable government. Clerk successfully completed his assignment by convening a government headed by Károly Huszár, which was recognized by the Conference.<sup>13</sup> Later in 1919, Admiral Nicholas Horthy gained political control of the country, in 1920 Hungary signed the Treaty of Trianon, and the last Rumanian troops were withdrawn.

The Allied victory in the war and the chance to realize Wilson's attempts to 'make the world safe for democracy' in Paris attracted a lot of attention and set the stage for extensive news coverage back in the US. This was done by a host of American journalists who escorted the President and the ACNP to Paris. But with an ocean apart from the peacemakers, American public opinion again had no say in decision making in Paris. The

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<sup>12</sup> Roosevelt (1953) pp. 115-17.

<sup>13</sup> The definitive account is Ránki (1967).

hectic events in Hungary were also viewed with some interest, and the American public was provided with first hand accounts by war correspondents. The New York Times continually reported on the developments in Hungary and another major American daily, the Chicago Tribune, also joined in. Simonds now worked for the American Review of Reviews, while Will Irwin of the CPI and the novelist Kenneth Roberts sent their contributions to the Saturday Evening Post. The last extensive coverage on Hungary was Isaac Marcooson's 'The New Hungary' in the 12 November 1921 issue of the Saturday Evening Post, which was probably written in response to the interest renewed by the signing of the separate American-Hungarian peace treaty.

Meanwhile, back in December 1918, a desperate Hungarian propaganda campaign for territorial integrity, mobilizing the political and academic elite of the country (including Apponyi), was also launched; but it did not, it could not bring about the desired result. This campaign focused primarily on Europe but the American public was also targeted. Eugene Pivány was sent back to the New World to organize the Hungarian-Americans and conduct Hungarian propaganda there. A major success was scored when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, headed by Wilson's chief opponent, the Republican Henry Cabot Lodge, heard the Hungarian case as presented by Pivány and other Hungarian-Americans. An English edition of the Pesti Hírlap (Budapest Gazette) was also widely circulated in America and Pivány wrote several pamphlets, too. In 1920, The Commentator, a short-lived Hungarian-American monthly, was also launched to educate the American public. But however impressive this campaign was, it clearly came way too late and had little influence on the American public, which continued to focus on broader issues: peacemaking in Paris and the treaty fight at home.

By way of conclusion, we must look at the issue of East-Central European integration at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. It has been emphasized that Wilson not only demanded the right to national self-determination for all peoples but that he also expected some sort of integration to take place after the war. On the global scale, he envisaged a new liberal world order with the League of Nations; and he also expected some regional cooperation in East-Central Europe. (See especially chapters 3, 9 and 11.) Initially, he instructed his experts, the Austro-Hungarian division of the Inquiry, to work on the federalization of the Habsburg Monarchy. After his reversal of policy towards Austria-Hungary he came to embrace Masaryk's vision of a 'New Europe,' and encouraged the leaders of the various nationalities to join it.

East-Central European integration, of course, was not an American project. Its first modern manifestation was Kossuth's plan for a Danubian Confederation, which made him, as has been pointed out in the sections on dismemberment propaganda, just about the only acceptable Hungarian for the non-Magyar peoples of the Danubian basin. The issue, however, became really hot during the war, when several players on the international scene came up with their own solutions. The official German version was, of course, Naumann's *Mitteleuropa* project, while its counterpart, the 'New Europe,' was worked out in detail by Masaryk and Seton-Watson. Meanwhile, yet another plan, Oszkár Jászi's version of regional integration (1918), received relatively little attention outside Hungary. Besides the Inquiry, the British and French organizations entrusted with peace preparations also worked on similar projects. The region really came to the focus of attention when it was decided that it was to serve not only as a *barriere de l'est* against Germany but also as a *cordon sanitaire* to contain the bolshevik threat from Russia.

Consequently, the Paris Peace Conference devoted considerable attention to the issue. Regional cooperation was not only encouraged but was also included in the various treaties drafted at Paris. The Successor States were to treat their minorities in a decent way to root out possible irredentism and to create a chance of cooperation with their neighbours. At the same time, the defeated parties in the war were compelled to grant most favoured nation status to the victors and sign economic agreements with their victorious neighbours within a couple of years. Furthermore, as part of the French security system established at Paris, the Successor States soon created the 'Little Entente,' a military alliance aimed more against Hungary and Austria than against Germany or Russia.

