

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

NATIONALISM, FEDERALISM, UNIVERSALISM –  
TOMÁŠ GARRIGUE MASARYK  
IN A HABSBURG CONTEXT

By

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## INTRODUCTION

The name of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937) is emblematic for the Czechs and the Slovaks and it is usually associated with the establishment of Czechoslovakia at the end of the First World War. No wonder, that he was called “the father” of the new state and his image in the end of the world conflict achieved its zenith.

Prior to 1914, T. Masaryk was known more as a professor of philosophy at Charles University rather than a politician and a member of the Austrian parliament. While some historians<sup>1</sup> analyzed his pre-1914 political activities and ideas, with special reference to his Austro-Slavism, others<sup>2</sup> focused mainly on his wartime anti-Habsburg propaganda in Western Europe and in the United States. Generally speaking, most of historians underlined and in some cases even exaggerated his role for the creation of Czechoslovakia thus ignoring other factors, such as international circumstances, which contributed to the recognition of Czechoslovak independence by the Entente and the USA.

Besides being the founder of Czechoslovakia, T. Masaryk was popular among his contemporaries with his universalistic ideas – his vision of human progress, democracy, his support of Christian socialism, which included the need for social reforms. The studies<sup>3</sup> about his universalistic views focus mainly on his “realism” and romanticism as

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<sup>1</sup> Nenasheva, Z. *Idejno-politicheskaia borba v chehii i Slovakkii v nachale XX veka. Chehi, Slovaki i neoslavism. 1898-1914.* M., 1984; Galandauer, J. *Vznik československe republiky.* Praha, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Kovtun, J. *Masarykův triumf.* Praha, 1991; Pichlik, K. *Zahraniční odboj 1914-1918 bez legend.* Praha, 1991; Seton-Watson, R. W. *Masaryk in England.* London, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> Schmidt-Hartmann, Eva. “*The Fallacy of realism: some problems of Masaryk’s approach to Czech National Aspirations,*” in: Stanley B. Winters, ed., *T.G. Masaryk (1850-1937), vol. I., Thinker and Politician* (London : Macmillan, 1990), pp. 130-150; Milan Hauner, “*The Meaning of Czech History: Masaryk versus Pekař,*” in: Harry Hanak, ed., *T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937), vol. 3. Statesman and Cultural Force* (New York, 1990), pp. 25-42

well as his perception of democracy<sup>4</sup> prior to 1914. The first two categories have opposite meaning and at the first glance it seems impossible for one to be simultaneously romantic and realist. T. Masaryk`s critical approach to politics and interpretation of history labels him as “realistic” politician in opposition to one of the major Czech political parties during the prewar period, the Young Czech party, with its leader Karel Kramar.

At the same time, the future president of Czechoslovakia was described as “romantic” historian regarding his interpretation of Czech history. T.Masaryk idealized the Czech past, in particular, the period of Hussite wars, which, he argued, laid the foundations of the Czech Revival. This idealized perception of the early modern Czech history has its roots in the writings of the Czech historian and statesman Frantisek Palacky whom T. Masaryk called “my political teacher”<sup>5</sup>. The former`s and Karel Havlicek Borovsky`s influence on the future president of Czechoslovakia was evident through his books on them as well as his “The Czech Question”.

T. Masaryk`s romanticism was evident as well as during the First World War. Its roots were mentioned, though in brief, in the study of R. W. Seton-Watson<sup>6</sup>, in relation to his lectures in London, dedicated to the Czech history.

Like most Czech and Slovak politicians, during the prewar period T. Masaryk did not envisage the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire desirable. On the contrary, he supported her territorial integrity as an important precondition for the safe existence and development of the Czech lands. At the same time, however, he stressed on the necessity of his reorganization on federative principle. That is why, this prewar political ideology,

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<sup>4</sup> Ludwig, E. Defender of Democracy. New York, 1971.

<sup>5</sup> President Masaryk Tells his Sotry. Praha, 1971, p.175.

<sup>6</sup> Seton-Watson, R.W. Masaryk in England. London, 1943. p.47.

known as Austro-Slavism, is often regarded as a type of federalism and it is implied that before the First World War and at the end of 1918 he was a supporter of federalist ideas.

The federalist projects in the Habsburg Empire have a long tradition, dating from the 1848-1849 revolutions during which the first political programs for federal solution of the national problem of the Habsburg monarchy were elaborated. These were the projects of Frantisek Palacky, Karel Havlicek-Borovsky, Lajos Kossuth, etc. Of great significance are the views of the members of the so-called “Belvedere circle”, headed by the heir apparent Franz Ferdinand, famous for their schemes for the reorganization of the Danube Empire on federalist lines.

While the above-mentioned politicians and statesmen elaborated in detail their federalist plans in single documents, T. Masaryk’s “federalism”, known as Austro-Slavism, was expressed mainly through his speeches of the 1890s and during the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In this sense, it is appropriate to put inevitably the question: Was Masaryk a “federalist” or his pre-1914 ideas possess only some “federalist” elements?

The aim of my thesis is to analyze Tomas Masaryk’s perception of nationalism and his “federalist” projects about the future of the Czech lands and Slovakia, and of the Danube region, in the context of the Habsburg federalist tradition. The thesis will evaluate T.G. Masaryk’s political philosophy and his universalistic ideas in the light of his political activities prior and during the First World War.

One of the objectives of my thesis is to set up ideas of T. Masaryk’s evolution from Austro-Slavism to anti-Habsburg activities in the beginning of the First World war. In this sense, his projects for the future of the Czech lands and Slovakia will be analyzed

and their modification during the war conflict. It will be proven that the wartime political phraseology of T. Masaryk varied in primary connection with the concrete political circumstances.

Another objective of my thesis is to evaluate to what extent T.G. Masaryk was a “federalist”. That is why, the use of terms such as “federalism”, “federalist ideas” with regard to Masaryk will be conditional.

Talking about federalism, a clear distinction should be made between the terms “federation” and “confederation”. While the former term means union of self-governing states or regions, or “*Bundestaat*”, the latter one is a union of sovereign states, or “*Staatenbund*”.

The thesis will introduce new ideas in portraying three types of Masaryk’s “federalism”. On the first place, it was the idea of the so-called “monarchical Switzerland” – the reorganization of the Habsburg empire, following the Swiss model. Secondly, it comes the so-called “economic federalism” from the late 1918, based on the assumption that an economic union between the successor states of the Habsburg empire was possible on certain conditions; Thirdly, the so-called “Czecho-Slovak federalism” which involves the issue of the postwar status of Slovakia and Carpatho-Ruthenia in Czechoslovakia; the Sudeten Germans and the Hungarians;

With regard to the first type of “federalism”, Masaryk’s Austro-Slavism in its Czech context will be analyzed. It means that his prewar ideas will be compared to Karel Kramar’s projects about the reorganization of the Habsburg Empire and especially his “Slav Empire” project. At the same time, it is important to put a stress on the federalist views of the Czech Social Democratic party, with its leader Bohumil Smeral, which,

together with the Agrarians, was the most influential party in the Czech political life during the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Furthermore, Masaryk's "federalism" will be evaluated in the Habsburg context, by comparing it to the federalist projects of Aurel Popovici. The main motive for such a comparative approach is that the "federalism" of the three politicians was inspired by the Swiss and American experience.

With regard to the above-mentioned objective, it is necessary to analyze the projects of some members of the so-called "*Belvedere circle*", famous for their plans to reorganize the Habsburg Empire on federalist principle. Besides the plans of Aurel Popovici and Franz Ferdinand, I shall focus on that of the Slovak politician Milan Hodza, who was part of this circle. He is important in another aspect – he was representative of that Slovak wing, which supported the idea of Czecho-Slovak political union after the First World with full autonomy of Slovakia. In this sense, Milan Hodza was a federalist not only in Habsburg, but also in a Czech and Slovak context and it is important to evaluate his Czecho-Slovak federalism as compared to Masaryk's vision of the postwar reorganization of the Czech and Slovak lands.

The so-called "economic federalism" will be evaluated by analyzing Masaryk's book "New Europe" ("*Nova Evropa*"). The wartime "federalism" was strongly propagated in the USA as late as the spring of 1918 by the future president of Czechoslovakia, because the federalist ideas were very popular in the USA. It will be proven that this type of "federalism" was part of Masaryk's propaganda and his *Realpolitik* – during the most period of the world conflict the future president of Czechoslovakia propagated that it was out of question to think of federal solution of the Habsburg problem.



The impact of American federalism was evident by the establishment of the Mid-European Union (MEU) in Philadelphia at the end of the First War as an alternative of already disintegrating Austria-Hungary. It will be analyzed whether this association of the Central European nations was “still-born” or not;

Another important element of Masaryk’s “federalism” was the idea of establishment of federative Czecho-Slovak state at the end of the First World War. Thus, another objective of my thesis will be to analyze the debates over the so-called “Czecho-Slovak federalism” and the reasons for its failure. With this respect, I shall focus on several sub-issues. In the first place, the so-called “Pittsburg Agreement” from the summer of 1918 will be evaluated in the context of the Czecho-Slovak relations in the late 1918 and early 1919. It will be revealed that in this case, Masaryk’s propagated “federalism” was an element of his wartime political strategy and Realpolitik. Czechoslovakia was established as a centralized, but not as a federative state, as proclaimed by Masaryk.

Secondly, the relations between T. Masaryk and prominent Slovak politicians from the “liberal” and the “conservative” wing (respectively, Milan Hodza and Andrej Hlinka) would be analyzed. The thesis will compare M. Hodza’s prewar and postwar views on the political structure of the Czech-Slovak state, as well as A. Hlinka’s pre-1914 and post-1918 views on the future of Slovakia. It will be revealed to what extent M. Hodza was a “federalist”, as being labeled as such by historians. The Carpatho-Ruthenia issue will be analyzed in the light of the self-determination principle as proclaimed by T. Masaryk during the war. The German and Hungarian minority issue was (to some extent) similar—the Germans and Hungarians were denied plebiscite, and therefore, the right of self-determination.

Still another objective of my thesis will be to analyze T. Masaryk`s universalistic ideas. In the first place, the “natural rights” principle (the right of each individuality to choose in which community and state to live), as influenced by Herder, should be connected to one of the elements of the prewar and wartime Czech and Slovak nationalism and the main pillar of T. Masaryk`s wartime independence movement, the concept of “Czechoslovakism”.

Another aspect of T. Masaryk`s universalistic principles was his religious toleration with special focus on his opposition to anti-Semitism, which dominated the Czech society in the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century; In this sense, his position toward Protestantism and his criticism to Catholic Church will be evaluated.

T. Masaryk`s perception of Socialism could be also regarded as an element of his universalism because it differed significantly from the Orthodox Marxists and especially from the leader of the Czech Social Democrats B. Smeral. To T. Masaryk Socialism meant Christian humanitarianism and in particular, a call for social reforms (the suffrage issue, the equality of women and men) in the context of the *fin-de-siecle* social and political “climate”. In this sense, another objective of my thesis will be investigation of Masaryk`s view of Socialism. The thesis will be innovative in contextualizing his views, by comparing them to the Socialism of Edvard Benes which also differed from the traditional one.

Of particular significance is the evaluation of T. Masaryk`s perception of democracy not only because his image home and abroad was that of a democrat, but also because his prewar and wartime national ideology as well as his social ideas were founded on its principles. T. Masaryk`s will be evaluated in several aspects. In the first place, his prewar

speeches in the USA will be analyzed in which he tried to make parallels between the Bohemian democratic tradition, which he traced as early as the Hussite times, and the American political ideas and democracy. Thus, by idealization of the Bohemian past, Masaryk was revealed as romantic historian. The thesis will be innovative in comparing his prewar romanticism to that during the First World War. It will be proven that T. Masaryk used not only “federalism”, but also romanticism as a propaganda tool. In order to prove this statement, I shall analyze his wartime speeches in Western Europe, which were a reflection of his romantic views on Bohemian history. Delivering these speeches, T. Masaryk assumed the role not of professional historian, but one of proponent of Realpolitik; thus his “romanticism” was regarded as its element and both were part of his wartime propaganda;

Another aspect of T. Masaryk’s perception of democracy is his interpretation of the First World War as a struggle between “democratic” and “autocratic” countries. This view was not quite precise since “autocratic” Russia fought “autocratic” Germany and Austria-Hungary; Besides, his criticism against Russia’s autocracy was in a contradiction with some of his wartime projects (“Independent Bohemia”), in which he supported the idea of Roman dynasty’s accession to the Bohemian throne.

# CHAPTER ONE

## THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Intellectual history or the history of ideas, as some historians prefer to call it, has a long “career” and is international in scope, assuming different names – *Ideen-* or *Begriffsgeschichte*, *l’histoire des idées*<sup>7</sup>. The writing of intellectual history has been the work of philosophers, literary scholars, historians, bringing their interests, implementing their methods to a common task to which they have never been trained. Therefore, intellectual history is an interdisciplinary enterprise, because it is located at the juncture of a number of disciplines. That’s why, this field of history must be approached through the perspective of three of these disciplines – history, philosophy, literature.

There is a discussion among historians over the issue part of which discipline it forms. D. Kelley argues<sup>8</sup> that it appears as an offshoot of the history of philosophy, while J. Higham claims that before assuming its own name it forms branch of history<sup>9</sup>. Similarly, A. Lovejoy says that “every branch of historical inquiry may be said to include some portion of the history of ideas”<sup>10</sup>.

The major focus of the history of ideas is on individual authors, on ideas, doctrines, theories, different “-isms”. There has never been an agreement among philosophers over what “ideas” are and it seems that intellectual historians could not resolve this problem by coming up with a better definition. For three centuries historians of thought have been trying to trace the trajectories of these enduring categories of thought.

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<sup>7</sup> D. Kelley. What is happening to the history of Ideas? *Journal of the History of ideas*, vol. 51, No 1, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> J. Higham. *Intellectual History and its Neighbours*. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 15, No 3, Jan. 1954, p. 339.

<sup>10</sup> A. Lovejoy. *Reflection on the History of Ideas*. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 1, January 1940, No 1, p. 3.

My topic deals with the interpretation of one of the most powerful modern political ideas, one of the “isms” of 19<sup>th</sup> century – nationalism within late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Czech context.

One of the primary tasks of each historian is to fix methodology he is to follow, because if we use the words of J. Pocock, “... good work done in a context of methodological confusion is in a sense done by chance”<sup>11</sup>. J. Higham suggests two approaches or, as he calls them “an internal and external history of thinking”<sup>12</sup>. The first one is presented by C. Brinton and A. Lovejoy. The former argues that intellectual history’s primary task is to uncover the relations between what a few men write or say in a broader social context. The second approach is establishing internal relationship between what some men write or say and what other men write or say. This approach ignores the context of events in order to enlarge and systematize the context of ideas. Here the connection is between thought and thought<sup>13</sup>.

These two approaches suggest different objectives, involve their own assumptions and lead to different disciplinary affiliations.

Therefore, the issue, which D. Kelley raises, is very important, because it exists as a methodological problem for many intellectual historians – whether to follow the internal or external method<sup>14</sup>. My approach here will be both external and internal. On the one side, I shall investigate T. Masaryk’s ideas in the specific historical context, that is, as a reflection on spiritual crisis of the Czech society at the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> century. This mean

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<sup>11</sup> J.G.A. Pocock. *Politics, Language and Time. Essays on Political Thought and Time*. Chicago and London, 1989, p.

<sup>12</sup> J. Higham. *Op.cit.*, p. 341.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> D. Kelley. *What is happening to the history of Ideas?*, p. 6.

that I shall concentrate on interpretation of his works, published in the second half of 1890s.

