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Paweł F. Nowakowski

Editorial

As the old world was crumbling to pieces with the end of the Great War, the new shape of Central Europe was emerging. There had already been discussion of what the region might look like when the empires fell. However, no one was able to predict the exact contours of the borders and, in many cases, the political system of the newly formed and reborn states.

This unpredictability did not discourage contemporaries; on the contrary, it provoked new questions. In the midst of conflicts over territory, borders, and native populations under the rule of a neighboring country, could the region be thought of in terms of a larger whole? The ideas that cropped up in the years and decades that followed took many different forms: from multilateral treaties, sometimes signed in fear of one of the neighbors, to bilateral agreements.

In addition, there were broader concepts of regions capable of resisting great political storms – when empires were reborn in ominous ideological shapes – as well as economic storms, such as a global financial crisis. Another great war did not interrupt these ideas, although it did bury the chances of them materializing.

To act in terms of a Central European region is a desire that is still present today, perhaps more pronounced now than when the system that defined this part of Europe as a zone of Soviet domination was collapsing. Back then, we wanted to participate in the wider free world, while sometimes losing sight of each other.

With time came the reflection that we did not know what important literature was being created in the neighboring countries

and how the literary heritage was evaluated from the viewpoint of decades of freedom. Likewise, we started revisiting the past, with even professional historians becoming overwhelmed by the difficult task of summarizing historiographical trends in the region. This experience is common to people of different countries.

We also remember that our region was being watched from the outside. Different Western notions, chief among them being the German concept of *Mitteleuropa*, were characterized by a paternalistic approach at best, and often denied the partners in the region the subjectivity that they could jointly express in action.

We do not want to be defined from the outside and have a framework for action outlined for us, when we can do it ourselves. So, out of a desire to learn about each other's history and literary heritage, we established the quarterly academic journal *Trimarium: The History and Literature of Central and Eastern European Countries*. We use internationally recognized editorial and peer-review criteria and issue the printed version in English so that the Central European voice will sound out beyond the region.

The quarterly is published in Poland by the Institute of Literature and is financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Its editorial board is made up of academics from Three Seas countries. The editors seek articles on the leading historical or literary theme for the issue and the first review is issued in the country of the author. With this procedure, we hope to authentically capture the diversity of views, even when this involves difficult or unresolved issues.

Thus, we open *Trimarium* with an issue dedicated to Central and Eastern Europe, which was emerging after the Great War. We asked the authors of the historical section to discuss the problems their country faced in the completely new situation. The authors of the literary section took up the theme of foreshadowing state independence in their national literatures. This issue is a mosaic that shows the different outlooks and emphases and what is important for some and negligible for others: a diversity that defines the region of the Three Seas.

History

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Lithuania's Search for Its Place in Central-Eastern Europe During the Conflict With Poland in 1919–1920

Abstract

Lithuanian historiography leads one to believe that the country's interwar conflict with neighbouring Poland was the darkest page in the history of the countries that once formed the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. Indeed, the wounds of mutual hostility healed during the bloody tragedies of World War II and the half-century-long occupation of Lithuania by the USSR and the imposition of its communist state model on Poland. After both countries succeeded in getting rid of the invasive communism that had hindered their national development, relations between them began to thaw, reaching the status of "strategic partners". Russia's war against Ukraine has become particularly important for the unity of Lithuania and Poland, as well as for other countries in Central-Eastern Europe, as Russia still harbours imperial and aggressive ambitions towards its western neighbours, significantly stepping up its aggression in 2022. This article examines the possibilities for cooperation between Lithuania and Poland at the height of the conflict between the two countries in 1919–1920, which even at the time reflected a common regional identity and could

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have been the basis for a joint anti-Bolshevik front. Despite the fact that this was not achieved during this period, and the conflict over the ownership of Vilnius complicated relations between the neighbouring countries for a long time, there was still a certain mental perception of belonging to the same space, which helps to explain why in 1939 Lithuania, despite calls from Germany to occupy Poland, did not take advantage of the tragedy of its neighbouring country and did not try to reclaim Vilnius by military force. Lithuania did not let itself be dragged into the war, and half a century after the countries regained independence and the USSR collapsed, the former countries of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations have again strengthened their partnership and are ardent supporters of Ukraine, which is fighting Russian aggression and thereby strengthening the security of CEE.

Keywords

Central and Eastern Europe, the search for coexistence in the Lithuanian–Polish conflict, the possibilities of anti-Bolshevik cooperation in 1919–1920, Lithuania's geopolitical position in Europe

The year 1918 marked the end of World War I and was a period of profound changes in the entire European continent, including its central and eastern parts. For the states situated between the Baltic, Black and Adriatic Seas, this year presented an opportunity to create or finally consolidate their independent nation-states amidst the collapsing empires that had long oppressed the region. For centuries Romanov's Russia, the German Hohenzollern dynasty, the Austrian Habsburg Empire and the Turkish Ottoman Empire had been making attempts to dominate this part of Europe, but the decline of all of them opened up space for cooperation between countries sharing a similar fate. However, the winds of modern national revival sweeping through the 19th century not only encouraged opposition to the empires, but also gave rise to a host of new conflicts. Numerous national, religious

and linguistic conflicts emerged between countries with seemingly similar historical pasts. These conflicts prevented the emergence of a strong group of states between the three small, internal seas of Europe, making Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) a region that suffered tremendously from the brutality of World War II and the totalitarian ideologies that gave rise to it. One of the causes of this war, the totalitarian USSR, subsequently brutally occupied some of the countries of the region and turned the others into obedient satellites, restricting their freedoms. Russia, its legal successor, continues to encroach upon the CEE countries in modern times in its attempts to establish itself between the three seas, thus cutting its way into Europe. The eastern guardian of the CEE region is currently the courageous country of Ukraine, and many countries with a similar fate are staunch supporters of Ukraine. In particular, the group of northern countries in the region – Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Czechia and Slovakia – can be singled out. By their resolve, they compensate for the hesitancy of some Western European countries, often in the CEE region, which understandably originates from the painful historical past. Historically, the German and Russian states have often cooperated with each other in one way or another, often at the expense of the wellbeing of the CEE countries. A lack of decisive action towards Russia by the most powerful economy in Europe – Germany – and a tough, educational stance on domestic policy in its discussions with Poland – also a member of the European Union and NATO – are good examples of how the fears of the CEE region's people are not necessarily unfounded.

It is worth going back to the early origin of cooperation between the CEE states, which traces back to 1335. The time saw a growing population in mediaeval Germany and a mounting pressure to colonise the CEE region, which had recently been hit by attacks from the eastern Tatars. The 1335 meeting between the Polish, Czech and Hungarian kings in Visegrad, Hungary, and later, the 1385 Union of Krewo between Poland and Lithuania helped the two countries defeat the Teutonic Order at the Battle of Grunwald in 1410 and eventually defeat its existential threat. Later, in the face of another threat from the East – the growing power of Moscow – the countries strengthened their cooperation through the Union of Lublin in 1569.

In short, it can be noted that in the historical memory of the CEE states, a certain glorious age was a period of successful cooperation that reached its peak in the 15th century. In that century the Jagiellonian dynasty, the descendants of Jagiella, who concluded the Union of Krewo, ruled over the territory or at least a large part of the present-day territories of Lithuania, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Czechia and Slovakia.

The year 1918 witnessed the emergence of new nation-states from this list. Lithuania and Poland managed to re-establish their separate statehood, but this brought them into conflict. The territories of Belarus and Ukraine, which were part of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, were also the scene of struggles, with local national movements striving for independence for their countries. Czechia and Slovakia then formed the federal state of Czechoslovakia, and a similar experiment was attempted by the Slavic states along the Adriatic Sea, forming the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Romania gained strength after the war and went to declare its independence in 1877, while Hungary achieved a real independence, albeit with some of its borders severely curtailed by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. However, it was now the Hungarians themselves, not the Habsburg dynasty, who oversaw their destiny. The period was thus seemingly favourable for the countries of the region. As we know, World War II would prove much more disastrous for them. Of course, this was due to objective reasons: above all, aggressiveness and the division of Europe between Moscow and Berlin. However, questions inevitably arise as to whether it was possible to avoid the violent conflicts between the CEE countries, which led to confrontation and prevented them forming a united regional bloc that could have fought against the ambitions of their aggressive neighbours.

This issue has been discussed repeatedly by various authors and in the historiography of many countries. I would like to revisit it once again by showcasing the example of Lithuania, by reflecting on how the population of the country that once again put itself on the global political map after many years and its political and military elite viewed the possibilities of regional cooperation and how they perceived, in general, the CEE region and their own country's place in it. It should be made clear from the outset that this

study, due to its small scale, does not focus on the then popular quest for Lithuania's possible identification as a northern European country. This was mainly due to the conflict with Poland, at the time the key power within the CEE region. It is not surprising that the Lithuanian political and cultural elite, unable to find a *modus vivendi* with Poland, was forced to look for such opportunities. At the same time, as all the unsuccessful federal ideas of the time showed, the country failed to forge a stronger link with even the closest neighbour to the north, Latvia – not to mention Estonia or the Scandinavian states further north, across the Baltic Sea. Even though Lithuania maintained and still maintains good relations with them, these relations have never translated into stronger prospects for regional cooperation. It has been much easier for Latvia, and even more so for Estonia, to find a link with the Scandinavian countries because of their long-standing cultural and psychological links with these countries.

The aim of this paper is therefore to investigate Lithuanian–Polish relations at what was likely the most difficult moment in the history between the two countries. A tentative hypothesis is made that even if there was a certain connection with Poland as a gateway to the CEE region, it is much easier nowadays, when Lithuanian–Polish relations have thawed, to nurture and strengthen the ties between the two countries and, through the centrality of Poland in the region, to involve Lithuania more closely in the various structures, such as the Three Seas Initiative, which could ensure both the independence and cultural development of the two countries. The following objectives were raised to achieve this aim:

1. Analyse which place, if any, the prominent political and military figures of the time who were shaping the country's policy and defending it with military means, saw for Lithuania in CEE.

2. Assess the reasons that prevented a joint anti-Bolshevik bloc developing among the easternmost CEE countries, which was supposed to prevent the spread of communist ideas from Russia into Europe and thus corresponded to the concept of *antemurale* that had been held by the countries of the region for centuries, and to highlight the exceptions which could have formed a common ground had they been promoted by the different parties to the conflict.

3. Explore the phenomena that might have mitigated the hostility between Lithuania and Poland during the interwar period, which is usually very prominent in the historiography, and might allow us to discover the possibilities for more positive cooperation, at least on individual issues, that have been obscured by this hostility.

Audronė Janužytė's PhD thesis, defended in 2005 at the Finnish University of Tampere, is worth noting. In it the author analyses the views of many prominent Lithuanian public figures on what modern-day Lithuania should look like and how its relationship to the region should be (Janužytė, 2005). Some important excerpts can be found in an easy-to-read book written by Alfonsas Eidintas and Raimundas Lopata (2020), which is intended to demonstrate the context of the restoration of the Lithuanian state in 1918. These researchers have extensive experience and have published several collections of documents, but in the aforementioned book their research findings are presented to the general public. Several works dedicated to the army can be mentioned separately – a book by Mindaugas Tamošiūnas (2021) on the Lithuanian cavalry of the interwar period analyses several difficulties faced by those whose identity did not make it an easy choice of even to which country – Lithuania or Poland – they belonged. The CEE region was under external pressure from its more powerful neighbours, whose plots have been extensively portrayed by Zenonas Butkus (2019) in his comprehensive monograph dedicated to the period in question. The Lithuanian historiography does not demonstrate very many attempts to define the boundaries of the region more broadly. In the historiography of neighbouring Poland, however, there have been many more such attempts: as early as 1952, Oskar Halecki's (1952) fundamental paper was published, which was intended to introduce the audience to the western world during the Cold War, to prove that the CEE countries were an integral part of western civilisation, which should not be left at the mercy of Communism and should be separated from the Russian space that was too strongly under the Asian influence and, thus, not a part of Europe. This tradition was continued by another Polish diaspora author, Piotr Wandycz, in his paper published in 1992, where he focussed on the history of the

countries of the so-called Visegrad Group: Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary. This tradition was also maintained by Jan Marek Chodakiewicz (2012) 20 years later, in his book further defining the intermarium tradition, but with more emphasis on the territory of the former Commonwealth of the Two Nations. In the same year, Zdzisław Krasnodębski's work (2012) on regional issues was published, representing a compilation of works by many authors. Chodakiewicz (2012, p. 4) focusses more on the eastern part of the CEE states – the countries between the Baltic and the Black Seas – as a kind of counterbalance to the more Asian civilisation of Russia. This is historically reminiscent of the concept of *antemurale*, which was so popular in the Commonwealth of the Two Nations and posited the protection of the European civilisation against the Asian empires. However, in the southern part of the CEE region – the Balkans – the term meant the fight against the advancement of the Ottoman Empire into Europe. For example, the Popes of Italy often gave the title to the Croats who fought against the Turkish invasion across the Adriatic (Velikonja, 2003, p. 78). A similar sentiment was shared by Hungarians and Romanians. It is no coincidence that George Friedman (2009, p. 73), an influential US geopolitical expert, sees CEE as a place that was set to flourish in the 21st century. There are other papers by foreign authors who note that the changing geopolitical background, Russia's attempted aggressive policies and the active ideological disputes in the West call on the CEE countries to defend their identity more strongly (Todoroiu, 2018, p. 116).

Likely the most authoritative historical study on Lithuania's self-perception in CEE belongs to historian Marius Sirutavičius (2015), who has written an 80-page paper published in a collective monograph by Vytautas Magnus University. This work provides a detailed analysis of the various works of the aforementioned Halecki, as well as the attempts of the historians who have followed his work to clarify and redefine the borders of the region. A review of political science studies reveals that in Lithuania, as well, more and more attempts are being made to define CEE. For example, one of the more recent articles on Lithuania's role in the European region concludes with the idea that "Central Europe is a territory of small countries whose histories have never seemed to be important to the rest of the world," but that

Lithuania belongs to this region and that its historical development should be more closely "linked to the Central European countries of Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. Such a choice would allow Lithuania to develop its international policy more successfully and would resolve some of the existential identity issues that it currently lacks in its vision of the future" (Šimanskis, 2016, p. 149). However, different perceptions within the public at large must never be forgotten. If the academia, particularly historians, often sympathise with the perception of Lithuania leaning towards CEE, this does not in any way imply that society agrees. And if it does, it finds it difficult to define it consciously ("Europe, its borders...", 2015). To change this might require scientific promotion to ensure that the academic debate reaches the hearts of ordinary citizens and reinforces their sense of belonging to the region.

Collections of published sources are particularly useful for accessing and evaluating material already collected by other historians. The collection of documents on Lithuanian–Polish relations between 1918 and 1920 compiled by Edmundas Gimžauskas and Artūras Svarauskas is worth special mention, because it compiles many important letters exchanged among the highest leaders of the two countries, important messages to their friends in arms and correspondence with politicians of foreign countries, both large and small, gathered from key archives in both Lithuania and Poland (Gimžauskas & Svarauskas, 2012). The memoirs of important military officers – Konstantinas Žukas and Vincas Grigaliūnas-Glovackis – were also used (Žukas, 1992; Grigaliūnas-Glovackis, 2017). The memoirs of the historian, diplomat and great thinker about the borders of Lithuania, Petras Klimas, and the published texts of the long-time Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona also deserve mention (Klimas, 1990; Smetona, 1990).

Although many important documents have already been published by the above-mentioned authors, the unpublished memoirs of Kazys Škirpa, the first volunteer of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, covering the period from the end of 1917 to the beginning of 1919, represent a valuable source kept in the manuscript section of Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania. It should be noted that these memoirs were written when the first volunteer was already

a colonel of the General Staff and the Lithuanian military attaché in Berlin in 1934 (Škirpa, n.d.). The rapidly changing geopolitical landscape called for reflections, and Škirpa, known at the time as an eager and detailed narrator, not only wrote his memoirs, but also sent detailed proposals to his command. His extensive and often controversial activities during World War II, which I have analysed in a recently published monograph (Jazavita, 2022), fall outside the scope of this article. The writing of this monograph and the doctoral thesis which inspired it required visits to numerous archives in Lithuania, Poland and Germany. Some of the documents from the archives of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Central State Archive of Lithuania were used to demonstrate the culmination of the processes described in this article prior to the outbreak of World War II.

The beginning of the Lithuanian–Polish conflict – an opportunity lost for the region?

Back in 1915, with the German army's successful eastward expansion again driving the imperial Russian forces out of Lithuania after more than a century, the conference of Lithuanians in Stockholm did not yet dare to openly entertain the idea of independence, but nevertheless stressed that the Lithuanian nation suffered only because "history had determined its place between Germany and Russia" (Butkus, 2019, p. 11). It seems natural that a counterbalance to this would have to be found in the vicinity of the strongest state in the region, i.e. Poland, which has wider ties with other CEE states. However, both the manipulation of the major powers and the Lithuanian–Polish conflict itself made the search for a way out difficult.

At the beginning of 1919, Prime Minister Sleževičius noted that although the Germans were committed to helping Lithuania and the Berlin government was giving assurances that it was doing so, in practice they were giving away the country to the Bolsheviks without a fight in many areas, despite the treaty with the Entente: "they are clearly selling us out" (Butkus, 2019, pp. 125–26). However, as the Bolsheviks approached Kaunas and the Entente gave stricter instructions, on 11 January the Germans announced their resolve

to defend the territories 100 km off their eastern border, and Kaunas – which had become the provisional capital – happened to be within this radius. These ideas were shared by Škirpa, the first volunteer in the Lithuanian army, who even by the end of 1918 noticed an eagerness between post-war Germany and Soviet Russia to find an agreement and have a joint border; if this goal could not be achieved the Germans were willing to set Lithuania and Poland against each other (Škirpa, n.d., p. 87). Petras Gužas, then Škirpa's right-hand man as the military commander of Vilnius, in his memoirs referred to some other interesting facts: the hoisting of the Lithuanian national flag in the tower of Gediminas Castle in the early morning of 1 January 1919 was met with cheers from the crowd, and the Poles, who had larger forces in Vilnius, would stop the Lithuanian soldiers, check their documents and politely let them go (Gužas, 1923, p. 453). Stasys Butkus, another soldier who raised the flag at the tower and who later became editor of the Lithuanian army publication *Karys*, recalled a similar situation, saying that despite the name-calling, there was no conflict between the Lithuanians and Poles. On the contrary, he pointed to some funny curiosities:

> In the morning, a couple of young Polish legionnaires came to see us. I went to meet them far from the castle. The Poles praised the Lithuanian flag for being beautiful, noting immediately that the Polish flag should be hung next to the Lithuanian one. (Butkus, 1957, p. 102)

Thus, amidst brewing tensions over Vilnius' ownership, there was still some degree of communication, reminiscent of the spirit of the times of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. The situation began to change very quickly, and when the Lithuanian government decided to retreat, the Minister of Education and a signatory of the Act of 16 February, Mykolas Biržiška, decided to stay in Vilnius and took a note of protest to the Polish General Władysław Wejtko. As Škirpa aptly put it, though, without an armed force to support such a protest, it was no longer relevant (Škirpa, n.d., p. 134). Soon the Bolsheviks captured Vilnius and both Lithuanian and Polish troops had to retreat. Once the situation on the front stabilised, both armies

pushed the Bolsheviks eastwards. Naturally, this required a joint anti-Bolshevik front of the CEE countries. The slight hints, or at least some goodwill towards the anti-Bolshevik front, can be seen in a note from Ignacy Paderewski, the then Polish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, to Jurgis Šaulys, another signatory of the Act of 16 February, where he said

> As regards the question of Lithuania's independence raised by Your Excellency, I take the liberty of drawing your attention to the vote which took place on 5 April in the Constituent Seimas which acknowledged the right of the Lithuanian people to build their own state. The Government of the Republic of Poland considers that this right is indisputable. The Polish Government considers that it is impossible to negotiate on the border issue now, especially since the Lithuanian diplomatic mission has itself confirmed that the border issue cannot be resolved definitively. Meanwhile, the Polish Government stands ready to join in every step to agree on a joint defence against the Bolsheviks, as well as to establish the friendliest relations with the Lithuanian people. (Gimžauskas & Svarauskas, 2012, p. 176)

On 12 May Šaulys relayed a reply which showed that even then the main and fundamental source of disagreement between the two countries was a very pragmatic one: the Vilnius question:

> The Lithuanian government was convinced that all disagreements concerning the border between Poland and Lithuania would not be settled by force of arms, but by consensus and a final decision of the Peace Congress. However, this was not the case. The Polish Government, albeit speaking of peace and agreement, resorted to military force in Lithuania and, under the pretext of fighting the Russian Bolsheviks, invaded Lithuania, without warning the Lithuanian Government, and occupied by military force Bialystok, Volkovysk, Lida and other towns belonging to Lithuania. On the same pretext, it occupied Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. In addition, Polish forces, acting in agreement with the German leadership but without coordination with the Lithuanian Government, occupied Grodno, even though there was no danger to the city, and it had already been occupied by Lithuanian forces. All these

> actions by the Polish government were carried out and have continued to this day, while the Lithuanian government has already proposed to the Polish government to join ranks in the fight against the Russian Bolsheviks, with the only condition being the mutual recognition of the independence of both countries: that Poland recognises an independent Lithuania, with Vilnius as its capital, and Lithuania recognises an independent Poland, with the capital city of Warsaw. (Gimžauskas & Svarauskas, 2012, p. 182)

The above-mentioned principle – the willingness to cooperate with Poland if it recognised Lithuania with its capital in Vilnius – was repeated many times by other influential contemporaries of the time, such as Klimas (1990, p. 174). Another city of interest was Grodno. Although it had almost no ethnic Lithuanians at all, dominated mainly by Jews and Belarusians, it was of particular importance to Lithuanian politicians as one of the centres of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Therefore, Lithuanian politicians at the time, such as Prime Minister Mykolas Sleževičius and Finance Minister Jonas Vileišis, vigorously decided that if the German army withdrew from Grodno and ceded it to Poland, Lithuania should also show its interest in the city and fight for the city by force (Gimžauskas & Svarauskas, 2012, p. 137).

Despite the first sparks, talks of a joint anti-Bolshevik front could still be heard. After the Lithuanian government withdrew to Kaunas, some prominent Lithuanian intellectuals stayed in Vilnius. They rallied around Mykolas Biržiška, the hot-tempered, diplomatic signatory of the Act of 16 February. It was this man who refused to retreat to the provisional capital and whose presence was intended to show that Lithuania still had an interest in Vilnius. After the Polish army had driven out the Red Army and established itself in Vilnius, Biržiška met Jerzy Osmołowski, the confidant of Poland's Commander-in-Chief Józef Piłsudski, and related the details of the meeting to the other members of the Committee of Lithuanians from Vilnius (LVLK). Osmołowski knew that Biržiška, like Lithuanian Prime Minister Mykolas Sleževičius, was a leftist, so he tried to convince them that his leader Piłsudski, who had come from the ranks of socialists, was also in favour of this, that there were no major

differences between Lithuania and Poland because they both were fighting against a common enemy, the Bolsheviks, but at the same time they sympathised with the workers and farmers rather than with the rich, the landlords, in order to deprive the Bolsheviks of their propaganda weapon. In Lithuania, this had an impact, because many of the intelligentsia originally coming from the peasantry did not trust Poland, not only because of its claim to Vilnius, but also because the richest landlords in Lithuania were usually Poles or Polish-speaking Lithuanians who favoured Polish culture. In order to secure a calm back-up for the fight against the Bolsheviks, Piłsudski tried to convey the message to Lithuanian intellectuals that he would not rely on the landlords in Lithuania, as they were the supporters of his political enemies, the "Endeks" (members of the National Democracy movement) (Gimžauskas & Svarauskas, 2012, p. 141). At that time the plan to form an anti-Bolshevik front still seemed realistic, because the Versailles Peace Conference was taking place then. However, the weights of the countries were not the same, with Poland being officially invited to the conference and Lithuania being left behind. Nevertheless, Lithuania's main negotiator in Paris, the capital of the war-winning France, was the first Lithuanian Prime Minister, Augustinas Voldemaras. In his speech to the French Prime Minister, who was chairing the entire Peace Conference and was discussing the coexistence of the post-war Europe, Voldemaras declared that Lithuania would be happy to cooperate with Poland, but only on the condition that Poland would recognise Lithuania not only with its capital city of Vilnius, but also as a part of the large ethnically mixed territories of the former Grodno and Suwałki Governorates, part of the East Prussian region and even Courland. This was, of course, a maximum territorial plan, and Poland, also showing interest in part of the same territories, was reluctant to recognise this. In that case, Voldemaras declared that the Polish army in Lithuania would not be treated as an ally against Bolshevism, but rather as an adversary (Gimžauskas & Svarauskas, 2012, pp. 166–67). These words of the historian and politician soon became a reality, and the conflict started to escalate.

It is not the purpose of this article to discuss in detail the conflict between the two former partners of the Union, which has already

been analysed many times. However, a few characteristic quotations are worth mentioning. For example, Colonel Konstantinas Žukas, serving as Commander-in-Chief of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, thus commented on the situation:

> After one of the captures of Sejny, Officer Asevičius, among other trophies, sent me a large wall map "Polska od morza do morza" (Poland from sea to sea), which he had taken from the Polish commander's office. This map clearly showed that not only the whole of Lithuania, but also the southern half of Latvia up to the Daugava River, was "real Poland". The map was later displayed in the War Museum in Kaunas. (Žukas, 1992, p. 139)

From this quotation it can be seen that the influential military officer did not see the conflict between Lithuania and Poland as a conflict over territories, but first of all as an obvious desire of Poland to gain a foothold in the former territory of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations. However, according to the interpretation of the Unions of Krewo and Lublin that prevailed in Lithuania during the time of the national revival, Lithuanian autonomy was not visible in Lithuanian historiography at all. For example, Petras Klimas, a signatory of the Act of 16 February, and Voldemaras, a member of the Council of Lithuania and the first prime minister of Lithuania, were both historians who shaped this image. On the other hand, as intellectuals, they understood the commonality of interests between Lithuania and Poland, at least until the 1863 uprising, just as they understood that as modern Polish nationalism was being formed, so too was Lithuanian nationalism, and that they naturally had more differences than similarities (Janužytė, 2005, pp. 90–94). However, it is interesting to note that Klimas must have understood the historical autonomy and statehood of Lithuania even in the Union period; Klimas was annoyed at the Versailles Peace Conference to realise that Poland was not seeing anything else in the eastern part of Europe, and imagined the 1772 borders not as a confederation of states, but as an ethnographic Poland (Klimas, 1990, p. 184). In fact, the influential politician Klimas was equally surprised as the influential military officer Žukas.

However, the Lithuanian army was not short of officers thinking otherwise. The most influential of these was General Silvestras Žukauskas, who served four times as Commander-in-Chief of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, and who had perhaps the greatest experience in the military forces of tsarist Russia. The circumstances of how Žukas became Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces in the summer of 1920 during the Polish–Soviet war are vividly described in his memoirs, emphasising Žukauskas' role:

> I told the President and the Prime Minister that a Commander-in-Chief must be appointed immediately. This was a very sensitive issue. The most important thing was that we did not have the right candidate... It is true that by that time Gen. Žukauskas, who had already been the commander of our army, had returned from Poland. He had gone to fetch his wife but stayed there too long. Quite rightly a campaign was waged against him among the officers, and he was appointed an inspector of the army. While in Poland, he met the provocateur Aukštuolaitis and unwittingly signed an article, with a weak sense of direction, on the necessity of a union between Lithuania and Poland. The article, signed by General S. Zukauskas, Commander-in-Chief of the Lithuanian Army, was widely commented on in the Polish press. The issue of the army commander remained unresolved. Temporarily, I was entrusted with that difficult and responsible position. (Žukas, 1992, p. 195)

Žukas was very correct about Žukauskas and his efforts to "revive the Union of Lublin", as he had been an officer himself since the beginning of 20th century, even spoke Polish at home (Eidintas & Lopata, 2020, p. 327) and could at least understand the sentiments nurtured by the older generation towards the common past that were still typical of Žukauskas, like the sentiments of Pilsudski himself. But when quoted, Žukauskas was much criticised by the military for such views. One of the most radical officers of the Lithuanian army, Vincas Grigaliūnas-Glovackis, did not mince his words in his condemnation of Žukauskas:

> Being of Polish culture himself, he always sided with the Poles, and regarded Lithuanians as yokels and farmhands, fit only to be slaves of

> their masters. And this is our first Minister of National Defence! Greedy, a great lover of girls and cards, he hoped that through Smetona and Voldemaras he would get plenty of cakes in Lithuania. When he saw that Lithuania was not only short of cakes, but also short of bread, he rushed to Warsaw in search of cakes. (Grigaliūnas-Glovackis, 2017, p. 19).

According to Grigaliūnas-Glovackis, Žukauskas had many supporters in the army, whom he protected in various ways. One of his friends was Colonel Petras Jackevičius. Thirteen years his junior, he was born in 1877, but had already served for several decades, having started in the Russian army in 1899. He commanded the Lithuanian cavalry on several occasions. Perhaps it was age, or his friendship with Žukauskas – maybe it was his sympathy for the Hussars – but Jackevičius, an influential officer of the Lithuanian army, tried to prove the advantages of the Lublin Union to more than one person, even in the bathhouse, and lamented the fact that the Commonwealth of the Two Nations had not been restored (Grigaliūnas-Glovackis, 2017, p. 19).

If such a mood had affected the leadership, there were even stranger situations among the rank and file. Mindaugas Tamošiūnas, a specialist in Lithuanian cavalry during the interwar period, described the story of two brothers:

> Hussar Henrikas Vaitkevičius … considered himself a Lithuanian and always faithfully fulfilled his duties. His brother Feliksas, on the other hand, insisted that he was Polish. In their spare time, the Hussars' barracks were more and more often filled with arguments between brothers who were convinced of their own righteousness. (Tamošiūnas, 2021, p. 126)

This story ended as it must have ended when the nation-states were formed. Henrikas Vaitkevičius remained a patriot of Lithuania and fought for independence, while Feliksas Vaitkevičius was discovered to be in contact with Polska Organizacja Wojskowa (POW) agents and was allowed to flee Lithuania peacefully, apparently only on account of his merits in the previous fight against the Bolsheviks.

Tamošiūnas describes several cases in which an officer who fought bravely against the Bolsheviks refused to fight the Poles, or was even

subjected to court-martial, especially after exposure of conspiracy with the POW. It is interesting to note that it was not uncommon among the rank and file to say that there was no need to fight the Poles because they believed in the same God (Eidintas & Lopata, 2020, p. 435). Thus, some hints of a regional connection can be seen, especially as the above-mentioned authors repeatedly point out that during the armistice Lithuanian and Polish soldiers did not avoid visiting each other or discussing something, and when they were captured on both sides of the frontline, they were often assisted by former classmates or other acquaintances. However, while some officers themselves were in favour of this, others reacted very negatively to the all-too-frequent chats between soldiers on different sides of the front. Škirpa, who has already been mentioned several times, was notoriously strict. As commander of the 5th Infantry Regiment, he was sent to Vilnius in May 1919 to negotiate with his Polish counterparts, but even almost a fortnight of negotiations were unsuccessful (Surgailis, 2017, p. 26). The officer in question tended to react personally to such things, so it is not surprising that on 23 July Škirpa demanded that his troops cease daily contact with the Poles, as they might deliberately send spies to extract valuable information. He threatened those who did not comply with court-martial and dramatically declared that henceforth there was only one way to greet the enemy – with fire (Surgailis, 2017, p. 36). This once again proves the author's point, already made elsewhere in this article, that in 1938 the Lithuanian political elite, having agreed to accept the Polish ultimatum and to establish diplomatic relations, sent a "gift" in return – the combative character of Škirpa, a retired colonel of the General Staff. On the other hand, even he was looking for a *modus vivendi* among the developments of 1938, and with some of the people with whom he had stood on opposite sides of the barricades in 1919 he had now established a close relationship, in particular with Marian Zyndram-Kościałkowski, at the time a patron of the POW (Škirpa, n.d., f. 648, ap. 1, b. 23, l. 110).

Although there was almost no support for reviving the union in the Lithuanian army, there was no support for the Soviets either. This was an important moment in the context of the Polish–Soviet war of 1920, when a seemingly small Lithuania could have tried

to tip the scales of war. Despite Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky's repeated calls for help and the creation of a joint anti-Polish front, Lithuania's military leadership maintained a pragmatic neutrality, which is reflected in Žukas' memoirs: "For the Bolsheviks, our manoeuvre to the Polish left wing would have been very useful, as it would have slowed down the Polish attack, but what good would it have done us?!" (Žukas, 1992, p. 210).

Even though Lithuania did not side with the Soviets, the idea was already gaining ground in the minds of some of the country's political and military elite that Lithuania could only keep its historical capital Vilnius in the event of a conflict between Poland and another country. In September 1939, Škirpa, then Lithuania's envoy in Berlin, would return to it. However, as in 1920, Lithuania chose a neutral position and did not hesitate to fight Poland or to help its former captors, Germany or the USSR, with arms. This was made clear on several occasions by the then President of Lithuania Antanas Smetona, Prime Minister Jonas Černius, Minister of Foreign Affairs Juozas Urbšys and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Stasys Raštikis. Material from the Berlin archives shows that the German envoy to Lithuania at the time, Erich Zechlin, was received by Prime Minister Černius, who echoed the arguments of Raštikis, though he stressed that even though Vilnius was still considered under Polish occupation, it was clearly Lithuanian from legal and national points of view. He also said that there could be no question of an armed takeover of Vilnius, but stressed that Vilnius would have to be handed over to Lithuania at the forthcoming peace conference. The neutral path was chosen, even though it infuriated the Germans (Zechlin, n.d., R-28870, p. 191). A hypothesis can be made that, despite the perceived wrongs at the hands of the Polish, Lithuania did not act against it, because it felt that Poland was still one of the states of the same CEE region, with which there were clear cultural and psychological links that were not overshadowed even by the conflict.

The Ukrainian factor – an opportunity lost?

Relations between Lithuania and Ukraine developed in a very different direction. It was a dream that the two countries could share a common

border. As early as 1909, future President Antanas Smetona published articles calling for closer ties with the Ukrainians, the closest people in the region in his opinion (Smetona, 1990, pp. 290–92). It should be noted that in another article from his youth, Smetona also used the phrase "from lagoon to lagoon", but interestingly enough, these peculiar inter-regional peoples were supposed to serve as a counterweight not only to Russia, but also to Poland itself (Smetona, 1990, p. 289). Even in the case of the Commonwealth of the Two Nations potentially being restored, this state was indeed to become at least a republic of three nations, as was still being considered in the 17th century. In 1918, active political figures Juozas Gabrys and Kazimieras Olšauskas had drafted a memorandum to the French proposing to support the idea of a Lithuanian–Ukrainian federation. Augustinas Voldemaras, a historian and future Lithuanian Prime Minister, went even further by taking part in the Ukrainian delegation at the Brest talks (Eidintas & Lopata, 2020, p. 167). It was for these reasons that the borders sought by the Lithuanian national movement were so far removed from ethnic lands – the hope was to have a joint border with Ukrainians. The conflict between Poland and Ukraine made the development of a strong bloc in CEE particularly difficult. According to Serhy Yekelchyk (2009, p. 124), a Ukrainian-born Canadian historian, the Poles at Versailles convinced the Entente that the spectre of Bolshevism was coming to Europe via Ukraine. Thus, in order to build a strong Poland as a bulwark, the Allies trampled on the principle of national self-determination by throwing General Józef Haller's army of 100,000 men, trained and equipped in France, into the fight against the Ukrainians, who posed no problem for European security. The losses on both sides could have been used to halt the Bolshevik advance.

It is interesting that the insights of the 21st-century historian were echoed almost word for word by Klimas (1990, p. 188) almost half a century ago. This army was supposed to be used to stop the Bolshevik expansion into Europe, but part of the force was consumed by the internal conflicts within the CEE powers. Without them, it would have been much easier for the Polish army to hold out along the Vistula River in 1920, and it is likely that the Bolshevik forces would never have advanced so far west. It is interesting to note that Ukraine was

still deeply divided at that time and, as Yekelchyk notes, Ukrainians in the east of the country looked favourably on the possibility of cooperating with Poland, while Westerners – who had never seen Russian occupation and who had not been under Habsburg rule until World War I – preferred to consider a possible anti-Bolshevik struggle alongside the Russian monarchists – the White Army. Symon Petliura, born in Poltava in eastern Ukraine, sought contact with the Poles, shook hands with Pilsudski and marched with his troops to Kyiv in May 1920. Meanwhile, Yevhen Konovalets, born in Zhashkiv, western Ukraine, had already organised an assassination attempt on Pilsudski in 1921. It is no coincidence that Konovalets would later become a close ally and even citizen of Lithuania. At the same time, it was a reminder of the missed opportunity that the emergence of the Ukrainian state would have strengthened the CEE region's ability to resist. In modern-day Ukraine, in the context of Russian aggression, this situation has fundamentally changed; there is no longer a clear west/east divide in the country, as the whole society understands that the country is essentially still on the edge of the *antemurale* and is defending Europe against further Russian invasion from the west. This breakthrough is of the same calibre as the already resolved Lithuanian–Polish conflict over the ownership of Vilnius and Suwałki. Poland recognises Vilnius as Lithuania's historical capital, while there is no debate in Lithuania that its southern border would rightly be located elsewhere, although in 1919 there were claims that the border in the south should at least include the entire area of the Suwałki province (Gimžauskas & Svarauskas, 2012, p. 121). Historical realities are now often obscured, but in the Polish and Ukrainian experience we also see the imprint of historical conflicts. A brief mention was made of the friendly historical ties between Lithuania and Ukraine, which could be used to promote understanding between the three countries and, at the same time, strengthen the eastern geopolitical wing of CEE.

Central-Eastern Europe between Moscow and Berlin

The CEE region has been at the epicentre of interests harboured by two competing centres of power: Moscow and Berlin. Moscow's rulers began to see themselves as the Third Rome as early as the end

of the 15th century, identifying themselves with the Roman heritage through Byzantium. Allegedly, after the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476, it was the Byzantine Empire, the eastern part of the Roman Empire, that protected the heritage of civilisation. After the collapse of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, the rulers of Moscow took over this heritage by marrying the niece of the last Emperor. After the fall of the two Romes, it was a persistent argument that the Third Rome would stand until the Last Judgement, thus giving this idea an eschatological, messianic image (Butkus, 2019, p. 9). This is why, during its expansion into CEE and other directions, Russia continuously emphasised its imperial heritage until Peter the Great succeeded in achieving diplomatic recognition of the Empire from the great European powers in 1721, after his victory over Sweden, the then regional power, during the Great Northern War. However, Mindaugas Šapoka, an expert on the period, points out that although Peter the Great managed to secure from the defeated Sweden and the weakened Commonwealth of the Two Nations the name of the new state of Russia rather than Moscow, this name was not recognised by the major Western powers, which only referred to the Russian tsars as emperors because they regarded Russia itself as an Orientalist, non-European state that did not abide by the rules of the European states (Šapoka, 2021, p. 237). After the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia seemed to have given up everything that defined its previous identity and adopted a negative view of the heritage of tsarism. At the same time, realising the impossibility of a global revolution at least for the time being, the Bolshevik ideologues eagerly embraced the idea of bringing back – and even strengthening – the Russian empire, and the communist ideas of equality and the overthrow of the old order became central to the powerful propaganda for achieving this goal (Butkus, 2019, p. 10).

As the agreements of 1772, 1793, 1795 and 1939 demonstrate, Moscow has always needed help from Berlin to intervene in Europe and to try to dominate CEE. When discussing the post-WWI context, one must not forget the harsh reparations imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. The Entente, which had imposed such a "cruel peace", was first and foremost looking for a foothold in another country that was not happy with the new order for its own reasons,

namely, Russia. A characteristic letter from Baron von Gayl, governor of Kaunas, to the government in Berlin said

> We need wide and direct access to Russia .... By all means increase the Lithuanian–Polish confrontation. If you succeed in handing over Lithuania to Russia without causing an international scandal, you will have fully accomplished your task and will have earned the gratitude of the Fatherland. (Butkus, 2019, p. 324)

The Germans were not alone in wanting a relationship with Russia, and for these reasons the action was reciprocal. If you are aware of the secret protocols signed in August 1939, it is worth noting that as early as November 1918 a special article was published by the Bolshevik in charge of nationalities, the future sole leader of the USSR, Joseph Stalin, who lamented the fact that in the countries located between Germany and Russia

> Petty kings and dwarf predators ... still rule, these dwarf "nation" governments, which by fate found themselves caught between the two grand bonfires of the eastern and western revolution, now dream of extinguishing the general revolutionary fire in Europe, while maintaining their curious existence. (Butkus, 2019, p. 325)

At all times, foreign leaders entertaining utopian ideas out of touch with reality have been threatening the path chosen by the CEE nations and their development towards independence. However, the inability of the smaller countries themselves to find a compromise is also a fatal problem, and unfortunately, this is typical of CEE countries. As regards the conflict over Vilnius, which is so topical in the context of this article, it can be noted that on the Lithuanian side the borders with Poland were designated in several ways. Even the leader of the Lithuanian Council and future President Smetona was inclined to see Lithuania mainly within ethnographic boundaries, but with important strategic additions. Without knowledge of the ultimate inclusion of Klaipėda into the state, the possibility of annexing the port of Liepaja in the north was under discussion. Lithuania should include the former Kaunas and Suwałki governorates, the Vilnius

governorate without the outermost Orthodox-dominated parts and part of the Grodno governorate, except for the very heavily Orthodox--dominated areas. While the northern boundary of the interests lay at the cities of Liepaja and Daugavpils in present-day Latvia, in the south, the industrial city of Bialystok was to be part of Lithuania, even though there were virtually no Lithuanians there. The border with Poland was to be drawn along the lines of the Lublin Union, but in the territory of present-day Belarus, especially in the western part, the hope was to go as far as a joint border with the Ukrainians. In this way, the future Lithuania would have a stable, friendly border with Ukraine and could cooperate against all its adversaries (Eidintas & Lopata, 2020, p. 117). Of course, such a Lithuania would have to be built on some kind of federal basis, because only then would some people of other nationalities be willing to stand up to defend it against invading enemies. This was understood by different interest groups. For example, Aleksandras Stulginskis, Smetona's rival, who was elected President of the Constituent Seimas in 1920, delegated by the Christian Democrats – who were winning the elections at that time – and soon elected President of Lithuania, described the territorial programme in a similar way: "From our point of view, the ethnological boundaries include the Vilnius region, the Suwałki triangle, the Klaipėda region and Lithuania Minor, but do not include the Slavic lands of the Grand Duchy" (Skrupskelis, 2010, p. 272).

In this way, claims to areas where Lithuanians were in a minority or non-existent were dropped, but the desire to claim disputed areas was maintained. There was a wish to win the favour of the large Jewish population in the disputed areas. The Lithuanian press, such as *Trimitas*, which belonged to the largest paramilitary Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, stressed that the Jews of Vilnius and Grodno, who would rather integrate into Lithuania, were suffering immensely in Poland ("Gardino žydai…", 1921, p. 6). Jonas Vileišis, a signatory of the Act of 16 February, spoke about this in one of the government's first conversations on 2 December 1918 during a debate on how Lithuania should preserve Vilnius:

> We need to strengthen the country from within. The army must be a state army; national regiments will not defend Vilnius. It is necessary

> to have a lot of courage to call people of all nations to defend the country. (Škirpa, n.d., P-1241, p. 80)

Interestingly, many years later, when trying to stabilise relations with Poland and when considering a possible visit to Kaunas by Polish representatives, which was to take place at the beginning of 1939, Vileišis was seen as a real candidate to welcome this delegation, although he did not hold any influential positions at the time. Another councillor, Stasys Šilingas, replied that it was "not the Bolsheviks who pose a danger for us, but the Poles", and that all the attention of the state should be devoted to saving Vilnius and Grodno (Škirpa, n.d., f. 383, ap. 7, b. 2041, l. 10–11). The position of the President of the Lithuanian Council, Smetona, who was suspicious of Poland, was also similar.

Latvia's attempted and failed mediation

I do not wish to elaborate on the separate, complex topic of Lithuanian–Latvian relations. Lithuanian politicians believed that Lithuania had a long tradition of statehood, while its northern neighbours had just established statehood, and so were rather looked down on. This was especially the case with the previously mentioned Voldemaras, who met the British envoy to Sweden in Stockholm on 12 March 1918 and asked him to hand over the Act of 16 February to his command. In the context of this conversation, the eccentric politician and historian went so far as to say that Lithuania was not interested in any kind of federation, especially with the Latvians, who were pro-Russian; they and the Estonians could continue to be ruled by Russia (Eidintas & Lopata, 2020, p. 314). As mentioned above, Lithuania also claimed the Latgale region in south-eastern Latvia, and Poland also had set its eye on it. However, after the successful capture of Vilnius, the Polish leadership decided to be content with controlling the Vilnius region, which had a predominantly ethnically, linguistically and religiously mixed population. It was therefore in Poland's interest to have good relations with Latvia, with which it had a direct border. This made it possible to create a broader "sea-to-sea" group of states without the opposing Lithuania. However, this

posed problems for Latvia itself, which was struggling to navigate between its neighbours, Lithuania and Poland.

As the conflict escalated, the unstable geopolitical situation frightened Latvia, which felt it had only recently gained independence and feared another potential conflict. The Latvian national movement had many sympathies for the Lithuanian people, with whom it shared a common origin, but it also had a friendly attitude towards the Polish state. Poland, for its part, gave Daugavpils back to Latvia (Eidintas & Lopata, 2020, p. 374) after liberating it from the Bolsheviks and withdrew its claims to Latgale, where there was a Polish-speaking population. Hence, Poland was seen as something of a counterweight to Soviet Russia or even to a possibly soon-to-be re-emerging Germany. As closer relations with Lithuania could not be established, Latvian Foreign Minister Zigfrids Mejerovičs prepared to play the role of mediator, inviting representatives of Lithuania and Poland to Riga. However, this did not work. Although Latvia clearly supported Lithuania morally during the march of Lucjan Želigovski in October and November 1920, later in the interwar Lithuanian press or in diplomatic speeches there were several attempts to ridicule Latvia's stance, which in the eyes of the Lithuanians was not tough enough towards Poland. Mejerovičs' proposal to the Polish Foreign Minister Eustachy Sapieha was as follows:

> In order to resolve peacefully and amicably the disputed issues between Poland and Lithuania, which are not only an obstacle to a closer union of the Baltic States, but also hinder the establishment of friendly relations between the two countries, and are a regrettable cause of bloodshed for the two nations, the Government of Latvia is taking the initiative of submitting the following proposals to the Governments of the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Lithuania:
>
> 1) to send plenipotentiaries to Riga to participate in a joint Polish–Lithuanian conference with a view to declaring an armistice between the Polish and Lithuanian armies;
>
> 2) to fix a demarcation line between the two armies;
>
> 3) in the light of the desire expressed by the two Baltic States at the Conference to reach an amicable agreement on all issues without

> resorting to arms, but by diplomatic means, to reach a solution to the fixing of the borders and to the other disputed issues involved.
>
> The Latvian Government is confident that its proposal will be accepted by both countries and would be happy to welcome representatives of both Governments in its capital. (Gimžauskas & Svarauskas, 2012, pp. 500–01)

It is easy to understand that the region's *realpolitik* was not changed by such proposals, nor by the numerous conferences convened to organise an anti-Bolshevik front. The Latvians tried to mediate between Lithuania and Poland on several subsequent occasions,[1] but failed to create an effective union of the CEE countries. Despite their common Baltic origins, Latvia felt closer to Estonia than to Lithuania, which is why the two countries were able to form a union as early as 1923, but the union of the three Baltic States was never realised. Meanwhile, Estonia, through Finland, was more interested in seeing itself as a Nordic country. The conflict between Lithuania and Poland was one of the key factors preventing the creation of a bloc of states between the three seas, but it was far from the only one. After all, in theory, Poland had a border with Latvia and could have had contact with its northern neighbours through it. To the south, Poland had difficult relations with Czechoslovakia, but good relations with Romania and Hungary. The latter two were also at odds with each other. Conflicts in the CEE region were more numerous than usual. However, the interwar conflict over Vilnius, which left Lithuania and Poland without diplomatic relations for almost two decades, was the most prominent of them all. A representative quotation to illustrate this point is the visit of the Hungarian Regent to Warsaw, Admiral Miklós Horthy (2000), in February 1938, when he saw the strengthening of Germany and the USSR and wished Poland to seek an agreement with Lithuania. Apparently, even the leader of a country with no direct border saw clearly that a prolonged conflict was threatening and ultimately disastrous for

1 For more, see Eriks Jekabsons, Latvian Foreign Minister V. Munter's attempt to mediate between Poland and Lithuania to resolve the conflict that erupted in March 1938, *Lithuanian Historical Yearbook*, 2011, No. 1.

both nations. The greatest lesson was therefore World War II, which was the most devastating for the CEE countries. Remembering all the victims in the area between the Baltic, Black and Adriatic Seas, and all the men who fought, it is important to learn the lessons of the past in the hope that the countries of the region will be able to reconcile their interests.

Conclusions

1. The analysis of the speeches of the founders of the Lithuanian state – military officers, diplomats and politicians – from different perspectives makes it easy to see that a broader understanding of the region has been sorely lacking. The ungrateful fate of Lithuania situated between Russia and Germany was understandable, but a broader understanding of the CEE region was lacking. The routes to CEE were through one country, Poland, and relations with Poland were largely influenced by the question of who would control Vilnius and other territories.

2. Due to the totally different views, no compromise could be found in this area, which prevented the formation of a joint anti--Bolshevik front. On the other hand, in 1920, even with proposals from the Soviet Russian military leadership, Lithuania did not want to break neutrality and fight against Poland, and a comparison of the war effort shows that there were some people in the army for whom the memory of the Soviet period did not have any negative connotations. Despite the hostility on the Vilnius issue, Lithuania was united by its anti-Bolshevik sentiment and a common Catholic faith. More than once, those fighting on the opposite side of the barricades had acquaintances or even relatives.

3. Having analysed these lessons, it can be noted that even in the most difficult period of Lithuanian–Polish relations, the animosity was not as deep as it was later deliberately emphasised in the inter-war period because of idea to fight for Vilnius. It is worth noting that in September 1939, Lithuania, faced with offers to take back Vilnius, opted for neutrality and not to strike at the back of Poland, which was being attacked by the forces gripping the CEE region – the Berlin–Moscow tandem. The regional connection noted in this very

article has undoubtedly contributed to this even two decades later. It is no coincidence that when the USSR collapsed half a century later and the two countries became independent, their relationship was quickly re-established and even became known as a "strategic partnership". This shows that even at the most difficult moment of relations, the mental link between Lithuania and Poland – which was not completely broken in the current situation – has again significantly strengthened and has a great potential not only for greater security in CEE, but also to promote the perception in Lithuania of a regional identity and of belonging to a part of Europe between the Baltic, Black and Adriatic Seas, the maintenance of which is in the vital interests of all CEE countries, including Lithuania.

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Simonas Jazavita – historian, was born in 1990 in Kaunas, Lithuania, and in 2020 defended his PhD in the humanities in the joint doctoral programme of Vytautas Magnus University and Klaipėda University. The topic of his thesis was Kazis Škirpa's geopolitical vision of Lithuania and efforts to implement it in the period 1938–1945. In 2022, he published a monograph based on it, *Kovok! Kazys Škirpa ir Lietuvos likimas Antrajame pasauliniame kare*. He co-authored (together with Dominik Wilczewski) *1938: Tamsiausia naktis būna prieš aušrą: 80 metų nuo Lenkijos ir Lietuvos diplomatinių santykių užmezgimo* [*1938. Najciemniejsza noc jest tuż przed świtem. 80 rocznica nawiązania stosunków dyplomatycznych pomiędzy Polską a Litwą*], a book in Lithuanian and Polish on Lithuanian–Polish relations on the eve of World War II, published in 2019. He has written seven research articles that appeared in Lithuanian, Polish and Ukrainian journals, and has written over 70 popular science publications and interviews on various topics of Lithuanian history. The main areas of his research are Lithuanian foreign policy in the interwar period, Lithuanian–Polish relations, Lithuanian–German relations and Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance in the 20th century.

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What Kind of Poland? Some Remarks on the Efforts to Establish the Territory of Poland After World War I

Summary

The end of World War I brought the collapse of three multinational monarchies, Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany, in Central and Eastern Europe, which offered the societies living in the region a chance to organize their own state structures.

In Poland, the political elites agreed that the western border would be demarcated at the Paris Peace Conference, while chances for a more independent resolution were seen in the east. There were two competing notions of the Polish presence in this area: the incorporationist view, promoted by nationalists and advocating the division of the so-called partitioned territories between Poland and Russia, and the federal view, under which socialists and Pilsudski supporters championed the establishment of independent Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus, which were bound to it by alliances, on the eastern fringes of the Republic. Although the final decisions at Riga were closer to the former, the territory of Poland that was outlined in both concepts raised objections from Ukrainians and Lithuanians. Germany reacted similarly to demands that Pomerania, Greater Poland and Upper Silesia be annexed to Poland, and Czechs

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opposed the annexation of Cieszyn to Silesia. These demands were only moderately strengthened by the ethnic predominance of Poles in these areas, but the final decisions were influenced by the pressure of uprisings and the goodwill of France.

The borders postulated by the nationalists and the Pilsudskiites corresponded with their vision of policy toward national minorities. The nationalists believed that Slavic minorities, who were denied the right to a separate state, should be assimilated. The Pilsudskiites, on the other hand, advocated state assimilation: they allowed religious, cultural and linguistic separateness of national minorities on condition of loyalty to the Polish state. Ultimately, however, the Second Republic failed to develop a long-term and consistent policy towards national minorities, as well as towards Poles living abroad.

Keywords

Second Polish Republic, struggle for borders, Jozef Pilsudski, Roman Dmowski, Treaty of Versailles, Treaty of Riga

Poland's regaining of independence in 1918, on the one hand, crowned the long struggle of Polish society to rebuild its state, and on the other hand, raised the pressing question of its territory. The Great War had ended, and Europe was entering the stage of defining its political identity. This problem was especially significant in Central and Eastern Europe, where the collapse of the three multinational empires, German, Austro-Hungarian and Russian, opened the way for the fulfilment of the national aspirations of the communities living in the region. The expectations of Polish elites had to align with these transformations as well. It is a complex issue: they viewed many of the problems differently, and the circumstances that need to be taken into account were just as different.

Given the structure of this volume, I felt that the best way to cover the subject matter would be to strictly adhere to the research questions posed by the editors. This will ensure the consistency of the different articles and make it possible to compare the different voices.

The literature on the subject is so abundant that simply citing it would exceed the limits of this article, so I will only refer to selected items. However, before we move on to answering the questions, we must draw attention to the circumstances that, in a fairly common perception, had to occur in order for the Polish cause to once again become the subject of discourse in international circles. We will also try to address the issue of Polish society's preparedness for independence.

The event that was necessary to raise the question of the political ambitions of Polish society was the conflict between the three partitioning powers. The Polish cause was absent from international discourse: it was commonly regarded as an internal problem of the partitioning states. Only the war lifted the Polish cause from non-existence, with the Polish elites making a decisive contribution by advocating for international recognition from the first weeks of the conflict (Wołos and Kloc, 2018).[1]

At this point, it is worth noting that war is usually a catalyst for social processes. It was no different in this case: in 1914, the problem of Poland's independence mainly preoccupied the Polish elite, but by 1920, interest in this issue was much more widespread[2] (Mędrzecki, 2002).

It should be stressed, however, that Polish society was preparing for independence. In military terms, this meant organizing troops. They symbolized separateness and aspirations for some form of autonomy: not necessarily independence, as this was out of the question in 1914. Remarkably, they fought on both major sides in the conflict, although we should keep the proportions in mind. Tens of thousands of men passed through the Legions: the Blue Army had about 70,000 soldiers, and the Puławy Legion had about a thousand volunteers. All this was negligible compared to the millions of Poles loyally serving in the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian armies. We can see, however, what contributed to the ultimate

1 These authors also point to the participation or direct access of Polish elites to the leadership circles of the partitioning powers, and of other states.

2 Although by 1917, the legionaries were already treated as a national army.

triumph, or the regaining of independence, i.e. playing on different pianos, and not pinning hopes on only one side.

Civilian actions were, however, more important as it seems from the point of view of the events of 1918 and 1919. What I mean is the awareness of the need to prepare structures, people, and legal proposals wherever possible. Naturally, it is worth looking at this problem through the lens of the capabilities of each partition. In principle, the lands within the borders of the German state did not have such, although the Supreme People's Council and district councils, based on the local elites, tried to make preparations for the seizure of power. The situation was different in the Austrian partition: the autonomous system functioning there since the 1860s provided the grounds for an administration with a Polish clerical apparatus, Polonized public schools and universities, and extensive local self-government (see Witkowski, 2007; Grzybowski, 1959, for more details). However, despite the overproduction of intelligentsia in Galicia, so that after 1918 it could "share its human resources" with the other two former partitions, the Kingdom of Poland was key due to its location, importance and demographic potential. This is where new opportunities opened up with the issuance of the Act of November 5 by Wilhelm II and Franz Joseph I. Marek Kornat emphasizes the fundamental importance of this declaration as the beginning of a geopolitical revolution in Central and Eastern Europe through the initiation of an unsuccessful attempt to create Mitteleuropa, which also moved other nations in the region, not just the Poles (Kornat, 2016). It was considered a breakthrough for the Polish cause in the international arena not only by activists, but by people closer to Dmowski. Although they basically held off with the transfer of powers to Polish actors until the last moment, the Central States were contemplating some form of autonomy for Congress Poland in the near future. The Act of the two emperors, in fact, created a new dynamic for the Polish cause in the international arena. Domestically, it provided an opportunity to train future state and local government officials, to make lists of those who were prepared to take up employment in the state apparatus when the time came, or to draft legislation that formed the basis of the decrees issued by the Chief of State after the restoration of

independence (for more on the subject, see Mierzwa, 2016). Finally, the basic echelon of central administration was being formed from late 1917 and early 1918: the clerical apparatus of the Polish Council of Ministers was still functioning under the Regency Council and was inherited by Jędrzej Moraczewski's cabinet.

1. Turning to the fundamental issue of the territorial proposals and their sources, in Poland they were largely the result of the political elite's own reflection. Foreign proposals for the area of future Poland were always several steps back from what the Poles demanded. Even in 1918, Wilson proposed a territory similar to the Kingdom of Poland, with the Vistula River neutralized and Gdansk internationalized. Such a functioning state would, of course, be dependent on the superpowers (Pajewski, 1985). Western ideas for Polish borders were a corollary of the interests of the countries that submitted them and did not take into account the basic premise of the Polish elite: that Poland must be a country large enough to play a subjective, independent role in this part of the continent, and that its fate would not be dependent on its formidable neighbours, Germany and Russia (it did not matter here whether it would be white or red) (Kucharczyk, 2019).

In the period of the struggle for independence, there were two territorial programs: incorporative and federal. The first, promoted by national-democratic circles, had an anti-German tone, while the competing one, endorsed by Jozef Pilsudski and the pro-independence left, saw the main threat in Russia (Faryś, 2019). With regard to the western and southern borders, demands were made for the annexation to Poland of Greater Poland, Gdansk Pomerania with Danzig, part of East Prussia, Upper Silesia and Cieszyn Silesia. But in fact, both the National Democrats and the Pilsudski supporters realized that it was not Poland that would decide on the contours of the border, and that this would depend entirely on the decisions made at the Paris Peace Conference.

The differences between the two options concerned mainly the eastern question. The Socialists were in favour of creating a state composed of lands inhabited by an indisputably Polish population. In the areas east of the Congress Kingdom, they postulated the establishment of a "Union of Free Nations," a formula for Poland's alliance

with Lithuania and Belarus. Simultaneously, they firmly insisted that the Vilnius land belongs to Poland. As for the Polish–Ukrainian border, they demanded a plebiscite, which corresponded to the fundamentalist socialist concept of self-determination of peoples. In this spirit, they supported the alliance between Pilsudski and Petlura, although in principle, from the second half of 1919, voices in favour of entering into truce as soon as possible intensified in this milieu (Michalowski, 2001). The ideas of the Pilsudskiites, who had their own Chief of State and Commander-in-Chief, but lacked more elaborate political structures and had vestigial representation in the Sejm, were not far removed from Socialist ideas. For Pilsudski, territorial demands were part of the new order in Central and Eastern Europe (Zimmerman, 2022). As he wanted to stamp out Russian and German influence from the area, he stipulated the necessity of establishing a multinational, federalized structure in the region. Only it could be an entity strong enough to resist Russian imperialism (Paruch, 2001; Kornat, 2020). Pilsudski, who had an army in his command and headed foreign policy in the eastern section, attempted to implement the federalization program. One of the tools to achieve this was the Civil Administration of the Eastern Territories, established in February 1919. It would administer the successive areas occupied by the Polish Army and lay the groundwork for later federal solutions (for more on this subject, see Gierowska-Kałłaur, 2003). If these were developed, detailed territorial settlements were less important, although Pilsudski could not imagine a Poland without Lviv or Vilnius. However, the entire plan collapsed under the influence of war events, and Pilsudski had little say in the final arrangements made in Riga in 1921although he accepted the policy strategies of the Polish delegation (Faryś, 2019).

Things were viewed differently by the National Democrats. They called for the annexation to Poland of “the former governorates of Vilnius, Kaunas, Grodno, part of Minsk and part of Volhynia” (Maj, 2001, p. 167). With regard to the Ukrainian, or “Ruthenian,” question, as the National Democrats called it, it was proposed that the issue be settled as soon as possible before Russia was in a position to compete with Poland; Poland would include not only the entire former Austrian partition, but also Kamianets-Podilskyi and

Proskuriv. Interestingly, as there were strong pro-Russian sentiments in this milieu, the National Democrats assumed that a peaceful settlement was possible, and that Russia, with other problems on its mind, would be willing to reach a compromise with Poland. In the end, they were the ones who had the key influence on the contours of the Polish–Soviet border, and the decisions made at the time can be considered the realization of the concepts of the National Democrats expressed by Stanislaw Grabski with the words "we will take as many Byelorussians, as many Ukrainians as we can handle" (Michałowski, 2001, p. 277).

Of course, these concepts could not have been abstracted from historical contexts. Dmowski referred to them, for example, on January 29, 1919, during his speech at the Paris Peace Conference. To show that his territorial program was moderate, he juxtaposed it with the pre-partition borders. He stated "we renounce 311,007 square kilometres of the 1772 Polish territories, which we could claim back, and 16.5 million inhabitants. Instead, we demand 34,386 square kilometres with 3.3 million inhabitants outside the 1772 borders" (Wapinski, 1989). Pilsudski also drew on historical analogies, for how else to describe the proclamation he issued after the Easter expedition: "To the Inhabitants of the Former Grand Duchy of Lithuania". Without going into the motives that guided the Commander-in-Chief, we can just say it was a proposal for a political agreement between the nations living in the Northeastern Borderlands, based on the historical experience of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Mędrzecki, 2018).

2. The role of international arbitration has already been mentioned. In the general view, this was how the Polish western borders were to be drawn up. Although Germany lost World War I, it was still a force that the Polish military could not match. While he was still imprisoned, Pilsudski declared that there was no possibility of fighting for Pomerania or the Poznan region, although he also made a caveat that if the Entente states decided to hand over something to Poland, then of course such a gift would be accepted (Gaul, 2006[3]). I would

3 There is a more extensive bibliography here.

therefore consider the Treaty of Versailles in terms of international arbitration. Was it received with gratitude or rather with resentment? The reception of the Paris Conference resolutions in Poland was far from enthusiastic. Criticism, however, focused on the provisions related to the minority treaty, the fact that it did not include Germany or was a form of restriction of sovereignty, and less on the territorial provisions themselves (Faryś, 2019). Rather, a measure of optimism and confidence in the successful outcome of the plebiscites tended to dominate in the case of the latter.

Two caveats must be made in assessing the arbitration. First, surrender to the decisions of the superpowers did not preclude exerting some kind of pressure on the Entente states, even though they perceived it very unfavourably, as an attempt to conduct a policy of faits accomplis. The Greater Poland Uprising and the Silesian Uprisings can generally be considered in these terms. Perhaps this can be seen most vividly with regard to the Third Silesian Uprising, whose goal was to induce a decision on delimitation in the plebiscite area that was favourable from the Polish point of view (Kaczmarek, 2019). This action was possible especially in the face – and this is the second caveat – of the inconsistent position of the Entente state. England and the United States defined their interests differently than did France. The Polish authorities could exploit France's favour, which, although not disinterested, is often underestimated today (Kornat, 2020).

Besides arbitration, in the sense of the Treaty of Versailles as a system, after 1919 there were also individual delimitation decisions, some of which were arbitrary and abstracted from the demands of the population, which could be expressed in a plebiscite vote. This mechanism was embedded in the decisions reached at the Spa Conference (July 1920). In exchange for a promise of mediation in talks with the Bolsheviks and possible assistance, Prime Minister Wladyslaw Grabski agreed to submit to arbitration by Western countries in resolving the Polish–Czech, Polish–Lithuanian territorial dispute, as well as the situation of Eastern Galicia and of Gdansk. The first decision was made at the end of July 1920 in relation to Cieszyn Silesia. It was judged by the Polish side as eminently unfair and was a bad omen for the future (Kaminski, 2001; Skrzypek, 2017). This is

one reason to explain the later decision on the Żeligowski Mutiny: the conviction that arbitration would not bring anything positive to Poland was quite strong and was reinforced by the speeches of representatives of Western countries (Łossowski, 1985).

It should be noted, however, that even these grievances over arbitration settlements that were unfavourable to Poland did not change the overall assessment of the Versailles order, which they were a part of. The Treaty placed reborn Poland on the international stage and guaranteed its borders. Poland therefore had a vested interest in its continuance, and its diplomacy was rather on the defensive. Even with its tacit acceptance of disadvantageous solutions – as was the case with the Polish–Czechoslovak border – this stance would only change in the 1930s, when Polish foreign policy under Jozef Beck would become more active (for more on this, see Kornat and Wołos, 2020).

3. The clash between Poland's territorial aspirations and the expectations of its neighbours in this part of Europe was particularly obvious. On the one hand, this was a consequence of the existence of huge swaths of land, inhabited by a population of mixed nationalities or with no formed national consciousness (Chojnowski, 1979; Mędrzecki, 2018). This is not a problem pertaining only to Poles but rather a common affliction of the region. Things were not made easier by the absence of clearly defined borders or traditions. The collapse of the three monarchies meant that political boundaries had to be redefined. The public regarded the area of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth as the reference point for the borders of the reborn Poland. Bearing in mind that the partitions themselves were treated as an injustice, this should be considered a fairly natural impulse. Whether it took into account the actual capabilities of the young state is another matter (Wołos, 2022).

With regard to Polish territorial claims, rather than answering the question of where Poles' ambitions clashed with those of their neighbour, it is simpler to say with whom Poland had no such disputes. The territorial agendas described above were of lesser importance. From the perspective of November 1918, Germany contested the allocation to Poland of any territories that were part of the Hohenzollern

monarchy, and in later months struggled to accept the loss of part of Greater Poland, not to mention Pomerania or Silesia. Neither did the Bolsheviks come to terms with Polish eastern border, and they treated the Riga settlement as temporary, and subject, under favourable circumstances, to revision (Wolos, 2022).

The situation was somewhat different with the aspirations of smaller neighbours that did not pose a threat to the existence of the state. The subject of dispute with Czechoslovakia was mainly the areas of Cieszyn Silesia and Spiš and Orava. Attempts at an amicable settlement, worked out in November 1918 by local actors and based on ethnic considerations, were not accepted owing to Prague's negative stance. The offensive launched by the Czechs in January 1919, in the midst of the ongoing Polish–Ukrainian war, brought them territorial gains, and was stopped due to pressure from Western countries. It was this factor that determined the subsequent settlement: originally, a plebiscite was to be held, but ultimately the arbitrary decision of the Conference of Ambassadors, which left more than 100,000 Poles on the Czech side of the border, decided (Kaminski and Zacharias, 1987).

A clash over territorial claims also ensued in Polish–Ukrainian relations. As mentioned, from the Polish perspective, Poland's future border depended on whether the Pilsudskiites or the National Democrats had the vote. But things were no different in Ukraine. Although it relinquished the disputed areas as the critical military situation deepened, this decision came far more easily to Ataman Petlura and the Transnistrian Ukrainians than to the leaders of the West Ukrainian People's Republic. For the latter, the acceptance of Pilsudski's demands in mid-1919, more modest than Dmowski's, meant giving up the Ukrainian Piedmont that East Galicia wanted to be. In the end, first the Polish–Ukrainian alliance was concluded (more on this below), and then the border in this part of the country was derived from the findings of the Treaty of Riga.

In the interwar period, Poland's relations with Lithuania were unarguably the worst. This was, of course, influenced by the territorial dispute between the two countries, which seems to have been impossible to resolve in a manner acceptable to either side. Dmowski advocated the incorporation of all of Lithuania into the Polish state.

Pilsudski allowed for the alternative of an independent Lithuania, but within purely ethnographic boundaries. The Lithuanian side made any talks conditional on Warsaw's recognition of an independent Lithuania with a capital in Vilnius. As a counter to the incorporation concept, they demanded the granting of territory with Suwałki and Białystok (Łossowski, 1985). As was the case with the Polish–Ukrainian dispute, the scales began to tilt in favour of a settlement benefiting Poland (as of April 1919). The deciding factor was mainly Pilsudski's policy of faits accomplis, based on military superiority, and the turn of the Polish–Bolshevik war did not ultimately change this (for more on this conflict, see Galuba, 2004). The border was decided by the so-called Żeligowski Mutiny that brought the disputed Vilnius region with the city of Vilnius under control.

The course of the Polish–Romanian border was determined without major problems. Relations between the two countries tightened under pressure from Paris, but also as a result of the weakening of "white" Russia. The cooperation led to Romanian interference in the Polish–Ukrainian war, the seizure of Pokuttia and its handover to Poland. Both sides, mainly when faced with the threat from the east, needed each other, thus the delimitation settlement became the foundation of their later alliance (Bułhak, 1973).

There was also no major trouble in establishing the border with Latvia. The disputed area (a part of the Ilūkste district with an area of about 1,500 square kilometres) following the retreat of the Polish army after Tukhachevsky's offensive in July 1920 was occupied by the Latvians, and Żeligowski's troops operating in the area in autumn 1920 stopped on the line manned by the Latvian army, thus de facto accepting what had happened a few months earlier (Łossowski, 1990).

It is worth adding that territorial demands that were motivated by demographic considerations coincided with other demands. When discussing Eastern Galicia or areas east of the Kingdom of Poland, the National Democrats invoked the argument of the Ukrainians' lack of state traditions, which as we know, the supporters of the federalist option questioned (Faryś, 2019). With regard to the western border, the economic rationale was also invoked. The demographic argument was moot in the case of Gdansk as the number of Poles in the city oscillated (according to optimistic estimates) around 10%. Therefore,

the economic factor was cited when making claims to Gdansk, along with the fact that the port was indispensable to Poland because of foreign trade. The economic factor also surfaced as a supporting argument for claims to Upper Silesia and Cieszyn Silesia.

Thus, as can be seen from this brief outline, the solutions adopted by Poland followed a general pattern: in the west, we conform to the decisions of the Entente, with possible strategic pressure. With that said, actions geared towards the direct interest of Western countries in a given area belonging to Poland can also be considered a form of pressure. What I have in mind is mainly the presence of capital, which lobbied for such and not other territorial settlement, or the prospects of granting economic concessions (Wolwowicz, 1995; Szmidtke, 2005).

