target was the one who had laid down his arms at Világos, in other words, Artur Görgey. Immediately after fleeing to Turkey, Kossuth proceeded to stigmatise him. Görgey was treated like a traitor and continued to be publicly reviled throughout his life and even after his death, aged ninety-eight. True, Görgey was the only one to receive assurances from Paskievich that his life would be spared, but he had not committed any act of treachery. Yet for Kossuth, and the majority of public opinion, clinging to the tradition of the heroic fight, Görgey's capitulation provided a pretext: the scapegoat had to be sacrificed in order to save the morale of the nation. Attempts were made to prove that the general had no other choice but to surrender, but it was only 150 years later, with the publication of Domokos Kosáry's historical oeuvre, that the witch-hunt finally ended.

A wounded Hungarian society now faced a new ordeal. After Haynau's cruel military repression, the civil administration of Alexander von Bach descended upon them like a millstone.

5

Rupture, compromise and the dual monarchy, 1849–1919

For the next seventy years, Hungary's ties with Austria were to be closer than they had ever been before, first under neo-absolutist constraints, then in the wake of the 1867 compromise. This was also the era of the balance of power on the continent, overseen by England and 'readjusted' by several conflicts: the Crimean war (1854–5), Napoleon III's Italian war (1859), the Austro-Prussian war (1866), the Franco-German war (1870–1) and others. The Austrian Empire, which emerged from the 1848–9 crisis unscathed, suffered defeat in Italy and was ousted from Germany by Bismarck's Prussia; its relations with Hungary were shaped by these events. As Austria's international position weakened, Emperor Francis Joseph moved towards the 1867 compromise which was to create the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy.

THE BACH SYSTEM

After three years of crises, calm prevailed in the Habsburg kingdoms and provinces. The young Francis Joseph succumbed to 'the intoxication of power' (Jean-Paul Bled) and opened a neo-absolutist 'septennat' not unlike enlightened despotism, but in conjunction with a rise in clericalism. Francis Joseph assumed total control, to the point of presiding over the Government Council in person. Pro-constitutional ministers resigned one after another; Schwarzenberg held his post till his death in 1851. Alexander von Bach, the minister of the interior, who was already very influential, became the architect of the neo-absolutist turn that began in 1850. With the decree of 31 December 1851, the emperor

abolished the final vestiges of the turbulent years, in other words the Constitution of March 1849. This took place four weeks after Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte's 2 December *coup d'état*, a prelude to Napoleon III's authoritarian empire.

Alexander von Bach governed a now unified empire with a strong bureaucracy. His officials, nicknamed 'Bach's Hussars', administered Hungary, replacing Marshal Haynau's cruel military dictatorship. Like all absolutist regimes, Bach's stood out for its violations of laws and traditions. The government sliced the forty-six counties into five bureaucratic districts, administered Transylvania and Croatia separately from the main kingdom, applied harsh censorship, suppressed civil associations and introduced foreign penal and civil codes. In other words, it reduced the country to stunned silence.

However, some very important 1848 reforms also came into effect under the Bach regime: the repurchase of peasant servitude, for example, accompanied by an anti-feudal propaganda aimed at dividing – unsuccessfully – nobility and peasantry. Indeed, the population's state of mind remained surprisingly united around the memory of the lost war of independence. Kossuth the legend endured – everyone awaited his return. Petöfi, who died on the battlefield fighting for freedom, was now part of a new national mythology engendered by the 1848–9 uprising. Epinal's depiction of the poet, mortally wounded by a Cossack and writing the word 'liberty' in the sand with his own blood, became part of the patriotic decor in the humblest peasant houses. Throughout this politically uncertain age and despite censorship, national literature continued to evolve towards a new golden age.

The most original feature of this decade of oppression was the appearance of a new form of opposition to authority and to Germanification: passive resistance, which became a way of life and an ethical code. The government introduced a tobacco monopoly: 'Well, in that case, I'll stop smoking', was the response of a character in a novel of the time, consigning his fine pipes to the ocean waves. His response to having to pay tax on his own wine? 'I'll give up drinking.' Tarot cards carried a stamp duty. 'In that case, I'll give up cards.' The novel, written by Mór Jókai, friend of the deceased Petöfi and his comrade in the 1848 'Ides of March', was undoubtedly a romantic expression of passive resistance but also witness to a certain collective mentality and social behaviour. So too was a play written by Imre Madách, *The Civiliser*, less well known than the *Tragedy of Man* written in 1860 and marked by post-revolutionary pessimism. *The Civiliser* (1859) was a direct and violent attack on the Bach system. Wielding satire as the most powerful weapon, Madách created the German 'civiliser' come to Germanise his good-natured Magyar peasant host. And finally, the prince of poets János Arany, upon being invited to greet Francis Joseph on his second trip to Hungary in 1857, wrote a scathing poem disguised as an English historical ballad, *The Bards of Wales*: 'Five hundred went singing to die, / Five hundred in the blaze, / But none would sing to cheer the King, / The loyal toast to raise' (translation by Peter Zollman).

Plate 26. Francis Joseph in ceremonial coronation robe

Plate 27. Queen Elisabeth, 1867

These are just a few examples to give a flavour of a decade characterised by hatred and despair. This distress and genuine trauma was to be the basis for the conciliation constructed by the architects of the compromise. But what about the role of the exiles?

After the defeat, several thousand people chose exile. This was a very significant number at a time when the only major emigration was that of the Poles. Many refugees returned but one thousand or so exiled

Hungarians had dispersed to the four winds, to America, to Western Europe or had remained in Turkey. The most active among them tried to influence British, French, American and Italian public opinion. Kossuth was warmly received at some 500 meetings organised for him in England and America, but he did not succeed in translating public sympathy into action on the part of politicians. Whereas for the Hungarians under Austrian domination he continued to represent hope, in the eyes of the political world of Europe he remained the heroic representative of an honourable but hopeless cause.

A flicker of hope appeared with the French–Sardinian alliance of 1858. Emperor Napoleon III pledged his support for the liberation of Northern Italy from the grasp of Austria. Prime minister and diplomatic leader of the kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, Camillo Benso, Count Cavour, tried for his part to involve Kossuth, who ended up agreeing to Hungarian participation in Italy's war and met with the emperor in person. Russia remained neutral.

At the famous Battle of Solferino, 24 June 1859, Austria suffered a crushing defeat but to the stupefaction of the Italians – and the Hungarians – Napoleon III stopped the war. Austria nevertheless lost Lombardy and unification of Italy continued in stages, without inflaming Europe.

Was Hungary, therefore, the main loser in this affair, apart from Austria? In any event, the former was a mere pawn on Napoleon III's political chessboard. Napoleon's Italian policy was certainly designed to change the European status quo but he did not want a Hungarian insurrection. Austria was still an indispensable element in Europe's balance of power. No one, least of all England, wanted to see it weakened. Thus, in 1859 the likelihood of Hungary regaining its liberty with international assistance was even more remote than ten years previously. A solution, whatever it might be, could only be found within the country itself.

Three historic dates represent three different approaches to a solution. 1847: traditional Hungary. 1848: a liberal constitutional Hungary under the sceptre of the Habsburg king, who was also emperor of Austria. And finally, the third date: 1849, the Hungary that declared its independence and split with Vienna.

The first option was outmoded as far as Hungary and even Austria were concerned. The idea of a return to the *ancien régime* was as

unpopular in Hungary as it was at a court intent upon imposing a neo-absolutist monarchy, but not upon restoring feudal powers and privileges. As for a return to the 1849 situation, Kossuth and his loyal followers supported the idea, but the realists resigned themselves to its impossibility given the international situation at the time. Finally, imperial Austria that had crushed Hungary as the price for a war was unlikely to concede independence around the negotiating table with the rebels. There was, therefore, no solution acceptable to both parties other than the constitutional model of 1848 as a means of creating a new arrangement.

Thinkers and politicians in Hungary set about paving the way for this compromise (which has divided opinion – and historians – ever since) slowly, patiently and sporadically. As has been mentioned earlier, there were many opponents to the extreme attitude that led to the April 1849 rupture. Baron Zsigmond Kemény, a novelist and statesman who had initially been close to Kossuth, subsequently joined the Peace Party in 1849. Baron József Eötvös, also a writer of great novels, eminent political thinker and former member of the 1848 constitutional government, left both post and country because he disagreed with those striving for independence. He lived in Vienna, then Munich, until 1853. It was abroad that he wrote his principal political work, *The Influence of Dominant Nineteenth-century Ideas on the State*. Another former 1848 minister, Ferenc Deák, also withdrew from political life after having attempted in vain to come to an arrangement with the Austrians. Finally, the most important political figure among those who distanced themselves from the revolution before it reached the point of rupture was Széchenyi. Though seriously ill, he was not to be silenced and criticised the Bach system until his last breath.

The compromise's intellectual breeding ground was therefore the liberal moderate trend represented by these men, among whom Ferenc Deák played the key role from 1860 to 1861 when Austria displayed the first signs of a change of direction. In order to reach an entente, the spirit of reconciliation had to mature in the imperial capital, too. Setbacks also played a significant part. In response to the Solferino defeat and internal rumblings of discontent, Francis Joseph reorganised the government and his states though without giving in to aristocratic constitutionalism and even less to liberalism. The 1860 October Diploma and the 1861 February Bill (in any case contradictory rather

than complementary) were the first steps towards a constitutional regime of sorts, but the emperor's state of mind demonstrated the extent of their ambiguity: 'We shall have a little parliamentarianism, but power will remain in my hands and the whole thing will be adapted to Austrian realities.' As distrustful of the magnates as he was of the liberals, Francis Joseph therefore imposed a centralising bill which took into consideration the 'individuality' of the kingdoms that constituted the monarchy without really giving them satisfaction. With the liberal Anton von Schmerlig at the head of government, the Austrian political system also developed, but not enough to dissipate ambiguity.

As a result, the Hungarian Assembly convened at last in 1860–1, opposed the royal rescript by a respectful 'petition to the king' rather than approaching him with a 'resolution' of the Assembly, as proposed by the more intransigent. The nuance was significant: Deák's petition party was more moderate than the resolution party. The emperor, however, rejected the petition and dissolved Parliament. Thus the idea remained in limbo, but after a gradual maturing process, political life re-emerged as a result of the celebrated 1865 'Easter article' in which Deák proposed a dual compromise with a joint Austro-Hungarian administration for shared external and military affairs. At the 1866 National Assembly, matters became serious: the deputies elaborated a project for a compromise. The decisive turning point came on 3 July 1866 when Prussia decimated Francis Joseph's imperial army. The Sadowa (Königgrätz) defeat was evidence both of Austrian failure in Germany and of the need to reach an agreement with the Hungarians.

Another year had to pass before a definitive conclusion to the compromise laws – that did not bear the name of 'compromise' but were entitled: '1867: article XII – pertaining to relations between the countries of the Hungarian Crown and the other countries under the reign of His Majesty and to the methods of their administration.' A homologous Austrian law was introduced. That year was full of international complications since the European cabinets were concerned by Prussian successes. Francis Joseph went as far as to nominate an anti-Prussian Saxon Friedrich Ferdinand Beust as minister of the interior. In the end, moderation prevailed all round. Bismarck took great care to accommodate Austrian sensitivities by allowing Austria the possibility of an 'honourable exit' from Germany without loss of face.

Francis Joseph's wife Elisabeth is also seen to have been influential in

the emperor's leniency towards the Hungarians and in his accepting the royal crown in the country of former rebels. The empress 'Sissi' was clearly sympathetic towards the Hungarians but the key factor in the *Ausgleich* was political rather than sentimental. The judicious moderation of Deák and his party in the aftermath of Sadowa reassured the emperor that the Hungarians would stick to their position and not up the stakes. And though Bismarck did secretly encourage the Magyars, he also demonstrated his legendary ponderousness by discreetly backing the compromise solution: the dual monarchy's focal point would be that much further from German affairs.