On the other side, I shall focus my investigation on comparing his views to other Czech intellectuals, in particular, in the context of the so-called debate among Czech historians on the meaning of Czech history. The main source for analyzing this debate I am going to use is collection of their written polemics in form of articles dating from the end of XIX and published several years ago in Prague<sup>15</sup>. This debate is, in fact, historiographical in its character, which evoked the question: is historiography an intellectual history or not. According to Carl Becker, historiography is a “history of historical study”<sup>16</sup>. In this sense, historiography gives us information about the historians, the defects and limitations of their works and “contributions”. Harry Barnes claims that historiography is a phase of intellectual history not only an estimation of contributions of historians<sup>17</sup>. I am inclined to follow this idea because each work, a product of certain historian, is a kind of intellectual contribution to the historical studies.

A crucial task of each historian is to define the meaning of terms he uses. As J.G.A. Pocock said, the “historian`s first problem is to identify the “language” or “vocabulary” with and within the author operated and to show how it functioned paradigmatically to prescribe what he might say and how he might say”<sup>18</sup>. The Dutch historian F.R. Ankesmit echoes the same problem – the best way to determine the assumptions (the main idea) of

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<sup>15</sup> Spor o smysl českých dějin. Praha, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Detachment and the Writing of History. Essays and Letters of Carl L. Becker. Ed. by Phil L. Snyder. New York., p. 65.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

<sup>18</sup> J.G.A. Pocock. Op.cit., p. 25.

a discourse is to study its terminology. He argues that vocabulary and terminology is supposed to be essential in such a research.<sup>19</sup>

It is hard to give definition of nationalism. H.Kohn claims that “it is a state of mind” and “act of consciousness”<sup>20</sup> of a majority of people. He asserts that the idea of nationalism developed during the Enlightenment. In comparison to him, B. Anderson emphasized the development of administrative bureaucracies and cultural institutions<sup>21</sup>. E. Gellner sees a close connection between the emergence of nationalism and economic development<sup>22</sup>.

What historians agree is that nationalism is a modern concept, it was born in Western Europe and the French revolution was its stimulus. Therefore, nationalist ideas are a distinctive form of modern thought, which shapes the political actions and cultural identities of individuals and groups.

While in the West nationalism was preceded by the creation of the nation-states, aimed at building political nations without sentiments to the past, nationalism in East and Central Europe was created out of myths of the past, or as a protest against the existing state. Western nationalism is thus defined as “political”, embracing the “political concept of nation”, while the Eastern and Central European – as cultural, based on cultural diversity. The meanings of nationalism and national identities sometimes include various dichotomies that define nation in terms of its differences from other people. This problem is outlined by the Czech historian J. Staif, who argues that the historiography of a nation plays an important part in the creation and consolidation of the basic concepts from which the self-image of the nation derives. These concepts involve not only images

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<sup>19</sup> F.R. Ankersmit. Historical Representation. In: History and Theory, XXVII, 1988, No 3, p. 205.

<sup>20</sup> H. Kohn. The Idea of Nationalism. New York, 1961, p.10.

<sup>21</sup> B. Anderson. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London, 1991, p.15, 49.

<sup>22</sup> E. Gellner. Nations and Nationalism.

of the nation itself, but also images of other nations. In Europe, the golden age of this kind of historiography was 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>23</sup>. My case study is dealing with such interpretation of Czech nationalism – I claim that, in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century and during the First World War one of its main elements was the construction of the image of German as enemy by F. Palacky and T.G.Masaryk, respectively. Both “speak” in similar manner, juxtaposing the two nations – “We – the Czechs” versus “Them – the Germans”<sup>24</sup>. L. Kramer’s view is in similar manner – he speaks about “oppositional” structures in nationalist thinking<sup>25</sup>. P. Sahlin echoes the issue: “National identity is socially constructed and continuous process of defining “friend” and “enemy”...National identities... do not depend on the existence of any objective linguistic or cultural differentiation but on the subjective experience of difference”<sup>26</sup>.

In dealing with Czech nationalism, my approach here will be to follow the model, or better to say, a general theme of intellectual history, which L. Kramer proposes – texts about nationalism investigate from the perspective of political and cultural contexts in which their authors have lived<sup>27</sup>.

Therefore, my research will not be investigation of the birth of Czech nationalism, but T. G. Masaryk (1850-1937)’s perceptions of Czech nation and nationalism in the Habsburg context. More specifically, my research will concentrate mainly on T.Masaryk’s ideas of Czech national identity, his universalistic ideas as well his federalist projects about the region, in particular, the Czech lands. The foreign policy and diplomacy will serve as a

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<sup>23</sup> J. Staif. *The Image of the Other in the Nineteenth century. Historical scholarship in the Bohemian Lands.* In: *Creating the Other. Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe.* New York, 2003, p.81.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> L. Kramer. *Historical Narratives and the meaning of Nationalism.* In: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 58, No 3, (July 1997), p. 527.

<sup>26</sup> P. Sahlin quoted in L. Kramer, p. 527.

<sup>27</sup> L. Kramer. *Op.cit*, p. 525.



mere background. It will not be, to use the definition of C. Becker, the so-called orthodox history, written by orthodox historian, who is primarily interested in military, politically, and diplomatic events<sup>28</sup>. The usual approach of historians dealing with Czechoslovak history, and more specifically, with the role of T. Masaryk in establishment of the first Czechoslovak republic, is to focus mainly on his political activity abroad during the First World War<sup>29</sup>, while the interpretation of and ideological connection between his ideas somewhat remain in the periphery of their research.

The other main issue, which will be a subject of investigation in my research is federalist ideas of T. Masaryk before and during the First World War. In this sense, the term federalism also needs explanation. A clear distinction should be made between the two main types of union – “federation” and “confederation”, which are often taken as synonyms. While the former term means union of self-governing states or regions, or “*Bundestaat*”, the latter one is a union of sovereign states, or “*Staatenbund*”.

There is a discussion among historians over the issue when the first projects for Central European federation appeared. Some of them stipulate the idea that their historical roots could be traced as early as the Late Middle Ages. The prominent Slovak federalist from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century M. Hodza<sup>30</sup> argues that the first political program, envisaging reorganization of Central Europe on federal principle, was that of the Transylvanian Aurel Popovici, that is, the very beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. I agree with the statement of H Kohn<sup>31</sup> that the first federal projects for the Danube region date back from

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<sup>28</sup> Detachment and the Writing of History, p. 68.

<sup>29</sup> J. Kovtun. Masarykův Triumf (The Triumph of Masaryk), Praha, 1991. Pychlik, K. Zahraniční odboj 1914-1918 Bez Legend (The Resistance Abroad Without Legends 1914-1918 ). Praha; Kalvoda, J. Genese československa (The Genesis of Czechoslovakia). Praha, 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Hodza, M. Federation in Central Europe. 1942, New York, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Kohn, H. Panslavism. New York, 1962, p. 56.

the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Karel Havlicek, Frantisek Palacky and Lajos Kossuth as their “fathers”. These and ones that appeared during the next decades prior to the outbreak of the First World War were based on the consideration that the best solution for the complicated national problems in Central Europe was a federation of nations. Such projects came also from members of the Habsburg family, namely the crown prince Rudolph and Franz Ferdinand.

In comparison to other federalists, Masaryk`s federalism could not be found in a single document, but through his speeches<sup>32</sup> and his publications<sup>33</sup>.

An important problem, which stood before each historian, is the character of sources he uses. In this sense, it is appropriate to recall the words of M. Fulbrook, who said that “sources are the crucial bedrock of historical research”<sup>34</sup>. This issue involves another problem – the use of primary and secondary sources. Some Italian historians divide them into “original” (statements by eye witnesses, documents or other material contemporary with the event) and “derivative” (historians themselves). Under primary sources we usually understand documents. Intellectual historian is supposed to pay a close and precise attention to them. Since the documents were a product of highly articulate people, intellectual historians write mostly about thoughts, which circulate among intellectuals. At the same time, the study of moods and beliefs of society was a subject of study of the social history<sup>35</sup>. This inevitably involves the connection between social history and Begriffsgeschichte. This issue was analyzed by R. Koselleck. This relation is, as he said, at first glance, strange, because the former deals with words and texts, while the latter

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<sup>32</sup> T.G.Masaryk. Parlamentní projevy, 1891-1914. Praha, 2001-2002.

<sup>33</sup> T. Masaryk. Palackého idea naroda Českeho. Praha, 1893.

<sup>34</sup> M. Fulbrook. *Historical Theory*. London. 2001, p. 100.

<sup>35</sup> J. Higham. Op. cit., p. 340.

uses the text to explain human behaviour and movements within society. Such relation, in fact, is possible, because, as R. Koselleck said, “Without common concepts there is no society and political field of action”<sup>36</sup>.

My research is a primary example of such a connection. What I mean is Masaryk`s concern over spiritual crisis among Czech society and his books “The Czech Question” (*Česká Otázka*), “Our Present Crisis” (*Naše nýnejši krise*) and “Jan Hus” (*Jan Hus*). “The Social Question” (“*Sociální Otázka*”), which were reflection of this “intellectual stalemate”. In these books he tried to reevaluate the Czech history in positive manner, involving critical interpretation of the past.

R. Evans raises very important issue, relating to the objectivity of documents. He asserts that “documents are always written from somebody`s point of view, with a specific purpose and audience in mind”<sup>37</sup>. Therefore, they are liable to manipulation. Primary example are T. Masaryk`s memorandums during the world conflict – he modified their content in accordance with his public and audience, in the context of international circumstances. In elaborating certain memoranda, he applied the method of selectiveness of the facts – ignored some of them or stressed on others with a certain purpose or distorted events from the past in pursuing his aims.

Thus, T. Masaryk`s “language” or “political phraseology” should be put into a wider historical and transnational context. As J. Pocock says, Historian should view the “language” as a product of history<sup>38</sup> and as possessing history of its own. In many cases “language” is changed in order to fit a specific audience. My case study gives such an

<sup>36</sup> R. Koselleck. “Begriffsgeschichte and social history”, in R. Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985. p. 79.

<sup>37</sup> R.J. Evans. “Historians and their facts”, in R. J. Evans, *In Defense of History*. W. W. Norton and Company, New York, 2000. p. 80.

<sup>38</sup> J. G. A. Pocock. *Op.cit.*, p.12.

example. What I mean is that T.Masaryk changed his “political language” according to circumstances and audience.

This issue involves the problem of “translation” and transmission of ideas not only in national, but in a transatlantic context. The lectures of T.G.Masaryk in the United States during his visits to the USA are such an example. Here my approach will be to present this transatlantic communication as a form of translation and of a transmission of ideas. He “discovered” Bohemia for the Americans by presenting its history, political and social institutions. Thus the translation here assumes the role of constructing national identities through selected texts whose form and theme/content contribute to the creation of a specific discourse of a nation<sup>39</sup>.

These transatlantic connections involve a problem, which intellectual history deals also with – the questions of “influence” and “reception”. One of my objectives is to evaluate the impact of American constitutionalism and federalism on T.Masaryk’s projects in the end of the world conflict. In his memorandums, elaborated in the USA, he stressed on principles, which appealed to the American public – the idea of violated social contract by the Habsburgs upon which the American Declaration of Independence was based in order to make resemblance of American and “Czechoslovak” ideals. Therefore, here the “translation” of American constitutionalism into “Czech” and “Central European language” takes the form of strategic act and a strong political and intellectual weapon.

M. Block said half a century ago, “The past is a datum, which nothing in the future will change. But the knowledge in the past is something progressive, which is constantly transforming and perfecting itself”. This knowledge of the past reached us thanks to the

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<sup>39</sup> L. Venuti. *Local Contingencies: Translation and National Identity*. In: *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*. eds. S. Berman and B. Wood. , p. 180.

power of the words, which, as R. Koselleck said, without their use human actions and passions could hardly be understood and made intelligible to the others<sup>40</sup>. Although T. Masaryk had passed on, his ideas are still alive and serve as inspiration to historians, politicians, statesmen.

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<sup>40</sup> R. Koselleck. *Op.cit.*, p. 73.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE BIRTH OF CZECH NATIONALISM

#### 2.1. FROM “BOHEMIAN NATION” TO CZECH NATION

The lands of the Bohemian crown comprised the three historical regions – Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. They were situated in the very heart of the Habsburg lands and had formed part of them since 1526. The Battle at White Mountain (Bila Hora) in the autumn of 1620 was considered a turning point in the Czech history. What was the nature of this catastrophe and why it was viewed as a breach of continuity in Czech history?

As a result of the Thirty Years` War the old Bohemian nobility was exterminated or forced to leave the country and a new one was “created” by the Habsburgs. It was German-speaking and less and less bound to the past. Neither was it the successor of the old nobility. Thus, the existing political nation that shaped and preserved Bohemia`s culture and identity, was destroyed. expelled<sup>41</sup>.

The Bohemian diet was denied key rights such as legislation, appointment, etc. Furthermore, in 1627 a new constitution was introduced, which gave the German language equal rights to the Czech and practically became the administrative language. In other words, the White Mountain shaped the direction and the nature of Czech history at least for the next two centuries.

On the other side, the political status of the Bohemian lands did not change nominally – the Bohemian kingdom continued to exist from legal point of view, so the Habsburgs were crowned as “king of Bohemia”, “margrave of Moravia”, “duke of Silesia”.

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<sup>41</sup> P. Wandycz. *The Price of Freedom. A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*. London and New York, 1992, p. 94.

Modern historiography gives variety of interpretation about the beginning of the Czech nationalism. Some historians<sup>42</sup> claim that there was a “common Czech national feeling” in 11-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, because the Germans were regarded by the Czechs as foreigners. The 1960s and 1970s Czechoslovak historiography<sup>43</sup> also argues that there was Czech nationalism in the Middle Ages, based on the language and the defense against the Catholics. The Hussite patriotism was interpreted as national consciousness, which had religious elements. The Hussite nobility demanded the legal disputes to be held in Czech, the translation of the Bible in the Czech, and the foreigners not to be entrusted with office.

Carlton Hayes gives an interesting characteristic for the Czech nationalism. He typologizes it as 1) “Jacobin” which developed in the age of the Hussite wars. It was also fanatic, had a broad popular support and spread beyond the borders of the Bohemian lands; 2) “traditional”, because its ideological leader was the Bohemian aristocracy; 3) “liberal”, because its representative was the middle class.<sup>44</sup>

It is hard to speak about national consciousness before 18<sup>th</sup> century. The rebellion of the Bohemian nobles in 1618 was not an expression of national consciousness, but a feudal and religious protest – the Bohemian and the German protestant aristocracy supported a German Protestant prince as a Bohemian king, rejecting the other alternative – a Catholic prince from the Habsburg dynasty<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> A. Klima, A. The Czechs. In: The National Question in Europe in Historical Context. Ed.by M. Teich and R. Porter. Cambridge, 1992, pp.228-229.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Zacek, J. Nationalism in Czechoslovakia. – Nationalism in Eastern Europe. Washington, 1994, p. 186.

<sup>45</sup> In that sense, the British historian Ernest Gellner puts a very interesting question in his book “*Encountes with nationalism*”: “What would have happened if the Bohemians had won a victory against the Catholic forces”? Then he gives his “version”: The Protestant Bohemia would become an ally of Protestant Prussia and as a result it would have been Germanized by Prussia with greater success than the Habsburgs.

That is why, in 18<sup>th</sup> century there was no Czech or German, but "Bohemian identity", which is usually associated with the aristocratic Landespatriotismus of the noble nation. It remained dominant till the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century – the statement of Count Joseph M. Thun in 1845 was in this spirit – "I am neither a Czech nor a German, but only a Bohemian, that, filled with the glow of inner love for my Fatherland, I consider the intention to suppress either of these nationalities – it makes no difference which – as the most unhealthy calamity".<sup>46</sup>

The Swiss historian Urs Altermatt asserts that national consciousness in the modern sense of the word rose among the peoples within the Habsburg Empire as a reaction against the policy of centralization, implemented by Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II<sup>47</sup>.