The situation was different in the east, where Poland pursued a policy of accomplished facts, using the instrument of the army. This was done in spite of the fact that the Entente states also laid claim to decision-making in this area. The Poles, by virtue of their military superiority, were able to impose their position on the Lithuanians and Ukrainians, and the actual decisions resulted from the outcome of the main clash in this theatre of operations, i.e. the Polish–Bolshevik war.

4. The aforementioned paths for the realization of Poland's territorial aspirations did not preclude attempts to build broader coalitions of interested states. Dmowski's proposals obviously made less allowance, in the spirit of national egoism, for the possible demands of neighbouring nations. From that point of view, only the Russians could be possible partners for discussion (Faryś, 2019). Hence, the question of building broader alliances could mainly apply to the eastern area and was linked primarily to the federation program. The attempts made in the spring of 1920 to build a broader coalition were part of this. The idea was to align standpoints with Finland and Estonia. The formula for such cooperation was to be the Union of the Baltic States, which would become the region's voice against both Bolshevik Russia and Germany, and the project itself was presented at a conference in Helsinki in January 1920. At the time, however, it turned out that the discrepancies between the potential counterparts

were too large: Finland did not agree with the anti-German rhetoric, Estonia wanted peace with the Bolsheviks as soon as possible, but the relations between Poland and Lithuania were the worst, as the latter saw the main threat in Warsaw rather than Moscow (Łossowski, 1995).

In practice beyond diplomatic endeavours, we can speak of two undertakings carried out by Warsaw. The first was Polish-Latvian cooperation related to the offensive on Daugavpils in January 1920. As a consequence the Lithuanians were cut off from direct contact with the Bolsheviks and Latgale was occupied by the Latvians. This cooperation, however, did not develop in the following months for the Poles expected closer military cooperation, while the Latvians were rather content with the acquisitions they had gained and sought peace with the Bolsheviks (Łossowski, 1990).

The second agreement that functioned in practice (but which had the character of a formal alliance) was the treaty with the Ukrainian People's Republic (this issue already has a very abundant literature cf. Pisuliński, 2020). Talks on Polish–Ukrainian cooperation were still underway during World War I, but took on a more tangible form after the expulsion of the troops of the West Ukrainian People's Republic beyond the Zbruch River, i.e. in the second half of 1919. They did not proceed smoothly, mainly due to the reluctance of Ukrainians to give up Eastern Galicia, but their position softened along with the deteriorating situation of the UPR in the wake of Denikin's and the Bolsheviks' offensives. Finally, in April 1920, there was a military alliance and a joint Polish-Ukrainian offensive, which ended with the capture of Kiev on May 7, 1920. The future fate of the cooperation depended on the course of the Polish–Bolshevik war, and this turned out to be unfavourable for Pilsudski's federation plans and thus for the question of Ukrainian independence. Poland was able to defend its independence, but was too weak to win Ukrainian independence as well.

The presence of Russian and Byelorussian troops on the Polish side during the Polish–Bolshevik war was of a different nature (see, for example, Karpus, 1999). It is also worth noting here the support, mostly in war supplies, given to Poland by Western countries (Mazur, 2021).

5. A separate issue is the consequences of the choices and opportunities that Poland used during the struggle for the borders. They affected how the role of national minorities was perceived in the country, and how the problem of Polish communities outside the borders of the Republic was viewed.

What policy to pursue with regard to national minorities living in Poland was influenced by the two main circles already mentioned. These ideas had to address what to do with these communities when they became citizens of the Polish state. The words of Grabski, mentioned above, illustrate the National Democratic Party's vision of nationality policy. In short, the Slavic, Belorussian and Ukrainian communities, which were denied the right to their own state, were to be assimilated, while with regard to Germans or Lithuanians, it was assumed that a policy of reciprocity would be pursued, which would take into account how the Polish population in those countries was treated. Concerning the Jews, it was envisaged that they would emigrate (for more on this, see Mich, 1994). The Pilsudskiites, on the other hand, stood for state consolidation, i.e., efforts to convince individual nationalities that the Republic is a superior value within which they would fit in while retaining the right to linguistic, cultural, religious etc. identity (Paruch, 2001). How these concepts were implemented is another matter. It is one thing that the Second Republic fell short of time, but it is another that neither concept was implemented consistently. Furthermore, they disregarded objective circumstances like the attractiveness of Poland or the aspirations of individual nationalities.

The view of Poles who resided outside Poland was even less orderly and consistent. The Poles living in the countries of the Americas or Western Europe were mainly considered in economic terms. With the huge population growth in the country, and the inability to provide work for the population, economic emigration was a natural way to relieve internal tensions (emigration projects related to the Jewish population were also part of this scheme). The Polish authorities strove to increase its scale, but the results were meagre.

As for the near abroad, the situation of Poles varied and was very complex depending on the country. In Germany, for example, the Little Treaty of Versailles was not in force, so Poles were

not subject to international protection, unlike Germans living in Poland. But Poles living in the plebiscite area of Upper Silesia, which remained part of Germany, were subject to such protection under the Upper Silesian Convention of 1922 (Polish-German Upper Silesian Convention signed in Geneva on May 15, 1922). The situation of the Polish population in Lithuania was mainly influenced by the quality of international relations between the two countries. The same was true for Czechoslovakia. In both countries the governments pursued a policy of denationalization and weakening of the Polish population. With regard to Soviet Russia (later the Soviet Union), Poland tried to take advantage of the opportunities created by the Treaty of Riga, but due to the nature of the communist system and limited tools, attempts to organize Polish education were abandoned and the country became effectively helpless in the face of the crimes committed against Poles (Iwanow, 2014).

Thus, summarizing this issue, it should be noted that the policy of the Second Polish Republic toward compatriots outside the country's borders varied greatly, whether due to the diverse reasons for which they found themselves outside the country, the political system of the country of residence or its policy toward other nationalities. As in the case of attitudes toward national minorities living in Poland, no consistent and comprehensive solutions were developed.

Both the concepts discussed and the border conflicts played different roles in later events. Embedded in the events of the Polish–Ukrainian war, the myth of the Lviv Eaglets and the Cemetery of Lviv Eaglets is still a flashpoint in mutual relations, even now in independent Polish and Ukrainian states. The struggle of Greater Poland and Silesia for becoming part of Poland is still an important element that constitutes identity mainly in the regional context. The Polish–Czech disputes of 1919–1920 became a rift in mutual relations and partly a justification for the revindication of 1938, which continued in 1945.

Concepts relating to territorial contours were, of course, revisited later. Awareness of the disintegrating importance of national minorities in the life of interwar Poland, as well as the disastrous location of the borders influenced the post-World War II decisions to some extent. The aforementioned territorial programs were also the

subject of reflection and evolution in the post-war period, as Jerzy Giedroyc and Juliusz Mieroszewski referred to Pilsudski's concepts when discussing the Ukraine–Lithuania–Belarus area. In practice, a return to these experiences occurred in Polish politics after 1989.

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Formation of Czechoslovakia: An Artificial State?

Abstract

The study focuses on the dynamics of the formation of the independent Czechoslovak Republic in the context of the Great War and the immediately following post-war period. Emphasis is placed on identifying the concepts on which Czechoslovakia's territorial claims to the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian and German empire were based and their formative influence on the subsequent political and economic orientation of the new state formation in the web of newly constructed relations in the Versailles-era geographic and geopolitical configuration of the wider Central European area.

An important context for this paper is that the period under study represents a paradigmatic shift for Central Europe with the dramatic disintegration of integrated state entities into a number of independent states in accordance with the right to self-determination of nations advocated by American president Woodrow Wilson.

In connection with the right to self-determination, the author of the article mentions that the Czechoslovak state was granted this right in full, despite some fabrications concerning the concept of a Czechoslovak nation of two "branches" speaking the Czechoslovak language and Edvard Beneš's "inaccuracies"

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about the number and other socio-geographical characteristics of the German population in the territory claimed by Czechoslovakia at the Paris Peace Conference. Moreover, it was rather peculiar that the new state with a republican order insisted on the historical raison d'etre, i.e. on the full consideration of the historical rights of the Crown of the Kingdom of Bohemia in the Czech lands, and conversely, on the breaking of the millennial union of Slovakia with the Crown of St. Stephen's lands on the basis of the natural right of the "imagined" Czechoslovak nation to its state. Last but not least, the paper addresses the question of whether this fragmentation, or Balkanisation in the contemporary sense of the term, helped to stabilize the overall post-war situation in Central Europe, or whether it created a rather undesirable and dangerous power vacuum in this vital area for European security.

In this context, the paper elucidates the genesis of the idea of state independence from the declaration of loyalty to Emperor Charles I by the domestic political representation during the war to the leaning towards the position of the Czech emigre and the disintegration of the century-old union of territories of the Habsburg monarchy after the final reversal of the war events in the summer of 1918. The author of the study also raises the question of whether this programme was implemented with the consent of the Diets of particular crown lands or German population prior to the proclamation or after the proclamation of independent Czechoslovakia on 28 October 1918, or only through the unelected Czechoslovak National Committee or the Revolutionary National Assembly from Prague. The question of the role of the emperor, or his dethronement, as well as Czechoslovakia's attitude to the continuity of Austro-Hungarian statehood in contrast to the reception of the Austro-Hungarian legal order, is also considered. The author of the study also emphasizes the fact that Czechoslovakia, like other successor states, was emerging in a completely new reality and that Czechoslovakia in particular lacked the essential element of statehood,

sovereignty, in much of the territory it claimed, especially in the German-speaking border areas and Slovakia; therefore, trade and political relations played a key role in this situation as one of the main surrogate instruments of state sovereignty.

The article also deals with the use of the more robust resource and industrial base and the privileged position of a member of the Entente to promote Czechoslovak political interests with neighbouring states, especially Austria, particularly in the context of the recognition of Czechoslovak control over the parts of Czech lands inhabited by the German-speaking population that had come under Czechoslovak administration before the signing of the Treaty of Saint-Germain. Some attention is also paid to the complicated issue of Teschen (Cieszyn) in the context of relations with Poland.

Keywords

Czechoslovakia, Austria-Hungary, Austria, independence, sovereignty

The Great War completely disrupted the hitherto traditional configuration of the "long" 19th century Europe. Its final act, which consisted of the Bolshevik Revolution in the Russian Empire in 1917 and the failure of the German summer offensives a year later, followed by the collapse of the Central Powers, resulted in the fall of the four defeated dynasties, the beginning of the disintegration of the colonial empires of the victors, and most importantly for the Central European context, the emergence of a significant number of successor states. Czechoslovakia belonged to the group of these new states as a symptomatic example of the arbitrary application of the right to self-determination of nations, the proverbial "zeitgeist" advocated by US President Woodrow Wilson. The founding of Czechoslovakia was based on the romantic mid-19th century idea of the existence of a distinct Czechoslovak nation of two branches with its own "imagined" language (Kampelík, 1842). Another critical element in the dynamics of the constitution of Czechoslovakia was Edvard Beneš's "inaccuracies"

regarding the size and socio-geographical characteristics of the German population in the territory to which Czechoslovakia laid claim at the Paris Peace Conference,[1] designed to downplay the size of the German-speaking population in the newly emerging state. Moreover, it was rather bizarre that the new republic insisted on taking full account of the historical state right of the Crown of the Kingdom of Bohemia, but contrarily on breaking the thousand-year union of the Lands of the Crown of St. Stephen, on the basis of the natural right of the virtual Czechoslovak nation to its state in the case of Slovakia.

According to Vlastislav Lacina (1990, pp. 21–22), one of the main inherent, not only economic, problems of the concept of Czechoslovakia was the fact that the industrial heartland of the old monarchy, consisting of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, Upper and Lower Austria and Styria, was fragmented. In the Czech lands, this was felt the most by South Moravia region, which was most integrated with the Viennese industrial base. The merging of the historical Czech lands with the predominantly agrarian territory of the Upper Lands (“*Felvidék*”) was also problematic; besides, the Hungarian counties inhabited by Slovaks had been an integral part of the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen for a thousand years and never enjoyed territorial autonomy (Teich, Kováč, & Brown, 2011, p. 3) like the Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia or Fiume as a *corpus separatum*, or ethnic autonomy (Sedlar, 2013, p. 404) like the Saxons of Transylvania in the period before the Austro-Hungarian settlement. Czechoslovakia therefore had to necessarily integrate several entities not only at different levels of economic but also social development: the industrialised Lands of the Bohemian Crown, agrarian Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia with an economy at a medieval level of development. According to Ivan Jakubec (2008, p. 119), it created a new Austria-Hungary with all its inherited flaws.

It is not the purpose of this study to fully illuminate the economic perspective of the new state; nevertheless, the disparity in the

1 Memorandum č. 3: Problém Němců v Čechách. *Střední Evropa: revue pro středoevropskou kulturu a politiku*. Praha: Institut pro středoevropskou kulturu a politiku (I.S.E.), 1992, 8(25), 16–21.; Regarding the “authenticity” of the publication of the above-mentioned document, cf. Broklová (2002, 1–12, 309; 1994, 2, 262–263)

development of its individual parts is well illustrated by the fact that 90–92% of the industrial production of the new state came from the Lands of Bohemian Crown, as did 75% of the agricultural production (Kubů et al., 2000, p. 16). This disparity was also rooted in the adoption of two separate legal systems. While the ABGB[2] remained in force in Bohemia, Moravia and Czech Silesia, customary Hungarian law applied in the Slovak and Subcarpathian territories. According to Ivan Jakubec (2008, p. 120), legal dualism[3] was not completely overcome throughout the interwar period of the joint state. The lack of cross-country transport infrastructure was also a problem in creating a common internal market and in the actual functioning of the state (Kubů et al., 2000, pp. 15–16), as basically the only railroad connection between the western Czech half of the republic and Slovakia was the Košice-Bohumín railway running through the disputed territory of Teschen (Cieszyn), which was also claimed by Poland.

The Czechoslovak national programme in 1918, to which this study is primarily limited due to space considerations, oscillated between the independence advocated by the emigre and the autonomy still favoured by the domestic political scene. On 30 May 1917, the Czech domestic political representation within the reopened Imperial Council (Kárník, 2003, p. 25), almost unanimously as the "legation of the Czech nation", for the first time publicly issued a state declaration demanding "the transformation of the Habsburg-Lorraine Empire into a federal state of free and equal nation states". Thus it mentally still operated within the federal state on the territory of the Habsburg monarchy, which was rather disappointing for the emigre. In contrast, the revolutionary part of the declaration (Kárník, 2003, p. 25) was the first public declaration of the intent "to merge all branches of the Czechoslovak nation into a democratic state, including the Slovak branch of the nation". However, this extension of the national programme to encompass part of Transleithania,

2 The General civil code for the German Hereditary Lands of the Austrian Monarchy (Ger.: Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch für die gesammten Deutschen Erbländer der Österreichischen Monarchie, abbreviation ABGB).

3 However, it is more precise to speak of legal trialism when it comes to Czechoslovakia since the law of the German Empire was left in force in the Hlučín region.

made any wartime reform programme extremely difficult to implement, and it is not surprising that both the Cisleithanian government of Count Clam-Martinitz and the more reform-minded government of Ernst Seidler von Feuchtenegg rejected any structural reforms based on this foundation (Gajanová 1967, p. 12). Nevertheless, all other public proclamations of the Czech national programme, such as the *Tříkrálová* Declaration of 6 January 1918 and the so-called April Oath, read out by the "national" writer Alois Jirásek on 13 April 1918, espoused a territorial concept consisting of the historical right to the lands of the Bohemian Crown and the natural right to the territory of Slovakia, and thus naturally departed from the realisation of Czech political ambitions within the Habsburg Empire. The breakthrough came at the turn of September and October 1918, when Czech deputies from the Imperial Council presented (Ota Konrád, 2012, p. 34) to Emperor Charles I a programme consisting of a demand for the immediate establishment of a Czech National Council as a participant in the peace conference and for the transfer of Czech troops stationed in the German and Hungarian areas of the monarchy to ethnically Czech territories. The Czech political representation definitively parted ways with the idea of autonomy within Austria in the National Committee's reply to Charles I's manifesto of 19 October (Konrád, 2012, pp. 34–35), declaring that "without exception, all the Czech people unwaveringly insist on the position that there is no negotiation with Vienna for the Czech nation regarding its future" and furthermore "there is no other solution for us to the Czech question than the complete state independence and sovereignty of the Czechoslovak homeland". Thus, by the autumn of 1918, the Czech domestic and exiled political representation had reached a consensus on the Czech national programme of insistence on the administrative borders of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown with the annexation of Slovakia and independence from Austria--Hungary, as demonstrated by the mutual meeting in Switzerland in the autumn of 1918, which caused most of the prominent domestic political leaders to miss the coup d'état and the seizure of power on 28 October.

Independent Czechoslovakia was proclaimed by Prague Old Town greengrocer František Kopecký in Prague on 28 October 1918 with

the declaration "We are independent!" (Pacner, 2018, p. 91), while the Battle of Vittorio Veneto was still in progress. This battle ended for the Austro-Hungarian army with an unfortunate truce from Villa Giusti only on 3 November (Rauchensteiner, 2014, pp. 1002–1008), which rather bore elements of unconditional surrender.[4] According to Antonín Klimek (1998, pp. 182–189), the immediate causes of the coup d'état include both the "grain riot"[5] and the misunderstanding of the meaning of Andrássy note[6], caused, inter alia, by its somewhat mystifying translation displayed on the building of the *Politika* publishing house on the Wenceslas Square in Prague and later published, for example, in the *Národní listy* newspapers.[7] The subsequent collapse of the Austro-Hungarian power, surprisingly easy even for the Czech political elite, can be attributed mainly to the reluctance of the Romanian regiments to fight, the aversion of the last Austro-Hungarian Emperor Charles I to suppress the

4 The armistice was concluded on 3 November at 3 p.m. and despite the fact that the Italians had reserved a relatively "generous" twenty-four hours to inform their troops, due to certain misunderstandings on the Austro-Hungarian side, the Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff Colonel-General Arthur Freiherr Baron Arz, von Straußenburg, ordered a cease-fire as early as 1:20 a.m. on 3 November, which in effect gave Italian, British, French, and other Allied troops two days to occupy the territory and take Austro-Hungarian soldiers prisoner. The number of prisoners thus reached nearly 360,000 in the last days of the "war". Furthermore, the armistice, in its fourth point, accepted by Charles I "under duress", authorized the troops of the Allied and Associated Powers to move freely throughout the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a concession that was subsequently used by Czechoslovakia, among other things, in the occupation of German-populated territories.

5 On Monday 28 October 1918, the executive director of the National Committee of Czechoslovakia, lawyer František Soukup, and the head of the provincial economic council, the landowner Antonín Švehla from Prague suburb Hostivař, arrived at the headquarters of the Grain Institute, located in the reinforced concrete palace Lucerna under-construction, and declared that on the basis of the non-existent imperial manifesto they were taking over the institute and forced its officials to swear allegiance to the new state. The seizure of the Institute was of particular importance, as it orchestrated the distribution of grain on the territory of Kingdom of Bohemia, its export to other parts of the Empire and the supply of Austrian soldiers at the front.

6 Named after foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary Count Gyula Andrássy.

7 Through this note, Austria-Hungary de facto unilaterally denounced the alliance with the German Empire. See Rakousko-Uhersko příjíma veškeré podmínky Wilsonovy. *Národní Listy*. 28. 10. 1918, p. 1.

rebellion with the army and, according to Paulová (1937), also to the decision of Emperor Franz Joseph I to appoint Max Julius Count von Coudenhove as governor of the province in 1915, rather than a general, as Archduke Friedrich of Austria-Teschen had been advocating in his well-known memoranda along with the introduction of a military dictatorship in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia since 1914. However, the military commander of Prague, General of the Infantry Paul Kestřanek, planned (see Vykoupil, 2003, pp. 77–78; Klimek, 1998, pp. 219–222, 261–264) to declare martial law at the end of October due to the continuous "insultations" of the troops and new instructions from the War Ministry, and thereby to prevent possible conflicts and unrest. However, after dramatic negotiations with the National Committee delegation on the morning of 30 October, General of the Infantry Kestřanek capitulated, whereupon he and his staff were arrested and interned.

It is worth noting that on 21 October, a week before the coup d'état in Prague, the German deputies of the Imperial Council met in Vienna in response to the October manifesto of Emperor Charles I (Suppan, 1993, pp. 69–71) to form a provisional National Assembly of the federal state of German Austria, representing the German-speaking population within the Cisleithania (without Galicia), likewise in accordance with the principles of self-determination championed by Wilson. Consequently, the Czech political representation, through the coup d'état in Prague, hastened the constitution of an independent German Austria. However, *via facti* it declared independence from a state that de facto no longer existed. On 29 October, deputies of the Imperial Council from the German territories of Bohemia also assembled in the Austrian Provisional National Assembly to demonstrate their opposition to the incorporation of German-speaking territories into the new Czechoslovak state on the basis of the historical rights of the lands of the Bohemian Crown. The Czechoslovak proposal to participate in the supreme legislative body and to appoint a countryman German minister was met with refusal from the political representation of free Deutschböhmen, who congratulated the Czechs on the formation of Czechoslovakia on the territory of Bohemia inhabited by the Czech majority (Kárník, 2003, p. 41). Subsequently, the political representation of Deutschböhmen,

initially led by Imperial Council deputy Rudolf Lodgman von Auen, sought to engage in negotiations with the Czechoslovak National Committee but as "equal to equal, i.e., at the international level". The following negotiations, later headed on the German side by social democrat Josef Seliger (Vykoupil, 2003, p. 351), also failed to reach a compromise *modus vivendi*, and ultimately ended in accordance with Rašín's well-known statement, "One does not negotiate with rebels".

Although the process of consolidation of the new state was only just getting underway in the last months of 1918 and Czechoslovakia lacked the basic element of statehood – sovereignty – over much of the territory it claimed, Czechoslovakia's negotiating position among the successor states was relatively strong, due to its robust raw material base and its privileged position on the international stage, which arose from its status as a member of the victorious coalition of the Allied and Associated Powers.[8] While Czechoslovakia was internationally recognized by France until the final verdict of the Peace Conference, essentially within the historical borders of the Bohemian Crown lands and the territory of Slovakia with the border on the Danube as early as 15 October 1918 (Klimek, 1998, pp. 254–258; Beneš, 1935, pp. 368–370), Vienna in particular had to construct its new national identity, and Budapest was compelled to accept the new borders of Hungary in a highly forced manner. Both states also faced the challenge of being perceived as successors to the defeated power in the Great War. In this context, it is symptomatic that Czechoslovakia almost immediately (Konrád, 2012, pp. 53–55; Haas, 2000, p. 166) tried to project the view that Austria-Hungary practically no longer existed, thereby contradicting the "defeated" successor states, which in the autumn of 1918 were still trying to maintain some continuity with the former Empire.

The central issue in their mutual relationship was primarily a territorial dispute, as demonstrated by the course of the initial negotiations between Austria and Czechoslovakia, which actually took place on 1 November 1918, at the behest of the Austro-Hungarian government in Vienna. The negotiations were between the representatives of the State Council of German Austria and the new

8 Hereinafter Entente.

State Chancellor Karl Renner, Karl Seitz and Franz Dinghofer and the newly appointed Czechoslovak plenipotentiary to the Imperial Council Vlastimil Tusar, under the chairmanship of the last Austro-Hungarian Prime Minister Heinrich Lammasch and in the presence of other members of the last Austro-Hungarian cabinet. The negotiations were held in a cordial atmosphere, thanks to the identical left-wing political orientation of both delegations and some still existing ties between the social-democratic parties across the former monarchy (Haas 2000, p. 136). Tusar concurred on the necessity of maintaining tight collaboration between both states. Additionally, he promised to restore the standard transport link and to end the Czechoslovak food blockade of Austria, even at the price of clearly overstepping his authority. Other topics of discussion included administrative matters related to Czechoslovakia's request to be involved in the management of the Austro-Hungarian Bank and other central institutions. Nevertheless, the promising negotiations ultimately fell apart over the issue of Deutschböhmen, as Tusar naturally refused to relinquish the principle of historical state right and the borders based on it, although he explicitly ruled out the use of violence as a solution to this question. The nexus between all of Tusar's concessions and the acceptance of the Czechoslovak position on the matter of the German-inhabited lands of the Kingdom of Bohemia, as noted by Haas (2000, p. 136), was highlighted by his statement that only "the special issue of Deutschböhmen burdens everything." Conversely, Vienna's unwavering position on this issue was demonstrated by the remarkably assertive Renner reply, who stated that "Deutschböhmen is not up for grabs for the Czechs." The negotiations between the successor states highlight the complexities involved. Despite the separation of the political and economic issues, the subsequent talks in early November only on the questions of supply, transport and railways held in Vienna, Gmünd in Lower Austria and finally in Prague, led to the signing of the railway treaty of 5 November 1918 in Gmünd. Under this treaty, Czechoslovakia agreed to several concessions, but reneged on its promise to supply coal to maintain the railway running in Prague (Haas 2000, p. 138), thus foreshadowing Czechoslovakia's chronic failure to fulfil the negotiated agreements in the future.

The ongoing collapse of Austria-Hungary culminated when emperor Charles I signed a declaration on 11 November[9] containing the well-known "Ich verzichte auf jeden Anteil an den Staatsgeschäften" (Hautmann, 1987, p. 252).[10] The following day saw the proclamation of the Republic of German Austria. However, relations with Vienna, Prague's key trade and political partner, were marked from the very beginning by a peculiar crisis of Austrian identity,[11] which the Republic of German Austria sought to overcome by joining Germany, even though from the point of view of the Entente, especially France, according to Gajanová (1967, p. 22) the annexation of Austrian Germans to Germany and, as a consequence, the annexation of Bohemian, Moravian, and Silesian Germans to Austria was deemed unacceptable. Notwithstanding the unfavourable international situation, the deputies of the Austrian Provisional National Assembly decided to enter into a territorial "conflict" with Prague and on 22 November defined the territory of German Austria, which included the four "provinces" located in the territory claimed by Czechoslovakia and the Moravian German-speaking language islands.[12]

Given that the aforementioned province of Deutschböhmen was one of the wealthiest areas of the Bohemian Crown lands and contained a significant portion of Czechoslovakia's lignite deposits, the government of Czechoslovakia's first prime minister, Karel Kramář, decided at a cabinet meeting on 25 November to address the problem of the critical post-war coal situation and the termination of

9 On this day, the German delegation signed the Armistice in the renowned railway carriage of Marshal Foch near Compiègne.

10 However, Emperor Charles I never officially abdicated.

11 The second section of the Law on the State and Form of Government, which together with the regulation of 30 October constituted a de facto provisional constitution, was as follows: "Deutschösterreich ist ein Bestandteil der Deutschen Republik". See *Staatsgesetzblatt für den Staat Deutschösterreich 1918–1919. Gesetz vom 12. November 1918 über die Staats und Regierungsform von Deutschösterreich Nr. 5*

12 Namely Deutschböhmen, Sudetenland, Böhmerwaldgau and Deutschsüdmähren and Brno(!), Olomouc(!) and Jihlava. See *Staatsgesetzblatt für den Staat Deutschösterreich 1918–1919, Gesetz vom 22. November 1918 über Umfang, Grenzen und Beziehungen des Staatsgebietes von Deutschösterreich Nr. 40.*; *Staatsgesetzblatt für den Staat Deutschösterreich 1918–1919, Staatserklärung vom 22. November 1918 über Umfang, Grenzen und Beziehungen des Staatsgebietes von Deutschösterreich Nr 41.*

contracts and general obedience to Prague in (according to contemporary Czech discourse) "Germanised" territories. An example of this was the largest mining company in northern Bohemia, Weinmann and Petschek, which refused to supply Czech sugar refineries.

Instead of engaging in a dialogue with the German-speaking population, the government (Machatková, Malá ed., 1974, p. 11) approved their immediate occupation by the Entente or by its own forces. According to Gajanová (1967, p. 21), this was due to Beneš's tactic of not waiting for the outcome of the Peace Conference and potential plebiscites in territorial matters, but instead gaining control of the territory claimed by Czechoslovakia through the policy of fait accompli. The German question, on the other hand, was used by Beneš (Dejmek, Kolář ed., 2001, pp. 144–145) as one of the elements of argumentation for reducing coal supplies to Austria in response to requests for increased supplies by the Entente leaders. This is demonstrated by a letter addressed to the Director General of the American Relief Administration (ARA) and future President Herbert C. Hoover, in which Beneš justified the low supplies by, among other reasons, the occupation of the mines by "les bandes allemandes". Paradoxically, these German groups were supposed to be preventing the import of coal for their fellow compatriots in Vienna.

This struggle for the German-speaking borderlands violently escalated during the elections to the Austrian Constituent National Assembly on 16 February 1919, which involved the bloodiest chapter of modern Czecho(Slovak)-Austrian history (Kárník 2003, p. 43). The Czechoslovak government prevented Germans in the territory it controlled from participating in the elections to the legislative body of another state, and during the protest demonstrations on the occasion of its constituent assembly on 4 March 1919, 54 persons of mostly German origin (among them women and children) were killed and over 100 wounded as a result of shelling by Czechoslovak troops, allegedly "at the ground", according to an official Czechoslovak investigation. This tragic event permanently marked Czechoslovak-Sudeten German relations throughout the interwar period.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the elections to the regular legislative body in Czechoslovakia were held with a relatively considerable delay only in April 1920 (Kárník, 2000, p. 123–124). This

resulted in several ethnic minorities – German and Hungarian, and possibly also the Ruthenian minority – not being represented in the supreme legislative body for 16 months after the proclamation of Czechoslovakia. This meant that aforementioned groups were not allowed to participate directly in the drafting of the constitutional order of the new republic, just like the deputies of the Moravian and Silesian land Diets, because the Revolutionary National Assembly consisted of members of the Czechoslovak National Committee, supplemented according to the so-called key of Švehla on the basis of the results of the elections to the Imperial Council in 1911. Only deputies of Czechoslovak nationality were represented there (Kárník, 2000, pp. 63–64), and this national identification was treated in a declaratory manner, so that Beneš, for example, could be a member of the Slovak Club.

After the Chancellor of State and South Moravian-born Renner took office as Austrian State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, according to Haas (2000, p. 136) the reputed "best Austrian" reconsidered Austria's Anschluss orientation and developed a series of proposals (Payrleitner, 2003, p. 89) for resolving the issue of the German minority in Czechoslovakia within the framework of the Peace Conference. The first series consisted of the incorporation of only the southern Sudeten German provinces into Austria, while the second series called for the "cantonization" of Czechoslovakia, which essentially coincided with the inspiration of the "Swiss model" ostentatiously admitted by Beneš at the Peace Conference. This is evidenced by Beneš's well-known formulations in the aforementioned memorandum « le régime serait semblable à celui de la Suisse » and further in a note to the Commission for the New States of 20 May 1919 (Broklová ed., 2005, pp. 95–96): «une sorte de Suisse, en prenant, évidemment, en considération les conditions spéciales en Bohême» and «qui se rapprocherait considérablement au régime de la Suisse».[13] The final proposal involved an ambitious plan to form a federation between Czechoslovakia and Austria, with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk serving as the president and a joint parliament located in Pressburg. However,

13 See Memorandum č. 3: Problém Němců v Čechách. *Střední Evropa: revue pro středoevropskou kulturu a politiku*. Praha: Institut pro středoevropskou kulturu a politiku (I.S.E.), 1992, 8(25), 20–21.

the Czechoslovak political elites, as Payrleitner (2003, p. 89) aptly writes, failed to assume the role of the "new Austria" and fulfil their "historical mission". Ultimately, Renner's proposals for resolving the Czechoslovak-German settlement were not accepted. However, the latter plan was not entirely unrealistic, as it artfully dovetailed with the desires of the Entente Powers for some kind of integration of Central Europe, whether in the form of a federation or just a customs union, since, as Gajanová argues (1967, p. 19), they had begun to fear the consequences of the partition of Central Europe and the potential collapse of the Austrian state and the associated penetration of Bolshevism into the Central European area. Myopic Czechoslovak national and political considerations once again took priority, even if it meant sacrificing the complementary industrial structure inherited from the Austro-Hungarian economy. The Entente's efforts to reintegrate Central Europe are also exemplified by the well-known Article 222 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain, which explicitly states the waiver of the most-favoured-nation clause and, as a consequence, the granting of a tariff preference system between Austria and Czechoslovakia or Hungary for a period of five years.[14]

The Entente's ambition to interfere in Central Europe was further demonstrated by the fact (Woodward, Rohan ed., 1947, pp. 554–555) that on 27 August 1919 the Council of Five approved the inclusion of a special clause obliging Czechoslovakia and Poland to provide Austria with the same amount of coal as was being supplied to Austria from the territories ceded to these states before the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Council of Five even noted that both states were using the export of coal to Austria as leverage to demand additional benefits.

These arrangements were reflected in the final text of the Saint-Germain Peace Treaty in the wording of Article 224, which obliged Poland and Czechoslovakia to grant Austria a most-favoured-nation clause on coal imports for fifteen years, but still envisaged the principle of special bilateral compensation treaties. The Reparations Commission was also given relatively extensive powers in the matter

14 Sb. z. a n., *Mírová smlouva mezi mocnostmi spojenými i sdruženými a Rakouskem, podepsaná v Saint-Germain-en-Laye dne 10. září 1919 č. 507/1921 Sb.*

of coal supplies and was supposed to determine the type and quantity of compensatory supplies to Austria.[15] However, in practice, this article, like Article 222, was not applied, due to Czechoslovak tactics of non-fulfilment of the treaties, referring to its own plight and the fact that Beneš preferred bilateral agreements between the successor states to the interventions of the Entente powers.[16]

Another clash in territorial concepts between Czechoslovakia and Austria or Austria and Hungary occurred rather peculiarly in the area of the so-called "Hungarian Western comitatuses" (Gajanová 1967, p. 31).[17] However, the idea of a corridor between Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, fulfilling an ancient Czech ambition of the landlocked nation's access to the sea, dating back to the times of the Přemyslids, was rejected by the Commission for Czechoslovak Affairs at the Paris Peace Conference in late March 1919, despite the support of France. The subsequent allocation of this disputed territory to Austria in the Treaty of Saint-Germain was only definitively confirmed by Hungary's ratification of the Treaty of Trianon in November 1920 (Irmanová, 2011, p. 330), which nevertheless resulted in an eruption of conflict between Austria and Hungary. Czechoslovakia engaged on the Austrian side, in part to confirm the unquestionability of the peace treaties. Despite his interest in mediating the conflict, President Beneš was triumphantly defeated in these efforts (Houska 2011, p. 307) by the Italian foreign minister Pietro Tomasi Marquis della Toretta, who negotiated a compromise in October 1921.[18] In spite of Beneš's support of Vienna on the Burgenland issue, the territorial question was still casting a pall over Austro-Czechoslovak relations as late as July 1919, when disputes escalated over the final shape of the border, which was being discussed at the Paris Peace Conference at this time, as evidenced by the protest meeting in Valtice and the intervention of

15 Ibid.

16 AMZV. PZ 1918–1975, Rakousko, Vídeň, no. 159; Ibid., no. 172.

17 The territory of the present-day Austrian state of Burgenland and the Hungarian region of Sopron.

18 Hungary consented to cede the territory to Austria under the stipulation that a plebiscite would be conducted in the area of Sopron, and the results of the plebiscite indicated the desire of the population to remain part of Hungary.

the Undersecretary of State, Dr. E. Waiss, with the Czechoslovakian plenipotentiary in Vienna, Dr. Robert Flieder.[19]

On the basis of the Treaty of Saint-Germain and the Peace Treaty of Trianon, Czechoslovakia acquired from the territory of the Habsburg Monarchy, in addition to the historical lands of the Kingdom of Bohemia,[20] the territory of Slovakia with its border on the Danube and Carpathian Ruthenia, and was also granted the Pressburg bridgehead together with the peripheral parts of Lower Austria, so-called Bohemian Austria (Payrleitner, 2003, p. 94; Chrástecký, 2008, p. 122), namely the area of Valtice, the territory of the so-called Dyjsko-Moravský triangle and part of Vitorazsko. The division of Gmünd into České Velenice and Gmünd was made with strategic considerations in mind, with the railway station in České Velenice being particularly important.

As correctly observed by Konrád (2012, p. 30), the Czechoslovak state within these borders completely fulfilled the mental concept of the Czech nation as the autochthonous ethnic group of Bohemia, Moravia and Bohemian Silesia within its entire historical borders. This position naturally relegated the German minority of several million to the role of at best an occupant of hereditary Czech lands, while elevating the Czech nation to the role of an automatic inheritor of the territories inhabited by Germans. Moreover, the Czech claim to Bohemia was further strengthened by the construct of the post White Mountain Dark Ages and the subsequent several centuries of "suffering" under the Habsburg yoke, not to mention the moral magnanimity of the Czech nation and its manifestation in the Hussite movement, which predestined the Czech state for the future role of the "island of democracy" in "barbaric" Central Europe. In this regard, the question of the recognition of historical borders was not merely an optional extension of the achievement of national statehood, but the acquisition of German territories was deemed a necessary requirement. This was because only in this "complete" state could the Czech nation achieve its full development.

19 AMZV. PZ 1918–1975, Rakousko, Víděň, č. 109. 1919.

20 Concerning the intricate Czechoslovak-Polish dispute over Teschen, see the comprehensive study offered by Jelínek (2009, pp. 10–44, 53–150).

The achievement of this national pinnacle and state of "perfection" was furthermore enhanced by the discourse of "reunification" with the "Slovak branch" of the Czechoslovak nation within a single state. The Versailles peace system was therefore viewed positively in Czechoslovakia, as a just and definitive historical settlement, and the new state considered itself its natural guardian. By contrast, any changes to this ultimate victory of the good, for example, in the form of surrendering part of sovereignty, could not be understood through the prism of Czech discourse as progress, but rather as a disaster of national proportions and an unthinkable regression from the already achieved "perfect" state.

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Ukraine and the Ukrainian Question in 1914–1923

Abstract

The article analyzes the development of the "Ukrainian question" during the First World War and its aftermath – a period when a new world order was emerging along with new nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe. Born in the mid-nineteenth century, the Ukrainian "national project" evolved from cultural to socio-political demands. It culminated in the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921/1923, when an independent Ukrainian state emerged. Unlike Poland and the Baltic states, Ukrainian statehood did not last long. In March 1921, the western part of Volyn was ceded to Poland. Virtually all of Greater (Dnipro) Ukraine became part of the communist USSR. In 1923, the Entente Council of Ambassadors recognized the sovereignty of the Second Polish Republic over Eastern Galicia. In addition, after the First World War, Carpathian Ruthenia was ceded to Czechoslovakia, Bukovyna to Romania, and Ukrainians, as historian Stanislav Kulchytskij aptly noted, became "the only large nation of Austria-Hungary that did not achieve its own statehood after its collapse". At the same time, the experience of state-building in 1917–1921/1923 became crucial for the Ukrainian national movement in the twentieth century.

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Introduction

Ukrainians entered into the twentieth century divided between two empires, the Russian and Austro-Hungarian. In Romanovs' Russia, Ukrainians, who were called "malorosy (Little Russians)" there, lived roughly in nine provinces of Volyn, Kyiv, Podillia, Poltava, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Katerynoslav and Tavria. They made up the majority in all of the above administrative units. For example, according to the 1897 census of the Russian Empire, which was conducted on a language basis, most Ukrainians lived in Poltava province (93%), and the least in Kherson (53.5%). The only exception was the Tavria province, which included the Crimean Peninsula. A little over 42% of Ukrainians were recorded there. At the same time, in the mainland of the Tavria province, which included Dnipro, Melitopol, and Berdiansk districts, the share of Ukrainians was over 60% (Maiorov, 2014).

In the Habsburgs' Austria, Ukrainians were called "*rusyn* (*Ruthenian*)," and their main places of residence were localized in Eastern Galicia, Northern Bukovina and Carpathian Ruthenia. According to the 1900 census, the share of Ukrainians (determined by religion) in Austria-Hungary was 8% of the total population of the empire. In general, the Russian Empire owned 85% of Ukraine, and the Austro-Hungarian one – 15% (Hrytsak, 2021). In both states, Ukrainians lived mainly in rural areas and their percentage among urban residents was negligible. This applied to both large and small cities in the Ukrainian provinces of the Russian empire, such as Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Katerynoslav, and to cities and towns in the Austria-Hungary, such as Lviv, Ternopil, Stanislaviv, Chernivtsi, and so on.

Despite the absence of an independent Ukrainian state on the map of Europe, Ukrainians kept trying to develop their cultural life

and build their own national identity. Of course, this was taking place within the conditions given to them by the Romanovs and the Habsburgs. In Russia, the Ukrainians' opportunities for national and cultural development were worse. A similar situation applied to the Polish national movement, which was considered an even greater threat to the authorities. The Russians feared that the Polish uprisings of 1830–1831 and 1863 could become a "bad" example for Ukrainians (Plokhyi, 2016). The birth of the modern "Ukrainian project" can be conditionally defined as the middle of the nineteenth century.

The poet Taras Shevchenko was an iconic figure for Ukrainians. His difficult fate and his experience of survival in the Romanov empire inspired many generations. Moreover, he was involved in the activities of the first Ukrainian illegal political organization in the Russian Empire, the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius. The structure emerged around 1845 and lasted only a few years. Its creation was greatly influenced by the revolutionary events in Europe of 1848–1849, better known as the Spring of the Nations. The manifesto of the organization was called "The Book Ukrainian People's Existence." It contained the idea of integrating the Slavic peoples (including Ukrainians) into a federal republic with autonomous rights for each subject. Historian Serhii Plokhyi notes that

> Through their writings and activities … Shevchenko and other members of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius launched what we now call the Ukrainian national project. For the first time, they used the findings gathered by collectors of antiquities, folklorists, and linguists to formulate a political program that would lead to the creation of a national community. Over the next century, the ideas propagated by the members of the Brotherhood and presented to a wide audience in Shevchenko's passionate poetry would bring about profound transformations in Ukraine and the entire region (Plokhyi, p. 216).

After stopping the activities of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the Russian imperial authorities continued to suppress the Ukrainian national movement, paying special attention to the use of the Ukrainian language. In particular, in 1863, a ban was

imposed on the publication of religious, educational, and training books in Ukrainian (the so-called "Valuyev Circular"). Another attack on the national movement of Ukrainians was marked by the Ems Ukaz of Alexander II in 1876, which ousted the Ukrainian language from many spheres of life and banned the import of Ukrainian-language literature from abroad. At that time, Mykhailo Drahomanov, a well-known thinker and professor at St. Volodymyr University of Kyiv, was also forced to leave the Russian partition of Ukraine. He was the first Ukrainian socialist and a supporter of Ukraine's autonomy within a federal Russia. The emergence of the first Ukrainian political party in the Russian empire, the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party (RUP), in Kharkiv in 1900 was evidence of the strengthening of the Ukrainian national movement in Dnipro Ukraine. Its initial program was based on the brochure titled *Samostina Ukraina* by Mykola Mikhnovskyi, which contained the thesis of "one, united, indivisible, free, independent Ukraine from the Carpathian Mountains to the Caucasus" (Mikhnovskyi, 1967, p. 27). However, the RUP later abandoned this program and switched to the traditional autonomist principles of the Ukrainian movement of that time. The revolution of 1905–1907 in Russia, despite expectations, did not solve the key issues of state restructuring and modern transformation of the empire, leaving these problems for the years to come.

In the Habsburg empire, Ukrainians had much greater opportunities for the development of a national and cultural movement, and its regime was much more liberal than Russia's. The Spring of the Nations contributed to the creation of the Supreme Ruthenian Council in Lviv in 1848, the first Ukrainian national political organization in Galicia, which functioned until 1851. Unlike the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius, its activities were fully legal, and its members demanded the division of Galicia into eastern (Ukrainian) and western (Polish) parts, the integration of areas with a dense Ukrainian population (Eastern Galicia, Northern Bukovina, and Carpathian Ruthenia) into one administrative unit, "Ukrainization" of various spheres of cultural and social life, and so on (Holovna Ruska Rada, 2002). A key role in the national revival in Galicia belonged to the Greek Catholic clergy, whose representatives

created both the aforementioned Supreme Ruthenian Council and other Galician Ukrainian organizations, including the cultural and educational society Prosvita, which was founded in Lviv in 1868.

At the end of the nineteenth century, relations between the Ukrainian activists in Austria and Russia became increasingly close. This was facilitated by the relatively liberal regime in Galicia, which was referred to as the "Ukrainian Piedmont". An important role in these processes belonged to Professor Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, a native of Chełm, a well-known twentieth-century Ukrainian historian and a public and political figure who worked on both sides of the border, in Kyiv and Lviv. As noted by S. Plokhyi, his fundamental multi-volume work *Istoria Ukrainy-Rusy* "launched the Ukrainian historical narrative, completely different from the Russian one" and Hrushevskyi himself became "a key figure in the transmission of the Galician experience to the Dnieper Ukrainians" (Plokhyi, 2016, p. 257). Later, in his article "Galicia and Ukraine", Hrushevskyi noted that in the Dnipro Ukraine "they looked at Galicia as a Ukrainian Piedmont, as that all-Ukrainian factory where national work for the whole of Ukraine should be carried out until the right time comes…" (Hrushevskyi, 2002, p. 376–382).

In 1890, the first Ukrainian political party, the Ruthenian-Ukrainian Radical Party (RURP), was founded in Lviv. Both Galicians and Dnipro Ukrainians joined in its creation and activities: M. Drahomanov, I. Franko, M. Pavlyk, and more. One of its leading figures was Y. Bachynskyi, author of *Ukraina irredenta* (1895), in which he substantiated the need for Ukraine's political independence on Marxist principles. In particular, he noted:

> …I want to put once again the issue of the future of the Ukrainian nation on the agenda – in general, not only exclusively in Austria, but also in Russia. … One can imagine what a hard, desperate struggle awaits Ukraine; how much dedication, how much energy, physical and spiritual, it will have to draw from itself, how much material sacrifice and blood it will have to lay on the altar of the fatherland! This will be a terrible time – a time of terrible suffering and pain, but also the best time in the life of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie. Ukraine, independent! This is key. Free, great, independent, politically self-sufficient

> Ukraine – united, indivisible from San [river] to the Caucasus! – this is the way! (Bachynskyi, 1924).

The first decades of the twentieth century did not significantly change Ukraine's situation. The timid and extremely inconsistent democratization of Russia in 1905–1907 was followed by an almost complete silencing of the Ukrainian movement. Nevertheless, with gradual growth of the market economy, entrepreneurs increasingly acted as patrons of the Ukrainian cultural movement. These were the conditions under which Ukrainians faced the Great War. Despite uncountable casualties and material losses, they opened up the possibility for "Russian" and "Austrian" Ukrainians to try to realize their national aspirations, which in the previous century remained mostly theoretical developments of intellectuals. In this article, we will try to analyze the development of the "Ukrainian question" during the First World War, as well as in the first postwar years, a period of the creation of a new world order and the emergence of new nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe.

The "Ukrainian question" during the First World War

The war between the Entente and the Triple Alliance, which began on August 1, 1914, involved almost four dozen states, including the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, countries that included Ukrainian territory. This event gave Ukrainians an opportunity to create their own state, although at the initial stage of the armed conflict it looked more like a utopia. The Great War was also fratricidal for Ukrainians, as they were forced to confront each other as part of enemy armies. The hostilities not only led to the emergence of refugees. They disrupted the traditional way of life for peasants, and caused massive impoverishment of the population. However, they also significantly intensified the Ukrainian national movement on both sides of the front line.

In general, the "Ukrainian question" did not receive much attention from the Entente and the Triple Alliance, and was not at the center of their plans. For Russians, the Ukrainian nation did not exist, although some Russian liberals saw Ukrainians as a separate branch

of the Great Russian people. Historian Yaroslav Hrytsak notes that German elites also "had great doubts about the real potential of the Ukrainian issue, in particular, the readiness of Ukrainians for state independence. There were no such doubts about the Polish movement. In 1916, both the Entente and the central powers declared that they would restore an independent Poland after the war" (Hrytsak, 2021, p. 213). At the same time, Russia had its own plans for the Austrian Ukrainian area and the occupied parts of Galicia and Bukovina in 1914 (Demianiuk, 2006). The Habsburgs were also not averse to expanding their own territories and, as a result of a successful counteroffensive, by the end of 1915, they captured some territory of the Russian empire, including the western districts of the Volyn province. These events led to mass evacuation of local residents deep into the Romanov state.

> Many of the displaced ... were sent to the eastern districts of the province. Eyewitnesses recalled that the relocation took place in extremely difficult conditions. Many people died of starvation and disease. On the way, the evacuees sold their livestock and property, which they managed to take with them, because they could not survive on the rations they were given... Sometimes whole villages people were evacuated

wrote historian Yaroslav Shabala (2012, p. 303–304).

Ukrainian political figures on both sides of the front line declared their loyalty and support for the imperial authorities, hoping to resolve the "Ukrainian issue" and liberalize the regime after the end of the war. On the first day of the war, Ukrainian political activists created an inter-party organization in Lviv, the Main Ukrainian Council (HUR), which was intended to represent the interests of Ukrainians within Austria-Hungary. Its chairman Kost Levytskyi noted after the war:

> ...the leading political thought during the World War was already decisive and clear: to do everything possible until our brothers are liberated from the Russian yoke, and then to ensure the free development of the Ukrainian people in Austria, on their national territory. ...with the outbreak of the world war, our Ukrainian people in Galicia and

> Bukovina… felt in their souls that the time had come: to fight for a better life through the fire and see our glorious Ukraine with our own eyes (Levytskyi, 1926, p. 734).

At the initiative of the HUR, a Ukrainian volunteer formation, the Legion of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (USS), which numbered about 2,500 people and helped to resist the Russians on the eastern front, was formed within the Austrian army. Similarly, Polish legions also operated within the Austro-Hungarian army. These units also opposed the Russians, but for the sake of restoring the Polish state.

Another political organization of Ukrainians, the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU), operated in Eastern Galicia in parallel with the Supreme Ukrainian Council. Created by migrants from the Dnipro Ukraine staying in Austria, the SVU set out to revive Ukraine's independence. The achievement of this goal implied Russia's defeat in the war, which the organization tried to bring about in various ways – through an information campaign, publishing and educational work, forming military units from among captured Russian soldiers and officers, etc.[1]

The armed confrontation between the Russians and Austrians on the Eastern front sometimes led to contacts between Ukrainians on both sides of the front, which helped strengthen the Ukrainian national movement. Such an example is the arrival of the Galician Ukrainian Sich Riflemen in Volyn at the end of 1915 where they noted an extremely low level of national consciousness of the local population. In particular, in a letter dated March 2, 1916, Dmytro Vitovskyi, a centurion of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, wrote to Mykhailo Voloshyn, USS commander, about the situation in the Volodymyr district: "National identity… does not exist here. They answer, when asked: Who are you? Russian, Orthodox, Little Russian, local etc. – there was only one village in which they told me: and your men, from Galicia, say we are Ukrainians" (Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv Ukrainy u m. Lvovi, f. 395, op. 1, spr. 7, p. 6). The situation in Volyn was another proof of the differences in the conditions that the Ukrainian national and cultural

1 For more about the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, cf.: Pater, 2000.

development movement was facing in the Russian and Austrian empires. Under such circumstances, cultural and educational work among the population in the western districts of the Volyn province was of great importance. A key influence on this process was the activity of the aforementioned USS legion in the region. The coordination of schooling among the Ukrainian population in the territory occupied by the central powers was handled by the Bureau of Cultural Assistance for the Ukrainian Population of the Occupied Lands, an organization that was established in 1915 in Lviv under the auspices of the aforementioned Union for the Liberation of Ukraine. It was headed by Ukrainian historian and public figure Ivan Krypiakevych (Ibidem, spr. 1, p. 4). Ukrainian schools established by the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen in the western districts of Volyn province were the first Ukrainian-language educational institutions in the Romanov Empire (Hrytsak, 2021). Historian Oksana Kalishchuk notes that between 1916 and 1918, according to various estimates, 150 to 250 Ukrainian schools opened in the region (Kalishchuk, 2003). For comparison, in Galicia, on the eve of the Great War, there were 2,500 primary schools with Ukrainian language instruction (Plokhyi, 2016).

In parallel with the development of schooling, in the spring of 1916, the Austrians were building defensive lines on the eastern front, and the Russians were preparing for a counteroffensive under the leadership of the newly appointed commander of the southwestern front, General Alexei Brusilov. Thus, in early June of the same year, an offensive operation of Russian troops began along the entire front from Lutsk to Chernivtsi, better known as the Brusyliv (Lutsk) breakthrough of May 22 (June 4) to September 7 (Sept. 20), 1916. Within a few days, Brusilov's troops managed to regain control of certain areas. Attempts by Austrian troops to launch a rapid counteroffensive were unsuccessful, but they succeeded in building effective defensive lines that prevented the Russians from continuing their progress (Pasiuk, ed. 2006; Reient, ed., 2015). It was the revolutionary year of 1917.

Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1921/1923

The 1917 Revolution in Russia had fateful consequences, both at the global level and in the regional dimension. The dynamic development of events that was initiated by the abdication of Emperor Nicholas II contributed to the growth of national movements in the former empire. These trends were also observed in the Ukrainian provinces. In Ukrainian historiography, the term "Ukrainian Revolution" is used, on the one hand, as a product of the February Revolution in Russia and a phenomenon that took place in conjunction with Russian events of the time. On the other hand, it that had its own characteristic features, a national-democratic orientation, and eventually it led to the formation of Ukrainian statehood. A dominant feature of Ukrainian historiography is the characterization of the events of 1917 in Russia in the context of the history of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921/1923 as a process that eventually led to the formation of the Ukrainian statehood.

The chronological outline of the Ukrainian Revolution covers the years 1917–1921/1923 and includes three stages: 1) Formation and activities of the Ukrainian Central Council, creation and proclamation of independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) (March 1917 – April 1918); 2) Pavlo Skoropadskyi's Ukrainian State (Hetmanate) (April – December 1918); 3) UPR Directorate (December 1918 – late 1920, some events of the revolution in 1921, followed by its decline) (Verstiuk et al, 2011). At the same time, the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) is a separate page in the history of the Ukrainian Revolution. Regarding the chronology of the revolutionary events, it should be noted that some historians also use the following time frame: 1914–1923 or 1917–1921.

The Central Council of Ukraine (UTSR) was established shortly after the February Revolution in Russia on March 4 (17), 1917, and initially served as a representative body of social and political organizations, and after the All-Ukrainian National Congress (April 1917), it served as a parliament. It was headed by the aforementioned historian Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, who in the spring of 1917 published a brochure titled *Khto taki ukraintsi i choho vony khoczut* [Who Ukrainians are and what they want], in which he stated, in particular, that

> Ukrainians do not want any more … slavery either to themselves or to anyone else in Ukraine and in the entire Russian state. Together with the other peoples of Russia, they overthrew the tsar and rose up against the oppressors of the Ukrainian people, and won freedom for the peoples of Russia. And now this freedom must be established… (Hrushevskyi, 1991, p. 115).

According to Hrushevsky, the "affirmation of freedom" involved the realization of the idea of Ukraine's autonomy within Russia. This was confirmed by the first proclamation of the UTsR of March 9 (23), 1917. "To the Ukrainian nation." Among other things, it stated:

> The age-old shackles have fallen off. Freedom has come to all the oppressed people, to all the enslaved nations of Russia … For the first time, the thirty-five million Ukrainian people will be able to say for yourselves who you are and how you want to live as a separate nation. From now on, in the friendly family of free nations, you will begin to forge a better life for yourselves with a mighty hand. … Ukrainian Nation! You are standing before a new path of life (Verstiuk et al., ed., 1996, p. 38–39).

Almost throughout the entire period of its existence, the UTSR was faithful to the concept of Ukraine's territorial autonomy within democratic Russia, as evidenced by its first three state and political acts, the Universals. For example, the first Universal of June 10, 1917, stated: "May Ukraine be free. Without separating from the whole of Russia, without breaking with the Russian state, let the Ukrainian people in their land have the right to direct their own lives…" (Pershyi Universal Ukrainskoi Tsentralnoi Rady of 10 June 1917). In the second Universal of 3 July 1917, The UTSR reaffirmed its autonomist position, as well as its readiness to cooperate with national minorities:

> We, the Central Council, which has always stood for not separating Ukraine from Russia, in order to strive together with all its peoples for the development and welfare of all Russia and for the unity of its democratic forces … Striving for an autonomous system in Ukraine, the Central Council, in agreement with the national minorities of Ukraine,

shall prepare draft laws on the autonomous structure of Ukraine... (Druhyi Universal Ukrainskoi Tsentralnoi Rady of 3 July 1917).

The Third Universal of the Ukrainian Central Council of November 7, 1917, played an important role in the state-building processes by Ukrainians. It was proclaimed after the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, staged a *coup d'état* and seized power in St. Petersburg. The Third Universal declared the creation of an autonomous Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR) within a federation with the Russian state. This document outlined the territory of the UPR, which was to cover nine provinces where the majority of the population was Ukrainian, namely Volyn, Kyiv, Podillia, Poltava, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Katerynoslav, and Tavria (excluding Crimea). This legal act left open the question of the final borders of the republic and contained references to the possible future expression of the will of the local population to join the UPR in some areas of Kursk, Voronezh, Chełm, and other areas where Ukrainians were the majority. In the Third Universal, the UTsR declared the protection of the rights of national minorities and granted the right of national and personal autonomy to Russians, Jews, Poles, and other ethnic groups. The idea was that these national groups would be granted freedom of self-government in matters of their national life (Tretii Universal Ukrainskoi Tsentralnoi Rady of 7 November 1917). The revolutionary events in Russia in 1917 also had a positive impact on the activation of other national groups in the Dnipro Ukraine, including Poles, Jews, Crimean Tatars, and other communities. In March 1917, a congress of all Polish organizations was held in Kyiv. As a result, the Polish Executive Committee of the Association of Polish Organizations (later the Polish Executive Committee in Russia) was established, which began to create its own regional branches (cf. Potapenko, 2012, 2011; Jabłoński 1948).

The last IV Universal of the UTSR, adopted on January 9 (22), 1918, proclaimed the independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic from Russia and thus marked the rejection of the traditional concept of autonomy. This legal act was about the creation of an independent, free and sovereign state of the Ukrainian people, which sought peaceful coexistence with its neighbors: Russia, Poland, Austria, Romania, Turkey and other states (Chetvertyi Universal Ukrainskoi

Tsentralnoi Rady of 22 January 1918). On the same day, the UTSR adopted the law "On National and Personal Autonomy," which granted it to Russians, Jews, and Poles living in the UPR. Other national groups – Belarussians, Czechs, Moldavians, Germans, Tatars, Greeks and Bulgarians also received the right to a national autonomy (Zakon Ukrainskoi Tsentralnoi Rady "Pro natsionalno--personalnu avtonomiu" of 22 January 1918).

The declaration of independence gave the UPR subjectivity in negotiations with Germany, which was seen as an ally against Bolshevik Russia. The historian Yaroslav Hrytsak rightly notes that in 1918, Lithuanians, Estonians, Belarusians, Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and Latvians declared independence under similar circumstances. They all sought the support of the Germans in their confrontation with the Bolsheviks (Hrytsak, 2021).

The Germans helped the UTSR liberate Ukraine from the Bolsheviks, but the socialist experiments of the Ukrainian authorities caused serious concern on the German side. A coup soon followed, and a more conservative Pavlo Skoropadskyi came to power. With the support of German and Austro-Hungarian troops, the latter proclaimed the creation of the Ukrainian state. Skoropadskyi's administration has been characterized as a period of stability, attentive as to successful administration, showing positive trends in the education sector, and maintaining the security situation (Mędrzecki, 2000; Pyrih, 2011). The defeat of the central powers in World War I and the end of the armed conflict on the western front led to the fall of Skoropadskyi's government. In the last weeks of his government, on November 14, 1918, he proclaimed a federal union of the Ukrainian state with non-Bolshevik Russia, which in fact indicated a return to the autonomist concept of the Ukrainian People's Republic.

> ...The bloodiest war is over, and the peoples of the world are facing a difficult task: to lay the foundations for a new life. Among the other parts of long-suffering Russia, Ukraine has had the luckiest fate. Ukraine was the first country to restore order and legality. With the friendly assistance of the Central Powers, it has remained calm until today. ... Now, after the great unrest that Russia has ever experienced,

> the conditions of its future existence must certainly change. The ancient power and strength of the Russian state should be restored on federal principles. Ukraine is entitled to one of the most important positions in this federation…,

Pavlo Skoropadskyi's federal charter stated (Hramota Hetmana vsiei Ukrainy do vsikh ukrainskikh hromadian i kozakiv, 1918).

A real federation with Russia never happened, however, and in December 1918, the power in Dnipro Ukraine passed to the UPR Directorate. However, in the difficult socio-political conditions, the government body failed to properly organize the activities of the state administration in the country, and generally had little control over the socio-political and security situation. The year 1919 was marked by a wave of Jewish pogroms throughout Ukraine. In particular, on January 11, perpetrators set off from Zhytomyr to the town of Troianiv. Wagons with seven armed Cossacks and three women arrived and began looting Jewish homes. The Jewish community could not resist the armed attackers. In this situation, local Orthodox Christian Ukrainian peasants came to the defense of the Jews. They killed one attacker, two attackers escaped, while the rest were detained. The peasant assembly decided to punish the criminals with the death penalty (Makhorin, 2017). Regarding these events, which are poorly studied in Ukrainian historiography, the Directorate adopted a "Resolution on the adoption of the charter of the emergency provisional commission to investigate the events in Zhytomyr on January 7–13, 1919," in early March 1919 (Postanova pro ykhvalennia statutu nadzvychainoi slidchoi komisii… of 03 March 1919). In some towns, the Bolsheviks were the ones who incited the Jewish pogroms. In particular, Symon Petliura noted in a telegram of June 8, 1919: "In Volochysk, after the entry of the Ukrainian army, the Cossacks arrested a worker who incited Cossacks to commit a Jewish pogrom. I order the provocateurs to be shot, informing the population" (Komarnytskyi, 2003, p. 38–46). The investigation of anti-Jewish action was also related to the "Order of the UPR Directorate on the appointment of the head of the Special Provisional Commission to investigate anti-Jewish pogroms" of July 4, 1919 (Nakaz Dyrektorii UNR pro pryznachennia holovy Osoblyvoi

slidchoi komisii... 4.07.1919 r.). In general, the Jewish pogroms in Ukraine in 1919 are one of the least studied issues in contemporary Ukrainian historical scholarship, and at the same time an issue that attracts special attention in Western historiography.

In the fall of 1918, The Ukrainian National Revolution also covered the post-Austrian territories of Eastern Galicia, Northern Bukovina, and Carpathian Ruthenia. In particular, in mid-October, the Ukrainian National Council, headed by Yevhen Petrushevych, was formed in Lviv. Its creation was preceded by an Austrian attempt to reorganize the empire into a federation. At the same time, the Poles also saw Eastern Galicia as part of their future state. At the end of October 1918, a Polish temporary (transitional) government was established in Krakow – the Polish Liquidation Committee of Galicia and Cieszyn Silesia. This committee planned to take over Lviv as well. In fact, since early November, Ukrainian state-building processes have been taking place here, as well as a Polish-Ukrainian armed confrontation. On October 19, the newly formed Ukrainian National Council proclaimed a Ukrainian state in eastern Galicia. On November 1, Ukrainians took control of Lviv, and on November 13, they adopted the constitution of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR). At the end of November 1918, the Poles managed to force Ukrainians out of Lviv, but the Polish-Ukrainian war for Eastern Galicia continued (BN PAU i PAN, man. 4064, 4104, 4292, 4311) (cf. Lytvyn & Naumenko, 1995; Lytvyn, 1998).

On January 22, 1919, the Act of Unification of the UPR and ZUNR took place in the center of Kyiv on St. Sophia Square. The respective universal stated: "...From now on, the parts of a single Ukraine that have been separated for centuries, the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (Galicia, Bukovina, and Uzhhorod Rus) and the Greater Dnipro Ukraine, are merging together. The age-old dreams that the best sons of Ukraine lived and died for have come true. From now on, there is a united independent Ukrainian People's Republic" (Akt zluky UNR i ZUNR of 22 Jan. 1919). Under pressure from the Bolsheviks, the UPR directorate hastily left Kyiv and sought new allies. A serious threat to it was posed by the so-called "white Russian" movement, the Russian Volunteer Army of Anton Denikin, who did not see an independent Ukraine in his national concept. The leadership of

the ZUNR, like the UPR, was also losing sovereignty over its state territories, yielding to the Poles, and needed external support. The question of choosing allies was extremely difficult for both Galicians and Dnipro Ukraine dwellers. Serhii Plohkyi rightly notes that:

> Westerners did not see any problem in an alliance with the anti-Bolshevik and anti-Polish White Army. Easterners, for their part, viewed the Poles, despised by the Galicians, as potential allies in the fight against the Bolsheviks and the Whites, while some semi-independent atamans were not averse to joining the Red Army. United by ideology and circumstances, the two sides still waged their own wars (Plokhyi, 2021, p. 285–286).

The Ukrainian national project encountered similar projects of its neighbors. The Bolsheviks, despite declaring the nations' right to self-determination, saw Ukraine as a Soviet state in an alliance with communist Russia. For the White Guards, the Ukrainian territory was part of "one and indivisible Russia." The Poles also had their own concepts for the revival of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which were presented to R. Dmowski and J. Piłsudski. Despite the differences in the vision of the future territorial structure of Poland, both programs envisioned Volyn and Eastern Galicia as non-negotiable parts of the revived state. At the same time, Hungary and Czechoslovakia claimed Carpathian Ruthenia, Romania sought to incorporate Northern Bukovina, and the northern border of Ukraine became the subject of debate with the leaders of the Belarusian People's Republic, but they did not continue due to the seizure of Belarusian lands by the Bolsheviks.

In such circumstances, Ukrainians hoped for a fair international arbitration. However, at the final stage of the Great War, it was already clear that the Entente powers, which supported non-Bolshevik Russia and Poland, had little interest to the "Ukrainian question." During the war, the Polish political emigration actively worked to convey the need for a just solution to the "Polish question" in the international arena. This issue was also supported by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. In Western Europe, France had a special sympathy for Poland, which was especially noticeable

during the Paris Peace Conference, which summarized the results of the Great War (Lytvyn, 1998). It was thanks to the deployment of General Józef Haller's army, formed in France from Polish prisoners of war to the Polish-Ukrainian front, that the Poles gained a significant advantage in 1919: they pushed the Ukrainian Galician Army beyond the Zbruch River, occupied a significant part of the former Volyn province and included it in Polish temporary administrative units.[2] Thus, the success of the Poles in the war with the Ukrainians and their international support by the Entente powers contributed to their occupation of Eastern Galicia and Western Volyn and the establishment of a temporary administration in these territories. The Entente countries, as allies of non-Bolshevik Russia, also supported the "white" movement that opposed the Ukrainian People's Republic. Historian M. Lytvyn notes:

> Clemenceau wrote that he could not forgive Ukrainians for the 'shameful peace in Brest-Litovsk'. He believed that the Ukrainian national idea was supported by Germany, believing that Austria-Hungary and the Ukrainians of Galicia within it fought against the Entente, reproached the Central Council and the Hetman for their alliance with Berlin and inviting German troops to Ukraine in the spring of 1918 (Lytvyn, 1998, p. 257).

At the end of June 1919, the Entente officially agreed to the occupation of Eastern Galicia by Poland (Lytvyn, 1998).

It is worth noting that Ukrainians were not only in conflict with their neighbors. In particular, the Ukrainian Central Council offered

2 This refers to the Civil Administration of the eastern territories and the Civil Administration of the Volyn and Podillia Front. Cf.: Zarządzenie Komisarza Generalnego Ziem Wschodnich z dnia 7 czerwca 1919 r. dotyczące utworzenia Okręgów administracyjnych: Wileńskiego, Brzeskiego oraz Zarządu powiatów wołyńskich, Dziennik Urzędowy Zarządu Cywilnego Ziem Wschodnich (DzU zczw), 1919, No 5, item. 41, p. 37–40; Zarządzenie Komisarza Generalnego Ziem Wschodnich z dnia 9 września 1919 r. dotyczące utworzenia okręgu administracyjnego Wołyńskiego i uprawnień komisarza Okręgowego Wołyńskiego, DzU zczw, 1919, No 17, item. 153, p. 161; Rozkaz Naczelnego Wodza Wojsk Polskich z dnia 17 stycznia 1920 r. w przedmiocie utworzenia Komisariatu Ziem Wołynia i Frontu Podolskiego, Dziennik Urzędowy Zarządu Cywilnego Ziem Wołynia i Frontu Podolskiego, 1920, No 1, item. 1, p. 1–6.

cooperation to the Russian Provisional Government within the framework of the concept of autonomy, and Hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi even proclaimed a federal union between Ukraine and non-Bolshevik Russia at the end of his rule. "For both the Russian left and the Russian right, the idea of Ukraine as a separate, even autonomous state was a curse. National differences turned out to be stronger than ideological proximity," says historian Yaroslav Hrytsak (2021, p. 222).

Despite the Polish-Ukrainian war over Eastern Galicia and Western Volyn, the two rivals managed to unite in the face of the Bolshevik threat in the spring of 1920. On April 21, 1920, in Warsaw, Polish Foreign Minister Jan Dąbski and UPR Foreign Minister Andriy Livytskyi signed a secret political convention. Soon it received a popular and historiographical name, the "Warsaw Pact" or "Piłsudski–Petliura Union" (Pisuliński & Skalski, eds., 2020). According to the treaty, the Polish government recognized the Directorate of the Independent Ukrainian People's Republic as the supreme authority of the UPR. Three days later, on April 24, a Military Convention was signed, which outlined a joint Polish-Ukrainian anti-Bolshevik military action. The Warsaw Pact provided for territorial concessions by the Ukrainian party in exchange for international recognition of the UPR and military assistance in the war against the Bolsheviks. The UPR government recognized eastern Galicia and western Volyn as part of the Polish state (Pisuliński & Skalski, eds. 2020).

The signing of the agreement with the Poles led to sharp criticism of Symon Petliura. Mykhailo Hrushevskyi called him a "new Teteria" and referred to the treaty an "extravagancy," "provocation" and "machination" that stained Ukraine's image for European politicians (Hrushevskyi, 1920). The head of the ZUNR, Yevhen Petrushevych, also protested. At the same time, the moral authority of the Greek Catholics, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytskyi, responded positively to the agreement. Petliura himself later wrote: "Only a dishonest demagogue can afford to say that 'Petliura sold' Galicia and Volyn. Petliura, to tell the truth, bears responsibility for the historical 'sins' and shortcomings of Ukrainian disorganization, lack of culture and unfavorable circumstances in the life of the Ukrainian nation" (Petliura, 1994, p. 254).

The military success of Polish and Ukrainian troops in May–June 1920 was short-lived. In early July, Soviet troops crossed the Zbruch

River and began advancing into Volyn, Galicia, and further into Poland. In the occupied territories, the Bolsheviks created their own temporary authorities, the Revolutionary Committees. The short-lived Bolshevik regime was accompanied by terror and contributions. The decisive Battle of Warsaw, the "Miracle on the Vistula," took place on August 13–25, 1920, and ended with the retreat of Bolshevik troops. The 6th Division of the UPR Army under the command of Colonel Marko Bezruchko played an important role in this. During the defense of Zamość, Ukrainians did not allow the Reds to advance deep into Poland, thus saving the entire Polish-Soviet front. In the fall of 1920, the Poles and the Bolsheviks, exhausted by the military confrontation, signed a preliminary armistice and *de facto* ended the war.

