

Abstract

This thesis shows that the conceptions of Habsburg multinationalism continued to have a decisive influence on interwar Austrian social democratic and Catholic conservative political thinking on internationalism in the period 1916-1927. The legitimations of the Habsburg Empire's place in Central Europe, which included a distinguishing between political state and cultural nation, an othering of the 'Eastern menace' and the peculiar civilisational paradox of German superiority and national diversity, showed a 'stability of meaning' that continued to dominate Austrian political rhetoric after the Treaty of St. Germain.

An actively fought 'battle for intellectual hegemony', which sprung from the Empire's civilisational mission and found expression both in Austromarxist dogmatism and Catholic traditionalism, brought about a particular focus on education as a means for 'socialisation', renewal of Catholic values and internationalisation. Austrian Catholic and socialist internationalisms showed similarities, stressing the importance of cultural internationalisation through education and free trade in Central Europe. The Christian Social chancellor Ignaz Seipel loomed large as an inspirational figure for (young) Catholics in the whole of Europe while Austromarxists Friedrich Adler and Otto Bauer tried in vain to bridge the gap between Labourist social democracy and Bolshevik communism

The focus on *Kulturpolitik* and the universalist legitimations of Empire produced an internationalism that left room for utopian international schemes of European unity. Moreover, internationalism became a rhetorical tool in the increasingly polarised domestic debate in Austria, legitimising local political action with high-flying international idealism. This created a reality gap between local politics and utopian internationalism which resulted in an opportunistic Austrian foreign policy that was open to international initiatives like the League of Nations, the Little Entente and Paneuropa but that would never whole-heartedly commit itself. Austrian international utopianism wanted to keep every option on the table which created a situation in which politicians had to settle for the internationalist option closest at hand. In the end, that turned out to be *Anschluss* to Germany.

Weltösterreich

The Habsburg Legacy and Austrian Internationalism, 1916-1927

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Introduction - Greater Austria and the Stability of Meaning

The world, she explained, would find no peace until its nations learned to live together on a higher plane, like the Austrian peoples in their Fatherland. A Greater Austria, a Global Austria [*Weltösterreich*] - that was the idea His Grace had inspired in her at this happy moment - the crowning idea the Parallel Campaign had been missing all along!¹

Weltösterreich is the concept salon hostess Diotima comes up with as the defining purpose of her doomed-to-fail jubilee project celebrating the old Habsburg emperor in Robert Musil's novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. Diotima's 'flaming idealism' combines Austrian national pride with an international, even global purpose. However, Greater Austria cannot convince the bureaucrats, philosophers and military working on the project and they water down Diotima's proposal with their own side projects. The 'Parallelaktion' stays lost for meaning.

On 10 September 1919, the newly founded Republic of German Austria signed the Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye that marked the end of the First World War in Central Europe. The treaty also reprobated the Habsburg rump state's politicians for using the term *Deutschösterreich*.² The victorious Entente powers denied the German Austrians *Anschluß* to Weimar Germany and cut short the last desperate attempts, initiated first by the Habsburg Empire's last emperor Karl, to build some sort of Danube Federation upon the ruins of the Monarchy.³ The country was left with the name *Republik Österreich*.

While the Empire was gone, its language remained. In 1927, the First Austrian Republic's chancellor, Catholic prelate Dr. Ignaz Seipel, commented on the proposed move of the headquarters of an international institution to Vienna: 'Should I become convinced that there is no more time in the development of Europe for a Greater Austria and for a greater Germany, then it could be that I myself would raise the question of the construction of Europe.'⁴ Diotima's words echo in Seipel's connection of Greater Austria to the construction of Europe. What did Seipel mean by the 'higher plane' of nations, if it was not

¹ R. Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, (New York, 1996), p. 187.

² T. Kirk, 'Ideology and Politics in the State that Nobody Wanted: Austro-Marxism, Austrofascism, and the First Austrian Republic' in G. Bischof et al. ed., *Global Austria: Austria's Place in Europe and the World*, (Innsbruck, 2011), pp. 81-98.

³ P.M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire. A New History*, (Cambridge MA, 2016), pp. 431-433.

⁴ As quoted in: K. W. Von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel. Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 322-323.

the League of Nations, the institution proposed to move? In Seipel's and Diotima's vague rhetoric, Greater Austria, German nationalism, European integration and a global unity of nations are interconnected. The international dimension of Austrian identity was still present in 1927.

Recently, historians of the 'international turn' have shifted attention to the international institutions of the interwar period, long seen as the 'apogee of nationalism' because of the foundation of new nation-states in East-Central Europe.⁵ At the same time however, international institutions like the League of Nations were more important than ever, for example in the economic support of small states. The First Austrian Republic became the first country ever to receive financial support and accompanying control measures by international organisations in 1922.⁶ In the construction of new nation-states, nationalism and internationalism were 'twinned ideologies' that legitimised each other.⁷

Austria's self-conception had always been linked to its position in a multinational constellation. In line with Dominique Kirchner Reill's recent study of Dalmatian nationalism, Austrians can be dubbed 'fearful nationalists'.⁸ Reill argues that in nineteenth-century Habsburg Dalmatia nationalism and multinationalism were seen as mutually strengthening, not mutually exclusive, since early 'nationalists' emphasised their regional identity within a multinational framework. German Austrians were thus far from 'nationally indifferent' but very conscious about co-existing national identities.⁹ In the Habsburg tradition, multinationalism and nationalism were also 'twinned ideologies'.

Seipel and Diotima were children of an empire that adhered to a multinational 'Habsburg myth'. In Claudio Magris's famous description of Austrian literature, this myth included conceptions of German superiority, the cultural colonisation of Eastern Europe and

⁵ E. J. E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 131.

⁶ F. Beyersdorf, 'Credit or Chaos?' The Austrian Stabilisation Programme of 1923 and the League of Nations', in D. Laqua ed., *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (New York, 2011), 135-158; P. M. Clavin, 'The Austrian Hunger Crisis and the Genesis of International Organization after the First World War', *International Affairs* 90 (2014), 265-278; Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, pp. 197-214.

⁷ G. A. Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia, 2013), pp. 2-3/44.

⁸ D. Kirchner Reill, *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation: Adriatic Multi-Nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia*, (Stanford, 2020).

⁹ T. Zahra, 'Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis', *Slavic Review* 69 (2010), 93-119; Reill, *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation*, p. 8-9.

multinational 'harmony'.¹⁰ With St. Germain, these imperial ideas were thwarted. As a result, according to Adam Kozuchowski, the memory of the Double Monarchy 'matured fast' and quickly entered into the realm of fiction, for example in the works of Musil, Joseph Roth, Franz Werfel and Stefan Zweig.¹¹

Seipel's rhetoric puts this 'fast maturing' into question. He was far from being the only one to hold on to imperial metaphors. His social democratic nemesis Otto Bauer wrote in his great 1923 history of the Austrian Revolution: 'In any European crisis we shall again be confronted with the alternatives: supranational federation of the Danubian peoples or national unity with the Germans: restoration of the Hapsburg Monarchy [sic] or fusion with the German Republic.'¹² The two multinational schemes the Entente had forbidden, *Anschluß* and Monarchy, were no fictions but still at the forefront of Bauer's political thinking.

Reinhart Koselleck, the founding father of conceptual history, has concluded that 'language changes more slowly than does the chain of events that it helps to set in motion and that it seeks to comprehend'.¹³ Austrian political rhetoric of the interwar period drew upon an inventory of concepts that was developed in the centuries-long period that the Habsburg Empire had been a political reality. The shock and trauma of St. Germain inspired politicians and thinkers to refer to a collective identity that had a 'stability in terms of meaning, not action'.¹⁴ When everything else had become instable and insecure, language became a straw to cling on to.

The aim of this research is to connect this 'stability of meaning' in Austria to the internationalisms of the interwar period. Internationalisms is put in plural here, because the League of Nations was far from the only international scheme present. Drawing upon pre-war internationalist and pacifist movements, there were the Socialist Internationals, but also Catholic internationals, liberal internationals and fascist internationals, battling each other

¹⁰ C. Magris, *Der habsburgische Mythos in der modernen österreichischen Literatur* (Vienna, 2000), p. 26.

¹¹ A. Kozuchowski, *The Afterlife of Austria-Hungary. The Image of the Habsburg Monarchy in Interwar Europe* (Pittsburgh, 2013), pp. 13-17, 174-175.

¹² O. Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution* (London, 1924), p. 282.

¹³ R. Koselleck, 'Linguistic Change and the History of Events', *The Journal of Modern History*, 61 (1989), 649-666, p. 660.

¹⁴ J. C. Alexander, 'From "Towards a Cultural Theory of Trauma"', in J. Olick et al., *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford, 2011), 307-310, p. 308.

on the question of the ideal world order.¹⁵ Moreover, there were regional schemes like Friedrich Naumann's 1916 *Mitteleuropa* plan that wished to draw Germany and Central Europe into an economic union and Europeanist endeavours like Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's Paneuropa Union. Austrian politicians and intellectuals often played a part in these plans and used them to fight ideological battles in their own polarised national political debate.

The main research question of this thesis is how multinational Habsburg frames of reference continued to influence Austrian Catholic conservative and social democratic political thinking on internationalism after St. Germain. The language of the multinational Empire changed more slowly than international politics did and Austrian thinkers were thus forced to bridge the gap. The task German Austria was burdened with after St. Germain was to take the leap from being the state of many nations to being one nation among many states, to change the intellectual frame of reference from multinationalism to internationalism. The shared multinational meaning of the Empire found expression in different, party-delineated internationalisms in which Austrian politician-intellectuals instrumentalised tenets of the 'Habsburg myth' to further their political causes.

The compound politician-intellectual is used to do justice to the academic profile that many Austrian politicians in the interwar period had. In the last years of the Empire and in the First Republic, there was an overlap between academic circles and the political debate. The social democratic 'Austromarxists' were known to be creative theorists, revising Marxist orthodoxies by adding the latest insights of Vienna's thriving philosophical discussions, aiming to build their ideology on 'firm scientific grounds'.¹⁶ Catholic conservatives, on the other hand, were often educated in theological studies or attended courses by the Viennese

¹⁵ J. Wasserman, 'Österreichische Aktion: Monarchism, Authoritarianism, and the Unity of the Austrian Conservative Ideological Field during the First Republic', *Central European History* 47 (2014), 76-104, pp. 78-80; M. Duranti, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution. European Identity, Transnational Politics and the Origins of the European Convention* (New York, 2017); Sluga, *Internationalism*, pp. 20-38; G. Chamedes, *A Twentieth-Century Crusade: The Vatican's Battle to Remake Christian Europe*, (Cambridge MA, 2019).

¹⁶J. Boyer, 'Introduction: Boundaries and Transitions', in G. Bischof et al. ed., *From Empire to Republic: Post-World War I Austria* (Innsbruck, 2010), 13-23, p. 17; J. Wasserman, *Black Vienna. The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918-1938* (Ithaca, 2014), pp. 51-54; E. Czerwinska-Schupp, *Otto Bauer (1881-1938). Thinker and Politician* (Leiden, 2017), pp. 7-20, 47-60.

law professor Othmar Spann, who laid down a lot of the theoretical groundwork for Dollfuss's corporatist *Ständestaat*.¹⁷

Moreover, a Gramscian quest for intellectual hegemony in the new state was at the forefront of the Austrian parties' political programmes. In a deeply felt crisis of culture. Austromarxists placed great value on education as a means to bring about progress into socialism. Catholic conservatives spoke about 'moral reconstruction' and founded a *Zentralrat der geistigen Arbeiter* to achieve this aim.¹⁸ The chaos after empire proved an opportunity for thinkers to educate the people towards their own idealistic goals.

The First Republic's political field has traditionally been divided in three political camps with Adam Wandruszka's *Dreilagermodell*: Christian Socials, social democrats and German nationalists.¹⁹ When one takes into account the intellectual debate however, drawing a line between Catholic Socials, German nationalists and, later, Austrofascists becomes much harder. This has led Janek Wasserman to revise this scheme and to speak of two currents: Catholic conservatism and social democracy.²⁰ Ideas of German and Austrian superiority, fuelled by anti-Slavism and antisemitism, could be found all across the political field. I therefore apply a holistic approach to the politico-intellectual discourse, in which the Habsburg legacy was a contested concept with a meaning and influence changing over time, passing through multiple texts with diverging goals.²¹ Like Koselleck's *Grundbegriffe*, the Habsburg memory in the interwar period had certain recurring, distinguishable traits that allowed for its politicisation and in which the multinational aspect took prominence.²²

¹⁷ Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, pp. 73-105.