But this rather selective regional cooperation did not really stand a chance -- and this can be said with confidence not only with the benefit of hindsight, knowing what happened in the 1930s and 1940s. In fact, East-Central European integration was doomed to failure the very moment the decision to liquidate the Habsburg Monarchy through her nationalities was made. And not in 1919 or with the rise of Hitler. If national hatred is incited and countries gain new territories at the expense of each other (and here it must be emphasized that such conflicts took place between the victorious Successor States, too), they are rather unlikely to live in peace and cooperate. The summer 1918 Allied decision to launch the final propaganda offensive against Austria-Hungary together with the dictated peace terms in 1919 drastically reduced the possibility of genuine regional integration in the Danubian basin. The dream has lived on, the desire is there -- but East-Central Europe remains divided over a set of historic grievances.

**APPENDIX A:**  
**A LIST OF WORLD WAR I PROPAGANDA MATERIALS RELATING TO**  
**AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AND CIRCULATED IN THE UNITED STATES**

Note: the following list is an updated version of the appendix of Glant (1993); it supplements chapters 4, 6, 7 and 8.

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**APPENDIX B:**  
**A LIST OF INQUIRY DOCUMENTS ABOUT HUNGARY**

**1. Documents in the National Archives (RG 256):**

**CLIVE DAY:**

no. 112: Austria-Hungary: Economic, 1 March 1918;

no. 1007: Report on Economic Organization of Austria-Hungary, 1 February 1918.

**ROBERT J. KERNER:**

no. 306: Digest; Outline; Austria-Hungary: Structure of Government, 13 February 1918;

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no. 310: Memorandum: a Brief Sketch of the Political Movements Among the Jugo-Slavs Toward the Federalization or Dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, 25 March 1918; includes Resume, dated 20 June 1918;

no. 311: Memorandum on Racial Participation in the Government of Austria-Hungary, n.d.

no. 313: Minorities in Austria-Hungary, 22 April 1918;

no. 316: Resume of a Brief Sketch of the Political Movements of the Czecho-Slovaks Tending Toward the Federalization or Dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, 17 May 1918;

no. 317: see no. 310;

no. 318: Resume of no. 313, 20 June 1918;

**CHARLES SEYMOUR:**

- no. 506: Austria-Hungary: Jugo-Slav Trialism, 25 May 1918;
- no. 507: Austria-Hungary: Polish Trialism, 25 May 1918;
- no. 508: Austria-Hungary: Territorial Acquisitions of the Hapsburgs, 25 May 1918;
- no. 509: Austria-Hungary Federalized Within Existing Boundaries, 25 May 1918;
- no. 512: Epitome of Boundaries in Austria-Hungary, n.d.;
- no. 513: The Jugo-Slavs in Austria-Hungary: Bosnia-Herzegovina, 8 April 1918;
- no. 514: Epitome of Reports of Just and Practicable Boundaries Within Austria-Hungary for Czecho-Slovaks, Jugo-Slavs, Rumanians, Poles, Ruthenians, and Magyars, n.d.;
- no. 516: The Rumanians of Hungary: Districts With a Rumanian Majority, 1 April 1918;
- no. 517: Slav Aspirations in Austria-Hungary: the Corridor, 1 April 1918;
- no. 519: Social and Economic Basis of Nationalism in Hungary, 1 March 1918;
- no. 520: Territories in Austria-Hungary Claimed by the Jugo-Slavs, 1 April 1918;
- no. 641: Austria-Hungary: Czech Claims According to 'Historic' and 'Ethnic' Rights, 25 May 1918;
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  - no. 860: Forest Resources of Austria-Hungary, n.d.;
  - no. 883: Religious Statistics of Austria-Hungary, n.d.;
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no. 110: C.D. Davenport [and Ms. Mary T. Scudder], Foreign Organizations, Societies and Individuals That Might Become a Source of Information to the National Research Council, 14 May 1918 and 25 November 1918;

no. 204: Max S. Handman, Magyar and Rumanian in Hungary; a Preliminary Study, 29 April 1918;

no. 283: Eduard Beneš, The Creation of the State of Czechoslovakia, 11 November 1918;

no. 480: William Howell Reed, The Roumanian People, 30 November 1918;