Epilogue

Born in the mid-nineteenth century, the Ukrainian "national project" evolved from cultural to socio-political demands. This culminated in the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921/1923, when an independent Ukrainian state emerged. However, unlike Poland and the Baltic states, Ukrainian statehood did not last long. On March 18, 1921, a treaty was signed in Riga between Poland and Soviet Russia and its satellites, the Soviet governments of Ukraine and Belarus. The line of demarcation was almost exactly where the Ukrainian-Polish border was planned under the Warsaw Pact. The western part of the ancient Volyn province with Lutsk and Rivne remained under Polish control, while the eastern part, with Zhytomyr and Korosten, became part of the Soviet state.[3] Virtually all of Great (Dnipro) Ukraine became part of the communist USSR.

The international resolution of the status of Eastern Galicia took several more years. Nevertheless, in early December 1920, the Poles

3 In Western Volyn, the Poles created the Volyn Voivodeship. Established by the law of February 4, 1921, the new administrative unit was one of the largest voivodeships of the Polish state. Cf.: Ustawa z 4 lutego 1921 r. o unormowaniu stanu prawno-politycznego na ziemiach, przyłączonych do obszaru Rzeczypospolitej na podstawie umowy o preliminaryjnym pokoju i rozejmie podpisanej w Rydze 12 października 1920 r., Dziennik Urzędowy Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (DzU RP), 1921, No 16, item. 93, p. 216–217.

officially created three new voivodeships – of Lviv, Ternopil, and Stanislaviv.[4] Most Galicians did not accept the Polish authorities and they expected a fair decision by the victorious powers, therefore mostly boycotting the parliamentary elections in the fall of 1922. In the difficult domestic political and international situation related to the determination of the status of Eastern Galicia in early 1923, the Polish authorities seriously feared an uprising of Ukrainians in the spring of that year (BN PAU i PAN w Krakowie, man. 4066, p. 67; man. 4144, p. 2.). No uprising took place, and already on 14 March 1923, the Council of Ambassadors of the Entente recognized the eastern border of Poland and thus consolidated the sovereignty of the Second Polish Republic over Eastern Galicia (*Republika* 1923, 68, 15 March, p. 1, *Dziennik Wołyński* 1923a, p. 16, 1923b, p. 17, 1923c, 19–20, p. 1, 1923d, p. 1; Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie; Derzhavnyi arkhiv Ivano-Frankivskoi oblasti; Materski 1981). In addition, after the First World War, Carpathian Ruthenia was ceded to Czechoslovakia, Bukovina to Romania, and Ukrainians, as historian Stanislav Kulchytskyi aptly noted, became "the only large nation of Austria-Hungary that did not achieve its own statehood after its collapse" (Kulchytskyi, 1999, p. 268).

Why did the Ukrainian nation-state, unlike Poland or the Baltic states, fail to survive? The historian Serhii Plokhyi tried to formulate an answer to this complex question:

> There are many reasons. One of them was the presence of more powerful neighbors who had claims towards Ukrainian territories. But the key factor was the immaturity of the Ukrainian national movement and the too-late acceptance of the idea of statehood and independence in both the Austrian and Russian parts of Ukraine. …Despite the failed attempt to create a single state out of Habsburgian and Dnipro Ukraine, the ideal of a unified and independent statehood became the main element in the new Ukrainian creed (Plokhyi, 2016, p. 296).

4 Ustawa z 3 grudnia 1920 r. o tymczasowej organizacji władz administracyjnych II instancji (województw) na obszarze b. Królestwa Galicji i Lodomerji z W. Ks. Krakowskiem oraz na wchodzących w skład Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej obszarach Spisza i Orawy, DzU RP, 1920, No 117, item. 768, p. 2064–2066; Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, Departament Sprawiedliwości MSW, I 300.58.14.

The Ukrainian national movement remained captive to the romantic ideals of nineteenth-century autonomy and federalism, which ultimately had a negative impact on the outcome of the liberation struggle. At the same time, the Polish and Finnish national movements in the nineteenth century clearly articulated the concept of national independence, which led to the creation of nation states after the collapse of the great empire in 1918 (Hrytsak, 2021). The experience of the UPR and ZUNR became crucial for the Ukrainian national movement in the twentieth century. Many politicians would later refer to the lessons of 1914–1923, and the absence of a Ukrainian state would become the basis for the formation of the identity of Ukrainian society in interwar Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania.

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Bessarabia as Part of Greater Romania: Challenges and Solutions

Abstract

The focus of the article is Romania during the last part of the World War I (January– November 1918), when, after the demise of the Tsarist Empire, and shortly after the Bolshevik coup, Bessarabia proclaimed independence from Russia (24 January 1918), followed shortly by a union with Romania on 27 March. Based on documents of the time, we describe the circumstances of the Union, the difficulties that arose in the process of the integration of Bessarabia (proclaimed a republic) with the Kingdom of Romania, as well as the various opinions on the constitution of Greater Romania (through the later union of Bukovina and Transylvania).

After the end of the World War I and after the establishment of Greater Romania, the state and society faced various challenges, which they overcame (some successfully, others less so). The important figures of the time, some of whom were actively involved both in the Union and in subsequent political life, wrote about the emerging problems. For instance, Dr Petre Cazacu, a member of the Country Council (the Parliament of Bessarabia, 1917–1918), outlined a number of difficulties faced by the Bessarabian population in the first decade after the Union in his book *Zece ani de la Unire: Moldova dintre Prut și Nistru*

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(1918–1928) [Ten years after the Union: Moldova between the Prut and the Dniester (1918–1928)].

The publisher and politician Onisifor Ghibu expressed his views on this issue even more forcefully, and voiced his strong conviction that the Union of Bessarabia with Romania had been hasty. "Things would have turned out very differently in Bessarabia," stated Ghibu, "if the union had not been forced and if it had occurred naturally, in the autumn of 1918, at the same time as that of Transylvania and Bukovina, in an atmosphere of triumphant Romanianism. Shielded by the Romanian army, Bessarabia, guided by its national culture and by the idea of the union of all Romanians, supported by people imbued with the holy feeling of love for the nation, would have made such progress during the eight months (March–November 1918) [of] favourable development, like in the past, that it could no longer have fallen prey to the ambitions of some, or to the poison of others". We do not share Ghibu's views. We believe that by the end of World War II Romanian historians (from both Romania and the Republic of Moldova) had already objectively presented the history of Romanians after World War I.

Keywords

World War I, Romania's neutrality, Bessarabia, Greater Romania

On the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War (1914), Romania's joining the war (1916), the collapse of the Tsarist Empire (February 1917) and the Bolshevik coup d'état (October 1917), successful national reunification (1 December 1918) and the international recognition of Greater Romania, Romanian historians wrote monographs and articles, published new documents and republished the most important texts of the time (documents, memoirs, and hotographs). Romanian historians also organized international and national conferences, symposia, and round tables addressing these events. In turn, museographers held thematic exhibitions, while local authorities, as well as community organizations or even individuals built (or

restored) monuments or installed busts in memory of the great figures and events of the time. The efforts of historians, museographers and those directly involved in the commemoration of the Union's Centennial are presented in a fundamental work: *Enciclopedie: Centenarul Războiului de Reîntregire și al Marii Uniri (2014–2020)* [Encyclopaedia: The Centennial of the War of Unification and the Great Union (2014–2020)].

The minutes of the plenary sessions of the Country Council,[1] the minutes of the Agrarian Commission of the Country Council,[2] the republished five volumes of *Note politice* [Political Notes] authored by Alexandru Marghiloman[3] and others are particularly important for local history scholarship among the thousands of publications issued between 2014 and 2020.

The following is a succinct overview of the fundamental events in Romanian history during the years of World War I. Particular attention is paid to issues related to Bessarabia's separation from Russia and its return to its motherland Romania.

Romania during the years of neutrality: Romania's joining and participation in the War

Around the beginning of the World War I, the Romanian nation was divided politically and administratively. Thus, in 1916, the year Romania joined the war, Transylvania and Bukovina – territories populated mainly by Romanians – were under the rule of the oppressive Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Romanian province of Bessarabia was part of the "prison of the peoples" (Lenin): the Tsarist Empire.

The Romanians' sense of belonging to a national community and their manifest desire to achieve the sacred ideal of national-state unity were amply demonstrated by Bucharest both in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Great War and during the first two years of neutrality. Telling evidence of this was the prodigious activity of

1 Sfatul Țării. *Documente*, vol. I.
2 Sfatul Țării. *Documente*, vol. II.
3 Alexandru Marghiloman, *Note politice. 1897–1924*...

the Romanian Cultural League, which had foreign branches in the main European political and cultural-academic centres (Marinescu, 1993, p. 145). In September 1911, the Bucharest section of the Cultural League organized large-scale demonstrations under the banner of national unity, on the inauguration of the History Exhibition in Carol Park, thousands of Romanians "from all corners of Romania, as well as from the alienated provinces" came at the call of the League" (Marinescu, 1993, p. 192).

The philanthropic activity of Vasile Stroescu, a Bessarabian Romanian, leader of the Romanian Cultural League, is an epitome of Romanian solidarity, tangible proof of the sense of national unity. In 1911, for instance, Stroescu donated 500 crowns to the Romanian school in Mândra, Făgăraș, and another 500 crowns to the school in Marcoș. In the same year, he donated another 500 crowns to the church and school in Săliștea Zarandului. The total sum contributed by the Bessarabian patriot to support Romanian culture across the Carpathians was 1 million lei (Marinescu, 1993, p. 189).

The years of Romania's neutrality (1914–1916) saw an intensification of the movement for liberation and national-state unity of the Romanians, as part of the general European movement of the peoples oppressed by multinational empires. The outbreak of the war compelled Romania's political class to make crucial decisions, especially with regard to achieving complete state unity. The leadership of the Romanian Kingdom was faced with a great dilemma: whether to choose an alliance with the Entente states or with the Triple Alliance states. Joining the war on the side of the latter military block offered the prospect of Bessarabia's return to the bosom of the motherland land, but "would have prevented the national liberation of the Romanians of Transylvania and Bukovina" (Marinescu, 1993, p. 208).

In this situation, the Bessarabian-born Romanian patriot Constantin Stere fervently pleaded for Romania to join the war on the side of the Triple Alliance. In his speeches during the sessions of the Romanian Chamber of Parliament, which was meeting to discuss the Message to be delivered by the Crown, Stere provided multiple arguments in favour of his position and that of his followers on the issue of Romania's foreign policy. "Bukovina and Bessarabia," stressed

Stere, "were part of the old Moldavia, and shared their entire history with the Romanians of the Kingdom. Our parents, like yours (the Romanians living in the Kingdom – A.P.), lived during the reign of Alexander the Good, Stephen the Great and John the Brave. There is not a speck of Romanian soil without a drop of their blood and a molecule of their bones. We have built this state together" (Stere, 1997, p. 35). Based on historical facts, Stere convincingly demonstrated the aggressiveness of Russian tsarism's foreign policy, and the anti-Romanian nature of St. Petersburg's policy in the Balkans and in the Straits regions. "There is only one path open for us," insisted Stere: that against Russia and for Bessarabia. Otherwise we will lose Bessarabia and will be left without Transylvania also. Transylvania hasn't perished in a thousand years, it is not going to perish from now on either" (1997, p. 38).

Political and patriotic groups rallying around the Romanian Cultural League, were firmly in favour of Romania's joining the war alongside the Entente, especially after the signatories to the alliance (France, Great Britain, and Russia) decided to fully satisfy Romania's demands for the union of Transylvania and Bukovina with Romania. This "gradually became the main focus of the vast majority of Romanian public opinion" (Marinescu, 1993, p. 209).

In 1916, criticism (both from the pro-German party and from the supporters of the alliance with the Entente) against the government led by Ion I.C. Bratianu intensified. Bucharest's policy of neutrality could not last long. Romanian diplomacy carried out extensive secret activities, whose main aim was for Romania to join the war alongside the Entente. Later, on 16 December 1919, Brătianu delivered a speech in the Chamber of Deputies, in which he explained why Romania had joined the war alongside the Entente countries. The first reason was the Romanian government's rejection of the policy conducted in the Balkans by the Germans and Austro-Hungarians, whose attack on Serbia had led to the outbreak of World War I. Romania entered into an alliance with these two powers in October 1883.

"We entered into an agreement (with Germany and Austria-Hungary – A.P.)", Brătianu pointed out, "in order to guarantee the independence of the Balkans, we did so in order to maintain peace, and those who were our allies waged a war of aggression, seeking

to destroy the Balkan state and suppress its independence. That is why we could not join our yesterday's allies in their war" (Brătianu, 1996, p. 28).

The second reason that prompted Romania's officials to advocate joining the Entente was the two main principles on which the policy of the Allies (the Entente, A.P.) was based: a) the independence of small states and b) the freedom of nations. "When this banner is raised in a great battle, capable of changing the previous situation of Europe," Brătianu noted, "all feelings, all interests, all the souls in Romania can only rally around it. Romania must not watch this struggle helplessly, like a bystander waiting idly and watching two men fight only to have the winner decide its fate in the end"(Brătianu, 1996, p. 29).

Romania joined the war at the request of the Entente states, at the time "when their armies were in a difficult situation on almost all fronts" (Marinescu, 1993, p. 238). Prime Minister Brătianu drew attention to this significant fact: "We did not join the war as unwelcome petitioners. We entered the war valiantly, when the French ambassador to Petrograd said: if Romania does not enter the war, the western front may be compromised. We went into the war when the Russians were telling us: now or never" (Brătianu, 1996, p. 34). Therefore, the timing of Romania's joining the war was not chosen only by Bucharest, but was largely imposed by the Entente powers. Admittedly, Romania was not sufficiently well prepared to fight a modern war. Nevertheless, its involvement in the hostilities "produced 'a marvellous effect on the morale' of the member states of the Entente and also brought about important favourable changes on the battle fronts" (Marinescu, 1993, p. 239).

By signing the Treaty of Alliance and the Military Convention on 16 August 1916, Romania obtained from the Entente Powers the recognition of its right to reunite Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina and to have this union enshrined in the future Peace Treaty with the Central Powers. Military cooperation defined the obligations of both sides.

In accordance with the provisions of the Military Convention, Romania declared war on Austria-Hungary on 14 (27) August 1916. The Romanian army crossed the Carpathians, liberating a vast territory with important urban centres such as Orșova, Brașov,

Sf. Gheorghe, Miercurea-Ciuc, Târgu Secuiesc, and Borsec. The Romanian army's advancement was not supported by the Allies. Moreover, in the midst of the Romanian army's offensive in Transylvania, Bulgaria declared war on Romania. The Bulgarian army, in alliance with German military troops, went on the offensive in southern Romania. The Romanian General Staff was forced to send some of the troops to the front in Dobrogea. In the meantime, German and Austro-Hungarian military forces had gone on the counter-offensive in Transylvania. On the Southern Front, the Romanian Army took up defensive positions. East of the Carpathians, after fierce battles, German and Austro-Hungarian troops were stopped at Oituz. In southern Transylvania, however, Romanian resistance was less successful.

The overwhelming superiority of the enemy and the refusal of the Russian commanders to conduct military actions in support of the Romanian Army forced the Romanian military to abandon its strategic plan for defending the Olt Gorge. In the Argeș-Neajlov region, the Romanian Army put up strong resistance in the Battle of Bucharest. After heavy fighting, in December 1916, the front stalled in the valleys of the Sușița, Putna and Șiret rivers. The indisputable numerical and technical superiority of the German and Austro-Hungarian armies over the Romanian army, the failure of the allies to fulfil their obligations, and the insufficient supply of Romanian troops with rifles, machine guns, planes, and cannons resulted in the defeat of the Romanian army. Thus, a complex set of objective and subjective causes led to the temporary withdrawal of the Romanian Army, the Royal House, the Government, the Parliament and other state bodies to Iași.

Facing enormous material hardships and suffering considerable human losses due to shortages of food and medicine, the Romanian people overcame the difficulties of the war between December 1916 and spring 1917.

In the summer of 1917, German and Austro-Hungarian forces resumed their offensive on the Siret front. Soon, however, their operation failed. In July 1917, Romanian troops went on the counter-offensive and won a brilliant victory at Mărăști, which was a prelude to the great victorious battle of Mărășești.

The fighting at Mărășești began on 24 July 1917 and continued for two weeks. The Romanian army won a glorious victory, defeating a numerically superior enemy equipped with modern combat gear. "Mărășești was the grave of German illusions" (Marinescu, 1993, p. 269).– this is how national and universal historiography recorded this major military event. According to historian Marinescu, the Battle of Mărășești "was the key to the later achievement of the Great Union of 1918, it was the cornerstone of this great act sealed at Chișinău, Cernăuți and Alba Iulia by the will of the entire nation" (1993, p. 271).

Despite the brilliant victories of the Romanian Army in the summer and autumn of 1917, the situation on the Siret front worsened due to the lack of Allies assistance and, especially due to the disarray of the Russian Army after the Bolshevik coup of October 1917. Keen to retain power at all costs, the Bolshevik government signed the Brest–Litovsk armistice on 22 November (5 December) 1917. Russia's withdrawal from the war made Romania's situation considerably worse. Actually, "Romania was left alone against the armies of the Central Powers, which had overwhelming superiority and had advanced far not only into Romania, but also into Ukraine, on the Galician front" (Marinescu, 1993, p. 274).

After thorough consideration of the situation on the Eastern Front, in particular on the Siret river, on 21 November (4 December) 1917 the Romanian Government, presided over by King Ferdinand I, concluded that "the armistice was imposed as a case of force majeure and that it would be purely military, and not political" (ibid). On 26 November (9 December) 1917, Romania signed an armistice with the Central Powers. Romania's Prime Minister addressed the Allies in an extensive memorandum explaining Romania's new situation after Russia had exited the war. Romania's departure from the war, as Brătianu stressed, did not entail a change in Bucharest's relations with the Allies. Romania reserved the right to resume the armed combat in order to achieve its ideal of national unity, as soon as favourable internal and external circumstances would allow it (Marinescu, 1993, p. 277).

The demise of the Tsarist Empire and the national liberation movement of Bessarabia

Tsarist Russia was fully involved in the Great War, as the First World War was called. Russia was a multinational empire, in which the policy of Russification of non-Russian peoples was ostentatiously enforced. Sometime earlier, in the late 19th and early 20th century, some political parties in Europe (the Second Socialist International) took up the issue of the right of nations (peoples) to political self-determination and the formation of independent states. The idea was also debated by the political parties in Russia, including the most important one, the Party of Socialist Revolutionaries (the so-called Esers, from eS-eR/SRs), who believed that after the fall of Tsarism, the Russian Empire would be transformed into a federation similar to the United States of America, however not a federation of states, but of national state formations.

According to the Esers' views, Russia, as the centre of the future federation, was to retain four functions: a single military force, a single financial system, the right to dictate foreign policy and to establish the judicial system. Otherwise, the other constituent parts of the Russian Federation would be independent in their decision-making. After the fall of Tsarism, the Esers came to power and formed the Provisional Government, headed by Alexander Kerensky. The leader of the Provisional Government sent commissaries to Bessarabia who advocated the implementation of the Petrograd Executive policy, including in matters of national interest. The Bessarabian Ion Inculet was one of them.

The year 1917 was a time of large-scale movements for the national emancipation of Bessarabian Romanians. The programme of the National Moldovan (or Moldavian) Party, established in April 1917, called for the introduction of autonomy for Bessarabia: "Starting from the democratic and national objectives, which have been acknowledged both by the temporary rulers of Russia and by the rulers of the countries that have joined her in the Great War, the National Moldovan Party will fight to obtain the widest administrative, judicial, ecclesiastical, educational and economic autonomy for Bessarabia. While remaining bound to Russia by the laws of common interest, Bessarabia

will govern its own internal life, while taking into account the national rights of all its inhabitants" (*Unirea Basarabiei…*, 1995, p. 26).

The party's programme stipulated that democratic freedoms would be guaranteed, that all internal laws of Bessarabia would be drafted by the provincial parliament, the Country Council, that the administrative system would be made up of native citizen who spoke the language of the people; and that the language of instruction of all grades in schools should be the national language of the people.

In the summer and autumn of 1917, democratic Russia held elections to the Constituent Assembly: a pan-Russian Parliament, which was empowered to draft the Constitution of the future Russian Federation. The democratic forces in Russia were placing high hopes on the authority of the Constituent Assembly's decisions and demanded that it be convened. The demands to convene the Constituent Assembly continued after the Bolshevik coup in Russia. Their fraction in the Constituent Assembly, however, was too small. That is why, on 6 January 1918, the Bolshevik leaders convened the Constituent Assembly in the "Tavriceski" Palace in Petrograd, and dissolved it after a day of debates. In this way, Russia abandoned the path of democratic development.

In the summer of 1917, things in Russia began to spiral out of the control of the authorities. In July 1917, the Bolsheviks, financially supported by the Germans, tried to overthrow the Provisional Government, but failed. By autumn, the situation had grown worse for the Russian democracy. Under the influence of Bolshevik agitators, Russian Army soldiers stopped obeying the orders of their commanders; on the contrary, many of them were arrested, and anarchy became rampant. This state of affairs had spread into Bessarabia.

In the autumn of 1917, at the initiative of Bessarabian members of the Russian Army, a legislative body of the province, called the Country Council, was set up in Chișinău, with Ion Inculet elected as its president. On 21 November 1917 the first session of the Bessarabian Parliament was held. During the meetings, the Country Council debated pressing problems facing Bessarabian society at the time.

One of the first issues that was repeatedly discussed was the legitimacy of the Country Council. Taking into account the special situation that arose in the provinces, deputies to the Country Council were sent

by political parties, national communities, professional associations, peasants, workers, etc. Therefore, from the very first sessions of the Parliament, some deputies, in particular representatives of ethnic minorities, believed that the Moldovan Legislative body was a provisional body that would function until the Constituent Assembly in Russia was convened and a new legislative body of Bessarabia was elected by universal, equal, direct suffrage and secret ballot.

On 1 December 1917, the Country Council issued a Declaration that stated: "Upholding the principle of national-state self-determination, ... with a view to introducing state order and in the name of consolidating the gains of the Revolution [the Revolution of February 1917, which had abolished tsarism – A.P.], Bessarabia, by virtue of its historical past, henceforth titles itself the Moldovan People's Republic,[4] an equal member of the Russian Democratic Federal Republic. From now on, until the People's Assembly of Bessarabia is convened, elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage in accordance with the principle of proportional representation, THE COUNTRY COUNCIL SHALL BE THE SUPREME POWER IN THE MOLDOVAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC" (*Sfatul Țării.* Vol. 1, p. 179) [highlighted in capital letters in the document – A.P.].

The message seemed to be clear: until normal conditions are established for elections to the Country Council by universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot, this legislative body will rule Bessarabia. However, some deputies (such as Nadezhda Grinfeld, a member of the Russian Social Democratic Revolutionary Party, an Eser, and a member of the Bund) always questioned the legitimacy of the Country Council as the supreme legislative body of Bessarabia and refused to acknowledge it.

The Bessarabian political figures, who saw the establishment of the supreme legislative body as a practice similar to the creation of similar institutions in other regions of the former Tsarist Empire of the time, argued for the legitimacy of the Country Council. Thus, Petre Cazacu, a member of the Country Council, pointed out: "Speaking

4 In the document, *Moldavskaia Narodnaia Respublica* – the Moldovan People's Republic. Elsewhere, including studies of contemporary authors, the name is the Moldovan / Moldavian Democratic Republic.

of the organization and membership the Country Council strictly from the point of view of its legitimacy, there is no doubt that it was a revolutionary body, just as were and still are all the institutions of the former Russian Empire since 2 March 1917, when the only source of legitimacy, namely the will of the emperor, disappeared and was not replaced by another legitimate source, but by factual situations without any legitimacy, or with a common one: the expression of the will of the people at a given place and time" (Cazacu, 1992, p. 305). The author cited similar examples: the Provisional Government in Russia, the Governorate's Council in Estonia, the Rada in Ukraine, and the Taryba in Lithuania. In addition to those mentioned by Cazacu, one may cite the establishment of state bodies in Poland, Czechoslovakia and other states.

Another topic that was constantly under discussion in the Country Council meetings was the issue of ethnic identity. At the very first meeting of the Country Council, all the speakers called for equal rights for ethnic groups, in essentially similar addresses with certain nuances. The Country Council's president, Ion Inculeț stated that in Bessarabia "the rights of national minorities must be guaranteed; in a free Bessarabia there will be no place for nation-states [in Russian "*ne doljno bîti mesta derjavnîm națiam*", where *derjava* means "power", "state"] (*Sfatul Țării.* Vol. 1, p. 104).

On the other hand, Karol Shmidt, the Mayor of Chișinău, expressed the hope that "the Country Council would not forget the great achievements of the [Russian] Revolution [of February 1917 – A.P.], and that all nations are *derjavnî*" (ibid. p. 106), respectively nation-states. This meant that "Moldovans" as a "nation" would be equal to the other nations of the Russian Federation.

Ion Pelivan, the representative of the National Moldovan Party in the town of Bolgrad, delivered a remarkable speech. "The opening of the work of the Country Council," he said, "is the most important day for the Moldovan people. A nation that was doomed to extinction is being reborn today". Pelivan briefly outlined the history of Bessarabia, and said that in 1812 the area between the Prut and the Dniester was torn away from Moldova and annexed to the Russian State. "It has always been like this in the past: whenever the two great, spoliating robbers – the Russians and the Turks – fought

each other, the Moldovans had to suffer. This was also the case in 1812, when Bessarabia was torn from the body of Romania to be handed over to the Russian Tsar." Pelivan spoke about the situation of Moldova under the Ottoman protectorate and under the Tsarist regime to demonstrate that under the Turks, after paying the tithe, Moldovans were free (they could speak their own language, attend churches, etc.), "The Turks were robbing us, but they did not trample our souls under their dirty boots" (ibid., p.112) (rounds of applause followed). In other words, Pelivan gave a patriotic speech, demonstrating that "Moldovans" are, in fact, Romanians.

The deputy Solomon Eigher, president of the United Socialist Party of Jews, read out a statement in Russian, followed by the same text in Hebrew (in the text – Jewish), thus saluting the establishment of the Country Council, and called for "personal national autonomy" (ibid. 114). He demanded that the Jewish community should be recognized as a condition for this autonomy, as should be its so-called Seim (Sajm), proof that the Jews had migrated from Poland. According to the speaker, this "Seim" was to deal with the development of Jewish culture, with Jewish settlers and emigration, Jewish population statistics, etc.

Other addresses were delivered by representatives of the Bulgarian-Gagauz community, Ukrainians, and Greeks (Sinadino). Most notably, Moldovan deputies to the Country Council indicated repeatedly, more or less explicitly, that they were Romanians. Thus, at the opening of the Country Council sessions, a choir led by Mihail Berezovschi sang the anthem "Awaken thee, Romanian". The deputies warmly welcomed the speech of Onisifor Ghibu, editor of the Romanian newspaper *Ardealul* [cf. the Minutes – *A. P.*]. He was greeted by the deputies with a standing ovation, long rounds of applause, then his speech was punctuated by applause (ibid., p. 116).

The minutes of Country Council sessions show that the deputies of ethnic minorities always demanded certain advantages for themselves and took a stance against the name Democratic Republic of Moldova, arguing that it wronged ethnic groups, and insisting on the title of Republic of Bessarabia.

New developments continued to unfold in the meanwhile. The Bolshevik coup, the civil war in Russia, and the threat of Communist

power spreading across the territory of the former Tsarist Empire prompted Ukraine to proclaim its independence as a state. Bessarabia found itself separated from Russia. Under the circumstances, Bessarabia's leaders decided to proclaim the independence of the Republic, which happened on 24 January 1918. The Declaration of the Country Council stated: "Under such circumstances, we are also compelled to proclaim ourselves, in agreement with the will of the people, as independent and free and self-governing Moldovan Democratic Republic, with the right to decide its own fate in the future" (*Unirea Basarabiei,* p. 149).

Another major challenge faced by the deputies of the County Council was that of ensuring public order and the safety of people and their possessions. Spurred on by Bolshevik agitators, the soldiers of the Russian army committed murders, vandalised people's households, and incited peasants to seize the properties of so-called "exploiters". The situation in the northern and southern counties of Bessarabia was discussed in plenary sessions on many occasions. Both the deputies of the Country Council and the members of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Moldova, the Council of General Directors, found that the military forces at their disposal were too few and unable to manage the situation. For this reason, despite the protests of some deputies who were in the minority, the majority of the members of the Country Council decided to turn to Romania for assistance, including for military aid, in order to stop the anarchy and unrest and to ensure peace in Bessarabia.

The union of Bessarabia with Romania. The aftermath of the Union

The chaos and disorder that descended on the country after the Russian armies were defeated on the battlefront, and the attacks of Bolshevist bands of deserters who brutalised the civilian population in the villages and towns of Bessarabia fuelled the desire of most of the population as well as the deputies to be united with the country. These were further motivated by the expansionist tendencies that certain Ukrainian circles were showing towards Bessarabia.

On 27 March 1918 a historic meeting of the Country Council was held, which voted for the Union of Bessarabia with Romania. The Prime Minister of Romania, Alexandru Marghiloman addressed the deputies and members of the Council of Directors (the Government): he explained the historic circumstances under which the deputies would decide the fate of Bessarabia and laid out the conditions under which the Union would take place. Alexandru Marghiloman and those accompanying him then left the meeting room in order to allow the deputies to decide the fate of Bessarabia independently.

Constantin Stere, an experienced politician, an old and close friend of the Polish politician Józef Piłsudski, whom he had known since the Tsarist times, made a significant contribution to convincing the deputies to vote for the Union. Constantin Stere declared before the deputies: "Today we must make a historic decision, for which we need a clear head and a clear conscience. There are not many moments like these in the lives of men and nations... Today we proclaim the rights of a sovereign people" (*Sfatul Țării.* Vol. 1, p. 555).

Stere then went on to address the deputies representing national minorities in the Russian language. When one of them warned that if Bessarabia were to unite with Romania, all the Russian intelligentsia would leave, Stere replied that he respected this sentiment, but that "people who have such a weak sense of connection with this land cannot think like the native population thinks. The Romanian nation, Stere stressed, did not arrive from elsewhere; it was born here; here is the melting pot of the different elements of which the Romanian people was created. We have nowhere to go and nobody has the right to drive us out of our country. For a whole century, we bore the yoke, subdued and silent, for a whole century our language was suppressed, for a whole century the books in our mother tongue were persecuted like revolutionary poison... And now, when we speak our language and enter our own house as masters, the representatives of minorities have no moral right to shut the door in our face" (ibid., p. 556).

The speech of the illustrious patriot at that historic and inspiring session of the Bessarabian Parliament was followed by addresses of representatives of political parties and national minorities. On behalf of the Polish community of Bessarabia, deputy Felix Dudkevici

stated: “I have taken the floor only to express the joy of the Poles for the historic step you are taking and by which you are acting on the people’s right to decide their own fate, returning to the bosom of the mother from which you were forcibly taken away over one hundred years ago. I wish the Romanian nation the bright future it deserves” (ibid., p. 559).

The result of the vote is well known: 86 votes in favour of Bessarabia’s union with Romania, 3 against, and 36 abstentions. The historic act of 27 March 1918 was the work of a wonderful group of fighters, endorsed by the masses of Bessarabian Romanians and by some national minorities. The union of the Bessarabian Romanians into a unified state led to their national liberation, their salvation as part of the Romanian nation, of the Romanian soul.

Pantelimon Halippa wrote about the Union as follows: “The Union marked the end of a long, difficult path, trodden by Bessarabia’s greatest patriots, the Act of Union was the torch of Romanianism passed from generation to generation, starting with the family of Alexandru Hașdeu, Constantin Stamati, brothers Vasile, Mihai and Alexandru Stroescu…. Our ancestral ideals were achieved through the Union. The Union opened wide the windows through which light and culture poured in abundantly, nourishing the Romanian people between the Prut and the Dniester… The union of our province with our Old Homeland, Romania, was an act of special significance, because the beneficial effects of the Union are still manifest today. The beautiful Romanian language is spoken in our province, just as it is in Bucharest” (Halippa, Moraru, 1991, p. 195).

Contemporary Romanian historians justly assessed the importance of the Union as a historic event. According to *The History of Romanians: A Compendium*, the Great Union “elevated the community of material and spiritual life formed over the centuries between all the Romanian territories and created the national and state framework for a swifter development of Romanian society. The reforms of 1918–1923 changed the old economic, political and social structures… Greater Romania not only united provinces, but was also a more democratic state. Not all problems were fully solved, certain abuses were not eliminated, certain contradictions and even social conflicts could not be avoided as a whole, but … significant progress was

made in many areas and in many ways. On the basis of the principles adopted in 1918, the Romanian state sought to achieve and did achieve important democratic reforms, with consequences for all Romanian provinces, for all inhabitants, regardless of nationality" (*Istoria Românilor*, 1996, p. 273).

As part of Greater Romania, the Bessarabians solved the most vexing problem, which the Russians had been unable to solve for decades: the agrarian problem. Thanks to the agrarian reform of 1927, the Bessarabian peasants were given plots of land. They received the plots by law; they became owners of the land by buying it out, which ensured their economic freedom and independence from the state.

In 22 years of nationhood, the Bessarabians made greater strides than they had made in centuries. The Tsarist regime had gone to great lengths in order to completely Russify the Bessarabian Romanians through schools, the church, the army, the administration, etc. As a result, Bessarabian Romanians were among the least educated in the Tsarist Empire. This was no accident. As part of Greater Romania, the province received a modern education system, with compulsory and free primary education. Graduates of Bessarabian high schools could apply to any university in the country and abroad. The most talented and dedicated professionals, teachers and professors from the Romanian Kingdom travelled to Bessarabia and, going from house to house, on foot, convinced the parents and brought the children to school. Thus, through education and cultural activities, the Bessarabian Romanians were integrated into Greater Romania.

During these 22 years of common history, the population of Bessarabia increased naturally, as a result of economic improvement, better sanitation, etc. It had the widest telephone network compared to other Romanian provinces; the railway track gauge was made compatible with the European standard in only three years; good roads and solid bridges were built.

However, the Bolsheviks did not accept that just solution to the Romanian question. After unsuccessful attempts to export the communist revolution to Romania, in October 1924, they established the so-called Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR with its capital in Balta, then Tiraspol.

On 28 June 1940, in agreement with Hitler's Germany, the USSR annexed Bessarabia, northern Bukovina, and the Hertza region. The Soviets imposed their authoritarian vision on society: mayors of towns, politicians, including former members of the Country Council, were arrested, interrogated, executed or sent to Siberia.

On the night of 12 June 1941, the Soviets carried out the first wave of deportations from the so-called Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic; among those deported were the so-called "kulaks", that is the Bessarabian peasants who had received land under the Agrarian Reform and managed to create prosperous farms.

In 1944, the Soviets reoccupied the territories conquered in 1940 and imposed their way of life again. However, despite the efforts to Russify the captive Romanian population, Moldovan Romanians were able to assert their national identity and proclaimed their state independence from the Evil Empire, the USSR in August 1991.

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Enemies, Partners, Neighbors. The Romanian-Ukrainian Relations at the End of the Great War

Abstract

The Kremlin's statements on the alleged territorial claims of Poland and Romania against Ukraine, statements issued in the aftermath of Russia's large-scale invasion of the neighbouring country, have prompted us to investigate the evolution of Romanian-Ukrainian relations between 1918 and 1922. Based on Ukrainian, Romanian and Western sources, archive documents and articles published in the press of the time, we provide an overview of the most important aspects in the common history of the two peoples during the above-mentioned period in Bessarabia and Bukovina, as well as of the diplomatic negotiations and territorial disputes between Bucharest and Kiev. Although in the early years of its existence, the Ukrainian People's Republic expressed interest in these two regions, during the Directorate – in the hope of an anti-Bolshevik alliance with Romania – it adopted a pragmatic attitude and even offered to acknowledge the border on the Dniester (which meant recognition of the union of Bessarabia with Romania). Nothing was said, however, about the future of Bukovina. The Paris Conference officially assigned the former Habsburg province to Romania,

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which triggered resentment among the Ukrainian population towards Romania throughout the interwar period. The Treaty on Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation, signed in 1997, is currently in force between the two neighbouring countries.

Keywords

Greater Romania, Bukovina, Bessarabia, Paris Peace Conference, borders /România Mare, Bucovina, Basarabia, Conferința de Pace de la Paris, granițe

The war that broke out in Europe in early 2022 has changed the lives of millions of people, shaken the confidence of the world's citizens in the current system of international relations, and might also impair the good neighbourly relations between the states in the region. In its efforts to isolate Ukraine and to create dissension between Ukraine and the countries that, in one form or another, support it in these difficult times, Vladimir Putin's regime has repeatedly floated the idea that Poland, Romania and the Republic of Moldova have a secret agenda and territorial claims against their neighbour. The most recent statement by the Kremlin on this point was made on National Unity Day (5 November 2022), during the Russian president's meeting with historians and representatives of officially recognised religions, which forced the Romanian Foreign Ministry to once again publicly uphold the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders (Precizări, 2022).

This study aims to present the evolution of Romanian-Ukrainian relations in the context of the First World War, the demise of the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian empires and the emergence of the Ukrainian and Moldovan nation-states, with special emphasis on the events mentioned by Putin, which however have long been settled through diplomatic efforts, by the signing of the Treaty on Good Neighbourliness and Cooperation between Romania and Ukraine (2 June 1997).

The collapse of the Russian Empire, following the Revolution of February 1917, paved the way for the emergence of autonomous, and later independent, states in the area that had previously been under Romanov rule. In the south-east of the empire, the former governorates (gubernias) emancipated themselves, one by one, from the political authority of Petrograd. In those troubled times, in the full swing of the war, two new states emerged on Romania's eastern borders: the Ukrainian People's Republic (Ukrainska Narodna Respublika, or UNR) and the Democratic Republic of Moldova (RDM), which proclaimed their independence on 22 and 24 January 1918, respectively.

The rightful heir to a territory comprising nine governorates, Ukraine also aspired to gain other historical provinces, such as Bukovina, Kholm, Galicia and part of Bessarabia. Possessing remarkable demographic and economic potential and a political elite ready to lead the country, Ukraine emerged on the international stage as a state in its own right for the first time in modern history during the First World War. However, its authority was undermined by the Bolsheviks, so the only way for Ukraine to repel the "Red" offensive was to negotiate a separate peace with the Central Powers, which were interested in its natural resources and grain production. This is how, after weeks of negotiations, the Peace of Brest-Litovsk came about. During the talks, in addition to the Kholm region, the Ukrainians demanded Galicia, Bukovina and Ruthenian territories in northern Hungary, all belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Subtelny, 1988). However, facing the threat of obliteration and depending on German military aid, the UNR lowered its demands and proposed the establishment of an "independent Austrian province" consisting of Eastern Galicia and Bukovina (Czernin, 1919). An agreement that arose out of mutual interests was reached in the hope of concluding the talks as soon as possible. Thus, Germany, Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey and Ukraine signed a political treaty (27 January 1918, Old Style), which economically and militarily ended the state of war between the UNR and the Central Powers. According to the provisions of the treaty, the pre-war border between Austro-Hungary and Ukraine was reinstated, but Ukraine additionally received the Kholm district, part of historical Polish territory.

A secret clause, later revealed to the public, referred to the obligation of Austria-Hungary to enact a law by which Eastern Galicia and Bukovina would be reunited into an autonomous Ukrainian state within the Habsburg Empire (Wheeler-Bennett, 1936).

The Peace of Brest-Litovsk, the first to follow the Great War, put an end to the Allies' hopes of organising a Ukrainian front to prolong the war against the Central Powers in this part of Europe. As far as Bukovina was concerned, the secret clause created an advantage for ethnic Ukrainians over Romanians. The treaty also had another important strategic consequence for Romania, which was forced to conclude an unfavourable peace with the Central Powers.

The interests of the Central Rada in Bessarabia

Under the Russian Empire, there were strong economic ties between the Ukrainian governorates (gubernias) on the right bank of the Dnieper, especially in southern Ukraine, and Bessarabia. The presence of the Ukrainian population in the counties of Hotin and Akkerman (Cetatea Albă) further strengthened these ties before the First World War. For the sake of its local interests, the Central Rada tried to expand its sphere of influence to include the area between the Prut and the Dniester, thus giving the impression that it was even interested in annexing the territory. However, after a period of intense Russification, the Ukrainians in Bessarabia lacked a sense of national consciousness similar to that of the Ruthenians in Bukovina, and thus they did not play an active role in the political-diplomatic games of 1917–1920, nor did they constitute an internal pressure factor.

The first signs of the UNR's interest appeared as early as in the summer of 1917, when Volodimir Vinnicenko, the Rada's Minister of the Interior, travelled to Petrograd with the intention of obtaining the recognition of Ukraine's authority over ten governorates, including Bessarabia from the central government led by Aleksandr Kerensky. This mission was thwarted by the Moldovan authorities, who in turn submitted a memorandum and an ethnographic map to the Russian Prime Minister and thus successfully argued for "Bessarabia's right to self-determination and federal autonomy".

Confronted with the firm position of Chișinău officials, Ukraine gave up its plans for annexation for the time being and established normal political relations with its neighbour.

After the diplomatic success at Brest-Litovsk (see above), whereby it achieved many of its territorial objectives, the UNR publicly reiterated its interest in the situation in Bessarabia in the context of the negotiations between Romania and the Central Powers, conducted at Buftea, near Bucharest, and informed the Moldovan authorities that it wished to participate in the talks (A.N.I.C., Pelivan; Pântea, 1932). On 3 March 1918 (Old Style – OS), a note signed by Foreign Minister Vsevolod Holubovich, about the "indivisible unity" of Ukraine and Bessarabia was sent to the countries participating in the negotiations. The request was based on demographic arguments (the significant number of Ukrainians in Hotin and Cetatea Albă regions), as well as economic and political arguments. For various reasons, none of the states participating in the conference agreed to the request: Germany was opposed to Ukraine taking over Bessarabia for geopolitical reasons, Austro-Hungary had its own interests in the northern part of the territory, while Romania refused from the outset to address the Bessarabian question during the peace talks with the Central Powers (Agrigoroaiei, 2007). The diplomatic note submitted to the Central Powers by the UNR government was debated at the meeting of the Country Council on 16 March 1918 (OS) and rejected by a vigorous protest proclaiming the indivisibility of Bessarabia within the borders between the Dniester, Prut and Black Sea and rejecting Ukraine's request to participate in the Bucharest Conference (Agrigoroaiei, 2007).

Despite its efforts, the UNR was not admitted to the talks in Bucharest; moreover, the Central Powers – especially Germany – suggested that Romania seize Bessarabia as compensation for the territorial losses and economic exploitation Romania had incurred as a result of the Buftea Peace Treaty.

Amidst the chaos and threat created by the Bolsheviks present on the territory of the young republic east of the Prut, one of the immediate consequences of the demands made by the Ukrainian authorities was the intensification of the unionist current in the RDM in favour of the union with Romania, materialised in the meeting of

the Country Council on 27 March 1918, where it obtained an absolute majority of votes (Andronachi, 1933).

The proclamation of the union of Bessarabia with Romania triggered a wave of diplomatic protests from the UNR and Soviet Russia (Calafeteanu, 1995). The Romanian government replied to one such note of protest, sent by the Ukrainian government on 13 April 1918, that Bessarabia "was united with its motherland, by virtue of a vote expressed almost unanimously by the Country Council", that all nationalities were represented in the legislative body, that there was no region in Bessarabia where the population had asked for annexation to Ukraine and that the minority must obey the decision of the majority (Calafeteanu, 1995).

The "matter of Bessarabia" continued to fuel discord between Romania and Ukraine after the establishment of hetman Pavlo Skoropadskyi's regime, through a heated exchange of letters. In a diplomatic note of 5 May 1918, Dmitro Doroshenko, Ukraine's Foreign Minister, rejected the decision of the Moldovan Country Council to unite with Romania, citing the special, complex political, economic and social relationships between Ukraine and Bessarabia. He argued that the Country Council had been established under extraordinary circumstances and had refused any submission to Romania, that the Entente powers had given written guarantees of the independence of the Democratic Republic of Moldova, guarantees confirmed by the Romanian authorities. He also pointed out that the Romanian army had entered Bessarabia exclusively for military purposes and would leave the territory once order was restored. The Romanian side rejected the above arguments one by one, insisting on the continued presence of the Romanian population in the area, and stressed that the Country Council had been governing "without interruption and with full independence", as the legal representative and supreme authority of Bessarabia, that none of the official declarations of the Moldovan Parliament rejected the idea of an union with Romania and that there were no declarations guaranteeing the independence of the RDM from Romania issued by the Entente Powers (Calafeteanu, 1995).

Despite this controversy, a month later, Romania stated it was willing to approve the establishment of diplomatic relations

between the two countries, provided that the borders were recognised (Noe, 1918).

Different visions for the future of Bukovina

Much more complex was the nature of Romanian-Ukrainian relations in Bukovina, an Austro-Hungarian province in turmoil because of the war. In October and November 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was disintegrating. While the peoples of the Dual Monarchy sought their own political solutions, Charles I of Habsburg (1916–1918) proposed the federalisation of Austria. The Emperor's belated attempt to resolve the national tensions that had built up over the course of history failed, as the representatives of all the peoples rejected the proposal. The project could not solve any of the serious problems that concerned the elites of the nationalities subject to Austro-Hungary.

In a tense atmosphere, representatives of the Romanians and Ukrainians in Bukovina put forward opposing political solutions for the future of the province. While the Ruthenian leaders proposed the creation of an Austrian Ukraine comprising Northern Bukovina and Eastern Galicia, the Romanian leaders demanded either union with Transylvania – with the obligation that the two regions thus united should be freed from the rule of the Hungarian Kingdom – or union with Romania, in agreement with the Romanians of Transylvania and Hungary. The Vienna Parliament was the main forum for debates in which the two visions clashed.

In the following period, Romanians and Ukrainians intensified their political activity seeking to achieve their objectives. Two important events occurred in October and precipitated the situation. The Austrian newspaper *Vossische Zeitung* published an article revealing to the public the provisions of the additional pact of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, according to which the Ukrainian state undertook to issue a bill in favour of uniting the territories of Eastern Galicia and Bukovina into an Austrian "country of the crown" (Secret Contract, 1918). The news irritated and alarmed the Romanians of Bukovina, who took radical measures.

Ukrainians were greatly encouraged by the emergence of the Ukrainian state in Galicia, a province bordering Bukovina. On

18 October 1918, the Ukrainian National Council (Ukrainska Natsionalna Rada) was established in Lvov under Yevhen Petrushevych, who, based on the principle of self-determination of nations, proclaimed the existence of a state of all Ukrainians in Austro-Hungary (Hacman, 1998). The authority of this body was to be exercised over the provinces of Galicia, Bukovina and Transcarpathia. Shortly afterwards, the Rada proclaimed the West Ukrainian People's Republic (Zahidno-Ukrainska Narodna Respublika – ZUNR), which triggered a military conflict between Ukrainians and Poles.

In order to gain better political and social representation, the Ruthenians of Bukovina established a regional committee (*kraiovî komitet*) in the following days, headed by a smaller governing body led by Omelian Popowicz (Ботушанський, 2013; Новосівський, 1964). A manifesto was issued to the Ukrainian population, which called for the establishment of self-defence organisations in all the towns and villages of Bukovina.

The Romanians responded immediately, with the National Assembly adopting a resolution which denounced the partition of Bukovina and elected a Romanian National Council (CNR) of 50 persons, led by a presidium.

From the outset, the Ukrainian committee had several advantages over the CNR. The Romanian nationalists, unlike the Ukrainian ones, did not set up local committees in the important towns or villages of the province, nor did they form a volunteer corps of Romanian soldiers from the regiments stationed in the province. These two decisions were of great importance when the Rada negotiated with the Austrian governor Joseph Etzdorf from a position of strength (Țugui, 1996). Another advantage of the Rada was that Wilhelm Franz of Habsburg, son of Archduke Stephan and grandson of Emperor Charles I, was sympathetic to the Ukrainian national movement in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Vitencu, 1919). By creating the Ukrainian Legion that summer, Wilhelm of Habsburg became an important actor in the province's political games after the transfer of the "legionaries" to Cernăuți (Chernivtsi) and Rădăuți in October.

In order to ascertain the options of the two main communities of the province, Count Etzdorf summoned the leaders of the Rada and the CNR for talks, but the Romanian political leaders outright

rejected any compromise with their Ukrainian counterparts. Things came to a head when the Rada organised a mass demonstration in Cernăuți (3 November 1918) and decided to annex to ZUNR the city and county of Cernăuți, as well as the counties of Zastavna, Coțmani, Vășcăuți, Vijnița, Siret and some communes in the counties of Rădăuți, Suceava and Câmpulung. The CNR's claims that all of Bukovina should belong to Romania were publicly rejected (Ботушанський, 2013). Two days later, the Ukrainian committee took another important step towards seizing power, by announcing its intention to occupy the Gendarmerie headqurters, the Police Directorate and the Cernăuți railway station, with the aim of intimidating Governor Etzdorf (Șese zile, 1918; Bălan, 1929–1930).

The Ukrainian Regional Committee released a manifesto "to the free citizens of all nations and social classes of the country" on 6 November 1918, in which the Rada presented itself as the only "well-organised" political force that had taken upon itself the " arduous task of maintaining public order and security" by seizing power in the city of Cernăuți and northern Bukovina (Manifestul, 1929). The only aspect the Ukrainian leaders neglected was the military one. No one expected, apparently, that Romania would take action north of Rădăuți.

Faced with the situation created by the latest decisions of the Rada, the CNR demanded that the Romanian government intervene militarily in order to protect the "Romanian brothers". The 8th Division commanded by General Jacob Zadik was ready for action right on the border. While urgently seeking military and diplomatic support from Kiev, the Rada formally protested against the military action of the Romanian army and threatened to report the case to the Entente. After the withdrawal of Ukrainian soldiers stationed in Cernăuți (Добржанський, 2009), the Romanian army entered the capital of Bukovina on 11 November 1918; Ukrainian troops moved to the northern part of the province and then across the border into Eastern Galicia. During the following week, local Ukrainian committees formed across the Prut were liquidated by Romanian detachments (Ardeleanu, 1938).

The presence of the Romanian army allowed the representatives of the Romanian National Council to quietly plan the future

destiny of the province. The General Congress of Bukovina was held in Cernăuți, in the Synod Hall of the Metropolitan Palace on 15 November 1918 (os), and was attended by the leaders of all nationalities of Bukovina, with the exception of the representatives of the Jewish National Council and the Rada. The congress proclaimed "the unconditional and definitive union of Bukovina, with its old borders up to Ceremuș, Colacin and the Dniester river, with the Kingdom of Romania" (A.N.I.C., Presidency of the Council of Ministers).

The Paris Peace Conference: the shattering of the Ukrainian dream

The Paris Peace Conference was Ukrainians' last hope for the recognition of Ukraine as an independent and sovereign state, by an "act of elementary justice in accordance with the principles proclaimed by the powers of the Entente and the United States of America" (Sidorenko, 1919). A large, well-prepared and extremely active delegation, led by Hrihori Sidorenko (1919) and then by Mykhailo Tishkevich (1919–1920), travelled to France and defended their standpoint with memoranda, notes, letters of protest and statements addressed to the President of the Supreme Council. However, because of the civil war, Ukraine was not granted the status of a participant in the debates held between 18 January 1919 and 21 January 1920. A very good description of the situation in Ukraine at the time of the Conference was given by the newspaper *Bukovina* published in Cernăuți:

> the issue of the delimitation of Bukovina territory was also raised during the peace conference. It was less serious, because in this matter of the delimitation of Bukovina we were not dealing with a people inclined to agreement, but with a nation on its way to a state organisation, still troubled by internal struggles and continually oscillating between Bolshevism and the bourgeois establishment. The Ukrainians could by no means have been in a good position at the Peace Conference, when Ukraine's friendship with Kaiser's Germany was still so fresh in everyone's minds after the Peace of Brest-Litovsk (Delimitarea Bucovinei, 1919, 1).

The general aims of the Ukrainian envoys were to obtain international recognition of Ukraine, the withdrawal of Polish, Romanian and Allied troops from the country, as well as support in their fight against the Bolsheviks.

Ukraine's geopolitical interests are well reflected in the book written, published and distributed during the conference by Stanislaus Dniestrzański, based on ethnographic and demographic arguments and on the Fourteen Points of US President Woodrow Wilson. In his 120-plus page study, the author emphasized the large number of Ukrainians (over 40 million), and the vast territory they occupied. In recounting important events in 20th century Ukrainian history, the study focused on the eastern regions and the conflict with Soviet Russia (Dniestrzański, 1919).

Essentially, Dniestrzański's argument posited that the Ukrainian people was a shield against the Bolshevik danger, perceived as a "threat to European civilization". The Ukrainian land was described as a link between East and West. The area of interest of the Ukrainian nation, as the volume shows, also included territories under the Romanian state. With regard to Bessarabia, the author stated that there were many Romanian enclaves in Ukrainian territories, and vice versa. Two counties were of particular interest to Ukraine: Akkerman in the south, with 27% Ukrainians, which, in the author's opinion, was a relative majority, and Hotin in the north, where Ukrainians held an absolute majority, with 53%. In Bukovina, four counties were objects of territorial claims: Coțmani, Zastavna, Vașcăuți and Vijnița, as well as parts of six other counties: Cernăuți, Câmpulung, Rădăuți, Siret, Suceava and Storojineț. The border between Romania and Ukraine could also be established, according to the author, along Novosilițe (Noua Sulița), Cernăuți, Siret, the Suceava river, towards Storojineț and Cârlibaba (Dniestrzański, 1919).

Although the Romanian delegates were sympathetic towards the Ukrainian national cause when no Romanian territories were being claimed, the Peace Conference rejected the Ukrainian demands, and Romania's right over Bukovina was recognised by the Treaty with Austria (10 December 1919), which confirmed the decision of the National Congress of Bukovina, adopted by vote.

The Directorate and the Matsievich Mission in Romania (1919–1923)

Romanian-Ukrainian relations reached their peak under the Directorate, the political regime established after the overthrow of hetman Skoropadsky and the re-establishment of the Ukrainian People's Republic on 14 November 1918 under the leadership of Vynnychenko. Throughout 1919, the Directorate tried to assert its authority over a territory where Polish, Bolshevik, White Russian and Entente troops were operating, and in order to counter all opposing forces, it sought to gain international recognition from important European states and create an anti-Bolshevik military alliance with Poland and Romania.

Having taken power, the Directorate established diplomatic ties with various European states, where political and intellectual personalities and career diplomats were sent on diplomatic missions. Ukraine's extraordinary envoys to Bucharest were Yuri Hasenko in the first part of 1919 and the former minister of foreign affairs, Kostiantin A. Matsievich (July 1919–1922), whose appointment indicates the importance that Ukrainian authorities attached to relations with Romania.

Through various communication channels and press statements, the Ukrainian envoys attempted to win the goodwill of the Romanian authorities by offering in exchange the recognition of the border at the Dniester, as was the case with the statement which Consul Mazarenko, head of the Ukrainian mission to Chișinău, made to the Romanian press in April 1919: " Ukrainians do not think at all about Bessarabia, which was and must be Romanian land", the diplomat assured. "Their only desire is to live in friendship with Romanians, from whom they expect help and support" (Ce spune, 1919).

The Romanian-Ukrainian talks reached a climax on 26 July 1919, when the UNR submitted a note to the Romanian government renouncing its territorial claims and declaring the Dniester a "definitive border" (Misiunea, 1920). Ukraine announced its intention to conclude an agreement with Poland, "a friend of Romania", thus ending the hostility between the two parties and recognising the borders established by the Paris Peace Conference. The document

stressed the neighbouring country's interest in war supplies – guns, cartridges and cannons – and in Romania's support in negotiations with the Entante, "in terms of permanent supplies and the organisation of the army". Other objectives included co-opting Romanian, Polish and Allied representatives to the General Staff of the Ukrainian Army and forging commercial relations. Finally, Ukraine mentioned the "Bolshevik issue", which "again threatened to ruin Ukraine, as a result of which all states bordering the Bolsheviks and primarily Romania and Poland would have to take the blow which was and is being softened by the resistance of the Ukrainian people" (Misiunea, 1920). Actually, the "Bolshevik danger" was a recurrent theme in the Ukrainian diplomatic discourse during this period. On several occasions, Matsievich warned Romania that the Bolsheviks' aim was to occupy Bessarabia (Interview cu, 1919).

The UNR also sought to establish economic relations with the Kingdom of Romania. As a professor of economics, Matsievich believed that the rapprochement of the two states, "agricultural countries par excellence", was absolutely necessary as they complemented each other in certain areas, and even proposed an economic triangle that would include Poland. In his plans, the Ukrainian diplomat stressed the role of the sea basin in the development of trade relations:

> The mutuality of economic interests of the two neighbours goes even further, as the two countries are linked by the issue of the Black Sea and the straits. In my opinion, the interests of Ukraine, like those of Romania, fall within the main sphere of influence of the «League of Nations» and do not lie in the establishment of a single will, as was intended by Russia, which, it should be noted, generally speaking and excluding Ukraine, does not have any real economic interest, either in the Black Sea or in the straits (Declarațiunile D-lui, 1919).

Towards the end of 1919, Ukraine intensified its efforts to draw Romania into an alliance against the Bolsheviks. In November, Symon Petliura, chairman of the Directorate of the Ukrainian People's Republic (since February 1919), warned of the serious situation on the Romanian border, insisting on several points: the

need for a Romanian-Ukrainian alliance in the face of the Russian threat, the need to include Poland into such an alliance in order to "constitute a force against Greater Russia, which would prvent it in the future from pursuing the policy of conquest which it had been pursuing until the outbreak of the World War" (Interview-ul nostru, 1919).

While sympathetic to the political and military efforts of its eastern neighbour, Romania took no steps towards the alliance, forcing Matsievich to resume Ukraine's requests for the "political recognition of the Ukrainian republic and its national government, as well as technical and instructional support in the organisation of its national army on Romanian territory" (Nistor, 1934), applicable under a military convention. During the civil war across the Dniester, however, Romania had a benevolent attitude towards the Ukrainian national army (Ştiri din, 1919; Misiunea, 1920).

The Ukrainian extraordinary diplomatic mission operated until 1922, but after the military defeat of Ukraine its role and activity declined considerably. Between 1921 and 1923, Professor Matsievich was heavily involved in the political organisation of Ukrainian emigration from Romania.

Conclusions

The establishment of the Ukrainian state in 1918 is closely linked to Romania in various ways. Within a short period of time, during the short-lived existence of this Ukrainian political edifice, the two countries had different relations, ranging from collaboration to antagonism and dissension over territories.

In the context of Romanian-Ukrainian relations, it is necessary to first take into account the existence of important communities of Ukrainians on the territory of historical provinces: Bessarabia (in the north and south) and Bukovina (in the north, where they were in the majority), regarded as part of the area of formation of the Romanian people. The rise of the nationalist sentiment among the Ukrainians of Bessarabia and (especially) Bukovina and the vested interest of the UNR led to tension between Romania and Ukraine, which was mitigated by Kiev's pragmatic policy, especially

during the Directorate, a regime interested in eliciting a benevolent attitude from (if not an alliance with) the Kingdom of Romania in the fight against Bolshevik troops. Bucharest viewed the efforts of the young Ukrainian republic with distrust, and the assistance it offered did not go beyond humanitarian and economic aid, in no way involving military support, as its eastern neighbour would have wished.

While the scepticism of the Romanian political elite can be accounted for by the internal difficulties of Ukraine (a country with three successive political regimes in just one year), torn by the horrors of civil war and turned into a battlefield between the troops of the "white" and "red" Russians, the lack of interest in its fate demonstrates insufficient knowledge of Ukrainian history and a concern rather with the western border and the worrying events in Hungary, where a Soviet republic led by Béla Kun had been proclaimed in 1919. One might even say that only after the recent conflict broke out in 2022 did Romanian society begin to pay increasing attention to Ukraine, a country which, for most of the 20th century, was largely unknown to Romanians and whose history was known only through the official versions of Russian and Soviet historiography.

Secondly, we should also mention the behaviour of the leaders of the Ukrainian community in the above-mentioned provinces, which after 1918 formed the bulk of a minority officially estimated at 582,815 in the 1930 Census held on the territory of Greater Romania. In Bessarabia, the Ukrainian representatives abstained from a decisive vote in favour of the Union with Romania, while in Bukovina, they were openly against the union and took military action against it, as we have shown above. The external context was not favourable to the Ukrainians either, as they claimed territories of Romania and Poland, states which – compared to the two Ukrainian state entities, ZUNR and UNR – were much better organised, had disciplined armies and enjoyed a favourable attitude of the Entente.

The union of Bukovina and Romania and the recognition of this act at the Paris Peace Conference came as a shock to the local Ukrainian elite, which many of the politicians of the old generation could not shake off. For this reason, they chose to continue the political

fight outside the province, first on the territory of the ZUNR, then in states located in central and western Europe (Mihai, 2011; 2018). They paid particular attention to Bukovina, which was the case on 18 March 1919, when the Ukrainian delegation to the Peace Conference reported the "terror" exercised by Romanian troops in this province, where "elite members of the intellectual class" had been imprisoned (Sidorenko, 1919).

The integration of Ukrainians into Romanian society was a difficult and complicated process, especially amid the efforts to Romanianize the former Habsburg province (Hausleitner, 2001). During the interwar period, Ukrainians – the fifth largest community in Greater Romania – fought for their political, cultural and social rights through their own political parties, cultural and sports associations and societies. All these groups had one common goal: breaking Bukovina away from Romania and annexing it to a Ukrainian state in its own right, which was achieved through the formation of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The signing of the treaty between the two states after the demise of communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the sympathy and support of the Romanian authorities as well as the entire Romanian society for the Ukrainian fight against the Russian invasion opened a new stage in Romanian-Ukrainian relations (despite some friction over the delimitation of maritime territories in the Black Sea), based on mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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Big Dreams of Small Nations. Territorial Changes After World War I in Hungarian Collective Memory[1]

Abstract

Even though more than a hundred years have passed since the end of the First World War, the Hungarian historical consciousness has still not been able to fully come to terms with the lost war and its consequences, namely the Treaty of Trianon. One important reason for this phenomenon, which many authors consider to be a „cultural trauma”, is that the „Hungarian national space” imagined by Hungarian national activists at the time of the unfolding of Modern Nationalisms collapsed in 1918, as recorded in the 1920 peace treaty and reaffirmed in the 1947 one. From the outset, the space considered by the Hungarian elites as Hungarian overlapped with the similar visions of neighbouring non-Hungarian national movements, and at the end of the First World War the latter's concepts were realised – at the expense of the Hungarian. The present essay traces the process of the emergence, competition and reorganisation of Hungarian and rival "national spaces" from the 19th century to the present day.

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nationalism, World War I, Treaty of Trianon, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, imagined national spaces

Introduction

On 11 November 2018, the world commemorated the centenary of the end of World War I with a large-scale event in Paris. More than seventy heads of state or government attended the ceremony at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron.[2] In addition to many current representatives of the former Entente Powers and their allies, some of the present-day leaders of the former adversaries – the losers – were also present at the special anniversary. From the successor states of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Austrian chancellor, the Czech prime minister and the presidents of Slovakia, Romania, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia all visited Paris. However, no high-ranking state leader represented Hungary at the ceremony. This in itself would not be too surprising, as the heads of state or government of the United Kingdom or Poland were not present either. However, while the UK celebrated at home and sent a minister to attend the French celebrations, and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk explained his absence by having to attend a national holiday in his own country– also linked to the end of World War I – on the same day, Budapest could not even invoke the latter reason. In Hungary – apart from a few professional events – the historic event was not commemorated in any meaningful way. Of course, the Hungarian passivity could be explained by several, even trivial reasons. However, the most obvious conclusion seems to be that Hungarian society – and certainly the political and intellectual elite currently leading the country – has not come to terms with the consequences of the war, even one hundred years after it ended.

2 See World leaders mark 100 years since WWI end; Guillot, 2018; Hasselbach, 2018.

It is a fact that Hungary has never had a tradition of commemorating 11 November, the anniversary of the armistice signed by the representatives of Germany and the Entente in the Forest of Compiègne. Not least because the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had already signed an armistice with the Entente more than a week before, on 3 November 1918, and the war continued for about one year more on the territory of Hungary, with some regions of the country remaining under foreign occupation until 1921 (Fel a szegycsontig, 2018, pp. 1–3). However, in the other Central European countries, in many of which the violence did not cease on 11 November either – to think of the short but ill-remembered Czechoslovakian–Polish conflict, or the even longer and more ruthless Polish–Soviet war – the common anniversary in 2018 was nevertheless accepted, and linked to the centenary of independence or unification of these nations. Naturally, these commemorations were not identical: the South Slavic countries, as well as Czechia and Slovakia commemorated the birth of no longer existing common states, Romania celebrated the unification of the territories inhabited by Romanians, whereas the other great "loser" of the Monarchy, Austria, dedicated its anniversary programmes to the founding of the state and the construction of Austrian identity. What all these countries had in common, however, was that they commemorated the autumn of 1918 as a historic turning point of great significance.

This was also true in Hungary, where the period was similarly the subject of much discussion in the autumn of 2018. However, Hungary's official discourse and debates on history and the politics of remembrance differed from the Europe's. On 31 October 2018, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán gave a speech on the centenary of the assassination of former Hungarian prime minister István Tisza. Orbán spoke about Europe's suicide in connection with World War I, claiming that the war "was in fact lost not by the Central Powers, but by all of Europe" (Viktor Orbán's speech at the commemoration..., 2018). Mária Schmidt, a conservative historian and government commissioner responsible for coordinating commemorations of the war, said at the opening ceremony of the final part of a spectacular series of exhibitions on "Europe's fraternal war" that the exhibition broke with the interpretative framework "forced on Hungarians by

the victors" and also reflected in the ongoing celebrations (Szakítás a győztesek értelmezési, 2018). Furthermore, debates with often ideological undertones have also been revived in connection with the events of Hungarian history in 1918–1919.[3]

In Hungarian historical consciousness, however, the above-mentioned historic turning point is associated not with the autumn of 1918, but with another symbolic date, the signing of the Treaty of Trianon on 4 June 1920. Even though this day marks the regaining of Hungarian independence – which, according to historical tradition, was lost at the Battle of Mohács in 1526 – it also signifies the dismemberment of the Kingdom of Hungary and its transformation into a small state, as well as the loss of national unity because every third Hungarian became separated from their homeland as a consequence of the treaty.

Therefore, the end of World War I appears as a real national disaster in Hungarian collective consciousness. This interpretation already emerged in the interwar period, and made its return after decades of state socialism, when state power forced it out of the public eye. Since then, it has remained an enduring topic for Hungarian intellectuals and politicians alike, and it has also been given a prominent role in the politics of remembrance under governments thematising and instrumentalising the national question, including the Orbán governments which have been in office for more than twelve years now. In this context, it is primarily portrayed as one of the greatest tragedies (and "traumas") of Hungarian history (Kovács 2015, p.59), often embedded in the ethnocentric discourse of loss and self-victimisation which can now be considered traditional.

Thus, Hungary has not forgotten World War I, but mainly remembers it – and especially its consequences – in connection with "Trianon."[4] This is what happened at the centenaries in 2018 and 2020. Furthermore, since over time the name of the château near Paris came to be associated with the questions of the dissolution of historical Hungary and the fate of Hungarian minorities, the issue

3 See e.g. Stumpf, 2018; Jankovics, 2019; Ezerszer kegyetlenebbek leszünk, mint a burzsoázia hóhérai, 2019.

4 In her article cited above, Éva Kovács claims that the traumatic experience of WWI became "sublimed" into the memory of "Trianon"(ibid. 95).

remains unresolved, given the about two million Hungarians still living in neighbouring countries. In fact, a solution to this issue is not entirely possible or will be very difficult to find, and does not depend primarily on Hungary.

What does depend on Hungary, however, is what the Budapest governments do about this issue or how they deal with it. Following the 2010 electoral victory of Fidesz–KDNP, one of the first acts of the new Parliament was to make the 4 June anniversary official; however, it was not declared to be a day of mourning, but "the day of national unity". On this day, politicians and other public figures, as well as historians and other intellectuals usually recall the circumstances and impact of the Treaty of Trianon, commemorative events are held in schools, and the media also cover the topic. Even though the declared function of the memorial day is to raise awareness of solidarity with Hungarian communities living outside Hungary, public commemorations continue to be dominated by the topos of national disaster. Speeches and publications by right-wing and government politicians often employ the motif of intrigue and wrongdoing of internal "anti-national" forces, while Hungary and Hungarians are usually portrayed as victims of an unjust peace treaty ("dictate") imposed on them by selfish or indifferent great powers and greedy neighbours. This discourse only showed certain changes as the centennial anniversary approached: while the image of the internal enemy remained, the role of the neighbouring nations was increasingly overshadowed by the export of liberal democracy by the great powers, especially the USA, and by the Bolshevik aspirations for world revolution (Egry, 2020, pp. 123–142). However, in 2020, the Hungarian government has shifted the focus from grievances to the importance of national solidarity, "reunification" of the Hungarian nation across the borders and a positive vision for the future.

By now, "Trianon" has transformed from a tragic place of remembrance in Hungarian collective memory into an important element of Hungarian national identity. This is evidenced by the incessant public debates on the politics of remembrance and history (Laczó, 2013), the myths and legends surrounding the issue (Ablonczy, 2010; Ablonczy, 2022), and the newly built or restored Trianon monuments which have been growing in number continuously since the regime

change, and at an accelerated pace since the late 2000s (Boros, 2003, pp. 3–21), and which can be found all over Hungary and sometimes even in neighbouring countries.[5] We could also mention the multitude of books, articles, documentaries even a rock opera (!) about Trianon and Hungarians living abroad, as well as the plethora of maps, stickers, badges and posters depicting historical Hungary, which occasionally provoke indignant reactions from the neighbouring states.[6] Manifestations of the Hungarian "Trianon syndrome" are so spectacular that they are visible even outside the Hungarian-speaking public, as they also attract the attention of foreigners.[7]

It is perhaps clear from the above that the Hungarian memory of World War I and its conclusion is rather different from the way the war is remembered in other European nations. The resentment in Hungarian public consciousness against the new order after 1918–1920 – some elements and current manifestations of which I have already alluded to – can be explained by several factors (Zahorán, 2013, pp. 9–54). Much criticism has been levelled at the very manner in which the peace was concluded: representatives of Hungary – similarly to those of the other defeated states – were not allowed to participate in the negotiations, and although the Hungarian delegation was given an opportunity to present its stance, this had no impact on the final terms. This is reflected in referring to the peace treaty as a "dictate", which has become increasingly common in Hungarian discourse on Trianon in recent years. Hungarian political and cultural elites had a difficult time accepting the fundamental change in Hungary's status: the country, which used to be a partner state of a major European power (Austria-Hungary), shrank to an Eastern-Central European minor state with virtually no global significance, surpassed in several respects even by the previously scorned and despised neighbouring nations. Losses of economic resources and Hungarian national wealth are also often

5 See: https://trianon100.hu/emlekmuvek

6 See for example the Romanian and Slovakian responses objecting to a map on Viktor Orbán's wall or the supporter scarf, displaying the outline of historical Hungary, that he wore in the autumn of 2022.

7 See e.g. the volume of reportage by Ziemowit Szczerek, also published in Hungarian: *Via Carpatia – roaming in Hungary and the Carpathian Basin*, 2022.

mentioned as grievances: the former included a significant part of raw materials and mineral resources, as well as its access to the sea, while the latter included all the investments made in the decades before 1918, which since then enriched the successor states. One of the most important reasons for the Hungarian frustration, however, was the derailment of Hungarians' nation-building efforts, which picked up momentum in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. One third of Hungarians, whose numbers grew due to both forced and spontaneous assimilation processes, and who benefited the most from the modernisation of the country, became members of a minority after Trianon, in conditions that were not too favourable to minorities.