P. Sugar claims that the new ideas developing in the West would have penetrated the Habsburg lands even Maria Theresa and Joseph II had not launched the reorganization and centralization of the Empire<sup>48</sup>. These ideas penetrated relatively easy and earlier in the Czech lands because of their geographical location. Since the main industrial centres were located in the Czech lands, the middle class appeared earlier, in comparison to the Slovak, and it was numerous in size and wealth.

The issue of nation and nationalism for the Czechs was in many respects different from the national revival of other Central European nations. As I mentioned, there was no Czech political nation, as in Hungarian and Polish case, that could take the lead in this process. What was the unique of the Czech revival was that its leaders were not nobles, like the Magyar revival, but representatives of the bourgeoisie. The nobility continued to

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<sup>46</sup> H. Agnew. Czechs, Germans, Bohemians? Images of Self and Other in Bohemia to 1848. In: *Creating the Other. Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*. New York, 2003, p. 57.

<sup>47</sup> Altermatt, U. *Etnonacionalizmyt v Evropa*. (Ethnonationalism in Europe) Sofia, 1998, p. 88.

<sup>48</sup> Sugar, P. *The Nature of the non-Germanic Societies under Habsburg Rule*. In: *Nationality and Society in Habsburg and Ottoman Empire*. Brookfield, 1997, p.6.



be devoted to the monarchy (*Kaisertreue*). Expression of such loyalty was the address of J. Dobrovsky to Emperor Leopold II, in which he stressed the importance of the Slavs for the Empire, but at the same time, expressed the loyalty of “Bohemians” to the Emperor<sup>49</sup>. Therefore, Czech national revival could not take the form of expansion from “above” but had to grow from below<sup>50</sup>.

How could a group of awakeners persuade the masses that they were part of the Czech nation and should be proud of it? The intellectual group was so small, that the awakeners themselves felt that they were “playing a piano that had no strings as yet”<sup>51</sup>.

The first phase began in the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century and was characterized by a “scholarly” interest in Czech language and literature. During this period the Estates invoked the concept of *Landespatriotismus* on the basis of “historical rights”, that is, on the basis of their historically codified territorial and administrative autonomy. For this purpose, the Bohemian Estates relied on the work of Enlightenment scholars who studied the history of the country and aimed at raising the literacy among the population.

Thus, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century two elements contributed to the emergence of and formation of Czech national consciousness. The first one was the cultivation of national history – not in ethnic, but in territorial terms. The other was the study of the language. Many patriots at the early stage of the national movement defended the mother tongue and worked for its revival. Among the “defenders of language” was the Austrian general and

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<sup>49</sup> J. Dobrovsky – In: Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770-1945). Text and Commentaries. Ed. by B. Trenczenyi and M. Kopecek. Vol.1: Late Enlightenment – Emergence of the Modern “National Idea”, Budapest, 2006, pp. 100-103 (hereafter cited as Discourses of Cultural Identities).

<sup>50</sup> P. Wandycz. Op.cit., p. 144.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 145.

Bohemian aristocrat Count Francis Joseph Kinsky, who spoke publicly as early as 1773 about the usefulness and beauty of the Czech language<sup>52</sup>.

At the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century the Czech intellectuals developed their ideas of fatherland and nationhood, which were no more confined to certain regions or estates. Now the fatherland came to be identified with the language and customs of the nation, i.e. all people using the Czech language in contrast to the former “political” nation of the nobility. That was why, during the period in question, an important element of nationalism was the vernacular language as a community-building element.

A new Romantic concept of “nation” already developed in Western Europe penetrated the Czech lands and began to spread among the Czech and Bohemian German elites. Under the influence of J. Herder and his concept of Slav reciprocity the interest in Slavic studies increased. In Bohemia the greatest promoter of such endeavour was J. Dobrovsky, whose approach could be characterized as a predominantly scholarly. The next generation of Czech and Slovak intellectuals regarded the Slav issue more emotionally and politically. The two main representatives of the new type of Slav idea were the Slovaks Pavel Josef Safarik (1795-1861) and Jan Kollar, who wrote in Czech because at that time, it was the literary language of the Slav Lutherans. Though they spent most of their lives outside their native linguistic area, they contributed significantly to the new nationalist myth of Slavdom.

P. Safarik endeavoured to demonstrate the antiquity and equality of Slavs in Europe. J. Kollar was more publicist but his contribution to the myth of Slavness was more substantial. His cycle of sonnets “Slavy Dcera” contained the Pan-Slav idea, another element of Czech nationalism. Both P. Safarik and J. Kollar were influenced by Herder`s

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<sup>52</sup> H. Agnew. *Czechs, Germans, Bohemians?*, p. 56.

notion of “*Humanitat*” and his prophecy regarding the future of the Slavs in Europe. They elaborated the Pan-Slav ideology – the Slavs are presented as a single nation with many dialects<sup>53</sup>.

This Slav idea played a controversial role in the Czech and Slovak national movement. Although it encouraged the Czechs and Slovaks to view themselves as a part of a greater Slav community. This Slav identity, however, remained only a supportive element in the ideology of Czech national movement.

Joseph Jungmann (1773-1847) was another prominent representatives of the second generation of Czech patriots. In comparison to the “scholarly” interest of the former generation, he and his contemporaries were more inspired by the Romantic ideas of nation, following Johann Gottfried Herder`s approach. He believed that the Czech revival movement should rely on the younger intelligentsia. He realized that Bohemian provincial patriotism had ceased to be an adequate ideological basis for revival. J. Jungmann gave his own definition of a nation – it should be defined by the language of a certain cultural and historical community, which lived on its own territory, with its own particular customs and mentalities<sup>54</sup>.

J. Jungmann was the author of one of the three concepts of Bohemian nation, which dominated at that time. He proposed the idea of emancipation of the Czech as an autonomous nation combined with “Slav reciprocity”. The second conception came from the Bohemian Germans and raised the idea that Bohemia should be a part of the German lands. The third idea belonged to the Bohemian philosopher Bernard Bolzano (1781-1848) – the fusion of the Czech and German national communities into a single

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<sup>53</sup> Discourses of Cultural Identities..., vol. 2, pp.206-207.

<sup>54</sup> J. Staif. The Image of the Other in the Nineteenth century. Historical scholarship in the Bohemian Lands. In: Creating the Other..., p. 84.

Bohemian political nation. As a main argument he pointed out that the differences between Czechs and Germans could be overcome. Thus, he opposed the concept of J. Jungmann one language=one nation<sup>55</sup>.

Unlike the next generation Czech intellectuals, he did not use the Czech history as an instrument of national emancipation, because he was more a philologist than a historian. Thus he was not associated with romanticism as a method for interpretation of Czech history. Much more important was the discovery of the forged *Kralovedvorsky/Koniginhof* and *Zelenohorsky/Grunberg* Manuscripts, which met with enthusiasm by the Czech intelligentsia<sup>56</sup>.

These manuscripts had far-reaching impact on Czech historical thought, because they appeared to prove that ethnic Czechs had possessed a developed and unique linguistic culture and their own customary law as well as a capacity to resist Germans. They symbolized not only the Czech national identity, but tried to improve the terms of comparison with Germans. They shaped the image of the German as an ancient enemy of the Czech<sup>57</sup>. Thus romanticism contributed to forming a historical picture of German as enemy, which became an important element of Czech nationalism.

Thus, during the 1820s, the Bohemian history freed itself from the limitations of Enlightenment thought. The Czech historiography changed fundamentally in 1830 with the appearance of the “father” of modern Czech nation and historiography Frantisek Palacky (1798-1876).

At the center of the Czech national revival now stood the question of the meaning of national history. The main question was: Was a new nation being formed that had

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<sup>55</sup> Discourses of cultural identities..., vol. 1, p. 238.

<sup>56</sup> J. Staif. Op.cit., p. 85.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

nothing in common with the past, or was continuity essential? Searching for lasting national values, the awakeners strove to reconcile the historical noble nation with the present people's nation by a selective approach to national heritage. The role of Palacky as a historian, intellectual and politician was crucial in this respect.

As it has been mentioned above, by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Czech intellectuals had adopted a historical-territorial concept of their nation as a community that for centuries had inhabited Bohemia-Moravia-Silesia. Now it was replaced by the ethnic concept of nation, proposed by F. Palacky.

In his history F. Palacky developed a modern concept of Bohemian history and nation – it evolved from the territorial to the ethnic. The change in the title of his main work – “History of Bohemia” in the German original to “History of the Czech Nation” in Czech was symptomatic in this respect. While in the German version he took geographical and constitutional perspective, (Boehmen), in the Czech version the nation was presented ethnically.

His ideology was a combination of Enlightenment criticism, romanticism, and Slavic liberalism. He perceived the Czech history as being “based mainly on conflict with Germandom, in other words, on the Czechs' acceptance or rejection of German manners”. He rejected the dominating notion that Czechs were inferior to Germans, stating that the Czech nation affiliated “itself with the German nation as an equal”. Furthermore, in his “History” F. Palacky stressed the main mission of Czechs – “to serve as a bridge between Germandom and Slavdom, and also between East and West of

Europe in general”<sup>58</sup>. Thus, he proposed more critical assessment of German influence on Bohemian history.

F. Palacky turned to historical research to show the richness of the Czech heritage which could bolster pride and identity. Influenced by J. Herder and J. Lelewel, F. Palacky subscribed to the belief in original Czech democracy later corrupted by alien influences. The climax of this confrontation was the Hussite period, during which “our nation reached the zenith of its historical importance”<sup>59</sup>. The Hussites were perceived as pioneers in striving for freedom and equality, being unique in the scale of their movement. The Hussites thus appeared as forerunners of liberalism, democracy and nationhood.

Thus, the image of the Czech-German relationship changed. The German influence was seen no more as a purely civilizing force among the Slavs. The Czech intellectuals still recognized the virtues of German culture and Enlightenment, but more and more often tried to separate themselves from the Germans in Bohemia and reevaluate their own self-image, to counter the traditional stereotypes about the Slavs built by German sources. Though they recognized the Germans as being the Czechs’ “teacher of Enlightenment”, at the same time they pointed out that the Germans had been “once your clever pupils”. That was why, the main slogan, which the Czech intellectuals raised, was “Let us learn German, Greek, Latin ... but let us especially speak and write in Czech”<sup>60</sup>.

During the 1840s, it was already clear that the scholarly efforts of the Czech intellectuals and awakeners produced their fruits and they found wide social reception. F. Palacky

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<sup>58</sup> Discourses of Cultural Identities ..., vol. 2, p.55.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p.56.

<sup>60</sup> H. Agnew. Czechs, Germans, Bohemians?, p. 64.

now became the leading authority of the rising Czech national movement, overshadowing J. Jungmann in importance.

By this time, national discussions had already begun throughout Central Europe on the question of whether the entire Habsburg monarchy should be reorganized on the basis of liberal principles. The most conservative idea in terms of state integrity was that the Habsburg monarchy should be reformed on the principle of national equality. Slavs would play a major role, since in Austria they constituted the most numerous ethnic group. This idea became known as Austro-Slavism.

## 2.2. THE CZECH FEDERALIST TRADITION – AUSTROSLAVISM OR BOHEMIAN STAATSRECHT?

The father of Austro-Slavism was the Czech journalist Karel Havlicek-Borovsky (1821-1856). In a series of articles under the title “Slovan a Cech”, published in *Pražské Noviny* in 1846, he formed his concept, later to be known as Austro-Slavism, which would dominate the Czech political thought till the outbreak of the First World War. This concept contains two important elements. On the one side, it was a rejection of Pan-Slavism as a dangerous dream. K. Havlicek-Borovsky concluded that Russians, Poles, Czechs and Southern Slavs were not one nation but formed four separate and proclaimed that the name of Slav should remain a geographical expression, but not emotional slogan. In fact, Austro-Slavism did not deny the idea of Slav reciprocity but only in cultural terms. On the other side, it was the idea of a strong Austrian state, which should be decentralized and formed into a federation of autonomous regions enjoying equal rights, each with its own parliament. The Czechs, Moravians, Silesians and Slovaks were to

form a single unit with Czech as a common language. K. Havlicek-Borovsky stressed that the federative character of the Empire would secure all the Slavs against German and Russian expansionism – “The Austrian Empire is the best guarantee for preserving of our and the Illyrian nationality, and greater the power of the Austrian Empire will grow, the more secure will our nationalities be”.<sup>61</sup>.

This plan represented a new vision of the Czech national question. In the first place, he rejected the idea of Pan-Slavism, which until then was dominant. Secondly, he abandoned the old concept of Bohemian Staatsrecht, raised by Bohemian estates. Instead, he proposed federal solution of the national problem of the Habsburg empire, based on the principle of equality. Thirdly, he Czech journalist included Slovaks together with the Czechs in one political entity, which represented a completely new concept. Later to be known as “Czechoslovakism”. So, if the idea of a common Slavonic language was out of the question, that of a common Czechoslovak language became actual. This idea, however, faced irresistible opposition from the Slovaks themselves – in 1845 the Slovak Ludevít Štúr had codified one of the Slovak dialects as a Slovak literary language, thus claiming that Slovaks were a separate nation. No wonder, then, that he attacked the “father” of the Slovak nation, blaming him that he worked against Czechoslovak solidarity.

Like F. Palacký, K. Havlicek-Borovsky pointed out Germans as the main danger, but unlike him, he drew attention to Russia as a potential enemy. I am referring to the Russian factor in the Czech and Slav history, because it will form part of the political

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<sup>61</sup> S. E. Mann. Karel Havlicek: a Slav Pragmatist. In: Slavonic and East European Review, vol. 39, No. 93, June 1961, pp. 413-414.



concepts of the Czech political parties and will cause discussion among them during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In articles, published in “*Pražské Noviny*”, K. Havlicek-Borovsky described the position of the Czechs within the Habsburg Empire – loss of nationhood, the imposition of a foreign language. Because of the censorship, he used an analogy with the Irish struggle for home rule, portraying their leader D. O’Connell as an astute fighter for Irish independence. It is probably that K. Havlicek saw himself in the role of the Czech O’Connell. For example, O’Connell’s forty Irish members at Westminster was to be paralleled by the ninety Czech delegates to the Vienna Parliament. Although denying any thought of full independence of the Czechs and declared loyalty to the Austrian empire, he stressed that “we shall stay in the Austrian Empire, but first and foremost we shall be in the Kingdom of Bohemia”<sup>62</sup>.

The political statement of the Austro-Slavism appeared in the “Manifesto of the First Slav Congress to all nations of Europe” in June 1848, whose author was F. Palacky.

The revolution of 1848 marked an important watershed in the history of the Czech national movement, the Austrian Empire and Central Europe. H. Agnew characterized the events of 1848-1849 in the Habsburg Empire as a period of “transition” and expansion of the “political space”<sup>63</sup>. One of the main issues was the relationship between liberalism and nationalism. The meeting in Prague in March 1848 adopted a petition to the Emperor, in which the Czech political leaders demanded union of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, the establishment of central administration.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, pp. 416-417.

<sup>63</sup> H. Agnew. Dilemmas of Liberal Nationalism: Czechs and Germans in Bohemia and the Revolution of 1848. In: Nations and Nationalisms in East-Central Europe, 1806-1948” A festschrift for Peter F. Sugar, Bloomington, Slavica, 2002, p. 51.

The biggest challenge which the Czechs faced with was the debates in the Frankfurt Parliament over the unification of German lands and Austria into a confederation. The idea of possible incorporation of the lands of Bohemian crown into the future confederation prompted the Czech reaction, as expressed by K. Havlicek-Borovsky in an article in “Prazske noviny” in March 1848: “we are Czech by nationality, and have the right to be so within our kingdom... but politically we form together with other nations the Austrian Empire. About a German Empire we know nothing and wish to hear nothing”<sup>64</sup>.