The great turnabout of 1867 can therefore only be explained by a web of intertwined interests.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 1867 AGREEMENTS

Born of circumstantial constraints and under the sign of moderation on the part of all concerned, the 1867 compromise was, like all political accomplishments, both perfect and imperfect. It created a totally new state system composed of two constitutionally distinct entities, but united under the sovereign's sceptre and sharing governmental institutions – a characteristic that rendered it more than a personal union. Dualism was, for the moment, the optimal solution for safeguarding both the Magyars' sense of identity and the dynastic sovereignty. However, it would have required profound amendments. These were not undertaken because the ambiguity, a result of the unity of the monarchy and diversity within the two contractual parties, was insuperable. In fact, however paradoxical it may seem, it was necessary to preserve the fragile framework. Hungarian law, Eisenmann points out, did not mention the word 'unity' anywhere, but spoke rather of 'community'. It carefully avoided terms and measures which might suggest the superiority of the monarchy over the Hungarian side. Nearly fifty years after its creation, the dual monarchy was not able to withstand the storm of 1914. For the time being, it provoked a mixture of satisfaction, reservations and protests. The *Reichsrat* promulgated an analogous law for Austria.

On balance, however, despite sporadic hostile reactions, the political class and Hungarian public opinion were more satisfied than frustrated – and not without reason. Compared with the Pragmatic Sanction of

1723, the 1867 law was far more favourable to the Magyars. Transylvania was once more within the kingdom's administration. Hungary, along with the others, was under the king's rule but was not subject to the Austrian imperial government. Indeed, the latter was not even mentioned in the compromise laws which prompted the Austrian author Robert Musil to write the following famous ironic passage in his novel *Mann ohne Eigenschaften:* 'The Austrian calls himself citizen of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy's kingdoms and countries as represented at the Council of the Empire – which comes down to saying one Austrian plus one Hungarian minus the self-same Hungarian.'

Irony aside, the identity of the Hungarian 'half' of the Habsburg 'whole' was far better defined than that of its other components. Contrary to other minorities, the Magyar sense of identity was respected. And yet the ingenious legal edifice of the compromise did not reflect the economic correlation between a rich and powerful Austria and a less-developed Hungary. A balance had to be redressed through a quota system for maintaining the army. 'When the time came to pay the bill', writes Eisenmann, 'the unit principle enabled Austria to be charged for roughly a third of the common army's Hungarian contingent. The equation of community and dualism was as follows: equal rights, two thirds expenditure for Austria, three quarters influence for Hungary.' It was a witty remark. Hungary was heavily handicapped by the economic gap. In addition, alongside its independence it was dependent in domains which remained the preserve of the emperor–king: foreign and military affairs. In terms of diplomacy, war and international law, Hungarian national sovereignty was incorporated into Austria–Hungary.

Within the legal structure of the compromise, its ambiguities were elegantly camouflaged by the dispositions pertaining to common affairs. Two equally representative delegations had to be elected by the two parliaments, to deliberate on the financing of foreign and military affairs, each managed by a common ministry. Thus the delegations had no legislative power and their deliberations took place separately, communication between the two conducted strictly by the written word. So much so that, as was often jokingly said at the time, 'The session might as well have been conducted in the dark.' It was all designed so that the common parliament should be no such thing, just like the 'common' ministries that constituted the government. The Hungarians

had a particularly strong aversion to all legislative and executive institutions of the *Gesamtmonarchie* – an all-embracing monarchy which included Hungary.

The system was complicated and vulnerable, to say the least. In the fifty years of its existence it was the object of incessant controversy, particularly from the Hungarian nationalist left: the party of independence formed under the flag of the great absent exile. It had a programme that was less intransigent than Kossuth's and indeed changed over time, as did the name of the party. For half a century, political life was dominated by the opposition between the party of 1848 and Deák's great liberal party merged with the moderate left. Until 1905, the latter retained a three-quarter parliamentary majority or at least two thirds of the seats. The opposition meanwhile wore itself out in legal arguments over public rights. Kossuth's prophecy concerning the catastrophic consequences of the compromise, expressed in his *Cassandra Letter* in 1867, failed to occur. *Fluctuat nec mergitur*: though rocked by the waves, the dual monarchy survived, its accomplishments pacified the general mood and turned a reviled emperor into an accepted and then even venerated sovereign.

Politically speaking, the real losers of the dual system were neither the Hungarians nor the Austrians, but the other 'nationalities'. During the neo-absolutist 1850s, they had been in the same boat as the Hungarians. As ironists of the day put it: 'What the Magyars received from Vienna as a punishment, they received as a gift' – in other words, the Bach system, centralisation and Germanisation. Under the dual system, on the other hand, the minorities had to return to the fold of the Hungarian Crown, and the Croats in 1868 had to settle for a compromise with the Budapest government, modelled essentially on the Austro-Hungarian one. As for the other provinces and the kingdom of Bohemia, they remained, as before, 'countries represented at the Council of the Empire', the *Reichsrat*.

The dual monarchy thus settled into its new home with the promise of a new era – but saddled with a heavy mortgage.

In his famous work *Three Generations*, Gyula Szekfü includes the liberals of 1867, Deák, Andrássy and Eötvös – architects and executors of the compromise – in the second generation. It is thanks to this legal and political artefact that a Hungarian sense of identity was respected. However, the age of duality was rocked by struggles between those in

favour of the compromise on the one hand – in other words the 'second generation' liberals – and, on the other, partisans of complete independence. The latter were also more intolerant towards non-Magyar nationalities who, it should be borne in mind, constituted half the kingdom's population. Reconciling 'patria and progress' meant having to navigate between stumbling blocks on both sides, indissoluble and yet utterly contradictory. For the liberals also aspired to national independence and the independents also wanted some progress – both within the limits of a conservative ideology, to the point where the line between nationalism and liberalism divided not only the parties but members within the same party and probably also in individual hearts. The liberal path was a narrow one and it was purely the genius of Deák and Eötvös that enabled the creation of a national liberal state – not an easy task. Waves of nationalism, of social and religious conflict, considerably eroded its liberal foundations over the decades.

No one who thought about Hungarian liberalism in the nineteenth century did so with as much insight as Baron József Eötvös, a Magyar Tocqueville. Alongside him were: László Szalay – who belonged to the generation of '48 and died in 1864; Ágoston Trefort – the youngest; Baron Zsigmond Kemény – the most conservative (he died in 1875, four years after the death of Eötvös); and lastly, Ferenc Deák (1803–76) – 'sage of the homeland' – embodiment of all conciliations. Just as he had conceived the suitable formula for the 1867 agreement, Deák was always able to find the right word to eliminate discord and to ease through even the most controversial laws, notably those which addressed problems of minorities and schooling. The laws regarding institutions, churches, the emancipation of Jews, education, the minorities, penal law, and industry – partly promulgated after his death – also bore the stamp of enlightened liberalism and were among the most progressive on the continent.

Eötvös's ideas centred around personal freedom, cornerstone of civic liberty and progress. He wanted to create a state that was sufficiently centralised to adequately administer affairs and justice, at the same time with competences limited enough to allow scope for the development of citizenship. Undoubtedly inspired by Tocqueville, he envisaged a system of local self-government and a powerful network of autonomous associations between state institutions and the individual. His success in passing the minority and educational laws was certainly in

part due to Deák's support, but also to his having understood that in order to win, it was sometimes necessary to yield. He was able to find the middle road between the disadvantages of French-style centralism and the anarchy of 'Hungary's fifty-two anarchic self-governing counties'; between secular and Christian morality, between individualism and collectivism, between a national unitary state and freedom for the minorities.

As far as the minority issue was concerned, Eötvös's initial concept was unquestionably utopian to the point of being impossibly idealistic, not only in Hungary, but anywhere in Europe. To give the half a dozen minority languages equal status with that of the Magyars would have transformed the unitary state into a federation. If the 'third generation' governments had not toughened the nationality and public instruction laws, the model created by Eötvös's and Deák's generation would have in fact remained an unparalleled example of wisdom and generosity.

Internal stability: Kálmán Tisza's era

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the dual system and parliamentarianism worked without major hitches and, despite the 1873 crisis, liberalism favoured economic growth. With regard to the outside world, Austria–Hungary's prestige grew as much as its influence waned in Germany, now a hegemony since the fall of the French Second Empire.

In this international context, Andrássy, head of the Hungarian government, then minister of Austro-Hungarian foreign affairs from 1871 to 1879, played an important role. Together with Bismarck, he worked towards strengthening the Austrian–German alliance, keeping Russia at arm's length and defending Austrian interests in the Balkans. At the Berlin congress of 1878 he orchestrated the provisional occupation of Ottoman Bosnia-Herzegovina, which would be later annexed (1908) and serve as the stage for the 1914 Sarajevo assassination. But there was still some way to go.

Between 1867 and Francis Joseph's death in 1916 – in the midst of war – Hungary had seventeen successive cabinets – sometimes the same ones. After Andrássy's departure in 1871, there were a few short-term governments, followed by Kálmán Tisza's between 1875 and 1890. Tisza's era marked both the zenith of liberalism and the beginning of its decline. Internal stability was assured thanks to the abilities of this

Plate 28. Count Gyula Andrássy

'centre left' prime minister and the preponderance of the liberal party, which Tisza founded in 1875, merging his own moderate opposition with Deák's party. The liberal party was thus an amalgam which managed to mix a small dose of ''48' with a strong dose of ''67'. Thus it went on to win elections for thirty years, taking between two thirds and three quarters of parliamentary mandates.

Apart from a small conservative party and rather weak representation of non-Magyar nationalities, the opposition consisted of independents who relied for support on a nostalgic provincial lesser nobility and on the Magyar peasantry of the Great Plain, who had gained little from

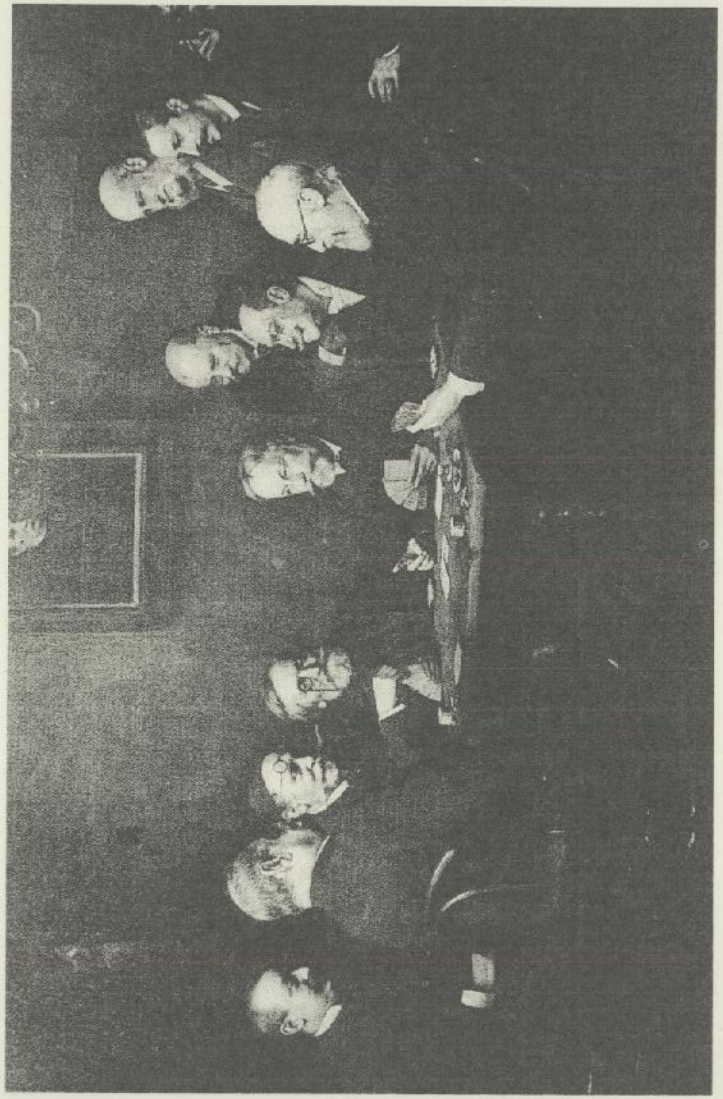


Plate 29. *Kálmán Tisza's Tarot Party*. Painting by Artur Ferraris

the development of an ascendant capitalism. Nor did the new tax-based voting system work in their favour: only 24 per cent of the male adult population had the right to vote (less than one million people); voting rights based on noble titles remained in place. National policy conducted in parliament now eclipsed an erstwhile dominant provincial policy anchored in the counties. The latter were placed under a mixed administration with a county chief (*főispán*) representing king and state and the vice-chief (*alispán*), elected by the local assembly, representing the supremacy of the gentry and remaining the pillar of Magyar administration.