Although some of these factors have faded or decreased in importance over time, and others were partially remedied by modernisation (Tomka, 2018, pp. 70–76) and European integration, it is still apparent after more than a century that certain grievances have proved extremely persistent. Of these, my article will address a complex set of issues, some aspects of which still reappear as acute problems today. These include the collapse – or at least the radical restructuring – of the "imagined Hungarian national space" after 1918. This covers both the transformation of the mental map of Hungarians and the severance of a significant part of the Hungarian population from Hungary, together with its numerous consequences.

Methodology

In this essay, I will first attempt to outline how the "imagined Hungarian national space" emerged and became fixed in the context of similar – and usually intersecting – ideas of Central European national movements in direct contact with it. After this, focusing primarily on the interactions of the Slovakian and Romanian national spaces with the Hungarian one, I will try to answer the questions of what changes were brought about by the military defeat and dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, how the new peace system emerged after World War I, and in what ways this determined the new order itself. Would it have been possible to reconcile competing national visions without traumatic

consequences for any of the parties, or at least to significantly mitigate the grievances?

There is a vast body of secondary literature on World War I and the evolution of the new order, increasingly available in Hungarian as well; by now, not only the most significant sources have been published, but they have also been analysed. A detailed overview of Hungarian and international historiography on this subject is outside the scope of this paper, but lately the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, various institutes of history of the Romanian Academy, the Trianon 100-Lendület [Momentum] Research Group[8] of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, as well as several universities and other research institutes have all published entire book series and numerous other publications related to the centenaries. These reflect relatively accurately the still noticeable national embeddedness and orientation of our region's historiography. Although the national perspective prevails with varying intensity in different countries, few research groups or authors can – or want to – escape some degree of ethnocentrism,[9] while current governmental politics of remembrance also make their presence felt. But even if one succeeds in transcending the national interpretative frameworks, the dissemination of academic research and academic dialogue continue to be restricted by the limits of national languages.

In my paper, I will attempt to answer the questions raised above by drawing on historical literature on the subject published mainly in Hungary, and to a lesser extent in the neighbouring countries. With regard to "imagined national spaces", I find it important to note that I, too, consider the topic of national identity – which is rarely problematised by the authors of ethnocentric historical narratives – to be a rather complex issue: an issue which even censuses and ethnic maps striving for accuracy inevitably oversimplify, and

8 The present author is also a member of the research group, which has been active since 2016.

9 In a Hungarian context, this is the explicit aim of the of the transnationally oriented NEPOSTRANS ERC project led by Gábor Egry: https://1918local.eu/, but also an objective of other professional workshops, such as the Trianon 100 Research Group.

which is instrumentalised in a downright distorted manner by (ethno-)political discourses. Although – for want of a better solution – I will also use such data in this article, a critical approach to ethnicity[10] is closer to me than the sharp linguistic boundaries, the stable, solid identity categories or the monolithic communities that are taken for granted by "traditional" national and nation-state perspectives. I will also try to filter out both spatially and temporally the nationalising effects of nation-state logic especially as regards present-day nation states, the (multi-ethnic) medieval antecedents of Hungarian statehood, the pre-modern territorial-based Hungarian identity and forms of identity based on social, denominational and local affiliations.

The emergence of the "imagined Hungarian national space"

National space as a geographical landscape as well as a political and cultural place – as Gábor Gyáni puts it in one of his studies – is a relatively new historical construct. "The way a nation appropriated for itself a slice of physical space as its natural living space … is the result of the historical processes of the past one or two hundred years" (Gyáni, 2010, p. 237) "National spaces" were "imagined" and created mainly in the 19th–20th centuries by national elites, who then made these spaces their home through their "nationalised" history, traditions, culture and science (ibid., pp. 247–258). These spaces, in accordance with the logic of national and nation-state territoriality, gradually acquired more distinct outlines, thus becoming a central element of national identity, with national activists even projecting them back into the past (ibid., pp. 239 and 249).

The national spaces of Central and Eastern Europe evolved as a result of the activities of national movements emerging within multi-ethnic empires: the Habsburg, the Ottoman and the Russian Empires. However, the "national maps" drawn by nation-building intellectuals, scholars, artists and politicians, i.e., the representations of those territories which are a nation's "due", as it were – overlapped

10 See e.g. Brubaker, 2002, pp. 163–189; Egry, 2015; Ficeri, 2019.

in many cases (Kolarz, 2003; Sugar, 2002). This led to tensions and numerous conflicts from the start, as we will see below.

The Hungarian liberal nationalists who had been promoting the idea of the "imagined Hungarian national space" from the 19th century onwards took as their starting point the territory of the former independent Kingdom of Hungary before the Turkish wars, and their policies were in fact aimed at its restoration (Gyurgyák, 2007, pp. 27–54). However, there were several obstacles to this in the early 19th century, when advocates of Hungarian liberal nationalism did not yet possess a decisive influence in the country's public life.

The first of these was the lack of sovereignty: for centuries, Hungary had been essentially ruled from Vienna, by a "foreign" dynasty. Although this was achieved through the institutions of the Hungarian state system, the Habsburgs always put the interests of the empire before particular interests, that is the interests of Hungary as a country and a nation. Hungarian nationalists wanted to achieve at least a reversal of these priorities. The division of the country's territory was another important factor: in the early 19th century not only Croatia, but also the Military Frontier bordering the Ottoman Empire, the Grand Principality of Transylvania and the Partium (the Parts) were governed separately. Therefore, Hungarian elites sought to unite these regions and their resources with Hungarian territories. Another serious difficulty was the economic and social backwardness of the Kingdom of Hungary, compared not only to Western Europe, but also to the more developed provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy. The extremely slow pace of modernisation also limited the possibilities of Hungarian elites in several respects, impeding the realisation of national aspirations. One symbol of the circumstances hindering the Hungarian national movement is the fact that, after the 18th-century Germanization attempt was repelled, it took more than half a century before Latin, the former official language of the Kingdom of Hungary – which also served as a means of communication mediating between speakers of different languages – was finally replaced by Hungarian.[11]

11 Ibid. This was only achieved in 1844.

The obstacle that ultimately proved decisive, however, was the high ethnic diversity of the country's population, the significance of which went long unrecognized by Hungarian nationalists. This is not overly surprising, because it appeared as only a vague problem in the initial stages of language-based nationalism. Later, however, it proved fatal for the historical framework of the state that on the territory claimed by Hungarian elites in the name of the Hungarian national ideal, the proportion of Hungarian native speakers was barely more than 40% of the total population in the mid-19th century. Although the central, most fertile regions of the country generally had a Hungarian majority, Hungarian native speakers formed minority groups or lived scattered in the vast peripheral regions. More importantly, national movements had also emerged in the non-Hungarian population by the 19th century, and their influence grew unstoppably, albeit to varying degrees. In time, these movements also formulated their national goals, including a demarcation of what they considered their own national territory.

Hungarian liberal nationalists aimed to restore the unity of the – rather anachronistically interpreted – medieval Hungarian state. Only Croatia was allowed some degree of separation within the "Hungarian national space" they imagined, which extended from the Adriatic coast to Slavonia and the Banat, to Transylvania and the mountain ranges of the north-western Carpathians; that is, it practically covered the entire Carpathian Basin. Hungarian national activists drew primarily on historical traditions, but their ultimate goal was to create a modern, *Hungarian-speaking* nation state. Although they did not yet have accurate data about ethnicities at the time, and the ethnic conditions of the territories in question were known only approximately before the second half of the 19th century, both certain writings and their own experiences made clear the multi-ethnic character of the imagined Hungary. Adherents of the Hungarian national movement tried to solve this contradiction using the pre-modern, territorial-based Hungarian identity, still present in certain places – which embodied allegiance to the kingdom – then by the concept of the "Hungarian political nation," created in the spirit of modern nationalism (ibid. 74–79). However, although they recognized the *cultural* and *linguistic* rights of various

non-Hungarian ethnicities within the *political* framework of the Hungarian state, the majority of Hungarian nationalists were adamant about the country's territorial unity. Besides the rational and pragmatic arguments for building a nation-state, this was also supported by such manifestations of the romantic zeitgeist as the topos of the "Hungarian island" surrounded by a "Slavic sea", or the even more sinister Herderian vision of the death of the nation. In the light of all this, the need to create the strongest possible Hungarian nation and state may well have seemed justified.

Nevertheless, this Hungarian demand intersected with similar aspirations of national activists representing the non-Hungarian ethnic groups of Hungary, which also crystallized during the 19th century. Croatian nationalists disputed Hungarian claims to certain parts of Slavonia and to the sea access; what is more, they wanted to expand Croatia with other South Slavic territories. The Serbian national movement in Hungary wanted to see the establishment of an independent Serbian province in the southern region, whose population became considerably mixed after the Turkish wars, and this was temporarily established between 1849 and 1860. Romanian nation-builders aimed to obtain equality within Transylvania, as well as maintain the separate status of the province, so that the Romanian majority within the population could prevail. They also had some success in this after 1849, but after the 1867 union they demanded in vain the restoration of Transylvania's autonomy. There were also ideas, for example in a 1906 book by Aurel C. Popovici, that Transylvania should be united with other Romanian-populated regions of the Monarchy to form one of the countries in a federalized "United Nations of Greater Austria." Union with the Romanian principalities and later with Romania was not – yet – a realistic idea. Parallel to this, the representation of the Romanian national space gradually included all regions of Hungary with a Romanian population.[12] The various "national maps" of Slovak nationalists came also to be gradually fixed, until "Slovakia" attained its still somewhat vague contours in the area between the Tatras and the Danube, and

12 On this topic, see Ábrahám, 2018; especially pp. 353–357. On Popovici's claim see also Balogh, 2018, pp. 15–27.

between the Czech–Slovak border and the Rusyn region. The "Slovak District of Upper Hungary" (*Okolie*) first proposed in 1848–1849 and publicised again in 1861, would have comprised a somewhat smaller, but more precisely defined area, which would have included the Hungarian counties with a Slovak majority.[13]

The reconciliation of national ideas in Hungary was also influenced to a great extent by the experiences of the anti-Habsburg revolution and the war of independence of 1848–1849, when conflicts escalated into violence in several places. Ethnic civil war broke out in the southern territories and Transylvania, but clashes of an ethnic nature also occurred in the northern Hungarian regions. Although the demands of the non-Hungarian nationalities were not granted in spite of the suppression of the Hungarian war of independence, and there remained even less chance for this after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, representatives of the national movements strove to keep them in the foreground, and they continued to re-emerge in various forms until World War I. At the same time, the majority of Hungarian nationalists concluded from these conflicts that Hungarian dominance in the Carpathian Basin could only be maintained through a compromise with the Habsburgs. There were some who promoted an agreement with the non-Hungarian nations instead, especially politicians forced into emigration, like Lajos Kossuth and László Teleki (Gyurgyák, 2007, pp. 56–64), but the ideas of the proponents of an Austro–Hungarian compromise ultimately prevailed (incidentally, Teleki was one of the few Hungarian politicians who – after the Hungarian Jacobins at the end of the 18th century – would not consider ethnic-based federalization of Hungary unthinkable).

The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 gave the green light to efforts to unite the Hungarian national space. Hungarian nationalists no longer wanted to make concessions, and they rigidly opposed any demands by the national minorities for regional autonomy or separation. The laws granted certain linguistic, educational and cultural rights to the non-dominant nationalities, at least in

13 On this topic, see Szarka, 2008, pp. 143–161; Ábrahám, 2016, pp. 102–119; Viršinská, 2017, pp. 127–142; Letz, 2017, pp. 157–171; and Kollai, 2021, pp. 219–224.

principle, but the majority of the Hungarian elites believed that only an indivisible and united Hungarian state could guarantee the development of the Hungarian nation and its protection against Russian (Pan-Slavic) and other threats. The "Hungarian national space" could not be diminished by its ethnic alternatives.

In the decades following the Compromise, the dominance of Hungarian elites gradually consolidated in Hungary, to which the peculiar parliamentary system, which conserved the existing public, political and social order, largely contributed (Gerő, 2017; Révész, 2022). The logic of the unified state of the "state-forming nation" – which essentially followed the French model of nation-state building – in time extended beyond the domains of politics and public life of the Hungarian Kingdom. This in turn provided less and less space for the non-Hungarian nationalities reduced to "minorities" (Gyurgyák, 2007, pp. 90–134; Nagy, 2017, pp. 139–157). While the Hungarian political elite strove to integrate non-Hungarian politicians, it either ignored their national movements – as in the case of the Slovakians –, or was willing to negotiate minor concessions at most – as with the Romanians in the early 20th century (Falusi, 2020, pp. 35–41). Parallel to this, the Hungarian leadership made several efforts which also affected the ethnic boundaries of the Hungarians. It put the state at the mercy of the Hungarian nationalizing aspirations, especially in the fields of public life, as well as education, culture and in part the economy. All this combined with the spontaneous social processes accompanying modernization – such as the Hungarisation of the German and Jewish bourgeoisie, and partially of the Slovak population (especially those living in dispersal) – which led to the Hungarisation mainly of the urban population.

While the realistic ideas of Hungarian elites reckoned with the preservation of the existing Hungarian positions, the consolidation of the Hungarian settlement area, and spontaneous Hungarisation – especially in the cities – their more daring plans aimed at intensifying the assimilation of the nationalities and strengthening the *Hungarian* character of the Kingdom of Hungary. Correspondingly, the national question often oscillated between two extreme positions in contemporary Hungarian public opinion. At one end of

the scale there was the idea that Hungarians would be pushed into the background in "their own country", together with the threat posed by Illyric, Pan-Slavic and Daco-Romanian aspirations, which occasionally led to downright hysterical outbursts; at the other end it was not uncommon to triumphantly celebrate the growth and achievements of the Hungarian nation, or to paint confident visions which foresaw the historic mission of Hungarians extending even beyond their borders, and their bright future.[14]

As far as the threats to the "imagined Hungarian national space" are concerned, an early example of drawing attention to these can be found in the work of Béla Grünwald, a subprefect from northern Hungary. In his pamphlet, which garnered great attention, the politician and historian writes about the sad history of Slovakised Hungarian villages: "It wrenches one's heart when one is in Upper Hungary and sees these conditions directly before oneself" (*A Felvidék: Grünwald Béla ...*, 2011, p. 89). Grünwald later – besides writing on the subject – also tried to directly change the situation by closing down the Slovak cultural organization Matica slovenská and Upper Hungarian secondary schools teaching in Slovakian, which made him one of the most notorious representatives of Hungarian nationalism in Slovak historical consciousness (Demmel, 2001).

Sándor József Pákéi, secretary general and then president of the Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania [Erdélyi Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület, EMKE], an organization established to spread Hungarian culture in Transylvania, recalled the circumstances of the society's foundation in a similar vein twenty-five years later. In the ornate commemorative volume of EMKE published in 1910, the author discusses at length the various Pan-Slavic, Pan-Germanic and "Daco-Romanian" goals (Pákéi, 1910, pp. 23–41), to which he considers the strengthening of Hungarian national activism to be the appropriate response. Among the antecedents of Hungarian activism, he mentions the efforts to spread the Hungarian national spirit and the Hungarian language in Upper Hungary (ibid., p. 67), or to mobilize Hungarians by invoking the "Vlachization" (Romanisation) of certain counties in southern and central Transylvania (ibid., p. 71).

14 See Romsics, 2004, and more recently Varga, 2020.

Gusztáv Beksics, another renowned Hungarian politician-publicist of the period, emphasized the importance of the Hungarisation of cities. In one of his writings, he calls cities the bastions of Hungarians, and, citing Western European examples, he claimed that "A dozen great Hungarian cities will preserve the Hungarian nation in the next millennium more surely than ancestry and the counties did in the previous one." He describes the Hungarisation of certain regional centres as a real fight, in which Hungarisation goes hand in hand with modernisation. He includes Pozsony (Bratislava, today in Slovakia), Trencsén (Trenčín, today in Slovakia), Kassa (Košice, today in Slovakia), Máramarossziget (Sighetu Marmației, today in Romania), Arad (today in Romania), Temesvár (Timișoara, today in Romania) and Lugos (Lugoj, today in Romania) among "the cities singled out for the purposes of Hungarisation". "Fortunately, Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca, today in Romania] in Transylvania and Nagyvárad [Oradea, today in Romania] in Hungary have already been conquered for the Hungarian cause. Gyulafehérvár [Alba Iulia, today in Romania], Brassó [Brașov, today in Romania] and Szeben [Sibiu, today in Romania] have to be conquered hereafter." Beksics even draws up a schedule: "Firstly, we have to conquer Hungary, understood in the strictest sense; the effects of this will then be felt in Transylvania as well" (2005, p. 85).

The author of an article published in 1893 comments with satisfaction on the Hungarisation of Nyitra (Nitra, today in Slovakia) in Upper Hungary: "Within ten years, it first became entirely Hungarian itself, and then it made a good portion of the Uplands Hungarian. And in these ten years it not only learned the language, but the Hungarian spirit also grew unbreakable roots in its heart. Indeed, if we look back twenty years into the past, we may notice with wonder that the Nyitra of the time of oppression vanished from the face of the earth, and something entirely new has grown up in its place. A modern Hungarian provincial centre" (Magyarország városai VI. Nyitra, 1893, p. 17).[15] Barely three years later, however, an article in the same newspaper reported on the partial failure of "national cultural policy" in sombre tones: "Demographic statistics

15 On Nitra, see also e.g. Krekovič, Mannová, Krekovičová, 2005, pp. 134–149.

reveal sad lessons about the boundaries of the Hungarian language. Let the alarm bells for our national cultural policy ring to the clouds against the Tóts in the north and the Vlachs in the east" (Felhők, 1896, p. 1).

The decennial censuses attesting to the rapid growth of the Hungarian-speaking population could also be used to mobilise the society to protect or expand the "Hungarian national space". For example, before the data of the last Hungarian census of 1910 were processed, a newspaper article assessed the developments favourable to Hungarians as follows: "The struggle is over in the cities: there, the Hungarian cause has been ensured for ten years, and the nationalities can no longer dispute the result. The battle rages on far from the centres, on the peripheries; with what success, will be determined by the new census" (*A népszámlálás sulypontja*, 1911, p. 31). The optimism also influenced the prospects of the above-mentioned Hungarian expansion. It is perhaps writer and journalist Jenő Rákosi who is quoted most often in this context, who wrote in 1902 that "We need no more than thirty million Hungarians for us to play the leading role in European history in this place, in this land, and the East of Europe will be ours!" (*Az amerikai magyarok zászlója*, 1902, p. 3).

In his influential volume of 1912, Oszkár Jászi attempted to reconcile these diverse and conflicting discourses. Drawing on secondary literature, statistical data and his own thorough knowledge of the field, he also painted a rather optimistic picture of the growth of the Hungarian population: "Wherever we may then measure the sea of nationalities' life, history, oral tradition, witnesses and statistics everywhere speak about the inexorable progress of the assimilation process in favour of Hungarians. In these circumstances, we need not take seriously for one moment the Cassandric warnings spread by some of our chauvinists in 'patriotic' newspapers about the Slovakisation of Hungarian villages" (Jászi, 1986, p. 183).

The above examples aptly illustrate the efforts to implement the "Hungarian national space" in practice. In this struggle, not only historiography, evoking the glorious past, but, according to Róbert Keményfi, ethnography, geography, statistics and cartography also provided politics with arguments which could legitimise the "idea

of the unified space of the Hungarian nation and state" (Keményfi, 2006, p. 3). The process of consciously constructing the Hungarian national space became increasingly noticeable, in which statistics and maps also fulfilled a political role, while "one's own ethnic space" "*became an important part of national mythology*: an inalienable part of national existence" (ibid., pp 18, 20; Emphasis in the original).

Indeed, the multi-ethnic Kingdom of Hungary became more and more Hungarian during the decades of Dualism (1867–1918), at least as far as appearances were concerned. The large-scale celebrations of the millennium of the Hungarian conquest were also intended to immortalise the glory of the "state-forming Hungarian nation", that is, the status quo favourable to Hungarians. This was also attested by the millennium monuments raised at this time in several carefully selected locations throughout the country.[16] One function of the monuments erected in Hungarian–nationalities contact zones and decorated with Hungarian national symbols (coats of arms, Turul birds, Árpád-era warriors, etc.) was precisely to spectacularly mark the "Hungarian national space". As historian Kálmán Thaly, who proposed selected sites for these statues, remarked in connection with the monument to be erected in Zimony (Zemun, today: Serbia), "There it stands proudly in front of the Serbs on the territory of Croatian-Slavons territory to represent the Hungarian state doctrine for them in that place. … The Zimony [monument] is meant for the Serbs who live in the protective embrace of the Hungarian state, but also for Serbs abroad: let them remember, only to the Sava – but not beyond!" (ibid., p 41).

Monuments associated with Hungary springing up in towns in the countryside and the symbolic practices organised around them served similar purposes, as did the coats of arms and flags displayed on public institutions, the Hungarisation of place names at the turn of the century (Berecz, 2020), and even the use of the Hungarian language by the Hungarian State Railways. The symbols of the Hungarian nation and state – and increasingly of the *nation state* – shrouded what was in reality a much more colourful country in red, white and green. Newer generations were brought up in

16 For details, see Varga, 2017.

such political reality. Hungary, surrounded by the ranges of the Carpathians in the north, east and south-east, the Sava in the south, the Adriatic in the south-west and the Austrian Alps in the west, became the natural setting of their lives with its borders unchanged since 1867, and with the 63 counties (and Fiume /Rijeka, today: Croatia/) which had been established by the 1880s after various administration reforms. This situation was also canonized by works like the monumental book series which began to be published in 1896, the *Magyarország vármegyéi és városai. Magyarország monográfiája – A magyar korona országai történetének, földrajzi, képzőművészeti, néprajzi, hadügyi és természeti viszonyainak, közművelődési és közgazdasági állapotának encziklopédiája* [Counties and Cities of Hungary. The Monography of Hungary: An Encyclopaedia of the History, Geography, Arts, Ethnography, Military and Natural Conditions, Cultural and Economic Situation of the Hungarian Crown].[17]

The various aspirations of the nationalities mentioned above may have seemed like unrealistic utopias in the face of the Hungarian nation state at the height of its power, covering the entire Carpathian Basin. Yet until the end of World War I so did the national and irredentist concepts emerging in the neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, these also contributed to the exacerbation of conflicts between the Hungarians and the ethnic minorities at the time of Dualism. The intellectuals active in Serbia, which was gradually shedding the domination of the Ottoman Empire, had the long-term ambition of uniting the entire South Slavic population under Serbian leadership. The Romanian principalities also worked feverishly to realize the Romanian national ideal, with the participation of Romanian intellectuals resettling from Transylvania. After the unification of Wallachia and Moldavia and the creation of Romania, acquiring Transylvania became the main goal of the Romanian nationalists who dreamed of the creation of Romanian national unity, which they justified on the ground of the Romanian majority, the theory of Daco–Roman continuity, and the 1599 conquest of Michael the

17 However, the monumental work edited by Samu Borovszky and published by the National Monograph Society, which presented both the rich history and diverse present of Hungary, remained unfinished due to the outbreak of World War I.

Brave. Romanian national poet Mihai Eminescu claimed he was able to hear the complaints of Romanians from the Dniester to the Tisza, while maps published in the second half of the 19th century already depicted the rebirth of the former Roman province of Dacia in the modern age. This *Romanian* Dacia imagined between the Tisza and the Lower Danube, Maramureș and the Black Sea also included a considerable part of the territory of Hungary.[18] The Czech national movement, like the Hungarian one, also made use of historical arguments to support the constitutional unity of the countries belonging to the crown of Saint Wenceslaus (Czechia, Moravia, and Silesia), and this was later complemented by the concept of Czechoslovakia (Hudek, Kopeček, Mervart, 2019). This concept, which also included the Slovakian nation, proposed the annexation of the Northern Hungarian regions inhabited by Slovaks to the historical Czech state. The contradiction between historical and national principles – as there was a significant German and somewhat smaller Polish population living on the territory of the Czech Kingdom – also appeared in the arguments of the Czechoslovakian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference held after World War I.

The deadlock between the the interested (and opposing) parties in the early 20th century was only broken by World War I and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The fast-paced changes unfolding at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 and later sanctioned by the peace treaties around Paris radically transformed the national spaces in the region.

The collapse of the "Hungarian national space"

Yet it was not clear until the last year of the war, and even later, until mid-1918, that the state framework threatened by the different national movements of the Monarchy would in fact soon cease to exist. While support for the demands of the nationalities became increasingly evident – first in the Fourteen Points of American president Woodrow Wilson (Glant, 2009, pp. 84–99), then in the more and more specific promises of the Entente Powers – Hungarian

18 See e.g. Borsi-Kálmán, 1995, pp. 9–66, and Cieger, 2017, pp. 313–314.

politicians continued to rigidly oppose any changes that would affect the territorial unity of Hungary. The letter which István Apáthy, an influential Hungarian politician from Transylvania, wrote to the then leader of the opposition, Mihály Károlyi, in mid-October 1918, about two weeks after the Bulgarian armistice (and two weeks before the dissolution of the Monarchy), is notable. In his letter, Apáthy stated – representing the stance of several other Hungarian politicians from Translyvania – that "at the [future] peace negotiations the representatives of Hungary must under no circumstances agree to sacrificing the internal unity of a free Hungary, much less to the mutilation of Hungary's territory"; Croatia may be ceded, but – if possible – "we must reclaim the three Slovenian [meaning Slavonian] counties which are home to more than 100,000 Hungarian-speaking and almost 150,000 German-speaking Hungarian citizens … We must certainly demand international guarantees for Fiume as our seaport." The author also made himself known as uncompromising with respect to Czech(oslovakian) and Romanian territorial demands and attempts at federalization: "It is of course out of the question to cede counties to the Czechs or to Romania. Nor can we agree to partition Hungary into self-governing territories or transform it into a confederacy of independent states. Yet this is precisely the federalisation that Socialists keep talking about" (Litván, 1978, p. 244).

Thus it is not surprising that both the government coalition led by Mihály Károlyi, which came into power after the Aster Revolution of 31 October 1918,[19] and the Hungarian public were actually shocked by the increasingly determined and radical demands and declarations of the national movements in Hungary. Although several negotiations with the leaders of the Romanian and Slovak nationalities were held in the autumn and winter, they all ended in failure. The main reason for this was that the new Budapest government continued to insist on the territorial integrity of the country – or at least on any modifications to the borders to be decided by the Peace Conference – while national movements were already envisioning the future of their communities outside Hungary.

19 Mihály Károlyi's government coalition was formed by opposition nationalist, radical liberal and Social Democratic forces.

This is well illustrated, for example, by the Slovak assembly in Turócszentmárton (Martin, today in Slovakia) on 30 October and the Romanian one in Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia, today in Romania) on 1 December, both of which unilaterally declared the secession of Hungarian Slovaks and Romanians, and their accession to Czechoslovakia and Romania, respectively. The Hungarian government made several attempts to salvage the historical framework of the state: it tried to solve the ethnic question by granting widespread autonomies or by a "Swiss-type cantonisation" of the country – for example by establishing autonomous regions in Subcarpathia (Transcarpathia, today in Ukraine) and in Upper Hungary (today Slovakia) – but these belated measures were only able to demonstrate a break with the old ethnic policies. All the more so because the Budapest government – in the name of pacifism – evacuated the ethnic regions more or less without resistance, and thus the majority of these had come under foreign rule by early 1919. The desperate attempts of local Hungarian elites– from Pozsony (Bratislava, today in Slovakia) to the cities of Transylvania and the Zipser region, to Szeklerland, the Banat and Western Hungary – to achieve the national self-determination of Hungarians also proved futile (Balogh, 2020. pp, 143, 188; Szeghy-Gayer, Zahorán, 2022).

It was even more consequential that at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919 the parties concerned failed to agree not only on the integrity of Hungary, but also on "fair national division" (Szarka, 1990, pp. 49–65). The Hungarian–Romanian and Hungarian–Slovakian negotiations at the end of 1918 relatively quickly revealed the irreconcilable differences between their territorial concepts. The leaders of the Romanian national movement – in accordance with the 1916 agreement between the Kingdom of Romania and the Entente – laid claim to about 26 counties of Eastern Hungary inhabited (among others) by Romanians, while disregarding the right to self-determination of the significant non-Romanian population in the area. The Hungarian government delegation was confronted with the intransigence of the Romanian party in Arad, as the latter rejected the preservation of the Hungarian state framework and a temporary division of the region on an ethnic basis. Following this, the Romanian demands were enforced by local Romanian

national councils and military troops arriving from Romania, and later largely approved by the peace conference. In comparison, the negotiations with the Slovak leaders in Budapest after the Martin Declaration may at first have suggested that there were greater chances of a compromise between Hungarians and Slovaks. The demarcation line of the so-called Bartha–Hodža agreement largely followed the Hungarian–Slovak linguistic border; however, this was considered unacceptable by the Czechoslovakian leadership. Czech and Slovak émigré politicians lobbying in Paris for the creation of a strong and great Czechoslovakia wanted to push the borders far south of the compact Slovak region in Upper Hungary, which they partially succeeded to do in the end, although not without a struggle. The predicament of the Budapest administration was made even more difficult – in addition to the general economic, social and political crisis – by its international isolation, as the great powers negotiating in Paris did not recognise any Hungarian government until the late autumn of 1919.[20]

While in reality the "Hungarian national space" controlled by Budapest was crumbling at lightning speed, Hungarian elites and the Hungarian public were slow to realize that the "thousand-year-old borders" of the country they considered their own were impossible to maintain. Not only the local Hungarian initiatives and protests in ethnic regions, but also the disputes within the government indicated that the proposals of the new Hungarian government proved unacceptable to many Hungarians as well. It was left-wing leaders who first recognized that the territorial integrity of Hungary was a thing of the past – which in fact meant accepting the new situation – nevertheless, they also continued to insist on keeping ethnically Hungarian regions. In late 1918 and early 1919 several Hungarian politicians suggested applying the "ethnographic principle," albeit public discourse was still dominated by insistence on the historical territory of the country (Romsics, 2005, pp. 92–93).

However, the Czechoslovakian and Romanian advances had made the situation of the already unstable Budapest government completely untenable by the spring of 1919. The new demarcation

20 For details, see Ormos, 2020.

lines cutting ever deeper into Hungarian territories and the steps taken by the Czechoslovakian, Yugoslav and Romanian authorities foreshadowed the future state borders, which the Hungarian government could not accept, thus it resigned. The Communist–Social Democratic government which subsequently came to power proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat, and while making it clear that it would not insist on territorial integrity (ibid., p. 124), it tried to defend the remaining territory of the country with arms, and to spread the Communist revolution. This attempt was finally put to an end by the Romanian intervention in the summer of 1919.

Representatives of individual countries put forward their concepts about their own "national spaces" to the victorious powers at the Paris Peace Conference, which opened in January 1919. The confrontation of competing ideas, however, became rather one-sided, as the losers did not have much say in what would happen, and due to the episode of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the Hungarian delegation was only invited to attend at the end of 1919. During the settlement, which had by that time been finalised, the great powers primarily promoted their own geopolitical and economic interests and the claims of their allies – Romania, Czechoslovakia and the South Slavic state – at the expense of Hungary in almost every instance (what is more, even the demands of Austria, another defeated party, were taken into consideration).

The delegates of the neighbouring states justified their demands with sometimes contradictory economic and strategic arguments, historical explanations interpreted in their own way, and creative use of census data (Simon, 2019). They also took advantage of the current anti-Communist moods (Gerő, n.d., p. 130), which became especially important with respect to the rail network at that particular moment in history. Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš, who headed the Czechoslovakian delegation, went back in time as far as the Hungarian conquest and 9th-century Greater Moravia to provide historical legitimacy for Czechoslovak claims, and confronted questions of Hungarian statehood and the identity of Slovaks in Hungary with the construction of the Czechoslovakian nation. He also emphasized the subsequent forced Hungarisation and oppression, while questioning the Hungarian census data and underestimating the

number of Hungarians who would be annexed to Czechoslovakia, and exaggerating the number of Slovaks remaining in Hungary (Zeidler, 2003, pp. 50–51). Beneš argued that "In all, 650,000 Hungarians would become subjects of the new state, whereas 450,000 Czecho-Slovaks would remain in Hungary." In Subscarpathia, "the Ruthenes do not wish to remain under Hungarian control ... It would be unjust to leave them at the mercy of the Hungarians" (ibid., p. 51). (It is worth comparing these figures with later censuses, according to which in 1930, after about 100,000–150,000 Hungarians had left the territories annexed by Czechoslovakia by the early 1920s, the total number of Hungarians living in Czechoslovakia was about 680,000, while in Hungary the number of Slovak speakers did not reach 105,000) (Kárník, pp. 170 and 236; Száray, 2020; Gyáni, Kövér, 2006, p. 213).

The Romanian demands[21] were similarly justified by a memorandum of the Romanian peace delegation (Zeidler, 2003, pp. 52–58) and by Romanian prime minister Ion I. C. Brătianu, who presented them (Gerő, n.d. *Fateful decisions...* pp. 127–131). Invoking not only the 1916 agreement, but also the disputed theory of Daco–Roman synthesis and continuity and the indigenousness of Romanians, the Romanian party asked the Peace Conference to recognise the expression of the Romanian people's will, that is, the accession of Romanians in Hungary to Romania (Zeidler, 2003, p. 56). While Romania did not wish to acquire Debrecen and the western swath of the Tisza-region because – according to the Romanian document – the long Hungarian rule had disrupted the "Romanian historical and geographical territory," in Transylvania "Hungarians in general do not form a coherent population. They live mainly in towns, scattered among Romanians, and the majority consist of classes that often change their place of residence, mainly officials" (ibid., p. 55). Brătianu, who also accused the Hungarian statistics of inaccuracy (the memorandum uses the word "fanciful"), estimated the number of Romanians in Transylvania at 2,900,000 compared to 687,000 Hungarians, arbitrarily distinguishing the latter from the ca. 450,000 Hungarians in Szeklerland (Gerő, n.d. *Fateful decisions...* p. 128) (according to the memorandum, "a race related

21 On this topic see Balogh, 2020.

to the Hungarians"). (Again, it is worth consulting the data of the 1930 census, according to which there were 1,555,000 native Hungarian speakers/1,425,000 ethnic Hungarians living in Romania after about 200,000–220,000 Hungarians had left Transylvania by the early 1920s) (Andreescu, 2005, p. 43; Száray, 2020).

By the time the Hungarian peace delegation arriving in Paris at the beginning of 1920 received the terms of peace, the victorious powers had long settled the question of Hungary's borders – taking the above into account – and already regarded this question an integral part of the new Central–Eastern European order. The Hungarian delegates, who were equipped with serious professional materials after feverish but thorough work on drafting the peace agreement, were taken aback not only by the terms – they were more or less aware of the future borders – but also by the fact that there was practically no question of negotiation, and the most they could hope for was that the Hungarian arguments would be heard (Romsics, 2005, p. 153). Nevertheless, the Hungarian position was presented in detail in several memos, and later the head of the peace delegation, Albert Apponyi, was able to present it in person at the peace conference. The central motif of the Hungarian arguments was the "thousand-year-old" historical and "organic" geographical, economic and cultural unity of Hungary, the disruption of which could not be justified by linguistic differences. Of course, the manifold Hungarian argumentation was highly ethnocentric and tendentious as well: for example, it denied the oppression of the nationalities in Hungary, and did not recognise the legitimacy of the assemblies that proclaimed their secession (ibid., pp. 150–151; Zeidler, 2003, pp. 110–120).[22] However, beyond the fundamental tenet of integrity, a reference to the Wilsonian principle of self-determination also appeared in Apponyi's speech when he requested a referendum in the territories to be annexed: "this is the principal request we must present to the Peace Conference. If the arguments we are able to bring forward in favour of our former territory, of historical Hungary, should not appear reasonable in your eyes, or not sufficiently conclusive, we would suggest consulting the interested people themselves.

22 On the Hungarian arguments, see also Szarka, 1998, pp. 348–352.

We are ready in advance to submit to their verdict" (Romsics, 2005, pp. 155–156; Zeidler, 2003, p. 124).

However, apart from some hesitation, neither the Hungarian notes nor the spectacular ethnic map ("carte rouge") made by Pál Teleki and his colleagues, nor Apponyi's arguments were able to convince the representatives of the great powers to change the new borders of Hungary.[23] The Treaty of Trianon annexed more than two-thirds of the territory of the historic state and more than half of its population – including every third Hungarian – to the neighbouring countries, thus internationally sanctioning the radical shrinking of the state framework of the "Hungarian national space".

Alternatives to the integrity of the "Hungarian national space" in 1920 and after Trianon

The establishment of the new borders of Hungary essentially embodied the Czech–Slovak, Romanian and Yugoslav national objectives, even if not fully in all places. During the debates on individual border sections, proposals more favourable to Hungary were occasionally made – primarily by the British and the Americans, and sometimes by the Italians – but even these would put the new Hungarian borders far inside the "imagined Hungarian national space" (Romsics, 2005, pp. 95–117). For instance, in the material of the experts from the United States of America, supposedly the most objective because it was not directly concerned, the territory of the new Hungary would have been 112 000 sq. km, with over 9 million inhabitants (after the Treaty of Trianon, the territory of Hungary was reduced to ca. 93 000 sq. km, with 7.9 million inhabitants), and "only" more than two million Hungarians would have become the subjects of neighbouring states (Glant, 2020, p. 232). However, there were much less favourable proposals as well, and in the event of their implementation, the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary would have shrunk to 62 000 sq. km, while its population to 5.4 million (Zeidler, 2020, p. 753). Although France backed the demands of the neighbouring countries in nearly every instance, the Trianon decision – according

23 On ethnic maps see Segyevy, 2021.

to Miklós Zeidler's assessment – could ultimatelly be regarded as a kind of "compromise" between the national principle and the maximum claims of the neighbours (ibid., p. 754).

Although at the time concluding the peace treaty the "Hungarian national space" was still virtually intact on the mental map of Hungarian elites and the Hungarian public, it had already started to shift due to the changed circumstances. This was true not only of the Hungarians who for various reasons fled or resettled from the annexed territories, but also of those politicians who continued to insist on the integrity of Hungary in Paris or in the Hungarian Parliament, as well as in the press and in other public forums. This is aptly illustrated – besides the request for a referendum – by the secret Hungarian–French negotiations which commenced in the months preceding the signing of the peace treaty, and continued even after that. After learning the terms of peace, the Hungarian party would now have made concessions regarding the "thousand-year-old borders", and concretised its territorial claims, in exchange for which it would have allowed the French geopolitical and economic influence to gain more ground in Hungary (Ormos,1975).

The Hungarian vision outlined in the spring of 1920 envisaged the re-annexation of the Hungarian-populated areas along Hungary's new borders; it called for a referendum in the case of Germans and requested regional autonomy and the guarantee of minority rights for those living in more distant regions, such as the Szeklers and the Saxons. The sketch map drawn up during the negotiations showed, on the one hand, the swath of territory definitely reclaimed – i.e. regarded as Hungarian – with a population of ca. 1.7 million, and on the other hand, the regions treated as "bargaining chips" – such as Eastern Slovakia, Subcarpathia or the German region of the Banat – which Budapest would even have relinquished (ibid., pp. 910 and 916). In the end, however, no agreement was reached, and Hungary could make very limited use of the opportunity of minor adjustments mentioned in the cover letter to the peace treaty during the process of establishing the borders.[24]

24 For more on this topic see Suba, 2021, pp. 217–231.

Thus the interests of raw power and the national "sacro egoismo" prevailed in the end, but the Hungarian elites and the Hungarian public did not not come to terms with the new situation (Zeidler, 2001, pp. 160–161). Acceptance of "Trianon" would have been a difficult and lengthy process even if it had not been so unjust and unfair to Hungarians. No wonder, since important sites and landscapes of Hungarian history and culture have been taken over by foreign "nation states". Pozsony (Bratislava – Czechoslovakia), the former coronation city of Hungary, Kassa (Košice – Czechoslovakia), the important regional centre, Kolozsvár (Cluj – Romania), the "capital" of Transylvania, Fiume (Rijeka – Yugoslavia), Hungary's sea port, the Transylvanian Szekler and Saxon regions (Romania), Banat (Yugoslavia and Romania), the Carpathians (Czechoslovakia and Romania), etc., were all considered to be integral parts of the "Hungarian national space". However, some of Trianon's consequences and the Hungarian discontent could probably have been mitigated either by compromises between Hungarians and their neighbours, or by a consistent application of the ethnic principle – which, according to Miklós Zeidler's calculations, would have resulted in a Hungary of ca. 120 000 sq. km, with a population of about 10 million (Zeidler, 2020, pp. 753–754), or by the acceptance of the Hungarian proposal presented during the secret Hungarian–French negotiations. This is true even if each of these solutions would have confined the "Hungarian national space" within much narrower political boundaries than what the majority of Hungarians would have considered acceptable in 1920.

Although the signing of the Treaty of Trianon brought closure to the issue of Hungarian borders, and Budapest also had to refrain from revisionist propaganda for a while, Hungarian frustrations were kept alive by the Czechoslovakian, Yugoslavian and Romanian nationalising policies, as well as by the grievances of the Hungarian communities living in the annexed territories.[25] Thus, as soon as a change occurred in international circumstances, the Hungarian government raised the question of revising the terms of peace with increasing openness. Numerous Hungarian ideas on the desirable

25 For details see Bárdi, Fedinec, Szarka, 2008.

adjustments to Hungary's borders were put forward in the 1920s and 1930s (Zeidler, 2001, pp. 125–158). While the Hungarian ruling elite advocated the necessity of an integral revision – that is, a complete restoration of the "imagined Hungarian national space", although in practice they could prove flexible –, the left-wing opposition and the emigrants were in favour of ethnic revision, accepting the reduction of the "Hungarian national space". Yet another type of compromise was proposed by those intellectuals who urged reconciliation and close cooperation between the region's nations, thus essentially reviving the post-1848 plans for a confederation (ibid., pp. 126–128). The trauma of the peace treaty was also reflected in Hungarian academic and artistic life. An entire series of artistic creations – literary works, public monuments, etc. – betrayed the pain caused by the "dismemberment of historical Hungary,"[26] while the scholarly-ideological justification of the natural unity of former Hungary also persisted (Gyurgyák, Kosztolányi, 2020). The goal was to sustain the "Hungarian national space," which, in a cultural sense, partially survived Trianon, through a long-term prospect of revision.

However, the neighbouring states would not hear of revision. For them, Trianon brought national liberation, which they also signalled by removing symbols regarded as Hungarian: besides Hungarian coats of arms, these included e.g. millennium monuments and other statues. This symbolised the consolidation of their own "national space". With the passage of time, the internationally sanctioned "national spaces" marked by new state borders became fixed and "organic" in Czechoslovakia, Greater Romania and Yugoslavia, and the local majority population and its elites became more and more closely attached to them. The operating mechanisms of nation states also contributed to these processes – similarly to Hungarian nation-building before 1918, but with the roles reversed. As a result, Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania became increasingly foreign elements in the states of the "Czechoslovaks", "Yugoslavs" and Romanians, in spite of the fact that they were native to the land they lived in.

26 Gyurgyák, Kosztolányi, 2020.

Hungary's neighbours perceived the changes made to the borders between 1938 and 1941 with the help of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy as national disasters and a "mutilation" of their own "national spaces" (similarly to the way Hungarians regarded the partitioning of historical Hungary twenty years earlier). Their frustrations, grievances and the fact that the revision was again the result of interventions by great powers (the two Vienna Awards) and armed actions (the occupation of Subcarpathia and the Vojvodina-region), while direct Hungarian–Slovakian and Hungarian–Romanian negotiations failed one after the other, made it again impossible to fairly separate the national spaces of Hungarians and their neighbours (Bárdi, Fedinec, Szarka, 2008, pp. 138–145). After World War II, the Trianon borders were essentially restored, and Hungary renounced definitively the political unification of the "Hungarian national space": at most it could continue to provide cultural support to the Hungarian minorities.[27] However, ethnic Hungarian minorities had to face further, even harsher measures in the region newly dominated by the power hegemony and worldview of the Soviet Union.

The majority of the post-1945 Hungarian grievances were only remedied after the fall of the state socialist dictatorships, as part of the Euro–Atlantic integration process. Even though the situation of Hungarian minorities has certainly improved considerably, it is still far from being settled in many respects, which keeps the "trauma of Trianon" alive. However, it is still possible to observe some Romanian, Slovakian, etc. ambitions in relation to the culturally redefined "Hungarian national space" which first emerged after 1918, and which aim to eliminate or at least minimise the Hungarian aspects of the regions formerly belonging to Hungary. These include an arbitrary reinterpretation of the past, and the neglect or appropriation of the Hungarian cultural heritage, in which the sometimes restrained, sometimes more forceful nationalising policies of the neighbouring countries have virtually free rein. Hungarian minorities and Hungary itself can counteract these phenomena only to a limited extent: for example by supporting Hungarian communities and autonomist movements, by extending Hungarian citizenship,

27 See István Bibó's thoughts on the Paris Peace Treaties of 1947.

or by strengthening symbolic practices (ibid.).[28] At present, the "Hungarian national space" in fact means Hungary and – virtually – Hungarian communities living in neighbouring countries, as well as – albeit less and less so – Hungarian "cultural heritage", i.e. the sites linked to Hungarian history and culture.

As Róbert Keményfi points out in his work cited above, "the 'myth of the ethnic space' has become an important part of the nationalism resurgent in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, which triggers and strengthens nationalism itself. … nationalism means nothing else but the struggle for the spatial realisation of symbolic ethnic boundaries." (Keményfi, 2006, pp. 24–25). The issue of Trianon, which also involves the theme of the "Hungarian national space", doubtlessly forms part of this struggle. This is because in the countries neighbouring Hungary "Trianon" was and still is used to legitimate the borders sanctioned by the peace treaty signed in 1920 (and reaffirmed after World War II) and the nationalising policies of the successor states. According to several Romanian and Slovakian politicians and historians, Hungary got in Trianon what it in fact deserved for the national oppression before 1918, and the new state borders confined the "Hungarian national space" to the territory that effectively belonged to Hungarians. Accordingly, they tend to understate the importance of linguistic boundaries, continue to set their own censuses against the Hungarian ones they dispute, relativise the minority politics of their countries after Trianon, etc.[29] At the same time, an increasing number of historians attempt to break with national bias, either by seeking more objective answers to the questions surrounding Trianon, or by choosing a different approach to escape the trap of national narratives.[30] The Hungarian historical discourse is similarly diverse: historians working with recycled elements of the pre-1945 national narrative and defending the "Hungarian truth" compete with the authors of

28 On Transylvania see e.g. Patakfalvi-Czirják, 2021, pp. 90–94, and Zahorán, 2016, pp. 226–281.

29 See e.g. Holec, 2010, pp. 291–312; Gábor, Vrábel, 2020; Pop, 2019; Pușcaș, Sava, 2020; and Drăgulin, 2021.

30 Michela, Vörös et al., 2013; Ficeri, 2019; Holec, 2020; Boia, 2017.

more nuanced and balanced works.[31] Which tendency will prove to be dominant will also impact the future of the interpretation of "imagined national spaces".

Conclusion

In the present paper, I have attempted to show how the Hungarian and neighbouring "imagined national spaces" emerged and came into conflict. The pre-1918 rivalry of the Hungarian, Slovakian, Romanian, etc. representations of national spaces, which had solidified in the second half of the 19th century, as well as the change in power relations at the end of World War I and the subsequent developments of the 20th century all demonstrate that the region's national elites as a whole stubbornly held on to what they had attained through transitory positions of power, and were unable to reconcile their results through compromise, even if this meant that they themselves suffered grave losses in the long run. Correspondingly, they interpret any encroachment on their own "imagined national space" as an offence ("dictate"), which leads to rejection and enduring frustration. This is especially true of Hungary, the greatest loser in the Central and Eastern European region after World War I.

Yet the peace conference following the war (could have) provided a unique opportunity for the peoples of the region to come to an agreement and for the victorious great powers acting as arbitrators to enforce the principle of self-determination of peoples which they so solemnly embraced, and, through its consistent application, by drawing (more) just borders, to strive to achieve a (more) lasting settlement between the small nations of the region.

What can be done, then, if border revision is not only unfeasible, but also pointless (as it certainly is within the EU)? On the one hand, we may trust in time, i.e. in a gradual cooling of the memory burdened by cultural trauma. Of course, this is a slow and rather "passive" solution, as evidenced by the fact that the present essay discusses

31 For examples of the former, see e.g. the works of Raffay, Popély or Schmidt; while examples of the latter include, besides the already cited writings by Romsics, Szarka, Zeidler, Egry, Simon, Balogh and others, e.g. Bárdi, 2013; Feischmidt, 2014; Hatos, 2018, Révész, 2019; and Ablonczy, 2020.

the consequences of World War I, which came to an end more than a hundred years ago. More tangible results could be achieved by making Central European borders even more "ethereal", supporting cross-border projects, joint actions by Hungarian political actors working in Hungary and in neighbouring countries, deepening the cooperation between the neighbours, complemented by an objective discussion of problems and a continuing dialogue between Hungary and its neighbours. Of course, this also requires further improvement in the situation of Hungarian minorities.

However trite and clichéd it may sound, it is the European Union which currently provides the best framework for this goal. The weakening of the nation-state structures also reduces the exclusivity of individual "national spaces", which makes it easier for them to complement each other rather than overlap. In other words, even the old, seemingly naïve visions of Central European or Danubian reconciliation and alliance may come true in the end. Even if this scenario does not seem too realistic in light of the conflicts of interests and power games existing within the EU and of the continuing instrumentalisation of nationalism, it may still be a suitable objective.

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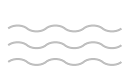

Literature

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Historical and Literary Contexts of the Establishment of the Lithuanian Nation-State in the First Half of 20th Century

Abstract

The article is dedicated to the developments in Lithuanian literature and history that led to the establishment of an independent modern state in the 20th century. The article analyses the historical context of Lithuanian literature in the 19th and early 20th centuries; the path of Lithuanian nationalism towards maturity, the panorama of literature and literary life at the end of the 19th century and on the eve of the Great War (WWI); the potential visions of the state emerging at the time of war in the political and power centres; and the new impetus within the literature in the aftermath of the war and through the fight for independence. The paper concludes with a discussion of the relationship between contemporary collective memory and the perceptions of the significance of the Great War and the fight for independence (1914–1920). The Lithuanian nation-state was established in 1918–1920 and went down in history as the First Republic.[1] On the other hand,

1 Although 16 February 1918 is now commemorated as the Day of Independence, the state of Lithuania did not exist *de facto* or *de jure* for the entire 1918; the

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Poles refer to inter-war Poland as the Second Republic, the first one being the Rzeczpospolita. There is the logic behind it: never before 1918 had there been a nation-state, i.e., a state with a Lithuanian-language governmental structure, educational system, and Lithuanian culture. Thus, for Lithuanians, unlike for Poles, the independence achieved after the Great War was not a return to a former statehood, but a more significant step: the first ever establishment of a nation-state.

Keywords

The Great War, Lithuanian nationalism, pre-war culture, activities of intellectuals, state projects, post-war literature

Development of Lithuanian nationalism

For such a state to emerge, it was necessary to prepare the ground throughout the 19th century, first of all, by turning the Lithuanian--speaking population (the people) into a nation, i.e., a nation that defines its own distinctiveness and is aware of its identity. A consistent and natural development of nationalism was not possible because of the tsarist policy in Lithuania, which changed over the course of the 19th century: from fairly liberal at the beginning of the century, to a totally repressive regime that closed universities, banned the press in the Latin alphabet, and set out to Russify Lithuanians by the end of the century. For almost the entire century, only small groups of intellectuals, acting underground and under persecution, were still able to spread knowledge of and build Lithuanian culture in one way or another. The nucleus of the future nation as an "imagined community" (Benedict Anderson's term[2]) evolved at the beginning of the century (as it did in all of Europe), and its scientific activities

struggle for a *de facto* state continued from 1919 to 1920, and it was only in 1922 that it received a *de jure* recognition.

2 Anderson, Benedict, (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, New York: Verso.

were described as the "Lithuanian Sąjūdis movement."[3] The most important achievement of the period was the appearance of the first historian who wrote in Lithuanian, Simonas Daukantas (1793–1864). Daukantas wrote four books: *Darbai senųjų lietuvių ir žemaičių* (1822), *Istorija žemaitiška* (1831–1834), *Būdas senovės lietuvių, kalnėnų ir žemaičių* (1845), and *Pasakojimas apie veikalus lietuvių tautos senovėje* (1850). With his versions of the history of Lithuania,[4] he, like his foreign counterparts, was beginning to shape the culture of national memory: a foundation that would have the power to inspire a new community of Lithuanian-speaking intellectuals at the end of the century.

In the first half of the 19th century, the literature of Polish-speaking Lithuania and Polish Romanticism was of great importance for the Lithuanian national consciousness, because it relied heavily on Lithuanian historical and folklore sources. Works by Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), such as his poems *Konrad Wallenrod* (1828) and *Grazyna* (1830) deserve a special mention because they

3 The term was introduced, and the period was analyzed by Vincas Maciūnas in his dissertation titled *The Lithuanian Sąjūdis Movement at the Beginning of the 19th Century*: *Interest in the Lithuanian language, history and national studies* published in 1939 (a collection of Maciūnas' papers *Rinktiniai raštai* was published in 2003). On this occasion, we can mention two earlier movements, also originating in Samogitia. The first centre was formed in Viduklė, under the patronage of the aristocrat Jonas Biliūnas-Bilevičius, who took several intellectuals under his wing, including Martynas Mažvydas (1510–1563), the author of the first book in the Lithuanian language. After the Jesuits defeated the Reformers, the cultural figures found themselves in Protestant Prussia, in the so-called Lithuania Minor, where the first book in Lithuanian, Mažvydas' *Katekizmas* (1569) was published; the highest achievement of the Reformers' activity was the first Lithuanian literary work, the poem *Metai* [The Year] by pastor Kristijonas Donelaitis (1714–1780), first published by Karaliaučius professor Liudvikas Rėza (1776–1840). The Catholic Lithuanian Studies Centre (formerly Protestant) was formed by the Bishop of Samogitia, Merkelis Giedraitis (1536–1609), while his protégé, Maciej Stryjkowski (1547–1593), wrote the history of Lithuania in Polish titled *Kronika Polska, Litewska, Żmódzka y wszystkiej Rusi* (1582). Lithuanian religious publications (Jacob Ledesma's *Catechism*, 1595, and Jakub Wujek's *Postilla*, 1599) were written by another protégé of Giedraitis's, Mikalojus Daukša (1527–1613).

4 During the life of Daukantas, only the third book of 1845, *Būdas senovės lietuvių, kalnėnų ir žemaičių* (1845), was published. At the end of the 19th century, two other books were published: *Pasakojimai apie veikalus lietuvių tautos senovėje*, by the M. Jankaus printing house in Bitėnai in 1893 and *Lietuvos istorija*, vols. 1–2 (free narration), in Plymouth, Pa. by Kasztu and in the printing house of Juozas Paukszczis, 1893–189.

played the role of heroic epic poems and became a source of inspiration for other poets at the end of the 19th century.[5] Józef Ignacy Kraszewski's (1812–1887) activities, works, and interest in Lithuanian past and mythology also made an important contribution.[6]

Two names were significant for literature and nationalism in the middle of the century: Antanas Baranauskas (1835–1902) and Motiejus Valančius (1801–1875). In his poem, *Anykščių šilelis* (1859), Baranauskas juxtaposed images of the romanticised past with those of the impoverished present and wrote poems encouraging resistance.[7] Valančius, Bishop of Samogitia, became an unofficial Lithuanian political figure. He founded a widespread sobriety movement involving thousands of peasants and strengthened Catholicism. Later, after the ban on the press was introduced, he organized a network of book smugglers and underground home schools, which raised literacy rates over several decades.[8] According to one historian, Muravyov's role was twofold. The positive aspect of repressions that he brought about is that they accelerated the maturity of Lithuanian nationalism (Snyder, 2003, p. 58). Valančius supported the underground press and wrote popular didactic books himself.[9] During the period of the ban on the press, the most important "apostles" of Lithuanian culture were the best organized clergy, who were

5 *Konrad Wallenrod* was translated into Lithuanian and published in 1891, while *Grazyna* – was in 1899.

6 His most important works for Lithuanians include a collection of poetry *Biruta, Keistutis, Ryngala, Devynios Lietuvos giminės* (published in Vilnius in 1838); the three-part epic *Anafielas* (*Vitolio rauda*, 1840, *Mindaugas*, 1842, *Vytauto kovos*, 1844), and the novel *Kunigas* (1881), which popularised the legend of the defenders of Pilėnai.

7 These poems, which were later to become songs, accompanied deportees to Siberia not only in the 19th century, but also in the 20th century; Baranauskas himself, after the suppressed uprising of 1863, distanced himself from national affairs, and saw the Lithuanian movement as a weakening of Catholicism.

8 Historians believe that "ethnographic Lithuania at the end of the 19th century was one of the most literate regions of the Russian Empire, second only to Latvia and Estonia, where the educational conditions were incomparably better," see: Aleksandravičius, 1996, p. 279.

9 Recent studies conclude that "the Diocese of Samogitia led by Valančius was the first form of the political life of the modern Lithuanian nation, an intermediate entity between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the nation-state; Valančius headed an institution of political significance and built an individual period of the country's political history," for more see: Jokubaitis, 2014, pp. 7–17.

allowed to work in the North-West. Until the Great War, the most important Lithuanian writers were priests: Kristijonas Donelaitis (1714–1780), Antanas Strazdas (1760–1833), Antanas Baranauskas, and Maironis (born Jonas Mačiulis, 1862–1932).

After the abolition of serfdom (1863), the Law on the Restoration of Russian Beginnings was adopted, allowing young people of peasant origin to study in Russian universities.[10] The law aimed, among other things, to Russify the peasant intelligentsia, but it achieved the opposite result. Despite the restrictions (those educated in their home country were not allowed to work, except for priests and doctors), underground Lithuanian groups were set up at universities, teachers' colleges, and seminaries. They discovered Daukantas, became fascinated by medieval history, and understood the reverence and value of the Lithuanian language – all the things that helped to define national identity. In the 1870s and 1880s, a generation of Lithuanian intellectuals came of age and soon formed the nucleus of the national movement. Their humble origins distinguished them from the cultural figures of the early 19th century, who had come from the Polish-speaking Lithuanian aristocracy. After the 1863 uprising and the ensuing reforms, Lithuanians distanced themselves and detached themselves from the old Polish-speaking culture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, from the Polish language, and Poland. This trend was reinforced by the emerging narrative of Lithuanian historical memory. The period before the Union of Lublin was the "golden age" of Lithuanian history when a future vision of a nation-state was starting to emerge.

The first periodical *Auszra* (1883–1887), published in Tilžė and circulating underground among Lithuanians, brought together intellectuals engaged in targeted cultural activities, which never ceased.[11] Periodical and fiction continued to proliferate, and interest in history was continuously growing – all this led to the formation

10 The law aimed to create a Russian-speaking intelligentsia of peasant origin, which would help to Russify Lithuanian and Belarusian peasants, see *Carų valdžioje*, 275.

11 The founder and publisher of this landmark newspaper was Jonas Basanavičius (1851–1927), who graduated from Moscow and became a famous doctor in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, admired the "Spring of Nations" in Central Europe and passed on its "spirit" to the Lithuanians. He is, therefore, considered to be the patriarch of the national revival. Thanks to him, the letters

of historical memory which was turning society into a political nation.[12] In the spring of 1904, the tsar lifted the ban on the press, which was the greatest political victory Lithuanians had ever achieved. The transformation of the imagined Lithuanian community into a political nation was marked by the 1905 elections to the so-called Great Seimas of Vilnius and the Seimas (congress) itself, held on 4–5 December, which demanded autonomy for Lithuania with a Seimas in Vilnius. All the projects for the future of Lithuania emerging a decade later, i.e., during the Great World War, would always refer back to this Seimas as their starting point.

Lithuanian literature before the Great War

Before the Great War, Lithuanian literature, which had regained its right to exist after the return of press in the Latin alphabet, was still in the process of transformation: Romanticism continued to be the most influential, realism was rapidly gaining popularity, and aesthetics of modernism were starting to take hold. Romanticism was represented by all the poetry of the so-called *Aušrininkai* movement, whose artistic and worldview limitations were outweighed by the talent of Maironis, eventually recognised as the national poet. Maironis's collection of poems, *Poezijos pavasaris* (1895), is regarded as the manifesto of the Lithuanian revival and the book that has had the greatest impact on the Lithuanian mentality to date. He also transformed verse writing, in a way liberating the Lithuanian language for literature.[13] Maironis probably made his greatest contribution

'č', 'š', 'ž', borrowed from the Czech language, came to be used in Lithuania instead of the previously used Polish 'cz', 'sz', and 'ż'.

12 Besides *Auszra*, the 19th century underground newspapers *Varpas*, *Ūkininkas*, and *Tėvynės sargas* were the most significant for national consciousness. Publications legally published in the USA that reached Lithuania were also important (e.g., Daukantas' *Pasakojimai apie veikalus lietuvių tautos senovėje* was published in the USA in 1899, and the first Lithuanian novel *Algimantas* by Vincas Pietaris was published in USA in 1904).

13 Before Maironis' syllabic-stress metre, Lithuanian poetry was dominated by syllabic verse borrowed from Polish poetry. Syllabic-stress metre is based on free stress rhythm typical of the Lithuanian language, while syllabic verse is typical of the Polish language, where the stress always falls on the penultimate syllable in a poetic text.

to the building of Lithuanian memory: his book *Apsakymai apie Lietuvos praeitį* was published in 1891. Here, Maironis used a more modern language to convey Daukantas' historical research and supplemented it with his own conception of the medieval times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and of Grand Duke Vytautas, who introduced Christianity to the country. Maironis changed the view of Lithuanian history as something finite (the histories that had been written until then ended with the loss of statehood). By bringing the 19th century into the historical horizon, the author argued that as long as a nation is alive, its history is not over, which is a rather bold statement of faith in the future of the nation. Maironis spread his ideas of history in poetry, which became popular and went on to become songs in the 19th century.

Romantic poetics and historical themes also dominated other genres: the novel and drama. The historical novel *Algimantas* (the first Lithuanian novel) was written by a member of the *Aušrininkai* movement Vincas Pietaris (1850–1902), while another *Auszra* writer, Aleksandras Fromas-Gužutis (1822–1900) wrote several historical and mythological dramas: *Išgriovimas Kauno pilies 1362 m., Eglė žalčių karalienė, Vytautas Krėvoje, Vaidilutė, arba Žemaičių krikštas*, and *Gedimino sapnas*. The beginning of realism in Lithuanian literature is associated with Žemaitė (born Julija Beniuševičiūtė Žymantienė, 1845–1921). At the end of the 19th century, she became famous for her short stories with social themes, which appeared in periodicals. Satirical short stories were written by the poet and publicist Vincas Kudirka (1859–1899), the author of the Lithuanian national anthem.[14] At the beginning of the 20th century, Jonas Biliūnas (1879–1907) wrote short psychological short stories. The future classic realist writer Antanas Vienuolis (1882–1857), nephew of Antanas Baranauskas, made his debut with novellas.

Symbolism and Impressionism were the most prominent among the modernist movements. Their aesthetics are evident in the works

14 In addition to *Auszra*, one of the most important ideological figures of Lithuanian nationalism – Kudirka – also published the most prominent periodical *Varpas* (1889–1905). In the fifth issue of *Varpas* in 1901 Povilas Višinskis (1875–1906), who had introduced several talented people to Lithuanian literature, wrote: "Our ideal is a free and liberated Lithuania."

of prose writers Šatrija Ragana (born Marija Pečkauskaitė, 1877–1930), Ignas Šeinius (1889–1959), Vincas Krėvė (born Mickevičius, 1882–1954), and the poets Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas (1893–1967) and Liudas Gira (1884–1946).

Of great importance for spreading Lithuanian culture were amateur theatres or "Lithuanian nights," which became popular throughout Lithuania during the press ban and survived until the Great War. Lithuanians lived in homesteads (only 2–6% of them lived in cities) and did not have any buildings dedicated to Lithuanian culture. After agreeing on a programme and obtaining permission from the censors, "Lithuanian nights" were held in houses or in granaries that could accommodate hundreds of spectators. The centrepiece was a play performed by amateur actors (usually a comedy, which encouraged the development of this genre), but the recitation of poems and singing of songs (based on the lyrics of the *Aušrininkai* members, mainly Maironis) also influenced national consciousness. The troupes, often made up of different performers, travelled across the country with the same or an evolving show.

As one drama researcher writes, "The artistic value of the repertoire was not decisive in early Lithuanian stage events.... What mattered was that the plays were performed in Lithuanian (albeit poorly), that the mother tongue sounded from the stage, and that compatriots were gathered together. All this lent such performances a magical significance" (Lankutis, 1979, p 32).

After the restoration of the press, but in the absence of any Lithuanian institutions, periodicals were the engine and mirror of cultural life. The number of publications was growing, with book reviews published in them. The creative energy of the nation expressed itself in various fields, and in the first decades of the 20th century many authors debuted and became classics of 20th century Lithuanian literature. Before the war, several literary almanacs were published, and several magazines devoted to literature, *Draugija, Vaivorykštė,* and *Švyturys*, came out.

Visions of the nation-state in wartime

Lithuanian intellectuals welcomed the outbreak of the Great War with trepidation, but also with high hopes. The project of national

autonomy, which had been stuck in a protracted *status quo* since 1905, was picking up momentum again. After Germany declared war, the Russian military leadership rushed to win over the Polish people, promising them broad autonomy in the future.[15] "Almost all Polish political forces declared their allegiance to the tsar in a joint letter," said Tomas Venclova[16] (2019, p. 132). Lithuanians felt unfairly forgotten and rushed to remind of themselves and of divided Lithuania. Jonas Basanavičius and his followers were gripped by the vision of a merger of the two "Lithuanias": Lithuania Minor and Lithuania Major. According to this vision, if the Germans were pushed westwards, a historic opportunity would arise to annex authentic Lithuanian lands to Lithuania. It was decided not to miss this opportunity. The famous Amber Declaration[17] was published in Lithuanian and in some Russian newspapers, sent to top government officials, and presented by Martynas Yčas (1885–1941) to the Russian Duma. Yčas, as a representative of the people, met with Prime Minister Ivan Goremykin (1839–1917). Unfortunately, the latter dismissed the declaration as nonsense. Yčas, who knew the backstage politics best and expected such a reaction noted that it was nevertheless "the first voice of Lithuanian society" (1991, p. 232).

Interestingly, earlier, on 1 August, Vilius Gaigalaitis (1870–1945), a deputy at the Landtag of Prussia, proposed the same project in reverse order, i.e., to incorporate Greater Lithuania to Little Lithuania (Venclova, 2019, p. 132).

The idea of uniting Lithuanian lands into a joint autonomy was also supported by the first wartime Lithuanian Seimas (congress) in the USA, which took place in Chicago on 21–22 September, and demanded that Lithuanians should be heard at the forthcoming

15 The Manifesto to the Poles, published on 1(14) August 1914, portrays Russia as the liberator of nations.

16 This topic is more broadly covered in *Empires and Nationalisms in the Great War*… 2015, pp. 46–72.

17 On 17 August 1914, the declaration was signed by Stasys Šilingas, Jonas Basanavičius, Donatas Malinauskas, and Jonas Basanavičius at a meeting of representatives of the Lithuanian societies and press of Vilnius. It was officially called the "Lithuanian Declaration," nicknamed "Amber" because of the metaphor contained in the text: to gather amber pieces into one, *Universal Lithuanian Encyclopaedia*, 2004, vol. VI, p. 683.

Congress of Europe after the war (Liulevičius, 1981, p. 312). The question of the merger of the "two Lithuanias" was revisited at the end of the war, on 30 November 1918. The Council of the Prussian Lithuanian Nation, encouraged by the Provisional Government that had already been active in Lithuania, addressed the world community gathered at the Paris Peace Conference (which began on 18 January 1919), in order to resolve many issues that arose after the war with the Act of Tilsit. However, it received no support either.[18] A large number of Prussian Lithuanians did not back the idea.[19]

In the face of the war, there were calls for unity in Lithuania itself. The editor of *Vairas* and the future president Antanas Smetona (1974–1944) wrote: "It is the duty of our small intelligentsia to understand the existence of the nation, to relieve it, and to seek a way out of many misfortunes..... The time has come for all currents to merge into one stream and to demonstrate national identity" (1990, p. 69). The war was perceived as a trial of destiny for Lithuanians, as a step forward to a better future and independence. At the same time, it was also seen as a great catastrophe befalling humanity: "Steel and fire are destroying everything that has been built for centuries. Where rich cities once stood, where there were beautifully cultivated fields, there are now embers and ashes, and ruined farmhouses. A great war of an unprecedented scale has shaken all mankind" (Smetona, 1990, p. 69).

Alongside the merger of the two "Lithuanias," a parallel idea of creating a joint three-member state including the Latvians was circulating at the time. The idea of Lithuanians and Latvians working together was the brainchild of Juozas Gabrys-Paršaitis (1880–1951), who held a joint conference with Latvians in Switzerland in 1915 and submitted a project called Independent Lithuania to the German diplomatic mission in Bern, in which he proposed incorporating Lithuania and Latvia, as autonomy with their own monarch (similarly to Saxony) into Germany (Šipelytė, 2019, p. 52). The most fervent

18 For more see *Tilžės akto šviesa*; Šidlauskas, pp. 188–199.

19 In his memoirs, priest Vincas Bartuška (1881–1956) recounts the opinion he heard from Gaigalaitis: "never in the souls of the Prussian Lithuanians will there arise a desire to separate from Germany and to belong to the newly reborn Lithuania" (1937, 171).

advocate of the vision of a Lithuanian–Latvian union was a member of the *Aušrininkai* movement, Jonas Šliūpas (1861–1944), who studied at Mintauja Gymnasium, had been following the Latvian revival, published the weekly newspaper *Unija* in the USA (1884–1885), and promoted the idea at various political meetings during the war (in the USA, Russia, and Nordic countries), albeit without much success.[20] After the war, from 1919 to 1920, Šliūpas was the representative of the Republic of Lithuania in Latvia and Estonia. It is worth mentioning that Professor Gaigalaitis, a member of the Landtag of Prussia, published a book in Berlin in 1915 entitled *Die litauisch-baltische Frage* [The Lithuanian–Baltic Question], which also considered the possibility of creating a Lithuanian–Latvian state as a buffer state that could protect Germany from the danger of Pan-Slavism. Toward the end of the war, the Germans themselves were considering the possibility of an autonomous entity that would include the Lithuanian and Curonian lands.

After Germany occupied all Lithuanian territory in late 1915 and established the Ober Ost administrative unit, the borders of which resembled those of the medieval age Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL), two projects immediately emerged. On 19 December 1915, the publication of the Confederation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was distributed in Vilnius, stating that members of Lithuanian, Belarusian, Polish and Jewish organisations had founded the confederation and would seek to establish a common Lithuanian–Belarusian state after the war (Klimas, 1988, p. 111).

In February 1916, the Confederation issued a second, much broader proclamation saying that the country represented by the Confederation was at odds with Russia. The yoke of one hundred and twenty years, it said, had proved that "nothing good could be expected… from Russian liberals who hope to gain power by overthrowing the tsarist bureaucracy" (Klimas, 1988, p. 111).