Probably the most famous expression of this Czech attitude to the idea of German unification and of the Czech national consciousness was F. Palacky’s masterful reply to the invitation from the Committee of Fifty at Frankfurt to join the German National Assembly at Frankfurt. He declined the invitation in his famous “Letter to Frankfurt” (11 April 1848), by stating that “I am Bohemian of Slavonic origin and { ... } I have devoted myself { ... } to the service of my nation”. He stressed on the fact that the “whole union of the Bohemian lands { ... } with the Holy Roman Empire and then with the German confederation, was always a mere dynastic tie”.<sup>65</sup>

The Czechs, he said, were a nation with a right to its separate existence, which should be best guaranteed not by a united Germany, but “within a transformed Austria, based on equal rights for all nations. This Austria ... was necessary to bind together all the smaller nations in Central and Eastern Europe... if the Austrian imperial state had not already

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Frantisek Palacky- Letter to Frankfurt, 11 April 1848. In: Discourses of Collective Identity..., pp.322-329.

long existed, one would have to make haste to create it, in the interests of Europe, in the interests of Humanity itself”<sup>66</sup>.

In 1860s, as a result of the adoption of October Diploma of 1860 and the February constitution of 1861, a new cultural and political programme for Czech society was coming into existence. The Czech politicians accepted as their basic political slogan the idea of State Rights federalism within an Austrian context. A coalition of the Czech liberals and the so-called “historical aristocracy” was formed in order to work for the restoration of the “historical-political independence” of Bohemia in its historical boundaries, accompanied with coronation. In Bohemian Diet, however, there was an influential German minority, who rejected the State Rights programme and looked at Bohemia and the Czech lands as “German province”.

Few national struggles in the Habsburg monarchy had the ferocity of the Czech-German struggle in Bohemia. It was caused by the rise of national consciousness among the Czechs (62 % of population) and their campaign from the mid-century to assert social and political equality within the historic crownland. This was increasingly resisted by the German social and political elite. This demographic balance in Bohemia made practically impossible any attempt of compromise. Besides the middle-class Czech nationalism made it a more formidable opponent than peasant nationalities in Hungary.

The Austro-Prussian war changed deeply the political structure of Central Europe. The creation of united Germany without Austria shocked the German-speaking people of the Habsburg empire. The *Ausgleich* of 1867 made them maintain even stronger their positions in the Czech lands. The Czech politicians were frustrated with the Compromise and demanded the same status as Hungarians. Although the Emperor promised to be

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<sup>66</sup> H. Agnew. Dilemmas of Liberal Nationalism..., p.64.

crowned in Prague, the protests of the Germans in Bohemia made him give up the idea. The disappointment of F. Palacky with the Ausgleich made him pronounce the prophetic words “We had existed before Austria, we would exist after it”. What followed was a period of passive opposition of the Czech politicians, or as O. Urban calls it, the “*struggle against the state*”.

This passive opposition was interrupted by the new generation Czech politicians, united in the so-called Young party. It envisaged a struggle for the Bohemian Staatsrecht, by actively participating in the parliamentary life of the Empire. The party assumed the leading role in the Czech political life during 1880s and would dominate it the next 16 years.

### CHAPTER THREE

## TOMAS GARRIGUE MASARYK BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 1880s-1914: THE YEARS OF QUIET RESISTANCE

The end of 19<sup>th</sup> century was significant for the development of the political life of the Czech lands. By the early 1880s the Czechs had acquired so much economic, social and political strength that the question of preservation of their national life was no longer vital. The main issue was the political and constitutional status of the Czechs and Germans in Bohemia. The Bohemian question called for the reforms and clarification of the status of the historic Land of Bohemia vis-à-vis the central government. That was why the main characteristic feature of the political system in Cisleithania, and in particular, in the Czech lands, during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was the existence of radical criticism and active participation in the political life.

During the above-mentioned period the modern political parties emerged and formed a new political framework. In its final form, the Czech modern party system was fully established by 1907. It had one specific characteristic – none of the parties aimed at central state power neither called for the dismemberment of the Habsburg Empire. In the early 1890s the most influential Czech party became the Young Czech party, which would dominate the Czech political life during the next 16 years. One of the most positive aspects of this party was the large number of highly competent Czech politicians it produced, who played crucial part in the Czech politics before, during and after the First World War. The history of this party is usually associated with the name of Karel Kramar (1860-1937), who became the leader of the party in 1901. Another striking figure was that of the first president of Czechoslovakia Tomas Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937).

In this chapter I shall evaluate his prewar ideas with special focus on his perception of Czech national question, his federalism and his universalist ideas.

### 3.1. THE EARLY POLITICAL CAREER OF TOMAS GARRIGUE MASARYK

T. G. Masaryk was born in 1850 in Moravia. His mother was a Moravian<sup>67</sup> and his father – Slovak<sup>68</sup>. After attending German language secondary school, he went to study philosophy at the University of Vienna. T. Masaryk lived there from 1869 to 1882, one year in Leipzig where he met his future wife, the American Charlotte Garrigue. Then he became a professor of philosophy at Charles University in Prague<sup>69</sup>.

In his youth, Masaryk was interested in the practical social and political questions of the day. He was concerned with the spiritual crisis which existed in Czech society and one of his first works, “The Suicide as a Social Mass Phenomenon of Modern Civilization” was reflection on this tendency. This raised the question of Czech moral and national regeneration, the reevaluation of Czech history and national identity. The young Czech professor felt that Czech society should free from the old myths and to take a more realistic and positive approach to his history. No wonder that the first serious intellectual confrontation between Czech society and T. Masaryk was over the most complicated Czech intellectual issue of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century – the so-called “Battle of the Manuscripts”. This was an intellectual dispute over the authenticity of two manuscripts (Zelenohorsky and Kralovedvorsky), related to the Czech history. It had long been believed that they were authentic. T. Masaryk proved that the Manuscripts were forgeries

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<sup>67</sup> J. Kalvoda argues that his mother was German.

<sup>68</sup> The above-mentioned author asserts that his real father was the Austrian politician Joseph Redlich.

<sup>69</sup> J. Kalvoda. *The Genesis of Czechoslovakia*. New York, 1986, p. 18.

which caused a wave of indignation against him. To him, the dispute over the authenticity of the two manuscripts was above all a moral question, which he related to new efforts for national reform and regeneration together with his concept of realism: “The national honour demands defense {...} of the truth {...} and there is greater morality and courage in acknowledging a mistake than in defending a mistake...”<sup>70</sup>.

This issue provoked sharp discussion among Czech society, because it was primarily concerned with the Czech history and national identity. T. Masaryk`s battle was cry for scientific truth and defense against national myths, superstitions and falsifications. He was criticized not only by Old and Young Czech party but also by writers as Jan Neruda, Josef Holecck, Adolf Heyduk. Later on, however, he would recognize, that without the romantic-mythological phase, the Czech national revival would have lacked the basis and the material on which and from which it later was possible to shape modern Czech nationality<sup>71</sup>.

K. Kramar was one of the few who took an ambivalent position – on one side, he defended the right and duty of scholars to teach freely and search for truth. On the other hand, the issue was not simply one of good versus evil, truth versus falsehood, as Masaryk and some of his supporters were arguing. The Manuscripts, even forgeries, were to Kramar a means that served the honourable function of reviving the nation`s pride and self-identity after the destruction of its literary heritage during the Habsburg-imposed Catholic counter-reformation. While he rejected the denunciation by defenders of the Manuscripts of Masaryk and others who had questioned their authenticity, he believed the poems to have been “a moral support” with a “great, truly blessed mission”, at a time

<sup>70</sup> St. Winters. T. Masaryk and K. Kramar: Long years of Friendship and Rivalry. In: T.G. Masaryk, Thinker and Politicians. Vol. 1, p. 155.

<sup>71</sup> Kautman, F. T. Masaryk and the Problem of National Identity, pp. 72-73.

the Czech nation badly needed such reinforcement. In Kramar eyes, the nurture of the nation was the highest good, so certain means to achieve it, even if not true and pure, might still help the national cause<sup>72</sup>.

This intellectual issue convinced T. Masaryk that active involvement in the formulation of Czech national identity was possible only for those who actively participated in the Czech political life. His perceptions of politics derived from his University education and his philosophical interests, his late arrival in the Prague Czech milieu, his academic professionalism, his realism founded on religious morality<sup>73</sup>. To T. Masaryk the politics was a means through which he could propagate his ideas. For example, he expressed his reluctance to become a member of the parliament, because he thought that the real political work was outside it<sup>74</sup>.

T. Masaryk's first years in the politics were closely connected with Karel Kramar. The relationship between the two politicians was considered a significant chapter in modern Czech history. Almost every issue concerning the national question was a subject of a dispute between them. Both met through the University Professor Josef Kaizl in 1887 and two years later a correspondence between them started<sup>75</sup>. In December 1888 T. Masaryk, together with J. Kaizl and K. Kramar, founded the Realist movement, whose roots could be traced to the deep dissatisfaction with the existing Czech intellectual and political climate – in a letter to K. Kramar in May 1890 T. Masaryk explained that “Realism emerged as opposition against Malichernost”<sup>76</sup>. This “Realist triumvirate” participated

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<sup>72</sup> Pameti Karla Kramare, p. 77.

<sup>73</sup> St. Winters, p. 157.

<sup>74</sup> Doc. 32, p. 91.

<sup>75</sup> Korespondence T.G.Masaryk-Karel Kramar (The Correspondence between T.G.Masaryk and Karel Kramar).Praha, 2005, Doc. 22, p.79 (hereafter cited as Korespondence TGM-KK).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, doc. 96, pp. 166-167. In fact, the first Realists were Jaroslav Goll, Otakar Hosinsky and Jan Gebauer, but they remained in the periphery.



directly in elaborating its program and upon T. Masaryk's proposal they started publishing the periodical "Cas"<sup>77</sup>.

J. Kaizl was the most politically experienced, who was interested in political life from early on. In comparison to K. Kramar and T. Masaryk, his views were less ideological and more "technocratic"<sup>78</sup>. He and T. Masaryk called their younger collaborator "a child" (*dite*). Later, in his memoirs, Karel Kramar would admit that he could not accept T. Masaryk's and J. Kaizl's paternalistic behaviour<sup>79</sup>. However, K. Kramar obviously had a high respect for T. Masaryk, because, in most of his letters, he called him "*pane profesore*" (Dear Professor) or "*spiritual Shepherd*" (*duchovní Pastýř*)<sup>80</sup>. Nevertheless, T. Masaryk respected Kramar's journalistic skills, energy, knowledge of Austrian government and finance. On his side, K. Kramar denied any intellectual debt of T. Masaryk to him, whom he regarded as naïve in legal and administrative affairs.

At that time they were only two parties, the Old Czech and the Young Czech, which were to T. Masaryk equally bad and he did not see any difference between them. He even joked that J. Kaizl was an "Old Czech realist", Karel Kramar – a "Young Czech realist", and he himself a "Realistic realist"<sup>81</sup>.

T. G. Masaryk became a member of the Young Czech party in 1890. These were the years of closest contacts between him and K. Kramar. Both faced three basic tasks – to be loyal Young Czechs, implementing party's program, pursuing its goal of national regeneration; to defend Czech interest in Vienna – for reforms and improved conditions

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, doc. 98, p.170.

<sup>78</sup> His interest was primary in the field of economic development and industrial relations. J. Kaizl believed that social reforms achieved by negotiations (as in England) had more desirable effect. He was against the classical economic liberalism (*laissez-faire, laissez-passer*). The most systematic presentation of his views could be seen in his book *Narodni hospodarstvi* (National economics), published in 1883 in Prague.

<sup>79</sup> Pameti Karla Kramare, p. 275.

<sup>80</sup> Doc. 97, p.168.

<sup>81</sup> Serapionova, E. Karel Kramar i Rossia, 1890-1937. Moskva, 2006, p.23.

for their nation; equal rights of Czechs with Germans in Bohemia and self-government for the Bohemian crown lands (Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian Silesia) within a federal Austria<sup>82</sup>. Both spoke in parliament on significant issues – nationality relations, language dispute with the Germans, education, but above all, the demand for universal suffrage<sup>83</sup>. In the early 1890s T. Masaryk was blamed for violating the party discipline, publicly making statements on which the party had not taken decisions yet. He often called the Young Czechs “dangerous radicals”, “lambs” and “children”<sup>84</sup>. The Czech professor even quarreled with the party leaders Edvard and Julius Gregř. He entered into a conflict with the Vienna correspondent Gustav Eim that he misinterpreted his speeches. As early as the middle of 1892 T. Masaryk was already considering of abandoning his mandate as a deputy. The culmination of their conflict and the following split was in the summer of 1893 – as a result of the so-called Sromota affair and the bitter controversy with Julius Gregř. The party sharply criticized him for incorrect behaviour and violation of party discipline. In order to prevent his dismissal, Masaryk voluntarily left the party, the Austrian parliament and the Bohemian diet. His two Realist colleagues, K.Kramar and J. Kaizl, refused to join him in surrendering their mandates, which Masaryk never forgave them<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> St. Winters, *Op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159-161.

<sup>84</sup> Korespondence TGM-KK, doc. 32, p.92.

<sup>85</sup> Doc. 270, p. 436.

### 3.2. THE CZECH QUESTION – T. MASARYK’S PERCEPTION OF NATIONALISM AND UNIVERSALISM

After T. Masaryk’s retreat from the Vienna parliament in 1893, he was preoccupied with the question of Czech national history and identity.

T. Masaryk realized that history was an important part of national identity and a powerful source of instruction and inspiration, needed by the Czech nation, which, by the late 1890s, lost track of his own history, identity, integrity. The exposure of destructive historical development was necessary for the sake of truth, but positive achievements were something to build on. Masaryk made a detailed analysis of many aspects of Czech national development and tried to distinguish between the positive and negative aspects of nationalism. He viewed the works of Jan Hus, Jan Komensky, Jan Kollar and Josef Dobrovsky as relevant to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, because of their respect for knowledge, search for the truth, and concern for social justice<sup>86</sup>.

T. Masaryk’s notion of history possessed the features of eclectism. On one hand, he juxtaposed his idea of Realism with “historicism”, which means that he rejected F. Palacky’s approach to history. T. Masaryk regarded historicism as possessing a negative influence upon the human character. To him, the main teacher of life is the present, not the past.

In contrast to F. Palacky, T. Masaryk tried to give a positive content of Czech national identity in times when it needed, by pointing episodes of Czech history which had been neglected. Thus, he challenged Palacky’s view that Czech history was mainly a struggle between Czechs and Germans. In this sense, the Czech professor stated that one should

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<sup>86</sup> |T. Masaryk, *Ceska Otazka*, p.

see the world as it is and not how it was. In other words, he regarded Realism as an attempt to solve the problems looking at them from the perspective of the present, not from the perspective of the past. On the other hand, much of the book was devoted to the Czech past. This obvious eclectics could be explained by the fact that Masaryk's notion of the national task of the Czechs to continue the traditions of the past, in particular, the ideas of Hussite Reformation and the Bohemian Brethren. He even stated that all the positive developments in Europe were a result of the continuation of this tradition<sup>87</sup>.

The mythical-biological concept of nationality, which emerged in the romanticism of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century and which played an immense role in the formation of modern European nations, was alien to Masaryk. Thus he differed from F. Palacky and his romantic notion of the Czech past. This became evident in the 1880s during his stormy confrontation with Czech society in the battle over the Manuscripts.