The workings of the 'grand old liberal party' no doubt favoured the entangled interests of the well-to-do classes, landowners and middle classes, who constituted the majority of both the electorate and the political class. Indeed, alongside the magnates and nobles, the benches of Parliament, of political clubs and casinos and the editorial boards of newspapers, the management boards of banks and factories were filled with the bourgeoisie and elected representatives of the liberal professions, mainly lawyers. The class element of liberal power – denounced by historians of the left – is undeniable – as was the case elsewhere around the world. It has also been called the 'party of clubs', and rightly so, since political decisions matured in corridor conversations and, to be more specific, in the corridors of the national Casino, the exclusive preserve of the aristocracy, and in less exclusive clubs frequented by the nobility and bourgeoisie. Kálmán Mikszáth, a great contemporary novelist and serial writer, with an acidic pen, though a regular partner of the prime minister at the card table, described his political style with as much sarcastic humour as affectionate collusion. Decisions to build the railways, carry out regional developments and other public works were taken in between two games of tarot; policies regarding minorities were shaped between pre- and post-prandial drinks.

The two liberal–conservative decades corresponded to a period of unprecedented progress in terms of the economy, urbanisation and education. The legal state was respected but the ever acute problems of non-Magyar minorities and of social injustice also darkened its horizons. Ethnic minorities were subjected to political and educational pressure but the state did not interfere in their private affairs; the various ethnic groups were free to pursue their economic activities, to practise their respective religions and to develop a national conscience.

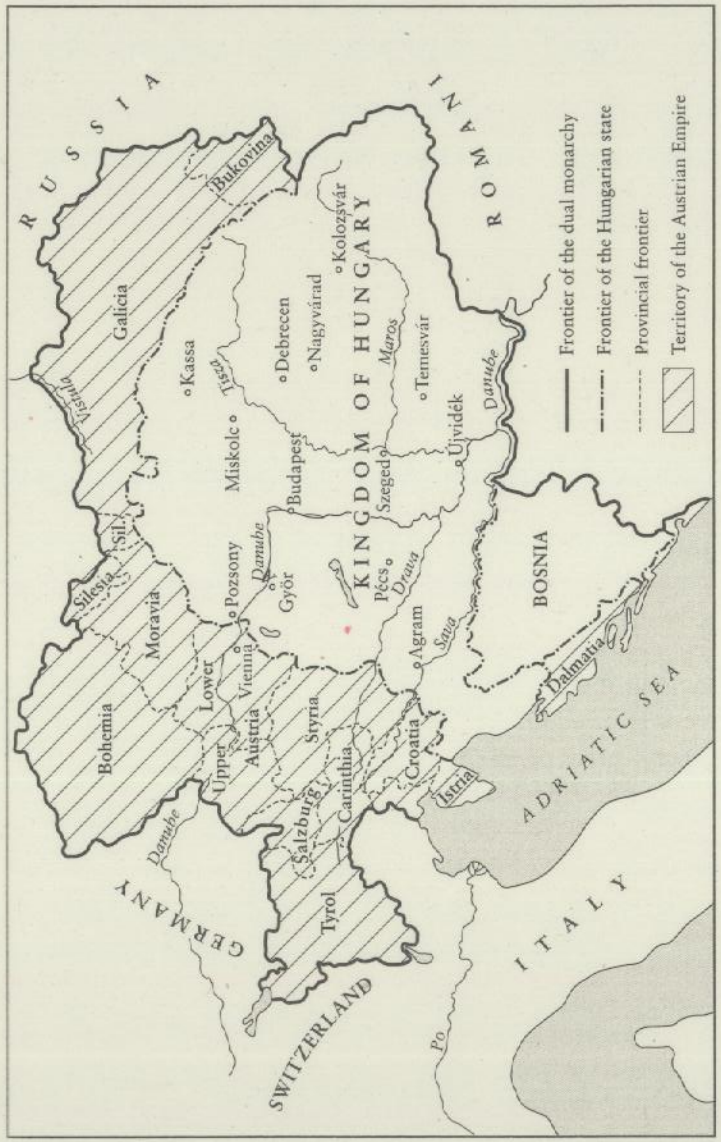
As for the social problems posed by the agrarian structure with its *latifundia*, they remained as serious as ever. A vast proletarianised peasantry co-existed with the reverberations of rising capitalism: a new industrial proletariat, the social democratic party and the struggle for workers' rights and the right to vote.

A self-assured political class lacked the audacity both to address new conflicts and to resolve old ones. As the end of the century loomed, Kálmán Tisza's successors seemed even more inclined to consolidate the gains of the wealthy to the detriment of society's rejects. Sándor Wekerle, the first president of the Council of middle-class origins (he was the son of a bailiff), was an exceptional financial specialist. But in this *fin de siècle*, Church issues, in particular that of the civil marriage bill, occupied the political centre stage. Despite a clerical and aristocratic counter-offensive, the liberal bill was passed – causing Wekerle's demise in 1895. The next government, presided over by Count Dezső Bánffy, excelled in repressive measures. It dealt harshly with any 'subversion': minority demands, the agrarian socialist movement, the social democratic party, the Kossuth cult, which became widespread after the death in 1894 of the exiled 'father of the nation' in Turin. 'Rights, laws, justice' – despite this promising slogan, the successors of Bánffy, who was ousted in 1899, did not stop the decline of liberalism any more than the erosion of dualism and successive political crises.

'MILLENNIUM' HUNGARY AND ITS ENTRY INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In 1896, Hungarians celebrated with great pomp and circumstance the thousand-year anniversary of the conquest of their country by their ancestors. Festivities, tricolour flags, commemorative books, exhibitions, a visit by the royal couple – no effort was spared. The stability of the country seemed relatively secure, justifying the optimism and enthusiasm of the crowds, and its economic health was to last just into the twentieth century. The Hungary of the triumphant 'Millennium' steered itself through buffeting storms.

In 1910, when the last general census was carried out within the monarchy, Hungary (without autonomous Croatia) had 18.3 million inhabitants, against 16.8 million in 1900. The Magyars, about 10 million, made up 54.5 per cent of the inhabitants, compared with 51.4 per cent



Map 9. The Austro-Hungarian monarchy, c. 1910

in 1900. Other nations, therefore, fell slightly, although Germans still constituted 10.4 per cent of the overall population, Slovaks, 10.7 per cent, Romanians, 16.1 per cent and Ruthenians, Serbs and others, more than 8 per cent.

Nearly half the population was Roman Catholic, 22 per cent Protestant, 23.8 per cent Greek Orthodox and Uniate (Greek Catholic). At almost 1 million, Jews accounted for 5 per cent.

The impact of voluntary assimilation, notably, of large numbers of Germans, along with a policy of 'Magyarisation', was far from insignificant, as was the assimilation process of the Jews, who continued to follow the Jewish faith, but adopted Hungarian as their mother tongue. Indeed, Jewish emancipation, in progress since Joseph II, was completed under the liberal regime. For Slav and Romanian nationals, on the other hand, the situation became more precarious, as nationalism overshadowed liberalism.

What were the social structures? Feudal, seigniorial, pre-capitalist, agro-industrial? Attempts to stick a label on such a complex reality fall short. According to 1910 statistical data, in a simplified form, the primary sector accounted for more than 60 per cent of the population; industry, 18 per cent; services, not far off 22 per cent. Compare this with figures for the 'workshop of the world', England, where the proportions were 8 per cent for agriculture and 46 per cent for each of the other two sectors. In the European table, Hungary was in the middle, just above Italy.

In other respects, social divisions were far more marked, especially in agriculture. About 5,000 of the biggest landowners, including members of their families, had estates of more than 570 hectares (1,400 acres) and together owned 8.7 million hectares, approximately 27 per cent of cultivated land. Esterházy and other magnates, churches (primarily the Catholic Church), a handful of rich nobles and members of the bourgeoisie, who made up this land-owning class, were called the 'thousand acres'. Some 66,000 landowners, the gentry, wealthy peasantry and rich tenant farmers, lived on lands covering areas of between 57 and 570 hectares (between 140 and 1,400 acres) 950,000 on properties of 30 hectares, and 3.5 million small peasants worked approximately 7–8 hectares. The mass of 7 million peasants owned less than 2.8 hectares, of which two thirds owned less than 0.57 hectares. In other words, at

the top of the ladder was an extremely rich and very small stratum (0.3 per cent of the population) while at the bottom was a poverty-stricken peasantry and agricultural workers (about 38 per cent of the population). In between the two were the small and large landowners. There were also 1,851,000 industrial workers and 600,000 in transport and commerce (13.4 per cent of the population), about 2 million craftsmen and shopkeepers (11 per cent), 1,100,000 employees, civil servants, officers, pensioners (6.1 per cent), half a million soldiers, servants and others (2.7 per cent) – and 66,549 capitalists (0.4 per cent).

Taking national revenue per capita as a criterion, Austria and Italy had marginally overtaken Hungary, while revenue in England was three times higher, and in France and Germany more than double. While in developed countries like France, Germany and Sweden an average of three quarters of the revenue came from the industrial and tertiary sectors (in England, it was 90 per cent), in Hungary these sectors provided only 56 per cent and agriculture close to 44 per cent. Nevertheless, it is important to note that forty years previously, agriculture accounted for 60 per cent; the secondary and tertiary sectors had therefore made remarkable progress.

Agriculture, still dominant from an employment point of view, showed signs of some technical progress, notably in the increased use of agricultural machinery, crop rotation and growing yields per hectare. Livestock was also on the increase: cattle went from approximately 5 million head in 1884 to more than 6 million in 1911; growth and improvement of stock was especially apparent in the western part of the country, due to intensive rearing which replaced free-range rearing. In the east, on the other hand, techniques remained old-fashioned and productivity was far lower than in the large pilot properties or peasant farms in Transdanubia. Viticulture, which had flourished for so long, was seriously affected by phyloxera. Before 1885, wine production had reached 4.5 million hectolitres; it dropped to 1,130,000 hectolitres and then rose again to 3,190,000 by 1900.

Wealth, therefore, increasingly came from industry, industrialised arts and crafts, transport and other services. After the late start of industrial capitalism, the number of factories increased rapidly, from 2,500 at the end of the century to 5,000 in 1913, with a workforce which also doubled: from 250,000 in 1901, to more than 474,000 in 1913.