¹⁸ I. Seipel, 'Die geistige Arbeit am Wiederaufbau', 14 February 1924, in J. Geßl ed., *Seipels Reden in Österreich und anderwärts* (Vienna, 1926), 107-114, hereafter *Reden*: 'sittliche Wiederaufbau'; I. Seipel, 'Die Sanierung der Seelen', 16 January 1924, in *Reden*, 95-97; J. Eberle, *De Profundis* (Innsbruck, 1923), p. 141; W. Schmid, 'Die österreichische Jugend', in A. M. Knoll et al., *Die österreichische Aktion. Politisch-programmatische Aufsätze* (Vienna, 1927), 270-284, hereafter *Österreichische Aktion*, all translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

¹⁹ A. Wandruszka, *Österreichs politische Struktur: Die Entwicklung der Parteien und politischen Bewegungen* (Vienna, 1954).

²⁰ Wasserman, *Black Vienna*; G. Romsics, *The Memory of the Habsburg Empire in German, Austrian and Hungarian Right-Wing Historiography and Political Thinking, 1918-1941* (New York, 2010), pp. 200-207.

²¹ R. Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten. Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache* (Frankfurt am Main, 2006), pp. 99-101; R. Koselleck ed., *Historische Semantik und Begriffsgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1979), pp. 9, 24-25.

²² P. Den Boer, 'Chapter 1. The Historiography of German Begriffsgeschichte and the Dutch Project of Conceptual History', in I. Hampsher-Monk, K. Tilmans and F. Van Vree ed., *History of Concepts. Comparative Perspectives* (Amsterdam, 1998), 13-22.

The source selection focusses mainly on articles, monographs and speeches that appeared between 1916 and 1927. This was a time of chaos, uncertainty and dire economic hardship, that was only somewhat stabilised during the course of Seipel's chancellorship. In this period, everything was still open as Austrians struggled to make sense of the war and its peace, making it an interesting period to analyse the volatile discourse of a lost empire. After the July Revolt and the fire in the Viennese *Justizpalast* in 1927, Austrian politics escalated on the course to the Dollfuß coup and civil war in 1934. The battle for intellectual hegemony then increasingly became a military struggle.²³

My research question entails the assessment of the longevity of a certain discourse as a way of legitimising politics. Using published works therefore makes sense as they offer the most comprehensive and sophisticated version of their authors' thoughts and ideals. These works offer the framework by which the authors wished their politics to be judged. With these texts, authors drew together the intellectual and political debate. They influenced their own intellectual circles but also added to the educative programme of *Volksaufklärung* that was part of the 'battle for intellectual workers'.²⁴

The selection is diverse but by no means a comprehensive overview of German Austria's intellectual debate, nor is it a very original one. It is hard to judge these texts' influence on actual political decision-making. They can however tell us something about the language Austrians used to add meaning to their politics, instrumentalising a shared but still-developing collective memory for new goals. That is the narrative of this research: how 'stability of meaning' could make the legitimations of a lost empire powerful tools for new international imaginings.

The first chapter will lay down the web of concepts that formed Austria's imperial imaginings around St. Germain. Concepts invoked by authors reflecting on the war and peace are compared to each other and to the historical legitimations of the Habsburg Monarchy. In the second chapter, it is shown how these concepts of multinationalism were transformed by their users into rhetorical underpinnings of internationalist schemes. Chapter Three compares these internationalisms to Austrian reactions to actual

²³ Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, pp. 175-177, 223-225.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-71; Czerwinska-Schupp, *Otto Bauer*, p. 178; Romsics, *Memory of the Habsburg Empire*, pp. 235-240.

international politics in Central Europe and assesses the influence of international questions on the domestic political debate.

Zooming in on the Austrian experience, this research can add to our understanding of how anachronistic concepts and frames of reference could continue to dominate politics despite the traumatic experience of the First World War and the collapse of the Empire. It can expand our knowledge on how internationalism, multinationalism and nationalism were not mutually exclusive in interwar Europe, especially in the states of Central Europe. It traces the semantic path of the multinational metaphor through different ideologies and competing internationalisms. In a day and age where European and other multinational institutions struggle for legitimacy and researchers are looking for new models to describe international cooperation, it is useful to see how the multinational metaphor has always been a hotly contested concept.

1 - Imperial Imaginings: Austria's Civilisational Paradox

In his classical study on nationhood, Benedict Anderson inserts a long quote from Otto Bauer's 1907 *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, in which Bauer spoke up against the Hungarian will to create a nation-state by pleading for a federative 'United States of Great Austria'.¹ Anderson remarks upon Bauer's 'imperial imaginings', allowing his supposedly new idea, 'Great Austria', to be 'the necessary heir of a *particular* dynastic dominion'.² Austrian socialism, Anderson shows, was inextricably linked to the idea of empire.

Politicians and thinkers from different sides of the political spectrum often shared the same conceptions of the 'Austrian idea' and adhered to the same imperial legacy of its Habsburg history. This chapter traces these conceptions that continued to exist after the Treaty of St. Germain and shows how these were an integral part of social democrat and Catholic conservative ideology at the start of the 1920s.

1.1. State, Nation and the Imperial Idea

Austria's 'imperial imaginings' took root in Austria's position as perceived Easternmost outpost of German and Western European civilisation and the Monarchy's status as heir to the Roman and Holy Roman empires. Austrian patriotism was an amalgamation of feelings of German superiority, Catholic piety and imperial expansionism that found their symbol in the Habsburg monarchs.

At the basis lay a discrepancy between the concepts of nation, state and empire. After the nationalist surges of the nineteenth century and Austria's expulsion from Bismarck's Germany, German Austrian thinkers felt strongly that they were inhabitants of a state that was not a nation-state and that they belonged to a nation that was divided in two states. A sharp distinction was therefore drawn between the cultural nation and the political state.

¹ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2016), p. 108.

² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 108, italics by Anderson.

This distinction was shared by thinkers of every side of the political spectrum. Before the war, Austromarxists Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, in their works on the *Nationalitätenfrage*, devised schemes giving nations cultural autonomy while retaining the political unity of the Empire.³ Nationalism, in the sense of being part of a *Kulturnation*, should be an individual choice, not a political program.⁴ Friedrich Naumann, a liberal, stated the same with his *Mitteleuropa* plans for economic and military federation of the German and Austrian Empires as he emphasised that the realms of religion, education and, therefore, cultural nationalism, should be left out.⁵ Although he saw big differences between Germanic culture and the Empire's nationalities, in which a sense of German superiority was definitely present, he also claimed: 'In exalting our nationality we ought at the same time to exalt theirs.'⁶ Austrian imperialism thus involved strong notions of multinational cooperation.

The Catholic conservative camp drew the same distinction between state and nation. Ignaz Seipel, then still a university theologian, published a study *Nation und Staat* in 1916, in which he defined both as *Schicksalsgemeinschaften*. The nation is a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* based on culture and language whereas the state is based on shared territory.⁷ Otto Bauer used the same definition.⁸ For Catholic Austrians however, a supranational state could also be a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*: nations drawn together by a common purpose, like in the early-modern wars against the Turks.⁹

Austria, to Seipel, had a different destiny than Germany. Drawing on the work of the Catholic cultural philosopher Richard Kralik, he asserted that, 'it appears to be Austria's purpose, in the their [Europe's nationalisms] midst, to safeguard the older and higher ideal of state, that has inspired the medieval Christian emperors and, earlier, the Roman Empire.'¹⁰ Like Naumann and the Austromarxists, Seipel and Kralik saw an imperial or federal state

³ K. Renner, *Staat und Nation* (Vienna 1899); O. Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, (Vienna, 1924).

⁴ A. Von Busekist, 'After Empire: Karl Renner's Danubian Model of Pluralism', *Nations and Nationalism* 25 (2019), 544-563, pp. 544-545.

⁵ F. Naumann, *Mitteleuropa* (Vienna, 1916), pp. 10-27, 65.

⁶ F. Naumann, *Central Europe* (New York, 1917), p. 19.

⁷ I. Seipel, *Nation und Staat* (Vienna 1916), p.9.

⁸ Bauer, *Nationalitätenfrage*, p. XI

⁹ H. K. Zeßner-Spitzenberg, 'Das Völkerreich des Hauses Österreich. Seine Idee, seine Probleme und seine Tragik', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 60-91, p. 63.

¹⁰ Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, pp. 17-18: 'Die Aufgabe Österreichs scheint es zu sein, mitten unter ihnen die ältere und höhere Staatsidee, die das mittelalterliche christliche Kaisertum ebenso wie früher das römische Imperium beseelte, zu bewahren.'

structure as the solution to overcome the tension between state and nation. They claimed Austria had a *Staatsidee* that was markedly different from the nation-state. It should be catholic, in its original meaning 'universal'.¹¹ Catholicism, to Joseph Eberle, probably the most influential Catholic publisher of interwar Central Europe, was 'by nature the strongest shelter of solidarity among peoples'.¹² The imperial mission extended beyond petty nationalist interests and had an almost messianic meaning, expressed in the old *bon mot*: *Austriae est imperare orbi universo* [Austria is destined to rule the whole world].¹³ Eberle also called this 'German cosmopolitanism', in reaction to a godless Western (and Jewish) cosmopolitanism, which was only based on banal economics and politics.¹⁴ The classical dichotomy between 'superficial' Anglo-French *civilisation* and Germanic *Kultur* was adapted to fit *Altösterreich's* imperial traditions. Cosmopolitanism in the Austrian sense was distinctly German and Catholic, but also multinational.

1.2. The Civilisational Paradox of *Mitteleuropa*

The Austrian Empire, to Catholic conservatives and Austromarxists, was the 'natural' state of organisation in Central Europe.¹⁵ The Habsburgs had protected Europe against the Turks and functioned as a bulwark against the Russian menace before and during the First World War. Austrians saw themselves as the *Schutzherr* of Europe, both militarily and economically.¹⁶ Otto Bauer described it as follows: 'So long as Russian Czarism remained intact, the existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was a historical necessity. Had it been overthrown, the Slav states which would have emerged from it would inevitably have become vassal states of Russia'.¹⁷ Richard Kralik, writing a world history in 1920, expressed the same fear for 'Russification', legitimising the Monarchy's 'defensive' war effort.¹⁸ The Russian Revolution only intensified these fears, now projected on bolshevist communism.

¹¹ A. Missong, 'Europa. Betrachtungen über Kaisertum, Völkerreich, Völkerbund und Paneuropa', in *Österreichische Aktion*. 37-59; Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, pp. 17-20.

¹² Eberle, *De Profundis*, p. 55: 'von Natur aus der stärkste Hort des Völkersolidarismus'.

¹³ Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁴ Eberle, *De Profundis*, pp. 59-67, 103-112, 131-135: 'deutscher Kosmopolitismus'.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24; Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, p. 14.

¹⁶ Kozuchowski, *Afterlife of Austria-Hungary*, p. 79.

¹⁷ Bauer, *Austrian Revolution*, p. 72.

¹⁸ R. Kralik, *Grundriss und Kern der Weltgeschichte* (Vienna, 1922), p. 381: 'Russifizierung'.

Austrian imperialism around World War One exhibited a civilisational fervour and othering of the 'East'. Within the Empire there were areas belonging to 'Europe with the civilizational deficit'.¹⁹ The Monarchy's expansionism in Bosnia in the decades leading up to the war was framed in the colonial discourse that permeated European countries at the time, including its racist stereotypes.²⁰ The Austrian Monarchy and its citizens were perfect examples of a typical European process of 'bipolar identity formation', in which a self-conscious, civilised, developed, white, Christian and in this sense Western Austria consistently defined itself against a barbaric, backwards and threatening East, exemplified by Islam and Russian Orthodoxy.²¹ Colonial rhetoric fuelled the frustration about what the German Austrians were left with after the loss of empire. Without the colonial hinterland, Austria and its cultural capital Vienna were degraded to the 'entire civilisational and cultural backwardness of the East'.²²

A moral frame was applied as well. The war and the peace were proof of the moral decline of Catholic values in the Allied powers as well as in Austria.²³ Austrian intellectuals, especially the Catholic ones, strongly felt the 'crisis of civilisation' that was experienced widely in post-World War One Europe.²⁴ The dissolution of the Empire was interpreted in this moral frame: the emperor had been the father of the state, of a hierarchically organised *Völkerfamilie*.²⁵ Ernst Winter, driving force behind the Catholic-monarchist *Österreichische Aktion*, described this hierarchy in 1927:

The social development of the white race, and of humanity respectively, hence roots not primarily in the 'liberty' and 'equality' of the individual atom, but in the familial-patriarchal

¹⁹ P. Bugge, "'Shatter Zones": The Creation and Re-creation of Europe's East', in M. Spiering and M. Wintle ed., *Ideas of Europe since 1914. The Legacy of the First World War* (New York, 2002), 47-68.