TGM did not regard nationality as a given, constant, innate and biologically predetermined phenomenon. His background excluded such a view – he himself was a half-Slovak and half-Moravian, his mother tongue was not Czech and his education was in German. Only in his mature years he became a writer in Czech language. When he came to Prague, he acquainted himself with Czech society and culture and with the Czech historical tradition. For him nationality represented a matter of choice, will, activity, and creativity. Although he considered mother tongue important for the identity of a nation, he stressed on the significance of common historical experience, culture, economy, geography. To him, these aspects were more important for the nation's potentials to advance than the political dimension – the struggle for independence.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

To T. Masaryk to constitute nationality means to raise it from the level of ethnographic existence to the level of a European or world-wide cultural agent. Since nationality is not given, it requires not only protection, cultivation, and popularization, but it must also justify its existence before the world. Only the nation that by its efforts enriches mankind has the right to exist; nationality, is therefore, justified only by its value in terms of universal cultural creativity<sup>88</sup>. T. Masaryk himself was optimistic about the future of the Czech nation. In one of his parliamentary speeches he stated that each nation, which had a glorious history, a high degree of national consciousness and wish to work for the mankind, could not be suppressed<sup>89</sup>.

Masaryk's views about the national identity and national existence could not be found in a single book, but in most of his publications<sup>90</sup>. One of his first works was "Česká Otázka" (The Czech Question), which, in fact, was interpretation of the Czech history and revealed T. Masaryk perception of nation and nationalism.

The book focused on the Czech national traditions and the emergence of Czech national consciousness. The Czechs were pioneers of establishing democratic institutions in Europe through the Hussite reformation in 15<sup>th</sup> century – the starting point of European intellectual and political development. By implementing the idea of uniqueness of the old Czech democratic traditions, Masaryk resembled to some extent the messianistic thinkers, but this notion is more on the surface and could be even misleading. It is true that he stressed on the uniqueness of the old Czech institutions and traditions, but at the same time he never referred to the idea of Czech suffering, as it was the Polish case. By pointing out the significance of the Czech past, T. Masaryk stressed on the necessity the

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 73.

<sup>89</sup> T.G.Masaryk. *Parlamentní Projevy (1891-1893)*. Praha, 2001, p. 260.

<sup>90</sup> Neudorfl, M. p. 571.

Czechs to understand their national traditions and their place in European civilization. This would help them solve the present problems, in particular the spiritual crisis at the turn of the century.

By idealizing the Czech past and its old democratic institutions, T. Masaryk could be characterized as a romantic historian, which, at first glance, was curious, as being dichotomous to his realistic approach to history and historical past – the Manuscript issue.

The book could be also regarded as universal, because it puts emphasis on T. Masaryk's humanitarian universalistic ideas. The Czech professor never specified the meaning of this concept, although it was the most used one in his book. He pointed out that this concept was not original, but its roots could be traced back to the times of J. Dobrovsky, J. Kollar, P. Safarik, F. Palacky and K. Havlicek.

There are several indications what was his perception of idea of humanity. In the first place, it was a call for national equality, abolition of violence, educational and social reforms. To him, the cultural progress within a society was more important than the political one. He believed that the most desirable national policy for the Czechs and the continuing of tradition of the Czech past was the promotion of education and morality. Thus, by stressing on the need of education, knowledge and progress as a possible remedy for the Czech society, T. Masaryk was also revealed as an Enlightenment thinker. Masaryk regarded progress very broadly, relating it to equality and prosperity, social justice, advancement of culture, morality, education, human relations, etc.. To him, the combination of knowledge, competition and cooperation plus moral principles were the key elements for progress. In his perception progress of the majority of individuals was

interlocked with that of a nation and vice versa. Therefore, each individual should contribute to the welfare of a nation. This he called inner work which was useful for small nations. As the contemporary European atmosphere was not very sympathetic to the survival of the small nations, T. G. Masaryk tried to prove that respect for them was not only a question of humanness but also in the interest of peace and stability. He recognized the right of nations to defend themselves by force when threatened, but rejected aggression.

Secondly, his idea of humanity was a concept about a connection between Czech and European historical development. The Czech professor regarded the problem of the spiritual crisis within the Czech society as a part of similar trends in European society and blamed intellectuals for causes of European contemporary spiritual tension – the roots of modern aggressiveness of German nationalism was, according to him, a result of Schopenhauer's hatred for Englishmen and Frenchmen and by his influence on German artists. He held responsible J. Fichte for O. Bismarck's belief in the missionary role of Prussian and German nation; he criticized Russian nationalism for its conservatism and glorification of the ignorance of Russian people.

As a remedy he proposed integration of European nations through education, economic contacts, increased communication. At the same time, however, he was not optimistic, pointing out the immaturity of European nations, in particular, their failure to solve their internal problems. He believed the problem was insufficient self-knowledge as well as knowledge of one another (i.e. intellectual integration)<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> Bednar, M. Masaryk's Idea of European Unity: Genesis and Significance. In: Czechoslovak and East European Journal, XXX, 1989, No 1, p. 45 .

The idea of humanity appeared in another book, devoted to the Czech history - “Jan Hus”, first published in 1896. Originally, it was a public lecture delivered by T. Masaryk on the anniversary of Hus`s death. In fact, this book, which also referred to the Czech past, was not academic, but envisaged to reach a wide public audience. The main idea in the book was that the Czech national revival should be regarded as a continuation of the Czech Reformation. He made clear that the “idea of humanity” was the guiding idea of Enlightenment and “our Reformation”. T. Masaryk regarded Reformation not only religious, but also a social, political and ethical movement aimed at moral improvement of man – “Hus aimed at the regeneration of moral life... his effort was striving for moral and religious revival, it was an effort to create a new man”<sup>92</sup>. Thus, for T. Masaryk Reformation means not a single event or process but succession of events that led to human progress. Therefore, in this book, his idea of humanity was interpreted as an idea of Reformation.

### 3.3. CZECHOSLOVAKISM

The concept of Czechoslovakism was an important element of Czech nationalism. It was based on the assumption, that the Czechs and Slovaks represented one nation, divided by the Magyars in 10<sup>th</sup> century. This concept was not new and emerged in the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the codification of the Slovak language in the 1840s, it was abandoned by the Czech politicians and, as it has been mentioned in the previous chapter, replaced by the idea of Bohemian Staatsrecht after 1867.

T. Masaryk was unusual among the Czech politicians for his deep interest in the Slovaks in Northern Hungary or Upper Land as the Slovak lands then had been called –

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<sup>92</sup> T.G.Masaryk, Jan Hus, Praha, 2005, p. 320 and 340.



“Slovakia” as a geographical term did not exist at that time. The Czech professor had special reasons to be preoccupied with the Slovak question – he was half-Slovak and he spent his youth among them.

T.Masaryk wrote about the Slovaks and their history in some of his works – in the “Czech Question” he developed an interest in Jan Kollar, pointing out that he was a Slovak<sup>93</sup>. In his book on K. Havlicek<sup>94</sup> the Czech professor summarized his view on the importance of awakening the national consciousness not only of Bohemia, but also of Moravia, Silesia and Slovakia. It was in this book, as well as in “Ceska otazka” and “Palackeho Idea naroda ceskeho” (Palacky Idea of the Czech Nation), in which he referred to Palacky`s plan of an Austrian federation based on natural rights, a principle, which, if implemented, would unite the lands of Bohemian crown with Slovakia. He mentioned the hesitations of Palacky between this type of federation and that based on historic rights. In fact, T. Masaryk supported K. Havlicek`s idea of ethnic federation, which would include the Slovaks.

The other Czech politicians did not interfere in the affairs of the Hungarian kingdom and supported the Bohemian state right. In fact, they were more realistic in their approach to the Slovak question and the Czech-Slovak relations. In view of the Ausgleich it was impossible at that time Czechs and Slovaks to be united – the Slovak lands were part of Transleithania, where a process of Magyrazation had started. T. Masaryk was supporter of the idea of Czechoslovakism and even thought that Slovaks were a branch of the

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<sup>93</sup> T.G.Masaryk, Ceska Otazka, p.

<sup>94</sup> T.G.Masaryk, Karel Havlicek, p.

Czech nation. K. Kramar also supported cooperation with them, like T. Masaryk, but he did not give priority to them<sup>95</sup>.

On their side, the Slovaks were also divided in their attitude toward the Czechs. The Slovak conservative wing supported only cultural contacts between the two nations. The second generation Slovak intellectuals, the so-called Hlasists, strove for close relations between the two peoples and supported the concept of Czechoslovakism.

### 3.4. MASARYK'S FEDERALISM IN THE HABSBURG CONTEXT

T. Masaryk did not elaborate specific federalist projects in a single document. His ideas regarding the transformation of the Habsburg Empire into a federal state were expressed through his parliamentary speeches, articles in periodicals, as well as in his books “Palackeho idea naroda Ceskeho” and “Ceska Otazka”.

While member of the Young Czech party, T. Masaryk supported the idea of Bohemian Staatsrecht. In a parliamentary speech of November 1892 he proclaimed – “We want the Bohemian Staatsrecht because it is our political right, led by economic reasons”<sup>96</sup>. The Czech professor rejected the attacks of the German deputies that the Czechs wanted to destroy Austria by demanding for the restoration of their historical rights<sup>97</sup>.

K.Kramar was one of the most zealous supporters of the Bohemian Staatsrecht concept. In a letter to T. Masaryk he insisted that they (the Young Czechs) should concentrate on the historical (*statopravní*) aspect of the Czech question. It should stand in the center of

<sup>95</sup> T. G. Masaryk-K. Kramar, doc. 2, p. 54.

<sup>96</sup> T.G.Masaryk. Parlamentni Projevy (1891-1893). Praha, 2001, p. 246.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

their political program, based on the demand for federalization of the Empire<sup>98</sup>. In comparison to T. Masaryk, K. Kramar elaborated his ideas of possible transformation of empire into federation in single documents.

The first federalist project of K. Kramar, which included the whole Habsburg Empire, was elaborated in 1890 and published in the periodical of the realist movement “Cas”. According to his project, the Habsburg Empire should be divided into four parts – Czech, Polish, Austro-German and Southern Slav. He supported the idea of administrative unity of the Czech lands<sup>99</sup>. Two years later he delivered a speech before the Austrian parliament, in which he outlined the main points of his political program – 1) administrative unity of the Czech lands; 2) administrative and legislative independence of the Czech lands; 3) the restoration of the historical rights of the lands of the Bohemian crown;

After leaving the Young Czech party, T. Masaryk abandoned this concept and embraced the natural rights idea (the right of each individual to choose part of which community wants to be), promoted by F. Palacky, combined with Austro-Slavism – the idea of transforming Austro-Hungary into a federal state. The Czech professor criticized the Bohemian Staatsrecht idea as being too conservative and unacceptable for the Czechs. He blamed the Young Czechs that they had failed to combine it with the natural right idea, as the Realists did it in 1890, thus excluding the Slovaks<sup>100</sup>, which he regarded as part of the Czech nation.

<sup>98</sup> T. G. Masaryk-K. Kramar, Doc. 98, pp. 169-170.

<sup>99</sup> E. Serapionova. Karel Kramar I Rossia, p. 24.

<sup>100</sup> T.G.Masaryk. Desorganisace Mladoceske strany. Organizujeme se k praci! In : «Cas», No 28, 1903, p. 20.

In other words, during the first decade of XX century T. Masaryk`s federalism was based above all on the natural rights concept, which meant the unification of Czechs and Slovaks into one state. This idea was for that moment realistic, in view of the dualist character of the Empire.

In comparison to T. Masaryk, K. Kramar included Russia as an important factor in his vision of the future development of the Czech lands. It is assumed that his idea of Slav Empire appeared at first in the spring of 1914. In fact, such an idea appeared as early as 1890, during K. Kramar`s visit to Russia. In a letter to T. Masaryk he submitted a short article for publication, in which he stated that “The small Slav nations ... are weak and naturally looked at Russia as a last resort although they were afraid of possible Russification... If the Slav question should be decided through force, Russia would unite the Slav nations in a Slav federation, in whose constitution the Russian influence would be decisive and would result in assimilation”<sup>101</sup>. It was one of the first documents, almost unknown until now, in which he spoke of Slav federation headed by Russia. He did not specify which Slav nations – all or some of them would enter this federation. This was the first indication that he regarded the Slav federation as alternative of the Habsburg or Danube federation as early as 1890 and not on the eve of the First World War, as it was assumed. This project sounded strange in view of the fact that at that time K. Kramar spoke about Russian-Austrian rapprochement, which to some extent was realistic in 1890s.

T. Masaryk`s federalism found reception in the young Czech University lecturer Edvard Benes. His vision of Czech national question and its solution on federal lines was published in Paris, 1908. E. Benes` nationalism was based on that of F. Palacky and in

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<sup>101</sup> Korespondence, TGM-KK, doc. 90, p. 157.

particular, on K. Havlicek<sup>102</sup>. Similarly to the other Czech politicians, he supported the territorial integration of Austro-Hungary because of militant aspirations of Hungarians and Germans. What he proposed in his project was federalization of the Empire on national grounds, which meant that he gave up the Bohemian Staatsrecht idea and in practice approved of the exclusion of all German minorities in the border regions in Bohemia and Moravia. In this he resembled the federalist program of Realists of T. Masaryk and that of the Social Democrats. E. Benes proposed establishment of autonomous units, possessing local government, that is, decentralization as a main principle in the federalization of the Habsburg empire. The autonomous units should be divided in smaller administrative communities, in which the local power should have a decisive role in government. The state should be attributed only the responsibility of taking cares of the public order. The view of the political structure of different national units was socialist in sounding, which, in fact, was reflection of E. Benes' socialist views, which he adopted during his study in France. At the same time, he admitted that his program was close to the Realists in his demand for education of the working class. No wonder, then, E. Benes himself called his project "*socialist-realist*". The new element in his program was the introduction of the so-called intermediary force – the national assembly, which should represent all the nationalities, would appoint a minister responsible before Vienna and defending the interests of the local population<sup>103</sup>.

Almost at the same time, another project appeared, this time elaborated by the Transylvanian Aurel Popovici, which resembled to some extent F. Palacky's project in dividing the Habsburg Empire into 15 autonomous units. However, E. Benes criticized A.

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<sup>102</sup> Archiv Narodniho Musea, fond Karel Kramar, box 246, file 2457.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Popovici's plan for not providing a device for protection of national minorities. The common feature between the Benes' and Popovici's projects was abolition of the historical crownlands and establishment of autonomous units based on national principle<sup>104</sup>. To Czechs this solution of their problem was not favourable because it would mean the separation of the German speaking regions of Bohemia and Moravia. At the same time, however, the Popovici's plan provided a solution of the Slovak problem, because it envisaged a separate Slovak autonomous unit.

Aurel Popovici's plan was unrealistic because it included Transleithania, which was a separate kingdom and the any reforms aimed at reforming the internal political structure should be approved by the Hungarian parliament. Popovici plan, which proposed the division of the lands of St. Stephen into several autonomous units, would be rejected by the Magyars. Besides, as I have mentioned, the plan envisaged the abolition of historical crownlands, to which the old as well as the future Habsburg emperor (Franz Ferdinand) would oppose, since their imperial power was based on historical imperial tradition.

Aurel Popovici was part of the so-called "Belvedere circle", which had been formed by the heir apparent Franz Ferdinand as an alternative center of power in Vienna. It is believed that the latter himself had plans for reorganization of the Habsburg Empire, aimed at abolition of dualism. In fact, the heir to the Habsburg throne had never made public declarations for having such intentions. The plans about the reorganization of Empire on federalist principle were elaborated by his collaborators, among which were (besides Aurel Popovici) the Slovak Milan Hodza, the Rumanian Al. Vaida- Voevod, J. Maniu, etc. Regarding the future and most probably alleged federalist intentions of F. Ferdiannnd, the most popular version was the idea of transforming it into trialistic.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

Contrary to the expectations, the third center of power would not be Prague, as it had been envisaged in previous case of 1870s, but Zagreb. The reason for such a project was above all geopolitical – by giving the Croats the same status as the Magyars, the future emperor would stop or at least diminish the irredentist movement among the Southern Slavs. At the same time, the so-called “Great Croatia” would serve as a political rival of Serbia, being an alternative unifying center for the Southern Slavs.