The second idea for the reconstruction of the GDL emerged on 6 January 1916 within a circle of Kaunas citizens: Saliamonas Banaitis (1866–1933), Adomas Jakštas (1860–1938), and Antanas Alekna (1872–1930). It was called The Project for the Reconstruction of the GDL

20 For more see Mačiulis, pp. 83–98.

(*Pirmoji Lietuvos konstitucija*, p. 2). This lengthy document consisting of two parts, Demands and Foundations of the Constitution, proclaimed the restoration of the constitutional monarchy of the GDL, ruled by a grand duke (a descendent of the grand dukes of Lithuania) and the Seimas. The national basis would be the two Baltic nations, Lithuanians and Latvians, coexisting on an autonomous basis. Belarusians, once part of the GDL, could join if they so wished. The principles of the constitution were discussed in seven points: the rights of the people, the rights of the grand duke, the rights of the parliament, the rights of the church, and more (*Pirmoji Lietuvos konstitucija*, p. 21).[21]

On March 1–5, 1916, Gabrys-Paršaitis along with seminarians from Switzerland organized the first Lithuanian conference in Bern, where it was decided to "demand that Lithuania be restored to full freedom and independence at the peace conference," and to emphasize the dissociation of Lithuania from Poland. "The union between Lithuania and Poland was abolished by the two partitions at the end of the 18th century and by the same token ceased to exist *de facto* and *de jure*. The Lithuanian nation, while sincerely wishing the Polish nation independence within its ethnographic borders, wishes to remain the master of its own land and vehemently protests against Polish attempts to usurp the rights of the Lithuanians," reads the final resolution (Purickis, 1990, pp. 45–46).

At the end of March 1916, a group of Lithuanian intellectuals in occupied Vilnius secretly distributed a proclamation "Lithuanians!" which also drew a line between Lithuanians and Poles, referred to Lithuania within ethnographic boundaries, and called for faith in freedom and a future nation-state (Klimas, 1988, pp. 340–341). This was the first of the projects to spread more widely in Lithuania, reaching provinces mostly populated by Lithuanians. The proclamation was eagerly read by young people, rewritten by hand, and distributed. Petras Klimas, one of the main authors of the document, was followed by the Germans and, during a Christmas visit to his hometown of Liudvinavas at the end of the year, he was arrested, interrogated, imprisoned, but in the absence of direct evidence and as a result

21 For more on this issue see Grigaravičius, 1991, pp. 353–357.

of skilful work of Klimas himself, he was released a month later (Klimas, 1990, pp. 82–84).

There was a Lithuanian information agency in Switzerland, founded in 1911 in Paris by Gabrys-Paršaitis (Senn, 1977, p. 16), probably the most famous Lithuanian in the world at that time. The agency published the bulletins *Pro Lituania* (in French) and *Litauen* (in German) and was moved to Lausanne in mid-1915 after the outbreak of the war. In addition to conferences for Lithuanians, Gabrys organized a large third Conference of the Enslaved Nations in June 1916 (the first one was held in London in 1911, where Gabrys made a presentation on Lithuania; the second one was held in Paris in 1912). It was an anti-Russian event sponsored by Germans, which attempted to bypass the Western countries (Britain and France, with their many colonies). Gabrys corresponded with representatives of many countries: he sent out questionnaires and an appeal to US President Woodrow Wilson (1854–1924). The ideas contained in the appeal were also shared by the Germans, who wanted to destroy Russia from within through national movements. One of the paragraphs of the appeal refers to Lithuania, to the statehood of the past, and to the policy of cultural destruction pursued by the Russian Empire. The document reached Vilnius and was signed by seven representatives of the Vilnius group (*Lietuva vokiečių okupacijoje ...*, 2006, pp. 67–68). This initiative encouraged the Lithuanian diaspora in the USA to become more proactive. On 17 August 1916, at a convention of Catholics, nationalists, and social democrats, the Lithuanian diaspora in the USA set up the Lithuanian–American Central Committee, which also appealed to the President of the United States to institute a Day of Lithuania. Lithuanian clergymen from Switzerland obtained an audience with the Pope to establish a Day of Lithuania in the Catholic churches of the world. During a visit to European capitals in 1916, the Protestant Martynas Yčas also received an audience with the Pope. Yčas travelled through the Entente countries (with eleven other deputies of the Russian Duma), and met personally with the kings of Britain and Belgium, the President of France, and the prime ministers of France, presenting himself as a representative of the Lithuanians, attracting attention, and gaining support for his nation, as he recounts in detail in

his memoirs. In the USA, the Day of Lithuania was established on November 1, 1916 and in the Vatican on May 17, 1917.

Before the Conference of the Enslaved Nations, Gabrys organised a conference for Lithuanians (the First Lausanne Conference) from 31 May to 4 June 1916. Apart from the "Swiss" participants (there were six of them), it was also attended by Lithuanians from the USA, Vincas Bartuška, Julius Bielskis (1891–1986), and Romanas Karuža (1883–1963). On his way to Rome, Martynas Yčas stopped in Lausanne to participate in the conference (to chair it). Many presentations were heard and a comprehensive ten-point resolution was adopted, condemning the German occupational regime, expressing concern for Lithuanian prisoners of war, expressing the need to establish a Lithuanian archdiocese in Vilnius and in the USA, as well as the idea and necessity of founding a Lithuanian university in Vilnius (with an appeal to the Holy See). The statement of Lithuania's future dissociation from Russia was not made for fear of harming Yčas, who was a member of the committee chaired by Tsarevna Tatyana, which supported compatriots who had fled to mainland Russia (there were about 250,000–300,000 of them).[22]

Thanks to the efforts of Gabrys, who had established contact and co-operated with high German civil officials[23], Antanas Smetona, Jurgis Šaulys (1879–1948), later envoy and ambassador in Germany, and Steponas Kairys (1878–1964), later Minister of Supply, came from Vilnius to attend the Conference of the Enslaved Nations (June 27–29) and the Lithuanian conference (Lausanne II) immediately afterward (from 30 June to 4 July). At the Conference of the Enslaved Nations, Bartuška read out the Lithuanian Declaration of Freedom. Some

22 Yčas managed to raise enough money to not only pay allowances to the majority of those who had fled or had been exiled, but also to organize a wide range of social and cultural activities, to set up schools and gymnasiums for the youth, various craft courses and workshops for adults, to pay teachers' salaries, to publish the Lithuanian Newspaper with a large circulation, and, in short, to create a national imaginary community in the hinterland of Russia (Voronezh being the Lithuanians' main centre), an almost Lithuanian state within Russia. For more on the situation of war refugees, see Balkelis, 2019, p. 352.

23 These were Gisbert Romberg (1866–1939), Friedrich von der Ropp (1879–1964), and Matthias Erzberger (1875–1921), a member of the Reichstag and leader of the Catholic Centre Party (opposition).

tension arose as a result of this declaration, as it seemed to be a provocation to participants coming from the occupied zone. Gabrys, who saw things differently, managed to convince his compatriots that the declaration was necessary and the timing was most appropriate. Later in his memoirs, Gabrys stressed that it is not 16 February 1918 that Lithuanians should celebrate as their Independence Day, but 29 June 1916, because that is when the Declaration was read out before a large international audience, in the presence of numerous correspondents from the most important countries (Gabrys-Paršaitis, 2007).[24]

The Second Lithuanian Lausanne Conference which took place shortly afterward endorsed most of the resolutions of the First Conference, including the establishment of a Council in Switzerland (which was to include, in addition to the "Swiss," representatives of the USA, Lithuania, and Russia)[25] and ratified the Declaration of Freedom read at the Conference of the Enslaved Nations. Freedom was now understood as freedom for the "genuine" Lithuania, i.e., within its ethnographic boundaries, without any reference to the Confederations, East Prussia, Belarus, or Latvian lands.[26]

24 The resolution of February 16, 1918, which was read in occupied Vilnius only among its signatories, was not immediately published in the newspapers (*Lietuvos Aidas* daily managed to be published on February 19, 1918, despite the fact that the german censorship tried to destroy the entire circulation; more details – Vaišnys A.: Spauda ir valstybė 1918–1940, V.: 1998); however, a copy of the resolution reached Berlin and was soon published in German newspapers.

25 The Council, the project of which had been in the making since 1915, could not be set up, because it was not possible to mobilise representatives of all the centres; it remained more theoretical, and its functions were performed by Gabrys' information bureau, although Gabrys himself published some documents on behalf of the Council.

26 It should be noted here that at the beginning of the year, representatives of Lithuanians, Poles, Jews, and Hungarians in Vilnius, who were members of the Council of the Confederation of the GDL, were at odds in February and March, and the project of the GDL was abandoned. The most active members, the Vilnius Lithuanian group, withdrew from the confederation in protest against the Poles. Thus, in March, the Lithuanians! proclamation and the vision of the future Lithuania that was fine-tuned at the Swiss conferences coincided, although communication between these Lithuanian political centres was almost impossible (only Vincas Bartuška, a representative of the Catholics in the USA, overcoming various difficulties of the war bureaucracy, managed to reach Lithuania via Nordic countries and Germany, and then to reach Switzerland again via Germany and participate in the conferences; he described his "hardships" in

In Russia, the Cadet Party, to which Yčas belonged, formed the Commission for Lithuanian Affairs on 28 March 1916. Lithuanian representatives Petras Leonas (1864–1938), a lawyer and future Minister of Justice, Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas (1869–1933), a member of the Aušrininkai movement, popular priest and writer, and Martynas Yčas, the most influential Lithuanian in wartime Russia, submitted a proposal for Lithuanian Autonomy on 25 August to the Commission. Thus, the Lithuanian political centres in the occupied country, in Switzerland, and in the USA were becoming more daring in voicing their support for the independence of ethnographic Lithuania (the civilian authorities in Germany did not seem to mind; however, the same could not be said of the military authorities in Ober Ost). In Russia, on the other hand, Lithuanians did not dare to formulate their aspirations this way, even in the Liberal Party.

The territory and concept of the "genuine" Lithuania was defined and formulated in 1916 by Petras Klimas in a special study in the German language.[27] The study *Lietuva, jos gyventojai ir sienos* (published under this title in Vilnius in 1917) with the help of Juozas Gabrys was first published in German at the end of 1916 in Stuttgart under the title *Russisch Litauen: statistisch-etnographische Betrachtungen*.[28]

In the first half of 1917, Germany's unexpected move to recognize Poland's independence (Russia had tried to do so earlier; the project of restoring Polish territory within the borders before the partitions was supported by other Entente countries) caused a headache for the Lithuanians. As the Germans had occupied Poland, they were able to influence its fate by proposing that Polish nationalists restore the Polish kingdom, although their real motive was to reinforce their army with conscripted Polish soldiers. In April 1917, the Polish Provisional Council issued a statement that the eastern borders would be extended "unless prevented by the necessities of war,"

his memoirs *Kelionė Lietuvon 1916 karės metais* (1916) and *Lietuvos nepriklausomybės kryžiaus keliai 1914–19* (1937).

27 Klimas mentions that he was assisted by one of the editors of the *Zeitung der x Armee* published in Vilnius, see. Klimas, *Atsiminimai*, p. 78.

28 The name was meant to draw attention to the fact that Lithuanian land is not only part of Prussia (Lithuania Minor), but also of Russia. The book was soon translated into French by Gabrys and published in Switzerland.

thus implicitly expressing the belief that Lithuanians and Belarus would willingly join the kingdom. The Lithuanians were even more outraged by a memorandum signed by 44 Vilnius figures and handed to the Chancellor on 25 May, saying that the Polish language and culture prevailed in the Vilnius and Grodno regions, that they had been the source of religion, education and civilisation in the region since time immemorial, and that the Lithuanians considered themselves to be part of Poland and were striving to merge with it. The outraged Lithuanians of Vilnius spent a long time drafting a detailed counter-memorandum, which they sent on 10 July. It rejected the Polish arguments, by stressing the uniqueness of the Lithuanian nation and the negative Polish influence on Lithuanian culture and political statehood, and the aspirations of Lithuanians to re-establish their former statehood within the ethnographic borders (*Lietuva vokiečių okupacijoje...*, 2006, pp. 139–147).

The February Revolution in Russia encouraged Lithuanians to make bolder statements: on 27 May a Lithuanian Seimas (i.e., parliament) was convened in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg). One hundred and forty right-wing representatives voted in favour of full independence, while 132 left-wing representatives, who saw the danger of a German protectorate, voted against it. In August 1917, the voice of the Lithuanians of Vilnius and Switzerland was finally heard: they were granted the opportunity to publish the newspaper *Lietuvos Aidas* and to organize the election of representatives to the Lithuanian Council. The Council was established in Vilnius on 18–22 September 1917. This was the greatest political achievement of the Lithuanians under occupation. The conference was attended by over two hundred delegates, including some from the USA and Switzerland. A twenty-member council was elected to carry out the pursuit of Lithuanian independence and to delegate its powers to the Constituent Seimas. The Germans did not interfere with these plans but did not delegate any practical powers to the Council, as they regarded it only as an advisory body.

At the conferences, Lithuanians outside Lithuania supported the resolutions adopted in Vilnius and tended to give priority to the Vilnius Council in their political activities. They expressed these positions at the conference in Stockholm on 18–20 October 1917, in the presence

of representatives of all political centres, as well as at the second Lithuanian Seimas in Russia, which convened on 16–19 November in Voronezh. At the Bern conference on 2–10 November 1917, it was decided that domestic political affairs would be decided by the Vilnius Council and foreign affairs would be handled by the Swiss Council. A possible form of statehood was discussed, with the majority voting that a monarchy was the most preferable option for Lithuania under the circumstances.

The German civil and military leadership showed growing support for the model of Lithuania (including the Latvian Curonian and the Belarusian lands in the Ober Ost territory), which was bound to Germany by monarchical ties. On 1 December 1917, the Germans summoned representatives of the Vilnius Council and outlined the declaration the latter could make: independence was to be presented only as a severance of previous state ties, and four conventions were to be concluded with Germany. This declaration was promulgated in a document known as the Act of 11 December.

The conventions with Germany caused a split in the Vilnius Council. It was resolved by a new act of independence, unanimously adopted and signed in secret from Germany, known as the Act of 16 February 1918. It was ignored by Germany, but as the international situation changed, the new German President Georg von Hertling (1843–1919) recognized Lithuania's independence (albeit based on the Act of 11 December) on 23 March 1918.

However, even after these declarations, the situation in the occupied country remained unchanged: the people were even more brutally exploited, and the Council had no levers of influence (the Germans practically ignored the memoranda addressed to them). Looking for a way out of the situation, the Council became increasingly accustomed to the idea of monarchy. A suitable candidate, who agreed to all the conditions put forward by the Lithuanians, was found. It was a relative of Matthias Erzberger, Prince Wilhelm von Urach of Saxony (1864–1928). In August 1918, there was another split in the Lithuanian Council over this decision, with several members resigning in protest. They were replaced by political figures returning from Russia, including Martynas Yčas and Augustinas Voldemaras (1883–1942), the future first Prime Minister of Lithuania.

However, Urach did not have a chance to reign for a single day, as the German military leadership, not wanting to lose control of the government, strongly rejected this option. It was not until the German surrender in the Great War became imminent that Lithuanians formed their first government. On 28 October 1918, the tricolour national flag was hoisted over the building at 13 Jurgis Street in Vilnius, which was the seat of the government headquarters, and the Council held a meeting that day to announce the revocation of the Council's decision to invite Urach to become King of Lithuania and the decision to set out the principles of the Constitution in 29 clauses.

Post-war literature

The creation of the state was accompanied by great national patriotism. For people in rural areas, who had lived in isolation during the long years of the German occupation, the rumour of the Lithuanian army was like a miracle. "The whole village gathered to touch us or to hear what we were saying. Most of the elderly cried with joy," wrote a volunteer in his memoirs (Šukys, 2016, pp. 58–59). Young people willingly volunteered, in some cases leaving home without their parents' permission. Many Great War officers took part in the fight for independence.

Not only folk songs and poems by 19th century poets were sung by marching soldiers: march songs were also written by young poets. Kazys Binkis (1893–1942), a poet who served in one of the regiments, wrote poems for the popular Iron Wolf March. Soon after the war, several almanacs and anthologies of young poetry appeared between 1920 and 1921, namely, *Dainava*, *Veja*, *Vainikai*, and *Vilnius*. Publishing memoirs was encouraged: they were published in the press (magazines *Karys, Kardas, Karo archyvas* specifically devoted to the analysis of war and armed struggle and the memory of them were published), and collections of memoirs were compiled[29]. In a broader perspective, however, literature did not pick up the theme of patriotism. Literature was governed by its own internal laws,

29 The collected stories of the people appeared in separate books in the 1940s: *Savanorių žygiai*, in two volumes, in 1937; and *Lietuva Didžižiajame kare* in 1939.

which led it to dissociate itself from the patriotic and social engagement that characterized literature at the turn of the century. An article criticizing the wartime poem *Mūsų vargai* (1920), written by the national leader Maironis, expressed a general post-war tendency: to distance oneself from the powerful influence of Maironis, to look for new aesthetic expression and new directions in literature. It was as if there was an effort to forget the war and the battles, to recover from them (in prose, like in all Europe, military themes and account of battles re-emerged on the occasion of the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Great War I[30]). As early as 1919, young poets were fascinated by the revolutionary poetry of Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893–1930), and during their studies in Berlin in 1920 – by German Expressionism (Balys Sruoga wrote a series of poems in the Expressionist style, another example is *Miestas* [1922], and Kazys Binkis's collection *100 pavasarių* [1923]). Italian Futurism and a new branch of art – cinema – were also influential ("As if under the bedsheets / Devils made a hell for themselves. / A giraffe crawled out of the wall. / The caverns came out. / The ceiling turned over. / Cinematography began." (excerpt from Kazys Binkis *C 40°* [1921]).

Rebellion against "good taste," against academic rigour, against the worship of art of the past, courage, activism, and arbitrariness of the artistic subject– the most important slogans of expressionism and futurism were best absorbed by the most talented Lithuanian avant-garde artist, Kazis Binkis, who published the poetry collection *100 pavasarių* (1923), and organized the movement of rebellious young poets *Keturi vėjai*, which published a magazine under the same name (1922, 1924–1928). This was the most prominent modernist movement in interwar literary life. The magazine *Pranašas* and its lead articles declared artistic ambition to "change the world," to "blow it up" from the inside, and proclaimed a revolt against the harmony and tyranny of "good taste," against "academic rigour" and the cult of the art of the past. This was a war of "children against their parents" (Kubilius, 1982, pp. 221–222). Binkis and others made parodies of the classics, Donelaitis,

30 In 1929, a translation of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* was published, and it was reprinted in the same year; this novel sparked a certain boom in war literature and the novel as a genre in Lithuania.

Maironis, the Symbolists, folk songs and hymns, and Baranauskas, Juozas Žlabys Žengė (1899–1992) wrote a poem under the same title, *Anykščių šilelis* (1930). "For the first time, ironic subtext, puns, pranks, and sarcastic reworking of the text in a distorting mirror entered Lithuanian poetic culture," a literary historian wrote (ibid., p. 226).

One of the wittiest poets of the movement was Teofilis Tilvytis (1904–1969), famous for his humorous poems. He published poetry collections *Trys grenadieriai*[31] (1926), and *Nuo Maironies iki manęs* (1929). In his poem *Meilė* (1928), *Išpardavimo dūšios*, he ridiculed the sensibilities of the Romanticists and Symbolists. The collections of poems by Salys Šemeris (born Saliamonas Šmierauskas, 1898–1981), *Granata krūtinėj* (1924), and *Liepsnosvaizdis širdims deginti* (1926), include references to war which are used to create new metaphors. The poet portrays the psychological trauma caused by war: the human being is reduced to "someone of little importance", a meaningless, helpless jester in the soulless arena of the elements. The spontaneity of life is expressed through erotic impulses. Each of us is a "flaming carnal bomb": "Give me your hemispheres. Which are blazing in fire/ I'll be licking them with my restless claws" (*Granata krūtinėj*, 1924, p. 11). The main prose writer of the *Keturi vėjai* movement, Petras Tarulis (born Juozas Petrėnas, 1896–1980), expressed this feeling in his novels, of which *Mėlynos kelnės* (1927) was setting new trends in this genre. Juozas Tysliava (1902–1961) tried to spread Lithuanian avant-gardism in Europe. While studying in Paris, he published a collection of poems in French, *Coupe de vents* (1926), and persuaded well-known artists to collaborate on his multilingual magazine *Muba* (1928, three issues published). In addition to Lithuanian poets, the magazine published texts by Jean Cocteau (1889–1963), Vicente Huidobro (1893–1948), Bruno Jasienski (1901–1938), and illustrations by the modernist artists Piet Mondrian (1872–1944), and Kazimiras Malevičius (1879–1935).

Pranas Morkūnas (1900–1941), a radical creator of nonsense poetry, who published only one poem in the magazine *Keturi vėjai*, was discovered and appreciated much later: his collection *Dainuojantis degeneratas* was published many years later, in 1993. The movement *Keturi vėjai* was continued by Kazys Boruta (1905–1965), a poet with

31 Grenadier is a military term meaning a soldier in a grenade-armed unit.

the most rebellious biography, who wrote poetry of stark vocabulary and broken syntax, and constructed the self-image of a rebellious man. His expressionist poetry combines avant-garde influences with Lithuanian melancholy. Boruta, Antanas Venclova (1906–1971) and the critic Kostas Korsakas (1909–1986) founded the magazine *Trečias frontas* (1930–1931), which attracted left-wing artists who were subject to ideological manipulation. After the fifth issue was published, the censorship banned the periodical.

The Memory of contemporaries about the Great War

There is a lack of understanding of the significance of the Great War and WWI battles, as well as of the literature that accompanied them. A large part of Lithuanian society has a vague idea of the events of that time and a naive notion that everything started on 16 February 1918, the Day of Independence, the emergence of an independent state, which was established and flourished until the 1940s. This flawed collective memory of WWI is due to two reasons.

One of them is a "fresher," and more painful trauma: World War II. It began with the Russian occupation in 1940, followed by the German occupation, and then the Russian occupation again. Even before the war, the Bolsheviks organized a mass "cleansing" of Lithuanians and their deportation by rail to Siberia. This was happening also after the war until 1951, when armed resistance to the occupation and deportations took place, costing many lives. Many Lithuanians, most of them educated, fled to Western Europe in 1944, and later to the USA, creating a strong diaspora of Lithuanians who made political demands and developed Lithuanian culture under conditions of freedom.

The second reason for the oblivion was artificially created by the Soviet occupying power, which resorted to decisive measures in the summer of 1940: "[a]s early as of 21 July, the Lithuanian national anthem was no longer broadcast on the Kaunas and Vilnius radio stations, and the Lithuanian three-colour national flag was no longer flown on Gediminas Hill in Vilnius, on the tower of the Military Museum and at the monument to the victims, the freedom fighters of Lithuania in Kaunas.... Since the end of August, the Lithuanian tricolour national flag, the symbol of the Chaser (Vytis) and Vincas

Kudirka's "National Anthem" became the symbols of "bourgeois" nationalism" (*Lietuva 1940–1990*, 2007, p. 110). As of 11 October, national and religious holidays ceased to exist and common union holidays were introduced. The name Lithuania also disappeared from official inscriptions, and Lithuania became the Lithuanian SSR (the name of a region within the Soviet state). In order to prevent any thought of resentment or protest, regular arrests, psychological intimidation and the imposition of a new ideology took place. This was done aggressively and brutally, with the aim of shocking the public. In a state of shock, it remained silent, and this enabled trials and legal procedures that determined a one-way course of events. Behind the Iron Curtain, books were withdrawn from libraries, and inter-war and earlier press and publications were banned. Emigrant life and culture were also silenced, and books from abroad could only reach Lithuania by being smuggled in, just as they did during the 19th-century ban on the press. The goal of education and the media was to destroy the cultural and political memory of the nation: to rewrite it. The events of 1914–1920, which were important for Lithuanians, were never mentioned, and were replaced by another narrative: about the maturing of the revolutionary situation in Russia, about the "global" significance of the October Revolution of 1917, and about the epoch-making creation of the proletariat. The nation-states of the interwar period were labelled bourgeois nationalists and treated as the wrong path of history. After Stalin's death, amnestied returnees from Siberia were strictly forbidden to talk about their exile. All this repeated for decades, affecting the understanding of history, especially of the younger generation, distorting memory and disrupting common sense.

With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the communist experiment, the years 1989–1991 offered an opportunity to erase the white stains of memory, to reconstruct memory. But this was not easy. There was a massive rush to read the press and newly published books and to enjoy the fruits of a culture that had long been banned. Attention turned first to the legacy of emigration, to the literature of the Siberian exiles and members of the resistance, and to the study of World War II. The flow of information was enormous and not accessible to all. The hunger continued unabated for years, but

the Great War (World War 1), the struggle for independence by diplomatic means and by force of arms was never explored.

Historians have begun to bring the Great War, its battles, and culture back into the field of collective memory (at least in part) when the world was commemorating the centennial of the war in 2014–2018.

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In Search of the Strength to Exist: Polish Literature of Criticism Between 1890 and 1914

> He shall live to see the day of Liberation,
> Who is liberated by his own will!
> S. Wyspiański, *Liberation*, Act I, v. 405–406

Abstract

The article describes the critical trends in literature and in socio-political thought known as the Polish Literature of Criticism (New Critical Order), which is part of the cultural heritage of the period from 1890 to 1914 that opposed decadent moods, the catastrophism of the end of the century, the cult of the individual and the modernist idea of art for art's sake. Literature of Criticism was a multifaceted movement that produced programs for national revival and the reconstruction of a conscious, multi-class Polish society. Playing a fundamental role in this process, the Literature of Criticism consisted of various phenomena, the most important of which included (using selected examples): 1/ literary works and views depicting non-institutional civilizationism, taking into account the emergence of increasingly moral and sophisticated forms of the state through the sacrifice of individuals and groups for higher spiritual values (Henryk Sienkiewicz and Boleslaw

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Prus); 2/ works depicting the intelligentsia ethos of work and service to society (active patriotism of labour) as well as advancing the need to create a new collective ethic that respects the rights of the most vulnerable; works showing the struggle against imposed orientalisation (stereotypes) and national uprooting (Stefan Żeromski, Stanisław Brzozowski, and Edward Abramowski); 3/ works in which history and national myths are revised in the name of conquering the weakness of uncritical nostalgia for the heroic past (Wyspiański, Miciński, and Żeromski); 4/ writings showing various aspects of national and social solidarity or lack thereof, and postulating ethnic activism (Roman Dmowski, Adolf Nowaczyński, and Tadeusz Miciński), demanding a change in subaltern attitudes and, most importantly, self-improvement for the sake of the national future; 5/ literary attitudes demonstrating anti-passive, active attitude to the direct, soldierly struggle for a free homeland (Edward Słoński and Władysław Broniewski). The Literature of Criticism, which integrated these literary and philosophical trends, was a vibrant phenomenon in terms of artistic and social and political values, as well as a coherent current if we look at the general principle of its existence. It stirred up internal debate on submissiveness to historical processes and social languor, held in the name of the free Poland as a supreme value. It was a platform where both a socialist and a nationalist, a representative of landed conservatism and a supporter of progress, a critic of a conciliatory political stance and a revisionist, a former civil servant and a fighting soldier-legionary could meet. After years of national crisis, writers, columnists, philosophers and the intelligentsia and other strata that followed them outlined and pursued a program of action that led to an active stance towards the challenges of history. Anticolonial and pointing out directions for reconsidering the foundations of collective existence, including art in its broadest sense, and propagating an active attitude towards social and moral problems, the Literature of Criticism (New Critical Order) prepared several generations of Poles capable of shaping and fighting for state.

Keywords

Literature of Criticism vs Aestheticism, Positivism in Polish literature, Stanisław Wyspiański, Stanisław Brzozowski, Stefan Żeromski, Edward Abramowski, Tadeusz Miciński, Roman Dmowski, Adolf Nowaczyński, Polish discourse

The rebellious subaltern

The long 19th century in Central and Eastern Europe was marked by the dashed or unfulfilled aspirations of Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, as well as Hungarians, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs and other subjugated nations. For Poles, this history, which began with the demise of the state in 1795 and the derailing of hopes for its revival, had the most bitter taste. The amount of disappointments they suffered and defeats they had to endure was simply overwhelming. Poland, a large state and society living in the middle of Europe, was divided by belligerent neighbours, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and the provinces that had been torn away from it became the periphery of the partitioning powers. The attempts to regain sovereignty failed completely. For this reason, many embittered Polish patriots and defenders of freedom took part in European revolts, uprisings, as well as local and foreign wars. They were emigrants actively supporting freedom (Adam Mickiewicz), soldiers helping in the fight of other nations (Tadeusz Kościuszko, Kazimierz Pułaski, and Józef Bem), terrorists throwing bombs under the feet of tyrants (Ignacy Hryniewiecki), and revolutionaries (Józef Piłsudski). Anything that could, in their view, change the course of history in Europe, in the world, and awaken the national majority falling asleep in captivity was worth the effort. So they took part in the Napoleonic wars, fought in the war for the freedom of the United States, and later joined the legions of Giuseppe Garibaldi, the Hungarian army of Lajos Kossuth, the war for the freedom of Italy in 1848, perished in the fights of the Paris Commune, and organized revolts in 1905. They sparked two national uprisings, whose failure turned into a nation-building myth, binding Polish societies strongly together across the borders of the empires. They were victims of mass persecution in Russian Tsar's

retaliation, the scale of which was previously unknown, as well as in Austria and Prussia.

These difficult historical experiences gave birth to the great Romantic literature and journalism of the émigré, and to a unique, defiant, underground Polish national discourse. They gave birth to the myth of the writer as the spiritual leader of the nation and the myth of literature as a surrogate state, which exists in the realm of historically charged symbols. Polish literature and political ideas showed a strong connection with the democratic European and national liberation tradition. In the second half of the 19th century, an intelligentsia originating from the landed gentry and the bourgeoisie was formed, also through literature, which determined the further cultural and spiritual development of Polish society. This young but rapidly growing social class, which was sometimes joined by Polonised Jews, had a distinctive sense of mission. It was defined by a bond with Polish national liberation and democratic history, a strong imperative to fulfil their duties to the nation and society that had not been completely fulfilled by any group until then, an aversion to social conservatism, as well as an attitude of openness to new ideas, and a belief in science and the power of education.

The work of the intelligentsia, especially after the anti-Russian uprising (1863–1864), which was defeated in a year, bore some fruit, but also made one realize that a homogeneous Polish nation may cease to exist in the long run if it ends with the efforts of a single, insufficiently crystallised social group. In the wake of the shock and massive Russian repression, it was in essence only a symbolic community to an extent that Benedict Anderson himself probably did not envisage, since it existed only in language and on paper, in literature. So it needed to be reawakened and strengthened, to prove that it was a unity not only in literary, political and philosophical works, and to revitalise the idea of its resurgence in separate class groups that poorly communicated with each other. It was the task of the intelligentsia to expand this imagined community as much as possible, by encompassing the people, the bourgeoisie and those members of national minorities who wanted to assimilate with Poles. The multifaceted dispute over the shape of the nation and the future state has so far taken place mainly among the social and

artistic elites. A large part of Polish society in rural and urban areas remained excluded from it. In the tumultuous year of 1905, Wacław Berent, author of the well-known fin de siècle novel *Próchno* [Rotten Wood] (1901), while discarding his decadent tone, asked in *Chimera*, in his article "Sources and Outlets of Nietzscheanism" about the attitude of his compatriots: "Why do only so very few manage to shoulder the heritage of the past and carry it with noble dignity anymore?" (1905, p. 134).

In *Próchno* [Rotten Wood], Berent showed the sources and forms of spiritual exhaustion of cosmopolitan elites rejecting the legacy of pro-independence ideas. Some of these elites, further abetted by decadent culture and literature streaming in from the West, spreading the popular cult of improductivism in art, the end-of-the-century crisis, dandyism, Baudelairean gloom and catastrophist sentiments, created a distinct, albeit inert worldview and artistic formation that fit into the mould of modernism, which was a trend of aestheticisation and was averse to all utilitarian and civic discussions. However, the activity of this formation was necessary because it provided an alternative to the provincial, hermetic patriotism of the defeated. The autistic patriotism magnified the sense of loneliness on the one hand, and, on the other hand, produced an uncontrollable sense of fulfilment at the sacrificial altar, a feeling that arises in communities that live with trauma, and struggle with historical fatalism. For no one knew how to suffer so beautifully and powerlessly in their own literature and symbolic culture as the Poles. From there, it was even further to the necessary social and mental transformations that could culminate in a modern Polish society in the future. National culture needed other, more powerful, vivid and creative ideas than "the naked soul," "art for art's sake" and "Poland is the Messiah of nations" that could have triggered the reconstruction of shattered Polish discourse.

Between 1890 and 1914, writers and publicists, active intelligentsia supporting new currents in culture, and active national activists, applied a kind of shock therapy to a divided and impotent Polish society (Podraza-Kwiatkowska, 1985, p. 121). The new literature demanded that society return to an active attitude, and promoted ideals of strength and work, which were the seeds of the future.

The rebellious Polish subaltern was, according to this therapy, to undergo a transformation from the position of a colonised object to that of a conscious subject decolonizing its circumstances. This was voiced by the poet Tadeusz Miciński in the revealingly titled essay "To the Sources of the Polish Soul," which became the title of a famous book about the need for a strong Polish identity as seen in the literature of the era:

> To the sources of the Polish soul! This is the battle cry of Young Poland – not decadence, not a literary current imported from abroad, as various peddlers of literature foolishly repeat. It is a search for power, and finding it. (1906, p. 34)

Literature of Criticism (New Order of Criticism)

These literary ideas and attitudes, partly involved in the awakening of society, in the creation of an intellectual atmosphere of dispute and resistance, is, to simplify things greatly, the legacy of the years 1890–1914, the period that literary historians call Young Poland. This epoch as a whole is stereotypically (especially in school textbooks) associated with the ideas of decadence, art for art's sake, sexual desire, the "naked soul," naive glorification of peasant life, improductivist psychology, and paradoxical praise of decay and hostility to the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the historical synopses of Young Poland do not sufficiently articulate the fact that ideas, works, and attitudes contrary to the aesthetising and escapist tendencies in modernism proved to be much more valuable for the future of the divided and weakened nation. Essentially, these ideas were conscious anti-Romanticism (which did not exclude an artistic fascination with the era of the national bards and of individual sacrifice), social utopianism, realism that negated aestheticism in its radical function, historical revisionism, cultural nationalism, patriotism of work above the divisions resulting from the partitions, and the idea of the unification of social classes on the path to the formation of a homogeneous nation.

I call this phenomenon the Literature of Criticism (or the New Order of Criticism). It is represented by writers from different generations and worldviews, for example, late positivists (Bolesław Prus),

revisionists of national history (Stefan Żeromski, and Stanisław Wyspiański), advocates of socialism (Stanisław Brzozowski), of cultural nationalism (Adolf Nowaczyński), and even of active struggle against tyranny (Andrzej Strug). Although internally antagonised, they formed a surprisingly distinctive whole in terms of their active attitude toward national reality, which had probably not been seen in this way before. The Polish historical literary self-stereotype, meanwhile, accentuates solipsistic modernism. It supposedly set the tone of the era. The opposite was true, as any reader of Polish literature, not its theorist who perpetuates the concepts of the alternation of literary paradigms, is aware. There were two parallel, non-alternative paradigms. The ideological antagonism between them, of course, did not preclude close historical, personal or even aesthetic ties between them. Many writers evolved by moving from aestheticism into Critical Literature, like, for example, Miciński, Staff, and Kasprowicz. Other major artists moved beyond aestheticism and musings on the "naked soul," and saw the purpose of creativity in developing the ideas of the Literature of Criticism, which could not be forgotten even if aesthetic considerations were prioritised in the literary process. This was corroborated by the well-known researcher of the era, Kazimierz Wyka, who wrote in almost the first words of his fundamental work *Modernizm polski* [Polish Modernism] that "many of the great writers of Young Poland (e.g., Wyspiański, Żeromski, and Reymont) will not appear in the pages of this book at all" (1959, p. 3) and added that some of those authors will be mentioned only in a specific role that does not provide a basis for judging their entire output.

The branch of Young Poland, which aestheticised and distanced itself from the pressing problems of the collective, even became a symbol of kitsch and literary mannerism, moments after the change of the historical-literary paradigm in 1918, and was attacked and even ridiculed, although later scholars retracted many of the charges as misguided. It would disappear, leaving behind a few catchphrases and few valuable works. On the other hand, the Literature of Criticism, bringing together a number of antagonistic ideas, although basically overlooked as a great project, would capture the social imagination for decades, set the course and give meaning to the actions of the Polish collective. Going down this road,

it can be said that this current would prove to be a major ideological and literary backdrop for the entire 20th century, regardless of its turbulent and twisted history and changing ideological dominants. Simply put, it was a formative phenomenon for the entire century in Poland because, although it was composed of warring political attitudes, social views, literary and journalistic works, it turned national focus to one aim: the restoration of culture and the restoration of sovereignty. To this day, more attention is paid to the supposedly insurmountable internal differences than to the similarities of this project. Meanwhile, the Literature of Criticism functioned as a whole, although it was seen only as a broken mirror reflecting contemporary events. The shape of the modern nation and future state was being forged in a complex ideological dispute, which by no means refrained from discussing aesthetics. Writers of those years did not let their society slip into slumber, confident that much could still be done for the virtual, non-existent country. Because of this, Poles were spiritually and intellectually prepared for the emergence of a reborn state and defended it in 1920.

In the Literature of Criticism and adjacent trends, there are four strands of thought and creativity associated with lost independence and the need to rethink the national situation, to spark discussion about the concept of rebuilding society and even the state. The first can be associated with the late works and views of positivists who were already active beyond their era: Henryk Sienkiewicz and Bolesław Prus. Both writers unexpectedly ignited a polarising discussion among the public, not only in Poland, on the essence and importance of the state, which, in the country without independence, was a clear invitation to intellectual rebellion or, at the very least, to criticism of the contemporary times. Sienkiewicz published his novel *Quo vadis* in 1895–1896, while Prus published *Faraon* [*Pharaoh*], which also resonated internationally, in 1895. The fact that the most prominent Polish writers of their time almost simultaneously matured to address the great historical question of the existence and meaning of the state is an answer to the deeply hidden and rarely asked questions of the era. Both works created a space for discussion for generations of Poles that no one had dreamed of before, and laid the groundwork for spinning bolder reflections on the future.

The second strand of critical discussion in the literature and criticism of the time is represented, by way of example, by selected views and works of Stefan Żeromski and Stanisław Brzozowski who expressed ideas of working for society and criticism of national passivity. When it comes to socio-philosophical issues, the thought of sociologist and philosopher Edward Abramowski was close to these writers, although a historian of social thought would likely mention many other names, such as the socialist Ludwik Krzywicki or the mystic Wincenty Lutosławski, who based his ideas on the cult of literary romantic messianism.

The third strand in the debate of the time, which consumed the national past in the name of a creative future, is bound up with the playwriting of Stanisław Wyspiański and the prose and dramas of Tadeusz Miciński. It contains, along with many ideas of the representatives of the second trend (Żeromski, Brzozowski and others), clear concepts of revising Polish history and culture, including the demythisation of national tradition amid the dispute with Polish romanticism, mysticism and the concept of art reduced only to local issues. Overcoming the inert weight of tradition, stimulating the viewer, sometimes with shock on the stage or in novels, preparing them to confront a living and ruthless history was a response to the decadent cries of the "naked soul" à la Stanisław Przybyszewski, the slogans of art for art's sake and the vulnerability of the idealized world of sentimentalisation of the folk. It was not art for art's sake, but the art of the will to exist through the reappraisal of illusions and weaknesses.

The fourth strand is formed by the ideological and artistic ideas of the proponents of nationalist ideology, Roman Dmowski and Adolf Nowaczyński, co-shaping Polish cultural nationalism, which was non-institutional and critical of the condition of the Polish nation and its relations with other nations in Europe. Roman Dmowski, in his critical work *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka* [Thoughts of a Modern Pole] (1903), placed many demands on his compatriots that they would have to meet in order to catch up with other European societies. In addition to the rationalist current of nationalist thought, it is worth pointing out the current of messianic national philosophy, which is also partly tied to Slavophilism. Its eminent representative in that

period was August Cieszkowski, a thinker who came from Poznań, i.e. a part of the former Republic of Poland annexed by Prussia. Cieszkowski described himself as a continuator of the thought of Bronisław Trentowski (Freiburg) and Karol Libelt (Poznań) who also originated from the same strand of nationalist and Slavophile thought.

In the literature of the early twentieth century, which is closely related to the course of World War I, it would be easy to distinguish another current of creativity and thought, this time associated with the armed combat of the Polish legions and, in general, with not only military, but also ideological efforts designed to awaken patriotism, appeal to the national community, and show the way to the rebirth of the state. This current, arguably the fifth in the historical sequence, goes beyond the time frame adopted here, but since it refers to the literary tradition of liberation it seems directly connected with the previous quarter century. The literature produced during World War I was also the direct backdrop for post-1918 works depicting the struggle and the emergence of the state.

A new state?

The rivalry between *Quo vadis* and *Pharaoh* was not only a matter of literary, but also of worldview differences. There is no denying that the attitude to Henryk Sienkiewicz's writing divided not only literary critics. There were essentially two tendencies in evaluating the work of the author of the *Trilogy*: those who adored the writer and were enraptured by his vision of the past, supporters of tradition, who saw in his works the medium of perfect Polishness, and a much smaller group who noticed the oversimplifications, and the shallow patriotic idealisation. According to sociologist Józef Chałasiński, there were two factions of the Polish intelligentsia (readers of literature) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which fundamentally influenced the national consciousness (1997, pp. 87–88). The first, usually originating in or revolving around landed gentry circles, was stuck in the space of national solipsism and national adoration and placed emphasis on the role of patriotic-Catholic identity, class distance and conservatism, albeit while preaching the need for work and

sacrifice. The second, radical group, with democratic or socialist leanings, rebelling against conservative traditions, but not abandoning its romantic pedigree, sought to expand the area of dialogue. Chałasiński recognized Sienkiewicz and his works, as a symbol of the conservative ideology of the noble-land intelligentsia. In 1905, Sienkiewicz was awarded the Nobel Prize, which seemed to confirm the validity of the stance represented by the writer in the eyes of a fairly large social group. Of course, Sienkiewicz did not stand for extreme aristocratic conservatism like Józef Wyssenhoff (a literary apologist of the old noble epoch) or Count Stanisław Tarnowski, a member of the group of so-called Galician Stanczyks, loyalists to the Viennese court, who advocated giving up the dream of independence, while firmly criticising aristocratic democracy with its *liberum veto* and national uprisings.

The novel *Quo vadis*, which tells the story of the pending demise of the Roman empire as a result of the emergence of true Christians of Western Slavic origin within its borders who know the truth about God and spread it, could be interpreted not only as a clever literary idea that was calculated to gain easy popularity in the world, but also as a thoughtful, allusive political text referring to the importance of the religious factor in history. It is, after all, a novel about suffering, messianism and spiritual defiance, which was to bring freedom to the oppressed because they believed in the meaning of the suffering of Christ Crucified. The torment of Christians, killed on the altar of humanity, and their courage in proclaiming the Truth, could hint allusively at the suffering of the religious Polish nation. Sienkiewicz's simplistic, rough-hewn mysticism was irrelevant to the novel's many followers, whose universal message, critical of the power of imperial evil, made it popular outside Poland as well. Rome, would fall because of Nero's madness, but the Christians would remain and the future belonged to them. Nero's decadence would turn the republic into a world of bankrupt values, but Rome would change for the better under the influence of the Christians and manage to survive only because of them. Christians would not conquer Rome militarily, they would transform it spiritually: this is important. In this process the author highlighted the historical role of Slavic Christians. It is mainly their suffering that would represent the hope for a better future for

the world. It is significant that the young Roman nobleman Vinicius matured to a new religion, and thus a new understanding of his reality through love, under the spell of a beautiful slave girl, a Christian Slav.

Almost five more centuries would pass before the empire would be fully suffused with the spirit of God and before it would completely collapse, to be reborn in a new form. The beginning has been made, however, and it was initiated by Jewish, Christian apostles and Slavic slaves. This is reminiscent of Adam Mickiewicz's messianic concepts, which Sienkiewicz, sating the pain of the enslaved, shifts symbolically to the beginning of Western civilization, the dawn of Christianity in Europe. *Qui vadis* was thus read as messianic and contemporary story about a new Poland, reborn thanks to God and the suffering of the Poles, which will rise on the ruins of a decaying empire. No one needed to be reminded that this empire lay in the east.

Published in book form in 1897, Prus' great novel about the state, Pharaoh, was an intellectual turning point not only for the brilliant writer, who moved from commenting on contemporary times, especially in his famous *Weekly Chronicles*, *Lalka* [The Doll], in his short stories, to a broad historiosophical reflection, and sketched a vision of the state and political disputes disguised as the portrayal of the transformations of ancient Egypt. *Pharaoh* a continuation of the positivist debates of the 1870s to the 1890s on social problems and individual attitudes, and also foreshadows future discussions about the state that will take place in the literature of later periods. Prus asked a fundamental question that historically had still not been answered by the numerous and, despite the historical calamities, still influential leadership class in Polish society: what is most important in the process of rebuilding a strong state? What is more important in history: the well-being of the leadership elite, who are able to guide the other classes into the future (the Egyptian priests), or the well-being of the general public, especially the common people, who represent the largest social stratum in the state, but are disenfranchised and destitute, and whose prosperity could guarantee the real power of the state. *Pharaoh* is, by and large, a story about the art of governance, about the difficult choices that rulers must make to save their tottering political creation. All the while the question of the plight and behaviour of the peasants, who suffer

misery due to excessive taxes and may become a third force led by people who do not respect the existing division of roles in the world, looms in the background.

The exemplary vision of a state that, despite internal conflicts, is able to unify and steer clear of the most dangerous reefs, eliminating political extremes, would demonstrate that in history growth is achieved not only through internal revolutions and great wars. Reason, and by extension political pragmatism, must be the cornerstone of successful development. Ultimately, two things are at stake: society and the state. The category of the nation, in view of the obvious internal ethnic divisions (Egyptians, Jews, Phoenicians, desert peoples, etc.) is not crucial, as in *Quo vadis*. When writing about the state and society, Prus shows the classic struggle of the antagonistic major forces of history, which if united can save this particular state, society and civilization. The most important issue is the survival of civilization, which is represented by the wisdom of the priestly caste and Egypt as a whole. Egypt is eternal because of the treasures of wisdom that are stored and cultivated, not because of this or that temporary historical faction. Prus chooses, like Sienkiewicz, a vision of the future in which the good of future civilization (Szaruga, 1999, p. 38), including Poland, will triumph. Arguably, the most significant thing about this story is that it poses a question that had not been asked for a long time, a question about a new state. That of the possibility of a state emerging and rising on the ruins of the existing order, perhaps capitalizing on the values of the past, but essentially taking its own spiritual and political course in history.

Both old positivists posed a problem the solution of which was beyond the reach of their generation. Surprisingly, the ideological and fictional conclusions of their novels both envisioned future states as theocracies (a state of priests in Prussia, a state of popes in Sienkiewicz). These ideas were not picked up in the secularised world of 20th century politics. Great writers such as Stefan Żeromski, Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, Andrzej Strug, and Zofia Nałkowska would return in the 1920s and the 1930s to the notion of building a Polish state without the religious factor.

Empty symbol or self-work?

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the word "Poland" was an expression without a political designator, although it was very firmly anchored in artistic and political practices. On the other hand, practically speaking, the Polish lands became marginal territories of the three partitioning powers, their "borderlands," which had little influence on either the economy or the politics of the centres. Preventive censorship, de-Polonisation of culture, and anti-Polish economic policies were put in place in each of the partitioned states, albeit with varying degrees of intensity. Austria-Hungary was the most liberal state, where Poles had considerable opportunities to make a career in politics, culture or the economy, and the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria and the Grand Duchy of Cracow, where they resided, enjoyed some freedom as autonomous territories. Poles living in the eastern and northern territories of Prussia and later the German Empire, which pursued a restrictive policy of Germanization and of limiting Polish economic activities, had the fewest opportunities for development. The "longest war in modern Europe," as the title of a well-known television history series from 1979–1981 read, was taking place. It was a bloodless, more than a century-long struggle between Poles and Germans in economy and culture activities. This struggle shaped a commitment to economic values, tenacity, perseverance, pragmatism, and collaboration between social classes and strata among some Poles. In the future, the region would play a major role in the unification of the Republic.

The Russian Empire, which seized the largest area of the former Polish state, had an ambivalent attitude toward the Polish issue. This area, stretching historically as far as the Dnieper River and the Wild Fields, although multinational, for it historically belonged to Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Lithuanians, was distinguished by its unique peculiarities resulting from multiculturalism and the rapid development of competing national identities that entered into disputes with each other and into conflicts with the hegemonic power, the Russian Empire. It was here that all Polish anti-Russian armed uprisings erupted, and ended in defeat (1794, 1830, 1863, 1905). Residents of this territory, first known as the Congress Kingdom

(after the Congress of Vienna in 1815) and, after the defeat of the January Uprising, as the Vistula Country, constituted the most numerous Polish population, part of which was slowly integrating into the empire, although the most radical liberation and anti-Russian movements, leading national forms of resistance, evolved within it. These lands suffered the greatest human casualties from failed uprisings. It was also here that a strong Russification campaign was carried out and inter-ethnic antagonisms were stirred up on a large scale. Despite this, generations that were most determined to fight for independence in the future, and most prepared for it in terms of political consciousness, grew up in the Russian partition, although their members did not take a direct part in government, as did, for example, Poles in Austria-Hungary.

Overcoming determinism that was pushing Poland into political and national oblivion, as well as the idea of a great deed – a momentous creative act in any area of social life – permeates the novels, dramas, and journalism of Stefan Żeromski and Stanisław Brzozowski. Especially the broader literary work of Żeromski was in tune with the ideas of activism, progress, work, ethics, and opposed the inertia of decadence and catastrophism that reigned in parts of the literary community. It represents the seeds and great realisation of the idea of Literature of Criticism. Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska wrote that the writer's attitude was a "heroic demand for moral fortitude, inner freedom, sacrifice and dedication" (1985, p. 128). Żeromski's work was associated with the ideological transformation of Polish society, occurring in conjunction with the demise of part of the landed gentry, the massive growth of the working class and the progressing emancipation of rural areas, and especially with the emergence of the intellectual, a person who repudiates social egoism and is sensitive to new intellectual and spiritual currents. It was these people, resisting national apathy, who worked selflessly in villages, devoting themselves to the education of the people, and who founded institutions in the cities to help the poor, as well as sports and paramilitary organizations such as the Sokół Gymnastic Society (1867), which was legal in Austria-Hungary, and illegal in Russia, the secret Union of Active Struggle (1908), the Polish Military Union

(1908), and the legitimate organizations Strzelecki Association and Strzelec. In Cracow, Wincenty Lutosławski established the Eleusis association (1902), with the goal of educating youth according to the national and ethical principles combined with the veneration of national romantic poets. The Polish scouting movement was established in Galicia at the initiative of the local intelligentsia, which also operated illegally in Russia. The patriotic and military celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Grunwald (1910), as well as the 100th anniversary of the death of Prince Józef Poniatowski in 1913 in Galicia were momentous events. There were many more similar events of lesser stature. The founding of the Slavic Society and the magazine *Świat Słowiański* [The Slavic World], in 1905 which was active until 1914, reveals efforts to transfer the so-called "Polish question" to a broader arena, where similar tendencies of binding one's own national independence to that of other Slavs, especially Ukrainians, Czechs, Slovaks and Croats, were emerging. The founders of *Świat Słowiański* [The Slavic World], scholars-humanists Marian Zdziechowski and Feliks Koneczny were both leading figures of the liberal-conservative current that did not fall into the traps of radicalism of left-wing thought (the revolutionism of Piłsudski) or nationalist thought (cooperation with Russia by Dmowski).

After the defeat of the November Uprising (1830–1831), Zygmunt Krasiński called Poland a country of "graves and crosses" that replaced and tragically symbolised freedom. This image of bereavement and helplessness was even more powerful for Poles after the lost January Uprising (1863–64). Meanwhile, in the activities of writers, publicists, founders of numerous patriotic and national, educational, and scientific organizations, actively supporting the Literature of Criticism between 1890 and 1914, the goal was to go well beyond this formula, not to encapsulate Polish history and Polish fate in it. No longer graves and crosses, but work and positive deeds were to define what was Polish for the future.

Work and labour

Representatives of the Literature of Criticism were debating the gap between Polish society and the civilizational transformations

taking place in Western Europe. Both in Prus's *Weekly Chronicles*, *Pharaoh*, as well as in the short stories and novels of Żeromski, in the journalism of Stanisław Brzozowski, in the thought of Abramowski, and Krzywicki there is a similar perception of the lethargy of Polish society, the majority of which was disinclined both to any idea of a national uprising and to rapid and lasting changes in other fields. The changes that were tolerated were proposed by the Warsaw positivists as part of activities described as grassroots work and organic labour, and did not satisfy the ambitions of the figures and groups most committed to promoting social development. In the writings of Prus, Żeromski, and Brzozowski, and even in those of Sienkiewicz (who supported countless patriotic causes) and Polish social philosophers, the criticism of a society that was paralysed, yet quarrelsome and intolerant, was accompanied by demands to raise its intellectual capital, initiate widespread educational activity, and introduce a firm ethos of work and responsibility. It is not without reason that already radical critics of the time of stagnation after the collapse of the anti-Russian uprising of 1863–1864 (such as the positivist Aleksander Świętochowski) used deprecating terms in their journalism about not only social circles, such as the conservative landed gentry, who collaborated with the invaders to protect their estates, but even the Catholic clergy, most of whom were, by the way, uneducated and generally represented the interests of the authorities.[1] A sizeable group of intellectuals, social and political activists (including Abramowski) and scholars (including Krzywicki) promoting technical and social progress was then formed. Their understanding of progress had to do with class transformation, that is, it mainly focused on the emancipation of the peasant strata and the working class, as well as scientific and technical advances, and progress in hygiene, education, and equality. Again the demand for educational work resurfaced, as it did during the Enlightenment and in the aftermath of the January Uprising, but not in the strict sense of educating the people, but of empowering them with stronger

1 This is topic is broadly discussed by Beauvois in the work *Ukrainian Triangle. The Nobility, the Tsar, and the People in Volhynia, Podolia, and Kiev, 1793–1914*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2005.

worldview, as well as philosophical, moral, political and especially economic arguments. Regardless of the political orientation between the 1905 Revolution and World War I, demands for the restoration of the national bond between the three sections of the once divided homeland were becoming bolder.

Abramowski now deemed the most important tasks to be research, public activity and dissemination of the new idea of social ethics. In such works as *Zagadnienia socjalizmu* [Issues of Socialism] (1899), and *Etyka a rewolucja* [Ethics and Revolution] (1899), he drew attention to the essential role of ethical shifts in the social processes of self-organization and change in human morality as well as the need for moral revolution to take precedence over social change. Between 1898 and 1900, Abramowski, like many other intellectuals with various outlooks on social issues, was involved in the work of self-education circles and clandestine classes that spread independent education and pro-independence ideas. As a socialist, he espoused active struggle against the Russian state wherever possible. Here his views were close to those of Józef Piłsudski. The Polish socialist wrote this almost prophetic declaration:

> We declare a fight against the Russian government for the freedom of Poland and for the freedom of every person in Poland. For let us not think that anyone will give us freedom without ourselves. Even if the Russian people were to win it now from the Tsar, they would win it for themselves, not for us, and Poland… would still remain a slave to whatever new government Russia would create for itself. (Abramowski, 1986, pp. 178, 180)

In 1904, he published the famous treatise *Socjalizm a państwo* [Socialism and the State]. In this work, he voiced criticism of state socialism (and the state itself) and called for a stateless organization of society in the form of free associations, and trade unions. Abramowski was opposed to the introduction of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," which would carry with it a new apparatus of coercion and violence. He accurately predicted that the socialist state would expand its bureaucratic apparatus and become a system of exploitation. The philosopher proposed stateless socialism, drawn

from the thoughts of European utopians of the 19th century, as a counterweight to state socialism. Such ideas, quite common at the end of the century, found their way into literature and journalism, and generated serious discussions. They also influenced the writings and activities of Stanisław Brzozowski. Abramowski's influence on Polish writers continued into the second half of the twentieth century, and was discernible, for example, in the oeuvre of Maria Dąbrowska.

When musing on national apathy, Brzozowski used the term "infantile Poland" in a famous analysis titled *Legenda Młodej Polski* [The Legend of Young Poland] (1910, pp. 57–102). He played one of the leading roles in bringing into existence the Literature of Criticism and the concept of the deed and work associated with its ideology, which entailed the obligation to raise national self-consciousness (the individuals work on him/herself). Representatives of different ideologies, not only proponents of socialism, but even critical, cultural nationalists, adherents of the reformation of Catholicism and liberal conservatives, were able to come together on such a viewpoint. In his novel *Płomienie* (Flames) (1908), the author portrayed the spiritual evolution of a Polish intellectual who matures into a revolutionary activist revolted by the feudal mentality of his landed family. The protagonist of the novel, Michał Kaniowski, leaves this community, which he accuses of mental indolence, religious zealotry, narrow intellectual horizons and lack of prospects for growth. He eventually joins the Russian terrorist organization Narodnaya Volya, and readies himself for an assassination attempt on the tsar.

In *Legend of Young Poland*, which appeared two years later, Brzozowski's concept of labour is moral and intellectual. The author appeals to the imperative to work for the benefit of the collective, which should be educated to increase its social sensitivity, but most of all he argues that intelligent individuals, who are able to take responsibility for themselves and the nation, should perform prudent deeds. Brzozowski's novels and essays, including the articles collected in *Filozofia czynu* [The Philosophy of Labour] (1903), and the *Legend of Young Poland*, provided several generations of leftist intelligentsia with food for thought and inspiration. With his concept of the heroic individual and the momentous intellectual deed done for society,

Brzozowski came close to the work of Stefan Zeromski, viewed as the conscience of his era and of the upcoming independence.

In his classic novels and short stories, such as *Doktor Piotr* [Doctor Peter] (1895), *O żołnierzu tułaczu* [On the Vagrant Soldier] (1896), *Syzyfowe prace* [The Labors of Sisyphus] (1897), *Ludzie bezdomni* [Homeless People] (1900), and the dramas *Róża* [Rose] (1909) and *Sułkowski* [Sułkowski] (1910), Żeromski portrayed the unbridgeable gulf that had emerged after centuries of serfdom between the nobility and the people, between the spirit of liberation revolt and the humiliation and despair of the defeated, between hope and political illusion, and then between the self-seeking attitude of the landed gentry and urban bourgeoisie and the actions of the self-sacrificing young intelligentsia, as well as former freedom fighters and conscious representatives of the people. His positive, though mostly downtrodden literary heroes, the unrepentant intelligentsia of landowner origin, stood in the way of the social majority, which sought stability after decades of insurgency and repression, and had already given up on cultivating pro-independence attitudes. At the end of his life, Żeromski asked this most important question, to which not only he lacked an answer: in which direction would the protagonist of his last novel *Przedwiośnie* (The Spring to Come) (1924) go? To fight for new, unknown times, marching at the head of a rioting mob, or to temperately build the country, while inheriting the existing status quo, including regained independence and a multitude of social conflicts?

Detested by conservatives of various stripes for revising Polish historical and social myths in the late 19th century (including his novel *Popioły* [Ashes], 1902, which debunked the Napoleonic myth), Żeromski wrote within the current of anti-colonial and identity reflection. His protagonists who represent the intelligentsia are social hybrids breaking out of conventional patterns of behaviour, faithful to the idea of service, provoking those around them to unjust acts of aggression, misunderstood, and rejected. Their personal defeat in life is supposed to serve as a social catharsis. In 1920, the writer openly condemned the Soviet attack on Poland and rejected any suspicion of sympathies for communism.

Revisions of national myths and self-stereotypes

Adam Mickiewicz, while penning *The Books of the Polish Nation and the Polish Pilgrimage*, presupposed that emigration would have the leading role in shaping the future of Poland after the defeat of the November Uprising (1830–31). A free thought about the future state should take shape among the émigré population, and cadres capable of leading the nation on its path to regaining a free homeland should also be formed here, he wrote. According to the greatest Polish poet, the fall of Poland was a harbinger of its future rebirth, as well as of a new Christian awakening of Europe and humanity.[2] The playwright Stanislaw Wyspiański, Poland's leading theatre figure in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, was vehemently critical of these para-religious views, although no one can deny that his work is a continuation of Polish Romanticism and alludes to the work of Mickiewicz. Several decades later, Wyspiański acerbically summed up the lack of national solidarity in his dramas *Warszawianka* [*Varsovienne*] (1898) and *Wesele* [The Wedding] (1901). In *Noc listopadowa* [November Night] (1904), he exposed overwrought patriotic rhetoric, powerlessness, and lack of will to win. In the drama *Wyzwolenie* [Liberation] (1903), he criticised the restrictions on artistic freedom, and in *Lelewel* [Lelewel] (1899) and *Legion* [Legion] (1900) he criticized the misapprehension of sound national ideas based on pragmatic rather than messianic premises. The conclusions that could be drawn from *Wesele* [The Wedding] may have led many viewers to embrace an attitude of social dialogue and a desire to prevent the relapse of internal, bloody conflicts. Wyspiański put Romantic messianism to a historical test, from which it emerged challenged, but not discarded. Konrad from *Wyzwolenie* [Liberation] mocks messianic illusions and the illusion of art built on an authoritarian injunction to blindly serve the national cause. However, in order to propose a different vision of art, of the

2 In his mystical poem *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrimage* of 1832, he wrote about "the days of European Confederation," and added the following words in a passionate message to Polish emigrants: "The empires have rejected your stone for the European edifice, and this stone will become the cornerstone and head of future construction; and on whom it falls, he will crumble, and whoever stumbles on it will fall and not rise." (Mickiewicz, 1955, pp. 54–55).

theatre, he needs romantic genius and strength of spirit. The things that were important in Brzozowski's work, i.e. the demands for achieving mature self-knowledge and responsibility in collective affairs, were very close to Wyspiański's views. *Wyzwolenie* [Liberation], in which Wyspiański expressed many critical views on art, the nation and the state, occupies a special place. During a discussion about art and the freedom of the artist, the Director (a character in the play) makes harsh comments about contemporary society: "half noble souls, half faith with half virtue," but the words of the main character of the tragedy, Konrad, referring to the modern state, open to national plurality, inspire a new political vision:

> After all, every nation is different from the state. A nation has only the right to be a STATE. And the state, in turn, is able to accommodate all, in a common province (1972, p. 410).

Tadeusz Miciński, in his novels, dramas, prose poems and essays, followed a similar path of creating an imagined community through highly critical judgments about his contemporary Poles. Hailed as the chief mystic of his era, and seemingly estranged from current affairs, in his second incarnation Miciński was a social critic and ideologue of national activism. His novels *Nietota* [Nietota: The Book of Tatra mystery] (1910), *Xiądz Faust* [*Priest* Faust] (1913), the drama *Termopile polskie* [Polish Thermopylae] (|1914) essays such as *O spuściźnie duchowej* [On the Spiritual Legacy] (1899), *Do źródeł duszy polskiej* [To the Origin of the Polish Soul] (1906), *Fundamenty nowej Polski* [The Foundations of a New Poland] (1906) emanate the same spirit as the literary works of Wyspiański and the essays of Brzozowski, although in terms of style they are marked by Young Poland expressionism and exaggerated emotionality. As an activist and teacher, Miciński was an advocate of the strength of spirit, a teacher of the nation, a man committed to the national cause, a critic of doubt, weakness, disheartenment and betrayal. "The religion of labour" is what he has in common with the thought of Brzozowski, the heroism and sacrifice of his literary heroes with the prose of Żeromski, the worship of the nation and caution against revolution with the thought of Dmowski, and historical revisionism with Wyspiański. More than

anything, he was guided by a desire to overcome national infirmity. His criticism of sham patriotism in his essays is ruthless. in 1899, in the Cracow *Życie*, he wrote:

> You – patriots – so animatedly discoursing at breakfasts about what should be accomplished in our country!..
> You – brothers – biting each other like dogs – over a bone! – You hateful – small-minded – cabots! [1899, no. 7]

Tadeusz Miciński continued his critique of historical thought in his drama *Termopile Polskie* [Polish Thermopylae] (1914), which tells of the fall of Poland. The collapse caused by internal chaos and scheming of neighbouring countries is depicted as a consequence of historical scenes unfolding in the mind of Prince Józef Poniatowski, who is drowning in the Elster/Elbe River, and defending with his troops the retreat of Napoleon's army according to the motto: "God has entrusted me with the honour of the Poles!" This surreal idea of rewinding the tape of history in the head of a dying man makes it possible to transform a traditional drama into a frenetic pageant of scenes, whose arrangement has a special logic that follows the work of the imagination, and only then the historical order. This offers the author the opportunity to highlight those events of the past that stand out due to their clarity and consistency. The motto of the main character's conduct is: "Poland is not founded on compromise!" The work is reminiscent of the great Romantic dramas in terms of its open plot construction, visionary tone and uncompromising judgments made against many historical figures of the European political scene. In the process, Miciński dispels the myth-ridden Napoleonic history and dismantles the myth of the short fate of the Duchy of Warsaw as a chance to revive Polish statehood.

Nation, nation

In Central Europe, nationalist ideas belong to two traditions, incidentally originating from religious beliefs: that of the nobility and that of the peasantry. At the dawn of the 20th century, these two traditions began to converge, and grew in importance as did the

religious factor, ethnic and economic factors, such as anti-Semitism and economic rivalry between ethnic groups. These themes were picked up by Stanisław Szczepanowski, author of several novels, and mainly a politician in Galicia, as well as a scientist-chemist and founder of the Polish oil industry, in his pamphlet *Idea polska wobec prądów kosmopolitycznych* [The Polish Idea vs. Cosmopolitan Currents] (Lviv, 1901). Szczepanowski was an advocate of a national Christian church supporting the nation in its fight against foreign influences. He took a critical view of the Vatican's condemnation of national uprisings and the collaboration of the Catholic clergy with the authorities of the partitioning states. The socialist Stanisław Brzozowski dedicated his *Filozofia romantyzmu polskiego* [Philosophy of Polish Romanticism], published posthumously in 1924, to him.

The famous text by Roman Dmowski, *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka* [Thoughts of a Modern Pole] from 1903, repeatedly reprinted and commented on, had far more resonance. This is one of the most important social texts of the Literature of Criticism of the early 20th century. First of all, *Thoughts of a Modern Pole* is a well-argued treatise on the passivity of Poles and their backwardness in all areas of European life. Dmowski was very critical of the level of national self-knowledge, solidarity and of what he referred to as "national morality," applying it critically to the growing acceptance of the non-existence of the nation within the borders of its own state:

> Our national morality, with a certain idle sentimentality, today consists mostly in the complete absence of active love of our homeland, and the political views of our enlightened public are unusual, they differ from the political views of other nations in that they lack the basis of all healthy politics, namely, the national instinct of self-preservation. We are a nation with a distorted way of political thinking (*Myśli nowoczesnego…*, p. 20)

With the good of the nation in mind, Dmowski makes scathing summaries of the condition of the nation and attacks Poles for laziness, overindulgent fantasizing about past greatness, "idle sentimentalism," and disinclination to diligent work. He wants to prepare them for the challenges of the Western civilization, from which

the Poles, he believes, significantly diverge. He anticipates a great conflict, for which his compatriots, in his view, are not prepared. Aware of all the limitations that stood in the way of the development of Poles in the 18th and 19th centuries, he does not excuse their mistakes, criticises national solipsism, anachronisms of collective life, especially the existence of obsolete feudal forms and a dismal economy. He creates the figure of a conscious citizen-landowner, industrial capitalist, intellectual, peasant, whose work contributes to the growth of collective prosperity. In the process, he rejects the leftist ideas of a classless society, which were promoted by a group of socialists, including Abramowski. He sees opportunities to transform the social masses that hitherto did not understand each other, although they spoke a similar language and lived in a common territory, into a conscious and cohesive nation. This is the great task that Poles, if they are to survive, must face. Any ideas of modernisation that emerged in the West could also benefit the Polish nation, Dmowski argued. This was especially true of the economy, because it is in an economically strong society that he saw the germs of a strong nation. Like Prus, Sienkiewicz, but also Abramowski and Brzozowski, the author of *Thoughts of a Modern Pole* appreciated the state-building role of the nation rather than the opposite. In the conditions of non-existence of the state, the work on national identity, in his opinion, must be particularly intense. A nation that neglects education and identity development will perish sooner or later.

Dmowski's text is a national manifesto, which could be signed by representatives of various ideological orientations on certain general points. It does not include nationalistic insults or political accusations that were typical of this author's texts after 1918, targeted at Jews, Germans or Ukrainians, socialists, democrats, etc. It is a constructive example of the socio-political facet of the Literature of Criticism, just like Abramowski's writings. It contains a wealth of rationalist proposals, for example, regarding the error of mechanically reproducing romantic slogans about Poland as the Christ of nations or about the messianic role of Poland as the restorer of civilization. Like the works of most authors promoting nationalist slogans, *Thoughts of a Modern Pole* also features the illusory

idea of a Slavic federation, presumably under the auspices of Russia, capable of defending the Slavs from Germanic onslaught. Dmowski's activism stems from a position of curbing anti-Russianism in favour of pan-Slavic collaboration and finding a place for oneself in the multinational empire of the tsars. Dmowski proclaimed "ethics of civic action," which he understood differently than his ideological opponents, Abramowski or Brzozowski, as he based it on the religious (Catholicism) and ethnic grounds. These, according to him, are the foundation of Polish civic identity. Dmowski's "new patriotism" took shape amidst a constant struggle for survival, in which the strongest nations win. Through working on themselves, Poles must be among those victorious nations, even if they do not currently have their own state.

Representatives of the intelligentsia and national currents debated the reasons for the collapse of the state and the possibility of its revival. So they asked: what is necessary for Poland to be reborn one day? Who should modern Poles be, who and what should they support, what should they beware of, who should they unite with in the fight for the common good, for the civilization standard, which the Poles lacked so much? The insightful analysis of the causes of Polish calamities in the last century, containing a list of tasks that the Poles had to undertake and complete in order to be included in the circle of modern European nations, was the pinnacle of cultural and critical nationalism at the same time, whose height Dmowski, as an ideologue of Polish nationalism and an advocate of collaboration with Russia, never surpassed in his further actions and works.

Another contribution to the current of reflection on the state and the citizen is Adolf Nowaczyński's rationalist-historical drama *Wielki Fryderyk* [The Great Frederick] (1910). The writer and publicist, who was inclined towards nationalism, ushered in a language closer to the political problems of the day, and showed, drawing on the example of Prussia, the genesis of the German state and its connection with the fall of Poland. The author pondered the mechanisms of state politics, while analysing the actions of a prominent individual in the history of the nation. In his drama, he portrayed the Prussian king Frederick II, called the Great, the

main initiator of the expansion of the Prussian state at the expense of the Polish state, who was almost obsessed with "the Polish threat." Frederick revealed himself to be a shrewd, ruthless and foresighted political player who transformed weak Prussia into a strong, military state capable of changing the course of history in Europe. In Nowaczyński's assessment, nationalism, political cynicism, the ability to cleverly exploit conflicts, and an uncompromising desire to strengthen one's own state were key qualities of this ruler. These were not negative traits, because they served to realize the Darwinian idea of winning the struggle for survival, which the author harkened to. Nowaczyński was therefore not surprised by the calculated anti-Polish policies of this ruler which were motivated by the will to survive. On the contrary, in the nations' struggle for survival, the dreadful personal qualities of Frederick, representing the Prussian ethnos and his political goals, could seem a remedy for the historical predicament of the Poles. In his drama, Nowaczyński did not neglect to indicate the German stereotypes that shape the attitude of Germans (the Prussian-German state) toward Poles: *polnische wirtschaft* and *polnisher Reichstag*, as well as the need to reverse them. The latter stereotype, arising from the chaos, corruption and inability of the Polish parliament of the time to make decisions, which contributed to the downfall of the state, was especially striking in Frederick's ironic argumentation advocating the destruction of the Republic.