Modern factories, with less than half a million workers, produced twice as much as the workshops of 2 million small artisan entrepreneurs. In 1910, industrial workers were distributed as follows:

	per cent
Clothing and leather industry	26.2
Iron, metal, machinery and vehicles	20.5
Construction	12.5
Food products	12.4
Wood	9.1
Stone, earth, clay	5.0
Mines	4.3
Textiles	3.9
Paper and printing	2.8
Chemical products	1.5
Gas, water, electricity	0.7

The state contributed actively to industrial development, to the expansion of the railways and large-scale hydraulic works. The results of river management were dramatic: cultivable land increased by 4 million hectares.

Infrastructure developments and road building had been taking place throughout the century, but the building of the railways won the prize. In 1846, there was just one line running from Pest to Vác and the construction of new lines was slow up until the dual monarchy (1867). The pace then changed, especially between 1890 and the 1914 war, the period of greatest expansion.

During this time, the network practically doubled in size, to total nearly 22,000 kilometres. Hungary followed France, the front runner with 130 kilometres per 100,000 inhabitants, ahead of Germany, Austria and Spain. Croatia's railway network was also more developed than that of most European countries.

In 1890, there were 634 credit and banking establishments (not including the co-operatives), 1,011 in 1900 and 1,842 in 1913, in addition to the Austro-Hungarian Bank's 39 branches. Eight large banks accounted for 37 per cent of all banking activities, including the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest and the Hungarian General Credit Bank.

At this favourable conjuncture for Europe generally, growth in

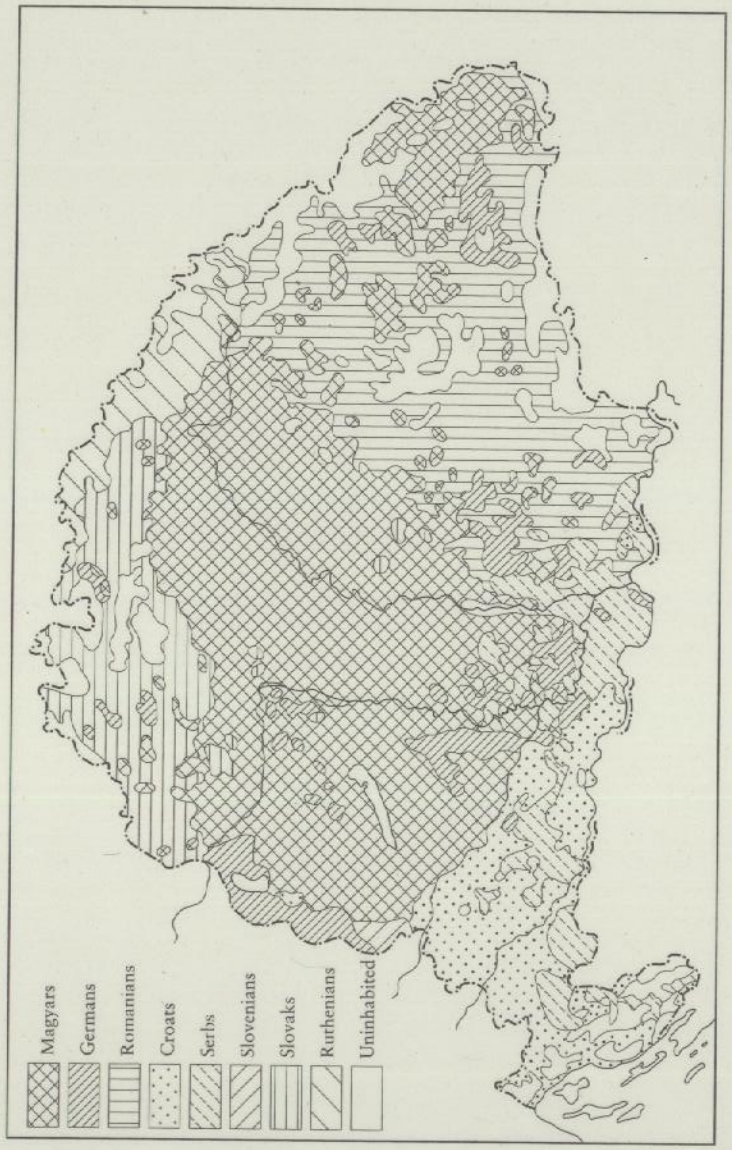
Hungary was remarkable: 2.4 per cent increase in GDP per annum, or 3.2 per cent, calculated by national revenue (I. T. Berend and G. Ránki). Growth was supported by rapid industrialisation, dynamic technical innovation and significant modernisation of equipment and infrastructure. During the entire period of the dual monarchy, the revenue index quadrupled: from 100 in 1867 it rose to 453 in 1913, the final year before the outbreak of war.

What remains to discuss is the impact of these developments on education, urbanisation and lifestyle, material and cultural civilisation. There is a Hungarian word which encapsulates the development of bourgeois civilisation: *polgárosodás* (from *polgár*, bourgeois and citizen), the suffix implying the process itself. Attaining bourgeois status and the movement towards bourgeois values, therefore, did not have the same meaning at all.

Having covered economic aspects and the emergence of a bourgeois society, we shall now turn to churches and schools, art and literature, attitudes and lifestyles. The general level of culture increased considerably, thanks to the law on compulsory state education. It was implemented by Baron József Eötvös in 1868, who conceived the idea twenty years earlier in 1848. Illiteracy rates dropped drastically: within thirty years, two thirds of the male population had an elementary education. The number of primary schools (four-year cycles) grew from 13,000 in 1867 to 30,000 in 1905, and a vast network of schools for working-class children, 'upper primaries', and a system of apprenticeship provided teaching beyond that of primary education. At secondary level, 200 schools served 44,000 pupils, not including students attending the teacher training colleges and other specialised commercial, agricultural and economic educational institutions.

A second university was established at Kolozsvár in 1872, and two others were set up, one in Debrecen, the other in Pozsony, receiving their first students in 1910. The Budapest School of Engineering was promoted to university level and a large number of academies ensured the training of an elite highly qualified in all the scientific disciplines as well as in music, fine art and drama. In 1895, the Eötvös College was founded, following in the footsteps of the Paris Ecole Normale Supérieure.

Education at all levels was open to all, regardless of race or creed, in keeping with the spirit of the minority laws conceived by Ferenc Deák



Map 10. Nationalities in the kingdom of Hungary, 1910

and József Eötvös, and adopted in 1868. Consequently, by the beginning of the twentieth century, several thousand schools and secondary schools provided education in minority mother tongues. There were over 2,000 Romanian primary schools, five lyceums and a dozen high schools and commercial colleges or colleges for young women. Conflicts with the different nationalities nonetheless erupted throughout the liberal age. In 1874–5, three Slovak lyceums were closed down due to 'pan-Slavic agitation' – in other words, all of them. Numerous other measures hit non-Magyar educational and cultural establishments. Things were particularly strained under Dezsö Bánffy's government, at the end of the 1900s. The 'lex Apponyi', adopted in 1907, introduced free primary education but also imposed 'Magyarisation', provoking strong opposition from aggrieved minorities.

Apart from a deterioration in the climate as a whole, with the upsurge of nationalism on every side, the roots of linguistic and cultural conflicts no doubt lay in the idea itself of the one and indivisible Hungarian state. The 1868 nationalities law was 'certainly a very liberal law' and 'in its details was evidence of a genuine broad-mindedness and a sincere desire for justice', the French historian Louis Eisenmann writes. It was a law that opened the way to assimilation, with no discrimination. Similarly, citizens were granted the right to 'be educated in their mother tongue' through to higher-education level. What the law did not recognise was the collective, corporate right of nationalities to cultural and administrative autonomy. Hungary constituted a single political nation in which all citizens were equal without distinction, but within the framework of a unitary state with Hungarian as the official language. Non-Magyar languages had not been relegated to the privacy of the home, however, since they were used in the classroom and, to a limited degree, even as official languages, according to a clever blend of freedoms and restrictions.

The idea of a unitary nation-state – along with an increasingly state-run education system – was very much in keeping with the spirit of the times, both in the monarchies and the Third French Republic. There was no Breton state school in France, nor a French school in German-annexed Alsace. The official language of administration and law was everywhere the language of the dominant nation – except for Austria and, to some extent, Hungary as well. As for the left, it applauded the progress of the state in all domains. A Marx or an Engels had nothing

but contempt for regional identities and the demands of the 'non-historical nations'.

The Magyar liberals erred not in judgement or intelligence, but in lacking a long-term perspective. It was unrealistic to count on the assimilation of minorities living in a country in which they constituted half the population. Furthermore, the 'tough tactics' deployed by politicians of the second generation in their attempt to 'Magyarise' the minorities were completely counterproductive and only exacerbated antagonisms.

The Jewish religious minority was, by reason of its size and circumstances, a special case. According to the 1735 census, there were 11,621 Jews in the country – historical Hungary – of which only 4,400 were native, the others being immigrants. The growth rate progressively increased: 75,000 in 1785, 240,000 in 1840, 540,000 in 1871. The population at large, meanwhile – excluding Croatia – grew from 8 million in 1785 to 13 million in 1869. The proportion of Jews, therefore, increased considerably, from 1 per cent to 4 per cent, and, by 1910, had reached 5 per cent. The character of the Jewish question then changed to become a social problem. An ill-defined generalised animosity spread alongside more traditional anti-Judaism fostered by the clergy and what I have called the 'competitive' economic anti-Semitism.

At the same time, the liberal nobility – the Hungarian 'bourgeoisie', as it were – continued to pursue a policy of welcome and emancipation. At a time when anti-Semitism was on the rise in the rest of Europe, including Austria, and pogroms were rampant in Russia and Russian Poland, their stance deserves to be noted. The industrial, financial and cultural activities propelled by enterprising Jews were viewed with approval in this country, which was backward in many respects and with a bourgeoisie of mainly German origin. The desire for assimilation was also mutual. Even the old 'Galicians' were not averse to it, though they often still spoke Yiddish, preserved their customs, and, it goes without saying, their religion. They even adopted a zealous patriotism – a trend that can be seen in obituaries, for example, praising the good Jew and true Magyar patriot.

Assimilation was both voluntary and exemplary. It was reciprocal, too; as despite being if not hated then at least despised within the dominant public view, the assimilation of Jews was welcomed in a country submerged by its ethnic and religious minorities. In the last general census of 1910, 54.6 per cent declared themselves Magyars – among them, the majority of the 900,000 Jews: a significant contribution to 'Magyarness' in this multinational kingdom.

Influenced by the pivotal national and economic role of the Jews, anti-Semitism, whether of a religious, visceral, competitive or ethnic kind, was therefore moderate. It manifested itself in some social discourse, in falsely jocular or openly contemptuous behaviour, and also in social exclusion either invisible or tacitly accepted by the Jews themselves. The half-hearted auto-isolation of the most traditional played a major part in creating the divide and particular cultural affinities not shared by the Magyar public were noticeable even among educated Jews. They did not frequent the same theatres, the same cafés, or read the same newspapers; they would, however, often vote for the same political party and mixed marriages became common as did the celebration of Christmas, together with other national festivals and the king's birthday.

It would be wrong to paint an idyllic picture, but during the half a century of the dual monarchy, peaceful co-existence brought about a certain tolerance which seemed to bear the promise of a hopeful future.

Apart from some sporadic incidents, one outbreak of anti-Semitism tainted the *belle époque*, the Tiszaeszlár affair. The village bearing this name was shaken by a 'ritual murder' trial, with a peasant girl the supposed victim. The trial ended in 1883 with the acquittal of the accused Jews. In the immediate aftermath of the affair, a parliamentary group formed a national anti-Semitic party, but it generated little interest, as did the Popular Catholic Party founded in 1895. Until the First World War, anti-Semitism gained little ground, either political or social.