The murder of Franz Ferdinand in June 1914 not only put the end of any hope for reorganizing the Empire on federal lines, but it destroyed the Austro-Slavism, that dominated the Czech political life till that time.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FROM AUSTROSLAVISM TO “AUSTRIA DELENDA EST”

#### (1914-1918)

#### 4.1.T.G. MASARYK’S “INDEPENDENT BOHEMIA”

The First World War destroyed the Austro-Slavism of the Czech parties and their hope that Austria-Hungary could be federalized. T. Masaryk was already convinced that if the Central Powers won the war, the Danube monarchy would not only become a German vassal, but would also be Germanized, which would result in the creation of German Central Europe (*Mitteleuropa*).<sup>105</sup> That was why he endeavoured to interpret the war as a struggle against the “Pan-German Imperialism” and as a conflict between absolutist and military theocracies on the one hand, and constitutional and democratic countries, on the other hand.<sup>106</sup> This interpretation was far from precise and accurate because Russia, being one of the Allies, could hardly be called “democratic”.

The other argument, which prompted T. Masaryk to launch an anti-Habsburg activity, was his deep conviction that the Danube Empire would not survive the war. During the autumn of 1914 he traveled twice to Holland in order to collect information about the two military camps. There he met his close friends Henry Wickham Steed and Robert William Seton-Watson as well as the French historian Ernest Denis. On the basis of this conversation Robert W. Seton-Watson elaborated a memorandum<sup>107</sup> through which he “introduced” the Czech professor to European public, giving a detailed description of his personality, political and academic career. In this memorandum he interpreted T. Masaryk’s views on the war and his idea of the future Czechoslovak state.

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<sup>105</sup> T.Masaryk. *Svetová revoluce (The World Revolution)* (Praha, Orbis a Cin, 1930), p. 28.

<sup>106</sup> T.Masaryk. *Nová Evropa. Stanovisko slovanske.* (New Europe. The Slav Standpoint)(Brno, 1994), p. 78.

<sup>107</sup> R.W. *Seton-Watson and His Relations with the Czechs and Slovaks.* Documents 1906-1951. vol.1, (Praha, 1995), doc. 61, 209-214.



In the first place, the Czech professor pointed out the anti-Habsburg mood in Bohemia as well as the Slav sentiments of the Czechs, depicting them even as “Russophile”. This fact had its own explanation – T. Masaryk knew that the memorandum in question would be sent to the Russian foreign minister Sergej Sazonov. The Czech professor pointed out that the future state would comprise the lands of Bohemian crown (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia) and the Slovak lands<sup>108</sup>. Thus, as early as the very beginning of the war T. Masaryk pointed out that the new state would be built on the basis of Bohemian Staatsrecht and the natural rights`s concept, which in its Czech version was also called “Czechoslovakism”. These two principles, in fact, were incompatible with each other. The first one is based on the “civic” notion of nationhood, which excludes the principle of nationality, while the second, on the contrary, is based on the ethnic principle. In fact, he embraced the concept of F. Palacky during the 1860s. Thus T. Masaryk endeavoured to legitimize his anti-Habsburg activities abroad, stressing the legal aspect of the Czech struggle.

Regarding the future form of government, T. Masaryk pointed out that it would be a monarchy, with a Western prince as a Czech king, but not Russian, because it would cause protests among the German population of Bohemia. This argument did not sound convincing because of two reasons. First, in his next memorandum the Czech political leader would take the opposite position – support for a Russian prince on the Czech throne. Secondly, almost at the same time, he had a conversation with the Russian correspondent in Switzerland Vsevolod Svatkovski. During the conversation he approved K. Kramář`s project of Slav empire as a solution for the Czech question (*uznává výhody takového řešení pro české zájmy*) and even supported the idea of a custom union with

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

Russia. He stressed that Czechs were Russophile and wanted a “Russian king”. The most striking statement in his conversation with the Russian journalist was his statement that the independence of the “Czecho-Slovak kingdom” could be best guaranteed by Russian occupation<sup>109</sup>. The last statement was in full contradiction with his prewar conviction that he stated that the dynasty of the Romanovs was not a lesser danger of the German Hohenzollern<sup>110</sup>.

In December 1914 T. Masaryk left the country and remained abroad till the end of the war. Since Western Europe was the diplomatic and military center of the world conflict, it was there that T. Masaryk launched his political activity. He remained during the most part of world conflict in London, where he cooperated with H. Wickham Steed and R. W. Seton-Watson, famous for their publications about Austria-Hungary. The latter helped him to start work at the newly established School of Slavonic and East European Studies. On 19 October 1915 the Czech professor delivered a lecture “The Problem of Small nations in European crisis” at London King`s College. This lecture could be characterized as a “general preparation” for his official declaration against the Habsburgs. In his lecture the Czech professor outlined his political program, in which he insisted that the Allies should accept it because its implementation would destroy German plans for *Mitteleuropa*: “... the Germany`s aim is and was Berlin-Bagdad, the employment of the nations of Austria-Hungary as helpless instruments, and the subjection of the smaller nations which form this peculiar zone between the West and the East of

<sup>109</sup> Zpráva o Rozhovorech Profesora T.G.Masaryka a V.P. Svatkovského v Ríme. In: *T.G.Masaryk. Válka a Revoluce I. Články-Memoranda-Přednášky-Rozhovory, 1914-1916*. (Masarykův Ustav AV ČR, Praha, 2005), 42-43.

<sup>110</sup> T. Gotovska . *T. G. Masaryk – izpovedta na edin nabeden rusofob*, 89, 91; idem. Rusko v politice T. G. Masaryka za první světové války. – In: *TGM, Rusko a Evropa. Sbornik příspěvků z mezinárodní vědecké konference pořadane ve dnech 12.-14. září 1997*. (Praha, 2002), 209.

*Europe. Poland, Bohemia, Serbo-Croatia ... are the natural adversaries of Germany, of her Drang nach Osten; to liberate and strengthen these smaller nations is the only real check upon Prussia. Free Poland, Bohemia and Serbo-Croatia would be the so-called buffer states... If this horrible war, with its countless victims, has any meaning, it can only be found in the liberation of the small nations who are menaced by Germany's eagerness for conquest and her thirst for the domination of Asia".*<sup>111</sup> In his lecture the Czech professor not only tried to justify the existence of the small nations, but pointed out that they possessed some advantages – the small community of citizen made possible the development of individual who was more respected by his fellows. On the contrary, the great nations possessed disadvantages – greatness meant more duties and responsibilities rather than privileges.

After the arrival of E. Benes in the autumn of 1915 both created the Czech emigrant committee in Paris. The official declaration of the Czech emigrant committee of November 1915 declared officially war on Austria-Hungary and proclaimed its aim to establish an independent Czechoslovak state: “We struggle for a fully independent Czechoslovak state”. “The Czech nation is determined to take its fate in its own hands”. “We lost the whole confidence in Austria-Hungary and did not recognize its right of existence”.<sup>112</sup>

The arrival of the Slovak Milan Stefanik in 1916 laid the foundations of the Czechoslovak National Council in 1916 with its headquarters in Paris and T. Masaryk as its chair. The aim of T. Masaryk was not only to familiarize the Allies and public opinion in Great Britain and France with the Czech question but also to convince them that it was

<sup>111</sup> R. W. Seton-Watson. *Masaryk in England*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1943) 151-152. Pichlik, K. *Poválečná Evropa v představách T. G. Masaryka v exilu. – První světová válka...*, p. 55.

<sup>112</sup> Beneš, E. *Světová válka a naše revoluce. Dokumenty. T. 3, Praha, 1935, dok. 72, p. 229-234.*

in their interest to support the disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the establishment of independent states in its place. An important element of T. Masaryk's wartime ideas was his concept of the existence of a single Czechoslovak nation. The Czech politician gave several strong arguments in favour of this idea: 1) his personal deep conviction that the Slovaks were a branch of the Czech nation; 2) the German minority – if the Czech and Slovaks were mingled into a single nation, in this case they would be majority as a counterbalance against 3 million German population.<sup>113</sup>

The main ideological argument for T. Masaryk was that the Allies should be convinced that Austria-Hungary should be destroyed as a multinational empire and replaced by national states, including Czechoslovakia. If the Czechs and Slovaks were presented as two separate nations, it would mean to recognize that the future Czechoslovak state would be also multinational. Thus, the Allies could hardly agree one multinational state to be replaced by another (let alone the German minority).

In October 1916, he, together with R.W. Seton-Watson and H. W. Steed launched the weekly "New Europe".<sup>114</sup> In this periodical they propagated the liberation of the oppressed nations in Central and Eastern Europe from German and Hungarian power<sup>115</sup>.

E. Benes' and M. Stefanik's activities were primarily in Paris because both had close contacts there since their student years and the latter even had received French citizenship before the war. In February 1916 M. Stefanik arranged an interview between T. Masaryk and A. Briand during which the former endeavoured to explain the essence of the Pan-German plans about "Mitteleuropa", the vassalage of Austria-Hungary and the Czecho-Slovak aspirations aimed at its disintegration. T. Masaryk outlined plan for the

<sup>113</sup> Křen, J. *Konfliktní společenství*. Praha, 1990, p. 395.

<sup>114</sup> Steed, H. W. *Through Thirty Years, 1892-1922*. Vol. 2, A Personal Narrative. London, 1925, p. 124.

<sup>115</sup> Roberts, I. *History of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1915-1990*. (London, 1991), 8.

reorganization of Central Europe through liberation of the small nations and explained that this plan was in full harmony with the aims of France and the other Allied countries. The Czech leader stressed that “the weakening of Austria means the weakening of Germany” and the destruction of the former would mean “to strike at Germany on its weakest point, thus destroying its plan for domination in Central Europe”.<sup>116</sup>

During the war E. Benes published several pamphlets as a part of his propaganda activity against Austria-Hungary. In his most famous pamphlet “Destroy Austria-Hungary” of 1916, in order to justify his call for the dissolution of the Danube empire, he gave as an example past events in order to show its falsehood – in 1848 and in 1871 the Emperor betrayed the Czech people (his refusal to be crowned as Czech king); therefore, there was every reason to believe that he would betray them now, by transforming Austria into a German puppet<sup>117</sup>. However, in his prewar memorandum of 1906 E. Benes supported the necessity of preserving the Empire, thus “missing” somehow these facts.

In articles, published in “*La Nation Tchèque*” in 1917, he rejected the British views on possible federalization of Austria-Hungary, by pointing out “cultural arguments” (*duvody kulturni*) against such a solution to the national problem in Central Europe. The Habsburg empire was a medieval state, whose power rested on 5 pillars – Dynasty, Hungarian and German aristocracy, Bureaucracy, Catholic Church, and Army. E. Benes called these pillars the “five enemies of the Czechs” and stressed the necessity of their destruction, in particular, the influence of the Catholic Church<sup>118</sup>.

T.Masaryk presented his ideas about the postwar reorganization of the Czech and Slovak lands in a series of memorandums and through his wartime speeches. I have

<sup>116</sup> Kerner, R. *The Winning of Czechoslovak Independence*. In: *Foreign Affairs*, VII, (January 1929), 314.

<sup>117</sup> ANM, Karel Kramář Archives, box 93, file 2427.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

already mentioned his first project, which appeared during his second visit to Holland, elaborated together with R.W. Seton-Watson.

This memorandum, in fact, was the first one of a series, which he elaborated during the war and which he modified in accordance with international circumstances and the position of the Czech politicians in Prague. For example, when T. Masaryk was told about the plan of K. Kramář about a possible territorial corridor between the future Czechoslovakia and future Yugoslavia, he included it in one of his memorandums. The Czech professor even admitted in his memoirs that: "It was not my plan, but most Czech politicians and the Southern Slavs supported it. Such narrow territorial corridor through Austria and Hungary seemed to me hardly possible"<sup>119</sup>.

His memorandum "Independent Bohemia" of 1915 was the most detailed one and could be considered T. Masaryk's wartime political program. In it T. Masaryk focused on several important issues – the aim of the war, his perception of nationality, the strategic significance of the small nations for the postwar reorganization of Europe with special reference to the Czech lands.

To Czech politician the main aim of the war was "the liberation and freedom of the small states and nations". He regarded the war as a struggle between Germans and Slavs, thus embracing F. Palacky's perception of the polarity in Czech history, which he had criticized before the war. In this memorandum T. Masaryk repeated the same principles, on which the future "Bohemian Kingdom" should be built. His state-building ideology contained two elements, incompatible with each other – the civic notion of nationhood (the lands of the old Bohemian kingdom – Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia) and the ethnic principle (Slovak lands). He deliberately used the old name "Bohemia" in

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<sup>119</sup> Masaryk, T. *Světová revoluce*, p. 25.

order to prove the existence and continuity of Czech statehood. This was, in fact, F. Palacky's political program of 1867, when he claimed for the restoration of the historical rights of the lands of Bohemian kingdom. Thus, T. Masaryk's program contains a strange combination of the modern perception of nation and the idea of "political nation". What was the strange point in his memorandum, that T. Masaryk did not mention at all the issue of the political structure and the nature of relations between the two nations, but at the same time was too detailed in outlining the Czech borders after the war.

At the same time, in memorandum he outlined his own notion of nationality, which he identified with language. This was the Romantic view of nation, as expressed by the second generation Czech intellectuals, in particular, J. Jungmann. Therefore, T. Masaryk could be regarded as a romantic nationalist, a characteristics, which was in full contradiction with his image of one possessing realistic approach to politics and history.

In the memorandum T. Masaryk again analyzed the issue of the strategic significance of the small nations for the postwar Europe and developed the concept of building a Slavic barrier against the German dream for "*Drang nach Osten*". The Czech politician stressed the fact that the small nations constituted the majority of the European states and therefore, there was no argument against their existence.

A crucial issue, which was a subject of analysis and which would be given a special place in all the wartime memorandums of T. Masaryk, was the form of government in the future Czechoslovak state. He envisaged the future Bohemian state to be a monarchy, because, as he stated, "a Bohemian Republic is only advocated by a few Radical politicians". He proposed the Allies to "give one of their princes, or there could be a personal union between Serbia and Bohemia, if the Serbo-Bohemian corridor could

be formed”. As another possibility of dynasty T. Masaryk even proposed a Russian prince, by stating:”The Bohemian people, that must be emphasized once more, are thoroughly Russophile. A Russian dynasty ... would be most popular ... Russia`s wishes and plans would be of determining influence”.<sup>120</sup>

In contrast to his first memorandum, here T. Masaryk proposed Russian prince on the Czech throne. This was in full contradiction with his political principles. Masaryk was a champion of parliamentary democracy and a zealous opponent of Russian autocracy, which he stated explicitly as early as 1913 in his book “Russia and Europe”. In this sense, his notion of the state structure of the future Czechoslovak state resembled more that of constitutional monarchies as Great Britain and Belgium.