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nos. 37 and 779: weekly reports on Austria-Hungary by Stovall and R. W. Seton-Watson respectively;

nos. 276-278, 283, 793 and 992: various interviews submitted by Douglas W. Johnson;

nos. 5, 38, 63, 67, 77, 78, 107, 226, 332, 415, 456, 694, 794-798 and 837: dismemberment propaganda material;

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**2. Additional material in the Inquiry Collection in the Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University:**

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**APPENDIX C:**  
**TWO KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF**  
**EAST CENTRAL EUROPE AFTER THE WAR**

**1. The Boundary Proposals of the Inquiry, October 1918:**

**BOUNDARIES IN AUSTRIA-HUNGARY**

**I. Czecho-Slovaks**

[The proposed boundary between Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary:] East of Marisch Ostrau the line cuts through Austrian Silesia, reaching the present boundary of Galicia; thence it follows the Carpathians to longitude 18°30'. Here it turns southward at the extreme extension of the Czecho-Slovak speech line to the northernmost elbow of the Theiss; where it enters the border of the Hungarian plain. The boundary turns westward by the valleys of the rivers Eipel and Sajo, which nearly cut off the mountains northeast of Budapest from the Slovak uplands. The border of the Slovak uplands is crossed by streams flowing south. The dividing line of Slovak and Hungarian speech lies somewhat further north on the mountain slopes, but these east and west flowing streams are the nearest natural features suited for a boundary.

The line reaches the Danube at Esztergom. This and Komarom remain Hungarian. The boundary continues on the eastern arm of the Danube to Pressburg (Pozsony), which is left on the Czecho-Slovak side. It will be noted that Pressburg stands on a navigable river which is also an international boundary...

[Comments on boundary problems:]

...where the proposed line departs from the linguistic frontier, it lies outside of it, thus giving the Czecho-Slovaks important regions (some 38,000 square kilometers in all, amounting

to 30 per cent of the area of the proposed state) in which they are a minority... [T]he bringing of the eastern part of the southern boundary of the proposed state well down into the Hungarian plain [finds its] primary justification in the desirability of eliminating strategically dangerous salients and of making Eastern Czecho-Slovakia more than a narrow finger between Silesia and Galicia on one side and Hungary on the other. Except that Czecho-Slovakia is given direct access to the Danube and thus gains a trade outlet likely to be free of control by neighboring states, these additions are of slight economic importance. And even the Danube outlet cannot be considered as really vital to the economic strength of the proposed state.

## II. Jugo-Slavs

[The boundary between Jugo-Slavia and Hungary:] Thence the line passes to the Drave[,] follows down the stream to within 10 miles of Marburg where it crosses over to the Mur Valley, then down the Drave to its junction with the Danube. the present boundary along the Drave between Hungary and Croatia-Slavonia crosses the river repeatedly, leaving many bits of Hungary south of the stream. When the river becomes an international boundary the mid-channel or one bank would presumably be adopted as the boundary. From the mouth of the Drave the line passes eastward to a point on the Theiss in latitude 45°27'. Then [it runs] in a nearly easterly [direction] to the Rumanian boundary as drawn.

[Comments on boundary problems:]

...These districts [the Bacska and the Banat] are geographically separated, both from old Serbia and Croatia-Slavonia by the Danube. Historically they have no connections with the Serbo-Croat districts. On the other hand, apart from their linguistic claims, which are not absolutely incontestable, the Jugo-Slavs have vital economic need of the cereal regions of the Banat included within the proposed frontier. Without those regions the proposed Jugo-Slav state would show a decided deficiency in the production of cereals as against their consumption, while, if the districts across the Danube were included, it would be economically self-sufficient in this regard.

### III. Rumanians

[The linguistic line between Rumania and Hungary is very irregular and unsuitable for a boundary. According to the proposal, Grosswardein (Nagyvarad, Oradea) and Arad should go to Rumania] leaving Debreczen and Temesvar to the nation of the plains... When the 48th parallel is reached the boundary follows the course of the Theiss upstream to the boundary of the Bukovina.