On the eve of the Great War, Nowaczyński's drama suggested other solutions leading to freedom than social revolution or religious transformation. According to the writer, the Polish subaltern did not necessarily have to follow the path of Spartacus in order to achieve its goal in particular. The wrong course of history could be reversed by national wisdom, resourcefulness and merciless discipline overcoming chaos. Even more important, according to him, were the awareness of goals, clarity of action, foresight, shrewdness, pragmatism, and the ability to use the power of the subjugated Slavs. Frederick, including especially his ruthlessness and cynicism towards Poland and the Slavs, was supposed to illustrate the value of political pragmatism in consciously achieving national, Polish goals.

Literature in the confines of war

Rethinking the historical circumstances of the collapse of their state, participation in major wars, conspiracy, rebellion, insurrection, revolution – Poles explored every opportunity to turn back the course of history in the 19th century. Despite this common fate (shared defeats) they did not form a unity at the end of the 19th century. The code of those reconciled to historical defeat and the code of those who rebelled were quite different. Certainly, armed combat was not the only way of moving into the future, although part of Polish society shared the belief of Adam Mickiewicz, voiced when he was forming new legions in Italy, in 1848, that Poland could be won only by military action, by weapons.

The years of the Great War, 1914–1920, are special for Polish literature both as a subject and as a period when a new outlook for the chance of independence was being born. For liberated Poland, WWI ended in a conflict with the Bolshevik armies between 1919 and 1920, so the European war lasted two years more. The Poles won the war against the Soviets against the wishes of several neighbours, unaware of the deadly threat. They suffered horrendous losses, but the joy of "regained garbage" (a term used by Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski in his novel *General Barcz*, 1922) dampened the pain. This extraordinary course of history became arguably the most important literary theme of the era.

Historians of Polish literature single out soldiers' output (the literature produced by Piłsudski's legions; by Polish military troops formed on various sides of the Great War, France, Russia, Austria and Germany; and written during the war with the Soviets) of WWI as proof of resistance to apathy and to lack of faith in rebirth. They also list later literature, especially prose, written retrospectively, in which the history of the war transitions seamlessly into a story about the defence of the recovered state and vice versa. This often happens in a single work, as in Bronisława Ostrowska's prose novel *Bohaterski miś* [Teddy Bear, the Hero] (1919), Eugeniusz Małaczewski's soldier's short stories *Koń na wzgórzu* [The Horse on the Hill] (1922), Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski's famous novels *Generał Barcz* [General Barcz] (1923), and Andrzej Strug's slightly later work *Pokolenie Marka Świdy*

[The Generation of Marek Świda] (1925). However, these novels are not as relevant as the wartime prose of Stanisław Rembek, *Nagan* [Nagan], 1928; *W Polu* [In the Field], 1937) and Stanislaw Strumph-Wojtkiewicz *Pasierb Europy* [The Stepchild of Europe], 1936), depicting the epic struggle of the Polish soldier fighting for a free homeland through the sacrifice of blood also spilled on foreign battlefields and fronts.

Traditionally, poets played no small role in the period. Let us mention, for example, two authors representing different styles, but a similar patriotic message, which was critical of the war as such, but not of the idea of defending the homeland. These are Edward Słoński, a poet of the legions, widely recited and idolised in his time, then almost completely forgotten, and Władysław Broniewski, a leftist, then communist poet, who, also like Słoński, was a soldier in Piłsudski's legions and a participant in the Polish–Bolshevik war. This poetry, therefore, was consumed by an obsession with the national "deed" (*Literatura polska 1918–1975*, 1975, p. 229) wrote Ryszard Przybylski, a deed that could bring triumph or perdition, in keeping, incidentally, with the spirit of the uprisings revived during the war and the growing hopes for restoration of independence.

The most famous Polish poem of World War I, *Ta, co nie zginęła* [She who has not died] by Edward Słońsky, which recounts the tragedy of a Polish soldier who was forced into fratricidal combat on behalf of the powers occupying Polish lands, ends with an optimistic passage:

When I'm awake I see
and every night I dream,
That SHE WHO HAS NOT DIED,
will rise from our blood.
("She who has not died," 1914)[3]

A few years later, twenty-year-old soldier Władysław Broniewski penned a poetic recollection about the war for Poland against the Bolsheviks, and described the departure of his friends to the front:

3 Quoted from: https://poezja.org/wz/Edward_Slonski/30619/Ta_co_nie_zginela [accessed: 20.01.2023].

Battalions, squadrons and regiments were marching east,
fine rain was sealing the drowsy eyes of the soldiers,
wet mud was sloshing on large and small wheels,
murky water was flowing from soggy ruts.

Apart from the objection to death and the sorrowful mood, the poet also voiced rebellion and the will to win:

O let this heaven suffocate and destroy me,
I will not bow before it – I protest and call.
("Młodość" [Youth] from the volume *Windmills*, 1925). (1977, pp. 10–11)

We should add that the war against the recent Russian hegemonic power, now draped in a red banner, was a culture shock for the entire society. During their march westward in 1919–1920, the Bolshevik armies, which torched every single blade of grass, and counted on the support of the masses, provoked strong resistance from the Polish working class and peasants. It is this new value added to the idea of independence, which was not found in excess before, that determined the victorious end of the war. Its stake was the survival of an independent state. The Bolsheviks did not rally the masses of peasants and workers by invading a reborn Poland. In fact, they never succeeded in winning them over, although Poland after World War II was ruled by a regime that considered itself to be a representative of the so-called "popular strata." Proof of this is the workers' revolts against the communist regime in 1956, 1970, 1976, as well as the history of Poland's worker-led "Solidarity" movement that began in 1980.

Conclusion

The years 1890–1914 were, on the one hand, a time of social and economic stagnation (interrupted by the events of 1905 in the Russian Empire), and, on the other hand, a time of the emergence of many outstanding literary works, political texts, and manifestos of profound importance for the national debate, for the future of society and the country being rebuilt after 1918. Despite censorship and other restrictions, there was a debate on the new national discourse and,

most importantly, the rebirth of Poland. Until and during the outbreak of World War I, there were heated and even fierce disputes on the subject, with intellectual and military arguments, banking once on the people, once on the intelligentsia, once on alliances and once on one's own path to freedom, but most of all on national integrity and solidarity.

The Polish discourse underwent an internal, positive transformation between 1890 and 1914, resulting from a rethinking of Polish modern history. The Literature of Criticism, which played a fundamental role in this process, consisted of various phenomena, the most important of which were 1/ works and views advocating non-institutional civilizationism, taking into account the emergence of increasingly moral and sophisticated forms of state through the sacrifice of individuals and groups for higher spiritual values (Sienkiewicz and Prus); 2 / works depicting the intellectual ethos of work and service to society (active labour patriotism), as well as arguing the need to create a new collective ethic that respects the rights of the underprivileged; the works showing the struggle against the imposed orientalisation (stereotypes) and national uprooting (Żeromski, Brzozowski, and Abramowski); 3/ works in which history and national myths are revised in the name of overcoming one's Polish weaknesses, such as uncritical nostalgia for the heroic past (Wyspiański, Miciński, and Żeromski); 4/ writings showing various aspects of national and social solidarity, or lack thereof, and calling for ethnic activism (Dmowski, Nowaczyński, and Miciński), demanding a change in subaltern attitudes and, first of all, self-improvement in the name of the national future; 5/ literary attitudes demonstrating anti-passive, active attitude to that challenge of history, which was the direct, soldierly struggle for a free homeland (Słoński and Broniewski). The Literature of Criticism, which integrated these literary and philosophical trends, was, if one looks at the general principle of its existence and influence, a coherent current. It was marked by a spirited dispute with submission to historical processes and with internal social torpor, held in the name of the free Republic as a superior and non-negotiable value. This was a platform were both a socialist and a nationalist, a representative of landowners' conservatism and a supporter of

progress, a critic of a conciliatory policy and a revisionist, a former Russian *poputnik* and a fighting soldier-legionary could meet.

During the years of national crisis, writers, publicists, philosophers and the intelligentsia and members of other classes who were following them outlined and implemented a program of action that led to taking an active stance towards the challenges of history. Anti-colonial and indicating directions for rethinking the foundations of collective existence, including the arts in the broadest sense, and promoting an active attitude towards social and moral problems, The Literature of Criticism (New Critical Order) prepared several generations capable of fighting and rebuilding the new Polish state.

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Czech Literature at the Turn of the Epoch and Its International Contexts

Abstract

The contexts of Czech literature are related to the crisis and revolutionary situation which gradually built up towards the end of the 19th century and reached its peak in the years of World War I and during the attempts at the world revolution. This was manifested by a certain dichotomy of Czech literature after 1918 when Czechoslovakia came into existence as a relatively large state and a strong parliamentary democracy amidst more or less authoritarian countries, a state with the first-rate Czechoslovak legions tested in the battles of World War I, with strong industry and agriculture which had been the nucleus of Austria-Hungary in the past. On the one hand, there was a majority and influential left, on the other were conservative groups often connected with Catholic Church, and in the middle — liberal currents linked with the official policy of the so-called Prague Castle represented by the first president T. G. Masaryk (e g. Karel Čapek). Nevertheless, Czech literature as a whole helped create national and state consciousness, with the currents differing from each other only in their preference for traditions and political and economic systems. The problems of the new state were, of course, not only social,

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but also national, ethnic and religious and were also reflected in the international arena. Unlike in the other Central European countries, Czech literature exhibited radical leftist tendencies which were realised in the Czech modernist avant-garde, the apex of which was Czech poetism and surrealism (with the corresponding current in Slovakia) and their authors, such as Vítězslav Nezval, František Halas, Josef Hora, Jaroslav Seifert (1984 Nobel Prize winner), and Konstantin Biebl etc., but also the Catholic current which was very impressive from the artistic point of view (Jakub Deml, Jaroslav Durych, Jan Zahradníček, Jan Čep and others). Both of these tendencies were surprisingly and paradoxically linked with each other, as were their representatives. The drama and the novel (the Brothers Čapek, and Vladislav Vančura etc.) occupied a prominent place alongside poetry. What shows the mutual relationship between "the building of the state" (the title of a very important book by the famous Czech journalist and politician Ferdinand Peroutka) and Czech literature is the fact that between 1918 and 1938 Czech literature reached a world level for the first time in modern history. The author defends the thesis that Czech literature connected with the rise of the independent Czechoslovak state regardless of all these problems and idealistic constructs ("Czechoslovakism"), created a specific, original model of the co-existence of various currents of thought and of the relationships between culture in its widest sense and practical politics. This enabled radical artistic innovations anticipating the evolutionary tendencies of world literature (surrealism, anti-utopia/dystopia, baroquizing prose, and experimental novel).

Keywords

National revival, model of the evolution of literary currents, Czech modernism, generational stratification, dichotomies in Czech interwar literature, coexistence of the avant-garde and Catholic modernism, "Protectorate" literature, contrastive poetics

The European conditions of modern times started to develop since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and since the Westphalian system that was its consequence. While in Western Europe "modern history" begins with Columbus' discovery of America, it is generally known that from the standpoint of Europe it had already been "discovered" by ancient Egyptians (who probably also reached Australia where their hieroglyphic instruction-report was found) or by Phoenicians. This can be explained by a Eurocentric vision of the world, which has only recently been abandoned. Nevertheless, the rational core of this reflection consists in the fact that it was not until the discovery of the New World in 1492 that the fundamental transformation of Europe itself began in the first place as was often stated in connection with the 500th anniversary in 1992 (Housková, Hrbata, ed., 1993). However, later the entire European system found itself in constant flux. In this sense, the key processes took place in the 16th and the 17th centuries when the whole European population was transformed as a consequence of deep conflicts which affected all of Europe. Wars during the Reformation involved just parts of the continent, but – and this is the most important – they did affect the key territory of German lands (Thirty Years' War). The coup d´état and long civil wars in England, Scotland, France and throughout Central Europe, and later also in Eastern Europe (the smuta, the war of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonweath with Muscovite Russia at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries, when the exchange of dynasties took place) – all this had a strong religious subtext, though with ulterior power, political and mainly economic interests. The Reformation affected all of Europe, with the possible exception of Russia, where only the Orthodox Church was reformed in the middle of the 17th century, though with similar intentions and corresponding features and a strong intermingling of the secular and sacred spheres. The Peace of Westphalia influencing the rest of Europe, under which the Lands of the Czech Crown remained part of the Habsburg Empire, while Sweden as a European power became a victor of the Thirty Years' War, controlled European politics for a long time and started to break down only at the beginning of the 18th century. Its disintegration coincided with the Great French Revolution and the Napoleonic era in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The notion of Central Europe, with which the subject of this article is closely linked, started to develop at precisely this time: the concept of a United Europe as an imitation of the Roman Empire and its monumental style ("Empire") was accepted to a certain extent and on a different ideological level by the Holy Alliance, which dominated continental Europe after Napoleon's double fall. This lasted in fact up to the 1830s and briefly around 1848 when nationalism started the fragmentation of Europe or at least the internal split of larger empires (Austria). At the same time, on the contrary, unification processes were taking place (in Italy and Germany). These often contradictory movements led to a new division of Europe into blocs in which Central Europe played an important role as the kernel of the Triple Alliance.

The term "world literature" and its formation is associated with the emergence of so-called modernity which led to primary globalisation, the awareness of contexts and the formation of one cultural and mental entity in Europe and later America. There is no need to analyse the conceptions of Dionýz Ďurišin, his notions of "specific interliterary communities", "interliterariness" and "interliterary centrisms" or the theses of his brilliant book *Čo je světová literatúra?* [What Is World Literature?] (1992) and his summary of the conceptions of world literature (additive, axiological, synthetic, and representative), nor today's revelation of what has already been revealed, and is gradually demonstrated at world congresses of comparatists.[1]

The position of Czech literature, whose evolution – due to various historical events – was punctuated with the turning points in Hussitism and the Thirty Years' War, was unique. The national revival (Macura, 1983, 1999, 2015) presupposed – to a certain extent – the existence of an artificial community of intellectuals ("vlastenecká společnost" / "patriotic society") which meant, for example,

1 In connection with this, we formulated an approach which was to be presented at the world congress of comparatists in Tbilisi, Geogia, in 2022, but participation was dependent on the membership in a national association of comparatists, one of which I co-founded several years ago (The Czech and Slovak Association of Comparatists) but was later forced to leave; the text will be published in 2023 under the title *Interpoeticity as a Crucial Node in the Construction of the Complexes of the National Literature and World Literature*.

the Czechisation of German communities, albeit of Czech origin in the past. This was well captured by Hubert Gordon Schauer in his essay "Naše dvě otázky" [Our Two Questions] (1886). It was a hard, bitter dilemma that Czech literature was forced to solve, openly or covertly, over the entire course of its existence: certainly at the very beginning and during several reversals, later after the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918, then in the period of the threat to national existence under the Nazi German occupation (1939–1945) and later. In fact, this permanent process which is partly open, however mostly hidden, runs like a red thread through the history of Czech Lands, sometimes unexpected and stealthy as the undercurrent of the national danger, under various circumstances and in various geopolitical pressures. While the end of the Czech national revival was connected with the Spring of Nations (1848), the final inclusion of Czech literature into a broad European and perhaps world context rather occurred in the second half of the 19th century when the systematic translations appeared, in which the two tendencies associated with the geopolitical and ideological orientation of Czech national life can be found. Translations from Slavonic literatures, mainly Russian, form – to a certain extent – an artificial construction of Slavonic mutuality/reciprocality having its roots in Pan-Slavonic efforts with the elements in various milieus, including Polish and Russian messianisms, and at the general humanist level ("Litteraria humanitas" in Frank Wollman's concept) in Jan Kollár's work, continued by the more modern national efforts, for example, in Thomas G. Masaryk (Pospíšil, 2016, 2022, 2022). Simultaneously there were translations from other, more advanced national literatures (Pospíšil, 1998, 2000, 1997, 2017, 2014) of the European West, such as French and English, besides the strong German tradition and influence if we take into consideration that German was often the first literary language of the future Czech writers (Pospíšil, 2003, 2005, 2012, 2014, Pospíšil, Zelenka, 2020), such as, Karel Hynek Mácha and Julius Zeyer. A good example is Thomas G. Masaryk for whom German remained the de facto first literary language until his death. The very role of Germany was peculiar: Germany was situated, so to speak, both in the West and in the East. As its border was located along the Kiel–Trieste axis, as is often traditionally

asserted, the majority of German Lands, including the dominant Kingdom of Prussia, was actually situated in the East (Pomerania, the Baltic coast, Upper and Lower Silesia, the Hansa cities, and the neighbourhood of the Russian Empire). Only the rest of Germany lied in the West: Hamburg, Alsace, Lorraine, Rhineland, which had been under a long-term and strong influence of French culture (the region was home to periodicals written in French, i.e. *Spectateur du Nord* in Hamburg). This is closely connected with the *Sturm und Drang* movement aimed at forming a Pan-German cultural consciousness and distinctive literary forms (the German Preromantic ballads by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Gottfried August Bürger; later Goethe's *Erziehungsroman* as an allegedly artificial genre which was supposed be a contribution of German literature to the world) (Sammons, 1981). Czech literature follows a similar pattern as other Slavonic literatures, i.e. it has a specific, individual evolutionary trajectory. The Baroque ends as late as the 1730s at the time when poetic sentimentalism first appeared in England, e.g. James Thomson (1700–1748), author of the poetic cycle *The Seasons* (1726–1730), Edward Young (1681–1765), who penned *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1742–1745) or Thomas Gray (1716–1771), author of the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751, translated into Czech by Josef Jungmann under the title *Elegie na hrobkách veských* (1807), which became one of the most representative works of the so-called "graveyard school of poetry". Czech Neoclassicism and Enlightenment produced poetry, music, painting and scholarship (Haubelt, 1986; Tureček, Zajac, 2017), but it was a weaker output than, for example, in Poland or Russia. Similarly, Romanticism in Czech literature was significantly belated and leaned more towards Preromanticism or even Neoclassicism or Rococo, according to Vojtěch Jirát, for example, in Karel Jaromír Erben's work (Jirát, 1944; Pospíšil, 2003, 2011). Essentially, the only genuine Czech poetic Romantic par excellence was Karel Hynek Mácha, probably the most significant romantic poet in the world whose metaphors and oxymora, a symptom of truly modern poetry, were imitated by Czech surrealists. He was only recently followed through contemporary English translations of high quality; including probably the best ones by James Naughton (1950–2013). His narrative

poem *May* was published in six English translations (in 1932, USA, by Roderick A. Ginsburg, in 1949 by Hugh H. McGovern, in 1967 by Edith Pargeter, in 1987 by William E. Harkins, in 2000 by James Naughton, and in 2005 by Marcela Sulak, a highly qualified translator of several languages); besides, of course, some incomplete translations and a recent new attempt of British professor Alfred Thomas (University of Illinois, Chicago) who is known to Czech readers by the translation of his English book *Anne's Bohemia. Czech Literature and Society, 1310–1420 (1998; in Czech: Čechy královny Anny: česká literatura a společnost v letech 1310–1420*, HOST, Brno 2005).[2]

The roots of the transitive period in the Czech and Czechoslovak milieu after 1918 are related, as it seems, to the nature of the national revival whose scientific stage began as early as in the second half of the 18th century and culminated as early as the second half of the 19th century. The risky project brought, as mentioned above, dilemmas which remain unresolved by the Czech national community to this day (Pospíšil, 2013).

At the fourth congress of Czechoslovak writers (1967), Milan Kundera aptly pointed to Hubert Gordon Schauer (1862–1892), born in Litomyšl, co-founder of Czech modernism (Česká moderna), and to his article "Our Two Questions" (*Naše dvě otázky*). It was published in the periodical *Čas* [Time], subtitled "a magazine devoted to public issues", which came out regularly on the 5th and the 20th of each month. When Schauer´s article appeared on the 20th December 1886, i.e. in the first year of the magazine's existence, it caused a stir within the editorial office itself even before publication, as confirmed by their "Short Editorial Supplement" as well as a note by Masaryk, who was originally mistakenly credited as the author of the article. Masaryk's attitude to the article changed over time: even national myths evolve. While at the time of the publication of Schauer's article he was quite pragmatic and rationally critical which was typical of the so-called realists, later in Čapek's *Hovory s T. G. Masarykem* [Talks with Thomas G. Masaryk] – of course, in a different situation – he commented upon Schauer and his article in a rather disparaging

2 For a different view see Stanislav Rubáš: *Levého máchovské studie Máje*. Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Philologica 2, 2018, pp. 81–89.

manner. After 1918 the basic questions seemed to have clear-cut answers and these answers were secured by the geopolitical situation of the time, though Masaryk himself was certainly not as optimistic as a man of science, in the role of the President he was to become. That is why Schauer, a Czech literary critic, writer and thinker, characteristically descended from a German–Czech family, kept returning to Czech society. These two questions were: "What is the duty of our nation?" and "If we have the proper goal, are we able to reach it?"

These problems were not handled any more by the 1890s generation which grew up on the May/Máj, Ruch and Lumír writers' circles or groups, no matter how contradictory these groupings, their poetics and cultural orientation were. On the one hand, they advocated fulfilling the elementary tasks of the national revival in the 1850s and the 1860s, on the other they pursued Slavic and European trends, so that Czech decadence and symbolism reached a world level from the axiological point of view, though they manifested their unique features, especially social ones (Pynsent, 1973, 2008). The mixture of literary currents at the beginning of the 20th century completed the whole process of the merging and clashing of creative generations (after the fin de siècle group born in the 1890s). For them, the tasks of the national revival seemed to be too archaic. There is much more freedom in their inspirations which could not be used in the past, e. g. the cult of Arthur Schopenhauer or Friedrich Nietzsche, of German philosophy of will, but also of the Naturphilosophie, of French and British positivism, Russian radical positivism and extremism and, at the end of the period, of American pragmatism – all this finally erupted only in the 1920s together with belated expressionism, outbreaks of naturalism and the new, more optimistic trends which – through their playfulness and future-centrism – were moving away from the suffocating atmosphere of pre-war and war calamities by means of the glorification of new technologies and the idea of bright prospects: the different varieties of Futurism (Gwóźdź-Szewczenko, 2009; Pospíšil, 2011), Dadaism, constructivism or functionalism which permeated the whole range of arts.

In this context, it is not possible to ignore – besides the traditional relation with German thought and its traditions and the

re-orientation on the Romance and Anglo-Saxon world – also the Russian influences which affected the Czechs several times. If we leave aside the distant past, there is the national revival in which Russia obviously played a supporting and idealising role, followed by critical distance, but Czech and deep Russian culture collided with each other,, as can be seen in the instructive albeit limited reflections of Karel Havlíček Borovský, and later also translators, among other, Karel Jaromír Erben and Vilém Mrštík (Parolek, 1964). It was not a mere exception, as the "miracle of Russian literature" of the so-called Golden Age influenced the entire world literature and shaped the great names and key works of various national literatures (Hofman, 1959).

The problems of literary evolution became very sharply visible in the period of positivism with a strong impact of Darwinism: this applied to the concept of literary history, but also to thinking about literary genres (Ferdinand Brunetière). In several published studies, I formulated the conception of the so-called "pre-post effect" or "pre-post paradox" (Pospíšil, 1999). It concerns more or less the development of Russian literature, but – to a certain extent – also Slavonic literatures in general or at least some of their periods; their vestiges or defining features can be found also in other national literatures. The impact of poetological impulses of artistically rich European literatures, such as French, Italian, German, English and others, led to the imitation of their poetics, but also to a mere vague adoption of some trends, and gave birth to quite different innovative trends: the transformation of such impulses created the phenomenon called the miracle of Russian literature. In other words: an imperfect poetological impulse led to the adoption of another, new poetics.

Using the example of the Baroque, it is possible to demonstrate a more general problem of the so-called literary currents, styles and – on a different level – the projects of literary currents, or, in other words, the capability of the terms which emerged from the period of positivism to the present to more precisely capture concrete literary phenomena, to schematize them in an adequate way and generalize them under common labels. While earlier the significance of literary currents was not questioned, later, especially from the period of

Modernism and Postmodernism, literary currents are understood as schematic labels with a low cognitive potential. Literary currents and genres are often understood as contrasting components of the same or similar processes: literary currents express evolutionary changes, while genres are rather conservative components; both are, however, complementary and subject to mutual modification. However, contemporary theory of literature and poetics re-revises literary currents as phenomena defined rather in the framework of positivist-evolutionist methodology, but ones which are perhaps functional and useful even in the new arrangement at the beginning of the 21st century, if we regard them as schematic entities – similarly as genres – with the elements of phenotype and genotype, i.e. surviving thanks to some of their elements, thus forming the internal structure of literature.

In the 1930s, literary history was extensively analysed from the structural standpoint by René Wellek (1903–1995), a young scholar at that time, who used the term "theory of literary history" in his study written in English (Wellek, 1936, Zelenka, 1995, Pospíšil – Zelenka, 1996, Pospíšil, 2008, 2009, 2009). If we overlook the "auxiliary" character of the concepts of literary genres in the sense that they are unable to capture the details of each author's earlier work and its development, the key question still remains about the evolutionary paradigm and mutual relations of literary currents the poetological elements of which have never expired, but often live on within the framework of other poetics.

One of the older elaborate conceptions attempting to create a general model of the evolution of literary genres is that of Dmytro/ Dmitrij Čyževskyj/Čiževskij/Tschižewskij (1894–1977), a literary scholar of probably Ukrainian–Polish–Russian–German–Czech–Slovak–American background (Mnich, Urban, ed. 2009, Blashkiv – Mnich, 2016, Pospíšil, 2017, 2016), but also a philosopher, theologian and an expert in culture and religion (Pospíšil, 2022) who has considerably influenced both the Czech and Slovak scholarly communities.

His remarkable work on the history of Russian literature, divided into two volumes, Romanticism (Die Romantik) and Realism (Der Realismus) was conceived in close connection with his theory of the

mutability of literary/artistic currents (Tschižewskij, 1967; Pospíšil, 2010; Čyževs'kyj, 1948).

Roman Mnich in his monograph evaluates Čyževśky's concepts of literary currents as very competent, but naturally unfinished. He himself supplements Čyževśkyj's *Wellentheorie* with the stage of post-modernism. Čyževskyj based his concept on the idea of the Platonic and Aristotelian poles: the first kind is represented by ancient Neoplatonism, medieval Gothic period, Baroque, Romanticism, and Modernism/Neoromanticism/Symbolism, whereas the second by Antiquity, medieval Romanesque style, Renaissance, Neoclassicism, and Enlightenment, Realism/Positivism; Postmodernism – due to Mnich – shifts between these currents.

I would rather regard postmodernism as part of the neo-classicist trend, or more broadly speaking, as one of the Aristotelian currents, but the Russian theorist Igoŕ Smirnov (born 1941 in Leningrad) holds a different view. In the 1970s, he wrote an innovative book in which he described the alternation of artistic/literary currents. He returned to this book and to its editon much later, after he authored several monographs and studies in the meantime and became affiliated with the *Konstanzer Schule* and German university theory of literature (Smirnov, 1977, 1981, 2000, 2001). In his early book *Chudožestvennyj smysl i evoljucija poetičeskich system* [The Artistic Sense and the Evolution of Poetological Systems] (1977), he dealt with the logic of artistic modifications, transformations of tropes, semantic figures and text typologies as well as with the so-called post-symbolism, the basis of diachronic poetics and the notion of artistic presupposition, i.e. preconditionality. At exactly the same time, Šabouk's research team, often deliberately forgotten, formed by scholars pushed to the professional margins for political reasons, with virtually no chance of having their work published originally, developed an interdisciplinary concept involving visual arts, music and literature, which was similar to Smirnov's semiotic reflections.

Smirnov illustratively demonstrates that artistic/literary currents often return in other forms, e.g. and hearken back, for example, to Baroque, Romanticism, Realism, and Futurism (Pavera, 2000). This is not Čyževsky's *Wellentheorie* based on the Platonic and Aristotelian poles, but undercurrents which carry literary semiotic currents

through the streams of time. Thus, they do not vanish completely, but live on in other currents. This is an idea based on semiotic analysis; elsewhere we can find similar ideas from other sources and based on other paradigms. These are the epochs of Romanticism and Baroque, the currents which led to the birth of other currents often forming their substance, as Zdeněk Rotrekl argues, for example, in the case of Baroque (Rotrekl, 1995; Pospíšil, 1995). Partial examples can be documented with concrete phenomena, for example, how Baroque penetrates Romanticism, Realism, Modernism.

In the 1990s the monograph *Tvorivosť literatúry* [Creativity of Literature] by a Slovak theorist and historian of literature Peter Zajac came out. I reviewed it immediately and came to the conclusion that it was quite a new view of literary evolution, and consequently also of the changing literary currents, but Zdeněk Mathauser sceptically opposed, dampening my enthusiasm somewhat, and he was right: most probably it was due to his knowledge of Čyževśky; I read Smirnov the year his book was published (1977), but not Čyževsky's study dating back to 1948. I found the concept of pulsation fruitful, because it was based on other sources than Smirnov, but also because I found there a response to my term "chronicle space pulsation" from my book *Ruská románová kronika* [The Russian Novel Chronicle], from 1979 (published in 1983). From a terminological and methodological standpoint (Pospíšil, 2018) pulsation is – like everything in literary criticism – a metaphorical notion which, of course, does not mean a natural biological movement, but rather a pendulum-like development of literary/artistic structures. In other words, the so-called synoptic-pulse model comes from the same source as Čyževśky's or Smirnov's reflections, but is more schematic. This was evidenced, above all, by its rather rigid application to the development of Czech literature, traced for practically twenty or more years after Zajac and his collaborators (Zajac, 1990; Pospíšil, 1990; Tureček, 2012; Haman – Tureček 2015, Tureček – Zajac, 2012).

The first years of the 20th century brought some stability although it was quite clear that it was the eve of revolutionary events, of local conflicts and, finally, the world war called the Great War at that time. The war period gave birth to three different books: Berdyaev's *Duša Rossii* [The Soul of Russia] (1915), Naumann's *Das Mitteleuropa*

[Central Europe], 1915) and Lenin's brochure *Imperializm, kak vyssaja stadija kapitalizma* [Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism] (1916) (Berdyayev, 1915, 1992; Naumann, 1915; Lenin, 1917). The first two books present a glorification of war, each time from a different angle and with a different structure and scope (Berdyaev's brochure is unlike Naumann's precise Prussian analysis of economics and military affairs). Berdyayev demonstrates the messianic role of Russia which will be purified through the war and will feel its male principle more strongly as opposed to the hitherto dominant female principle; while Naumann proposes the restructuring of Austria-Hungary and the suppression of the Slavs as the only way towards gaining control of continental Europe. Lenin's popular text, in turn, radically accentuates the political-economic basis of the war in well-known theses defining imperialism which is – according to him – the real cause of the war. I would prefer to leave all the three books without critical commentary, which has already been made by others in different times and in a different way.

What is self-evident is that 1) The Great War arose from the undercurrent of local conflicts going all the way back to the beginning of the 20th century and perhaps much further back. It was preceded by the Boxer Uprising in China (1899–1901), the Anglo-Boer wars (1880–1902), the Russo–Japanese war (1904–1905) and the Balkan wars (1912–1913).

2) Politically speaking, the Great War showed the disastrous failure of political and cultural élites, especially those whose programmes precluded such a war: Social Democrats and Socialists. This enabled the radicalisation of left-wing movements and the rise of communist factions and parties which then determined the character of the whole of the 20th century.

A compelling topic for a case study is Karel Čapek (1890–1938), as well as his brother Josef (1887–1945) (Pospíšil, 1999, 1999, 2008, 2010). Karel Čapek belonged to a group of intellectuals in his native Czech Lands who were able to successfully lead the national revival and look for stimuli, particularly outside of the conventional German sphere, though Čapek himself – as is well-known – studied at the Faculty of Arts of the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin in the winter semester 1910–1911 (and then at Sorbonne in the summer).

On the one hand French literature, the modern branch of which he mediated to the Czech reader and especially to the new generation of poets, and, on the other, American pragmatism and the so-called Russian extremism represented the cultural influences that offset the impact of German philosophy and literature for Czech intellectuals (Pospíšil, 2009, 2010). *Francouzská poezie nové doby* [The French Poetry of New Times] was largely written in 1916 in the midst of and under the pressure of the war (as Čapek himself wrote in the afterword to a new edition which was published under the title *Francouzská poezie* [French Poetry] in 1936 by the Borový publishing house). Vítězslav Nezval famously stated in his foreword that before Čapek's interference into poetry there had never been such a tone in Czech speech. Later, Čapek abandoned the poetry of Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Moréas, De Régnier, Le Roy, Fort, Apollinaire, Vildrac, Romains and others and returned to it only like to a youthful memory.

In 1910, at Arne Novák's seminar, Čapek analysed the grotesque in modern German literature, in 1911–1912 at Arnošt Kraus' seminar he wrote his work on Faust (the text has not survived) and finally in 1914, in professor Krejčí's seminar, he read his treatise on pragmatism and wrote a study *Poměr estetiky a dějin umění* [The Relation between Aesthetics and the History of Art] which led to his dissertation from 1915 *Objektivní metoda v estetice se zřením k výtvarnému umění* [The Objective Method in Aesthetics with Regard to Visual Arts]. His seminar work on pragmatism was published for the first time under the title *Pragmatism or the Philosophy of Practical Life* by the Topič publishing house in 1918 as the 34th volume of the popular-education series *The Spirit and the World*. A year before interpreting his work on pragmatism in the treatise *Směry v nejnovější estetice* [Currents in the Newest Aesthetics], 1913), Čapek reflects on aesthetic relativism. In the dissertation, he speaks out quite strongly against "the aesthetics of production" and mentions understanding and empathising. Though there is a background of Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaft*, many of his expressions foreshadow something even from future Gadamer and Jauss. The grotesque, Faust, the harmony of beauty, pragmatism and translation of French modernism: somewhere in this flow, as Dostoevsky said, arise "the cursed questions", which Čapek tried to

answer by testing French modernism, Russian extremism, and Anglo-Saxon practicality and finally answered by abandoning poetry and by juxtaposing plurality with monocentrism. American pragmatism and Russian ethical maximalism do not cease to inhabit his work and even become new, though contradictory foothold on which his work rests.

Which of Čapek's needs does the theory of pragmatism actually meet? It is the fear of the abyss that modern relativism opens up before humankind in natural sciences and in modern literature; it is the uncertainty in which the human being finds no space of support. He clearly explicates this in the 9th chapter of his seminar work before the so-called *Five Kinds of Amendments* which later completed it. The *Five Kinds of Amendments* deepen his understanding of pragmatism as a partial answer to the questions he asks himself: pragmatism is not a new definition of truth, but a new definition of philosophy, a combination of scepticism and enthusiastic energy, reason and will, representing, above all, a new form of individualism. In this sense it concerns the four kinds of antinomic notions that prominently characterise Čapek's work: individualism vs collectivism and totality/totalitarianism vs plurality. The total crisis of society, sciences, and arts which manifested itself in the period of fin de siècle, opened up several new avenues for Čapek: modern poetry, relativistic philosophy, but also the question of the boundaries of human reason (Bradbrook, 1998, 2006).

Boží muka [Wayside Cross] (1917) and *Trapné povídky* [Embarassing Stories] (1921) are relatively early artistic depictions of the conflict between rationality and irrationality, absolute truth and relative truths. These themes late resonate in *Šlépěj* [Footprint] and [Elegie] which develop the subject of a rationally ungraspable epiphany, *Lída* and *Milostná píseň* [A Love Song] which portray the mystery of love, and *Hora* [A Mountain], which is strongly reminiscent of Wells' *The Invisible Man* (1897). The miniatures *Utkvění času* [The Resting of Time], *Ztracená cesta* [The Lost Way], *Čekárna* [Waiting Room] and *Nápis* [The Inscription] are preoccupied with similar themes: they present seemingly commonplace phenomena (roaming, waiting, the inscription above the bed of a sick man made with his own hand) as enigmatic and tormenting, torturous and evoking sympathy. In *Embarassing Stories*, there appear themes of injury and

offence (*The Offended*), social and mental depression, and dejection and sorrow (*Na zámku* [At the Castle], *Otcové* [Fathers], *Tři* [Three]). The noetic crisis arises from the contrast of values and the infinite modification of the axiological scale: what stands tall, falls, what is down, rises, the weak becomes stronger and the strong becomes weaker. In *Stories from a Pocket* and *Stories from Another Pocket* (1929) this tension is often overcome by humour which, however, never weakens the relativity of the truths being demonstrated. The theme of life's variants is fully developed in *Hordubal* (1933), *Meteor* (1934) and especially in *An Ordinary Life* (1934). Asking "radical questions" was characteristic of Čapek: his works were often responses to the questions of immortality (*The Makropulos Affair*), responsibility for the world (*Krakatit*, *War with the Newts*), and the relativity of truths (*Meteor*). The problems of plurality and totality/totalitarianism, chaos and order of the world are also evident in his travel books.

The Czech literary theorist and historian, translation critic and comparatist, later American literary scholar René Wellek (1903–1995) (Pospíšil, Zelenka 1996) demonstrated the problem of the two currents in national literatures, based on English and Czech literature: the materialistic, sensualist, the empirical current vs the spiritual and metaphysical current (Wellek, 1929). Milan Blahynka (born 1933) put forward, especially since the 1970s, but in fact much earlier, the concept of the so-called "earthly poetry" (pozemšťanská poezie), which is not rejected even by Catholic authors: this can be evidenced by the account of the Catholic poet Jiří Kuběna (real name: Jiří Paukert, PhD, conservationist by profession, born 1936, died 2017, who belonged to the famous Havel generation) and the works of Vítězslav Nezval, as well as the discussion was held together more or less by Kuběna's impulses in Bítov Castle between authors and critics of various political and ideological views, including Blahynka himself. After all, even "avid communists" who had been surrealists in the past, such as Vítězslav Nezval (1900–1958) and Konstantin Biebl (1898–1951), found themselves in danger at the beginning of the 1950s (Voda, Blahynka, eds, 2011).

Modernist avant-garde and spiritual and even Catholic poetry interpenetrate in the Czech literary panorama of the interwar period, reacting to each other, but also functioning complementarily and

seeking common ground (loci communes, topoi), which is far from fundamentalism and irreconcilability: this was the source of the only Czech attempt in the 1960s at a dialogue with Marxism and religion, as manifested, for example, by the work of the philosopher and playwright from Brno, persecuted during the so-called Czechoslovak normalisation or, more precisely, consolidation, Vítězslav Gardavský (1923–1978), author of the work *God is Not Quite Dead* (1967). This intermingling and debate in the Czech circles first waned after 1948 and again after 1970 for a long time and they have never been re-established in the original scope.

The lives and creative careers of Czech Catholic poets, prose writers and playwrights were not simple: the current situation placed them, especially in the time of the Second Czechoslovak Republic (October 1938–March 1939) at the centre of the debates that were oriented against the traditions on which the First Czechoslovak Republic was based; they raised accusations of artificiality, anti-religiousness, and some of them even welcomed the new situation as a return to the roots, despite not openly collaborating with the Nazi occupation power. This had dire consequences for them after 1945, but especially after 1948 when these attitudes were used against them, they were imprisoned or were – often together with their families – driven to despair and death; but their fates were by no means identical: the fate of Jaroslav Durych was different from that of Jan Zahradníček or Zdeněk Rotrekl and Josef Suchý.

Predecessors of this type of literature included, among others, Karel Dostál-Lutinov (1871–1923), Ludvík Sigismund Bouška (1867–1942) and their *Literary and Artistic Company* (1913–1948), including Dostál-Lutinov, Emanuel Masák, and the Russian émigré Sergij Vilinsky (1876–1950), the Olomouc magazine *Archa* [Ark], *Akord* [Chord] in Brno, (up to 1948, Jan Zahradníček, Robert Konečný, and young Zdeněk Rotrekl), which featured authors influenced by ruralism, e. g. Jaroslav Durych, Jan Zahradníček, František Křelina, Václav Renč, Josef Kostohryz, Jan Čep and others, and also the specialist in this type of literature Mojmír Trávníček (1931–2011). The natural background of this literature, especially poetry, was the region of Třebíč and Velké Meziříčí, a poor area – in contrast to Southern and Eastern Moravia – yet typical of the strong currents of past religious

thought (Kralice is situated here, in the neighbourhood of Ivančice): this is the birthplace of Vítězslav Nezval but also a residence and place of activity of the surrealist poet and the world famous artist/painter Ladislav Novák[3] (1925–1999).

The general revival of the religious stream in Czech literature directly connected with Catholic theology and cultural tradition was naturally international, all-European and began as early as the second half of the 19th century, when something like a canon of Catholic literature gradually arose both in historicising trends and in the permeation with modernist styles of Paul Claudel, Francis James, Jacques Maritain, Georges Bernanos, François Mauriac, John Ruskin, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, Hilaire Bellow, Ewelyn Waugh, and Graham Greene. We must make one side note: the Catholic convert Graham Greene (1904–1991), an M I 6 agent, as it later turned out, has been often translated into Czech as a critic of imperialism since the second half of the 1950s; later, when he spoke unfavourably of the occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and supported the figures of the so-called Prague Spring, he became persona non grata in former Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, probably by mistake or oversight, at the most inopportune time, a monograph dealing with his work appeared in the series of academic writings by the specialist in German, Scandinavian and English studies Jiří Munzar (born 1937), *Angažovanost v tvorbě Grahama Greena*[4] [Commitment in the Work of Graham Greene] (1983). Graham Greene was then the subject of the monograph by Jan Čulík (1925–1995; *Graham Greene: básník trapnosti: literárně filozofické zkoumání jednoho z posledních existencialistů* [Graham Greene, Poet of Embarrassment: Literary-Philosophical Investigation of One of the Last Existentialists], 1994; and *Graham Greene: dílo a život* [Graham Greene: Work and Life]. Academia, Praha 2002). Not coincidentally, Rainer Maria Rilke's *Die Aufzeichnungen des*

3 As a poet he is the author of *Pocta Jacksonu Pollockovi* [Homage to Jackson Pollock], 1966; *Závratě čili Zdoufalství* [Vertigo or Hope/Despair], 1968; *Textamenty* [Textaments], 1968; author and translator of concrete and phonic poetry, translator of Eskimo/Inuit poetry, Aimé Césaire, and Achim von Arnim.

4 See our review Literatura jako politikum [Literature as a Political Issue], *Rovnost* 15 March 1984, p. 5

Malte Laurids Brigge was translated into Czech by a Catholic author Josef Suchý (1923–2003), translator of German, Austrian, and Sorbian poetry and prose (Pospíšil, 1984, 2004, 2008), of Reinhold Schneider, Hans Canossa, Richard Billinger, Giovanni Papini, and Sigrid Undset (Juříčková, 2011). The Czech and Slovak literatures of this trend were, consequently, part of this massive trend: in the Czech milieu, the works of the world famous symbolist Otokar Březina (1868–1929) and the poet and prose writer Jakub Deml (1878–1961) appeared in connection with modernism practically since the 1890s or the beginning of the 20th century, also in the works of some authors in Slovakia, e. g. of Pavol Strauss (Pospíšil, 2014).

The line leading from German and Czech expressionism of the Brno Literary Group (*Literární skupina*) further runs through Czech Poetism (*poetismus*), e. g. in the novels by Vladislav Vančura (1891–1942), e.g. *Amazonský proud* [The Amazon Stream], 1923; *Pekař J. M.* [The Baker Jan Marhoul] (1924); *Pole orná a válečná* [Ploughshares into Swords/Arable and Battle Fields] (1925), *Poslední soud* [The Last Judgement], 1929; *Hrdelní pře aneb Přísloví* [Capital Crime Lawsuit or A Proverb], 1930; a short story *Rozmarné léto* [Summer of Caprice], 1926; and also a historical novel *Konec starých časů* [The End of Old Times], 1934; a historical short story *Markéta Lazarová* (1934) to psychological, expressive introspection of the prose of the second half of the 1930s and the 1940s. Unlike the historicising style practiced, for example, by Vladislav Vančura (who returned to the apotheosis of the Middle Ages, to the Renaissance "Veleslavín" Czech language) or by Jaroslav Durych (who used baroquized style in his trilogy *Bloudění* [The Roaming], 1929, and in his prose triptych *Rekviem* [Requiem] containing the short stories *Courier, Budějovice Meadow, Valdice*, 1930) which are often interpreted ideologically (two examples: the communist Vladislav Vančura criticised the bourgeoisie as a natural stage, the Catholic Jaroslav Durych and his skeptical return to the principals of Czech history); the prose writers of the end of the First and in the Second Czechoslovak Republic and the Böhmen und Mähren Protectorate, Jaroslav Havlíček, Václav Řezáč, Jan Drda, Egon Hostovský, and Jan Čep, on the contrary, free the human being from history on the grounds which might mean both protest and resignation, for which the context is the manifesto

Slovo k mladým [Speech to the Young] by Kamil Bednář (1912–1972) with his conception of "the naked human". This ahistoricity was, of course, understandable at that time and had an existential dimension which enabled one to survive by focusing on the present moment and general freedom.

The group of the authors of the psychological introspection trend also called "the prose of the protectorate" may be regarded as the stylistic pinnacle of the Czech prose of the 1920s–1940s, though its representatives had different personal and political fates. One of them, the emigrant and perennial sceptic Egon Hostovský (1908–1973) started his writing as early as the 1920s, and was the author of the prose works *Zavřené dveře* [The Closed Door] (1926), *Ztracený stín* [The Lost Shadow] (1931), *Žhář* [The Fire Raiser] (1935), *Nezvěstný* [The Missing] (written in exile, 1955), *Dobročinný večírek* [The Charity Ball] (written in exile, 1957). Another author, Jan Drda (1915–1970), who continued the early prose works of Karel Čapek (Kautman, 1993), later became a communist and much later the supporter of the Prague Spring, was the author of the excellent prose works *Městečko na* dlani [The Open Townlet] (1940, also filmed), *Živá voda* [Water of Life] (1942) and *Putování Petra Sedmilháře* [The Travels of Peter the Liar] (1943), Václav Řezáč (1901–1956), and the author of the short stories *Černé světlo* [The Black Light] (1940), *Svědek* [A Witness] (1943) and *Rozhraní* [The Boundary] (1944). Finally, there was Jaroslav Havlíček (1896–1943), practically all whose works, e. g. *Neviditelný* [The Invisible] (1937), *Ta třetí* [The Third] (1939), *Helimadoe* (1940), *Neopatrné panny* [Careless Virgins] (1941), *Vyprahlé touhy* [Burnt-Out Desires/Thirsty Lusts] (1934, after the reworking better known under the title *Petrolejové lampy* [Kerosene Lamps], 1944); were filmed in various years; Jan Čep (1902–1974), an emigré after 1948, who was the author of the refined prose works in the rural, introvert style *Zeměžluč* [The Centaury] (1931), *Letnice* [The Pentecost] (1932), *Děravý plášť* [The Perforated Cloak] (1934).[5]

A substantial feature of the poetics of the so-called prose of the Protectorate, the problems of which go beyond the boundaries of

5 The key stories appeared in the anthology *The Sister Anxiety/Sestra úzkost* (1944) (Pospíšil, 2014).

the present study, is anxiety as an existential feeling, pessimism based on the rational reflection of the movement of the world, sometimes also on a return to biological instincts and deep introspection based on philosophical spirituality (Geisteswissenschaft), and psychoanalysis revealing fear as a dominant feeling in life. All this was closely connected – not only in sociological and psychological terms – with the general social atmosphere, but also with the philosophical conception which lost its supporting elements of positivism, and practically of all optimistic currents both in thought and arts, such as Futurism, vitalism and sensualism, the foundations of Dadaism, Czech Poetism, and surrealism.

Conclusion

The present study attempted to grasp the specific features of the position of Czech literature in the life of the Czech nation as continuing the historical traditions from the period of national revival, and being the impulse for the total restoration of the Czech statehood. The contexts of Czech literature are linked with the crisis and revolutionary situation which gradually arose towards the end of the 19th century and culminated just before the First World War together with the attempts at world revolution. This became apparent in a certain dichotomy of Czech literature after 1918, when Czechoslovakia came into being as a relatively large state and a strong parliamentary democracy surrounded by authoritarian states, a country with a Czechoslovak legions tested in the battles of the First World War, with strong industry and agriculture which had long before become the kernel of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. On the one hand, there was the majority and influential left, on the other the conservative currents often connected with the Catholic Church, and in the middle moderate liberal streams supporting the official so-called "Prague Castle policy" of the first Czechoslovak president Thomas Masaryk (one of its representatives was, for example, Karel Čapek). Nevertheless, Czech literature as a whole helped construct the national and state consciousness that differed in their preferences for traditions and the political and economic system. The problems of the new state were, of course, not only social, but also national,

ethnic and religious and were also reflected in the international arena. A well-founded analysis of strong and weak elements of interwar Czechoslovakia was presented – paradoxically, but characteristically and multifariously – by a talented foreigner with a tragic fate, Valery Vilinsky (Vilinskij, 1931, Pospíšil, 2017). It is interesting to note that the author of the book cover was the painter and architect Josef Kaplický, father of the famous architect Jan Kaplický (1937–2009). Valery Vilinsky asserted that Czechoslovakia was a model (albeit an unsuccessful one) of a multinational and multilingual state gravitating towards European globalism, but preserving the specific features of a national state. Unlike the other countries of Central Europe, we reject the term "East Central Europe", "Ostmitteleuropa" in German, as asymmetric as the notion of "Westmitteleuropa"/"West Central Europe" which is practically not used; Central Europe is a compact, synthetic concept and the so-called ethnic mixture of its eastern part does not constitute a strong argument. In Czech literature, there were radical, left tendencies which were obvious especially in the strong modernist avant-garde with a peak in Czech Poetism and surrealism (*nadrealizmus* or Slovak surrealism) and among their authors, such as Vítězslav Nezval, František Halas, Josef Hora, Jaroslav Seifert (Nobel Prize winner, 1984) and Konstantin Biebl, but the already mentioned Catholic stream was also artistically impressive (Jakub Deml, Jaroslav Durych, Jan Zahradníček, Jan Čep and others); both streams were sometimes paradoxically linked, as were their representatives. Besides poetry drama and novel were also prominent (the Čapek Brother, and Vladislav Vančura). The list of influential writers can be, of course, extended. The mutual context of the building of the state (this is the title –*Budování státu* in Czech – of the famous book written by the Czech interwar and post-war journalist and politician Ferdinand Peroutka) and Czech literature may be confirmed by the fact that in the period 1918–1938 Czech literature reached a world level for the first time in modern times. I defend the thesis that Czech literature linked with the rise of the independent Czechoslovak state, with all its problems and idealistic ideological constructs (e. g. Czechoslovakism), formed a specific, original model of co-existence of various streams of thought and the relationship between culture in its broadest sense and practical politics. This enabled the creation

of radical innovations anticipating the future tendencies of world literature (surrealism, antiutopia/dystopia, baroquizing prose, and experimental novel).

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The Poetry of Ivan Franko: Themes of Ukrainian National Unity, Statehood and Fight for Freedom

Abstract

This paper is based on the political, philosophical, and journalistic poetry of the Ukrainian writer, thinker, and public and political figure Ivan Franko (1856–1916), on top of the evolution of his views on the problems of national unity of eastern and western Ukrainians, the achievement of Ukrainian statehood, and the ways and means of the liberation struggle is highlighted. The poet and thinker expressed these views in poems of various genres (sonnet, epistle, manifesto, *duma*, dedication – *posviata*, apostrophe, "fairy tale," obituary, *pomennyk*, "prologue," "march," etc.) and lyrical epics. In Franko's early poetry, the future social and national liberation of Ukraine is linked to a universal and socialist perspectives, while the Ukrainian people play a messianic role in liberating peoples from the yoke of Russian tsarism. In the mature Franko, the messianic emphasis changes from universal to national. It is noteworthy that in Franko's poetry of 1875–1905 the image of the national (native/our/our own) home appears regularly. At the beginning of the twentieth century, his poetry shows an awakening neo-romantic current. Franko's state-building

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poetic discourse is characterized by prophesying freedom, relentless therapeutic exposure and scourging of the inert slave mentality of the oppressed nation. In his state-building pathos, Franko refers to the historical duchies, resorts to poetic allegory, and originally processes biblical (Old Testament) plots, images, and motifs, actualizing them and projecting them onto his contemporary Ukraine; he weighs the priorities between humanism and militant nationalism, and reflects on the rationale of numerous Ukrainian sacrifices in the bloody liberation struggle. Reflecting on the problem of power in history, the poet came to the conclusion that national will is measured by the degree of struggle to gain it (and the degree of its defense).

Key words

Ivan Franko's poetry, Ukrainian statehood, national liberation, neo-romanticism, biblical intertext

After a short Russophile period (1874 to first half of 1876), in 1876–1886, Ivan Franko solidarized and interacted mainly with radical socialists in Galicia who, like himself, were influenced by Mykhailo Drahomanov (Mykhailo Pavlyk, Anna Pavlyk, Ostap Terletskyi, early Ivan Belei, and others), but also maintained editorial and journalistic cooperation with the nationalists: Volodymyr Barvinskyi, Damian Hladylovych, Omelian Partytskyi, and Kornil Ustianovych). As a result, he was caught between two groups. At the same time, Franko became closer to Polish socialists in Galicia (in 1878–1881 he published in the Lviv workers' newspaper *Praca*, in 1889, – in the Krakow *Ognisko* magazine, which gathered sympathizers of socialism and the national movement; in 1889–1891, he printed in the Lviv weekly, *Przyjaciel Ludu*, which was founded and edited by socialist and Freemason Bolesław Wysłouch, and in 1887–1897, he worked on the editorial team of the *Kurjer Lwowski* paper, which was then edited and published by Freemasons Henryk Rewakowicz and Wysłouch). In 1890–1899,

he was one of the leaders of the left-leaning Ruthenian-Ukrainian Radical Party, and late in December 1899, he became a member of the national (center-right) Ukrainian National Democratic Party. Accordingly, the development of Franko's poetic, journalistic, and philosophical work reveals a wide range of motives, from left to right, from short-lived Russophile to early universal, federalist, radical socialist, social revolutionary, and at the same time national-patriotic to advocating state-building, national independence and conservative views in the mature period of his public activity.

There are numerous differences between what Franko expressed in his poetic inspiration and the constraining formal requirements of verse size and what he said in journalistic and scholarly writing, which is better suited for clear and precise formulation of ideas. In his national and patriotic, pan-Ukrainian and state-building poetry, Franko is an inspired poet, an expressor of feelings, aspirations and dreams, unspecified futuristic visions, while in his political and philosophical journalism he is a sober analyst, a thoughtful theorist, a concrete pragmatist and a realist politician. Even if expressed more or less synchronously, Franko's emotionally driven views were not always in tune with the rational views of Franko the publicist. In this article, limited by the space, it is not possible to compare them all, so I will just consider the themes of Ukrainian national unity, statehood, and the liberation struggle in Franko's poetry (for his views on the appropriate and possible form of Ukrainian statehood in his journalism (cf. Nakhlik, 2019). These themes in Franko's poetry can be traced in the work of many researchers of different times. This article contains a systematization of these poetic motifs in Franko and their modern comprehension in research.

The pan-Ukrainian theme can already be traced in Franko's early Ukrainophile sonnet *Kotliarevskyi* (1873, printed in 1893), in which Franko, a Galician, linked his own and other Ukrainian writers' works to the poetic opening of the Poltava resident Ivan Kotliarevskyi, author of the burlesque and parodic poem *Eneida*: "ohnyk, nym zasvichenyi, … rozhorivs, shchob vsikh nas ohrivaty".[1]

1 Hereinafter, Franko's works are cited following these editions: Franko, 1876–1986; *Pokazhchik kupiur*, 2009; Franko, 2008, 2010.

This and another sonnet, *Narodnyii pisni* (1873, printed in 1874), in which the young poet was inspired by the "living words" of the traditional folk songs, expressing the "spirit of the people," reveal that at the Drohobych gymnasium, Franko was formed partly as a romantic folklore lover and a Ukrainian philosopher.

At the same time, the young Franko was no stranger to Russophile sentiments. In his early poem *Vskhid sontsia* (1875, published in 1876) national patriotism, internationalism and humanism are based on theocentric Christian principles. He poet calls out to the God of the "native land" – "Rus" ("*O, sylnyi predkiv nashykh Bozhe!*" ["Oh, the mighty God of our ancestors!"]), complaining, that "*bratnoi liubovy / Mezhi narodamy nema!*" ["There is no brotherly love between the nations!"], his young "soul" "*Vsiu zemliu, liudei by vsikh rada obniaty, ... / Brativ vsikh ziednaty soiuzamy zhody* ["Would like to all embrace all the Earth, all people ... Unite all brothers with alliances of peace"]. His ideal was "*Liubov bratnia, shcho svit zbavyt, / Zhoda – doch nebes sviata!*" ["Brotherly love, which will save the world, / Peace – the sacred daughter of the heavens!"], and he was calling for national and international harmony based on Christian love of one's neighbor: *Na ruinach predkiv slavy ... / Bratnia zhodo, nam vytai*" ["Upon the ruins of ancestors' glory ... / Welcome, brotherly concord"].

Instead, the political and philosophical message *Tovaryshcham iz tiurmy* [*To Comrades from Prison*] (e.g., printed in 1878) was already a poetic presentation of the socialist ideal of a universal social order – *krainy sviatoi, / De braterstvo, i zhoda, i liubov*: "*Nasha tsil – liudske shchastia i volia*", "*braterstvo velike, vsesvitnie*" ["the holy land, where there is fraternity, and concord, and love: 'Our aim is human happiness and freedom'"]. In his social and revolutionary manifesto *Na sudi* [*On Trial*] (1880, published in 1887) the poet hopes to "*Zvalyty nash suspilnyi lad*" ["Abolish our social order"] with its antagonism between the rich, the lords and kings (*paniv, tsariv*), the oppressed "mute people" [*liudu nimoho*] and the "working hands" [*robuchykh ruk*]. And social revolutionaries want to do this "with truth, and labor, and science" [*pravdoiu, i pratseiu / i naukoiu*], but they admit that "bloody war will be necessary" [*viina / Kryvava znadobytsia*]. The aim of non-violent overthrow does not refer to a national enslaver, but to a social one. As a political thinker, a theorist of social development,

Franko was open to accepting different ways of progress, both peaceful (cultural) and violent, and did not limit himself to one or reject the other; depending on the circumstances, he was ready to recognize the expediency and legitimacy of an armed struggle for liberation (the poem *Berkut* [The Golden Eagle], 1883, printed in 1887), not to mention the fact that he considered war to be a final and just war to defend his country and homeland from a foreign invader, the "villain". "*Supokii – sviateie dilo / V supokoinyii chasy, / Ta syl v chas viiny ta boiu / Ty zovesh do supokoiu – / Zdradnyk abo trus iesy*" ["Peace is a holy thing in times of peace, but if you call for mourning in times of war and battle, you are a traitor or a coward"] //… "*Ta koly v robuchu poru / V nashu khatu i komoru / Zakradaies lyhkodii, / Shchob zdobutok nash rozkrasty, / Shche i na nas kaidany vklasty, – / Chy i todi sviatyi spokoii?…*" ["But when a villain enters our house and barn in the working day, / To steal our spoils and put chains on us, / Is there still holy peace?"] (*Supokii* [*Peace*], 1883, printed in 1887).

In addressing the national question, Franko stood on socialist and federalist principles since 1878. Defending the primacy of the socialist idea over the national one, and thus the economic interests of the people over the linguistic and cultural ones, in his early satirical poem *Duma pro Maledykta Ploskoloba* [*Thought on Maledykt Ploskolob*] (written and published in 1878) ridiculed the Ambassador of the Galician Provincial Sejm and State Council in Vienna, Vasyl Kovalskyi, for what he considered to be a not very relevant demand that Galician "Rusyns" have the right to use paper with inscriptions in their native language and to use it in court proceedings.

In the symbolic and autobiographical poem *Kameniary* [*The Stonemasons*] (published in 1878), universal messianic accents are placed. Self-denying "stonemasons", "not heroes" and "not *bogatyrs*," selflessly work for "the people" as such; the ideal of the characters and the author related to them is "*dobro nove u svit*" ["new goodness in the world"], "*shchastia vsikh*" ["happiness for all"]. In accordance with the socialist-federalist beliefs Franko held at the time, his poem *Moia liubov* [*My Love*] (1880, printed in 1881) declares the unity of the national and universal: love for Ukraine is unthinkable without "holy love," "*do vsikh, shczo lliut svij pit i krov / Do vsikh, kotrykh hnetut okovy*" ["for all who pour their sweat and blood, / For all who are oppressed

by fetters"], that is, all working and enslaved people on earth: "*Ni, khto ne liubyt svikh brativ, / Yak sonce Bozhe, vsikh zarivno, / Toi shchiro poliubyt ne vmyv / Tebe, kokhanaia Vkraino!*" ["No one who does not love all brothers, like the sun of God, all equally, has not been able to love you, my beloved country!"]. In the poem *Rozvyvaisia, lozo, bodro…* [*Grow, vine, abundantly…*] (1880, printed in 1882), the revival of Ukraine is presented as serving the progress of all mankind: "*Zelenisia, ridne pole, / Ukrainska nyvo! / … shchob svitu dobra sluzhba / Z tvoho plodu stala!*" ["Be green, our native field, Ukrainian soil! / … So that you can serve well / with your yield!"]. In the sonnet *Pisnia budushchyny* [*The Future Song*] (1880, printed in 1887) the national and international are intertwined in a kind of romantic way, similar to the endowment of Poland with a liberating historical mission in the works of Mickiewicz, Słowacki and Krasiński, with the difference that in Franko's case, the messianic role in liberating peoples from the yoke of Russian autocracy belongs to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people: "*… z pohordy pylu / Ty otriaseshsia i… Do naitiazhchoho boiu, / Ostatnioho, za pravdu i voliu mylu / Ty povedesh narody i prohnylu / Staru budovu rozvalysh soboiu. / I nad obnovlenym, shchaslyvym svitom, / Nad zbratanym, chystymi liudmy / Ty zatsvitesh novym, prechudnym tsvitom*" ["… from the scorn of dust / You will shake yourself off and… to the hardest battle, / The last one, for truth and sweet freedom / You will lead the nations and the rotten / Old structure you will destroy. / And over the renewed, happy world, over the united, pure people, you will spring with a new blossom"]. Franko's historiosophical prophecy was partially fulfilled in 1917–1921, and especially in 1991, and it is still being fulfilled today, when Ukraine has become an outpost of European nations against the new Russian-imperial military expansion.

In the poetic *Hadki na mezhi* [*Thoughts on the baulk*] (published in 1881) the freedom of Ukraine also is inseparable from a universal perspective, and socialist in its organization of labor: "*Ya dumav pro liudske braterstvo nove, / … chy v svit vono shvydko pryjde? / I bachyv ya v dumtsi …: / Upravlena spilnym trudom, ta rillia / Narod hoduvala shchaslyvyi, svobidnyi. / … tse Ukraina, svobidna, nova!*" ["I thought about a new human brotherhood, /… will it come soon into the world? / And I watched, thoughtfully… / Cultivated by joint labor,

that arable land / Fed a happy, free people. / This is Ukraine, free and new!"]. The poetic *Posviata Mikhailovi Petrovychu Drahomanovu* [*Dedication to Mykhailo Petrovych Drahomanov*] (written and printed in 1882), too, combines the universal ideals to which the young Galician radicals adhered to, following their Geneva-based emigrant mentor with the dreamed-of national ideal: "*Ta zh Ty vkazav nam put ... do liudskosty skarbnytsi, / Do postupu budovy dokladaty, – / Dobra sobi v dobri dlia vsikh shukaty*" ["But you have shown us the way... to the treasure of humanity, / to add to the progress of building it, / to seek the good for ourselves in the good of others"]. Addressing his teacher, Franko assured him that his Galician students, "sons," "*vraz z Tobov bazhaiut... shchob Tebe iz wyhnannia, iz dali / Na volnyi my Vkraini povitaly!*" ["They wish together with you... that you would come from exile, from far away, / and be welcome to the free Ukraine!"]. By "free Ukraine," we should understand, most likely, is the acquisition of social and national rights.

In his rhymed fantasy titled *Poiedynok* [*Duel*] ("*Klubamy vyvsia dym. Revly harmaty...*" ["The smoke tumbled. The cannons roared."], written in 1883, printed in 1893), Myron (the lyrical "I" of the author) is facing "the holiest battle for humanity" ("*naisviatishoho za liudskist boiu*").

Meanwhile, thanks to his cooperation in 1880–1886 with the Lviv national magazines *Dilo*, *Zoria*, *Pravda*, *Zerkalo*, and *Nove Zerkalo*, partial rapprochement with their editors (mentioned above), and ties with patriotic figures of the Kyiv *Hromada*, primarily Oleksandr Konyskyi and Volodymyr Antonovych, and in general, under the influence of the then Galician nationalist environment, the press, and various events (literary and musical Shevchenko evenings and other, folk meetings), Franko created a number of purely nationally accented poems in 1880–1884. The famous hymn *Ne pora, ne pora, ne pora...* [*'Tis not the time*] (between 1880 and 1884, printed in 1887) imbued with the ideas of national self-sufficiency ("*Nam pora dlia Ukrainy zhyt*" ["It's time for us to live for Ukraine"]), harmony and consolidation ("*ne pora / V ridnu khatu vnosyty rozdor!*" ["It's not time to bring discord to our home!"], "*Pid Ukrainy yednaimos prapor*" ["Let's unite under the flag of Ukraine"]), and at the same time sacrificial dedication and national freedom (*volia*): "*U zavziatij, vazhkii*

borotbi / My poliazhem, shchob voliu, i shchastie, i chest, / Ridnyi kraiu, zdobuty tobi!" ["In a fierce, hard struggle, we will die to win freedom, happiness, and honor for you, our native land!"]. How should one understand this freedom of the "native land"? As a Ukrainian state? From Franko's political and journalistic reflections of the time, we know that he did not equate the concept of national freedom with the concept of national statehood, but linked the two, according to the theory of federal socialism, to social and national rights and freedoms.

National and unifying accents are also placed in the early poem *Rozvyvaisia, ty, vysokyi dube...* [*Grow, ye tall oak...*] (1883, printed in 1893): *"Pora, dity, dobra pohliadity / Dlia vlasnoi khaty, / Shchob hazdoiu, ne sluhoiu / Pered svitom staty!"* ["It's time, children, to look out for your own home, to become a master, not a servant, before the world!"]. It voiced the idea of a unified state. The poet believes: *"Vstane slavna maty Ukraina, / shchaslyva i vilna, / Vid Kubani azh do Siana-richky / Odna, nerozdilna"* ["The glorious mother-Ukraine will rise, / happy and free, / from Kuban to the river San / One and indivisible"].

It is indicative of the change in emphasis in the poetic message in *Liakham* [*To Poles*] (1882, printed in 1887) compared to the poem *Napered!* [*Forward!*] composed in 1875 in the folk-Russophilic environment of the student "Academic Circle" and the editorial board of the *Druh* magazine (published there at the same time). That early ethnocentric poem had a clear anti-Mickiewicz and anti-Polish orientation, but it was unspecific about the author's national identity: He opposes the "*liakhiv yarmu*" ["Liakh's yoke"] to the unspecified "we" and "brothers", while "Poland" is opposed to "Rus". The poet called on his peers to fight a decisive struggle "*putem myru*" ["through peace"], "*nauky i pravdy*" ["science and truth"] against Polish rule "in Rus." This inspired apostrophe by Franko to his young generation ("*yunykh syl*") of Galician Ruthenia was a polemical response to Mickiewicz's famous *Oda do młodości* [*Ode to Youth*], inspired by the romantic pathos of the heroic creation of a new world. Instead, the message of *Liakham* refers to "Ukraine" as the land of a common state and free and prosperous coexistence between Ukrainians and Poles: *"Bulo kolys voli dovoli / Dlia nas i dla vas na Vkraini, / I khliba dovoli na*

poli, / Lysh zhyty b ta buty donyni" ["There used to be enough freedom / for us and for you in Ukraine, / enough bread from the field, / so we could live and be to this day"]. In the new poem, other subjects of the historical tragedy between the Ukrainian and Polish peoples are implied as well: the neighboring imperial powers: because the Poles wanted to *"Nad bratom panamy ostays, / V yarmo yeho shyio pryhnuty"* ["remain masters over their brothers, / to bend their necks in a yoke"], *"Susidy obokh nas z toboiu / I tysnut, i drut, brate liashe"* ["Neighbors of both you and me / Oppress and tear apart, brother Pole"]. Taking into account the bitter lessons of history, the poet no longer encourages the Ukrainian peasants to destroy Poland, as in the poem *Napered!* [*Forward!*] (*"Ot dnes na Rusy Polshchy nit, / My dnes yu rozvalym!"* ["One day there will be no Poland in Rus, / and one day we will break it apart!"]), but addresses the Poles with a cautionary appeal: *"Brataimosia, liashe, ta shchyro / Hromadoiu, dilom i myrom, / Brataimos, yak z rivnymy rivni, / A ne yak pany i piddani!"* ["Let us fraternize, Pole, and sincerely, / In community, labor, and peace, / Let us fraternize as equals, / not as masters and subjects!"].

In the artistic and conventional imagery of the nation-centered poem *Sviatovechirnia kazka* [*Christmas Eve tale*] (1883, printed in 1884) the lyrical "I" focuses on the native "Rus-Ukraine", that he sees flying *"na krylakh kherubyma"* ["on the wings of a cherub"] as *"Kokhanuiu ridniu"* ["the beloved homeland"] – *"ves ruskyi krai... / Shyrokyi: "Otse ridnia moia!! Otse moia dershava, ...: / Dnister, Dnipro i Don, Beskydy i Kavkaz, / ... shvydko vlast chuzha propade z seho polia!"* ["the whole Ruthenian land, the wide. / 'This is my homeland! This is my country... / Dnister, Dnieper and Don, the Beskids and Caucasus, /... Soon will the alien power disappear from this land!"]. In these lines, the pan-Ukrainian theme is intertwined with the national liberation theme, and then the national consolidation motif is also heard: Rus-Ukraine leads the lyrical "I" *"v silskii khaty"* ["to the village cottages"] (to the peasants), *"do pastyriv naroda"* ["to the shepherds of the people"], *"V vikontsia yasnii popivski"* ["Into the bright windows of priests"] (to the clergy), *"v mista... mizh varstaty"* ["to the cities... Among workshops"] (to the workers), then *"v shkoly"* ["to the schools"] (to teachers), *"V palaty sudovi"* ["Into the courtrooms"] (to judges), *"V varstaty dukhovi"* ["Into the workshops of the spirit"]

(to the creative intelligentsia). The poem is Ukraine-centered not only in the national but also in the personal sense: Franko, whose characteristic was a universalism of thought and who repeatedly appealed to "humanity," connects his existence with his native Ukraine, which, as he prophetically foresees, is the only one that will not ignore or forget him: "*Khoch vse pokyne, ya odna tebe ne kynu, – / Lysh ty liuby mene – svoiu Rus-Ukrainu!*" ["Even if everything abandons you, I will not, / just love me – your Rus-Ukraine!"].