²⁰ P. Stachel, 'Der koloniale Blick auf Bosnien-Herzegowina in der ethnographischen Popularliteratur der Habsburgermonarchie', in J. Feichtinger, U. Prutsch and M. Csáky ed., *Habsburg postcolonial. Machtstrukturen und kollektives Gedächtnis* (Innsbruck, 2003), 259-275; U. Reber, 'Periphere Angelegenheiten/ Angelegenheiten der Peripherie. Einschreibungen in eine Karte von "Adiáphora"', in *Habsburg postcolonial*, 231-241; W. Müller-Funk ed., *Kakanien Revisited: das Eigene und das Fremde (in) der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie* (Vienna, 2002).

²¹ G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality* (London, 1995), pp. 84-86.

²² Eberle, *De Profundis*, p. 26: 'ganzen zivilisatorischen und kulturellen Zurückgebliebenheit des Ostens'.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-162.

²⁴ Spiering and Wintle, *Ideas of Europe*, p. 4.

²⁵ Kozuchowski, *Afterlife of Austria-Hungary*, pp. 149-164.

order, the sovereignty of authority, the corporatist structure, the parallelism of farming and cattle breeding, the vital connection of personal and familial property.²⁶

According to traditional Catholic visions of politics, the state should above all represent the 'natural' ordering of things, which included familial paternalism, racial superiority and dynastic legitimism. The return to romantic medieval values was matched by a corporatist economy, which, based on guilds, would be organised along professional branches.²⁷ The monarchic *Völkerfamilie*, in the eyes of many Catholics, had done justice to this.²⁸

This combination of German colonialism and cultural paternalism created a clash of what Jacques Le Rider has called 'pluralism' versus 'plurality'.²⁹ Kralik, quoted by Seipel, called this 'the problem how multiple different nations can form one unified state structure to higher goals of culture and politics'.³⁰ The challenge of Austrian federalism was to structure pluralism without giving in to nationalism.³¹ There was a civilisational fervour based on a paternalistic sense of German and Catholic superiority, whereas it was also recognised that in order to create stability, non-German nationalities should have a certain cultural autonomy.³² For politicians from every side of the political spectrum, but for Catholics in particular, Austria was both the civilising force, bringing cultural and economic development from Western Christianity to the East, and the tolerant father protecting the rights of smaller ethnicities, both *Kulturbrücke* between West and East and *Organisationskern* of an uncivilised East-Central Europe.³³ The *Völkerfamilie* metaphor proved ambivalent about the conflict between civilisational superiority and cultural heterogeneity.

²⁶ E. K. Winter, 'Der europäische und österreichische Raum', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 11-25, p. 13: 'Die soziale Entwicklung der weißen Rasse, respektive der Menschheit wurzelt daher primär nicht in der 'Freiheit' und 'Gleichheit' der Individual-Atome, sondern in der familial-patriarchalen Ordnung, der Souveränität der Autorität, dem Erbgang nach Legitimität, der ständischen Gliederung, dem Parallelismus von Ackerbau und Viehzucht, der lebensmäßigen Bindung des personalen und familialen Besitzums'.

²⁷ J. Chappel, 'The Catholic Origins of Totalitarianism in Interwar Europe', *Modern Intellectual History* 8 (2011), 561-590, p. 565.

²⁸ Eberle, *De Profundis*, p. 24; Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, pp. 14, 55.

²⁹ J. Le Rider, 'Mitteleuropa, Zentraleuropa, Mittelosteuropa. A Mental Map of Central Europe', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 11 (2008), 155-169.

³⁰ Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, p. 64: 'das Problem, wie mehrere einander fremde Nationen ein einheitliches staatliches Gebilde zu höheren Zwecken der Kultur und Politik ausmachen können'.

³¹ J. Le Rider, 'Mitteleuropa as a *lieu de mémoire*', in A. Erll and A. Nünning ed., *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Berlin, 2008), 37-46, p. 43.

³² Eberle, *De Profundis*, p. 25.

³³ Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, p. 94.

Monarchic paternalism could transform into anti-Prussianism. The so-called *Nationalitätenprogramm der Linken*, drawn up at the start of 1918 by the most left-wing socialists led by Friedrich Adler, distinguished between *alldeutsch* and *großdeutsch*: *alldeutsch* was autocratic, militaristic, imperialistic and Prussian. *Großdeutsch* was democratic, preferably socialist and acknowledged that the self-determination of other nations was essential to the Germans' own nationalism.³⁴

Catholic anti-Prussianism often focussed on the dichotomy of Catholicism and Protestantism, which were seen by Naumann as the two strands of German history *tout court*.³⁵ Eberle was the most staunch defender of Catholicism against Prussian Protestantism, accusing it of the degradation of Catholic values after Bismarck.³⁶ He blamed Protestantism for the rise of individualism and relativism, putting it almost (but not quite) in the same bestial category as Freemasonry, Judaism and Liberalism.³⁷

Ernst Winter went even further. He coupled Protestantism historically to Russian Orthodoxy and held German industry, philosophy and militarism responsible for the Russian-Bolshevik menace.³⁸ In a weird echo of the Nazi catch phrase 'Judeo-Bolshevism', he coined the surreal amalgamation 'North-Eastern social and national bolshevism'.³⁹ For Catholic Austrians in a secularising Europe, the threat could apparently come from all sides at once.

Anti-Slavism and anti-Prussianism were strong tropes in Austrian political rhetoric, but antisemitism and flagrant racism were always present as well. Unsurprisingly, this was strongest in right-wing publications. Eberle could be especially fierce, equating Judaism with Freemasonry, plutocracy and international capitalism and warning against the racial threat of black Entente soldiers in Germany.⁴⁰ The authors of the *Österreichische Aktion* reasoned in similar terms. The Austromarxists were not afraid either to draw links between Jewry and

³⁴ Bauer, *Österreichische Revolution*, p. 69.

³⁵ Naumann, *Mitteleuropa*, pp. 10, 36.

³⁶ Eberle, *De Profundis*, pp. 56-57.

³⁷ J. Eberle, *Zertrümmert die Götzen! Zwölf Aufsätze über Liberalismus und Sozialdemokratie* (Innsbruck, 1918), pp. 15-16, 110-115.

³⁸ Winter, 'Der europäische und österreichische Raum', p. 22; E.K. Winter, 'Die österreichische Idee in der Geschichte', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 26-36, pp. 31-35.

³⁹ E. K. Winter, 'Die katholische und die österreichische Aktion', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 244-269, p. 245: 'nordöstliche Sozial- und Nationalbolschewismus'.

⁴⁰ Eberle, *De Profundis*, pp. 20-23, 56-57, 103-125, 170; Eberle, *Zertrümmert die Götzen!*, pp. 112-114, 219-235.

international finance, despite the fact that many of their leaders had Jewish roots.⁴¹ Antisemitism was so banal in early twentieth-century Austria that it was easily shovelled up the pile of stereotypes of the country's imperial and civilisational metaphors.

The political and economic structure of dynastic imperialism had been, in Renner's words "the historic given" in Central Europe for centuries.⁴² Culture had been a legitimation for this structure, and the emperor was the pinnacle of the Empire's paternalistic cultural hierarchy. In an age of war and nationalism, the political structure could not be sustained, but cultural legitimations provided necessary solace.

1.3. Inner Colonisation

The importance of language and cultural memory to the new Austria's politicians was reflected in the education of 'intellectual workers'. A new people had to be created, infused with the qualities their leaders wished to inherit from the Empire. With no 'barbaric East' left to civilise, Austrians had to look inward. Robbed from the colonial hinterland, Austria discovered the possibilities of an inner *mission civilisatrice*, in schooling and *Volksaufklärung*, through speeches and mass meetings: 'All political and economic problems are in essence problems of education', stated Seipel in a 1924 speech to the League of Nations.⁴³ Austria changed from an imperial father into a provincial school whose teachers battled each other over the curriculum.

Tara Zahra has recently argued that 'inner colonisation' also found its expression in an 'antiglobalist' settlement movement that attracted voters from all political parties, but also widened the gap between city and countryside.⁴⁴ The inner colonisation movement pleaded for exploitation of the own land now that the colonial *Lebensraum*, which had supposedly

⁴¹ Winter, 'Europäische und österreichische Raum', pp. 12-13; Bauer, *Österreichische Revolution*, pp. 166, 271; Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, pp. 49, 137, 146, 179.

⁴² K. Renner, *Österreichs Erneuerung. Politisch-Programatische Aufsätze* (3 vols., Vienna, 1916), i. p. 35: 'das geschichtlich einmal gegebene'.

⁴³ I. Seipel, 'Vertrauen um Vertrauen', 16 September 1924, in *Reden*, 151-153, p. 153: 'Alle Probleme der Politik und auch der Wirtschaft sind im Grunde Erziehungsprobleme'.

⁴⁴ T. Zahra, 'Against the World: The Collapse of Empire and the Deglobalization of Interwar Austria', *Austrian History Yearbook* (2021) 52, 1-10.

provided autarchy, had gone.⁴⁵ The quest for autarchy was a result of the dominant opinion that without the free trade zone of the Empire and its access to raw materials and agricultural products, Austria could not survive: the infamous *Lebensunfähigkeit* thesis. The fear for a leap into chaos, exemplified in the buzzword *Balkanisierung*, was wide-spread.⁴⁶

Autarchy can be read as the economic equivalent of the *Heimat*-idea that is so typical to German and German Austrian nationalism.⁴⁷ Like *Heimat*, the idea of autarchy is an assertion of localness inside a larger imperial or international structure, the one cultural, the other economic. As the chaos of global economy replaced the imagined self-sufficiency of the imperial structure, the return to land and *Boden* was another attempt to hold on to the cultural tropes of empire. The tension between the local and the international, between *Heimat* and empire, between civilisational idealism and economic reality was central to Austrian politics in the Interbellum.

⁴⁵ Zahra, 'Against the World', pp. 4-5.

⁴⁶ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 31-32; Eberle, *De Profundis*, p. 25; Bauer, *Österreichische Revolution*, p. 113.

⁴⁷ A. Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1971-1918* (Chapel Hill, 1997).

2 – Deus Ex Machina: The Austrian Hope for Internationalism

In his first speech to parliament upon forming his first government in 1922, Ignaz Seipel felt the need to schoolmasterly reprimand his countrymen for their passivity and pessimism: 'Above all, every day I learned more that our people, inclined to only complain about the grievances it suffers anyway and expecting external support for everything, can be helped by no Deus ex Machina.'¹ After years of political turmoil, it was time to work for the new state, whatever reservations anyone might have about its existence. To only hope for support from other states, was to endanger one's own survival.

During the negotiations on the Treaty of St. Germain, Austrian politicians had sought to prevent *Balkanisierung*. The first republican government, a Great Coalition of socialists, Christian-Socials and German nationalists headed by Renner and with Bauer at the foreign ministry, pleaded for *Anschluß* in Paris with the argument of Austria's economic unviability. The *Länder* governments in Salzburg and Tirol overwhelmingly supported *Anschluß* and organised plebiscites in which this was affirmed.² Government support was given to German national movements in South Tirol and the Sudetenland and a scramble for land took place in Burgenland and Carinthia.³ In neighbouring Bavaria and Hungary, bolshevist movements had briefly seized power in 1919, adding to the fear for communist revolution.

This volatile international situation was exploited by Austrian politicians. It seemed to confirm the imperial legitimations of stability, of Austria as 'bulwark' against the East and the need for large economic zones. Nonetheless, *Anschluß* remained unattainable. The Great Coalition collapsed and a right-wing Christian Social and German National coalition government took over. The Social Democrats entrenched themselves in 'Red Vienna' and in fierce opposition in parliament.

Seipel, who was to lead this right-wing government for a large part of the 1920s, was a multinationalist, in spite of the 'autarchic' speeches of his first years in office. Austrian

¹ I. Seipel, 'Die erste Regierungserklärung', 31 May 1922, in *Reden*, 17-24, p. 19: 'Vor allem lernte ich täglich mehr, daß unserem Volke, das ohnehin die Neigung hat, über die Mißstände, unter denen es leidet, nur zu klagen, alle Hilfe aber von außen zu erwarten, kein Deus ex machina helfen kann'.

² J. Swanson, *The Remnants of the Habsburg Monarchy. The Shaping of Modern Austria and Hungary, 1918-1922* (Boulder, 2001), pp. 228-230.

³ J. Deutsch, *Aus Österreichs Revolution. Militärpolitische Erinnerungen* (Vienna, 1921), pp. 67-78.

passivity and pessimism in relation to the country's national development were consequences of its multinational experience. Starting from the same imperial imaginings, Austromarxists and Catholic conservatives looked abroad to further their partisan causes. For politicians in a country never used to exist on its own, internationalism was the simpler option at hand.