Towards a bourgeois society?

Since the reform era of the 1830s, the most clear-sighted thinkers had worked towards a modern, industrial and urbanised Hungarian society and for the creation of a 'multitude of educated men' as Count Széchenyi famously put it. National progress had to include the development of economic and social structures and, of course, a bourgeoisie. The liberal deputy Pál Nyári said in 1848 that the country might have changed in its ideas but that among his peers at the Assembly, 'all the names were familiar ones', in other words, aristocratic and noble.

The civil service was the preserve of the local squires and landed gentry; impoverished and indebted nobles filled the administrative posts. Since Kálmán Tisza, nearly half the deputies of the ruling liberal party had been high-ranking civil servants. This combination of landed gentry and high-ranking civil servants and the more distinguished commoners constituted a political class and a middle class that was not easy to define, a class of worthies who would later call themselves 'seigniorial Christian middle class'. The adjective 'seigniorial' is probably not a good translation of the more modest Hungarian term, closer to 'gentlemen', but it was a specifically Hungarian self-identification, very different from the bourgeoisie of other countries. Having said that, one only has to read Balzac or Trollope (or Molière) to see that the phenomenon of a bourgeoisie aping the nobility was not unknown in these countries either. The Hungarian middle class, despite lacking self-confidence, had a strong tendency towards social posturing. Far from being merely a matter of semantics, this particular characteristic was also reflected in the attitudes and lifestyles of the nobility, whether authentic or borrowed. The huge economic transformations brought about by industrial and commercial progress, the increasing contribution of factories to the national revenue, along with other indicators of development, were evidence that bourgeois society was in the ascendant. A host of historians since the 1960s (György Ránki, Péter Hanák, Iván T. Berend, László Katus, to name but a few) have described the spectacular upsurge in the value of industrial production. From 175 million crowns in 1860, it rose to 1,400 million crowns in 1900, and to 2,539 million in 1913. The industrial growth index soared to 1,450, while the national revenue index climbed from 100 to 453. The state played its part: whereas between 1880 and 1890, industrial subsidies amounted to around 120 million, between 1900 and 1906, industry received 2,300 million from the state, and during the seven years leading up to the war, the amount trebled. Foreign investment was also considerable, estimated at 50 per cent in the 1890s – mainly Austrian capital – compared with only 25 per cent in the next decade. Once it had taken off, domestic capital became the economy's driving force – and a powerful one: industry and commerce went full speed ahead, leaving the primary sector far behind, its production value having only doubled within the same fifty-year span. It nonetheless remained dominant if at times backward.

Behind these figures, evidence of a developing capitalism, was a society split in two; modern and dynamic on the one hand, and moving at a snail's pace on the other. These contrasts explain the disparate judgements made about the country's characteristics. Some underline its outmoded – even feudal – structures, others highlight its scientific and technical achievements, the expansion of urban centres, of civil society, the arts and literature. Life in peasant villages had changed little, whereas in the large towns – Budapest especially – it had risen to the same level as the other European cities.

The capital was born in 1873 out of the unification of three separate towns: Óbuda, an ancient settlement, Buda, the royal seat, and Pest, a small town of peasants, craftsmen and fishermen. Pest had been of little importance until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when, for the first time, its number of inhabitants (35,000) superseded Buda's (25,000). A century later, in 1910, a unified Budapest had 881,600 inhabitants, nearly three quarters of them in Pest. The growth rate climbed from 100 to 1,254 per cent in less than a century – the highest in Europe, ahead of Berlin (998) and Vienna (578). Expansion and improvements in historic Buda did not supplant its majestic 'old town' look. On the left bank, Pest, industrial, commercial and bourgeois, exploded with vitality in a disconcerting blend of styles. Everything – or nearly everything – was 'neo': neo-Gothic, neo-baroque, neo-classical, *Jugendstil* (secessionist), or simply of no particular style: the hundreds of thousands who had come to town from the countryside to work in the factories had to be housed somewhere.

Apart from a few churches and houses (especially on Buda Castle), there was not much left of the old towns. In Pest, the remains of the old town were demolished, its walls razed to the ground or embedded with houses in order to create a circular boulevard, a kind of *Ringstrasse*, and later the grand boulevard where all the craftsmen set up shop, and beyond that, the industrial zone. The boulevards and the town centre, with the Opera, the neo-Gothic Parliament, the museums, schools and theatres, the palatial banks, stock exchange, and well-to-do middle-class houses were reminiscent of imperial Vienna, though less opulent. The middle-class conquerors of Pest were less wealthy, so the town was less splendid. Out of 1,000 houses, 543 were without an upper floor (compared to 123 in Vienna and 64 in Paris) and were home to modest artisans, minor employees and factory workers. Budapest became

Plate 30. The Hungarian National Museum, c. 1890

Hungarian at the same speed with which it became a modern urban centre. In 1850, 56 per cent of its 178,000 inhabitants were German, 36 per cent Magyar, 5 per cent Slovak, and 3 per cent other. Thirty years later, the figures had reversed and, in 1900, 85 per cent of the population was Hungarian, with 9.4 per cent German. The change was brought about by an influx of Hungarian workers, assimilated Jews and the integration of the Germans. It was a spontaneous process, a result of the culture and drive of a city in search of its identity. Family names were 'Magyarised'. Yesterday's Germans and Jews changed their names and became the thousand-year-old country's most fervent patriots.

The establishment of a strong Jewish middle class in the capital did not constitute a major problem until the aftermath of the First World War. Though 'ordinary anti-Semitism' was in no way absent – Jewish expansion in economic life and the sensitive domains of the press, publishing, theatre and the liberal professions did provoke resentment – it never reached the level of Viennese anti-Semitism. In 1910, the Jewish population represented about 7 per cent of the inhabitants in the Austrian capital, compared with 23 per cent in Budapest. Despite this three-fold expansion, Budapest did not experience the virulent rise of anti-Semitism that occurred under Schönerer and Karl Lueger (the seven times elected–resigned–re-elected mayor of the city, despite the emperor's disapproval).

Budapest was not the only triumphant symbol of urbanism and a certain urbanity. Temesvár, Arad, Pozsony, Nagyvárad and several other towns followed the example of the capital. In educated circles, development in social mores – in Norbert Elias's definition – was especially apparent. As with everything in this land of contrasts, social graces stopped at the sometimes invisible threshhold of the higher social ranks. Széchenyi, for example, tells a story, not too disapprovingly, about his friend Wesselényi – a vehement man, it has to be said – slapping a servant. Nearly a century later, this was still a common occurrence. Servants and peasants were often subjected to humiliating treatment but not the urban commoner, and the peasant with a certain status in the village was respected by the big landowners, as were the worker, post-office worker and railwayman and, of course, the educated and middle classes. Social divides remained, but class barriers were collapsing in favour of the middle classes. The new middle class was composed of an ever widening social circle and of people from all kinds of

backgrounds; it was a Hungarian-style bourgeoisie in which all graduates were on first name terms. Though it did not expunge the insurmountable distinction between a noble of good birth and the son of a commoner, the diploma did have a certain equalising effect, and bestowed upon its beneficiaries some social status. A more democratic space was therefore taking shape among the educated and wealthy classes, though the lowest classes were excluded.

The progress of bourgeois society was also evidenced by a diversified civil society. One indication of the new sociability was a proliferation of associations of all kinds: religious, cultural (reading and singing circles), economic, professional and local. This sociability, based on new affinities and shared interests, comradeship or education, often transcended social divisions.

In 1862, there were 579 associations in Hungary; in 1881, there were 4,000. In the absence of any other statistical data, an estimate based on the 21,311 association statutes approved by the minister of the interior, suggests that the associations, circles and clubs existing towards the end of the dual monarchy numbered around half that figure. Among them were 'coalitions' of workers consisting of over twenty members – banned for so long in France – and trade unions. In 1904, there were 14 nationally organised trade unions with 408 groups and 17 local syndicate societies. The first clubs and associations for women also appeared and the very old mutual aid burial societies survived without being registered.

Freemasonry, already long established in the country, began to evolve in a variety of milieus, notably among ex-combatants of the 1848 revolution. Alongside the lodges which followed Scottish rituals were veterans from Kossuth's time, who organised the Great Oriental Lodge. The two trends merged in 1886 under the name of Great Symbolic Lodge, bringing together a number of eminent men.

Here too there were stark contrasts: the 'civilising process' in Hungary which owed much to the liberal government had two distinct limits: national minority societies were closely monitored, and socialist movements, both industrial and rural, were controlled, suppressed and even persecuted. The name 'social democrat' was forbidden and it was not until 1890 that the Workers' Party was able to operate under that name. Its activities met with countless administrative obstacles followed by brutal suppression in 1906. The government's main target at the turn of the century, however, was the vigorous and tenacious rural Socialist movement.

As in previous centuries, developments in science, art and literature were particularly dazzling during this period of contrasts and diversity. Physicians, doctors, numerous natural and technical scientists contributed to progress in the sciences and to research and university teaching. It is impossible to list all the scientific discoveries. The most significant were in law, philosophy of law, history and sociology, because they addressed issues related to contemporary society. Professors in philosophy of law, like Ágost Pulsky, Gyula Pikler, Ignác Kuncz in Transylvania, or Bódog Somló, were concerned with issues inextricably bound up with nationhood, the state and citizenship. Once dominated by nationalist thinking, the law for the new generation had to conform to a society based on philosophical and moral assumptions of individual freedom and equality. Trends of thought evolved towards democracy and led to the birth of sociology, thus breaking with the rigid disciplinary boundaries of the past. 'Sociology was a word which synthesised our aspirations in a new politics inspired by Bentham's ideals of justice and founded on the social sciences', wrote Oszkár Jászi in a retrospective article. The Society for Social Sciences founded in 1901 became the breeding ground for a radical democratic movement.

An expansion in historiography, dominated by national romanticism but equally influenced by positivism, the critique of sources and German historicism had already occurred.

Literature had long been dominated by the memories of 1848–9 and by the divisions created by the 1867 compromise. Petöfi, the poet, died as he had lived, fighting on the battlefield for freedom – and his national romanticism still exerted a fascinating influence, even on conservative writers, thanks to the magic and genius of his poetry. He was called by some the Hungarian Béranger though he was a far better poet. Should he in fact be seen as the Hungarian Victor Hugo or Heine's brother, for his romanticism and caustic wit, the clarity of his populist poetic language? Every great poet is, in the end, his own universe.

Among his friends, János Arany reached the highest peaks in terms of perfection of form, crystal clarity of language and his closeness to the language of the people. He left a body of work more complex than

Petöfi's, the fruit of his experience, but also the emotional traumas of his time and his own leanings towards pessimism, melancholy and mental suffering.

The Hungarian poetic tradition, which embraced seven centuries, lived through a veritable golden age with Vörösmarty, Petöfi, Arany, Vajda's lyrical poetry and other contemporaries. The greatest among them set about translating Shakespeare, seen as 'half the universe'. The nineteenth century was also outstanding for the wealth of its epic genre, straddling romanticism and realism. József Eötvös wrote social and moral novels, while his contemporary, Zsigmond Kemény, though little read due to his heavy style, authored historical novels in which the characters' psychology is described to a degree that has yet to be surpassed in Hungarian prose. And of course, Mór Jókai, author of close to one hundred adventure and fantasy novels, enjoyed unprecedented popularity.

Kálmán Mikszáth inaugurated a period which it would be tempting to label 'critical realism', were it not impossible to fit him into a cliché. Short-story writer, novelist, author of devastating sketches, satires and short newspaper articles, Mikszáth shone at everything. His finely nuanced characters suggest parallels with Thackeray, Trollope or Maupassant, his contemporaries. However, the world which inspired this clear-sighted observer – that of his own class, the gentry, flamboyant, frivolous, charming, scheming and forever in debt – was coming to a end.