In a poetic obituary *Na smert bl[azhenoi] p[amiati] Volodymyra Barvinskoho dnia 22 sichnia (3 liutoho) 1883 roku* [*On the death of the blessed memory of Volodymyr Barvinskyi on January 22 (February 3), 1883*], Franko praised the People's Republican leader as "*ratnyka za ridnyi liud*" ["a warrior for the native people"], and a year later he composed a new respectful *pomennyk, Spomianim! (V pershi rokovyny smerty Volodymyra Barvinskoho)* [*Remembering! On the First Anniversary of the Death of Volodymyr Barvinsky*i), in which he again glorified the "Cossack Volodymyr", "*shcho na storozhi / Rusy zhynuv*" ["who perished on the guard of Rus"]. The second verse emphasizes the national perspective as a priority for the nationalists: "*Pratsia lysh o vlasnii syli / Nam zbuduie voli dim*" ["Only working on our own strength / Will build our house of the free"].

The *pomennyk* titled *V XXIII-ti rokovyny smerti Tarasa Shevchenka* [*On the 23rd anniversary of Taras Shevchenko's death*] (written and printed in 1884) is notable for its inspired prophecy of liberation from the Russian imperial yoke in favor of "*Staroi slavy i syly Ukrainy / Kotra ot-ot voskrese, vstane znov*" ["The old glory and strength of Ukraine, / which is about to rise again"], and the unification of the native country, which had been torn apart by neighboring states: "*Nebavom proiasnytsia svit nad namy! / Shchaslyvi, volni, my zo vsikh storin / Sviatoi Ukrainy hromadamy / Pidem k mohyli tvoii na poklin*" ["Soon dawn will shine upon us! / Happy and free, from all corners / of the holy Ukraine, in crowds / We will come to your tomb to honor you"].

The *pomennyk* titled *V dvadtsiat piati rokovyny smetri Tarasa Hr*[*yhorovycha*] *Shevchenka* [*On the twenty-fifth anniversary of Taras Hryhrovych Shevchenko's death*], written on 13 March 1886, after Franko's visit to Kyiv the previous year in the second half of March to early April (printed in 1886), is not so optimistic anymore. In the

Dnieper Ukraine, potential leaders of the people "*Bezsylliam vlasnym skuti, /... Tremtiat, zhduchy vorozhykh stril*" ["Are shackled by their own powerlessness,... / They tremble, waiting for enemy arrows"], and complain: "*Malo nas! / Kudy to rvatsia nam? I khto pide za namy?*" ["We are few! / Where should we go? / And who will follow?"]. "*A molodizh, nadiia Ukrainy*" ["And the youth, the hope of Ukraine"], is joining the all-Russian liberation movement "*pid praporom chuzhym i na chuzhomu poli!*" ["under an alien flag and in the alien land!"]. And "*tut... de pidkarpatski dity*" ["here,... where Subcarpathian children"] (mostly youth) "came to honor Shevchenko's name", they also declare: "*bidni my chyslom i rozumu maloho, – / A nyni b ne ditei, muzhiv tut treba mnoho!*" ["we are scarce in numbers and feeble in mind – / And today many men are needed, not children"]. Therefore, the apostrophe to "our martyred prophet" is imbued with a romantic motif of national grief and ends with moods of sorrow and hopeful questions: "*Slabi my, batku! Po Kavkaz vid Sianu / Slabi, rozbyti na atomiv drib! / ... Chy skoro bude svit po tij strashennii nochi?*" ["We are weak, father! / From the Caucasus from San {river} / Weak, broken into tiny atoms!"].

For Franko, as the author of the national-patriotic poem, *Proloh na pamiat 50-tykh rokovyn smerty Ivana Kotliarevskoho* [*Prologue in memory of the 50th anniversary of the death of Ivan Kotliarevskyi*] (published and printed in 1888), "*Kotliarevskyi, batko nash Ivan*" ["Kotliarevskyi, our father Ivan"] is "*Odyn z poslidnykh svidkiv toho, jak / Poslidni iskry volnoho zhyttia / Pomalu hasly, popelom vkryvalys*" ["One of the last witnesses of how / The last sparks of free life / Little by little, covered with ashes"], "*vin / Z velikoho pozharu Ukrainy / Naibilshu spas narodnu sviatist – slovo*" ["he / From the great fire of Ukraine / Salvaged the people's greatest sanctity – the word..."], "*Sam syloiu svoieiu voli i pisni / Mynuvshynu Ukrainy zviazav / Z budushchynoiu stiahom zolotym*" ["Alone, by the power of his will and song / Connected the past of Ukraine / With the future, with a golden stitch"]. The poem emphasizes the enslavement of Ukraine by the Russian Empire, and its policy of violent Russification: "*Pid nevoli hnetom*" ["under the burden of slavery"] "*Pryhkodylos / Poboriuvat Eolovi vitry, / Shcho rizko vialy z pivnochi*" ["To fight the Aeolian winds, / Which blew strongly from the north"]. "*Charivnyk-moskal*" ["The Muscovite wizard"] "*Pryishov u khatu vdovy Ukrainy / I shvydko stav u nii riadyt po-svomu, / Yak pan.*

Ne pomohla sprechka zhodna – / 'Malchat, stara!' – otse ioho vsi chary, / Po-zvirsky prosti i, yak zvir, mohuchi! / ... Nyni my / Pid vahotoiu toho slova stohnem, / A slovo nashe – zapakhushcha kvitka / Na vseslavianskii nyvi – topches v griaz, / Proslidujes, mov dykyi zvir u lisi" ["Came to the house of the widow-Ukraine / And he quickly began to rule it in his own way, / Like a lord. Not a single argument helped: / 'Shut up, old woman!' – that's all his charms, / Beastly simple and, like a beast, powerful! / ... Now we / Groan under the weight of that word, / And our word is a fragrant flower / In the all-Slavic field – trampled into the mud, / Running like a wild animal in the forest"]. However, in the final chords of the poem, the poet expresses his faith in the liberation of Ukraine from the Russian imperial yoke: "*Shche derevam nasyllia i samovoli, / I hnetu, i samodurstva, i temnoty / Ne suzhdeno do neba dorosty / I sontse nam navik zakryty*! *Blysne / Te sontse yasne, roziidusia khmary! / Upadut ti tverdyni, shcho nam nyni / Tiurmoiu, i zalunaie nashe slovo, / Prekrasne i svizhe, na ves svit, nanovo!"* ["The trees of violence and arbitrariness, / And oppression, and tyranny, and darkness / Are not destined to grow in heaven / And block the sun from us forever! It will shine / The bright sun, the clouds will disperse! / Those present strongholds will fall / The prison, and our word will be heard, / Beautiful and fresh, for the whole world, anew!"].

One should note the appearance in Frank's poetry of 1875–1905 (that is, actually for three decades) of the image of native/ou / own/ own (meaning: national) home [or country cottage – *khata* – trans.]. In the early poem *Koliada (ruskym hospodaram)* [Christmas carol (for the Rus farmer)], dated December 24, 1875 (probably on Christmas Eve) (printed in 1876), "*Ruska zemlytsia*" [Rus land] is pictured as "our house". In *Yak dvoie liubliatsia, a zhdut...* [*When two people love each other, and are waiting...*] (1883, printed in 1926) Franko, appealing to "my nation", prophesized the coming of a time, "*Koly shchaslyvyi i mitsnyi, / Do pratsi stanesh na svii lan / I v svoii khati budesh pan*" ["When, happy and strong, / Will toil your own land, / And will be a master of your house."].

The unanimous revision of the 1893 (first) edition of the allegorical poem, *Naimyt* [*Worker for hire*] (written and printed in 1876) also provides an example. In both editions, after outlining the social

antagonism of landlords and peasants (the worker for hire, a servant "*dlia dobra chuzhoho... Pit krovavyi llie, /... Potom truda svoho / Panam panovanie daie*" ["for the good of others... sweats blood, /... the result of his labor / He gives dominion to the lords"], the poet proceeds to an allegory of the social and national enslavement of the Ukrainian people: "*Toi naimyt – nash narod, shcho potu llie potoky / Nad nyvoiu chuzhov*" ["That hireling is our people, who labors so painstakingly / a stranger to the field"].[2] Hence, in the first edition, the leitmotif of liberation is logically highlighted: "*Sviatoi volenki vin dovhi zhde stolitia, / ... v serci, khot i yak nedoleiu prybytim, / Nadiai vonosty zhyie*" ["He awaits the sacred freedom for long centuries, /... In his heart, even though it's crushed by misfortune, / The hope for freedom lives"]. Addressing his native people, Franko prophesied in the original version: "*I volnyi vlasnyi lan / Ty znov oratimesh, shchasliv iz svoho trudu, / U shchastiu, yak u horiu, – velykan!*" ["And your own field / You'll plow again, happy with your labor, / a giant in happiness as in sorrow!"]. These lines express the futuristic idea of people working on their own account in a free homeland. In the second edition, the author strengthened the prophetic liberation theme, emphasizing that "our people" will not only enjoy the fruits of their labor, but also rule over their land: "*I volnyi vlasnyi lan / Ty znov oratimesh, vlastyvets svoho trudu, / I v vlasnim kraii sam svij pan!*" ["And your own field / You'll plow again, owner of your labor, / And your own master in your land"].

Over time, Franko became even more imbued with the idea of the rule of the Ukrainian people over their native land, as evidenced by the poem *Velyki rokovyny. Proloh, hovorenyi pered yuvileinoiu vystavoiu 'Natalky Poltavky' v pamiat stolitnykh vidrodyn ukrainsko-ruskoi narodnosty*" [*Great Chronicles. Prologue, recited before the jubilee performance of 'Natalka Poltavka' in memory of the hundred-year rebirth of the Ukrainian-Rus nation*] (written and printed in 1898): after the

2 Franko probably borrowed the image of the Galician people as workers for hire from an article by Drahomanov, which he had read, that warned: "While little by little... Galician patriots will work on literature,... foreign elements will continue to grow, and the Galician people will have to either ended up becoming hirelings in their own land, or will turn their hopes to a bloody revolution" (Drahomanov, 1874, p. 381).

loss of Cossack statehood, Ukrainians *"Znov… bazhaiut v ridnii khati / Rai zhotovyty sobi"* ["Again… want to make their native home / into a paradise for them"]. The image of "freedom" (as national liberty and power) "in their native home" is also rehabilitated in *Sichovyi marsh* [*The Sich march*] (written and printed in 1905): *"V nashii khati nasha volia, / A vsim zaidam zas!"* ["We have our freedom in our home, / and no one else can come in"].

In *Velyki rokovyny*, Franko projects the messianic action on every compatriot, realizing that the fate of the nation depends not only on exceptional personalities, such as the one poetized in the poem: *"slavnyi, beztalannyi / Shchyryi batko nash Bohdan"* ["famed, unlucky / our earnest father, Bohdan" (Cossack hetman Bohdan B. Khmelnytskyi), but also from as many active and selfless fighters as possible: *"Do velykoho momentu / Bud hotovym kozhdyi z vas, – / Kozhdyi mozhe stat Bohdanom, / Yak nastane slushnyi chas" /… Kozhdyi dumai, shcho na tobi / Milioniv stan stoit, / Shcho za doliu milioniv / Musysh daty ty odvit"* ["Be ready for the big moment, / each of you – / Everyone can become a Bohdan, / when the time is right / Everyone know you have / a fortune of millions on your shoulders, / you must give an answer to"].

In general, in 1897–1906, Franko was seized by a new urge to create nationally accented poetry. In his national-philosophical poem *Yakby…* [*If…*] (1897, published in 1898), the poet interpreted the dreamed statehood of Ukraine in the context of national struggles ("rivalry") from the Cossack era to his present day and through the lens of the New Testament themes as well as ones derived from the pillars of romanticism, such as suffering and atoning sacrifice (redemption), liberation struggle, in addition to the positivist foundation of work. The figurative semantics of the poem (*Vkraina*, *panuvannia*, *svoboda*, *volia, slava*, *borba*) suggests that it is a kind of reprise of the national anthem of the then-popular poet Pavlo Chubynskyi and composer Mykhailo Verbytskyi, *"Shche ne vmerla Ukraina*, / *Ni slava, ni volia…* (*"Zapanuiem i my brattia / U swoii storontsi"*, *"Dushu i tilo my polozhym / Za nashu svobodu"* ["Ukraine has not yet died, / neither glory nor freedom…" / We, brothers, will also reign / in our country", "We will lay down our body and soul / for our freedom")] – emphasis mine Ye. N.). Franko rejects the factor

of suffering and atonement cultivated in Polish and Ukrainian romanticism as a guarantee of future liberation as ineffective: "*Yakby samo velykeie strazhdannia / Mohlo tebe, Vkraino, vidkupyty, – / Bulo b tvoie velyke panuvannia, / Nikomu b ty ne musyla vstupyty*" ["If the great suffering itself / Could redeem you, Ukraine, / your dominion would be great, / and you would not have to yield to anyone"]. According to Franko's historiosophical observation, the Ukrainian people, among other European nations, shed the most blood and tears in the liberation struggle, but did not get the desired freedom: "*Yakby mohuchist, shchastia i svoboda / Vidmirialys po miri krovi i sliz, / Prolytykh z sertsia i z ochei naroda, – / To khto b z toboiu supirnytstvo znis?*" ["If power, happiness, and freedom / were measured by the amount of blood and tears / shed from the heart and eyes of the people, / who would rival you?"].

Five years later, in the *Proloh* (printed in 1903) to his unfinished poem *Lisova idyliia* [*Forest Idyll*], Franko would remark in the same spirit: "*... nikhto shche / Plachem svoiei doli ne vidper*" ["Nobody has yet / changed their fate by crying"]. This philosophical observation resonates with Mickiewicz's sad remark "*na żale ten świat nie ma ucha!*" ["the world has a deaf ear for complaints!"] addressed to fellow emigrants in the epilogue to the poem *Pan Tadeusz*. In Franko's translation of the epilogue of *Pro shcho tut dumat na paryzhskim bruku...* [What to think of on Parisian pavement...] (1913, printed in 1914): "*... na zhal sei svit ne maie vukha*" ["Unfortunately, this world has a deaf ear"]. Instead, the author of *Yakby...*, based on his own observations of the course of history, considers forceful struggle ("*Volia, slava, suyla / Vidmiriuiursia miroiu borby!*" ["Freedom, glory, strength / Measured by the measure of struggle!"]) and work on the "wide field" of "mother"-Ukraine to be effective ways of national liberation Franko's historiosophical conclusion that national freedom is measured by the struggle for its acquisition (and the measure of its protection) resonates with the teachings of the young Mickiewicz in his programmatic poem *Oda do młodości*: "*Gwałt niech się gwałtem odciska*" ["May there be violence for violence"] – and remains valid and instructive today.

In *Pokhoron* [*Funeral*] (printed in 1899) the existence of the Ukrainian people is understood in social and national liberation

aspects. Having started a "*khlopskie povstannia*" ["peasants' rebellion"] "*za prava liudei, za voliu*" ["for the rights of people, for freedom"] – liberation from the yoke of "aristocrats" and "nobles" and in order to "*Zrobyty panom na svoiomu poli*" ["make {the native people} masters of their land"], the "leader" (*provodyr*) Myron, however, prefers to be defeated than to win, because he sees in the rebellious "avengers" (*mesnyky*) – albeit fighting "heroes" full of "holy fire" – "*idealu brak, vysokikh zmahan, viry*" ["a lack of ideals, of high aspirations, of faith"], and therefore he is not satisfied with "*pobida mas, / Brutalnykh syl, plebeistva i netiamy*" ["the victory of the masses, of brute forces, of plebeians and ignoramuses"], those who "*v dushy svoii buly i temni, i pidli, / Taki zh raby, yak upered buly*" ["were dark and mean in their souls, / slaves that they were before"]. Franko expresses a far-sighted prediction of the danger that in the event of a victory of the peasant anti-feudal and national liberation revolution, uncultured mob rule (ochlocracy) may emerge. At the end of the poem (in the Epilogue), the subject of the narrative's disturbing reflections and action concerning "our people" not as a social community (*khlopy* – peasants) but as an ethnic one – "*plemia sonne, i boliashche, / i malovirne*" ["a tribe sleepy and sore, / and unbelieving"] come to the fore. In the final "deep thought", the hero is most "tormented" by the problem of national self-preservation, self-sufficiency, and the dignity of "our people", crippled by national apostasy: *I chom vidstupnykiv u nas tak mnoho? / I chom dlia nykh vidstupstvo ne strashne? / Chom ridnyi stiah ne tiahne ikh do svoho?*" ["And why do we have so many apostates? / And why is apostasy not terrible for them? / Why doesn't their native banner draw them to their own?"]. Why is not "*sluzhba vorohu, shcho z nas shche i kpyt*" ["serving the enemy who mocks us"] repulsive to them? Originally developed in "our time of great class and national antagonisms", the "legend of the great sinner who turns to the righteous path thanks to the vision of his own funeral" (as the author says in the preface) testifies to Franko's "conversion" to national priorities. Ukrainians should not be subordinate, but a full-fledged actor in history, an independent and at the same time a cultural political force – this is the ideological imperative of the poem.

The problem of the prudence of many national sacrifices in the bloody liberation war falls into Franko's field of vision. *Pokhoron*

suggests that the deaths of the heroes who "*muchenytskyi prynialy vinets*" ["accepted the martyrdom crown"] will not be in vain: "*Ikh smert – zhyttia rozbudyt u narodi. / Se pochatok borni, a ne kinets. / Teper narod v nykh maie zhertwy vzir / I nenastannyi do posviat pidpal; / Ikh smert budushchi rody pererodyt, / Vshchepyt bezsmemrtnu sylu – ideal*" ["Their death will awaken life in the people. / This is the beginning of the struggle, not the end / Now the people have in them the image of a sacrifice, / and the unceasing fire of dedication; / Their death will rebirth future generations, and instill an immortal power – the ideal]. The "leader" Myron not only optimistically interprets mass "heroic death" as a guarantee of the future revival of the "people", but also drives the "chained people", like "*nemov lihyvyi skot, / V ohon i v sichu, v trudy i nebezpeky, / Shchob nibechit plebeiski svi instynkty, / Shchob hartuvalys lytsari-zapeky*" ["like lazy cattle, / into fire and brimstone, into toil and danger, / to destroy all plebeian instincts, / to harden them into fierce knights"]. He even throws the rebels "to the slaughter" in order to "inflame, ignite" the "souls" of future generations for the desired victory.

In the poem *Na ritsi vavylonskii – i ya tam sydiv...* [*By the river of Babylon, I sat, too...*] (1901, printed in 1902), which is an original reinterpretation of the biblical Psalm 137: "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept" with its motifs of exiles' longing for their native land and the problem of singing songs in captivity, Franko introduces the theme of mercilessly exposing and scourging the inert slave mentality of the enslaved nation. The conditions of national subjugation depicted in the poem do not turn it into complete slavery, physical and spiritual, the enslaved enjoy certain social freedoms and material goods. However, they do not use these even limited social rights, freedoms and prosperity as opportunities for liberation, on the contrary, they are levers be mans of which the enslavers keep the conquered people in captivity, providing them with a kind of servile existence and causing the enslaved people to fear losing the commodities provided to them. Thus, being in captivity is tolerable and, thanks to adaptability, even financially secure. Hence the slavish deformation, the underdevelopment of the national psychology, the split soul in the enslaved, which, despite a desire for freedom, is formed as cautious, conformist, and slavish in a patient and even comfortable way. This

national mimicry, the fear of openly expressing one's opinion, become common features of slave mentality: *„I khoch zris ya, mov kedr, shcho vinchaie Lyvan, / Ta dusha v mni pokhla, povzka, mov burian. / ... Khoch ya put ne noshu na rukakh, na nohakh, / Ale v nervakh noshu vse nevolnytskii strakh. / Khoch ya volnym zovus, a, yak rab, spynu hnu / I svobidno v lytse nikomu ne zyrnu. / Pered blaznem usiakym koriusia, breshu, / Volne slovo v dushi, nache svichku, hashu. ... / Khoch dobra dorobyvs, ta vono lysh tiazhyt"* ["Though I have grown like a cedar that crowns Lebanon, / my soul is sloping, creeping like a weed. / Though I wear no fetters on my hands or feet, I still carry the fear of slavery in my nerves. / Though I call myself a free man, I bend my back like a slave, and I look no one in the face freely. / I bend and lie before every clown, I extinguish my free word in my soul like a candle... / Though I have gained goods, they only weigh me down"].

At the same time, in such a sharply reprehensible way, the author encourages his compatriots to actively fight for national liberation, while, as can be inferred from the poem, he also allows for an armed act of liberation. So, the self-critical national theme in poetry gives way to a creative, rebellious and liberating one: *"Ya khylytsia pryvyk vid dytyniachykh lit / I vsmikhatsia do tykh, shcho katuiut mij rid. / I khoch chasom, mov hrim, hrymne slovo moie, / To tse bliashanyi hrim, shcho nikoho ne vbie. / I khoch dushu manyt chasom voli prybav, / Ale krov moia – rab! Ale mozok mij – rab! / ... I hkoch chasom v dushi pidiimaietsia bunt. / Shchob is put otriastys, staty tverdo na hrunt, – / Akh, to i se ne toi hniv, shczo shabliuku styska, / Se lysh zloba nyzka i serditist rabska"* ["I've been bowing down since childhood / and smiling at those who torture my kind. / And though my words may sometimes be like thunder, / They are tin thunder that will kill no one. / And though my soul is sometimes drawn to the lure of freedom, My blood is a slave! And my brain is a slave! / And though my soul sometimes rises in rebellion. / To shake off the fetters, to stand firmly on the ground, / – Oh, this is not the anger that clutches a saber, / This is only low anger and a slave's grudge].

With such a powerful philosophical and poetic "therapy" of the slave mentality of the subjugated nation, Franko affects the readers using the opposite method: the listed negative formulations should turn into positive ones in their perception.

A notable component of Franko's state-building artistic discourse of the beginning of the 20th century became his neo-romantic "awakening" poetry. Like the Galician romantic revivalists Markian Shashkevych, Ivan Vahylevych, Nikolai Ustianovych, Antin Mohylnytskyi, Yosyf Levytskyi, Volodymyr Shashkevych, K. Ustiyanovych, etc., the Bukovyna poet Yurii Fedkovych, as well as Panteleimon Kulish in the poems of the *Dzvin* [*The Bell*] collection (1893), to which Franko responded with a review (*Zhytie i Slovo*. 1894. Vol. 2. 5), he appeals to duchy statehood in his state-building pathos. Although in the late Kulish (not only in his poetry, but also in his artistic prose and philosophical journalism), the appeal to the cultural and state heritage of Kyivan Rus was ideological and conceptual, political and historiosophical, embodied in the original concept of Old Rus, in the mature Franko it was episodic: In the poems *Kryk sered pivnochi v yakims hlukhym okoli…* [*A scream in the night in some remote area*], *Vyishla v pole ruska syla…"* [*The power of Rus stepped out…*] (both printed in 1902), *I dosi nam snytsia…* [*And we still dream…*] (written and printed in 1906). They are based on the *Tale of Igor's Campaign*, as evidenced by the relevant epigraphs. According to the romantic tradition, the poems *Kryk sered pivnochi v yakims hlukhym okoli…* and *I dosi nam snytsia…* express a longing for the heroic, albeit tragic, princely past, which contrasts with the sleepy, servile present, and stands in contrast to the indifference and obedience of the generations contemporary to the author with the brave ancestors. However, the poet does not idealize princely Rus.

In the poem *Vyishla v pole ruska syla…* his attention is focused on the present, and it is presented not in opposition to the heroic past, but in parallel to it: he depicts the revival of Ukrainianness, national manifestation and consolidation in the struggle for national rights: "*Vyishla v pole ruska syla, / Korohvamy pole vkryla; / Korohvy, yak mak, leliiut, / A mechi, yak iskry, tliut …*" ["The Rus' army came out into the field, / and covered the field with banners; / The banners, swaying like poppies, / and swords, glowing like sparks"]. Since foreigners were concerned about the massive entry of Ukrainians into the political arena of that time, they opposed them and attacked them with abuse (this is emphasized by the epiphany "*A lysytsi v poli breshut*" ["And foxes are lying in the field"] repeated at the end of the

first three stanzas, an allusive reminiscence of the epigraph: "The foxes yelp at the vermilion shields"), the poet resorts to a kind of political correctness, depicting the Ukrainians' protest as inevitable resistance to aggressive neighbors: *"Vyishla v pole ruska syla, / Ne shchob brata zadusyla, / Ne shchob slabykh hrabuvaty, / A shchob ordy vidbuvaty, / … Ne chuzhoho my bazhaiem, / Ta i svoie ne znevazhaiem, / Ta i ne pen my derevianyi, / Shchob terpity styd i rany …"* ["The Rus' army came out into the field, / Not to strangle a brother, / Not to rob the weak, / But to repel hordes… / We do not want what's not ours, / But we do not despise our own, / And we are not a wooden stump, / To endure shame and wounds…"]. Thus, in this historical excursion, the poem involves the national past. The author poeticizes the stages of the Ukrainian "freedom" from the duchy of Rus to Haidamachchyna: the "foxes" *"Breshut na shchyty chervoni, / Yak brekhaly vo dni oni,… / Zavdaly zh lysytsiam zhakhu / Ti shchyty! I dosi snytsia / Im ta ruskaia volnytsia, /… Te kozatstvo, haidamatstvo, / Shcho ne znalo voli vpynu, / Shcho borolys do zahynu; / I proishlo, yak more krovy, / … Po istorii Vkrainy…"* [They lie to the red shields, / as they lied in those days,… / Those shields terrified the foxes! /And they still dream of that Rus freedom, /… The Cossacks, the Haidamaks, / Who did not know freedom to the end, / who fought to the death; / and passed like a sea of blood, /… Through the history of Ukraine…]. The image of Cossacks and Haidamaks in the poem is ambivalent: there is both a much-desired national "freedom" and a "sea of blood" that is undesirable for a humane poet. At the same time, this image sounds like a warning to invaders.

In *Dosi nam snytsia…*, to which the words of Prince Ihor were chosen as the epigraph: *"A liubo yspyty shelomom Donu"* (or *"Abo napytsia sholomom z Donu"* ["or drink a helmetful of the Don"], is a continuation of the previous phrase: *"S vamy, Rusytsy, khochu hlavu svoiu prylozhyty"* ["I wish either to lay down my head"]), there are also allusive reminiscences from two works in which the hydronyms of the San and Don symbolize the western and eastern borders of Ukrainian ethnic lands and the future free Ukrainian state: the poem by the Galician poet and publicist Ksenofont Klymkovych *Velyky rokovyny* (Slovo. Lviv, 1863. № 5. 16/28. I): *Iz-vid Donu ta azh do Sianu* [*From the Don to the San*], one of the most common versions

of the national anthem, *Shche ne vmerla Ukraina*. *"Stanem, brattia, vsi za voliu, / Vid Sianu do Donu, / V ridnim kraiu panuvaty / Ne damo nikomu"* ["We will rise, brothers, all for freedom, / From the San to the Don, / We will not let anyone / rule in our native land"] (the original edition by P. Chubynskyi in the Lviv *Meta* magazine, 1863, № 4, does not include these verses). Franko alluded to these symbolic boundary hydronyms immediately in the first stanzas of the poem: *"I dosi nam snytsia, / I dosi manytsia / Blakytnoho toho Donu / Sholomom napytsia. / Vid rodu do rodu / Siu daleku vodu / My spivaly-spomynaly, / Yak mriu-svobodu. / Yakby-to nam z Donu / Ta ne bulo hromu, / To vzhe b my nad Buhom, Sianom / Ne dalys nikomu"* ["And still we dream, / and still we fantasize about the blue Don, of drinking a helmetful of it. / From generation to generation / We sang and remembered / this distant water / As a dream of freedom. / If only there had been no defeat on the Don, / We would have been over the Bug and the San, / We would have been unstoppable"].

According to the poet, the reasons for the national captivity of Ukraine lie in the unfavorable geopolitical situation of the Kyiv state, the vulnerability of its eastern borders, unprotected from the steppe hordes, as well as in the strategic miscalculations and tactical failures of the Kyiv dukes: *"Yakby-to nad Donom / Staly my riadamy, /Zaliznymy pantsyriamy / Sperlysia z ordamy! ... / Bula b nas ne rvala / Steoppvaia ptakha, / Yakby na Donu stoialy / Chaty Monomakha"* ["If only we had stood / in rows over the Don, / If only we had fought the hordes / with iron armor! //... The steppe bird would not have torn us apart, / If Monomakh's sentries had stood on the Don"]. In the second half of the poem, the mythologeme of the river Don serves the author to bitterly conclude about the enslaved situation of eastern Ukrainians who did not conquer the Don. Instead, some of them were forced to move to the Donetsk basin in search of earnings: *"Dovelos-taky nam / Nad tym Donom staty / Robitnytskymy valkamy / Baidaky taskaty //... Pid zemleiu dla chuzhoho / Kamin-vuhil tsiukat"* ["We had to become / laborers over that Don / and pull the *baidaks*. / Under the ground mine for coal for the alien men"]. The poem contrasts the former national "our good" [*nash harazd*] from the times of the princely state with the work "for someone else", that is, for a foreign country, state, or nation.

It was in those years that Franko again, as at the turn of the 1870s and 1880s, pondered the problem of power in history. From under his pen comes an unexpected and, at first glance, untypical poem *Konkistadory* [*Conquistadors*], imbued with romanticizing of armed raids (written and printed in 1904). This is a vivid heroization of strength and courage in history. However, if Franko's historical novel *Zakhar Berkut* (1882, printed in 1883) vividly depicts how the people of Tukholka put up a courageous resistance to the Mongol invasion, while in *Konkistadory*, on the contrary, the European conquerors of present-day Latin America and their attack on the peaceful "sleeping town" are poeticized. In Franko's scientific and journalistic works, we can find unique statements that are consistent with the pathos of defense in *Zakhar Berkut*. Why did the poet create this work and how does it fit into Franko's reflections on international struggles in history?

Despite the conquistador theme, *Konkistadory* as a poem is only superficially related to the history of the conquest of Latin America. Franko is not talking about the Spanish or Portuguese conquistadors. They are distant and foreign to him. It is not their militant heroism, which was used for conquest, that the Ukrainian poet actually praises. Sensitive to the liberation struggle of enslaved peoples, condemning the occupation of foreign lands, Franko could not have sympathized with the aggressive way of the conquistadors, who subjugated and exterminated the indigenous population of America. In the same year, in the article "Poduvy vesny v Rosii" ["Spring storms in Russia"], he noted:

> Read the most prominent representatives of the Russian thought of the Nikolaev time – Pushkin and Lermontov, read what they say about the Caucasus – not a trace of the idea that those Caucasian highlanders have any right to independent life in their mountains and that war against them involves raiding and oppression, drowning free ethnic groups in blood, and not any civilization.

And a year before that, in the critical review "Shcho take postup?" ["What is progress?"], Franko illustrated the thesis "What steep roads sometimes human progress takes!" with the following example:

> And it also happens that newcomers, like the Huns and Magyars once, arrive to an already inhabited region and begin to exterminate the older population like wild animals, or turn them into slaves by force in order to occupy their land. Such was the case with those Dutch settlers in South Africa who are now called Boers. Having left Europe 300 years ago, they cleared space at the Cape of Good Hope with obvious robbery; when the British came there later and took the region, part of the Boers … went a little to the north and again destroyed a couple of African tribes and settled on their land …; when the country was also conquered by the British, the Boers went even further north and once again plundered the vast lands 'beyond the mountains'… and the springs of the Orange River…

According to Franko's definition, those Boer conquerors were "little robbers". Here, Franko, traces the "complicated ways" of "human progress", giving the conquerors, "newcomers", an assessment from the point of view of humanism, clearly branding them as robbers. And much earlier in the second part of his *Prychynky do otsinennia poezii Tarasa Shevchenka* [*Introduction to evaluating the poems of Taras Shevchenko*], the article "Temne tsarstvo" ["Dark kingdom"] (written and printed in 1881) the young Franko explained his understanding of heroism:

> In the times of great fanatical blindness of people, we see many such cases that make the hearts of next generations tremble, but which, however, no one thinks to count as heroic deeds. Only such a deed can be called heroism, where the pain and suffering of an individual acquires or redeems the good of the whole nation, the whole of humanity.

In the continuation of "Temne tsarstvo" (1882), Franko placed Shevchenko with his "heartfelt words" of "harmonious brotherhood" in the poem *Kavkaz* [*Caucasus*] – solidarity with the liberation struggle of the Caucasian peoples – "higher… than Pushkin, who in the poem *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* unapologetically praises the war against the Caucasians from the position of the greatness and glory of Russia…" (Franko refers to this imperial expansion a "predatory war").

It is noteworthy that in the poem *Velyki rokovyny*, Franko condemns the escape of Aeneas with the Trojans from Troy captured by the

Greeks and their search for a "better fate", "luxuries", "And glory, and brilliance, and gold" as a betrayal of their fatherland: "*Tikaie inshoi shukaty khaty. / Piatamy nakyvav vid tebe, nene! / Lyshyv tebe u ranakh, u krovi! / ... / Pishly novoi matery shukat*" [He runs away to look for another home, / / Pointing his heels away from you, mother! // I left you in wounds, in blood! / ... / We went to look for a new mother"]. For Franko, the desperate conquistadors are only an excuse and a means for poetic allegorization. For the same reason, the author abstracts from the suffering, the interests and the historical tragedy of American natives in the poem. The projection of the unconditional courage and zeal of the conquistadors onto the Ukrainian situation is meaningful and relevant for the poet: for him, it is important to educate Ukrainians to be ready for the unconditional, if necessary armed, acquisition of their rights and their statehood. In the end, the reconquest of their land (in his understanding, this is heroism for "the good of the whole nation"). Franko sets the desperate militant heroism of the conquistadors as an example for Ukrainians in his contemporary national competitions and in the future, revolutionary and liberating upheaval: in the struggle for national freedom, one must go resolutely to the end, without hesitation, recklessly and fearlessly, without leaving a humiliating escape route to retreat, because only in this way can the dreamed state independence be acquired. Here is the allegorical essence of this inspired neo-romantic poem, its heroic and acquisitive pathos: *„Ta zaky rushat, puskaite / Skriz ohon po korabliakh, / Shchob vsi znaly, shcho nema nam / Vorottia na staryi shliakh. / ... Shcho za namy, khai naviky / Vkryie popil zhyttovyi! / Abo smert, abo pobida! – / Tse nash oklyk boiovyi!"* ["But when they set sail, let them / fire at the ships, / so that everyone knows that we / have no return to the old way. /... Let the ashes of life cover us forever! / Death or victory! – This is our battle cry!"]. The poem is not about the past conquest of America, but about the future achievement of Ukraine's freedom, not about the historical conquering heroism of the conquistadors, but about the longed-for liberation heroism of Ukrainians. Recognizing that history is far from a peaceful competition of nations, Franko glorifies military, combative heroism, the acquisition of land for his ethnic group, and armed struggle for territory: "*Krov i trud os tut zdvyhne nam / Novu,*

krashchu vitchynu!" ["Blood and labor will build us / a new, better fatherland here!"]. Anticipating the upcoming liberation struggles in the Austria-Hungary and Russian Empire, the poet sends his nation characteristic symbolic impulses. It is no coincidence that the aphoristic statement from this neo-romantic poem is apt: "*Do vidvazhnykh svit nalezhyt*" ["The world belongs to the brave"] became one of the slogans of the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity.

Konkistadory fits in with Franko's another work of the time, the poem *Moisei* [*Moses*] (written and published in 1905). The prologue to *Moisei*, pan-Ukrainian and state-like in its content, immediately begins with an appeal to the people ("My people…"), after which the author's ideal is inspiredly stated: united and free Ukrainian people from the Caucasus to the Beskids and to the Black Sea. Earlier, Franko the publicist, disappointed and angry with his defeat in the March 1897 elections to the State Council in the Przemyśl, Sambir, Mostyska, and Drohobych regions, noted skeptically in the same year in the Polish-language preface "Nieco o sobie samym" ["A little about myself"] to his collection of short fiction *Obrazki galicyjskie* [*Pictures from Galicia*] (published in May): "… The future [of Ukraine – Ye. N.] is unknown to me and I see no grounds for her greatness". Now, Franko the poet was prophesying with inspiration: "*Ta pryjde chas, i ty ohnystym vydom / Zasiaiesh u narodiv volnykh koli, / Trusnesh Kavkaz, vperezheshsia Beskydom, / Pokotysh Chornym morem homin voli / I hlianesh, yak khaziain domovytyi, / Po svoii khati i po svoim poli*" ["But the time will come when you will shine / with your fiery look among free peoples, / You will shake the Caucasus, you will overcome the Beskids, / you will sound freedom across the Black Sea, / and you will look like a master of your / house and your fields"]. The expression of the pan-Ukrainian state idea with a similar territorial definition has already been found in Ukrainian poetry, for example, in the aforementioned poem by K. Klymkovych *Velyki rokovyny*, which poetizes "our land", "*shcho rozstelyvsia skriz hen-hen: / Iz-vid Donu ta azh do Sianu, / Iz-pid Kavkazu za Karpat, / Do Chornomoria vid Esman*" ["which stretches far and wide: / From Don to San, / from the Caucasus to the Carpathians, / from the Black Sea to Esman"]. Similar borders of Ukraine with the same and other oronyms and hydronyms are marked in Franko's poems *Rozvyvaisia, ty, vysokyi*

dube…, *Sviatovechirnia kazka*, *V dvadtsiat piati rokovyny smetri Tarasa Hr[yhorovycha] Shevchenka*, and *I dosi nam snytsia…*

The poetic image of the native people in the prologue to *Moisei* was usually understood then and is understood now as the cherished dream of Ukrainian statehood as an equal among other national democratic states. The eloquent prologue makes it clear that the poem, under the biblical images of "Israel", "the nomadic laziness", "the Hebrew camp", and "the poor people" who are "a guest in their own homeland", the fate of Ukraine and the historical ordeals of the Ukrainian people are allegorized. The idea of the ultimate transformation of Ukrainians "from lazy nomads" into "a nation of heroes" is encoded, and the Jewish ideals of the "state", "wonderful promised land" and "glorious fatherland" are projected onto the struggling Ukrainian statehood (Franko-Moses to Ukraine in the image of Israel: *"V tobi dukh mii, budushche moie, / I krasa, i derzhava"* ["My spirit is in you, my future, / and beauty, and state"]). The poem emphasizes the image of "his people", "his nation". *"Chy zh doviku ne vyrvatsia vzhe / Liudu momu z nevoli?"* ["Will my people never escape from captivity?"] – This is the main problem that worries Franko's "prophet" and "leader" Moses, despite the fact that the "Hebrew kingdom", which "will cost tears and blood", *"zavashyt u sudbakh zemli, / Yak ta mukha volovi"* ["will interfere with the destinies of the earth, / like a fly with an ox"]. In this way, the native, the national, despite its partial nature and seemingly insignificant impact on global processes, rises above the universal. In the prologue to *Moisei* and in the poem itself, Franko actually departed from his position of the early 1890s, when he denied the grounds for a Ukrainian statehood in Galicia and advocated the unity of Ukrainian and Polish (Masurian) peasants in addition to a joint Ukrainian-Polish unity of Eastern and Western Galicia (on Agrarianism) as a separate region of Austria-Hungary.

The biblical story of Moses has several very important contemporary meanings time: anti-pagan (directed against pagan polytheism, rituals, rites, beliefs, superstitions, etc.); moral, cultural (promoting the norms of clean, ethical, humane, and just coexistence of Israelites, social and family: categorical prohibitions on murder, theft, perjury, incest, homosexuality, etc., regulation and

prescriptions for the consumption of certain foods); ethnic (chosen people; regulates Israel's relations with other nations and tribes; liberation, seizure of land for living, creation of their own state). From this complex of meanings, Franko chooses a purely ethnic one, projecting it onto Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

Earlier, in the aforementioned *Velyky rokovyny*, the poet turned his gaze with hope to the youth: "*Tazh ne darom probudyvsia / Ukrainskyi zhvavyi rid. / Tazh ne darom iskry hraiut / U ochakh tykh molodykh! / Chei novi mechi zasiaiut / U pravytsiakh u tverdykh*" ["It's not for nothing that the Ukrainian people have awakened. No wonder the sparks play in the eyes of those young people! Whose new swords will shine in their strong hands!"]. It is striking that the poem *Moisei* also depicts the image of "children" who, to the surprise of "half-asleep parents", "build strange toys": / *To voiuie, muruie mista, / To horody horodyt*" ["He wages wars, builds cities, and cultivates gardens"], or he kills scorpions in the steppe. In the Pentateuch of Moses, there is no image of new generations of Israelites, zealous children who, having grown up, would rise to liberation struggle (except that the Lord declares that only "children" will enter the promised land after forty years of wandering in the desert to atone for their parents' "iniquities". – Numbers 14: 29–35; Deuteronomy 1: 39). Probably, not without the influence of disputes with "young" radical statesmen (Viacheslav Budzynovskyi, Yulian Bachynskyi, etc.). Franko allegorically depicts how new generations of Ukrainians are growing up, who, at the right time, will resolutely and persistently take up the desperate struggle for national statehood. The poem concludes with a depiction of such a national liberation struggle of the people at the call of a young leader, the "prince of stablemen", Yehoshua: "*Do pokhodu! Do zbroi!*", *Do boiu!*" ["Ahead! To arms!", "To battle!"]. The last stanzas are a poeticization of the armed force used to gain the "promised land". The former social revolutionary, who considered a "bloody war" to establish a socialist system (the poem *Na sudi*), now predicts a future armed struggle for Ukrainian statehood.

In Franko's *Moisei* (as in the Old Testament: Numbers 13: 25–33; 21; 31; Joshua 6–13, and elsewhere), Israelis act as conquerors. The poetic pathos, projected on the liberation cause of Ukrainians, involves approval of this, while Franko's insight in *Poema pro sotvorennia svitu*

[*Poem on the Creation of the World*] (1904, printed in 1905) did not go beyond ancient history and condemned Jewish ethnocentrism in the Old Testament:

> ... in those Hebrew books, at least in a significant part of them, God appears as the God of the Jews alone; he commands them to kill people of other nationalities without mercy and warns them very sharply not to succumb to the gods of those other nations.... Thinks of those things what you want, but they probably did not reveal the highest wisdom and the highest truth.

This is how Franco weighed the priorities between humanism and militant nationalism. It was a dynamic process dictated by the writer's desire to orient himself and give clear guidelines to his compatriots to defend their national interests in the complex and contradictory course of human history.

Against the early poem *Kameniary* in the second edition of the poem (fairy tale) for children *Lys Mykyta* [*Mykyta the Fox*] (1896), in *Velyky rokovyny*, in *Pokhoron*, and *Ivan Vyshenskyi* (printed in 1900) and *Moisei*, messianic accents change from universal to national.

The poem *A my z chym?* [*What do we have?*], written on September 9, 1915, two and a half months after Lviv was liberated from Russian occupation, was a response to the Ukrainian liberation struggle during the First World War. Probably inspired by this event, although the "*liutuie borotba*" ["battle is still raging"], the poet depicts how "*do vysokhikh bram derzhavnoho zhyttia, / V ladi i dobri ta dla kulturnoi roboty / Narody tysnutsia pod naporom buttia*" ["peoples are pressing towards the high gates of state life, / In order and goodness and for cultural work, / under the pressure of existence"], and among them are Ukrainians, while, as hostile voices mock, "*vsesvitni zhebraky, / Nevmyta khlopska ta popivska orava*" ["the world's beggars, unwashed peasants and church mobs"], although, as the same enemies admit, there were once also "*Hetmany, kozaky, sami buntivnyky*" ["Hetmans, Cossacks, all rebels"]. To those who doubt their "historical right" to their own statehood, Ukrainians firmly declare: "*A otzhe i do nas poklykaie diishlo, / I my staiem do bram otykh mitsnykh / Iz arkhykanonom dumok vsikh vyzbolnykh...*" ["And so, the call has come to us, and we

are standing at this strong gate with the arch-canon of the thoughts of all the liberators....”].

The transition of the mature Franko from the primacy of the socialist idea over the national one and to the primacy of national interests over social ones, from socially radical views to national democratic ones, was expressed in his poetry, corresponding to the spirit of the times, and contributing to the strengthening of his authority as a national leader among Ukrainians, especially Galicians, who dreamed of gaining state independence in the early twentieth century. Expressed in clear, comprehensible poetic language, often even aphoristic, Franko’s national-patriotic slogans, maxims, and prophetic visions with pan-Ukrainian and state-building accents not only awakened national feelings but also contributed to the formation of a strong consciousness of Ukrainian national unity and across the nation and the indispensable need for Ukrainian own statehood. Mostly silenced or even banned during the communist totalitarianism, such poetic works were returned to mass readers during Gorbachev’s *perestroika*, triumphantly received new life and recognition in independent Ukraine, and have gained great relevance in the current context of the Ukrainian people’s continued struggle for freedom, democracy, and European perspective.

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Theatre of the Nation: Romanian Historical and Allegorical Drama Before the First World War

Abstract

This study investigates the way in which Romanian theatre before World War I contributed to the formation of Romanian national consciousness and to the articulation of the ideal of a unitary national state. My analysis addresses the historical drama and dramatic allegories of the nation, with special focus on the drama of the early 20th century (and on the works of playwrights such as Alexandru Davila, Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea, Nicolae Iorga, Zaharia Bârsan, Ștefan Octavian Iosif and Victor Eftimiu). As a related topic, I address the rise of extremist nationalism in pre-war Romanian society. Mainly resorting to discourse analysis and close reading, I demonstrate the importance of theatre in the crystallisation of the Romanians' national-identity assertiveness, which culminated, politically speaking, in the achievement of the Great Union of 1918.

Keywords

nation, dramaturgy, Romania, history, allegory

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Before addressing the topic of the present investigation, which concerns the way in which Romanian theatre prior to the First World War contributed to the formation of the national consciousness of the Romanians and to the emergence of the ideal of a unitary national state, I provide the readers with a number of historical explanations for context.

The foundations of modern Romania were laid in the 19th century. In the early 19th century, most Romanians lived in territories controlled by the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires (soon joined by Russia). These were the Grand Principality of Transylvania, the regions of Maramureș, Crișana, Banat and Bukovina – which were part of the Habsburg Empire – and the principalities of Wallachia[1] and Moldavia,[2] under Ottoman suzerainty. In 1812 the Russian Empire annexed the eastern part of Moldavia between the Prut and Dniester rivers, renaming it Bessarabia (after a region in southern Moldavia). However, in the favourable circumstances created after the Crimean War in 1859, the first important unification in Romania's history took place, namely that between Wallachia and Moldavia (not including the eastern territory occupied by the Russians). The name Romania was made official by the Constitution adopted in 1866. Following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, Romania freed itself from Ottoman rule by fighting on the side of Russia under the German-born ruler Carol, who had been crowned in 1866. In 1881, Romania was proclaimed a kingdom (constitutional monarchy) and prince Carol became King Carol I.

The struggle for national emancipation of the Romanians within the Habsburg Empire, which had begun in the 18th century, faced a significant hurdle in 1867 when – following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise – Transylvania, Banat, Maramureș and Crișana were incorporated into the Kingdom of Hungary, and Bukovina (part of

1 Țara Românească in Romanian (which means, literally, The Romanian Country or Land).

2 Moldova in Romanian. Nowadays, the historical region of Moldavia is split between Romania, The Republic of Moldova (which share the same official language, Romanian) and Ukraine.

historical Moldavia annexed in 1774 by the Habsburgs) was made an imperial province. Under the dual monarchy, the Romanians of Transleithania[3] were subjected to an intense policy of Magyarisation, while a similar treatment was applied to the inhabitants of the Duchy of Cisleithanian Bukovina;[4] the forced assimilation of the Romanians living in Bessarabia under Russian occupation was even more harsh (Hitchins, 1994, p. 202). In this context, the issue of the Transylvanian Romanians (regarded as a tolerated nation and deprived of fundamental rights, despite their majority in the region) became an obsessive concern for public opinion in Romania. However, general hostility towards Austro-Hungary posed an immense challenge to Romanian politicians, and especially to King Carol I, who in 1883 concluded a secret pact with the Central Powers in order to counter the Russian threat. When the First World War broke out, dissent among the political elite – between the supporters of an alliance with the Central Powers and those supporting an alliance with the Entente countries – became more acute, at a time when the public had already decided in favour of the Entente (Constantiniu, 2008, p. 267). King Carol I, who intended to honour the pact with the Central Powers, was opposed by members of the Crown Council. He wanted to abdicate, but death took him sooner. He was succeeded to the throne by his nephew Ferdinand I.

Romania remained neutral until 1916, when those who advocated entering the war with the Entente prevailed. The ideal of national unity, namely that of Transylvania joining the 'motherland', outweighed considerations of national security (Constantiniu, 2008, p. 267). Within a short time the capital and two thirds of Romania's territory were occupied by German and Bulgarian troops. However, the fortunes of war miraculously turned in its favour. Following the demise of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires, Romanians living there demanded union with Romania in 1918, which led to the creation of Greater Romania, which in addition

3 Transleithania was the informal name for the Lands of the Crown of St Stephen, i.e. the territories belonging to Hungary under the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

4 Cisleithania was the name designating the territories in the Austrian half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

to the Old Kingdom included Transylvania, parts of Maramureș, Crișana, Banat, Bukovina and Bessarabia.[5] The year 1918 was therefore recorded by Romanian historiography as the year of the 'Great Union', whose main landmark was the Old Kingdom being joined with Transylvania.

Allegories of the nation and Romanian historical drama in the 19th century

The Great Union achieved at the end of the First World War was the culmination of the Romanian movements for liberation and national and cultural emancipation from the authority of the aforementioned empires. As these movements emerged in the 18th century and throughout this period, the nation – in the sense of an 'imagined political community' (Anderson 1991, p. 6) – was the great *idée-force* that sustained and mobilised Romanian society, which had already embarked on the path of modernisation, giving it a general direction in almost all areas, from politics to the arts.[6] Moreover, some areas of Romanian education and culture developed precisely because of the awakening of national sentiment among the Romanian elites. This is also the case with Romanian professional theatre, which emerged in the first half of the 19th century (see also Hațiegan, 2020). It was the product of one or two generations of intellectuals, most of them educated in the West and coming from the ranks of the lower and middle aristocracy of Wallachia and Moldavia. The ideal of national unity became prominent in Romanian theatre around the time of the Union of the Principalities in 1859, when many occasional pro-Unionist short plays appeared, usually ending with *tableaux vivants*, angels, voivodes and, last but not least, allegorical women representing the United Principalities and donning national

5 Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia were later annexed by the Soviets. Northern Bukovina currently belongs to Ukraine, and Bessarabia is today's Republic of Moldova (minus historical Bessarabia, which was also incorporated by Ukraine after the breakup of the U.S.S.R.).

6 According to Alex Drace-Francis (2006), the term *nation* began 'to really be used widely' in Wallachia and Moldavia 'only in the 1820s and later', but 'ideas of national identity' had been circulating in Romanian-inhabited territories 'since the 18th century and even earlier' (pp. 84, 9).

costumes. Most of them dwelt on the religiously charged theme of the rebirth of Romania. A similar mobilising role was played by *Le Rêve de Dochia* [Dochia's Dream] (1877), an allegorical/dramatic poem composed at the beginning of the War of Independence by the French-Romanian writer Frédéric Damé (1849–1907). It was immediately translated into Romanian and performed at the National Theatre in Bucharest. The cast included several female characters portraying Banat, Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia – provinces which at the time were under Austro-Hungarian or Russian rule. The poem thus expresses the unionist dream which prompted political action in the following century. An allegorical short play, *Visul României* [Romania's Dream] (1899) by Constantin Grigoriu (1866–1914), which tapped into the same unionist mindset – though with abrasive allusions to the plight of Romanians outside the country's borders – was performed by schoolgirls in 1898 at a secondary school teachers' festival. This outraged the head of government, who ordered the play to be censored for fear of the reaction from Romania's neighbours (Austria-Hungary in particular), sparking a huge scandal. The national issue was becoming increasingly heated.

In *Visualising the Nation*, Joan B. Landes points out that nationalist ideology involves a convergence of patriotic sentiment and eroticism (2001, p. 80). The nation is far too abstract a concept to stir the imagination of the masses in the absence of representations that appeal directly to the senses, Landes notes. When the political community is entirely male (as was the Romanian one in the era in question), female representations of the nation serve to stimulate feelings of desire and attachment (filial or passionate) in its members towards the concept thus personified. This may account for the proliferation of female allegorical representations of the nation in the period before the Unification of the Principalities and later, during the consolidation of the Romanian state (see also Hațiegan, 2018, 2019).

Romanian historical drama was slow to mature. The Shakespearean and Romantic-style plays of the period up to 1900 evince a predilection of the best authors for anti-heroes, adventurers and obscure and individualistic characters, which allowed for greater creative freedom. In plays such as *Răzvan și Vidra* (1867) by Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu (1838–1907) – the first great success of the

genre – or *Despot-Vodă* (1879) by Vasile Alecsandri (1821–1890), the protagonists are modelled on the figures of eccentric personalities in Romanian history, who did not have any major impact on the destinies of the countries they temporarily ruled. Also, 19th-century Romanian historical drama was very receptive to the tenets of Romanian historiography of the period, concerning the origins of the Romanian people, the continuity of the Romanian population in the territories north of the Danube (disputed by Austrian and Hungarian historians, who sought to justify the discriminatory policy applied to the Romanians in Transylvania) and the awareness of their unity throughout time.

Borrowing these tenets and themes from historians, playwrights made an important contribution to the creation of a national mythology around them and thus to the formation of the national consciousness of Romanians. The dream of uniting the Romanians of Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia under a single crown also haunts the protagonists of Hasdeu's and Alecsandri's plays, despite their eccentricity. Another case in point is the writer Dimitrie Bolintineanu (1825–1872), who between 1865 and 1868 published a number of dramas deeply indebted to Romanian Romantic historiography, with all its exaggerations. Three of them are inspired by the figure of Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave), who ruled for a time (in 1600) over these three medieval states, roughly corresponding to the territory of Greater Romania. For this reason, in the 19th century he became the symbol of the national and state unity to which Romanians aspired at that time. Bolintineanu endows his hero with a modern national consciousness, projecting the ideas of his epoch onto the past.

Post-1900

The theatre with a specific national character, centred around figures sanctified by national mythology and strongly anchored in the community, crystallised much better under the influence of early 20th-century Neo-Romanticism. The masterpieces of the genre, *Vlaicu Vodă* (1902), a five-act verse drama, and *Apus de soare* (1909), a four-act play, were written by Alexandru Davila (1862–1929) and

Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea (1858–1918), respectively. The fashion for occasional allegorical short plays on a national topic, on the other hand, experienced a decline.

Davila is remembered in the history of Romanian literature and theatre primarily as the author of *Vlaicu Vodă* [Vlaicu Voivode], as well as a theatre director and a reformer of the performing arts. The inspiration for the play came from a friend who urged him to turn 'the idea of the unification of the Romanian land into a play' (Massoff, 1973, p. 97), referring to the Union of the Principalities. Davila promised him to write a play on the subject, but not '*à thèse*, to glorify this idea, because it is a *fait accompli*'. The huge success of *Vlaicu Vodă*, which premiered at the National Theatre in Bucharest on 12 February 1902, was due not so much to its retrospective as to its prospective character: although the play touches on the shared interests of Wallachia and Moldavia, the theme of the Romanian struggle and resistance against Hungarian expansion takes centre stage. This was an extremely hot topic when the play appeared, because of the persecutions suffered by the Romanians in Transleithan Transylvania. In fact, after the war, in 1923, Davila admitted that he had 'looked into the Romanian past for times similar to those we were living in', and had found them in the reign of Vladislav I (Vlaicu), who ruled Wallachia between 1364 and 1377, for 'in our time, we were hoping for a fusion under the Romanian crown of all the Romanian peoples, and this is what Vlaicu Vodă sought to achieve as well' (Rampa, 1923, p. 3). The playwright therefore resorted to the same kind of anachronism cultivated by his predecessors and attributed a modern national consciousness to his protagonist. Thus, at the beginning of the second act of the play, Vlaicu Vodă speaks of the 'great' dream that he has, namely that of seeing his own dynasty, the Basarabs, ruling 'over the whole Romanian-speaking nation' (Davila, 1929, p. 59). Also, according to his own declarations, the playwright, who was close to the Royal House, used 'some character traits of King Carol I' in his portrayal of Vlaicu (Massoff, 1985, p. 41), hence the modernity of the character, who no longer displays the classical heroic virtues but stands out mainly due to his diplomatic skills.

Finding himself at the beck and call of King Louis I the Great of Hungary (and Poland), who is holding his sister and brother-in-law

hostage, Vlaicu is forced to conceal his true feelings for a while, but he secretly plans a counter-offensive. Dissimulation is all the more necessary as his movements are closely watched by his stepmother, the Hungarian-born Lady Clara, who plays into the hands of King Louis I. Vlaicu Vodă's plotting behind the scenes confuses even his most loyal boyars (local aristocracy), who suspect him of treason. Only one character understands Vlaicu and stands by him to the end: Rumân Grue, the mute hero who symbolises the people devoted to the country to the point of supreme sacrifice. Finally, Vlaicu reveals his intentions, refuses to be the vassal of Louis and enters into an alliance with the Serbian king, to whom he promises to marry his sister. She is thus sacrificed on the altar of the motherland (for she is in love with Mircea Basarab, Vlaicu's nephew). The boyars rally around the ruler, and the plans of the truculent Lady Clara and her cronies are thwarted.

In the protagonist's character arc, Doina Modola (1983) identifies 'the pattern of a myth: the dissimulation under a humiliating camouflage, of a hero, of an exceptional character' (p. 54). Thus, Davila does not completely abandon the devices previously used by the playwrights who wrote historical drama before him: the archetype of the skilful diplomat, embodied by Vlaicu, conceals one much more familiar to the audience of the time, namely the Christ-like hero who suffers for the sake of his country. Interestingly, after the war Davila (1923) – a convinced supporter of the Entente – denied any substantial resemblance between his character and King Carol I, on the grounds that the latter preferred 'great Germy' to 'little Romania …. Vlaicu is, above all, a Romanian, a genuine Romanian, a true Romanian, the Romanian loyal to tradition, while King Carol remained, until the very end, a Prussian dragoon officer', Davila wrote, quite unfairly (p. 1).

The plot also has a religious side, in addition to the political one, from which it cannot be separated: while defending his country, Vlaicu Vodă also defends Orthodoxy against the expansion of Catholicism – a denomination that finds a zealous missionary in Lady Clara. Converting to Catholicism, Clara argues, would contribute to the country's progress, directing it towards the West of Europe, 'where knowledge and light is' (Davila, 1929, p. 154). Vlaicu Vodă and

the Romanian boyars' counter-arguments are the 'ancestral law' and the 'custom' of the land. In other words, Orthodoxy is inextricably linked to local tradition. This dispute echoes an older Romanian controversy, still unresolved today, between the proponents of westernisation and traditionalists. Throughout *Vlaicu Vodă*, the playwright seems to side with the latter. However, one of the play's characters, the Orthodox monk Nicodim, explains that Catholic propaganda is just a tool used by the Pope and his representatives to subjugate the people, as the Pope 'is patriarch and king, he is confessor and warrior' (Davila, 1929, p. 55). Resistance to Catholicism must therefore be understood primarily as a rejection of foreign domination.

When Davila wrote his play, Vladislav I was a rather obscure figure in Romanian history. This was not the case for Mircea, Vladislav's nephew,[7] who has a thankless role in Davila's masterpiece. Mircea I Basarab (known as Mircea the Elder or the Great) reigned over Wallachia, between 1386 and 1418, with a brief interruption, and distinguished himself in battles against the Turks. His figure was immortalised by the Romantic poet Mihai Eminescu in a poem published in 1881 (*Scrisoarea a III-a* [Third Epistle]), which conferred on him a mythical aura. The first version of Davila's play, written in 1902, ends with Mircea being banished with harsh words by Vlaicu, having tried to kill the voivode who opposed his love for Vlaicu's half-sister (and instead killing Rumân Grue, who throws himself between the two). According to Davila, who intended to write a trilogy, which was never completed, the character was to be rehabilitated in the other two plays, with the final one dedicated to him entirely. However, the scene mentioned above so displeased the audience that Davila was forced to rework it. In later anthumous editions of the play (1908, 1921, 1925 and 1929), Vlaicu forgives Mircea and makes him his right-hand man in Grue's place. Relevant for the atmosphere of patriotic exaltation in Romania before the Great War is the position taken on this issue by Eugen Lovinescu,

7 Mircea I Basarab was actually the son of Vladislav I Basarab's son, and not Vladislav's nephew, as Davila believed. Consequently, he could not have fallen in love with the half-sister of his grandfather.

the literary critic who led the most pro-Western and cosmopolitan literary group in Romania during the interwar period. Writing about *Vlaicu Vodă* in 1914, Lovinescu (1927) stated that Davila's portrayal of Mircea was tantamount to 'a veritable national assassination' (p. 58). Lovinescu considered that, unlike history, which can also take an interest in the flaws of past personalities, art must confine itself to 'the ideal reality' when it comes to heroes who have become legendary (p. 55). Despite the initial 'assassination', by 1925 the play had been performed 100 times at the National Theatre in Bucharest alone (Cioculescu, 1988, p. 7) – a record for the Romanian theatre of that time.

Delavrancea's *Apus de soare* [Sunset], the other great success of pre-war Romanian historical drama, centres on the ruler Ștefan (Stephen) III the Great (or Holy), who reigned over Moldavia between 1457 and 1504. The play is part of a trilogy, which also includes the dramas *Viforul* [The Windstorm] and *Luceafărul* [The Morning Star], both published in 1910. They focus on the figures of two of Ștefan's descendants, namely Ștefăniță (Stephen the Younger, Stephen IV), ruler of Moldavia between 1517 and 1527, and Petru Rareș, who ruled Moldavia between 1527 and 1538 and between 1541 and 1546 (the playwright stops at his first reign). Doina Modola (1982) points out that the trilogy seems to be based on the well-known Hegelian triad: thesis-antithesis-synthesis, with Ștefan, Ștefăniță and Petru Rareș 'representing respectively the hero (in a hieratic, stylised manner), the anti-hero (in romantic Hugo style) [and] the modern hero (dilemmatic)' (p. 9). The first one ('the sun') appears at the end of his life and exemplary reign, imposing his will even beyond death; the second ('the windstorm') is depicted at the height of his bloodthirsty dementia, killing out of an inferiority complex in relation to his great predecessor and being murdered for it by his own wife; and the third ('the morning star') is presented as a follower of Ștefan, defeated by circumstances, but not without leaving behind a glimmer of hope for the country's progress.

The plays do not have equal literary value. The most impactful one, which most impressed the readership, is undoubtedly *Apus de soare*, although *Viforul* is more theatrical, according to classical canons. *Luceafărul*, due to its not very well-constructed episodic

structure, was always considered the least successful play in the trilogy. It is worth mentioning that the latter most often and explicitly raises the question of the unity of all Romanians, by resorting to anachronism (although Delavrancea based his dramas on thorough research). Thus, at the beginning of Act II, Petru Rareș speaks of 'the suffering of the same nation scattered under three different crowns' (Delavrancea, 1910, p. 72). And in the fourth act, a character laments the behaviour of some of the boyars, 'conceited, and envious, and disloyal', for if it were not for them, according to Rareș, 'we would all be one, one and the same, all of us descendants of Rome, on either side of the mountains, from the steppes of Hungary to the shores of the sea!' (p. 187). All three plays of the trilogy converge, however, in supporting the ideas expressed by Petru Rareș in the final one. Delavrancea, who was not only a prolific writer, but also a lawyer and politician, was a staunch supporter of the cause of the Romanians in Austro-Hungary throughout his public career, and during the years of Romania's neutrality he actively campaigned to support the country's entry into the war alongside the Entente. 'Let us close in on the Kesar, let us shorten his path by taking over Transylvania!… Oh! I have dreamt! Let my descendants dream too!', says Petru Rareș in *Luceafărul* (p. 73), voicing the obsession of the author and his contemporaries.

Interest in Stephen the Great's era was stimulated at the beginning of the last century by the 400th anniversary of his death in 1904 and the 450th anniversary of his accession to the throne in 1907. On the occasion of the commemoration of his death, historian Nicolae Iorga (1871–1940) published his *Istoria lui Ștefan cel Mare povestită neamului românesc* [History of Stephen the Great told to the Romanian nation], which was the main source of information for Delavrancea. He also wrote his trilogy under the influence of the great peasant uprising of 1907, which was bloodily suppressed, much to the writer's horror. A convinced demophile, Delavrancea projected onto the reign of Stephen the Great 'the utopia of peasant and national democracy' (Modola, 1983, p. 66), perhaps in counter-reaction to that tragedy. He was likely also influenced in this sense by the opinions of Iorga, who was the main proponent of Sămănătorism, a literary movement and national/agrarian current of thought that dominated Romanian

cultural life in the first decade of the 20th century (Hitchins, 1994, pp. 67–71). Though not affiliated with this movement, Delavrancea had clear affinities for it. Thus, Stephen the Great's court in *Apus de soare* resembles a peasant's household, run according to patriarchal ordinances. Stylised folkloric elements and motifs can be found in the scenographic details and costumes of the characters. The solidarity between the ruler and the people – the fruit of the convergence of the will and aspirations of Stephen and his subjects – is sealed by a bond of flesh: Petru Rareș and Oana, characters who feature prominently throughout the trilogy, are the illegitimate children of Stephen the Great and a commoner. In *Luceafărul*, this glorious filiation, on which Rareș prides himself, is elevated to the status of a symbol. 'In me the lineage of the Mușatins and the lineage of the people are merged into one', he says (Delavrancea, 1910, p. 243).

The protagonist of *Apus de soare* is shown by Delavrancea in three roles that equally reveal his greatness: as a hero of the nation and champion of Christianity, as a Christ figure (martyred by old age and illness) and as a patriarch revered by all of Moldavia (depicted, as we have already shown, as a great peasant family). The 'national character' of the play's atmosphere is achieved by merging the historical imaginary, the Christian imaginary and the rural imaginary. As the hero of the nation, Stephen (Ștefan) makes a final (victorious) military expedition to stabilise the northern border between Moldavia and Poland, setting milestones along the border of Pokuttia, the region he had won from King John I Albert of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth following the Battle of Codrii Cosminului (1497). His descendants, however, later lost it.

In *Viforul*, Ștefăniță intends to invade Poland in order to regain Pokuttia. The boyars disagree, as they feel that it would not be good for the country to break relations with the Poles. Ștefăniță falsely accuses them of plotting to bring Petru Rareș, who is taking refuge in Poland, to the throne in his stead, and executes the best patriots among them. In *Luceafărul*, Pokuttia is again the main concern of the Moldavian ruler, who suffered a humiliating defeat at Obertyn (in 1531) in his attempt to recover it. Delavrancea has Petru Rareș, during the middle acts of the play, engaged in a new attempt to conquer it, achieving a fleeting victory. Moldavia is later attacked

simultaneously from three sides – by the Turks, Tatars and Poles – and Rareș is unable to persuade the boyars to support him in resisting. As a result, he is forced to take refuge in Transylvania, where he holds several fortresses.

Not coincidentally, perhaps, the playwright focusses much more in his trilogy on Moldavia's conflicts with its north-western neighbours, Poland and Hungary, than on those with the Turks or the Tatars, given that the terrain of these confrontations was in possession of Austro-Hungary when he was composing his plays. Even the centre of Stephen the Great's power, Cetatea de Scaun (the Princely Citadel) of Suceava (in south-eastern Bukovina), belonged to Cisleithania in Delavrancea's time. So did the monastery of Putna, where the tomb of the ruler is located. In 1911, a Romanian theatre company performed Delavrancea's trilogy in Bukovina with great success at the invitation of the Society for Romanian Culture and Literature in Cernăuți (Chernivtsi).

As regards the martyr role of Ștefan, the characterisation made by Ion Luca Caragiale (2015) (a classic of Romanian theatre) of Delavrancea's masterpiece in the daily newspaper *Universul* in 1909 is very eloquent and pertinent: '*Apus de soare* is a play in the genre of the so-called Sacred Mysteries of the Lord's Passion' (p. 926). The protagonist stoically endures the ordeal of old age, weakness and the pain caused by an old leg wound, aggravated by the expedition to Pokuttia. His physical suffering culminates in the scene where his leg wound is cauterised with a red-hot iron. The treatment is not successful and Stephen dies, with the name of Moldavia on his lips, but not before executing the three boyars who were plotting to remove his designated successor from the throne; with his last breath he proclaims his eldest son Bogdan as ruler. In this fabulous scene, as historian Lucian Boia (2001) notes:

> Stephen speaks out from beyond the grave and beyond history to confirm the communion of generations in the spirit of the eternal Romanian ideal: 'Keep in mind the words of Stephen, who was your shepherd far into his old age..., that Moldavia was not my ancestors', was not mine, and is not yours, but belongs to our descendants and our descendants' descendants to the end of time.' The words are those of

> the great orator Delavrancea and in no way those of the old ruler, but what does it matter? The image of Stephen the Great that is imprinted in public consciousness owes much more to this play than to any document of the time or scholarly monograph. (p. 195)

Stephen the Great's (Ștefan's) patriarchal, 'clan chief' persona has no real rivals, which is why the only serious conflict in the play is between his weakened body and his spirit, which won't give in and fights to the last minute for the welfare of the country. Significantly, the conspirators dare not target Stephen directly, but only his successor. The boyars' plot is commonplace in pre-war Romanian historical drama, but it is always directed against the reigning ruler. With one exception.

In 1912, Iorga also published a play inspired by Stephen, namely *Învierea lui Ștefan cel Mare* [The Resurrection of Stephen the Great], which was performed during the war to raise the spirits of the demoralised population, since it tells of a disastrous military defeat followed by the ruler's victorious return. The 1912 volume, entitled *Trei drame* [Three Dramas] and written in verse, opens with another play – about Michael the Brave (Mihai Viteazul). Its construction is reminiscent of Hasdeu's aforementioned *Răzvan și Vidra* [Răzvan and Vidra], whose protagonist was, incidentally, a contemporary of Michael the Brave, who reigned very briefly in Moldavia. In both works the ambition of the hero (endowed with exceptional qualities) is stirred by an evil woman, while the voice of the common man tries to bring (or return) the protagonist to the right path. And in both plays the hero collapses, like Icarus, because he cannot resist the temptation to soar higher than he should, though leaving behind a bright memory.

The evil genius of the protagonist of Iorga's play (his shadow, in the Jungian sense) is Lady Velica, a half-Hungarian, half-Romanian noblewoman. The voice of his self or his good genius is Vladika Ioan, a Romanian country priest from Transylvania who became a metropolitan. The plot moves from Wallachia, which the Turks are trying to turn into a pashalik against Michael's resistance, to Transylvania (which was an autonomous principality at the time), to the Prague court of Emperor Rudolf II of the Holy Roman Empire

(also King of Hungary), and back to Transylvania, where Michael meets his death. This is the time of the Holy League, headed by the Habsburg Empire, i.e. the alliance formed by Moldavia, Wallachia and the Principality of Transylvania, under the suzerainty of the Transylvanian Prince (of the Hungarian Báthory dynasty), against the Ottoman Empire.