2.1. The Search for Unitary Socialism

Austromarxist internationalism was no new phenomenon. Since Marx and Engels, socialism and internationalism had been strongly linked, stressing the primacy of class identity over national identity.⁴ For Austromarxists like Friedrich Adler, the international proletariat formed a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* in its own right.⁵

Austrians were influential in the international socialist movement before World War One. Austrian socialist leaders Victor Adler, Friedrich's father, and SPD ideologist Karl Kautsky stood at the basis of the Second International. Moreover, the connections between German and Austrian socialism were strong and manifold in this period. Socialist books and pamphlets were published as easily in Berlin, Munich or Vienna and correspondence between leading socialist thinker-politicians in Europe was extensive.⁶

The First World War had a devastating influence. It split the Second International along national lines and shattered established networks of communication. The Austromarxists lamented this rupture. Friedrich Adler was most vocal: 'The war blew up the International, she was its first big victim.'⁷ The ambivalence about the war led to the split between the SPD and the USPD in Germany. The Austromarxists stayed together, but tension was high, especially after Friedrich Adler shot the Austrian prime minister in 1916. Under the influence of Bauer however, unity was held and the party became dominated by his and Friedrich Adler's left.

Possibly because of this retained unity, Austrian socialism was in a good position to try and heal the wounds of the wartime split of socialism, especially after *Anschluß* was denied.

⁴ J. Schwarzmantel, 'Nationalism and Socialist Internationalism', in J. Breuilly ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism* (Oxford, 2013), 635-650, pp. 635-636.

⁵ F. Adler, *Die Erneuerung der Internationale. Aufsätze aus der Kriegszeit* (Vienna, 1918), p. 4.

⁶ Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, pp. 52-53; Czerwinska-Schupp, *Otto Bauer*, p. 9.

⁷ Adler, *Erneuerung der Internationale*, p. 73: 'Der Krieg hat die Internationale gesprengt, sie war sein erstes großes Opfer'.

The international Socialist *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* reached further than internationalism in its narrow definition as cooperation between countries. Adler called this 'Die Internationale der Tat': 'Not the future forms of societal organisation, but the present forms of the proletarian battle, not the league of nations that will be, but the union of the working class that is, not the end goal, but the road leading up to it, is the most burning question of socialism.'⁸ International proletarian action was seen as more realistic than international cooperation between nation-states, which is discarded as a utopian ideal for the future: The League of Workers held primacy over the League of Nations.

The Austromarxists' orthodox focus on class struggle caused a strong ambivalence about the concepts of democracy and national unity. Austromarxism strived for a strong, unitary, classless socialist society with full power to the workers and the diminishment of bourgeois influence. Leftist author Max Adler expressed this as follows in 1924: 'In the capitalist state there is no national unity yet, only a population that is neither an economic, a cultural, nor an ideological unity.'⁹ A society divided along class lines could never be a unified society with one national identity. Parliamentary democracy was only a method in the battle towards 'true' proletarian national unity, not a goal in its own right.¹⁰

The Austromarxist view on democracy was not based on principles of pluralism but held that real democracy could only be achieved by educating workers into socialists before granting them political powers. The Russian case provided an example: Bauer hailed the overthrow of *Zarismus* but struggled with Lenin's proletarian revolution in a country largely populated by uneducated agricultural masses. According to Bauer, the agricultural masses should first become *Kulturmenschen*: 'If the majority of eligible voters is still at such a humble cultural stage, then universal suffrage (...) is not a tool for liberation, but a means of extortion.'¹¹ Habsburg's cultural paternalism is clearly discernible.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32: 'Nicht die Zukunftsformen der gesellschaftlichen Organisation, sondern die Gegenwartsformen des proletarischen Kampfes, nicht der Völkerbund, der werden soll, sondern der Bund der Arbeiterklasse, die ist, nicht das Ziel, sondern der Weg zu ihm, ist die brennendste Frage des Sozialismus'.

⁹ M. Adler, *Die Staatsauffassung des Marxismus* (Darmstadt, 1964), p. 122: 'Im kapitalistischen Staate gibt es noch keine Volkseinheit, sondern nur eine Bevölkerung, die weder eine wirtschaftliche, noch eine kulturelle, noch eine ideologische Einheit darstellt'.

¹⁰ M. Adler, *Politische oder soziale Demokratie. Ein Beitrag zur sozialistischen Erziehung* (Berlin 1926), p. 57; Bauer, *Österreichische Revolution*, p. 187.

¹¹ O. Bauer, *Bolschewismus oder Sozialdemokratie?* (Vienna, 1920), p. 47: 'Steht die Masse der Wahlberechtigten noch auf so niedriger Kulturstufe, so ist das allgemeine Wahlrecht (...) nicht ein Werkzeug der Befreiung, sondern ein Mittel der Prellerei'.

Nationalism could be a tool of liberation: 'by sharing in the culture of the nation, hitherto the property of the ruling classes, the working class would in this cultural sense "constitute the nation" and no longer be excluded from it.'¹² Cultural-nationalist enthusiasm would foster the social revolution.¹³ The proletariat had to become national in a cultural sense in order to bring about social change, in the same way as the Austromarxists had hoped for the Empire to become a multinational 'Erziehungsgemeinschaft'.¹⁴

Not violent revolution, but state-led 'Sozialisierung' through cultural education and social welfare schemes in 'Red Vienna' were more important to Bauer than revolutionary action.¹⁵ The socialisation programmes of the Republic's first governments were 'so far from being radical', that not even Christian Socials had any real problems with them. Ignaz Seipel readily presided over the first Socialisation Committee alongside Bauer.¹⁶ Unitary or 'integral' socialism thus meant that economic processes and the education of 'intellectual workers' had to go hand in hand, promoted top-down by the state's institutions.¹⁷ The sequence was important: the battle for intellectual workers was a paternalistic civilising mission, not an open debate, as Marxist ideology was epistemologically undisputed.

Ultimately, this would lead also to internationalism, at least in Friedrich Adler's eyes. After the breakdown of socialist internationalism at the onset of the First World War, the youth had to be educated in the historical-economical context of internationalism: 'The truly class-conscious worker is also international, but the class as such is not class-conscious from the outset.'¹⁸ Socialist internationalism, like nationalism and democracy, should be taught.

¹² Schwarzmantel, 'Nationalism and Socialist Internationalism', p. 639.

¹³ J. Benes, *Workers and Nationalism: Czech and German Social Democracy in Habsburg Austria, 1890-1918* (Oxford, 2016), p. 241.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 241; A. Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism. From Red Vienna to Civil War 1927-1937* (Chicago, 1983), p. 16.

¹⁵ Bauer, *Bolschewismus oder Sozialdemokratie?*, pp. 99-106; J. Wasserman, *The Marginal Revolutionaries. How Austrian Economists Fought the War of Ideas* (New Haven, 2019), pp. 119-120

¹⁶ Czerwinska-Schupp, *Otto Bauer*, p. 25.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 352.

¹⁸ F. Adler, „*Falls der Krieg dennoch ausbrechen sollte...*“ (Vienna, 1929), pp. 7-8: 'Der wahrhaft klassenbewußte Arbeiter ist auch international, aber die Klasse als solche ist nicht von vorneherein klassenbewußt'.

2.2. The Central European Revolution

Sozialisierung as a national programme based on the classical dichotomy between politics and culture, extended to the other parts of the late Empire as well. In *Die österreichische Revolution*, Otto Bauer described Austrian socialism through the broader lens of the 'mitteleuropäische Revolution'.¹⁹ The conditions for socialism in Central Europe were fundamentally different than either in Western Europe or in Russia. Faced with a total breakdown of economic structures, the Habsburg successor states were forced to turn to the counterrevolutionary *Ententeimperialismus* of the Allies for food deliveries and subject themselves to the Western sphere of influence.²⁰ The 'Hungerkatastrophe' put the agricultural masses against the proletarian workers' and soldiers' councils.²¹

What exactly the Central European Revolution was about is difficult to grasp. Bauer defined it mostly by what it was not: it was not imperialistic, not bolshevist, not Western, not necessarily council-led, not agricultural, not Christian Social. The lowest common denominator was that a social revolution should lead to the rise to power of the proletarian masses in the area that had formerly constituted the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while special attention was paid to the German-speaking regions. The Central European Revolution was nonetheless not really a revolution but rather a sort of transition phase in which the masses had to be economically and culturally 'socialised' and in which as much as possible from the former economic union of Central Europe had to be preserved.

Defining Austromarxist internationalism, the economic aspect is important, and not necessarily progressive-revolutionary at that. Bauer, like other Austromarxists, was an advocate of free trade. He reasoned that protective tariffs in the transition phase rump-state Austria found itself in, would only benefit the bourgeois classes and large companies, but not the industrial proletariat.²² 'Schutzzollpolitik' was seen as an inherent result of capitalist imperialism and colonialism and was part of the changing nature of capitalism to an organised

¹⁹ Bauer, *Österreichische Revolution*, p. 116.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-120

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-125.

²² Czerwinska-Schupp, *Otto Bauer*, pp. 101, 143.

cartel capitalism in the twentieth century.²³ Other party leaders reasoned in the same way. Karl Renner had been vocal about tariffs in his 1916 *Österreichs Erneuerung*:

The open door and the free road must not only be regulated legally via an international treaty, but also secured by international arbitration and guaranteed by a powerful international administration. It seems to me that this method of internationalisation should become an object of particular care of the international proletariat.²⁴

Free trade had been the glue that held the Habsburg Empire together.²⁵ Organised free trade, which cut down tariff barriers and combatted the monopolies of anarchic capitalism was of crucial importance to the rise of the proletariat.²⁶ To call Austromarxism anticapitalistic is only partly true: Bauer and Renner acknowledged that without capitalism there would be no socialism. Consequently, it was better to hold on to the capitalist order for a while longer and to reform it from inside than to violently destroy it while there was nothing put in place. Their anxiety was that precisely that would happen after the dissolution of the Empire.

Austromarxist internationalism was based on a couple of pillars: a cultural nationalism that was not necessarily tied to the nation-state, the socialisation of the proletariat and agricultural masses into *Kulturmenschen* and the necessity for organised free trade without tariff barriers in economic *Großräume*. Nationalism and class consciousness would strengthen each other and would result, eventually, in international consciousness. The Adlers, Bauer and Renner were 'fearful nationalists'. They embraced some of the nationalist aspects of the Habsburg legacy, like cultural paternalism and the fear of the Eastern threat, and turned it into rhetorical tools in their plea for the socialist state.

²³ Adler, *Erneuerung der Internationale*, pp. 128; O. Bauer, *Das Weltbild des Kapitalismus* (Bielefeld, 1974), pp. 50-56.

²⁴ Renner, *Österreichs Erneuerung*, ii, p. 55-57: 'Die offene Tür und die freie Straße müssen nicht nur durch internationalen Vertrag gesetzlich geregelt, sondern auch durch internationale Schiedsgerichtsbarkeit gesichert und durch eine machtvolle internationale Verwaltung verbürgt werden. Es will mich bedünken, daß diese Methode der Internationalisierung Gegenstand der besonderen Obhut des internationalen Proletariats werden müße'.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 33-34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 52-65.

2.3. Between London and Moscow

The Central European Revolution was fought internationally and should not be limited to the German lands. Faced with strong opposition at home and *Anschluß* unrealistic in the foreseeable future, the renewal of the Socialist International was at the forefront of Austromarxist politics. Friedrich Adler became one of its leaders, strongly backed by Bauer.

The renewal programme aspired a reconciliation between the socialist parties that were split into social democrats and 'independent' socialist parties, but were also met by a strong new International: the Comintern led by Lenin's Bolsheviks. The task Adler and Bauer saw for Austrian socialism was to function as 'middle-man' between the Second and Communist Internationals, crafting a 'synthesis' between the democratic, individual and cultural values of the one, and the global revolutionary appeal of the other.²⁷ Austrian socialists had strong reservations about both sides and found themselves ideologically mostly on the same side with the 'independents' of the USPD in Germany and the Independent Labour Party in Britain.²⁸ The independents formed the International Working Union of Socialist Parties in 1921, the Vienna Union, headed by Adler.²⁹ Opponents derogatorily dubbed it the 'Two-and-a-Half International'. In many ways, that is exactly what it would turn out to be.

The Vienna Union carried the programme of the Central European Revolution. Likewise, its principles were rather vague. On the issue that constituted the fault line in international socialism as a whole, the stance towards Russian bolshevism, Adler had declared at the 1919 Socialist Berne Conference, that it was 'premature' to install dictatorial bolshevism.³⁰ Instead, Adler prescribed education in creating understanding between workers of different countries to further the socialist peace goal. Scientific research by intellectual workers was fundamental to the draft of action plans and internationalism would proceed by technical innovations as the train networks and telegraphs had done.³¹ Adler promoted the

²⁷ Czerwinska-Schupp, *Otto Bauer*, pp. 201-203; T. Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914-1960* (Oxford, 2017), p. 65.

²⁸ Rabinbach, *Crisis of Austrian Socialism*, p. 20.