T. Masaryk`s support for the Russian dynasty in his first memorandums should be explained with strategic, political and historical arguments. During the first years of the world conflict Russia was the only one country of the Allies, whose armies were on the offensive and were able to defeat the Austro-Hungarian, thus penetrating the Czech lands. Besides, it was believed that Russia would have a decisive role in the future peace conference and in the establishment of the Czechoslovak state. Though a harsh critic of Russian autocracy, T. Masaryk took into consideration all these factors. Thus he found himself in a strange situation – though an opponent of Imperial Russia, he relied on its defeat over Austria-Hungary, which would bring the Czech independence. The Russian emperor could hardly accept the establishment of a republic as a Russia`s neighbour (at that time, T. Masaryk was convinced that the future Czechoslovak state and Russia would have a common border). Besides, most European state were monarchies with the exception of France, Switzerland, Portugal. The states, which were established or

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<sup>120</sup> R.W. *Seton-Watson...*, Documents, vol.1, doc. 68, p. 223-235.



restored during 19<sup>th</sup> century (Belgium, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania) also had a monarchical form of government. This idea was in harmony with the programs of the Czech political parties, which had supported the Bohemian *Staatsrecht*.

Generally speaking, the next wartime memorandums of T. Masaryk contained the same arguments. The modifications in them were due to political and diplomatic circumstances and were in harmony with the possible “recipients”. For example, in his memorandum to the French government, Masaryk stated: “The experience with the foreign dynasties and the role, which the foreign princes played in Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Albania, proved to be not successful. That was why, the Republican form of government became more and more popular”.<sup>121</sup>

Three events of 1917 had impact on T. Masaryk’s views on the postwar reorganization of Central Europe, in particular, the Czech lands. These were the February revolution, the American entry into the war and the Bolshevik revolution.

T. Masaryk supported the February revolution because he believed it would bring democracy to Russians. When he visited the country in May 1917, he changed his views. In conversations with members of the American mission, then in Russia, he shared his pessimism about the situation in the country – it lacked strong leaders and strong central power, and the demoralization of the Russian army was an undisputable fact long before the February revolution. T. Masaryk argued that the Allies could no longer rely on the Eastern Front and should be prepared for the worst – the German invasion of Russia, since no one was able to stop them.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, he stressed on the negative

<sup>121</sup> Galandauer, J. *Vznik československé republiky*. (Praha, 1988), 38.

<sup>122</sup> Long, J. W. et C. H. Hopkins. Document: T.G. Masaryk and the Strategy of Czechoslovak Independence: An Interview in Russia on 27 June 1917. – In: *Slavonic and East European Review*, 56 (January 1978), 91-92.

Czech and Slovak attitude to the war, by pointing out that great number of Czechs and Slovaks, serving in the Austrian army, escaped and surrendered voluntarily to Russians. The Czech nation would demand during the Peace conference “an independent country with a Republican form of government”. Besides outlining the Czech war aims, Masaryk stated his views on the postwar reorganization of East Central Europe – incorporation of Transylvania to Roumania, establishment of unified Polish state, which should be in close relations with the Czechoslovak state.

This conversation was a reflection of the second event of the spring of 1917 – the American entry into the war on the side of the Entente. Till that moment he had not regarded the USA as an important political factor. For example, in September 1914, in a letter to his close friend, the American Czech Emanuel Voska, T. Masaryk declined his invitation to come to the USA: “...*I should stay in Europe... in America I would be useless.*”<sup>123</sup>

During his conversation with members of the Americans mission, T. Masaryk for the first time distinguished the USA as a significant factor in international relations – he stated that “the USA should help France with troops on the Western Front”. At the same time, he expressed his enthusiasm with the US entry into the war, by stating: “America has brought in the War this ideal element – to help others establish democracy. I hope this principle will prevail at the peace conference”.<sup>124</sup> This statement was an indication that T. Masaryk already regarded the North American republic as an important geopolitical factor, which should have a decisive role in the postwar reorganization of Europe.

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<sup>123</sup> F. Hadler. (Hg.). *Weg von Österreich! Das Weltkriegsexil von Masaryk und Benes im Spiegel ihrer Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1914 bis 1918*. (Berlin, 1995), 53-55.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 93-94.

## 4.2.THE IDEA OF DANUBIAN FEDERATION – MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?

Since the beginning of the war the Allies did not support the dismemberment of the Habsburg Empire. Furthermore, they were afraid of its possible disintegration because it would result in formation of Russian satellites in Central Europe. It is true, that in November the British Foreign secretary Sir Eduard Grey declared that British war aims were not only to crush German militarism, but also the defense of the “small nations”, by which they meant their Allies, the Serbs and in particular, the Belgians.<sup>125</sup> In November 1916 the new British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour elaborated a memorandum in which he gave his support for the “national principle”, but, at the same time, he expressed his doubts as to the strength of new Slav states<sup>126</sup>. At that time the British had not yet used the peoples of Austria-Hungary for the Allied cause.<sup>127</sup>

The British radicals also opposed the dismemberment of the Danube Empire, because it would destroy the economic integrity of the region. As the best solution of the national problem of the Empire they proposed its reorganization into a federation. One of the prominent representatives of the radicals was Henry Brailsford, who published in “Nation” his views on the future of the Danube region – he spoke of the necessity of its economic unity and the possible danger of turning the new states into political satellites and of suppression of national minorities. The other arguments against the establishment of national states were his doubts whether the peoples of the monarchy would like independence and the difference between Czechs and Slovaks, Serbs, Croats and

<sup>125</sup> Fest, W. British War Aims and German Peace Feelers During the First World War (December 1916-November 1918). – *The Historical Journal*, (XV, No 2, 1972), 285.

<sup>126</sup> Fest, W. *Peace or Partition. The Habsburg Monarchy and the British Policy, 1914-1918*. New York, 1978, 41.

<sup>127</sup> May, A. R. W. Seton-Watson and British Anti-Habsburg Sentiment. – *American Slavic and East European Review* (XX, February 1961), 40.

Slovenes were so enormous that they could hardly create strong states.<sup>128</sup> The position of Noel Buxton was similar – he was afraid of the violation of balance of power in the region which would be exploited by Russia. That was why, he proposed, the peoples of the Habsburg monarchy should be given wide autonomy. Arnold Toynbee also supported the idea of federation as a main precondition for preserving its territorial unity intact<sup>129</sup>. In response, T. Masaryk published in “Nation” his objections against the federal solution of the Danubian region because the first important precondition for federation was democracy, which was not acceptable for Germans and Hungarians.<sup>130</sup>

Like France and Great Britain, the USA were also against the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary. Curiously, during the world conflict the American president W. Wilson was lionized as “a champion of the small nations” by the Austrian Slavs, in particular, by the Czechs and Slovaks. His views on the rights of the small nations and self-determination were expressed in a series of speeches during the war, in which he proclaimed his support for them – each nation had the right to choose under which sovereignty to live; to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the small nations;<sup>131</sup> His speeches were reflection of his political and moral principles, especially his idealism and the vision of “national mission”. The last idea was usually attributed to his Calvinist and Puritan upbringing and to the idea of American exceptionalism and messianism, which had long tradition.

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<sup>128</sup> Hanak, H. *Great-Britain and Austria-Hungary during the First World War. A Study in the Formation of Public Opinion*. London, New York, Toronto, 1962, 206-208; 221-222.

<sup>129</sup> Jeszensky, G. *British Policy towards Central Europe, 1914-1918. – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Hungary and the Great Powers*. New York, 1995, 57.

<sup>130</sup> Hanak, H. *T. G. Masaryk's Journalistic Activity in England. – Slavonic and East European Review XLII*, December 1963, No 98, 186-187.

<sup>131</sup> Mamatey, V. *The United States and East Central Europe...*, p. 41.

This idealized image of Woodrow Wilson was curious and strange in several aspects. In the first place, he had very little knowledge of foreign nations and cultures. When became an American president, W. Wilson was not prepared to conduct active foreign policy but to concentrate his efforts on internal reforms. Thirdly, the American president had no previous contacts with Central Europe; his knowledge of the region was very little. Fourthly, during the world conflict, W. Wilson declared his support for the territorial integrity of Austria-Hungary, which was in full contradiction with the national aspirations of the Austrian Slavs, in particular, of the Czechs and Slovaks.

The reasons for the high reputation of the American president among the Czechs and Slovaks are several. The first one is the phraseology of his speeches – he used abstract terms such as “duty”, “mission”, “service”, “democracy”, which appealed to the Austrian Slavs. There were no specific suggestions, but only two – the establishment of Polish state and a League of Nations. In other words, W. Wilson`s speeches could be interpreted very broadly because of their ambivalence. The Austrian Slavs, in particular, the Czechs and Slovaks, were enthusiastic about the proclaimed principle of self-determination (although W. Wilson did not coin the term!). To him, however, this principle meant not “independence”, but “self-government” and “regional cooperation”.

I claim that this idealization was not absolute during the world conflict. There are two examples to support this statement. The first one is the reaction of the Czechs to the American declaration of War on Austria-Hungary in December 1917, when W. Wlosn supported its territorial integrity. T. Masaryk, then in Russia, in a cable to the American president, expressed not only his enthusiasm with the declaration of war, but as well as his disappointment with the American president`s support for Austro-Hungarian

territorial integrity: “There will be no liberation of Europe from German militarism and imperialism if Austro-Hungary were not be dismembered and a zone of free and independent nations in Eastern Europe were be established”.<sup>132</sup>

The other event is the Fourteen Points Speech, delivered on January 8, 1918. It appeared to be the most detailed American peace program for the postwar reorganization of Europe. Historians usually point to the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 as its stimulus. With its slogan “peace without indemnities and contributions” they appeared to be a challenge to W. Wilson because the proclaimed principle of “national self-determination” by them was like a “phraseological twin” of the American president’s “Peace Without Victory” Speech in January 1917. They declared that “National groups not enjoying political independence ... to be guaranteed an opportunity to decide freely by means of referendum whether ... to be an independent state”<sup>133</sup>. Besides, the Bolsheviks made clear that the principle should be implemented in the whole of Europe.

This detailed American peace program was an indication of America’s interest in and commitment to the problems of Central Europe – three of the 14 points (9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup>) dealt with that region. Point Ten referred to the Dual Monarchy and appeared to be a confirmation of W. Wilson’s pro-Habsburg policy. It reads as follows: “The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and secured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development”.<sup>134</sup> This statement means that the American president did not support the dismemberment of the

<sup>132</sup> Kovtun, G. *Masaryk & America*. New York, 1989, 55-56.

<sup>133</sup> Heater, D. *National Self-Determination. Woodrow Wilson and his Legacy*. New York, 1994, 35.

<sup>134</sup> Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. 1918, Supplement 1, The World War, vol. 1, 12-17.

Danube Empire and the most he promised its subject people was self-government but not full independence.

It is paradox that the Fourteen Points Speech of Woodrow Wilson, regarded as the culmination of his wartime foreign policy, caused the greatest frustration among the Czechs and Slovaks because for the first time since the beginning of the war they saw a quite clear the discrepancy between their national aspirations and the American policy toward the Habsburg Empire.

The famous American professor George Herron, then in Geneva, expressed the negative reaction of the Czech, Yugoslav, and Polish immigrants – there were “wide disappointment, amounting almost to bitter resentment that has risen among the various Slav nationalities in response to the recent pronouncement of President Wilson”. According to the Austrian Slavs this speech was not only “a moral failure”, but “a diplomatic and military mistake”. They had reached to the conclusion that, “the dismemberment of the Austria-Hungarian Empire... is the *sine qua non* of European peace and of the satisfaction of the several nationalities”.<sup>135</sup>

The name of George Herron was associated with the last attempt of reorganization of the Habsburg Empire on federal lines. This plan was born during his conversations with the Austrian professor and unofficial diplomat of Charles I Heinrich Lammasch in the end of January and in the early February 1918 in a castle near Bern. The Austrian professor pointed out that the Emperor planned to change “the constitution of the Monarchy, in getting extricated from Prussian hegemony, and in getting a reorientation, especially with America. He said that the Emperor was honest in this and determined in

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<sup>135</sup> Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. Hoover War Library. George Herron Papers, Czechoslovakia, Doc. I.

it, and that he was especially backed by the Empress, whom he described as extraordinarily clever”<sup>136</sup>.

H. Lammasch and Charles I worked out the following plan. First, the American president would deliver an official speech calling for a peace. The next step would be an official proclamation of the Emperor that he wished the principle of national self-determination as proposed by the American president, to be implemented. Then follows Professor Lammasch`s scheme for Austrian confederation, which would consist of Yugo-Slav state that would include Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia; Poland, Austria, Transylvania; Hungary, Italian lands, making Trieste an international port, something like the old city states”<sup>137</sup>. In implementing this plan, Austria needed American help against “two great enemies” – the Magyars, “who dominate the whole Empire” and “Prussia” who “establishes ... a hegemony over us”. H. Lammasch insisted that “America must save us from these two enemies” by making it the explicit requirement or condition of peace that Austria shall give autonomy to all nationalities within the boundaries of the Austrian Empire”. The Austrian professor said that Austria then would inform Germany that it would accept those conditions. If the latter refused, the Habsburg monarchy would conclude a separate peace. H. Lammasch did not believe that Germany would refuse because some South German states such as Bavaria and Wurtemberg would join Austria.”<sup>138</sup>

It became clear that the constitution for the federation was prepared. It was “an adaptation of the Swiss cantonal system to the six or seven nationalities of the Austrian

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<sup>136</sup> Herron Papers, doc. IV.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid; Herron, G. “Heinrich Lammasch`s Suggestion for Peace in Bern.” – In: *Heinrich Lammasch, seine Aufzeichnungen, sein Wirken und seine Politik*. (Hrsg. von M. Lammasch, H. Sperl). Wien & Leipzig 1922, S. 186-193.



Empire, with a plebiscite reserved for the Italian Irredenta, and Trieste transformed into a free Hanseatic town and port”. Charles I asked “Count Windisch-Graetz to prepare a constitution for the new confederation” The latter told the Emperor that he should accept breaking with Germany and creating the United States of Austria. He told Charles I that he must choose “between such a course and the irremediable ruin of Austria-Hungary”. In cooperation with Professor Lammasch, Count Windisch-Graetz wrote a constitution for the expected federation. “But when this constitution was ready for the Emperor’s signature and consequent action, he first asked to reflect for two days; after six weeks, there was still no answer. Then began a lengthy drama of indecision and vacillation on the part of the Emperor...” One day Charles I “was under the impulse to sign and decree the constitution... the next day, he would defer action; and for six months this Hamlet-like debate with himself and his ministers proceeded”. The Count said that this action “required the greatest mental capacity as well as moral heroism; and his Emperor was only “a poor weak thing,” without mental capacity... ”. “It was an opportunity that comes once in a thousand years – an opportunity to change the course of history; and the man to whom the opportunity came was no match for it”. As Count Windisch-Graetz said, the great traitor to this opportunity ... traitor to his Emperor, to his country and to Europe – was Czernin.<sup>139</sup>

Indeed, it was the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister who caused the so-called Sixtus affair<sup>140</sup> - in a speech on April 2, 1918 he revealed earlier negotiations between France and Austria-Hungary. In response, the French Prime Minister Clemenceau

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid, doc. XLIII.

<sup>140</sup> Sixtus affair was called after the name of Charles’s brother-in-law Prince Sixtus who served as an intermediary between the Emperor and the Entente during peace negotiations in the Spring and Summer of 1917.

published a letter written by Emperor Charles I in which the latter had recognized “the just aspirations of France on Alsace-Lorraine”. These revelations discredited the young Emperor in the eyes of Germans because these negotiations were led without their knowledge and consent.