[In the section on the distribution of peoples:]

...The Szekler minority in eastern Transylvania presents the most serious complication in the settlement of the Roumanian [sic] question on linguistic lines. These people are intensely pro-Magyar in their sympathies and would deeply resent incorporation in a foreign country, especially in the country of that race which they have looked down upon as former serfs.

[Alternative boundaries:]

The alternative line shown on the map represents an adjustment that would be necessary in case the Ruthenian districts of Hungary were to be divided between Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania. As far as the Ruthenians are concerned, there might be no serious objections to this agreement, but for the sake of a tenable frontier this would require the inclusion into Rumania of an uncomfortably large Magyar area and would not be just to the Magyars.

[Comments on boundary problems:]

The incorporation of Temesvar, which is ardently desired by the Rumanians, would deprive the Magyars of their sole remaining market-town of importance in this region. Nor can the Rumanians, like the Serbs, claim further extension in the Banat on the grounds of economic necessity, for without such extension they would still produce an amount of cereals considerably in excess of their needs.

### V. Ruthenians

The south west boundary of Ruthenian speech runs along the western foothills of the Carpathians. The political boundary suggested would run very near it, following the River Theiss from Szaldobos (48°10'N, 23°25'E) to Meso-Vari, where it would cross the river Borsa and follow it to the proposed boundary of Czecho-Slovakia.

[Under distribution of peoples the authors wrote:]

The proposed boundaries, for topographic reasons, diverge considerably from the linguistic frontiers... [O]n the south, by gaining the line of the Theiss and the Borsa, they would take in a long narrow zone which lies outside their linguistic frontier and is predominantly Magyar. [With regards to alternative boundaries, the authors saw a serious possibility in the] division of the Ruthenian parts of Austria-Hungary between Poland, the Czecho-Slovaks, and Rumania with guarantees of the national rights of the Ruthenians.

[A comment on boundary problems:]

Assuming, on the one hand, that an independent Ukrainian state is hardly likely to be created, and, on the other hand, that Austria-Hungary is to be dismembered, it becomes not a little difficult to forecast the fate of the Ruthenians in the Hapsburg Monarchy...

## VI. Magyars

[Having already discussed all the other boundaries the authors dealt exclusively with the Austrian-Hungarian boundary and remarked that]... the advantages of maintaining the historical frontier are obvious.

[The authors established that the territory of the lesser Hungary would be 112,000 km<sup>2</sup>, i. e. 40% of the prewar state. Magyars would form an absolute majority with 82% (7.4 million) while the largest minority would be the Germans with 11% (1 million)]... who outnumber the Magyars along the western frontier. The rectification of the historic boundary along this frontier is not proposed, but it would secure some 200,000 Germans from Magyar political control.

The proposed boundaries would leave more than two million Magyars under the political domination of the other nationalities. Of these about half would be included in the Rumanian area; they are, in greater part, the Szeklers, of south-eastern Hungary, who furnish one of the chief difficulties of the Rumanian problem. About a million Magyars would be under the political control of the Czecho-Slovaks; they could not be included in lesser Hungary unless the northern frontiers were pushed back considerably. The main objections to such an enlargement of the Magyar frontier are of topographical character, particularly that it would narrow the Czecho-Slovak state to a dangerous degree...

[In the section of historical notes the authors stated that the Magyars had been living in their country since the ninth century. In the 16th century they were invaded by the Turks, who were driven out in the 18th century and Hungary was reunited under the Hapsburg crown.] ...Since that time, excepting during the Napoleonic epoch, the Hungarian monarchs have maintained intact the historic boundaries of the kingdom, - boundaries which may roughly be said to have been established as early as the twelfth century. In the territory it includes as well as in its constitution, Hun-gary is one of the oldest states now in political existence.

Thus the boundaries proposed for the Czecho-Slovaks, Jugo-Slavs, and Rumanians provide for the dismemberment of an historic state. Whatever the natural rights of non Magyar nationalities and however heavy the Magyar yoke upon them, it is incontestable that the boundaries of Hungary have existed as an historic fact for two hundred years. Hence the vehemence of Magyar opposition to the creation of a Slovak state in the north and a Rumanian in the south. The inclusion of Croatia-Slavonia in an independent or autonomous Jugo-Slav state has greater historical justification ... but we must remember that Croatia had accepted Hungarian rule three centuries previous this date.