There was also an academic literature, more conservative in both its politics and forms of expression, with reviews, publishers and literary societies as well as a culture born of a cosmopolitan metropolis. Though not the sole representatives, Jewish writers and journalists were part of a rather particular breed whose lifestyle made its mark on the capital's bohemian element until the end of the monarchy and beyond: the poet József Kiss, the novelist and short-story writer Sándor Bródy and the youngest of them, Ferenc Molnár, internationally acclaimed playwright, to name but a few. Budapest had half a dozen theatres, large publishing houses and a press representing a variety of tendencies. Fine arts flourished, notably the Nagybánya School, fuelled by the artistic influences of Munich, Paris and Berlin. Pál Szinnyei Merse, Károly Ferenczy, István Csók, Tivadar Csontvári Kosztka, József Rippl-Rónai – it would be impossible to list them all. At the 1900 World Exhibition, the Hungarian school presented in Paris was admired for its 'bold and

brilliant virtuosity', having no 'particular characteristic' if not a 'certain exoticism'; Paris bestowed the same judgement on Gustav Klimt's and Egon Schiele's Secessionism. True, the *fin-de-siècle* of Hungarian painting, like that of Viennese Art Nouveau, was only just beginning. All things 'modern' remained suspect in the eyes of the educated majority in Hungary, who feared the dilution of national cultural identity. Gustav Mahler, then Arthur Nikisch, directors of the Budapest Opera for a time, were soon dismissed. Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, had just begun their research into folk music, which would later be blended into their modernist music. For the time being, 'Budapest 1900', just like that of the previous century, cultivated a conservative national art rather than the *fin-de-siècle* art of Vienna, Berlin, Paris or London.

FROM ONE CRISIS TO ANOTHER, 1904–1914

When the 'Millennium' fires of 1896 died out, Hungary was still living under the fascination of its thousand-year-old past and bathed in self-satisfaction over the success of the Austro-Hungarian compromise. An unequivocal success, it was confirmed by progress in all domains and by a better distribution of general well-being. Social tensions and the problem of the minorities had not yet disturbed the peace. Hungary was confident, had a clear conscience, and failed to notice the threatening clouds gathering on the horizon. Until that point, Hungary succeeded in discarding any reorganisation plan to move from a dual to a tripartite monarchy or even a federation; anything that called into question Magyar supremacy within the kingdom or its role, along with Austria, in common affairs. And yet, the first crisis stemmed not from social tensions or dissension among the minorities, but from the modalities of co-existence with Austria, an as yet unresolved issue. It was sparked off by the opposition of 'left-wing' independents in the conflict over military contingency and the order of army command, one of the dual system's numerous bones of contention.

Francis Joseph, true to himself, behaved loyally towards his Hungarian kingdom, scrupulously respecting the words and the spirit of the compromise. He refused any involvement in internal affairs, including the demands of the ethnic minorities. The two common affairs, diplomacy and the army, formed part of his special domain and

he had no intention of acceding to the nationalist demands of the Independence Party led by, among others, its president Gyula Justh and by Ferenc Kossuth, son of the famous exile. They were unhappy with the monopoly of German as the language of command, wanted the withdrawal of Hungarian units serving outside the frontiers and their oath to be made to the Hungarian Constitution. It was too much for Francis Joseph: the unity of the imperial and royal army (*Königliche und Käiserliche*), foundation of the dual monarchy, would have been compromised. To express his unswerving opposition, he made his celebrated order of the day at Chlopy in September 1903, amidst his soldiers, during the Galicia manoeuvres. Standing fast against the Hungarians was all the more necessary since the imperial army was, as in Joseph Roth's novels, the crucible of social and supranational integration of the people living under the monarchy, where individuals could advance regardless of class or nationality.

Francis Joseph made a few concessions on minor issues and appointed Count István Tisza, son of the old liberal leader, to form a new government and to pass a law on the army in accordance with his ideas. Growing opposition forced Tisza to call an election – which he lost. In 1905, for the first time since the 1867 compromise, the liberal party lost its overall majority and found itself relegated to second place, behind the Independence Party. The imperial general began to consider military intervention and suspension of the Hungarian Constitution. Francis Joseph refused but nonetheless chose to take firm action. He gave General Géza Fejérváry the task of forming an extra-parliamentary government which was nicknamed 'gendarme-government' because Fejérváry had been commander of the bodyguard.

The king had another weapon at his disposal: he threatened the former opposition, now the majority, with the introduction of universal suffrage, which would have certainly led to the Independence Party losing the elections through the hostile votes of the minorities. The ploy worked. After the dissolution of Parliament in 1906, opponents accepted Francis Joseph's conditions concerning the army and formed a coalition government under the presidency of Sándor Wekerle, the former prime minister, with the participation of politicians of all hues, including Gyula Andrássy, son of the former foreign affairs minister, Ferenc Kossuth, son of the venerated leader of the 1848–9 uprising, and Count Albert Apponyi. The Wekerle government, despite its prime minister's

liberal reputation, led a resolutely nationalistic and anti-socialist policy, which provoked the opposition of the entire left, from the Social Democratic Party to the National Agricultural Workers League, via the middle-class radicals.

The nationalist and anti-democratic coalition government did not last. At the 1910 elections, the former liberals, now the National Workers' Party, secured an absolute majority, under the aegis of István Tisza who, without having been involved in government prior to 1913, led the policy-making of a series of ephemeral governments. The Workers' Party had as little in common with erstwhile liberalism as Tisza did with his father. His personal qualities – intelligence, steadiness and courage – are undisputed but Tisza also represented an anti-social, reactionary trend (the poet Ady called him a pit bull). As for the nationality question, he energetically destroyed the independent nationalist opposition which threatened the Austro-Hungarian edifice, while being nonetheless a firm supporter of an exclusive nationalist policy at the expense of the minorities.

Francis Joseph thus emerged victorious from the crisis, but then had to face others. The Chamber of Deputies became the stage for noisy confrontations and ludicrous scenes provoked by the opposition's obstruction tactics and an assassination attempt against Tisza. There were also more serious signs of instability and brewing discontent. A general strike and a large anti-Tisza demonstration were organised in 1912 by the Social Democratic Party. It was well attended and led to a confrontation with the police, resulting in 6 dead, 182 wounded and 300 arrests. This 'bloody Thursday' entered the mythology of the workers' movement. Agrarian Socialism, meanwhile, had taken off again, under new leaders such as András Áchim, deputy in the Assembly, who promoted the redistribution of large properties, and István Nagyatádi Szabó, founder of a small farmers' party, the future and important Smallholders' Party.

A variety of conflicts with national minorities continued, the latter finding in Archduke Francis Ferdinand a powerful protector. Francis Ferdinand, the emperor's nephew, was heir to the throne since Francis Joseph's only son, Rudolph, had taken his own life, together with his mistress, Baroness Maria Vetsera, at Meyerling Castle, in 1889. Unlike Rudolph, Francis Ferdinand was known to be 'anti-Magyar', but in reality he was first and foremost a Habsburg archduke, defender of the

Imperial House and of its power. He developed a strong aversion to the Magyars, the main obstacles in his plans to reorganise the monarchy. At the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, Francis Ferdinand set up a kind of special cabinet, attended by individuals of various nationalities, where the reorganisation of the monarchy along federal lines was discussed and elaborated upon.

Political crises certainly did not help to consolidate the Hungarian state or to advance towards a solution to the real national and social problems. If despite everything dualism survived, it was thanks to the liberal wing of the political class, conscious of its necessity, and to Francis Joseph, who also believed that maintaining the precarious balance based on the compromise was essential. Meanwhile, the monarchy had to face even more acute crises, this time from abroad.

In October 1908, Bosnia-Herzegovina, occupied since the Congress of Berlin (1878), was annexed to the monarchy. The powers who had a direct interest – Russia and Turkey, followed by Serbia – consented reluctantly. Annexation was justified by 'historical rights' of the Hungarian Crown dating back to the Middle Ages, but in fact the Hungarians did not particularly want an increase of their Slav population. Bosnia-Herzegovina was, in effect, governed as a territory shared by the two states of the monarchy, without being made part of Hungary. After a few conflicts with the local Muslim population, the Austro-Hungarian administration, though not loved, came to be accepted. Such was not the case for the Bosnian Serbs, however. The latter looked to Serbia, where the policy had changed since the assassination of Alexander Obrenovich by officers of the 'Black Hand' and the accession of the Karageorgevich dynasty. A pro-Austrian position had been replaced by the idea of a 'Greater Serbia', based on Russian support. Nicola Pashich had already masterminded this project.

Hungary, meanwhile, was more immediately concerned with Serb unrest in Croatia. In 1908, more than fifty members of the Serb Autonomy Party (of Croatia) were arrested and brought before the Zagreb tribunal, accused of Greater Serb propaganda. Thirty-one of them were found guilty of high treason and sentenced to long periods of imprisonment, but were later acquitted. Serb unrest in Croatia was far from being the Magyars' preoccupation. Among Croats themselves, the movement supporting separation from the Hungarian Crown was gaining ground.

Indeed, it was not long before the Balkan powder keg blew up: the annexation of Bosnia in 1908 was just a time bomb waiting for the 1912–13 Balkan wars in order to go off. Following annexation, Russia had – in the words of its minister Alexander Isvolski – 'swallowed the bitter pill'. The Serbs, forced to submit to Austrian and German pressure, no doubt felt even more embittered. They were just biding their time for the opportune moment for a renewed assault, this time against Turkey, in alliance with other Christian countries in the peninsula and with Russia (who appointed itself protector of their interests). Turkey was beaten; the victors, however, immediately set off to fight for the partitioning of Macedonia, which had been liberated from the Ottoman Empire and was coveted by Bulgaria. From here to the second, very brief, Balkan war in which Serb, Greek and Romanian armies defeated the Bulgarians.

The imbroglio that was the Balkans (a land of inextricably mixed nationalities and languages under the eagle eye of Turkey, Russia, Italy, Austria–Hungary and, behind it, Germany) was, after two Balkan wars, far from being resolved. The results achieved by the two great rival powers were limited: Russia had certainly consolidated its influence but not its hegemony; in the face of Russia's rising preponderance and Serb expansion in the Balkans, Austria–Hungary won little more than a reprieve. The plan of Vienna, to aid Bulgaria in creating a counterweight against the Russians and Serbs, had to be abandoned. Italy, its ally, opposed the plan, while Germany, the Triple Alliance's pivot, was putting the brakes on Vienna in order to safeguard its relations with Russia. Caution also prevailed in London and Paris. The degeneration of the Balkan conflicts into a European war was thus avoided – but only just, and without having resolved the tangled antagonisms that would eventually be its root cause.

During the political crisis of the early twentieth century progressive minds had drawn the contours of a radical transformation of society, those of a 'new Hungary' and a democratic 'counter-culture', open to the ideas of the century. The guiding light was the poet Endre Ady; the breeding ground for these ideas were journals like *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century 1900–19) and *Nyugat* (West, 1908–41), and associations like the Social Sciences Society. We have already come across the leaders of this movement, notably Oszkár Jászi, famous for his clarity and multivalent vision. Jászi raised and tackled a variety of issues


V. ÉVFOLYAM. 1912. JUNIUS 16. 12. SZÁM.

NYUGAT

FŐSZERKESZTŐ: IGNOTUS SZERKESZTŐK: FENYŐ MIKSA ÉS OSVÁT ERNŐ

SZERKESZTŐSÉG ÉS KIADÓHIVATAL BUDAPEST, IX., LÓNYAY-UTCA 18.