²⁹ Imlay, *Practice of Socialist Internationalism*, pp. 80-84.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-65, 90-91.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

imperial values of pragmatism, socialisation, and caution. One might have expected differently from a *Propagandist der Tat* who had once shot the prime minister.

Adler's *Internationale der Tat* claimed to build a more pragmatic socialism in which internationalism was a method rather than a goal.³² Accordingly, it should be organised like a regular 'Arbeiterrat' and be a sort of international trade union.³³ Austrian experience with multinationalism had shown how this could be done and, with the secession of Czech socialism before the war, how it could fail.³⁴ The socialists of the Habsburg Empire were international even before they were bound to their rump state.

On the question of national autonomy, the Vienna Union also took a middle position. In spite of Adler's revolutionary workers-unite!-rhetoric, he criticised the Comintern for ignoring national differences and for instituting almost a new imperialism that threatened the freedom of the national working class movements.³⁵ He echoed his wartime essays in which he had reasoned that 'Eroberungskriege' should be avoided at all costs.³⁶ The dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia was too aggressive for Adler's liking and he pleaded for a defensive dictatorship if needed, instead of an active revolution.³⁷ The fear for Russian imperialism had not much dwindled.

After the institution of the Vienna Union in 1921, Adler's and Bauer's efforts culminated in the Conference of the Three Internationals in April 1922 in Berlin. Adler was the chairman of the conference. He asked not for a 'common organisation', but for 'common action', stressing pragmatism over hollow resolutions.³⁸ One of the divisive issues was the Soviet invasion of Georgia in 1921 that had toppled the social democrat government in the Caucasus country.³⁹ The Austrian socialists, represented by Bauer, took the side of the Second International against the communists. Bauer reasoned from Austria's own experience:

³² Adler, *Erneuerung der Internationale*, pp. 65, 128.

³³ J. Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale* (2 vols., Hannover, 1963), ii, p. 259.

³⁴ Adler, *Falls der Krieg*, p. 6.

³⁵ Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, ii, pp. 250-251.

³⁶ Adler, *Erneuerung der Internationale*, pp. 21-30, 64, 73; Adler, *Falls der Krieg*, pp. 21-22.

³⁷ Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, ii, pp. 250-251.

³⁸ *The Second and Third Internationals and The Vienna Union. Official Report of the Conference between the Executives, held at the Reichstag, Berlin, on the 2nd April, 1922, and following days* (London, 1922), p. 9.

³⁹ Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, ii, pp. 260-263.

We German-Austrians, who have suffered ourselves because our bourgeoisie tried to dominate other nations and violate the right of self-determination of other nations, we support this principle absolutely, and go so far as to consider that even a partial success in the direction of the liberation of peoples is an historical step forward, although it may be used at the moment by one imperialism or another for its own ends.⁴⁰

The reluctantly independent Austrians now presented themselves as the champions of self-determination. National socialisation should take place without imperialist, centralised aggression, but under the umbrella of the Socialist International. The civilisational paradox of *Mitteleuropa* was still present: the Austrian mixture of cultural paternalism and national heterogeneity and the hope to retain a multinational structure that would stabilise the *Kleinstaaterei* against the threat from the East.

The attempt at reunification of the International failed in Berlin, despite explicit Austrian proposals for mediation.⁴¹ A 'Neunerkommission' was set up with three representatives from each International, headed by Adler yet again, to prepare future conferences, but was almost immediately blown up by the communists, who soon adopted a Russian 'national infliction' themselves.⁴² Social democracy cut its losses. The Vienna Union was dissolved and blended into the Labour and Socialist International. Again, Adler became one of its leaders.⁴³

The Austromarxists' call for pragmatism had amounted to nothing. The *Internationale der Tat* ironically had an international programme that was vague and mostly based on national socialisation programmes rather than on actual international cooperation. The Austromarxists' Habsburg fondness for multinationalism was a cultural legitimisation of their national programme but internationally only resulted in idealistic calls for pacifism and organised free trade.

⁴⁰ *Official Report*, p. 58.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁴² Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, ii, pp. 286-272; Schwarzmantel, 'Nationalism and Socialist Internationalism', p. 647.

⁴³ Imlay, *Practice of International Socialism*, pp. 98-99.

2.4. Catholic-Socialist Common Ground

The Austrian socialists were far from rootless internationalists but used Socialist internationalism to inspire their local and national programmes. On the other side of the political spectrum, the Christian Socials amassed their rural supporters by stressing the connection to *Heimat* and land. But Catholic leaders were not afraid to look for an international *Deus ex Machina* either.

Catholicism at the start of the twentieth century was defined by 'its hierarchy, its uncompromising doctrinal stance and its activist and associational structure', with a 'pyramidal' hierarchy descending from the papacy to local actors.⁴⁴ The priorities of Austrian Catholic politicians - dynastic loyalty, cultural paternalism and economic corporatism - matched this well. Lueger and his followers also gave Catholicism a social face, transforming its pastoral mission into concrete social welfare measures. This 'Social Catholicism' was conservative and embraced traditional hierarchies by stressing Catholic piety.⁴⁵

Social Catholicism was a result of traditional imperial paternalism and consequently shared a lot with Austromarxism, not in the least an aversion to large company capitalism. Eberle was not afraid to cite Marx to show the lack of local and moral responsibility of capitalist enterprises.⁴⁶ Despite, or maybe thanks to, the deep political polarisation between socialists and Catholics, conservatives in Austria were keen to reflect on the rival ideology. Eberle, Kralik and Spann denounced socialism as Jewish, faithless and rationalistic, but did want to pay tribute to 'uplifting' the masses and the local grounding of capital and labour, like in a corporatist system. In his *Der wahre Staat*, Othmar Spann wrote:

Just have a look at the socialisation programme of the Austrian social democratic party, which has been designed by the far-left standing Otto Bauer: It is actually not a communist socialisation programme anymore, that is to say one that is based on the centralisation, on the collectivisation of the means of production; but in it clearly there is clearly a tendency towards a associational, thus corporatist organisation of the economy.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ M. Conway, *Catholic Politics in Europe. 1918-1945* (London, 1997), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴⁶ Eberle, *Zertrümmert die Götzen!*, pp. 49-51.

⁴⁷ O. Spann, *Der wahre Staat* (Vienna, 1972), p. 205: 'Man sehe sich doch einmal das Sozialisierungsprogramm der österreichischen sozialdemokratischen Partei, das der sehr links stehende Otto Bauer entworfen hat, an: Es ist eigentlich kein kommunistisches Sozialisierungsprogramm mehr, das heißt eines, welches auf der

Economic socialisation was less far removed from economic corporatism than 'plutocratic' capitalism. The authors of the *Österreichische Aktion*, August Knoll and Ernst Winter foremost among them, were 'Christian-Social' in their beliefs, describing themselves as Catholic 'Sozialreformer' and as standing between left and right.⁴⁸ The Austromarxists were not as explicit about these commonalities, but to many conservatives, the fate of the proletariat was a Catholic responsibility as well.

Catholics deeply felt the 'crisis of culture' in modernity that capitalism, socialism, industrialism, development of modern science and spreading secularisation had brought about. Therefore, the need for schooling was omnipresent in Catholic conservative thought. Different values would of course be taught, in the Catholic case traditional family values to revitalise an amoral society.⁴⁹ The focus on Catholic values created nonetheless a comparable fusion of socialisation and nationalisation that the socialists strived for.

On *Freihandel*, Catholic conservatives expressed attitudes akin to those of the Austromarxists. They also feared the economic backlash Austria would experience from high import tariffs. Early on, Seipel applauded free travel and a lack of international tariffs.⁵⁰ Precondition would still be the organised economy of corporatism. Eberle dreaded the godless loss of useful economic branches in capitalist large company competition, 'that cares neither for fatherland nor culture'.⁵¹ Reaching back to a 'traditional' economic order, Catholic conservatives might have been even more anticapitalistic in their writings than the Austromarxists.⁵² The tension in both currents' economic programmes was between decentralisation and organisation, as both attacked large company plutocracy and pleaded for 'local', 'non-political' organisation, either by guilds, local governments or workers' councils.⁵³ The free trade zone the Empire had been was a necessary fundament for this to be successful.

Zentralisierung, auf der Kollektivierung der Erzeugungsmittel, beruhte; sondern in ihm liegt deutlich ein Zug zu berufsgenossenschaftlicher, also ständischer Organisation, zur Verzünfftigung der Wirtschaft'.

⁴⁸ 'Vorwort', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 5-10, pp. 9-10; A. M. Knoll, 'Kaisertum und Proletariat oder Die soziale Monarchie', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 186-215; A. M. Knoll, *Der soziale Gedanke im modernen Katholizismus*, (Vienna, 1932); J. Chappel, *Catholic Modern. The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (Cambridge MA, 2018), p. 124.

⁴⁹ Conway, *Catholic Politics*, pp. 10-17; Eberle, *Zertrümmert die Götzen!*, pp. 155-164.

⁵⁰ Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, pp. 146-149.

⁵¹ Eberle, *Zertrümmert die Götzen!*, pp. 44-49: 'das sich weder um Vaterland noch um Kultur kümmert'.

⁵² Chappel, *Catholic Modern*, p. 33.

⁵³ Chappel, 'Catholic Origins', p. 565; A. Missonig, 'Entproletarisierung', in *Österreichische Aktion*, pp. 216-243, pp. 218, 233.

2.5. Catholic Youth and European Unity

Pre-1914, Catholics in Europe had largely eschewed ‘unholy’ politics as a means to combat modernisation, even though influential politicians like Karl Lueger incorporated Catholic feelings into their populist rhetoric.⁵⁴ After the war, Catholicism became more politicised and better represented in parliamentary institutions.

The main inspiration for Catholic internationalism came from the papacy, which had become increasingly activist in the period between the two encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), most prominently during the pontificate of Pius XI (1922-1939).⁵⁵ *Rerum Novarum* had been the birth of Catholic social policy and was a major source of inspiration for Austrian Catholics. Both texts put the family at the centre of economic organisation. The main difference between them was that in the meantime the papacy had accepted the state as mediating actor in the economic process, allowing for a more centralised approach.⁵⁶

The papal inspiration brought together national and social revolution just as Bauer’s Central European Revolution tried to do. Seipel, addressing Weimar German Catholics in 1925, which he did on a regular basis, stated: ‘Now the Catholic church will hesitate no longer to also address the other, greater, social question, in which it is not only about how the individual people in the state, the community, the economic body should live together, but about how the peoples will live in peace with each other.’⁵⁷ Catholics were ideologically more opposed to nationalism than the Austromarxists, but were also ‘pragmatists’, able to shake off their ideology when circumstances forced them to.⁵⁸ The Vatican’s work helped fore-ground a new comprehensive understanding of the international order, even as it consolidated the ideal and reality of the nation-state—one people, one land, one culture—as a central component of that

⁵⁴ Conway, *Catholic Politics*, pp. 3, 17; J. Boyer, *Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna. Origins of the Christian Social Movement 1848-1897* (Chicago, 1981), pp. 224-225.

⁵⁵ Conway, *Catholic Politics*, p. 29.

⁵⁶ Chappel, *Catholic Modern*, p. 79.

⁵⁷ I. Seipel, ‘Katholische Liebe und Völkerfrieden’, 25 August 1925, in *Reden*, 234-244, p. 241: ‘Jetzt wird die katholische Kirche nicht mehr zögern, auch die andere, größere soziale Frage anzugehen, in der es sich nicht nur darum handelt, wie die einzelnen Menschen im Staat, in der Gemeinde, im Wirtschaftskörper zusammenleben sollen, sondern wie die Völker miteinander im Frieden leben können’.

⁵⁸ Chappel, *Catholic Modern*, p. 23.

order.⁵⁹ The Catholic handling of nationalising tendencies in Central Europe had thus both explicit cultural and economic components.

The 'Catholic International' found its most prominent expression in the 'Catholic Action' that was initiated by Pius XI in the 1920s to promote Christian values in civil society, mainly through youth movements.⁶⁰ Like the myriad other youth movements of the time, these were not political in a strict sense but raised a lot of popular enthusiasm for moral and social campaigns with which they played a role in modern mass politics.⁶¹ The 'Catholic International' was a network of national (youth) groups that each tried to adapt the papal guidance to their own national context. It was transnational as this shared ideological basis sparked international contacts: Seipel, arguably the most prominent and outspoken Catholic leader of interwar Europe, was for instance invited all across the continent, and even in the United States, to give speeches and seems to have been especially popular among young Weimar Catholics.⁶² Seipel's role as inspirational figure shows that Catholic internationalism was an informal network of theologians, politicians and youth groups aiming to bring back Catholic culture into politics.