## **VII. Economic Data**

### **6. Magyars**

The Magyars, retaining the central plain of the Danube basin, would have a district which has long been the granary of the Habsburg lands. Every county produces a surplus of

the cereals, except that in which the large consuming population of the capital is situated; and the new Magyar state would have for sale abroad a total surplus of about 37 million quintals, nearly equal to the amount consumed at home, or, in other words, a supply sufficient to meet the needs of another 9 million people.

The mineral resources, represented by a product valued at 63 million crowns out of a total for Austria-Hungary of 426 million, do not compare in value with those that would be acquired by the Czecho-Slovaks, and would scarcely suffice home needs of coal and iron, the main components. Now [nor] would the manufacturing industry, which employs about 344,000 people, in factories of some size, change the distinctly agricultural and rural character of the new state. It is to be noted, moreover, that is concentrated to a very large extent in the capital, and both here and in the provinces has been regularly stimulated by public subsidies of various kinds. A political convulsion, stripping Hungary of the subject territories, would almost certainly lead to a decline in her manufacturing industry.

Hungary seems certain to maintain her trade relations with the people of German Austria, and southern Germany. These relations are a natural result of the complementary nature of the two parties: one with an excess of food stuffs, the other with a deficiency. For this trade, as well as access to the Black Sea, the Danube offers a cheap and adequate route. Hungary should also have assured a means of access to the Adriatic, such as it has enjoyed by its railroad to Fiume. It has, however, no such imperative need of reaching out to distant markets and sources of supply, as has a distinctly industrial country like that proposed for the Czecho-Slovaks, and will probably use the route to the Adriatic even less than in the past. It will find an assured market for its surplus food in Central Europe, and will probably make its purchases in the same market.

[Source: NA RG 256: Inquiry Document 514: 'Epitome of Reports on Just and Practicable Boundaries within Austria-Hungary for Czecho-Slovaks, Jugo-Slavs, Rumanians, Poles, Ruthenians, and Magyars.' For discussion see chapter 9.]

2. Lansing's proposals, dated 21 September 1918:

First. The complete abrogation or denouncement of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty and all treaties relating in any way to Russian territory or commerce; and also the same action as to the Treaty of Bucharest. This applies to all treaties made by the German Empire or Germany's allies...

Fourth. An independent Poland, composed of Polish provinces of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, and in possession of the port of Danzig.

Fifth. An independent state, either single or federal, composed of Bohemia, Slovakia, and Moravia (and possibly a portion of Silesia) and possessing an international right of way by land or water to a free port.

Sixth. The Ukraine to be a state of the Russian Confederation, to which should be annexed that portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in which the Ruthenians predominate.

Seventh. Roumania, in addition to her former territory, should ultimately be given sovereignty over Bessarabia, Transylvania, and the upper portion of the Dobrudja, leaving the central mouth of the Danube as the boundary of Bulgaria, or else the northern half. (As to the boundary there is doubt.)

Eighth. The territories in which the Jugo-Slavs predominate, namely Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, should be united with Serbia and Montenegro forming a single or a federal state. The sovereignty over Trieste or some other port should be later settled in drawing a boundary line between the new state and Italy. My present view is that there should be a good Jugo-Slav port.

Ninth. Hungary should be separated from Austria and possess rights of free navigation of the Danube.

Tenth. Restoration to Italy all the Italian provinces of Austria. Italy's territory to extend along the northern Adriatic shore to the Jugo-Slav boundary. Certain ports on the eastern side of the Adriatic should be considered as possible naval bases of Italy. (This last is doubtful.)

Eleventh. reduction of Austria to the ancient boundaries and title of the Archduchy of Austria. Incorporation of Archduchy in the Imperial German Confederation. Austrian outlet to the sea would be like that of Baden and Saxony through German ports on the North Sea and the Baltic.

Twelfth. The boundaries of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece to follow in general those established after the First Balkan War, though Bulgaria should surrender to Greece more of the Aegean coast and obtain the southern half only of the Dobrudja (or else as far as the Danube) and the Turkish territory up to the district surrounding Constantinople, to be subsequently decided upon...

[Source: Lansing (1921) pp. 193-95. For discussion see chapter 10.]

Comment: These were the two key proposals regarding the future of East Central Europe, and of Hungary, which the ACNP took to Paris.



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