After important victories against the Turks, achieved in the name and with the aid of the League, Michael – who had sworn allegiance to Rudolf II – removes the Prince of Transylvania from power because he was threatening his own reign, and prepares to do the same in Moldavia. This is the moment when Iorga chooses to have his hero face the dilemma of his life, exposed through Velica and Vladika Ioan. Velica entices Michael with the dream of royal and even imperial power. To this end, Velica advises Michael to rely on the Hungarian nobles of Transylvania. Vladika Ioan, on the other hand, awakens the hero's national Romanian consciousness and awareness of the nationhood uniting the Romanians of Transylvania and those of his native Wallachia. He urges him to liberate the Transylvanian Romanians (mostly serfs) from their status as a tolerated nation, excluded from the political and social life of the Principality, and to pursue his goals with their support. More skilful than Bolintineanu and other predecessors, Iorga avoids directly attributing to Michael the project of a unitary national state, and thus committing a historical inaccuracy. But he cannot refrain from putting into Ioan's mouth some bold words about 'the longing of the entire nation for union' (Iorga, 1912, p. 46), although the character is also based on a real person. Michael is moved by Ioan's speech, but Velica appears and diverts his thoughts. Choosing her path, the hero quickly loses the three principalities briefly united under his sceptre, being betrayed by both the Hungarians and the Habsburgs and even killed by his supposed allies. There is no perfect overlap between the cause of the Transylvanian Romanians and that of Michael, Iorga suggests, because of class differences (which were abolished in Delavrancea's utopian *Apus de soare*). The ruler is estranged, alienated, and must be reminded of his origins, while the peasant keeps his national identity intact, in Iorga's view (and not only his – see Cosma, 2019). Ironically, Michael cannot integrate into the Hungarian or Habsburg

aristocracy either, as they regard him as Romanian peasantry and show him imperialist superiority.

The Romanian village priest, apostle of the nation, holds a central position in plays by the Transylvanian writers Ștefan Octavian Iosif (1875–1913) and Zaharia Bârsan (1878–1948)[8]: *Zorile* [Dawn] (1907) and *Se face ziuă* [Day is breaking] (1914), respectively. Since the Romanians of Transylvania did not have access to the top echelons of politics or the military hierarchy before 1918, with rare exceptions, it is not surprising that Romanian historical drama with a Transylvanian setting generally selected protagonists from the lower strata of society (unlike the plays inspired by the history of Moldavia and Wallachia). This fixation on the figure of the village priest also has a sociological explanation: in order to avoid enlistment in the imperial army, many Romanian men chose the path of priesthood, whether or not they had a vocation. They played a key role in the national emancipation movement of the Romanians in Transylvania.

Zorile is a historical drama in two acts, written in verse and set in Transylvania during the 1848 revolution. *Se face ziuă* is a one-act drama set in 1784 during the peasant uprising led by Horia, Cloșca and Crișan in Transylvania. Both plays therefore focus on mass movements demanding rights, with an important national component. They depict the martyrdom of Transylvanian priests' families (against the backdrop of the aforementioned movements). Although written with the scenario of Christ's Passions in mind, like *Apus de soare*, the plays end on a threatening note, with the promise of revenge on the Hungarian oppressors (uttered, in both plays, by a mother grieving the loss of a son who died by their hands). Both plays also contain a confrontational scene between a Hungarian nobleman and a Romanian priest (or two, in *Se face ziuă*), from positions that prove irreconcilable. *Zorile*, in this sense, contains a true compendium of the arguments of each side in the historical dispute over the rights of the Romanian and Hungarian ethnic groups in Transylvania (Iosif, 1907, pp. 78–85). The premiere of *Se face ziuă* at

8 The authors had settled in Romania, where they worked together for a while in the editorial office of the journal *Sămănătorul*, issued by the eponymous group.

the National Theatre in Bucharest, scheduled for 25 March 1914, was cancelled by order of the head of government in order not to offend the diplomatic representation of Austria–Hungary. The Romanian press reacted immediately, denouncing 'Hungarian censorship at the National Theatre' (Cenzura maghiară..., 1914, p. 2). The incident attests to the highly charged, explosive nature of these dramas and their social impact at the time.

One year before Romania's entry into the war, another theatrical 'national assassination' stirred up public opinion: the one committed by Victor Eftimiu (1889–1972) in the play *Ringala*, a historical drama in five acts, published that year (1915). Critics of various literary and political affiliations attacked the play, from Lovinescu (1927, pp. 58–59), whom the drama reminded of Davila's *Vlaicu Vodă*, to Iorga, who demanded the Romanian Academy to require that the play be withdrawn until it was re-made, which the author did (Preda, 2022, pp. 182–187).

The main line of attack of the protesters was the construction of the character inspired by Alexandru I cel Bun (Alexander I the Good), ruler of Moldavia between 1400 and 1432. As Lovinescu (1927) stated in his reproach of the author, the ruler is reduced to 'the dubious role of an old man subject to the dictates of his younger wife' (p. 58), i.e. of Ringala (Rimgailė) – who in the play by Eftimiu, who was not at all scrupulous in his research – is the sister of the Polish King Władisław II Jagiełło and Svidrigel (Lithuanian: Švitrigaila, Polish: Świdrygiełło), although in reality she was their cousin. Another line of attack concerned the depiction of Alexander the Good's Moldavia, in Act I of the play, as a welcoming haven for all nations (Eftimiu, 1915, pp. 23–46), including the Jews, whose sympathetic portrayal angered the apostle of Romanian anti-Semitism and professor of political economy at the University of Iași, Alexandru Constantin Cuza (Preda, 2022, p. 186). For part of the Romanian intelligentsia, as well as the general public, the nation was becoming an exclusive notion. Like Davila, Eftimiu obeyed the critics without protest and altered the play, which returned to the stage in January 1916 (though he did not republish the new version, as the author of *Vlaicu Vodă* did). Despite the naysayers, the drama, with its moments of modern sensibility, was well liked, even in its original version,

perhaps also because Act II tells how the Moldavian army fought alongside the Poles and defeated the Teutonic Knights at Marienburg (Eftimiu, 1915, pp. 130–131) – a victory that the Romanian public of the time, eagerly following the news about the confrontation between the Central Powers and the Entente, would have liked to see re-enacted.

Conclusions

From around the time of the Union of the Principalities in 1859, until the Great Union of 1918, Romanian theatre stubbornly supported, with increasing vigour, the idea of a unitary national state, while contributing to the creation of the pantheon of national heroes. Attempts to de-heroise certain historical personalities, promptly sanctioned by contemporaries, were immediately remedied by the playwrights who had been deemed guilty of 'national assassination'.

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"The Last Nastratin": An Interethnic Novel of *Fin De-siècle* Dobroudja

Abstract

Starting from Mihail Sadoveanu's (1880–1961) novel *Ostrovul lupilor* [Wolves' Island/Wolves' Nest] from 1941, with a Turkish Dobrujan setting, the aim of the paper is to reveal how the imaginary of a specific Oriental spirituality is constructed around the figure of the popular sage Nastratin. The multi-ethnic image of pre-World War I Dobruja, with its interethnic tensions, thus becomes the vehicle for a humanist message of tolerance within a convoluted, complex narrative.

Keywords

multiculturalism, Oriental, mirage, Dobruja, Nastratin

The Turkish Tatars in the writings of Mihail Sadoveanu

Mihail Sadoveanu's particular sympathy for the Turkish Tatar ethnicity[1] might seem intriguing, since his historical novels are set against

1 Ottoman citizens until 1878, Romanian citizens afterwards, the Tatars of Dobruja are a Turkic population of Sunni (Hanafi) Islamic religion and Turkic

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the backdrop of the periodic invasions by the Ottoman Empire or Tatar hordes. One might see in the attitude of the writer, who was known between the two World Wars for his ecumenical tolerance, his reverence for the heritage of the ancient wisdom of a defunct empire at a time when, in the heart of modern Europe, Nazi-fascist barbarity was thriving. In essence, Nastratin (Nasreddin Hoca/ Hodja), on account of the pedagogy of his "classic" anecdotes, is a vehicle of the mentality (morality) of a large part of the East acculturated by Persian, Arab, Ottoman or Mongol domination: from the Mediterranean basin to the Indian Ocean and from the Balkan Peninsula to the Maghreb and Central Asia. The anecdotes attributed to him have been circulating in folklore over the centuries, and his figure appears in specific adaptations (including onomastic ones) in Arab, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Albanian, Bulgarian, Bosnian, Croatian, Chinese, Greek, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Kurdish, Mongolian, Persian, Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, Uyghur or Uzbek traditions, processed in folklore or literary narratives; he is also found among the Spanish Jews and the Urdu population, in Western apocryphal literature and, of course, in the *Halima / One Thousand and One Nights* (Başgöz, 1978) and circulated predominantly within the sphere of influence of the former Ottoman Empire. Even its origin is disputed: according to some authors, Nasr ed-Din was Persian, while according to others a Seljuk Turk or Arab. His metamorphoses and avatars have been traced and studied within several cultures. It can be posited that, quite possibly, the inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance epitomised by Hoca is an "anchor" that Sadoveanu proposes to Europe as it was going adrift in the late 1930s. The first Turkish edition of the stories of the sage of Akșehir – "the Turkish Aesop" as Dimitrie Cantemir dubbed him (Constantin, 1973, p. 212) – appeared in 1838 in Istanbul under the title *Lta `if-i Nasr ed-Din Khodja*.

language, settled in the region since the 12th century. According to the 1878 census, the majority of Dobruja's popuation at the time were Tatars – 71,000 and Turks – around 49,000; in 1918 there were about 177,000 Turks-Tatars, whose number fell to 119,500 in 1930s, then abruptly to about 28,800 in 1948 (cf. Andrei Tudorel, Vasile Ghețău, *Serii istorice de date. Populația României. 1860–2021* (*Historical series of data. Romanian Population. 1860–2021*), National Institute for Statistics, Bucharest, 2021).

The collection *Nezdrăvăniile lui Nastratin Hogea* [Nastratin Hoca's Mischiefs, or Witticisms], published by the Bulgarian-Wallachian Anton Pann in 1853, according to G. I. Constantin (1967, p. 109), is the first translation of the series into a Balkan language, tapping into apocryphal Greek, Turkish and Bulgarian sources. Before Sadoveanu, Romanian modern literature mythologised Nasr ed-Din Hoca through the abstractionist/hermetic poet Ion Barbu's lyrical utopia of Isarlîk in the "Balkan cycle" of the volume *Joc secund* [Mirrored Play] from 1930 (see especially the poem *Nastratin Hogea la Isarlîk* [Nastratin Hoca at Isarlîk], with different implications of political identity than those of the Sadovenian text, depicting Nastratin as an abstracted, sapiential, contemplative avatar of the Ottoman imperial heritage – and the epitome of a "Balkan" identity affiliation that is a distinguishing quality of the Romanian national character).

One of the writer's diary entries, dating from 1919, seems to have provided the inspiration for the Turkish-Dobrujan novel *Ostrovul lupilor*, written and published two decades later[2]: "A Turkish man from Dobruja – sentenced to 20 years' hard labour for murder – is released from prison, comes before the judge and declares that he was innocent" (Sadoveanu, 2005, p. 124). On several occasions, Sadoveanu avows that the gestation of his novels preceded their drafting by several years; this is confirmed by titles such as *Venea o moară pe Siret* [A Mill Was Floating Down the Siret] (1924), inspired by the flooding in 1908, *Hanu-Ancuței* [Ancuța's Inn] (1928), whose first draft dates from 1921, or the historical novel *Nunta domnița Ruxanda* [Lady Ruxanda's Wedding] (1932), with research work recorded in his personal diary of 1927.

Ostrovul lupilor likely draws on the author's experiences prior to the First World War, from a different historical context; in July 1907, Sadoveanu had already made his first hunting expeditions to the Danube Delta; the series of reports he published in *Priveliști dobrogene* [Dobruja's Views] between 1909 and 1914 (when they were also collected in a volume) gives an account of his discovery of the territory between the Danube and the Sea, augmented and recalibrated in the 1920s by his travel notes on the Quadrilateral, his reconstruction of the Ottoman Byzantium in the novel *Zodia Cancerului sau vremea*

2 All quotes from the novel are taken from Sadoveanu, 2010.

Ducăi-Vodă [The Cancer Sign, or the Times of Duca Voivode] (1929) and, after 1945, several "Turkish" short stories in the volume *Fantasii răsăritene* [Eastern Fantasies] (*Vama de la Eyub*, *Huzur* and *Roxelana*), whose title appears to echo Marguerite Yourcenar's 1938 *Oriental Tales*.

Before *Ostrovul lupilor*,[3] Sadoveanu had described the region only in travelogues or hunting and fishing stories. Contact with Dobruja occasioned his first direct relationship with the Orient – an "Orient within Romania",[4] as the area was perceived in the interwar period – due to affinities with the Turkish Tatar communities abiding from the time of the Ottoman Empire (in 1878, following the Russian–Romanian–Turkish war, the territory of Dobruja was annexed by Romania); these affinities are addressed in the subjective chronicle of the Second Balkan War in the volume *44 de zile în Bulgaria* [44 Days in Bulgaria] (Sadoveanu, 1914a)[5] – more precisely, the "pacifying"

3 In 1969 Petre Luscalov, author of children's books born in Chișinău, published an eponymous book which became a best seller of Romanian children's literature.

4 For representations of this space see Romanița Constantinescu, *Pași pe graniță. Studii despre imaginarul românesc al frontierei*, Polirom, Iași, 2009.

5 It is worth noting, in the chapter "The Turks of Ghighen," how the former Ottoman occupiers view the different attitudes of the Bulgarians and Romanians towards them. The Bulgarians (the new dominant nation) are blamed for the cruelty of their revenge on the common Turks, while the Romanian soldiers are praised for the nonviolence of their intervention, but reprimanded for not understanding this law of violence. The Romanians' host in Ghighen, an elderly Turk, even expresses his community's desire to take refuge in Dobruja, seen as an ideal multi-ethnic safe haven ("they have no law now... Good that you have come; they are now afraid; then we must ask your government to allow us to settle in Dobruja"). In reply, the commander of the Romanian military company explains the different treatment by the fact that the Romanian army pursues peace, while the historical revenge of the Bulgarians is motivated by the similar cruelty of the "Bashi-bazouk" during the Ottoman occupation: "–...We are a regular army... Besides, between you and the Bulgarians there was something else. The Bashibazouks once cut and hanged many Bulgarians./- That's right... said the old man. So it was in times past". "Peaceful and melancholic" in appearance, the Turks of Ghighen still nurture nostalgia for the glorious days of the Ottoman Empire (when they were "feared" and respected), seeing in its demise a "punishment from Allah" for the decadence of the leaders. "The empire is ruled today by weak men who fight over money coffers. They have forsaken the law, play cards, drink wine... Now the people who used to fear us are driving us away and putting us to the sword"). To Sadoveanu, the Turkish dwellings in the area appear as a camouflage of identity: humble in appearance, their "spotlessly clean" interiors hide imperial luxury: adorned with lace and kilim rugs, sofas on carpets and old weapons with mother-of-pearl inlays displayed on the walls.

military campaign of the Romanian army in Bulgaria in 1913, in which the writer participated as a second lieutenant.[6] Here, sympathy for the Turkish community in the young Bulgarian state is tantamount to fraternising with the dignified decline of those "defeated by history." In his historical novels as well – particularly *Neamul Șoimăreștilor* (1915) and the *Frații Jderi* trilogy (1935, 1936 and 1942)[7] – the writer systematically avoids confusing the Tatar invasions or Ottoman expansionism with the peoples in question, as the Moldovan protagonists of the respective stories forge close bonds with ethnic Tatars or Turks.

An intercultural novel with a Dobrujan setting

In Sadoveanu's case, contact with the social life of the Turks in Dobruja, the Quadrilateral and Bulgaria enhanced the authenticity of his representations of the Muslim East.[8] There is little or none of the post-romantic, sentimental/pictorial, orientalist exoticism of Pierre Loti, so widely emulated in the literature of his time. In *Privelişti dobrogene* (Sadoveanu, 1914b), the Danube Delta and northern Dobruja, especially

By comparison, Bulgarian homes are "beautiful and grand on the outside," but their interiors are underwhelming.

6 The First Balkan War was a military conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan League (Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece), with the occupation of Macedonia (liberated from the Turks) at stake. Ended by the intervention of the Great Western Powers, the conflict was reopened by a surprise military attack by Bulgaria, unhappy with the outcome, on its fellow League members, followed by attacks on Bulgaria by the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro. On 10 July 1913, the Romanian army intervened in the conflict without engaging in fight (as the Bulgarian army waged several simultaneous battles) and reached Sofia with losses caused solely by the cholera epidemic, and on 31 July Bulgaria called for a truce. Following the signing of the Bucharest Peace Treaty on 10 August 1913 (the Great Powers withdrew from the arbitration), Romania took possession of the Quadrilateral – two counties of southern Dobruja with an area of 6,960 km^2 and a population of 286,000 inhabitants, most of them Turks and Tatars.

7 In the historical novel *Neamul Șoimăreștilor*, strongly influenced by Henryk Sienkewicz, the Moldovan-Bessarabian hero Tudor Șoimaru has the Tatar Cantemir-bey as his "blood brother" and travelling companion, and in *Frații Jderi*, Ionuț Jder travels south of the Danube accompanied by a faithful servant named Gheorghe Botezatu, a Christianized Tatar; both Cantemir and Botezatu are associated with the ethno-stereotype of "wisdom" and "common sense."

8 On the political-literary etiology of the representations of the relationship between East and West in Romania, see Monica Spiridon, *Les dilemmes de l'identité aux confins de l'Europe: le cas roumain*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004.

the Tulcea and Babadag areas, are scrutinised with quasi-anthropological interest in their multi-ethnic mosaic; the Sadovenian travel notes, some of them close in literary value to short stories, contain numerous observations of "imagological" relevance, though they focus mainly on the Lipovans and Romanian shepherds settled in the area, while the Turkish or Tatar element is still secondary. The Muslim populations would receive the writer's attention a little later. *Ostrovul lupilor*, a novel on Turkish identity in Dobrogea, no longer focusses on the fabulous landscape of the Delta (also evoked in the accounts of fishing adventures in *Împărăția apelor* [Kingdom of the Waters] from 1928), nor on the dreamlike Quadrilateral (depicted in the travel accounts in *Depărtări* [Faraway Lands] from 1930), but on the geographical area bordering the hills of Niculițel to the north and Constanța (the former Küstenge) to the south; an area centred around Babadag,[9] the ancient Histria (known as Caranasuf until 1914)[10] and the great Lake Sinoe (formerly Casapchioi). The "Oriental" atmosphere, the "flowery" style and the ceremonious narrative protocol have led some commentators to place the volume alongside sapiential literary masterpieces as *Divanul persian* [The Persian Divan] (1940) or *Poveștile de la Bradu Strîmb* [The Tales of Bradu Strîmb] (1943), on a par with Hermann Hesse's writings. *Ostrovul lupilor* has also been regarded as a Dobrujan replica of the pastoral novel *Baltagul* [The Hatchet], along a transhumance route linking mountainous Moldova to the Danube marshes (after 1878, when Dobruja joined the new Romanian national state, the Bucharest administration colonised/Romanianised the province by bringing in Transylvanian shepherds from the Austro-Hungarian Empire [Iordachi, 2002]). Both novels

9 Sadoveanu attributes a questionable Turkic etymology to the town: according to him Babadag means "father of the [Hercynian] mountains" in the area, however Turkish historians are of the opinion that the name comes from the dervish Sari Saltuk Dede (real name Sherif Hizir), the leader ("Baba") of the Tatars settled in the area since 1263 – see Sabahat Akșirai, *Sari Saltuk Baba, Renkler*, Bucharest: Kriterion Yainevi, 1995, p. 189.

10 The ruins of Histria, founded by Greek settlers from Miletus around 650 BC and destroyed in the 7th century AD by the Avaro-Slav invasions, were identified by the French archaeologist Ernest Desjardins (1868); archaeological excavations were started only in 1914 by teams led by the historian Vasile Pârvan (roughly around the time of the "hunting trip" in Sadoveanu's novel).

are "pastoral" narratives constructed around a murder, a problematic investigation and a labyrinthine criminal trial, and in both novels the murderer is exposed by a woman Zebila or Vitoria Lipan, respectively. In *Baltagul*, Nechifor Lipan's murderer is maimed to death by the herding dog Lupu (Wolf), and in *Ostrovul lupilor* the death of Iovan the Serb – the murderer of his cousin Marcu – is foreshadowed by a pack of wolves decimating his flocks during the winter, on an island on Lake Sinoe. Admittedly, "in their purely external aspect, the episodes with judges, lawyers, jurors and so on lack the density of similar ones in *Baltagul*" (Ciopraga, 1981, p. LXXXIX); the focus of the narrative no longer falls on the facts recounted, but on his musings on them. Rather than a realist novel, *Ostrovul lupilor* is a "*conte philosophique.*"

This is, however, completely different territory; *Ostrovul lupilor* is, in the first and last instance, an interethnic narrative about a Dobruja where the peaceful coexistence of the "nations" has always been subject to the political pressures from the various administrations. The political context in which the novel was written is not without significance: on 7 September 1940, under pressure from Hitler's Germany, the Quadrilateral (the southern Dobrujan counties of Durostor and Caliacra) were returned by the Treaty of Craiova to Bulgaria, from which Romania had taken it over in August 1913; the population exchanges also affected the Turkish community, whose members had long since begun to expatriate to Mustafa Kemal's Turkey. Most of the Turks in Histria (Caranasuf) were replaced by Bulgarians.

A 1938 article by Geo Bogza (1968), whose social reports on the provinces newly annexed by Romania after 1918 very tellingly describe the exodus of the Turks from Dobruja, which was making the headlines in the press:

> Again you are leaving, Turks from the lands by the sea, and again the newspapers have started to write about you. With melancholy. Apparently, the Romanians feel sorry to see you go. Now so many of your good qualities are revealed: you were nice, you were loyal. And you wore fez. You were thus a picturesque touch adding to the charm of the Romanian landscape. But above all, you descended from ancestors who had inspired an endless number of Romanian proverbs. For

> instance: "Like Turk, like shotgun." It's true that besides the Browning or the machine gun, the shotgun is now obsolete. Or that strange saying: "Let the Turk pay!" I know that for a long time it was us who paid to the Turk. But perhaps it was then that we took to this this manner of speaking, in which so many of us now say that Germany is watching over the peace. Your departure from the lands by the sea has caused not a little sorrow and there are people who sigh: "The Turks are leaving..." A belated reply to the cry that terrified our grandparents for so long: "The Turks are coming!" Over centuries, in the rhythm of Eminescu's gloss, one might say of course: "The Turks are coming, the Turks are going..." But there's nothing poetic about your departure: on the deck of ships, bags on your backs, huddled together like a herd. By day you thirst, and by night you shiver with cold. And how long have you been hungry? *Aman, bre*! Woe is you! Don't I know it. (pp. 345–346)

Although the identity of the narrator/hunter is not disclosed, the novel's prologue develops a very "Sadovenian" view on the history of Dobruja, also expounded in his older travel writings; his inventory of the ethnic groups (Turks, Tatars, Bulgarians, Germans, etc.) also includes the Italians in the village of Cataloi, stating that they were first brought to Cornești, in Moldova, by "a landowner from the vicinity of Iași, father of the poet Dimitrie Anghel" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 194) (after 1870, many of the urban construction projects in Romania employed Italian architects and workers). A "land of antiquity," Dobruja is at the same time a "land of change", a territory where the historical rights of ethnic groups are as uncertain as possible – in fact, non-existent. The novel's sumptuous *incipit* melancholically unfolds a relativising perspective on history (in a very broad perspective), in a *vanitas vanitatum* key:

> The spring deposits of the Danube are rich enough to gradually push the Sea's boundary further east. Chilia was a seaport in the 15th century, in the reign of the righteous voivode Stephen of Moldavia. And seven hundred years before Stephen-Voievode, the pagan Slavs from Kyiv, eager to prey on the trade routes of the Byzantine kingdom, had set up a fortress and hanging gardens at Prislav. From those gardens Tzar Sviatoslav watched the sea, sipping sweet wine from the gold-encrusted

> skull of a Bulgarian prince. Now Prislav sits far away from the view it once had, on one of the three arms of the river. Also, from Babadag to Siutghiol, all the lakes within reach of the shore were the dominion of the Euxine Sea. Now the Lipovan fishermen catch carp in the big pond of Razelm; in Tașaul, Duingi and Caranasuf the mullets come to spend the summer in shallow waters; and on the seabed of yore, at Histria, the shepherds lead their flocks and the peasants plough the necropoles of times long gone. Seven or eight hundred years before the hordes of bearded Slavs arrived here, the Greek cities were flourishing. At Histria mosaic thermae and marble inscriptions are unearthed. The graves of the refined Milesian settlers mingled with the older burial mounds of the Scyths. On these superimposed, overlapping layers of bones, our Dacian ancestors also lit their fires, along their routes carrying wool and grain for the peoples of the south. Then the Romans took over. Later, Mongolian hordes left a trail of fire and blood, as their hunger drove them westwards. The *autokrators* of Byzantium brought the peace again, until the Tatars invaded once more from one side and the Turks from the other. Graveyard over graveyard, and hearth on top of hearth. The last human waves left the residue of descendants still standing face to face. Malorusians and Lipovans, Gagauz and Bulgarians, Turks and Tatars. Romanians too, filling all vacant places like water, slowly sweeping away the past. (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 194)

Two things should be pointed out here: first, the lack of historical memory among the inhabitants, after "catastrophes that shattered everything;" as "a passage from the wilderness to the Empire's heaven," Dobruja is a land of forgotten antiquity, of impermanence and ephemerality: "Dobruja, you are 'antiquity' itself; but the transient Dobrujans, as soon as they set foot here, discard this word as well as any other in connection with permanence" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 197). In such circumstances, toponymy becomes incomprehensible to the locals, and "philologists can find only a funereal use for their knowledge" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 197). Secondly, we note how recent are the Romanian administration and population: the only "autochthonous" Romanians are the shepherds settled here from Transylvania (*mocani*). One symbolic detail – defining the local identity – is striking: beyond the ruins of the Histria fortress, where the lake seems to "send dark

blue waves" towards the sea, there is no water, but only the dry bottom of the valley – a mirage, a *Fata Morgana* known as "the water of the dead," reaching into the depths of "that mystery where the past lies, locked away" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 196).[11]

This abyss over which cranes soar (Sadoveanu's symbolic bird) is the only element in the novel with an esoteric ("mystical") significance, but nevertheless a key element: this is a realm where illusion takes precedence over reality. The mirage spanning the space between Caranasuf and Ostrovul Lupilor (Wolves' Island) is guarded by a mill abandoned and burnt down not long ago, but vaguely persisting in people's memory like a name "to which nothing answers": Moara

11 The mirage occurring between Caranasuf and Sinoe also appears in a tale of nature and hunting included in the volume *Vechime*: *Histria* (*Ancient Times: Histria*, 1939), where Vasile Pârvan's archaeological site appears as a palimpsest of submerged civilizations. Here the "land of antiquity" is (also) a "land of solitude," where millenia before the ancient Dacians had forged links with old and great civilisations: "Solitude seems to be the name of the whole land, where for more than two thousand years the tireless Greeks established a sumptuous and civilised life. First the entire island was occupied by the city of Histria. As testifies one of the marble slabs that have come to light, the earliest Histrians, in union with other Greek settlements of the Sea and the Danube, entered a covenant of alliance, defence and trade with an ancient Dacian king who predated the great Boerebista. His name was Remaxius and he reigned betwteen the Danube, the Tisza and the Dniester. I salute this ancestor whose name slumbers in the solitude of Sinoe." Historical musings on the ruins leads to a decadent eulogy of civilizations swallowed by waters, yet present through the evidence of the grandeur of their remains: "From the 6th century BC to the 3rd century AD, the Histrians traded with Dacia and sailed across the Euxine Sea to the Greek islands and the land of Asia Minor. In the latter period, greatly afflicted by the invasion, the ravages and the plunder of the Goths, they built a city on top of the ruins. It is a strong fortress; its outer walls are of hewn stone. The defensive towers of the gate, the width of buttresses, the public buildings, the marble and mosaic termae fully justify the observation of our Lipovan boatman from Jurilovca: – Hm! He exclaims in awe, those people of yore were wise. Says one of the unkempt, uncouth boorish men smelling of oil and booze, who pass by and over the noble graves. For the unrelenting waves, from Goths to Huns, Slavs and Tatars, have crushed and defiled the edifices of a dazzling civilization." This piece of prose can be considered to "branch out" in the 1941 novel, starting from its very *incipit* ("I found myself, with two companions, on the mounds near Caranasuf"). The excavations of Pîrvan's archaeological teams resulted, after the identification of the Roman town in 1914, in the renaming of the village of Caranasuf (apparently named after its founder Nasuf) as Histria; the new Orthodox church built for the Romanian and Bulgarian believers in the locality incorporated remains of the excavated ruins.

lui Ali (Ali's Mill), although it never belonged to Ali, but to the man who had killed Ali; the names themselves thus become a kind of macabre mirage, announced in the opening of chapter two of the book: "I count on my fingers and find that twenty-five years ago this August, I first took the road I speak about, to Wolves' Island" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 198).

The new Nastratin and "Mad Ali" – A *sui generis* anti-Halima

Monica Spiridon (1982, p. 77) pays particular attention to the narratological solutions of the text. The (meta)narrator has an uncertain status and does not necessarily share the identity of the author on the book's cover; the name given to him by the shepherd Dănilă of Caranasuf ("Master Ioniță") is not the real one (of which we know nothing!). We are also informed that the "storyteller" has ancestors "in Byzantium" and "a neatly-trimmed beard," which again rules out any identification with the real author, or rather conceals it (the tone is jocular enough to be unreliable). The uncertainty surrounding the name is ironically pointed at in the title of the second chapter ("The storyteller is allegedly one called 'Master Ioniță'"), while the title of the next chapter refutes it just as facetiously, through the name used by Dănilă *baci* (chief shepherd): "The storyteller arrives at a shepherds' settlement, in the wilderness, and does not even care to greet 'Mr. Panaite…'." Therefore, the very name of the storyteller is a "mirage" to the local people.

The "story within a story", a characteristic trait of Sadovenian literary maturity, holds a relatively minor place in *Ostrovul lupilor*, occupying little more than half of the novel; instead, the narrative "frame" – a hunt for great bustards in the "Bărăgan" plain of Histria – is significantly expanded. This hunting trip, if we subtract 25 from the year when the book was written (1940), would likely be set in the summer of 1915, and its evocation spans the whole of chapters II through VI. The participants, along with the storyteller, are the lawyer Panaite Cîmpanu from Constanța, his trusted servant Neagu Leușcan and their hosts at a sheepfold near Ostrovul Lupilor (The Wolves' Island): the septuagenarian shepherd Dănilă and the "philosopher" Mehmet Caimacam, head of the shepherds and former client

of Panaite, nicknamed Nastratin Hoca after the legendary sage; his faithful assistants, the Tatars Gulfi and Șaban, are also present. Spectacular in itself, the narrative establishes a Dobrujan literary geography and a specific atmosphere, as well as a moral typology of the characters, contentiously engaged in hunting confrontations that reveal their mentality. In its turn, the sheepfold is portrayed as an archaic corporation, described "anthropologically."

A particular element of local atmosphere is represented by the specific dishes (to Sadoveanu, gastronomy is the quintessence of a community's identity). In particular, the kebab is the hunters' delight; a frequent occurrence in Sadoveanu's later writings, it also features at the court of the Crimean khan in the novel *Nunta domniței Ruxanda* [Lady Ruxanda's Wedding] and in the third volume of *Frații Jderi* [The Jderi Brothers] it "bewitches" the young hero on his journey to Mount Athos via Ottoman Bulgaria. The seduction of Turkish cuisine – an element of imperial soft power, eventually assimilated by Wallachians – makes Ionuț Jder "forget" his own ancestry ("You eat yourself into oblivion") and momentarily "suspends" his aversion towards the invaders (Sadoveanu, 1966, p. 222).

Resulting in a modest success – the narrator effortlessly shoots a bustard, and the envious and passionate Panaite, after great struggle, kills another – this "atmosphere hunt", as Paul Georgescu (1967) termed it, is followed, during a rainstorm that forces the protagonists to take refuge in the valley's sheepfold, by the telling of an old story (in Sadoveanu's prose, such rains usually have an initiatory role, opening a passage into another reality). The lawyer's account, a retrospective plea, is (as stated elsewhere), "rather convoluted, with repetitions and belaboured points, but also with details that no longer linger in my memory" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 360); we are therefore offered an essentialised account, with a retelling of a reality to which there is no direct access. The "mishap" of 50-year-old Mehmet, a close friend of shepherd Dănilă and host to the group of hunters, thus becomes the main subject of the story – and of the novel that contains it at its core – a story introduced by the lawyer as a "true *Halima*, complicated and rather lengthy", even before the narrator meets the new Nastratin. When the long-awaited man

appears, he does not disappoint, and the nickname by which he is identified with the sage of the 1400s[12] is justified by the moral stories he tells – first of all, in order to make the coffee ceremony more pleasant: "caave saade caimaclî," a blend "of one variety of Mocha and two of Hindustan" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 226). Then Mehmet serves his audience the parables of Nastratin Hoca, portrayed, in turn, as a "man of peace" in the confrontation with the cruel Timur Lenk and as a skilled coffee maker initiated into the craft at Istanbul and Balchik, where he ends up seeking refuge "for fear of his wife." Beside their particular sense of humour, the anecdotes are intended to "match tastes" very much to the listener's liking ("Coffee, beyim, is a pleasant beverage, but at the same time it's a drug. Any drug is also poison"). Like Mehmet, he does not enjoy the Bulgarian coffee, because it is "excessively watered down" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 228). What he finds fascinating about the new Nastratin is in fact the ceremonious delicacy of witty speech, melted into the *optimal dosage* that defines coffee and its symbolic correlative, the story.

Here Sadoveanu employs the "Oriental" technique of postponement and obliqueness/disclosure by degrees, which makes the main hero first appear to be the narrator, then the brigand Deli-Ali and finally revealed as Mehmet himself. The aforementioned mirage – the so-called "water of the dead", a Fata Morgana between Histria and Sinoe – becomes a *mise en abyme* of the story of the new Nastratin. The tales told by the two hunting companions over several rainy days blend together to the point of indistinguishability, merging into a unique "paste": the voice of our unknown narrator.

Mehmet and Ali's unfortunate story takes place before the turn of the century, in a Dobruja newly colonised by the Romanians (who hold the state authority bodies of administration and justice). Henceforth, the novel takes a Turkish "foundation" with Romanian "superstructure"; enter Ali, the nephew of Mehmet's wife (Zebila) from her cousin's side and son of his friend Iusuf. Poor and humble, the child Ali feels wiser than others (by way of psychological compensation); later, he listens to some "wonderful stories" read

12 Sadoveanu's poetic license; the popular philosopher and pedagogue Nasreddin Hodja actually lived in the 12th century AD.

out from the *Halima* by a hoca in Küstengè (Constanța), and they spontaneously fill his mind like a mirage. The conversation with his mother, the lowly "handmaid" Eitùn, intertwines life and literature, with a moral full of psychological astuteness:

> I think of so many things, *anne*, for I've inherited from father a wisdom that other boys of my age don't have. While I was living at Küstengè, I didn't waste my time playing childish games in the slums or fishing for goby on the sea shore. I used to go quite often to a hoca who taught me how to listen to wonderful stories. He would read them from a thick book and in my mind I could picture every word he read. I especially liked a story about Aladdin, a wizard and an enchanted lamp. Aladdin was a poor little boy like me, and had a wise mother like you. Whatever troubles he may have caused his mother, as I do you, they all ended well because of the enchanted lamp he found in a cellar, so strangely, when he least expected it. As soon as he rubbed that lamp, a mighty genie appeared right away to grant his every wish .... So I seek to find a lamp like that, and then we'll lack nothing, we'll live in luxury and have it all; and I can send you to the emperor, to ask for his daughter as my wife, as Aladdin did in the kingdom where he was living. Eitùn ... did not believe in any of the Halima's wondrous tales, for life had taught her the bitter truths. Such lies as those in the Halima were invented by the lazy and spread in the world by poets, who also belong to the same lot. But Ali obstinately kept to his philosophical reckonings. (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 261)

In one of his seminal studies on Sadoveanu's work, Nicolae Manolescu (1976) noted that to Mehmet the model assumed, imitated and emulated is Nastratin, with his pragmatic wisdom – a "man of peace" and of witty words, also having learnt at the "the school of life" – whereas Ali's literary ideal is the story of Aladdin in the *Halima*. Like Don Quixote or Emma Bovary, the "obstinate" Turk – marked by a distorted paternal role model – becomes a victim of the confusion between literature and life, more precisely, between the stories of those "up high" (who sell comfortable illusions to the many) and the real-life world of "the lowly" (those who work). Life, in its turn, seems to confirm his upside-down mode of thinking. As if in an

anti-story, the teenager finds a (not enchanted) lamp, with which he accidentally sets fire to an old straw mattress and discovers in the ashes the four Turkish *mahmudiye* coins his mother had painstakingly saved: the narrator sneers, "This is how books' lies turn out to be truths" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 262). Ali steals them and flees to Babadag, followed by the curses of the poor woman who, overwhelmed with remorse, later forgives him; however, (such an extraordinary literary device!) her forgiveness never catches up with him: mocked by the hoca of Babadag (a figure opposed to the one in Constanța), beaten and robbed of three of his four coins by a Romanian policeman because he had dared to defend his rights, the young man learns that Eitùn has died, leaving him alone in the world. Taking up his mother's way of life, he toils profitlessly at shepherds' folds, including Dănilă's, or at the fishers' storehouses; he then falls ill with black pox brought by the wind from a wolf carcass, but survives it; he spends a while at Niculițel, guarding the Hafizlî vineyards of landowner Năstase Blîndu, even defending them in an armed fight against thieves (and as a reward earning a nomination for a medal); he finally serves as a soldier in the cavalry corps led by Sergeant Murad of Constanța, before abandoning observance of the Prophet's Law in favour of the "free life" of the brigand.

From now on, the man will be known as the feared Deli-Ali ("Mad Ali", a nickname whose pronunciation will be voluptuously practised, decades later, by the narrator and Panaite) and will act as a Turkish outlaw who avenges his humiliations a hundredfold. He who had mistaken the "lie" of literature for real life now rebels against the injustice which, in another typical confusion, he equates with the Law, announcing to his fellow countrymen that he has gone out into the wilderness to live according to his heart's desire and to bring about an "order" only he understands "among the Turkish clergy, the police and the Romanian shepherds."

The individual against the laws of the community: this is a *hybris* specific to Sadoveanu's prose. Declared public enemy number one in the region, a wanted man hunted by the authorities but hidden by loyal supporters, the rebellious "loner" avenges his humiliations one by one, mutilates the hoca, takes back his *mahmudiye* coins and kills the policeman Negură, then goes on to collect from the wealthy

men of all Dobruja the riches he and his father had always coveted; the "madness" of rebellion is his understanding of justice. While hiding in the windmill of Marcu the Serb, Ali ends up a victim of Marcu and his cousin Iovan, lured by the price placed on the head of the robber. Taking advantage of the Turk's trust, Marcu kills him, aided by Iovan, who suspects him of keeping for himself the secret of Ali's most important fortune: his hidden treasure trove.

A forensic storyline with ethnic implications

After a meeting with the shepherd Dănilă, Mehmet finds Marcu (who had left them only an hour and a half earlier) murdered in his own mill, while Iovan is searching for him at the foot of the hill. An astute thinker, Mehmet correctly anticipates that, as the only witness, he will also become a suspect – though none of the villagers and shepherds believe that the murder could have been committed by this fair man, almost saint-like in his righteousness and kindness, revered by his much younger wife. From this point on, the story – hitherto adventurous, quasi-picaresque – takes a "forensic" turn.

Although all evidence points to the innocence of the witness, the reconstruction of the incident, carried out with suspicious "haste," is unfavourable to him. Suspicion is first voiced by Judge Radu V., the judge sent from Bucharest, unhappy about his "exile to Dobruja" and eager to build a successful career in Bucharest through overzealous convictions handed down after scant investigation (we learn that he later becomes Minister of Justice). The narrator justifies, in retrospect, the secrecy over the magistrate's surname (a "nice guy" who ensures Mehmet's safe transport to Constanța prison) by his easily recognisable notoriety ("our readers of yesteryear will easily connect the dots"). As a man with the fear of Allah, who "was not guided by proverbs but by his own mind" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 317), Mehmet realises the danger early on; he therefore advises Zebila on how to run the household after he is arrested. In the meantime, he reflects on Nastratin's teachings on justice and injustice, and performs the ritual ablutions.

Despite finding a suitable lawyer – Panaite Câmpanu, whose preliminary investigations he "likes" – the accused becomes the victim of

magistrates who discriminate against him as a Turk on the basis of real or imagined interethnic conflicts. He is, in fact, viewed (suspected and, in the end, discriminated against) not as a Romanian citizen of Turkish ethnicity, but as a Turk fostering imperial nostalgia, hostile to Romanians by virtue of the old military/religious conflict between "Christians" and "Muslims". The judge Iancu Diamandi starts from the premise of the "enmity between Christians and Muslims", to which Mehmet wittily replies that in Caranasuf there is no other enmity but "against the she-wolves who birth too many cubs, while we don't want to let them have the lamb meat" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 336). The one who "nails" the Caimacam, however, is prosecutor Gara Bairactarian ("dubbed Gara Bara"). As an ethnic Armenian, he applies the presumption of guilt on behalf of the Ottomans and Kurds who, during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, massacred the Armenians of Sasun, accused of refusing to pay taxes:[13]

> In his indictment, the prosecutor made a poignant digression about the slaughters in Asia by Muslims against Christians. He alluded to the recent acts of the Kurds in a certain province of the Ottoman Empire, which all the newspaper issues of that month wrote about in horror. He quoted these instances to prove to the Honourable Court how fierce religious hatred still persists among certain populations of the East. (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 341)

Ethnic bias, collective stigma and moral "Oriental" labelling are therefore the prosecution's favourite tools, to which are added the taking out of context of some words spoken by Mehmet – "Me today, you tomorrow" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 339) – in which the prosecutor finds proof of his guilt. On the other hand, as a witness and a man with first-hand knowledge of the community, the Romanian mayor

13 The massacres of 1894–1896 were condemned by the major European powers; Great Britain threatened military intervention and Russia sent troops to end the pogrom. The French government, however, refrained from any condemnation, sparking outrage from the socialist opposition (Jean Jaurès) and writers such as Anatole France. According to the Sadovenian narrator, the murder investigation "took place at Caranasuf, within sight of Lake Sinoe and the buried fortress of Histria, on 20 September 1900," just a few years after the Hamidian massacres, which stirred strong emotions in Romania as well.

of Caranasuf, Ștefan Chiriloiu, defends him admiringly: "he is an honest and God-believing Turk; besides, he is more learned than their Tatar priest; and he has his own thoughts and insights that amaze us" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 339). Free from any inter-ethnic prejudice, he makes the necessary distinction before the prosecutor between "Turk" (common man) and "Ottoman" (imperial official), but to no avail. Sentenced to seven years in the prison of Küstenge (the old Turkish name of the port city of Constanta), the "innocent culprit" refuses any appeal against the conviction, to which he is entitled: "If there is no guilt, there can be no forgiveness" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 358). During his imprisonment, this "good believer, who at the same time has the special outlook of the old Hoca of 1400" (pardoned by Timur for a non-existent crime), and who, in the time of King Carol I (who will eventually exonerate him), re-enacts the case of the Hoca of Timur's time, and peacefully assesses his own moral condition, in the perspective of a divine judgment to which ephemeral men have no access:

> His honour has been brushed aside as a mere trifle. His wealth is left in the care of a weak creature, such as a woman, however worthy she may be. His physical freedom has been taken away. He does not feel ashamed, for he is conscious of his innocence before God. But, because God has graciously granted him the trial he is going through, he isolates himself from us men and seeks refuge in the very One who tries him or punishes him for some unknown fault.... Time, which is so important to men, does not exist for God. It may be that the oil of his righteousness will not rise above the water any time soon; he might be proven innocent in an age, when other generations of men will have forgotten all that is past; and this justice may be done after another age in another form than that which the common people expect. (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 345)

Mehmet Caimacam nevertheless enjoys the respect of the authorities who, suspecting a miscarriage of justice, strive to make his life comfortable in anticipation of an increasingly likely pardon, first by allowing weekly visits to Zebila, then through rewards from the prison governor delivered by the warden, a veteran of the War of Independence. As a skilled jeweller and clock repairman, he then

works for a fee, making "belt buckles and bracelets for those who like such finery" and every week he mends the governor's wife's "horologes", which she passionately treasures in a "personal museum of her own" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 348). Legal reparations – also obtained through Gara Bara and Radu V., who in the meantime had achieved his dream of becoming a high-ranking official in Bucharest, freed from his "exile" to Dobruja – finally arrive thanks to the obedient Zebila, who discovers in Iovan the Serb's house a blue mug that had belonged to Ali's mother, which the son had taken after her death and where, hidden close to the mill, Iovan kept "part of his thieving gains" as a private fetish (Marcu, we infer, had found the mug and Iovan had taken it from him after killing him).

Like Nechifor Lipan's robbers in the novel *Baltagul*, Iovan becomes rich in a suspiciously short time, which is strange. As always with Sadoveanu, however, immanent justice is decisive and intervenes before human justice: one winter, the Serb's flocks are decimated by wolves on Wolves' Island. Terrified both by the threat of "positive law" (as a suspect) and by the "signs" that have appeared – his murder is "exposed by God", according to the mayor and Dănilă – the Serb attempts to evade justice, first through "donations to a holy monastery," then by confessing to the Turk's innocence and eventually choosing to hang himself in the attic of his own house. Finally, Mehmet is pardoned and released almost by force: the only reason he agrees to leave the prison is Zebila-*hanym*'s arrival in a carriage, with servants Gulfi and Shaban, to take him home to Caranasuf.

The story ends in the same setting of the sheepfold: Panaite remembers Mehmet's release and the death of his wife, five years later, from a heart disease caused by the waiting. The Turk's experience prompts the anti-Schopenhauerian reflections of the lawyer – who suddenly became a wiseman – on the sublimated purity of love for Zebila. As the "jeweller" fashioning his own feelings, Mehmet crafts his own "golden branch":

> Both we and the women we loved were deceived by the genius of the species .... For such simple physiology a whole etiquette was created. I also know the ancient and Asian view of women. From Scheherazade and Helen of Menelaus to the present day, the woman appears to them

> only as an object of desire. I am not talking about my Turk's temperament, nor about the 'contact between two epidermises', but a human creation that was born as a pinnacle of emotions and that stands next to physiology, ennobling it. Our man polishes it, like a jeweller. (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 364)

Much has been said in Romanian literary criticism about Nastratin Hoca's "sadness" (melancholy) in the Sadovenian novel – a sadness certified by his spiritual "heir," Mehmet Caimacam:

> Our Nastratin Hoca was neither a jester nor a stubborn mule, Master Panaite, but a sage greater than all sages. My people dare not openly call me by his name, because they have no understanding of Hoca's parables. They laugh at the stories that Hoca would tell in the evening by the fire, but Hoca did not laugh. Five hundred years have passed since our Nasredin died, but Nasredin is still alive when they make fun, and when I am sorrowful. (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 222)

We can see in Mehmet's "Nastratin" figure more than an idealising ethno-cultural stereotype; it is an ethno-image meant to configure a common ethnotype. In the 1970s, the French researcher Guy Michaud (1978, pp. 19–34) outlined a sampling method, according to the criteria of literary imagology and based on a variable number of authors and texts on the characteristics of peoples. The resulting "typical portraits" were called ethnograms. By gathering and comparing – using the same criteria – a sufficient number of writings (including those of Romanian culture) centred around the figure of Nastratin, we obtain relevant data for an ethnogram of the "wise jester", defining a spiritual type. In the Sadovenian text, he also acquires the role of an ethical model.[14]

14 Sadoveanu's affinity for "Nastratinesque" wisdom resurfaces in a short story (*Huzur*) in *Fantasii răsăritene* (Bucharest: Editura de Stat, 1946). It is centred around an elderly Turkish-Tatar couple living in Balchik (Hasan efendi, a former "guardian of the türbè of the unknown saint of Batova Valley", and his wife

The figure of the “wise jester”

Nicolae Manolescu (1976) correctly noted that to Mehmet, “Nastratin is not a clown, but a philosopher,” whose “sadness,” misunderstood by Timur Lenk, is brought to the foreground (p. 226). But he is not right in stating that this “sad reading” of the Hoca (or of his parables, which he retells centuries later) is a “betrayal” of the Nastratinesque spirit, except insofar as “identification involves the risk of underhanded betrayal, while betrayal can be tantamount to a superior kind of fidelity.” It is, in fact, a betrayal of buffoonish appearances, aimed at saving one’s own interiority. A specific melancholy filters through Sadoveanu’s image of the wise jester. Monica Spiridon

Mariam-hanym) who had hosted the writer during his hunting wanderings across the Quadrilateral, in the spring of 1937 – at the beginning of the far-right Iron Guard campaign against him. The guest is treated to the traditional Turkish coffee and fig jam, in the aroma of unleavened bread and kebap baking in the oven, and touched by the “oriental idleness” of the scene, he puts down in a notebook the words he finds witty, amused by their faulty Romanian pronunciation. Watching him closely, his friend Hasan is delighted when his words arouse interest and are transcribed: “he wishes his wise words could enter into the world of newspapers and books”. He agrees that “good things are rare”, and when the moral stories he tells stir interest (“When Hasan’s turn come, that God think of him, then Hasan speak a good word. But that is rare, now and then”) he begins to hope: “if like it, you write it to book”. He is saddened, however, when what he wants to convey is not deemed worthy of being put on paper (“Word not good, then?”). Other “lucky” sayings are delivered in the form of an injunction by the sage Nasr-ed-din, whom Hasan believes died at Balchik (“left Anadol and Timur and all and come to Balchik, to rest from the wickedness of emperors; no other truth there is”); he is in fact simply acting like other communities and peoples who claim the sage for themselves. More politically “incorrect” is the “parable” – allegedly Nastratinesque – that Hasan invokes to prophetically vex the Bulgarian claims to the Quadrilateral: “You, Christians of Balchik, know they will come to your place, to famous city call’d Balchik, come they will – nations of hard working and angry men and will not forgive you for living here… This you not wrote?”. Hasan is disappointed with his interlocutor’s reserve: “I was in doubt, for I am not an enemy of the Bulgarians, as I am not an enemy of any nation; and seeing that I was in doubt, Hasan efendi was saddened: «This write not? This not good. That the prophet prophesied, good; but not good that what he said was fulfilled. The best prophet – he who not tell the truth. If you write this to booklet, I die happy, beyim. If come to us hard working and angry man, then is over, we lie down our head; we die». It is only this resigned and peaceful acceptance of victimhood that reconciles them under the ennobling sign of the written word: “I wrote this in my notebook and Hasan-efendi sighed in gratitude.”

(1982, p. 79), in turn, sees Mehmet – a "Nastratin of solitude" – as an exemplary "Smileless Păcală" (a prankster figure in Romanian folklore, from *a păcăli* – to dupe), thus diverting the witty buffoonery of the Romanian folklore character towards seriousness. Mircea Muthu (2002) also calls attention to the "tragic undertones and philosophical emphasis" that, beyond the "universality of the anecdotes", the Romanian reworkings add to Hoca's figure, revealing "the mutation from *picaro* to *sophos*, from *activism* to *contemplativism*": "The plus that the Romanian version brings is undoubtedly the tear of sorrow, the existential projection" (Muthu, 2002, p. 210).[15] The Balkan hypostases of the "wise wanderer" illustrate the character's picaresque chameleonism, adapted with versatility to the ethnicity of the respective region. It is amusing that the same Mircea Muthu, contradicting the linguist and folklorist Lazăr Șăineanu's idea that "the legendary type of the Oriental spirit" is a mixture of "naivety and stupidity", commits a significant error: quoting I. L. Caragiale's assessment of Nastratin ("a type of naivety and cunning, of wit and foolishness, of logic and absurdity, of trickster and gullible man"), the Cluj-based comparatist states that the playwright's text containing the aforementioned opinion is entitled *Din isprăvile lui Nastratin Hogea* [Nastratin Hoca's Antics] and appeared in the newspaper *Epoca*, 1897, no. 497. In fact, the real title is *Cilibi Moise. Câteva rînduri alese* [Cilibi Moise: Selected lines], published in *Epoca literară*, I, no. 5 of 13 May 1896, p. 3. Caragiale's connection between *Năzdrăvăniile lui Nastratin Hogea* [Nastratin Hoca's Mischiefs] and the brochures of "moral stories, maxims and aphorisms" by the Jew Cilibi Moise (Froim Moses Schwarz, 1812–1870), published between 1858 and 1870 and edited by the folklorist Moses Schwarzfeld (1857–1943), is important insofar as the two itinerant sages illustrate the same oriental moralism, beyond and across ethnic/religious barriers; "with the same classic oriental geniality as the legendary Nastratin Hoca, he speaks of himself, of his bad luck, which never quite overcomes his wise patience.... there are his fine pearls of wisdom where, with a superior sense of humour,

15 With the following *coda* regarding the analogies with the local hero Păcală: "naive and resourceful, wise and tolerant, illustrating a form of social pedagogy, the Romanian version of the type adds one of the most nuanced representations of popular South-Eastern European humanism."

he prevails over his ill-starred fate; where he mocks the troubles of his own life as of another's (Muthu, 2002, p. 75).

It is not cunning, nor versatile resourcefulness, but the ability to survive and defend his inward being in adverse circumstances that Sadoveanu chose in the historical conditions of 1940. Mehmet's lonely sadness comes from an awareness of modern decadence: the new people no longer understand the spirit of Hoca, retaining only the hilarious appearance. While Kesarion Breb, in the esoteric novel *Creanga de aur* [The Golden Bough] (1933), after his initiation in Egypt and Byzantium, becomes the last high priest of the free Dacians of Mount Om, Mehmet Caimacam can be regarded as the "last Nastratin" of the land between the Danube and the Sea. However, his "Nastratinism" also serves as camouflage for an inaccessible interiority: "and Nastratin confined himself only to those manifestations and parables which he put on like a foreign garment and a mask" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 361). Out of gratitude, the liberated Turk turned shepherd invites the hunter-guest (a hunter of stories and souls, not only of birds) to "the great autumn passage of the wild geese" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 367). But the latter's trips to Dobruja come to an abrupt halt; the story fast-forwards to the time of the First World War, "during the long winter of 1917" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 367), to a Dobrujan territory occupied by German, Bulgarian and Turkish troops.

The "storyteller" will learn about the circumstances of Mehmet's death, from his friend Panaite; the Caimacam and his "fellow shepherds" successfully defended themselves against the wolves' attacks, but not against the "bands of *comitagii*" [Bulgarian revolutionaries] coming from the Balkans, from Batova Valley. Although "in that battle he managed to defend part of his possessions", Mehmet is shot twice and admitted to a makeshift hospital in Constanța thanks to the lawyer, where he dies exhausted from the journey and haemorrhaging – but not before putting everything in order. After "arranging worldly things," he "takes counsel" with "the priest of his law" about "more lasting things", then bids farewell to the lawyer from Constanța and, through him, to his newer absent friend: "He remembered me too: he left me a Nasredin-style farewell: – I'm leaving: flowers will still bloom without Mehmet. Güle-güle – to

the bey! This 'güle-güle' – an Ottoman 'adieu' – literally translates as: 'smiling-smiling'" (Sadoveanu, 2010, p. 368). It's a characteristic ending for a novel under the banner of interethnic tolerance.

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Jacek Malczewski's Picturesque Story

Abstract

Jacek Malczewski was a painter who, in his monumental artistic output, left works revolving around the problems of homeland, freedom and lost identity, life and death, spanning between romantic visions and metaphysics. He was inspired by the art of antiquity, Polish Romanticism, but also tapped into folklore, complicating the meaning of his paintings with symbolism that was not always easy to understand. It was a multi-layered oeuvre, a testament to his great erudition, but also to the imagination and sensitivity of a refined humanist.

In his paintings, he also asked about the essence of being an artist, the artist's responsibility, and was interested in the problem of whether artists are really only masters of themselves, or whether they have a responsibility for the artistic tasks they take on.

During the seventy-five years of the artist's life, the history of Europe and Poland changed profoundly. His creative personality was mainly influenced by Poland's loss of independence which entailed an identity crisis. Throughout his artistic path, Malczewski subscribed to the inherent mission of art to build national identity through creative exploration of various myths. He illustrated the dream of freedom and independence, showed

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the suffering of the nation and its sacrifice, and recalled the idea of the homeland which was to be both a homeland, a home, but also the foundation of national culture.

Keywords

Jacek Malczewski, Polish art, painting, symbolism, Young Poland, heritage

Jacek Malczewski was a painter who, in his monumental artistic output, left works revolving around the problems of homeland, freedom, life and death, stretched between romantic visions and metaphysics; he was inspired by the art of antiquity, Polish Romanticism, but also drew on folklore, complicating the subject matter of his paintings with symbolism that was not always intelligible. It was a multi-layered oeuvre, a testament to his vast erudition, but also to the imagination and sensitivity of a refined humanist. Finally, as Piotr Juszkiewicz notes, he was a painter and writer, whose work is dominated by intellectual speculation, which the artist tries to convey through the medium of painting (Juszkiewicz, 2002, p. 14).

In his paintings he also posed the question of the essence of being an artist, the artist's responsibility, he was interested in the problem of whether artists are really only masters of themselves, or whether they have a responsibility for the artistic tasks they undertake.

Jacek Malczewski was born in 1854 in Radom as the third child of Julian Malczewski, of the Tarnawa coat of arms (1820–1884), secretary general of the Landowner's Loan Society, and Maria, née Korwin-Szymanowska (1822–1898). During the seventy-five years of his life, the history of Europe and Poland changed dramatically. Poland's loss of independence entailing an identity crisis, and the nation's failure to believe in its own "self" defined his personality. The artist's monographer Agnieszka Ławniczakowa noted that he grew up in a period of the rising awareness of nations and their aspirations for autonomy or sovereignty, and in a time of ostensible

stability dominated by the power of Russia, Prussia and Austria, with no chance for Poland to regain its independence. As a nine-year-old boy, he learned first-hand about the events of the January Uprising and its defeat, which made him realize that armed struggle was ineffective and that for the sake of the Poland's future development it was necessary to raise its political and economic potential under the still existing order of the three partitions (Ławniczakowa, 1995, p. 6).

Throughout his career, Malczewski subscribed to the inherent mission of art to build national identity through creative exploration of various myths. He illustrated the dream of freedom and independence; he showed the suffering of the nation and its sacrifice, and finally he recalled the idea of Poland which was to be both a homeland, a home, and the foundation of national culture. It was Malczewski, as a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow, who uttered the significant, oft-quoted words to his students to describe the attitude to the homeland and its future, "paint in such a way that Poland will rise from the dead." And he himself painted in such a way, drawing on both the history of Poland, which he dressed in symbols, but most of all seeking inspiration in the writings of Polish Romantic poets, which were so important for the cultural identity of the non-existent homeland.

In the early days of his work, Jacek Malczewski had to confront the greatness of Matejko and his visionary art. By uttering the meaningful words, later quoted by Adam Heydel " I cannot cannot walk in other people's shoes... with this new year (1878) I begin a new period in my life, I will start drawing inspiration from myself and painting my own things" he rejected his dictates and chose his own creative path (Heydel, 1933, p. 81). In an interview with Jan Brzękowski in 1925, he commented on his relationship with Jan Matejko:

> In order to oppose Matejko's colorism, I began to paint pictures of Siberia in grey colours. I wanted to express the national element of my art in a different way. He was always the strongest stimulus for my work. Believe me. If I were not Polish, I would not be an artist. On the other hand, I have never confined the Polish character of my art to some narrow, predetermined frames. Wyspiański, for example, limited the concept of Polishness to one place.... Meanwhile, I always explained to

> him that Poland is fields, meadows, roadside willows, the atmosphere of the countryside at sunset, this moment is now (Brzękowski, 1925, p. 1).

Malczewski also often dealt with problems that oscillated around purely "artistic" themes of the nature of art and the role of the artist. Nevertheless, he also included in many of these works, replete with symbols and inspired by romantic ideas, themes devoted to the suffering of his nation and the dream of liberating his homeland. Malczewski combined the nineteenth-century injunction to serve his enslaved homeland with the dilemmas typical of a Young Poland artist, thus conveying the problems of his era as well as expressing his own desires and anxieties.

Malczewski learned about Romantic literature at home, where it was important to worship the ideas of Romanticism, to embrace poetic thinking, Romantic sensibility and imagination: his father, Julian Malczewski, who was not only the guardian of his son's life, but also his friend and guide who watched over the formation of his personality and the development of his talent, had the reputation of an erudite man, he was an admirer of ancient literature, the works of Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, and especially Romantic poetry. Adam Heydel (Heydel, 1933, p. 13), wrote that he "knows Polish literature through and through, Słowacki is his favourite poet, and he has read Anhelli "a hundred times." Yet at the same time, being so fascinated with Słowacki, Julian Malczewski recognized the dangers that the fascination with his poetry could entail and, as Dorota Kudelska writes, "saw the poet, which was typical of the positivist view, separately as the author of brilliant poetry, serving the nation (as we know, not all works were so classified), and as a destructive egoistic personality" (Kudelska, 2012, p. 60). Malczewski's interest in Romanticism was sustained by his teacher Adolf Dygasiński, a naturalist writer, publicist, and participant in the January Uprising, who turned the young, sensitive Malczewski's attention both to nature, the land, the landscape, the world of flora and fauna, contemplation of the beauty of nature, as well as to the people and their customs and folk tales full of fantasy. It is then that the fascination began, which in later works will allow the artist to so freely use references to folklore.

The figures he met after his arrival in Cracow, such as Adam Asnyk and, most importantly, Konstanty Górski, were of no small importance in shaping Jacek Malczewski's artistic identity. It was the latter who underlined Malczewski's fascination with Juliusz Słowacki, and called him "the son of Słowacki," but also pointed out his artistic independence from the poet, as well as his belief that the painter could take up Siberian themes even without inspiration from Anhelli, because, as he wrote,

> Malczewski had patriotic feelings, very intense feelings, and, frankly, became the greatest painter of contemporary national sorrows after Grottger for a number of years. In comparison with his paintings, *Poland after 1863* is pretentious and melodramatic. Malczewski did not need literary influence, after all, he was eight years old on the day of the January uprising. People born in this era are said, and I tend to believe this, to be more neurotic, more sensitive than others. How could such a child not remember the march of ill-armed but trusting volunteers and the eerily silent march of uniformed Russian soldiers? Didn't this child hear all about the hanged and hangmen? Słowacki's son would have remained himself, even if he had never read a verse of Anhelli (Gorski, n.d.).

The themes borrowed from Anhelli, which begin to appear in Malczewski's works from around 1877, enriched by inspirations from the works of Grottger, take place during exile or transports of prisoners to Siberia, without reference to specific events, places or scenes from the literary original and history, without pathos, and far from Słowacki's visionary imagery, instead full of weary, apathetic characters who are stripped of hope. Malczewski, drawing on Słowacki and his tales of the value of sacrifice and the destructive power of suffering, shows, as Ławniczakowa (1995) also notes, the problem of the nation in terms of higher ethical values and from a general human perspective. The most important "Anhellian" artwork, and certainly the most famous one, is the depiction of Ellenai's death. Portrayed in the paintings, the heavenly beauty of the dead Ellenai, an exile, a criminal, and a product of fantasy, which was utterly unreal in the living conditions of the characters, inspired dreams

and spiritual and aesthetic experiences. And first of all, it became relevant and recalled the still vivid past associated with 1863 and the martyrdom of the Polish nation. The impulse of messianism inspired by Słowacki, as well as by Mickiewicz and Krasiński, which was not only an expression of rebellion, but also a consent to suffering and sacrifice, is also clear. Malczewski took up the subject of Ellenai's death in several versions, and if he focused on Anhelli's mourning and despair in his early works, in his later pieces, especially those in which Ellenai was accompanied by the angel Eloe, the artist referred to the idea of redemption of the nation through death, and these paintings acquired a more political significance, which, along with Słowacki's literary works, accentuates the idea of rebirth and faith in regaining national identity.

Malczewski was not only interested in Siberian exiles, but also in folk themes. Inspired by Dygasiński's youthful teachings, folk tales and the Romantic poems of Ignacy Kulakowski, Bohdan Zaleski, August Bielowski and, first and foremost, Adam Mickiewicz, the mermaids and nymphs that preyed on people's lives stepped into the realistic landscape of the Cracow region and the everyday life of village girls in folk costumes and the shepherds who accompanied them. Malczewski is also part of the trend of fascination with folklore, important at the turn of the 20th century, which was associated with the search for national identity, the idea of national solidarity and brotherhood of the intelligentsia and peasantry, faith in the vital forces of the people. The work of Juliusz Słowacki, his King Spirit and the discernment of the hidden spirit of the Polish nation among the colourful peasantry, which awaits a renewed rebirth with the emergence of an unspecified power, was again not without significance. In his paintings, Malczewski created a new fairy-tale and visionary world, which he uses as a pretext to represent, based on folk themes, an allegory of dreams and personification of illusions.

The landscape plays an important role in these paintings, and complements their mood and symbolism. While it is not always captivating or picturesque, it is a constant reminder of the beauty of Poland, builds an image of Polish Arcadia and evokes associations with childhood and happiness.

The artist discovered the image of this magnificent, lush nature as a child, mainly thanks to Adolf Dygasiński, who taught him to observe, love and admire nature. He would rediscover it again thanks to Słowacki and Beniowski. In Malczewski's paintings, one can find illustrations to poetic descriptions of "bright meadows, where the moist / lily of the valley blooms, full of pines, callas, firs; / where the lone wild rose glistens, / where the fair birches are the mistress of springs..." (Słowacki, *Beniowski*, Song 1).

The painting *In the Dust Storm*, in which a woman with her hands cuffed behind her back emerges from a great cloud of dust, whirling in a surreal dance with boys dressed in greatcoats, occupies a special place among paintings combining landscape with symbolism. The scene can be likened to a non-existent Poland and the female figure to Polonia, who has abandoned her children, but it can also be interpreted as Malczewski's own vision, as a figure of national allegory and anthropomorphized nation and nature, the dusty, desiccated land symbolizing slumbering forces rising up and awakening to life.

Malczewski also regularly addressed issues of the essence of art and the role of the artist. At the same time, he incorporated into many of these symbolic works, inspired by romantic ideas, themes devoted to the suffering of his nation and the dreams of liberating the homeland. Malczewski combined the nineteenth-century imperative of serving the enslaved homeland with his talent with the dilemma typical of a Young Poland artist, expressing the problems of his era, as well as voicing his own desires and fears. In his signature work, *Melancholia* of 1890–1894, in one of his many symbolic layers, he raises the very problem of the artist's responsibility for the subject s/he takes up, placing him/her in the role of involuntary liberator of the spectres of the past. Thus, he poses the question of whether artists have the moral right to take on such a challenge, to resurrect the phantoms of the past and engage viewers in their own visions. There appears the fracture of reality, characteristic of Malczewski's works, into the imagined and the real, which refers to the clash of historical and modern art, but also life and death. The painting, according to Agnieszka Bagińska, shows the position of an artist entangled in patriotic duties, while pursuing artistic freedom (Bagińska, 2022, p. 27). The painting is captioned on the back by the

author himself with the following words: Prologue. Vision. The Last Century in Poland (Tout un sièle) portrays successive generations of the Polish nation in the 19th century, the Polish reality and the faces of successive generations of subjugated Poles. An important interpretation of *Melancholia*, in the context of patriotism and loss of identity, was offered by Piotr Piotrowski who referred to the views of Sigmund Freud and went on to explain: "Subsequent uprisings, and with them subsequent disasters, functioned in this mechanism like the festering of wounds mentioned by Freud. Jacek Malczewski's *Melancholia*, therefore, is a state of awareness of this process, an understanding of the mechanics of the creation and functioning of national feelings: national narcissism. It seems to reveal the identity crisis of the Polish nation (Piotrowski, 2004, p. 101).

The woman standing in the sunlit window, dressed in black, who was identified by researchers both with the titular Melancholia (Piniński, 1925, p. 206), as well as the alter ego of the artist (Grzybkowska, 2002 pp. 30–31), or Death (Pieńkos, 2002, p. 52), played an important role. She was also interpreted as Polonia (Krzysztofowicz-Kozakowska, 2008, p. 18), which became another important heroine of Malczewski's works over time. Her appearance was again a consequence of the artistic trend inherent in Polish art of the post-partition period, when historical painting was dominated by patriotic subjects while the influence of romantic ideas was growing. Although always beautiful, usually with the face of the artist's beloved model and most important muse, Maria (Kini) Balowa, Polonia referred to the history of Poland, its nation and the search for its identity. Over the years, she also became, as Wacława Milewska noted, an expression of the atrophy of patriotic feelings not only of Malczewski, but of the Poles of the late 19th century (Milewska, 2018, p. 389). Malczewski was also guided by the thoughts he jotted down in a letter to his wife Maria Malczewska around 1896:

> The Republic is safe and peaceful – because it is dead – because it is out of this world. So it stands before generations of honest hearts from time to time like a beloved phantom, and every generation – this phantom becomes weaker, and every generation – this phantom becomes more airy and elusive. This Republic of our imagination will finally lay down

> for ever. – And then it will die, it will die forever (Malczewski qtd. in Puciata-Pawłowska, 1968, p. 84).

At first, therefore, mournful Polonies appeared, with their hands tied with rope or shackles, in straw crowns falling from their heads, in greatcoats, praying for the revival of the nation, shaking off languor and reminding us of our duties to the homeland. It was only after 1914 that the canvases were filled with dignified and proud Polonias, watching the battles of the Polish Legions, leading into battle and showing the direction of the attack, smiling, but still inspiring moderate optimism. Such restraint is present even after 1918. The heroes of Malczewski's earlier works return to their homeland, Anhelli, Polonia, soldiers fighting in the various partitioned armies return from their wanderings, and the artist himself also returns to his native home. And these deliberations can be summed up by a painting from 1918, *Corona Imperialis*, in which Malczewski again juxtaposed the real world – soldiers returning to the court in greatcoats with the symbolic meaning of flowers blooming in the flower beds of the imperial crown (Corona imperialis) – heralding, according to the words of Tadeusz Bednarski, "a truly royal blossoming of the rising homeland and the moral victory of invigorating feelings over 'poisoned wells,' 'whispers of chimeras' and traitors, 'dust storms' of historical events and the stupor of the 'vicious circles' of history" (Bednarski, 1990, p. 3).

In 1918, Poland regained its independence and, after 123 years, reappeared on the maps of Europe with new goals for art. In 1918, the need for a nation's self-identification and the method of building its identity and searching for new values was transformed. Enthusiasm for the new State brought the need to think about modernity and art, which would remind of the strength of the reborn State with its often monumental form. Malczewski, who painted in such a way that Poland would be resurrected, a melancholic and difficult symbolist artist, removed himself into the shadows of modernity, stepping down from the pedestal on which nineteenth-century history had placed him.

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Jacek Malczewski, *Self-Portrait With a White Costume*, 1914
oil on canvas, 93 × 78 cm
National Museum in Krakow

Jacek Malczewski, *Christmas Eve in Siberia*, 1892
oil on canvas, 81 × 126 cm
National Museum in Krakow

Jacek Malczewski, *Death of Ellenai*, 1883
oil on canvas, 212 × 370 cm
National Museum in Krakow

Jacek Malczewski, *Eloe and Ellenai*, 1908–1909
oil on canvas, 218 × 129 cm
National Museum in Poznan

Jacek Malczewski, *The Artist and Muse*, 1898
oil on canvas, 121 × 80.5 cm
private collection

Jacek Malczewski, *In the Haze*, 1893–1894
oil on canvas, 150 × 78 cm
Raczynski Foundation at the National Museum in Poznan

Jacek Malczewski, *Corona Imperialis*, 1918
oil on canvas, 100 × 200 cm
private collection

Jacek Malczewski, *Melancholy*, 1890–1894
oil on canvas, 139 × 240 cm
Raczynski Foundation at the National Museum in Poznan