The most prominent, and controversial, group the Catholic Action inspired, was the *Action Française* founded by Charles Maurras. Often seen as proto-fascist, and condemned by the pope in 1926, the *Action* incorporated the aforementioned mixture of decentralisation, corporatism and spiritual revival into a holistic programme of 'integral nationalism' that was violently antidemocratic, anti-communist and racist.⁶³ In Austria, the *Action* inspired Ernst Winter, August Knoll, Hans Zeßner-Spitzenberg, Wilhelm Schmid and Alfred Missong into founding *Die österreichische Aktion* in 1927. They amplified the programme of the Catholic and French Actions with ideas about the restoration of the Habsburg monarchy, federation of the Habsburg successor states and social reform.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Chamedes, *Twentieth-Century Crusade*, p. 7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

⁶¹ Conway, *Catholic Politics*, pp. 30-32; S. Whitney, *Mobilizing Youth. Communists and Catholics in Interwar France*, (Durham, 2009).

⁶² See the many speeches Seipel made to German Catholic academics as well as speeches in France, The Netherlands and Sweden in *Reden*; Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, pp. 246-248, 310-311.

⁶³ Chappel, *Catholic Modern*, pp. 36-38; Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, pp. 144-145.

⁶⁴ Wasserman, 'Österreichische Aktion', p. 79.

More than the *Action Française*, the *Österreichische Aktion* seemed to embrace pluralism and the protection of minorities in its Habsburg multinationalism. Their multinationalism turned internationalist as they stated that this ‘Austrian idea’ could be transported to Europe as a whole: ‘The European, pacifist idea is nothing else than the extended reconfiguration of the Austrian idea.’⁶⁵ Espousing Catholic universalism and *Völkerfamilie* metaphors, they reasoned in similar wordings about cultural autonomy as Renner and Bauer had done before them, trying to depoliticise nationalism.⁶⁶ Following Seipel, and Friedrich Adler, they regarded international cooperation as a form of *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* that could create ‘a sort of nation’.⁶⁷

Zeßner-Spitzenberg argued in one of his contributions, as well as in a posthumously published work on emperor Karl, that the Paris Treaties had not solved the problem of cultural minorities any better than the imperial structure of the Habsburg Empire.⁶⁸ Seipel and Eberle had earlier expressed similar opinions: they argued that minorities were a product of the nation-state.⁶⁹ The *Aktion’s* programme was nonetheless far from progressive and tolerant. Pupils of Spann, readers of Eberle’s journals, inspired by Maurras, the members of the *Österreichische Aktion* were infused with racist, antisemitic and anti-Slavist ideas in the same way as they were taught anti-Prussian Austrian federalism and legitimism:

the *Aktion* desired not so much the end of nationalism or the promulgation of a cosmopolitan league of European nations but conservative hegemony within Austria and Mitteleuropa. These writings evince a will to power that went beyond mere cultural hegemony while also asserting a distinctive brand of nationalist, or imperial, internationalism.⁷⁰

These thinkers expressed a kind of Austrian ‘imperial nationalism’ that used national diversity as a means to legitimise Catholic and German cultural-political ideals.⁷¹ They shared this with Naumann’s wartime *Mitteleuropa* plans for pan-German unity.⁷² Ideas on European unity like

⁶⁵ Missong, ‘Europa’, p. 39: ‘The European, pacifist idea is nothing else than the extended reconfiguration of the Austrian idea’.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52; Zeßner-Spitzenberg, ‘Völkerreich’, pp. 60-61

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63: ‘eine Art Nation’.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-75; H. K. Zeßner-Spitzenberg, *Kaiser Karl* (Salzburg, 1953), p. 121.

⁶⁹ Eberle, *De Profundis*, p. 131; Ignaz Seipel, ‘Die geistigen Grundlagen der Minderheitenfrage’, 19 January 1925, in *Reden*, 159-164.

⁷⁰ Wasserman, ‘*Österreichische Aktion*’, p. 96.

⁷¹ P. Ther, ‘“Imperial Nationalism” as a Challenge for the Study of Nationalism’, in S. Berger and A. Miller ed., *Nationalizing Empires* (Budapest, 2015), 573-591.

⁷² Delanty, *Inventing Europe*, pp. 102-103.

those were primarily a way to further a conservative, almost reactionary, political programme and only in second instance a real proposal for international cooperation.

2.7. The Deliberate Vagueness of Internationalist Schemes

The civilisational paradox of *Mitteleuropa* was mirrored in the unwillingness of Austrian politician-intellectuals to separate their national party-political programmes from their internationalist ambitions. After empire, multinationalist internationalism was there in thought, but much less so in action. The Habsburg legacy gave Austrian politicians the rhetorical tools of cultural memory to appeal to Austrian nationalism, the idealism of which was based on an international purpose. Even the most international-minded politicians like Friedrich Adler refrained from proposing organisations that could actively engage in action on the ground.

Internationalism became subject to a form of ‘intellectual imprecision’, wherein the multinational concepts of the late Empire were utilised to propagate national and local party-political programmes.⁷³ The ‘stability of meaning’ of Habsburg legitimations became intertwined with ideology, so that both the national and the international remained highly contested concepts. Apart from the shared aversion to tariff barriers, the most important trait of Austrian internationalism was intellectual education of the youth and ‘underdeveloped’ peoples. Internationalism was an important rhetorical vehicle in the battle for intellectual hegemony, but increasingly lacked substance. Its unclarity left room for polarisation.

⁷³ M. Marks, *Revisiting Metaphors in International Relations Theory* (New York, 2019), p. 3.

3 – Utopianism and Opportunism: The Polarisation of Austria's Internationalisms

The question arises why the political debate in Austria polarised as it did at the end of the 1920s, if the internationalisms of both political currents were based on very similar imperial imaginings. The following chapter tries to show that the utopian ideals parties held could hardly be matched by concrete foreign policy actions in the Interbellum. Austria had to deal with international organisations and constructions in which its status as 'small power' became painfully clear. The political opportunism this situation generated was prone to divide the political field.

3.1. The Non-Inspiration of the League of Nations

The most divisive issue in Austrian politics of the early 1920s was an international one: the loans Ignaz Seipel secured from Britain, France, Czechoslovakia and Italy via the League of Nations with the Geneva Protocols, signed on 4 October 1922. In recent historiography, the stabilisation programme for Austria has been characterised as the first successful attempt of international financial action, foreshadowing post-1945 institutions like the IMF.¹ The stabilisation programme involved unprecedented international control over an independent country's finances, with a supervisory commission reporting to the League council. Austerity measures included a massive scale-down of Austrian bureaucracy, budget cuts, a newly founded central bank and stabilisation of the *Schilling*.² It worked: the rampant inflation stopped and within a period of six months the Austrian economy got into relatively calmer waters.³

No Austrian politician heartily welcomed the infringement on national sovereignty Seipel had negotiated. Seipel, who had heavily stressed the need for stability in Central Europe as a bulwark against Bolshevism to convince the League, legitimised his policies at home in

¹ Clavin, 'Austrian Hunger Crisis'.

² *Ibid.*, p. 276; Beyersdorf, 'Credit or Chaos?', pp. 139-140.

³ G. A. Sluga, 'Habsburg Histories of Internationalism', in P. Becker and N. Wheatley ed., *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands* (Oxford, 2020), 17-36, p. 30.

Volksaufklärungen by stressing the need for food over financial independence.⁴ Interestingly, he also remarked, in a speech to the *Industriellenklub*, upon the necessity of the success of the Austrian programme for the legitimacy of the League of Nations itself and regarded control by the League as the lesser evil to control by the *Siegermächte*.⁵ He tied Austrian stability to the success of international cooperation and framed the League as a form of internationalism that allowed for more national sovereignty than *Ententeimperialismus*. Seipel's international pragmatism thus met Habsburg's multinational mission.⁶

Seipel's Catholic conservative fellow thinkers expressed the same mix of opportunism and idealism in regard to the League. They were no particular enthusiasts but mostly saw the League as godless, 'mechanistic' or 'rationalistic', and as a vehicle of Western plutocracy and imperialism.⁷ They would rather have a Catholic union of states, another vague principle that they called the 'Weltmonarchie' or, as Kralik did, a Holy Roman Empire 'in a newer, higher sense'.⁸ Initially, the League was frowned upon as an institution imposed by the winners of the war, especially since Austria and Germany were initially left out.⁹ After the signing of the Geneva Protocols this resentment died down a bit.

The ideal of 'Weltmonarchie' did not disappear. The League offered a form of internationalist sovereignty that Catholic Austrians liked, but did not meet Austrian values. The *Österreichische Aktion* was most explicit. Alfred Missong wrote that the League was 'adequate' as a 'surrogate of the emperorship' to secure peace and cultural development.¹⁰ It was a 'Weltrepublik' though, not the desired 'Weltmonarchie':

Out of fundamental sociological considerations, the League of Nations should just as well be rejected as any modern parliamentary-democratic state. In the same spirit it should however be tolerated as a necessary evil like we for example tolerate the Austrian Republic.¹¹

⁴ I. Seipel, 'Die Volksaufklärung über das Genfer Sanierungswerk', 23 October 1922, in *Reden*, 38-43.

⁵ I. Seipel, 'Bei den Industriellen', 9 November 1922, in *Reden*, 45-50.

⁶ Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, pp. 140-169; Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, pp. 117, 187

⁷ Eberle, *De Profundis*, p. 165; Kralik, *Weltgeschichte*, p. 385.

⁸ *Ibid.*: ein neues 'heiliges römisch-deutsches Reich', in neuem, höherem Sinn'; Eberle, *De Profundis*, p. 25; Missong, 'Europa', p. 52; H. K. Zeßner-Spitzenberg, 'Die Zukunft des Hauses Österreich', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 285-300, p. 300.

⁹ Eberle, *De Profundis*, pp. 51, 152-153.

¹⁰ Missong, 'Europa', p. 55: 'Surrogat des Kaisertums'.

¹¹ *Ibid.*: 'Aus grundsätzlichen soziologischen Erwägungen ist der Völkerbund genau so abzulehnen wie jeder moderne parlamentarisch-demokratische Staat. Aus der gleichen Überlegung ist er jedoch geradeso als ein notwendiges Übel zu tolerieren wie wir beispielsweise die demokratische Republik Österreich tolerieren'.

The reluctant acceptance of parliamentary democracy, the Republic and other liberal constructions by Austrian Catholics extended to the League of Nations. The way they clung to the dynastic-paternalistic-corporatist order and its Habsburg concepts, fed this ambivalence. Austrian Catholics wanted an international order, but an illiberal, Catholic one. They acknowledged the need for international law, which should however be 'natural' and Christian, not national-sovereign and atheist.¹² They adhered to multinationalism, but saw the League's minority protection as the weak dilution of the Empire's *Gleichberechtigung*.¹³

The Austromarxists in opposition were more eager to push back against Seipel's League of Nations mission. The Geneva Protocols were the submission of Austrian independence to international finance and Western capitalist imperialism. Otto Bauer described it as a 'Knechtungsvertrag' and would rail against it in parliament all throughout the 1920s.¹⁴ Austromarxists tried to assert themselves as the champions of self-determination, as Bauer had done in St. Germain and in relation to the Comintern.

The Austromarxist insistence on international class consciousness led them to denounce the League in a similar way as the Catholics did. Friedrich Adler considered it a necessary forum for international, pacifist cooperation, which nonetheless failed to make working-class politics. The Socialist International had to exist alongside the League to control it and 'democratise' it in socialist fashion.¹⁵ Max Adler reasoned in similar vein, but was pessimistic about the willingness of the militaristic *Völkerbundbeherrscher*. He was afraid that the League would strengthen the bourgeois system of centralised nation-states and diminish the power of decentralised socialist *Volksgemeinschaften*.¹⁶ The social democrats' 1926 Linz Programme stated that the League was an instrument of the 1919 Entente-imperialistic order. Even though, they felt that it could be transformed from inside and were willing to give it a chance as a way to uphold the *Völkerfrieden*.¹⁷

¹² Zeßner-Spitzenberg, 'Zukunft', p. 300; H. K. Zeßner-Spitzenberg, 'Legimität und Legalität', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 163-185; I. Seipel, 'Die sittlichen Grundlagen des Völkerrechts', in *Reden*, 189-194.

¹³ Seipel, 'Vertrauen um Vertrauen'; I. Seipel, 'Die Neugestaltung Europas', in *Reden*, 178-187; Zeßner-Spitzenberg, 'Völkerreich', p. 68-75.

¹⁴ Czerwinska-Schupp, *Otto Bauer*, pp. 28, 112; Bauer, *Österreichische Revolution*, pp. 265-274.

¹⁵ Adler, *Falls der Krieg...*, p. 18.

¹⁶ Adler, *Politische oder soziale Demokratie*, pp. 163-164.

¹⁷ 'Programm der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei Deutschösterreichs', in H. J. Sandkühler and R. De la Vega, ed., *Austromarxismus. Texte zu 'Ideologie und Klassenkampf' von Otto Bauer, Max Adler, Karl Renner, Sigmund Kunfi, Béla Fogarasi und Julius Lengyel* (Vienna, 1970), 378-402, p. 402.