The subsequent events showed that the Sixtus affair proved be the actual turning point in the relations between the USA and the Habsburg Empire. This diplomatic blunder pushed Charles I into surrendering Habsburg military control to Berlin (the so-called Spa agreement in May 1918). This agreement made impression that Austria-Hungary became a mere province of Germany and a new policy should be adopted toward her – that of supporting her dismemberment. The American press spoke of Emperor Karl’s trip to Spa as the road to Canossa.<sup>141</sup>

In the middle of April 1918 G. Herron was still optimistic about the possible establishment of a federation in Central Europe, headed by the Habsburgs. In a letter to the American president he wrote that despite the Sixtus affair, “there is still some chance of circumventing Germany through Vienna that we should keep the door open”. To the American professor “Austria affords the best European field for the beginning of a European federation. The several states of Austria, even if once given complete independence, would soon find themselves compelled by a variety of interests to come together again in some form or other”. As a main reason for such a possibility he pointed out the significance of preserving the economic unity of the region – “Each one of these states in a way economically complements the other”. G. Herron still had illusions that “Notwithstanding the ancient divisions between these nationalities and fragments of

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<sup>141</sup> Keleher, E. P. Emperor Karl and the Sixtus Affair. – In: *East European Quarterly*, (XXVI, June 1992, No 2), 172.

nationalities, there is an identity of interests between them. No one of them can really stand alone. Separated they will all fall under the instant dominion of Germany.” The American professor even hoped that they could lay the foundations of European unity – “United in a democratic confederation, even under a thoroughly constitutional monarchy, they can form the basis for the new Europe.” George Herron was optimistic about overcoming the conflict of interests between them, because, as he pointed out, “these complexities and hostilities ... are the creation of the Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns and their satellites during the past”. The American professor was convinced that “Austria could become the foundation of federated Europe” – “the Emperor believed Austria could be the foundation for the United States of Europe ... by founding the United States of Austria”. G. Herron pointed out that this idea originated with G. Mazzini, “the greatest political thinker Europe ever produced”, who “advocated the Danubian Confederation as the successor of the Habsburg Monarchy”. The only difference here was, as G. Herron stated, that the envisaged Danubian Confederation would be headed by the Habsburgs<sup>142</sup>. Despite these hopes for the European future, G. Herron still had serious doubts about the prospect of their realization (“the possibility is so slender and doubtful at best, and it may be it has no existence at all”)<sup>143</sup>. One of the indications for these doubts was the Congress of Oppressed nationalities, which showed the anti-Habsburg sentiments among the Austrian Slavs. The other reason was the Italian position, pointed by G. Herron himself. His plan for Austrian confederation could be realized if reconciliation would be achieved between the Habsburgs and Italy over the Adriatic issue. Such rapprochement was hardly

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid, doc. XIX.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

possible, as the American professor pointed out and the only way out was the creation of “organization of the Society of Nations”<sup>144</sup>.

G. Herron pointed out that Austria-Hungary had to choose between “a complete reversion to the past, or of taking the altogether improbable step of declaring her instant independence of Germany and her intention of democratically reconstructing herself”. It was Clemenceau whom G. Herron blamed for the affair because he had “sealed the fate of Austria” and her detachment from Germany became impossible. According to the American professor, the inevitable dissolution of the Habsburg Empire might come “through a complete collapse of the whole political and social system, as in the case of Russia” or “through the revolution of each of the several states”. He pointed out that the “Czechs are already in a state of active revolution” and “the Yugo-Slavs are entering into a racial unity that has no precedent in their past”. The dissolution would result in each fragment of the dismembered Habsburg Monarchy being absorbed by the German empire. The only way out was these “Austrian states” to form United States of Austria which would be the beginning of the United States of Europe.<sup>145</sup>

#### 4.3.T.G.MASARYK’S “NEW EUROPE”

In the beginning of May 1918 T. Masaryk arrived in the USA. At that time, the North American republic appeared to be an important political factor and it was obvious for everyone that it should have a decisive role in the future peace conference. The Czech professor came to the USA in order to obtain recognition for Czechoslovak independence. During his travel all over the USA cities he propagated his interpretation

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Herron Papers, Austria I, doc. XXV.

of the war in such a way to appeal to the American ideals for democracy and national self-determination. In a speech at Chicago University he outlined the Slav aims of the war – the struggle against pan-Germanism, which he called “religious theocracy” and whose roots could be traced as early as the times of the Holy Roman Empire: “The German imperialism was obsessed by the idea the mankind to be ruled by one person. This imperialism was dangerous for Europe”. He concluded: “The war aims were the Slav aims. That was why, we, the Slavs, though regarded as peaceful, called for war to the end”.<sup>146</sup> Thus T. Masaryk characterized the war as a conflict between democracy, republicanism, and constitutionalism (USA), on one hand, and the monarchism and absolutism (Germany), on the other hand. This interpretation was not precise at all, because two of the Allies were monarchies (Great Britain and Italy).

His ideas were published in his book “New Europe”, which he started writing while in Russia in the autumn of 1917, but it was published in the USA<sup>147</sup>. In it T. Masaryk proclaimed the need for the establishment of independent Yugoslav, Polish, and Chechoslovak state, a zone of independent states between Russia and Germany. He thought their independence as the first step of the future federation – “the liberated nations would organize themselves, as they found reasonable, into bigger entities”. An important condition for such a federation, T. Masaryk argued, was a total victory over Germany<sup>148</sup>. In his book he outlined the political structure of the future Czechoslovak state: “The Czechoslovak State would be a republic {...} *the Czech and the Slovak nation were ready for a republic. We had not had king for centuries, the Habsburgs were always*

<sup>146</sup> AUTGM, MA, kr. 312, sl. 23.

<sup>147</sup> Kovtun, G. Masaryk`s New Europe: A History and the Purpose of the Book. – *Czechoslovak and Central European Journal*, (VIII, 1989, No 1-2), p. 81.

<sup>148</sup> Masaryk, T. *Nová Evropa*, p. 34.

*alien to us*".<sup>149</sup> Supporting republicanism as the most suitable form of government, T. Masaryk stressed on the fact that it were France and the USA which the future Czechoslovak state would rely on in the future. It is typical of him to change his political phraseology in order to correspond to the circumstances and to fit his audience. It should be mentioned that, for the first time since the beginning of the war, he started propagating the idea of federation, which was very popular in the USA but which he had rejected while in Western Europe.

In Pittsburg Masaryk stated that "a free Bohemia and a free Slovakia will be established." In harmony with his ideas, the so-called Pittsburg agreement was signed on 31 May between the Slovak League and the Czech organizations in the USA in the presence of Masaryk. The agreement stated that the political structure of the Czechoslovak state would be federal and the Slovak lands would receive autonomy with their own Slovak administration, Slovak language would be official in the schools and in the local affairs.<sup>150</sup>

This agreement was, in fact, incompatible with his view on the existence of a single Czechoslovak nation. The following events would show that this agreement was just a strategic step on the side of T. Masaryk, but not real intention to constitute federalized Czecho-Slovak state.

T. Masaryk's next wartime projects for the future of the Czech lands and Slovakia were also indication of adopting the American ideals. His memorandum of 31 August "The Recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council and of the Czechoslovak Army", was considered as one of the most significant documents in 1918, because in it Masaryk

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Dokumenty Československé zahraniční politiky, doc. 41, p. 123.

included in most detailed manner the arguments for the just national aspirations of the Czechs and Slovaks. T. Masaryk described Austria-Hungary as an alliance of states, Bohemia joined as equal partner. The centralization and Germanization deprived it of its historical rights. Slovakia had been for a long time absorbed by Hungary and thus cut off from Bohemia and Moravia. He stressed on the identical demands of the Czechs and Slovaks – “an establishment of a single Czechoslovak state”. Further in the memorandum T. Masaryk tried to make association between the American ideals of democracy and national self-determination, by stating: “The Disintegration of Austria-Hungary is the logical consequence of the American political principles. {...} if the equality of nations {...} is the democratic basis of modern society, then Austria-Hungary is condemned”. He stressed on the historical foundations of the Czechs and Slovaks for independence: “Czech lands did not come under Austria by conquest: they are still independent {...}. The Czechoslovak state must be a republic {...} We have elected the Habsburgs to the throne of Bohemia, and we therefore the right to cancel our contract with them; we do not recognize their theocratic origin or divine right. They exist by the will of the nation, and by the will of the same nation they cease to be lords of Bohemia. They violated the mutual agreement by their anti-Czech efforts.”

In the conclusion T. Masaryk stressed the identity between the American political ideals and the democratic tradition of the Czechs dating from the Hussite times: “We desire the recognition of the United States for reasons of principles: we consider the great American republic to be the mother of modern democracy, and therefore her recognition is of special value to us” ; “...the history of Bohemia since John Hus and the Hussite movement up to the present is permeated with a strong religious element, which brings us

into a close spiritual relationship not only with England but also with America. For a long time America has been to us the practical ideal of freedom – more than a million of our compatriots found their new homes in this country”.<sup>151</sup>

The future president of Czechoslovakia prepared his Washington declaration of Independence in similar manner. It was elaborated as a response to the Imperial Manifesto of Charles I, in which he promised reorganization of the Empire on federal principles. The prominent American professor Herbert Miller and other 5 Americans helped T. Masaryk prepare the text for the Washington Declaration for Independence as a counterattack of the October Manifesto of Charles I. Its phraseology was similar to that of the American Declaration of Independence.<sup>152</sup> In the declaration Masaryk rejected the Austrian plans for federalization by stating that “federation of nations and states suggested freedom and democracy”. “Our nation has a full right of complete independence”. He stressed on the historical and natural rights of the Czechs and their relations with the Habsburgs and the personal union of 1526: “The Habsburgs broke their contract with our nation by {...} violating the Constitution of our state {...} and we therefore refuse to remain a part of Austria-Hungary any longer in any form”. He stated that Slovakia was “once part of our state” – not true. “Our nation elected the Habsburgs to the throne of Bohemia of its own free will and by the same right deposes them”, rejecting their claims of divine origin of their power.

Regarding the principles, on which the new state should be erected, T.Masaryk stated: “We accept the American principles as laid down by President Wilson {...} We {...} accept these principles expressed in the American Declaration of Independence, the

<sup>151</sup> Dokumenty Československé Zahraniční Politiky, doc. 103, 235-244.

<sup>152</sup> Morris, R. *The Emerging nations and the American Revolution*. New York, 1977, p. 125.



principles of Lincoln, and of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. For these principles our nation shed its blood in the memorable Hussite wars five hundred years ago...”

The Czechoslovak state will be a republic and its subjects will be guaranteed complete freedom of conscience, religion, speech, the press and the right of assembly. The rights of minorities will be guaranteed. He claimed that the American vision of government was similar to the old Czech democratic tradition from the time of Jan Huss. Pointing out that “a single nation should not be forced to live under government he did not accept”, he stressed that the freedom was “the first prerequisite for federalization”. Although he denied any such possibility within the framework of the Empire, Masaryk stated that “the free nations of Central and Eastern Europe may easily federate should they find it necessary”.<sup>153</sup>

In his memorandums T.Masaryk endeavoured to show the identity between the Czech and American political ideas and to show before his American audience the legal aspect of the Czech struggle, presenting it as a violation of the “social contract” between the Bohemian kingdom and the Habsburgs by the latter. In elaborating his Washington declaration of the Czechoslovak independence, the future president of Czechoslovakia went even further – helped by his American friends, he used the phraseology of the American Declaration of independence in order to impress Woodrow Wilson<sup>154</sup>.

The Czech statesman claimed that the publication of the Declaration had had enormous impact on American president’s response to the Habsburg Empire: “The Declaration was

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<sup>153</sup> Dokumenty Československé zahraniční politiky, doc. 155, c. 317-320.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, doc. 103, 235-244.

a great success not only in the press and with public opinion, but in Government circles. *President Wilson had written to me that the Declaration had deeply him moved*.<sup>155</sup>

Neither the October manifesto of Charles I, nor the Washington Declaration had influence on W. Wilson`s decision regarding the Habsburg Empire – as early as the early October he had already admitted that he could not accept the federalization plans of the Empire because he had already recognized the national aspirations of the Czechoslovaks and Jugoslavs for independence.

If T. Masaryk endeavoured to “translate” the American constitutionalism and federalism into “Central European language”, the American government on its side also tried to implement the American ideals in Central Europe in practice. In the middle of September 1918 the Mid-European Union (MEU) was established in New York, by the oppressed nations of Austria-Hungary. The initiative belonged to the Committee on Public Information (CPI) as a part of the anti-Habsburg propaganda. The meeting was held under the slogan “The Will of the Peoples of Austria-Hungary.” The event was attended by the former American president W. Taft, the influential senator Henry Cabot Lodge. The main speakers were T.Masaryk, the Polish leader Ignace Paderewski. The main initiator of the meeting, prof. H. Miller, said that the primary task of MEU was to “set up the preconditions” for a Danube federation. According to him, the mere existence of the organization should reject the presumption that the preservation of the Habsburg empire was necessary for the stability in the Danube region. In his own words, the MEU “*means a solid front of free, united nations, ranged in mutually protective formation in a long*

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<sup>155</sup> Masaryk, T. Svetova revoluce, p. 365.

*sentry-line from the Baltic to the Adriatic. It means the basis of a rational and enduring peace”*.<sup>156</sup>

On his side, in a letter to him T. Masaryk pointed out that the establishment of MEU had “an enormous political significance, because it would put on the agenda the national problems in Eastern Europe”. That was why he relied on the new organization because it would “contribute to the closer cooperation between different nations and would pave the way for the Paris Peace Conference”.<sup>157</sup> On 26 October 1918 in Philadelphia, the so-called “Declaration of Common Aims” was adopted by MEU. It contained several principles: 1. That all governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed; 2. The peoples should organize its own government on such principles, which will best promote its welfare, safety and happiness; 3. Free and natural development of ideas should be promoted in such a way in order not to harm or threaten the interests of other peoples; 4. No secret diplomacy; 5. The Peoples should have similar ideals and purposes in order to coordinate their efforts and insure the liberties of their nations; 6. Establishment of League of Nations<sup>158</sup>.

The ideas, as stipulated in the Declaration, were not unique, but a repetition of Woodrow Wilson`s wartime speeches about the postwar reorganization of Europe – the idea of self-determination, the establishment of League of Nations. This proclamation was, in fact, a clear indication that American government endeavoured to implement federalist principles in “Central European soil” in order to prevent “balkanization” of the region.

It was still in Philadelphia, however, when the initial enthusiasm was replaced by the revived conflict of interests between the nations of the Habsburg Empire – the

<sup>156</sup> May, A. The Mid-European Union, p. 259.

<sup>157</sup> AUTGM, MA, XV-Amerika, kr.312, sl.23.

<sup>158</sup> Dokumenty Československé zahraniční politiky, dok. 168, 330-331.

conflict between the Poles and Ukrainians, Italians and Southern Slavs over the Adriatic issue. These conflicts sealed the fate of MEU – it disintegrated before the opening of the peace conference.

## CONCLUSION

The first president of Czechoslovakia Tomas Garrigue Masaryk still provokes discussions among historians because of his personality and the universalism of his ideas. He was unique among Czech politicians because of his charisma. His life was devoted not so much to politics, which to him often stood on the second place, but to serving the people, spread his ideas of democracy.

Prior to the First World War he was famous in Austria-Hungary as well as abroad more as humble intellectual than as a politician; he himself always repeated that his destiny was to serve the mankind in its struggle for democracy and peace.

Although he is known more as the “father” and founder of Czechoslovakia he still provokes admiration for his intellectual capacity and his depth of the thought. His universalistic ideas and his interpretation of the Czech history provoked many polemics among the Czech society, which forced him to put under the question his academic or political career but not to betray the truth.

His search for the truth and his struggle against injustice won him abroad a reputation of democrat and a defender of the human rights long before to become a Czechoslovak President. It is true, that he won enemies, but at the same time, he won much more followers and admirers, who looked at him as a living icon even during his lifetime.

The culmination of his world fame came during the First World, when he stood at the head of the Czecho-Slovak resistance movement and through his activities in Western Europe proved that for him truth and human ideals were far more important than a political career. His image of democrat was usually associated with his four encounters with the American President Woodrow Wilson and the names of the two “great men”

were an object of admiration along the Prague streets in the autumn of revolutionary 1918.

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