Grossmann Simon
Szerb királyi udvari fogász
Budapest, VII. kerület,
Erzsébet-körút 50. sz.
TELEFON 86—50.

BLACKMAN
VENTILÁTOROK, SZELLŐZŐ-SZIVÓ-BERENDEZÉSEK
MAGYAR SZELLŐZŐ MŰVEK
Budapest, Áréna-út 80. Telefon

GÁBOR
INTERNÁTUS
Budapest, VI., Munkácsy-u. 21. sz. Andrássy-úti villanegyed.

Elsner
divatáruháza
BUDAPEST
IV., Párisi-u. 3. sz.

HUNGÁRIA
Általános BIZTOSITÓ R.-T.
BUDAPESTEN, IV., KÁROLY-KÖRÚT 2.
TELEFONSZÁM 153—98.
KARTELLEN KIVÜL KÖT: tüz-, élet-, baleset-, betörés-, üveg-, jég- és állatbiztositásokat

Plate 31. Cover of the journal *Nyugat*, 1912

including socialism, agrarian reform and the struggle for political democracy. It was he who developed the modern democratic concept of solving the nationality problems based upon cultural freedom for all minorities, but without autonomy. He retained the concept of the integral and unitary Magyar state which he hoped to evolve towards a citizens' democracy. Like other exponents of radicalism, Jászi emigrated after the collapse of the Károlyi regime, in which he was a minister, and pursued a brilliant career as a sociologist–historian, first in Europe, then in the United States until his death in 1957, without ever returning to the public political life of his native land. Like his comrades, he was held in contempt by the Horthy regime because of his radicalism, and, later, by the Communist regime for his firm opposition to Bolshevism, a position which also caused his breach with Count Károlyi.

Jászi's itinerary is fairly typical of the fate of Hungarian radical democrats under successive regimes over a period of nearly a century. By the time they founded their association and the journal *Huszadik Század*, the radicals amounted to a small, heterogeneous group of essayists and professors of law, philosophy and the science that was their guiding light to a just and free society – in other words, sociology. Their radical social vision did not attract a very wide audience and its social base was tenuous. In the absence of an established bourgeoisie, their sphere of influence was limited to a handful of intellectuals and half of those were Jewish. Furthermore, since their social ideas and a degree of anti-capitalism set them apart from a burnt-out liberalism, the radicals only appealed to some sections of the middle classes. Though close to the social democrats, they distanced themselves from the party, from the workers' movement and from Marxism. The historian Miklós Szabó was correct to detect the inclination towards a 'third way', that bright but narrow path which has so often bewitched high-minded intellectuals, but which fails to impact upon reality.

Initially, the group advertised its political disinterestedness. It included men with divergent perspectives: Count Gyula Andrássy was president of the Social Science Society; the liberal journalist Gusztáv Gratz edited the journal *Huszadik Század* until 1906, when their paths diverged. The more radical elements among them focused on a programme for the fundamental transformation of society and state. Many of them joined the Galileo Circle, founded in 1908, which included among its members a number of future Communists. The name 'radical

democrat' was certainly appropriate in the sense that the New Hungary of their ideals entailed the abolition of feudalism, the establishment of a lawful state, and a progressive modern democracy. With the old liberal party led by the nationalist–conservative István Tisza, they wanted to implement a revolutionary plan via the irresistible force of progress rather than through violence. Their respective intellectual development was, however, very different. In the beginning, positivism was an ephemeral presence, together with that of Herbert Spencer. There were traces of the sociology of Durkheim and Vilfredo Pareto and of anarcho-syndicalism through Ervin Szabó. Also present were hints of Marxism – treated with caution – and evolutionism. These eclectic readings could not form a coherent ideology, but they were instrumental in the advent of a new political culture. The radicals had the courage to sow the seeds without any real hope of reaping the benefits. The almost total indifference of most radicals towards economics, both theoretical and practical, further reduced the possibility that they might influence society in any significant way. Fighting everyone was hard; one ended up with a lot of enemies and few supporters.

SARAJEVO: WAR AND DEFEAT

When on 28 June 1914 Gavrilo Princip, a member of the 'Black Hand' secret society, assassinated the heir to the throne, Francis Ferdinand, and his wife at Sarajevo, none of the powers foresaw the consequences of this act. Yet the Sarajevo assassination was to trigger the deadly Great War. For nearly a century now, historians have tried to unravel the diplomatic entanglements which led to Francis Joseph's ultimatum to Serbia and, finally, to the declaration of war. The belief that Belgrade was behind the 'Black Hand' organisation weighed heavily in the decision. Francis Joseph envisaged first of all a punitive expedition against the Serbs. It was a military solution, therefore, supported by his Austrian prime minister, Karl von Stürgkh, by the chief of staff, Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, and the foreign minister, Count Leopold von Berchtold. The latter supported the view that the monarchy must rise to the challenge of Serbia. Assuming Russian intervention on the side of the Serbs, the German chief of staff and chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg considered the situation rather favourable: Russia was unprepared, the war would be brief and victory a foregone conclusion. The cogs were set in motion. Only the Hungarian head of government, Count István Tisza, was against the decision, fearing irreparable consequences if Belgrade's role in the Sarajevo assassination could not be proven and if military and diplomatic conditions were not right. Tisza finally relented under pressure from Austrian ministers and with agreement from Berlin. He was then in the front line, concentrating all his efforts on winning the war.

The population reacted enthusiastically at first. As in all other belligerent countries, mobilisation and the soldiers' departure to the front took place in a wave of patriotic fervour. The Social Democratic Party, after a brief pacifist response, gave up its opposition to the war. A crucial factor for the multinational monarchy was that none of its dozen or so ethnic minorities turned against it and defections were rare. Unity seemed to have been renewed in an outburst of loyalty towards the emperor. Enthusiasm did inevitably wane, but with its 53 million inhabitants (France had 42 million), Austria–Hungary had at its disposal at any one time about 4 million soldiers and 8 million in all fought in the war, half of this force being provided by the Hungarian Crown.

The Austro-Hungarian armies first engaged on the southern front against Serbia, then, following the Russian offensive, on the northern front and, finally, on a third front against Italy, collecting more defeats than they did victories, despite the valiant efforts of the soldiers and the officers' corps. High command was partially responsible, but the main causes were organisational weaknesses and lack of equipment and provisions; the German army had to save the day more than once during the long years of the Great War.

The monarchy's losses were extremely heavy. Of the 3,800,000 soldiers mobilised in Hungary, 661,000 lost their lives, more than 700,000 were wounded and a similar number of them were made prisoners.

The final series of débâcles began in June 1918 on the Italian front. Along the line of the River Piave, scene of Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms*, the army of the monarchy was almost annihilated. The counter-offensive by the Entente began in July, with the Germans sustaining a fatal defeat near the Somme. In September, the Bulgarians surrendered to General Franchet d'Esperey's Eastern French army at Salonika. October saw the second catastrophe at Piave; on 3 November, Austria–Hungary surrendered to the allied armies and signed the armistice at Villa Giusti in Padua.

War diplomacy

Meanwhile, on 21 November 1916, Francis Joseph died at the age of eighty-six, after a sixty-eight-year reign. His successor, as emperor of Austria, was Charles I – Charles IV as king of Hungary. The death of the old emperor was a heavy blow to the monarchy, but the decline of the empire had already begun with the defeats and because of serious economic deterioration in its rural hinterland. Consequently, four months after his coronation, Charles initiated a separate peace deal through his brothers-in-law, Princes Sixte and Xavier of Bourbon-Parma, officers of the French army. Sixte took Charles's message to President Poincaré, a rather vague message rejected by the French and, moreover, not at all well received in Berlin.

Rather than embarking upon a serious course of diplomacy for a separate peace, the monarchy seems to have adopted those of its rivals and of the emigrants. Its fate was not sealed on its own by the Alliance and the United States until April 1918. Despite its military setbacks, desertions, the formation of the Czech legion in Russia, mutinies, strikes and agitation by the minorities, the destruction of Austria–Hungary was not yet a foregone conclusion. President Wilson's famous Fourteen Points, to be declared on 8 January 1918, did not envisage it, nor was it part of the Entente's war aims. On the other hand, the Congress of the Austro-Hungarian nationalities, which opened in Rome on 8 April 1918 and where bids for independence were made, turned out to be an unfavourable turning point. At the end of May, the United States agreed to the dismantling of Austria–Hungary. This was followed by a military council of the Entente which officially added the creation of Poland, Czechoslovakia and a southern Slav state to the war aims – in other words, the destruction of the dual monarchy. The recognition of the Transylvanian Romanians' right to self-determination was the last stroke in the disintegration of the Hungarian part.

The end of Austria–Hungary, however, cannot be explained by ultimate decisions; nor, indeed, the thesis of 'fatality' which had to be reframed in the long term. The mutilation of the monarchy, if not its total destruction, was foreseeable. Before recapitulating this long process, it is helpful to discuss the short-term events, in so far as a summary of the multiplicity of events punctuating the war years is in fact possible.

While there was naturally no diplomatic presence in enemy cities and therefore no one to plead the Austro-Hungarian cause in Paris or London, there was an emigrant presence from the monarchy's nationalities. Czech and Slovak emigrants played a decisive role in bringing about a change in the politics of the Entente and the United States towards Austria–Hungary. The aim to 'destroy Austria' (*Austria delenda*) was propagated by leaders of the Czech emigration, primarily two high-calibre statesmen, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937) and Edvard Beneš (1884–1948). In Paris, Beneš worked tirelessly for the Czechoslovak cause, winning the support of influential French intellectuals, Slavist university professors, journalists, writers, mostly members of a national Committee for Political and Social Studies and a Society of Studies, both founded in 1916, comprising pacifists, anarchists and freemasons. The historian Ernest Denis played a particularly important role. The 'Czechophile lobby' also won the support of Stéphen Pichon and Philippe Berthelot, minister and general secretary of foreign affairs respectively. As for the head of government himself, Georges Clemenceau, no convincing explanation has yet been put forward for his violently anti-Austrian reversal in 1918–19 and his acrimony towards the Hungarians.

An influential pressure group was also formed in England, led by Professor Robert W. Seton-Watson, author of *Racial Problems in Hungary* (1908), *The Habsburg Monarchy and the South Slav Question* (1911) and editor of *The New Europe Review* from 1916, and Henry Wickham Steed, correspondent of *The Times*. 'The result was the creation of a powerful government lobby in support of a strong British commitment to national self-determination in Eastern Europe', writes Thomas L. Sakmyster in a collective work dedicated to the war (*War and Society in East Central Europe*, vol. VI (Social Science Monograph, New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1982)).

At the peace conference, the Hungarians had to pay a heavy price for the defeat. The Czechoslovak Republic, Romania and the Serb-Croat-Slovene kingdom annexed vast territories where more than 3 million Magyars cohabited with the ethnic relatives of the victorious side. The Paris treaties satisfied the latter entirely, but did so by brutally carving up territories, sacrificing millions of Magyars, including discrete groups like the Szeklers and the Magyars living in border areas. 'Another cloudless day', writes Harold Nicolson, the British diplomat, in his *Diary* on

8 May 1919, after a decisive meeting between the foreign ministers of the five powers, held at the Quai d'Orsay.

> There (in that heavy tapestried room, under the simper of Marie de Medicis, with the windows open upon the garden and the sound of water sprinkling from a fountain and from a lawn hose) – the fate of the Austro-Hungarian Empire is finally settled. Hungary is partitioned by these five distinguished gentlemen – indolently, irresponsibly partitioned – while the water sprinkles on the lilac outside – while the experts watch anxiously – while A.J.B., in the intervals of dialectics on secondary points, relapses into somnolence – while Lansing draws hobgoblins upon his writing pad – while Pichon crouching in his large chair blinks owlishly as decision after decision is actually recorded – while Sonnino, returned to Canossa, is rigidly polite – while Makino, inscrutable and inarticulate, observes, observes, observes.