Austrian socialists and Catholics welcomed the new wave of internationalism the League stood for, but not how it was put into practice. The reason for this was their Habsburg experience, with its Catholic-paternalistic narrative. Of particular importance here is the peculiar gap between local *Heimat* and international *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* that seems to be inscribed in the civilisational paradox of Austrian multinationalism. The opposition to the Geneva Protocols made Bauer the one pleading for autarchy this time, as Seipel had done before. The loudest voice on Austrian *Lebensunfähigkeit* was preaching *Selbsthilfe*, preferring homeborn proletarian control for which the social democrats had a proposal of forced loans from Austrian financiers.¹⁸ The Geneva Protocols were the vindication of the German national-social revolution by the bourgeois reaction, the definitive betrayal of the idea of *Anschluß*.¹⁹ Bauer could now claim to represent the German Austrian *Heimat*.

Seipel's policy, in Klemperer's words, was a 'studied noncommitment' that tried to make the most of Austria's position as small power in a volatile Central Europe, securing economic stability, keeping together the *Länder* and seeking international recognition.²⁰ The internationalism of the League of Nations offered a more or less neutral framework with which it was possible to achieve this without committing too much to one great power or the other. The result was a provisional sobering to the nervous grand scheme internationalisms of *Anschluß*, Mitteleuropa and Danube federation that the hangover of the Empire's collapse had produced.

3.2. Navigating the Central European Axis

Against the backdrop of Entente power, Seipel's international politics were a balancing act between the poles of Berlin, Prague and Rome. Self-confident Czechoslovakia, led by Foreign Affairs Minister Edvard Benes, became the most important player in the region in the 1920s. The first to leave the Empire and blessed with the well-developed industrial regions of the Sudetenland, it had quickly reached internal stability. Internationally, Benes tried to counter

¹⁸ Bauer, *Österreichische Revolution*, pp. 266-267.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-271.

²⁰ Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, pp. 295-300.

any form of Habsburg revisionism by especially targeting Hungarian aggression.²¹ The Czechoslovaks therefore established a politico-military alliance with the other successor states Romania and the Yugoslavian Kingdom in 1920, which came to be known as the Little Entente.²² The Little Entente was a result of the 'little empires' these states were, harbouring significant national minorities which gave Hungary a reason to challenge their legitimacy. International cooperation was for them a substitute to the legitimacy the Empire had possessed as well.²³

Austrian relations with Czechoslovakia and the Little Entente were hindered by a strong distrust towards the new states. German Austrians saw Bohemian nationalism as the one culprit for the Empire's collapse.²⁴ Eberle stated that Czechoslovakia and other successor states were *Völkerstaaten*, 'little empires' in their own right.²⁵ The minorities issue was an example for the conservative-monarchist assertion that the nationalism that had caused the Empire to fall continued to endanger stability in Central Europe. Socialists, disgruntled by the missed *Anschluss* plebiscite, saw in the Czechoslovakian refusal to hold referendums in their new state the affirmation of its liberal, Entente-influenced, antisocialist foundations.²⁶

Nevertheless, the creation of an understanding with the Little Entente proved vital for the preservation of the Austrian state. Austria's chancellors from Renner to Seipel all played an opportunistic hand, deliberating with Benes to secure Czechoslovakian loans and support for border questions with Hungary.²⁷ For both sides, the Little Entente was primarily a way to cement the status-quo of the Paris Treaties in order not to progress into chaos.

Seipel liked to downplay the strictness of these borders: 'If the peace in Europe, the economic one as well, will be translated into action fast enough and if the minority issues will be solved satisfactorily fast enough, the question of borders will no longer be as important or

²¹ H. Case, 'The Strange Politics of Federative Ideas in East-Central Europe', *The Journal of Modern History* 85 (2013), 833-866, pp. 847-848.

²² M. Adam, *The Versailles System and Central Europe* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 85, 193.

²³ J. Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe* (Princeton, 2020), pp. 362-364; Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, pp. 449-451.

²⁴ Kralik, *Weltgeschichte*, pp. 382-383; Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, p. 99; Bauer, *Österreichische Revolution*, pp. 20-36.

²⁵ Eberle, *De Profundis*, p.131.

²⁶ Imlay, *Practice of International Socialism*, p. 105; Deutsch, *Aus Österreichs Revolution*, pp. 67-68, 119-124.

²⁷ M. Adam, *The Little Entente and Europe, 1920-1929* (Budapest, 1993), pp. 136-139, 273-274.

interesting.²⁸ He and other Catholics might have submitted to the international status quo, they did not want to abandon their 'higher' political ideals. The *Österreichische Aktion* is once again the best example. It might be a reason why Austria never became a member of the Little Entente: it did not want to relinquish other supranational solutions.²⁹

The same dynamic was true for relations with Italy. The Catholics of the *Österreichische Aktion* had romantic feelings about cooperation with the Pope's homeland and were appalled by the German nationalist 'Los von Rom' rhetoric.³⁰ Their Christian peace mission was to have an important Italian-Roman face. Italian fascism provided a model, especially after Mussolini signed his concordat with the Pope.³¹ For Seipel personally, a customs union with Italy was a serious option, which nonetheless amounted to nothing.³² Austromarxists were vehemently against anything Italian and protested against any action Seipel made in that direction. For them, Italian imperialism was an important subcurrent of Entente-imperialism.³³ This threat that became all the more real when Mussolini seized power. Nonetheless, the years immediately after St. Germain, Italy essentially played the same role Czechoslovakia did for Austria, securing its border, containing Hungary and offering financial support.³⁴

3.3. Austria's Fortification and International Utopianism

The grandiosity of Austria's political internationalist schemes paved the way for a political opportunism that Seipel played well to calm Austrian economy, keeping a pragmatic position in regards to the League of Nations and to regional powers like Czechoslovakia and Italy. In the long run it failed to deliver real stability however. This was a result of Austria's internal polarisation, where international politics were part of a reciprocal process: the Geneva

²⁸ I. Seipel, 'Das wahre Antlitz Österreichs', 11 February 1926, in *Reden*, 290-299, p. 296: 'Wenn rasch genug der Friede in Europa, auch der wirtschaftliche, in die Tat umgesetzt wird und wenn dazu die Minderheitenfragen rasch genug befriedigend gelöst werden, dann ist die Frage der Staatsgrenzen nicht mehr so wichtig und so interessant'.

²⁹ Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, p. 339.

³⁰ J. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna. Christian Socialism in Power, 1897-1918* (Chicago, 1995), pp. 42-43; E. K. Winter, 'Das konservative und liberale Österreich', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 113-126, p. 113.

³¹ Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, pp. 41-42.

³² Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, pp. 194-197.

³³ Bauer, *Österreichische Revolution*, pp. 263-264; Renner, *Österreichs Erneuerung*, iii, p. 37.

³⁴ Swanson, *Remnants*, pp. 161-168.

Protocols and Seipel's subsequent dominance and international stature hardened the domestic positions of Austrian socialism and Red Vienna.

John Boyer has argued that already before the First World War the younger generation of Austromarxists (Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler, Max Adler) and Christian Socials (primarily Seipel) increasingly made the party-political struggle into a battle of *Weltanschauungen*, the fight for intellectual hegemony described by Wasserman. The socialists professed their anticlericalism more loudly and culture thus became a battleground for political debate.³⁵ The former bulwark of Christian Social mayor Karl Lueger, Vienna, turned into the fortress of Austrian Socialism in the 1920s. It took over many of the structures of Lueger's system, most notably the corporatist organisation of municipal politics and the importance placed on school programmes. In the cultural battle against the ruralising Christian Socials, Red Vienna became a 'moral unit' as well.³⁶

Austria's competing internationalisms had been vague to begin with but the morally defined *Weltanschauungskampf* only aggravated this and fuelled utopianist rhetoric in both currents. Utopianism was widely discussed and sometimes actively embraced. Seipel stated once: "The others may call us utopianists and dreamers. I take the scorn to also be such a utopianist and console myself because, in that case, I find myself on the side of the greatest saints and in the following of the divine Redeemer himself."³⁷ Tellingly, both Seipel and Eberle made reference to Thomas More's *Utopia* in their wartime writings.³⁸ Utopianism, though often used derogatorily, was an important trademark of Catholic thought and found its way into internationalist thinking.³⁹

Catholic thinkers referred to Habsburg or 'Germanic' 'Staatsideale' and 'Kulturideale'.⁴⁰ The solution to godless and mechanistic liberalism and Marxism were not 'science', technocracy or soulless politics, but *Kultur* and a return to German and Austrian

³⁵ Boyer, *Christian Socialism in Power*, pp. 208-211

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-51, 453-457.

³⁷ Seipel, 'Katholische Liebe', p. 239: 'Mögen die anderen uns Utopisten und Schwärmer nennen. Ich nehme den Hohn, auch ein solcher Utopist zu sein, an und ich tröste mich, weil ich mich dabei an der Seite der größten Heiligen und in der Gefolgschaft des göttlichen Heilandes selbst befinde'.

³⁸ Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, p. 14; Eberle, *Zertrümmert die Götzen!*, p. 224.

³⁹ Conway, *Catholic Politics*, pp. 17/30; Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, pp. 35, 45, 71

⁴⁰ Eberle, *De Profundis*, pp. 49, 57, 74, 82, 134-135, 181; Eberle, *Zertrümmert die Götzen!*, pp. 19, 65, 69, 179, 234; Kralik, *Weltgeschichte*, p. 385; Seipel, *Nation und Staat*, pp. 2, 17-18, 140, 160, 187.

idealism: 'Tomorrow's solution is called idealism!'.⁴¹ Missong, in an article on Hitler's *Bierkellerputsch* predating *Österreichische Aktion*, claimed that the national-socialist movement was born out of the modern Prussian *Geist* to implement cultural ideas by power-political means.⁴² Missong pleaded for an equivalent to this *Kulturpolitik* in the Catholic states in Central and Southern Europe.⁴³ Othmar Spann's programme of a romantic *völkisch* universalism and corporatism was a compelling kind of *Kulturpolitik* that was hostile to the utilitarian 'Genauigkeit' of the Interbellum's modernisms.⁴⁴

Marxism was not devoid of utopianism either. Marxism in its finest teleological form is shamelessly idealistic and its rhetoric was readily used by the dogmatic Austromarxists, going lengths to stress the 'natural laws' behind it. Kautsky himself traced back communism to Ancient Greece, Christianity and, again, Thomas More.⁴⁵ Bauer tried to nuance the image of an 'atheistic' materialism a bit by showing historic parallels.⁴⁶ He sympathised with the utopianism of Bolshevik communism but, as we have seen, saw it as something to be realised at a later stage.⁴⁷ Jakub Benes moreover describes the Christian-inspired Austrian tradition of socialist activism 'including teleological fictional narratives and sermon-like orations, which gave it a utopian thrust'.⁴⁸ The Fortress Vienna heritage of Lueger thus extended beyond structures of governance to a devotional form of mass politics in the city.

Marco Duranti remarked in his history of the conservative human rights movement that,

it would be a mistake to think of romantics as intrinsically any more utopian than technocrats. The difference between the two was not one of practicality but rather one of scale, romanticism embedding itself in the particular and technocracy in the universal (...) Romantic and technocratic internationalism both employed a vocabulary that appeared apolitical.⁴⁹

⁴¹ Eberle, *Zertrümmert die Götzen*, p. 65: 'Die Lösung für morgen heißt Idealismus!'.
⁴² A. Missong, 'Was sollen wir zum deutschen Fasismus sagen?', in A. Missong Jr. ed., *Christentum und Politik in Österreich. Ausgewählte Schriften 1924-1950* (Vienna, 2006), 69-75, p. 73.
⁴³ Missong, 'Zum deutschen Fasismus', pp. 74-75.
⁴⁴ Spann, *Wahrer Staat*, p. 85-92.
⁴⁵ Adler, *Erneuerung der Internationale*, p. 5.
⁴⁶ Bauer, *Sozialdemokratie, Religion und Kirche*, pp. 35-46.
⁴⁷ Bauer, *Bolschewismus oder Sozialdemokratie?*, p. 37.
⁴⁸ Benes, *Workers and Nationalism*, pp. 239-241.
⁴⁹ Duranti, *Conservative Human Rights Revolution*, pp. 49-50.

Though the last statement appears to be true enough, the difference of scale does not apply to the Austrian case. The discussions on autarchy, *Selbsthilfe*, *Heimat* and Fortress Vienna show that in rump state Austria the local was tied to an attempt to save as much from the multinational and universalistic Habsburg mentality as possible. Local politics in Vienna and the other *Länder* had become the sphere of action but the intellectual sphere was still imperial.

3.4. The Reality Gap of Austrian International Politics

The rift between Catholic conservatives and Austromarxists and the cultural-ideological terms in which the debate was framed made it almost impossible to agree upon a common internationalist rhetoric. The parallel societies of Vienna and the countryside could never find common ground in international politics precisely because internationalism served as a moral legitimization of internal political programmes and authority. The socialists were therefore more willing to try and fix the Second International than to cooperate with Seipel's international politics.

The Linz Programme accounted for this. The cardinal tenets of Austromarxism – the 'scientific basis', the battle for intellectual hegemony, the education of *Kulturmenschen*, an economy organised in *Genossenschaften* – were still there.⁵⁰ The final section on internationalism was typically labelled 'Die Internationale': it stressed national *Selbstbestimmung*, the socialist quest for peace, the 'education of the youth towards the Peoples' Peace' and the revision of the Paris Peace Treaties.⁵¹ The need for *Anschluß* to Weimar Germany is reiterated: the continued use of the adjective *deutschösterreichisch* really says it all. Adler's internationalism and Bauer's Central European Revolution failed to develop out of their analytical vagueness as rhetorical constructs. Their intellectualist dogmatic Marxism produced nothing but unrealistic internationalism. Combined with their unbridled antagonism to anything Seipel achieved, they were left with no other choice than to reach back to the principles that had driven Bauer in his short period in the foreign office.

⁵⁰ 'Linzer Programm'.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 402: 'Erziehung der Jugend zum Völkerfrieden'.

In return, Seipel and the Christian socials, also bound by the German nationalists in their coalition, had to be opportunistic as any real engagement with international actors would certainly be met with forceful protests like the Geneva Protocols had been. But it extended beyond that. Since conservatives were not remotely enthusiastic about the possibilities of 'liberal internationalism', they would only give scant support if it could serve Austria's short-term interests. Seipel *cum suis* endorsed all kind of international organisations but never really engaged. The perfect example here is Coudenhove's *Paneuropa*, a movement that in fact built on many of the here discussed Habsburg and Catholic concepts like the fear of Russia, Catholic social ideals, the focus on an 'organic' ordering of society and the civilisational paradox of cultural paternalism and national diversity.⁵² Seipel readily provided the Bohemian count with an office in the Hofburg, opened the first congress and was made a honorary member (Karl Renner was also a member) but only paid lip service to *Paneuropa* to keep the door open to his own vague ideas on a Central European cooperation.⁵³

The Austrian reaction to the 1930 Briand Memorandum, perhaps the one interwar initiative that came closest to the realisation of Coudenhove's ideas, is even more telling.⁵⁴ Christian Social Johann Schober, re-risen to *Kanzlerschaft* after Seipel, uttered to gathered diplomats that 'a kind of "Mitteleuropa" should be founded on the basis of Briand's proposal first, to which in the course of time other states will join and that in this way "Paneuropa" will emerge via Mitteleuropa'.⁵⁵ Greater Austria had not left the minds of the rump state's leading politicians in 1930. Far from it. It had created an abyss of polarisation between the state's political currents that had fortified themselves in their local jurisdictions. Rhetorical vagueness on international politics was a strategy used by Catholic conservatives and Austromarxists alike and created a reality gap between local politics and utopian international imaginings.

⁵² R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Paneuropa* (Vienna, 1926), pp. 32, 51-56, 73, 97, 133-136; D. Gusejnova, *European Elites and Ideas of Empire, 1917-1957* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 80-82; K. Sorrels, *Cosmopolitan Outsiders. Imperial Inclusion, National Exclusion, and the Pan-European Idea, 1900-1930* (New York, 2016), pp. 11, 45-47, 140-152.

⁵³ Gusejnova, *European Elites*, pp. 78-79; Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 296; A. Ziegerhofer-Prettenthaler, *Botschafter Europas: Richard Nikolaus Coudenhove-Kalergi und die Paneuropa-Bewegung in den zwanziger und dreißiger Jahren* (Vienna, 2004), pp. 582-583; See also the Dutch translation of *Paneuropa*, where Seipel's role is explicitly mentioned: R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Paneuropa* (Amsterdam, 1928), pp. VII/138-139.

⁵⁴ W. Roobol, 'Aristide Briand's Plan: The Seed of European Unification', in *Ideas of Europe since 1914*, 32-46.

⁵⁵ Cited in: A. Ziegerhofer-Prettenthaler, 'Österreich und das Memorandum von Aristide Briand über die Einrichtung einer Europäischen Union von 1930', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 12 (1999), 377-397, pp. 384, 397: 'aufgrund der Briandschen Anregung vorerst wohl eine Art "Mitteleuropa" geschaffen werde, an das sich im Verlaufe der Zeit andere Staaten anschließen würden, und daß somit erst über ein Mitteleuropa ein "Paneuropa" entstehen würde'.

The result was an international opportunism in which Austria's leaders shunned any real commitment to international institutions. When it turned out that every international option had failed, the country reached back to an old option of international cooperation that had been discarded by the international community, but never left the mental area of international possibilities in the country itself. That option, of course, was *Anschluß*.

Conclusion – The Surplus of Ideas

Musil's protagonist at one point concludes that, 'reality comes primarily of nothing being done for ideas.'¹ He speaks for his country. Interwar Austria was lost in a surplus of ideas that originated in an imperial frame of mind to which the rump state could no longer live up. The void the Empire had left was more than a political disillusionment, it was a crisis of metaphors.

Interwar Austrian thinkers were in a unique position. The generation of Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler, Ignaz Seipel and, later, *Die österreichische Aktion* was faced with the challenge to make the conceptual change from multinationalism to internationalism. As intellectuals, they tried to infuse Habsburg ideals with new meanings. As politicians, they were instrumentalising them in a polarised political reality that was increasingly framed in the language of ideological dispute and they radicalised with it.

The history of political discourse in 1920s Austria is fraught with failed attempts at reconciling seemingly incompatible rhetorical extremes. The civilisational paradox of empire had tried to bridge the gap between cultural superiority and national diversity. Austromarxism sought to instrumentalise popular national enthusiasm whilst promoting international proletarian identity. Catholics wished to hold on to the utopia of the holy *Universalmonarchie* alongside the localness of *Heimat* nationalism. The problem of the legacy of Habsburg multinationalism was that the universal claims the Empire had made were hard to reconcile with a narrow Austrian identity, making the nationalisation of imperial metaphors ultimately a utopian *tour de force*. The language lag of Habsburg imperialism produced a style of politics in which vagueness about international issues was a political strategy.

This had real consequences for Austria's leading political currents and their respective internationalisms. The Austromarxists, beleaguered behind the big ideological walls of Fortress Vienna, appropriated German nationalism and Lueger's municipal corporatism as well as the Habsburg civilisational mission into a programme of education of

¹ Musil, *Man without Qualities*, p. 395.

Kulturmenschen, social welfare in a council-led economy and localised democracy.² The matching international programme was a combination of Friedrich Alder's pacifism, anti-Entente-imperialism and a reluctant recognition of the League of Nations with a strong rhetorical programme of national self-determination. Austrian socialism lacked the expansionist vigour of Soviet Bolshevism but also the more cooperative spirit of Labour and the SPD and was, in fact, rather conservative. The indecisive Austromarxist internationalism after the Empire was neither as original as recent enthusiasts of Renner's and Bauer's nationalities programmes might have liked it to be, nor did it succeed in rising above utopian Marxist dreams.³ Austromarxism's 'scientific basis' did not produce new well-devised international programmes but instead provided the party with reified and unrealistic foreign policy concepts to legitimise their actions in the polarised domestic arena.

The conservatives also struggled to face the challenges of internationalism in interwar Europe with a coherent programme. Inside the broad conservative field, there were subcurrents of monarchism, antisemitism and 'antiglobalism' (if we are to use Tara Zahra's slightly anachronistic term) that could plead for pan-German unification, a customs union with Italy, or a revived South-German monarchy combined with Bavaria.⁴ The popularity of Seipel as the one Austrian politician with an international stature in Europe ensured that these ideas never represented the Christian Social mainstream. Nonetheless they are proof of the prevalence of a range of diverse and utopian foreign policy options that Seipel, in the end an authoritarian and radical Catholic monarchist at heart, also did not want to quench.

The debate on internationalism in Austria became highly ideologised and cultural legitimations produced the rhetorical tools for political polarisation. The *Österreichische Aktion* is a telling example, seemingly stressing the 'unpolitical' of their cultural programme in reaction to the general disillusionment with the First Republic. This was however a political act in its own right, *Kulturpolitik* as a politicisation of the supposedly unpolitical. In the volatile post-St. Germain system in Central Europe the 'unpolitical' sparked rampant cultural international idealism on both socialist and conservative sides.

² 'Linzer Programm', p. 383-296

³ See: O. Leiß, 'Superstaat und Nation. Was der austromarxistische Theoretiker Otto Bauer der EU raten würde', in M. Fröhlich et al. ed., *Universitas: Ideen, Individuen und Institutionen in Politik und Wissenschaft* (Baden Baden, 2019), pp. 265-283;

⁴ Swanson, *Remnants*, pp. 172-179.

Anschluß as a Rhetorical Tool

Anschluß never left the table as an option for Austria in the interwar period. A short look at the social democrats' Linz Programme suffices to demonstrate this. Especially for Otto Bauer personally, *Anschluß* remained relevant.⁵ Politicians from other camps, most visibly the German nationalists, held the same opinion.

This does not mean that *Anschluß* for Austria was unavoidable or that we should read this period through that teleological lens. This thesis has tried to demonstrate that multiple foreign policy options were always present in the minds of Austria's reluctant nationalists, many of them utopian and idealistic to the modern historian's eyes, but often very real and heart-felt for contemporary thinkers.

The reaction of some Austrians to the tragicomic attempts of the erstwhile emperor Karl to regain his monarchical position in Hungary was part of this mentality. Bauer called the Easter Coup one of the great crises of the time period.⁶ Richard Kralik and Zeßner-Spitzenberg both spent time working on biographies of Karl. After the discussion of Karl's coup attempts, Kralik ends his booklet by saying that for the emperor's case 'once glorious resurrection and justification has to come'.⁷ Coming from someone who was regarded as 'the tireless bard of Austrian history' by Austrian conservatives and many Catholics in other European states, it shows the ongoing popularity of the Habsburgs and the metahistorical narratives they represented.⁸ *Friedenskaiser* Karl could still be a *Wegweiser* for Austria's future, his ideas not as different from those of Renner or Lueger as antimonarchists wanted people to believe.⁹

Nor was *Anschluß* as different from restoration of the Habsburg monarchy as one might think. It was even more unpopular among Entente powers. It was not met with particular enthusiasm by the leaders of the Weimar Republic, which might also have been a

⁵ Czerwinska-Schupp, *Otto Bauer*, p. 23.

⁶ Bauer, *Österreichische Aktion*, p. 244.

⁷ R. Kralik, *Kaiser Karl von Österreich. Eine historische Skizze* (Vienna, 1926), p. 31: 'muß noch einmal eine glorreiche Auferstehung und Rechtfertigung kommen'.

⁸ Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, p. 22; A. Knoll, 'Kaistertum und Proletariat oder Die soziale Monarchie', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 186-215, p. 189: 'der unermüdliche Sänger österreichischer Geschichte'.

⁹ Zeßner-Spitzenberg, 'Kaiser Karl', in *Österreichische Aktion*, 127-142, p. 127; Zeßner-Spitzenberg, *Kaiser Karl*, p. 197.

result of the cooling of relations between German and Austrian socialists. Moreover, it was an old concept, predating the split of the Empire after the 1867 *Ausgleich*.

Most importantly, *Anschluss* was a contested concept within the polarised political debate. International projects were tools of political rhetoric in interwar Austria. The most pragmatic politicians, such as Seipel, saw that Austria's space for manoeuvre was extremely limited and settled for the only international solution at hand without having any particular ideological enthusiasm about it.

For a long time *Anschluss* was thought rather than action and only one unreachable internationalist project among many others. Only when a true megalomaniac came to power in Germany did utopian international schemes suddenly become viable policy options. Nazi rhetoric shared many of the historical-ideological aspects of Habsburg thinking, including economic *Großraum* theory, cultural superiority, antisemitism and a colonial and pseudo-religious language.¹⁰ The Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime therefore failed to distinguish itself conceptually from the fascist threat, building upon Seipel's and Bauer's international vagueness.¹¹ Imprecision and utopianism were at the heart of Nazi ideology. The fact that Austrian politician-intellectuals had used both *Anschluss* and pseudocolonial *Mitteleuropa* projects as tools of political rhetoric made the young Republic vulnerable to Hitler's challenge. They had written themselves into the rhetoric of national-socialism. The political reality followed suit.

¹⁰ Romsics, *Memory of the Habsburg Empire*, pp. 238-245, 272-276; M. Mazower, *Hitler's Empire. How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York, 2008), pp. 15-19.

¹¹ Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, p. 192.

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