The fact that Nicolson was not particularly fond of the Magyars makes his testimony all the more significant.

Apart from Emperor–King Charles's clumsy attempt and a few diplomatic or private moves – by Count Michael Károlyi among others – Vienna and Budapest did not have the means of influencing Allied diplomacy or European and American public opinion. Hungarian internal policy had not made any progress towards democracy that would have changed the kingdom's tarnished image. Successors of István Tisza, head of government until 1917, maintained a 'greater Hungarian' position, thereby leaving little room for any kind of agreement with the minorities.

THE END OF HISTORICAL HUNGARY

The half a century of dual monarchy has been described, analysed and judged in different ways by both Hungarian public opinion and historians. The enthused crowds who celebrated independence in the final days of October 1918 were followed by disappointed generations nostalgic for 'the good old days' of Francis Joseph, for peace, and, above all, for the vanished grandeur of historical Hungary. Collective memory certainly reserved a special place for the anti-Habsburg tradition, but alongside remembrance of Rákóczi and Kossuth was also a veneration of the good kings of the Austrian dynasty. The 'legal' world was as divided as the 'rural' one. Hungary remained a kingdom under Horthy's regency, and the return of the crowned king, Charles IV, was forbidden. Schools and streets displayed the tricolour roundel on 15

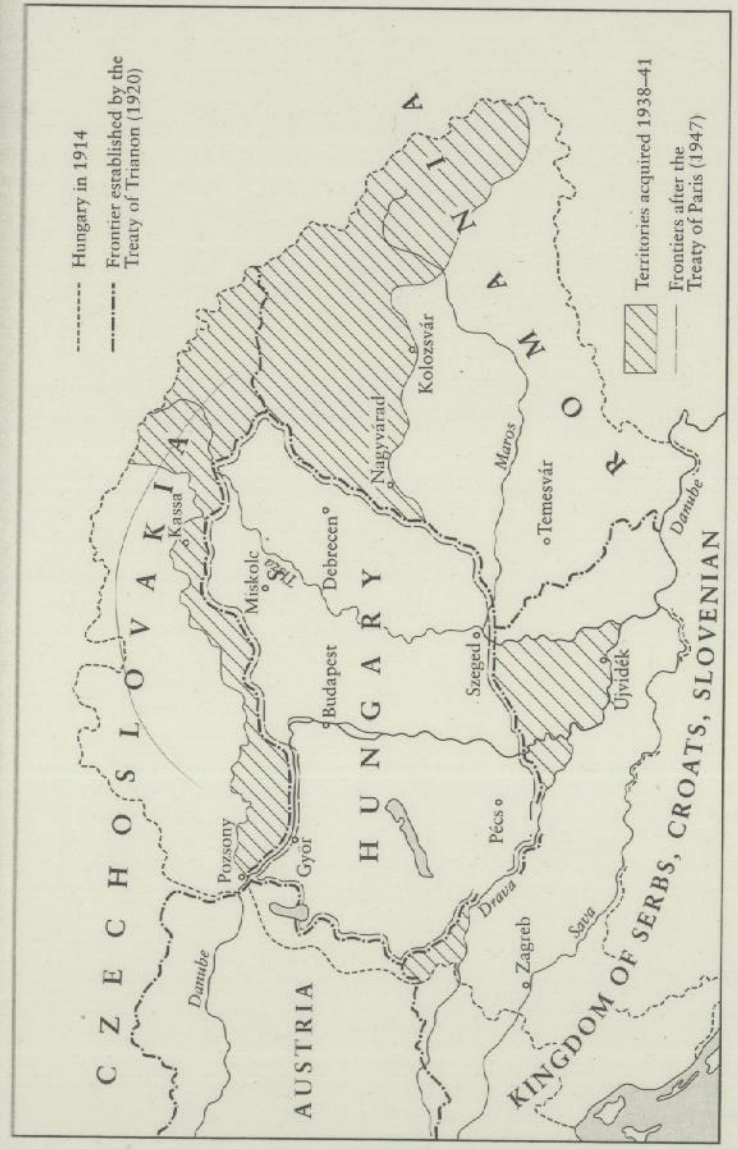
March, anniversary of the 1848 revolution, and a black ribbon on 6 October, in commemoration of the day thirteen generals were executed during the War of Independence. However, teaching about the day in April 1849 when Kossuth declared separation from the Habsburgs remained discreet. Photographs of the old man of the Hofburg and the old man who died in exile in Turin, gazed peacefully at each other on the dressers of bourgeois apartments or in the 'parlours' of peasant cottages. The predominantly Calvinist eastern region seems to have remained more attached to the anti-Habsburg *kuruc* tradition than Catholic Transdanubia. A similar split can be observed among the historians of the inter-war period. Gyula Szekfü's iconoclastic study of Rákóczi in exile had already provoked a scandal when it appeared in 1913 because of the less than complimentary judgement he conferred upon the prince, one of the symbols of national resistance. Yet the same historian became an incontestable authority for his works which cast a critical eye upon the turbulent noble estates, on Kossuth and his radical policy as opposed to Deák, the wise architect of the 1867 compromise, that 'happy accomplishment of our modern history, the best solution to an age-old problem'. Szekfü went as far as to declare that 'in terms of public rights, '67 was the peak of 400 years of history'. Communist historiography would later veto this. For twenty years, the notion of Hungary's 'colonisation' by Austria, and of the nation's oppression by the Habsburgs prevailed. In this ideological reading, Hungary's 'true' history was nothing less than '400 years of struggle for independence'. University professors, members of the Academy and respected lyceum teachers were sacked for stating the contrary or for professing a more nuanced point of view. Re-establishing the truth of the matter carried risks for several historians from the Institute of History. György Ránki and Iván T. Berend, in their studies of economic history, show that the period of dualism, whilst penalising industrialisation through Austrian customs pressures, was favourable to modernisation and growth. Péter Hanák, author of several studies on cultural and political aspects of this period, analyses societal progress, refusing dogmatic Communist theses in which only the exploiting classes supported dualism. These historian 'apologists for the monarchy', the Communists retorted, were simply renouncing the ideas of the democratic and socialist revolution. Domokos Kosáry, one of the key representatives of scientific historiography, did not bend to ideological demands and was fired. Thanks to a

host of historians, the Hungarian position within dualism has also been rectified: they have shown how, bearing in mind that total independence was impossible, Hungary was able to find security and an honourable place in international relations. Without idealising the 1867 solution, its detrimental effects on the economic and social structures and on the petrifaction of the political system, the chiaroscuro light of reality is thus shed on dualism. In the light of an otherwise glorious history, it was an undoubtedly regrettable, in the true sense of the word, compromise, but a fertile and creative one too.

Could the monarchy have survived?

On 16 October 1918, two weeks before the Padua armistice, Charles declared the transformation of Austria (not Hungary) into a federal state. It was too late. In a cascade of declarations, Czechs, Slovaks and Southern Slavs proclaimed their separation. Austria declared itself a republic, and Hungary separated itself belatedly from its king. Within a matter of weeks, the Habsburg Empire, ten centuries old, collapsed. Could it have survived? According to the most widespread opinion, the 'worm-eaten edifice' was in any case condemned to demolition because of its outmoded structures, its heavy and punctilious organisation, and most of all its multi-ethnic composition. Every empire must perish ... However, the only worthwhile point is not to come up with rather short theories on the 'inexorable advance of the nationalities' and the imminent collapse of the multinational empire, but to ascertain whether or not it had the capacity to rebuild itself on new foundations.

As has already been stated, in 1918 it was certainly too late. Emperor Charles's manifesto for the reorganisation of Austria, without touching Hungary's status, came at a time when independence – for all the countries of the empire – was within reach, and without a single shot being fired. One year earlier – let alone in the pre-war period – the desire for independence was far weaker. Separatism was at that time fostered by emigrants, especially the Czechs, rather than by the domestic political class or public opinion. The federal solution seemed to meet Czech desires; as for the Croats, they leaned towards an attachment to the Austrian Empire in return for separation from the kingdom of Hungary and union with Dalmatia. Other provinces, like Galicia, aspired to autonomous status. Subject to a shift in the Hungarian position, the



Map 11. Frontiers of Hungary after the Treaties of Trianon (1920) and Paris (1947)

federal solution was therefore viable – perhaps until 1918, certainly before the war.

It can be deduced that without the war, the Austrian monarchy, transformed into a federation, would not have been doomed. As Léo Valiani points out in his authoritative work, it was the war, the trials endured, emigrant activity, the hardening of the Allies and the final defeat which turned the nationality movement into an irresistible force which led to the eruption.

As for the Hungarian position – within the hypothesis of a solution adopted before the crisis became irreversible – the essentials are known: the Hungarians stuck firmly to their intransigent position, unwilling to give away an inch of their constitutional prerogatives. In other words, they rejected any trialism or federal project which placed the Austrian Slavs on an equal footing with the Hungarians. Furthermore, apart from the minorities of the Austrian Empire, there were Hungary's national minorities: Slovaks, Romanians, Germans, Croats, Serbs and Ruthenians. To enter into a federation with all these peoples would have been absolutely unthinkable for two reasons. Firstly, the other members – Austrian Germans, Czechs, Poles and Italians – would have been reduced to the smallest portion under the crushing weight of a Hungary comprising 20 million inhabitants. Secondly, none of the nationalities within the Hungarian kingdom would have been willing to be the leftovers of a reorganisation of this kind.

The Hungarian statesmen were right: whatever the scenario, federalisation would have led to the disintegration of historical Hungary. It would have entailed separation from Croatia, the loss of Upper Hungary to be transformed into a federal Slovak state and the secession, in one form or another, of the Transylvanian Romanians, not to mention inevitable Serb demands, probable Ruthenian demands and foreseeable Saxon ones.

All the last governments – of Tisza, Móric Eszterházy, Sándor Wekerle and Count Hadik in the final instance – acted reactively: they categorically opposed any agreement which threatened the sovereignty of the Hungarian Crown over the entire territory of the kingdom. Hungary was consequently the stumbling block in the reorganisation of the monarchy: without Hungary's agreement, the project could not be carried out; without Hungary, the result would have been an Austro-Czech–Dalmatian–Galician federal state reduced to half the dual monarchy. To add anything to this statement would be pure speculation.

Detractors of the Hungarian attitude were therefore not wrong either when they observed that any solution which satisfied the ten or twelve nationalities came up against Budapest's refusal. An additional question remains, however: how could Hungary have removed the obstacle constituted by its internal multi-ethnicity? Heterogeneous Austria was more easily reconciled. It had built itself up through the centuries, piece by piece, into an empire where the hereditary provinces of the House of Habsburg rubbed shoulders with Bohemia, conquests in Italy, Dalmatia, Galicia and Bucovina. It was a mosaic of states and provinces with a supranational character, headed by the shared sovereign in the Hofburg, Vienna. Conversely, the Hungarian 'mosaic' was drawn upon the canvas of a thousand-year-old historical Hungary, under the cupola of the Crown. To renounce this unity, unless forced to do so, would have been indubitably a generous act. In view of Magyar public opinion and its political class, it would have been a suicidal one – an extraordinary and historically unprecedented gesture.

Nonetheless, to defer the irreducible nationality problem from one decade to another was equally suicidal. Without speculation as to what could have happened 'if' the Hungarians had sought and found a *modus vivendi* with the non-Magyars in the kingdom, one conclusion stands out: it was never seriously envisaged. For reasons which run through the centuries and are inextricably linked to the Magyars' conception of the nation-state, apart from a few rare and isolated individuals the idea was beyond their horizons.