

CHRISTINA DIETL, KHRYSTYNA FOSTYAK,
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WAR IN UKRAINE

THEOLOGICAL, ETHICAL AND HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

Aschendorff Verlag

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Central and Eastern Europe in the Age of the First World War: Revolution, Counter-Revolution, Containment

Dmytro Bondarenko

Before the First World War, Central and Eastern Europe was a defined historical region dominated by the conservative empires: Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary. However, Pan-Slavism, as a revolutionary ideology that emerged in the mid-19th century, became an instrument of Russian and Serbian foreign policy aimed at the disintegration of Austria-Hungary. Hence, the Austro-Hungarian military actions against Serbia as a response to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand should be considered an external counter-revolution. Meanwhile, Russia, supporting Serbia, became an advocate of regicide. As such, it violated the principle of monarchical solidarity and provoked the First World War, whereas the German concept of Mitteleuropa *emerged as a containment to Pan-Slavism, which, after the end of the First World War, was replaced by a Cordon Sanitaire against Bolshevism as a new challenge to the world order and the new revolutionary ideology.*

1. Introduction

The current aggression by Russia against Ukraine has geopolitical, historic and ideological origins in the Russian Pan-Slavic messianic idea. After the collapse of the USSR, Bolshevism as a missionary idea was replaced by Pan-Slavism, which had been the Russian imperialist idea before the Bolshevik revolution.[1]

1 Cf. George Urban, A Tale of Two Empires. A Conversation with Otto von Habsburg, in: idem (ed.), End of Empire: The Demise of the Soviet Union, Washington 1993, 133–154, 135; George Urban, What is "Soviet" – What is "Russian"? A Conversation with Adam B. Ulam, in: idem (ed.), End of Empire, 155–177, 160, 165; Gregory Gleason, The "Na-

Hence, Central and Eastern Europe has once again become the target of Russian expansionist interests.

Central and Eastern Europe, a specific historical region[2] also known as the "*land in between*" Germany and Russia,[3] or, more precisely, the territory of the European part of the former Russian Empire and the non-German part of Austria-Hungary,[4] was the arena of rivalry for the Great Powers. During the 20th century, it was characterized by the outbreak of two world wars, the rise of Bolshevism, the *Cordon Sanitaire*, the Iron Curtain, and more.

Before World War I, Central and Eastern Europe was dominated by conservative empires under dynasties such as the Romanovs (the Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp's branch), the Hohenzollerns, and the House of Habsburg (Habsburg-Lorraine), and the Vienna system of international relations, which gave rise to the Holy Alliance (*Heilige Allianz*), and the League of the Three Emperors (*Drei-Kaiser-Abkommen* und *Dreikaiserbund*). This system was based on and was able to retain itself due to the solidarity of the dynasties, and was aimed at the preservation of monarchical power. The empires provided stability and order within the region, and as Francis Ludwig Carsten remarked, "their collapse caused instability and disorder, the outbreak of revolutionary movements such as Europe had not seen since the French Revolution, movements that strongly influenced each other and everywhere threatened the old social order."[5]

However, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, imperial rivalries, particularly between Russia and Austria-Hungary, accompanied by the irredentism of divided nations such as Poles, Serbs, Ukrainians, and Romanians (which was occasionally even encouraged by the rivals), eroded the principles of the

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tional Factor" and the Logic of Sovietology, in: Alexander Motyl (ed.), The Post-Soviet Nations: Perspectives on the Demise of the USSR, New York 1992, 1–29, 18.

2 Cf. Sir Lewis Namier Bernstein, Conflicts: Studies in Contemporary History, London 1942, 1–77; Piotr Wandycz, The Price of Freedom: A History of East-Central Europe from Middle Ages to the Present, London 1992, 1–2; Jeno Szűcs, Three Historical Regions of Europe, in: John Kean (ed.), Civil Society and the State, New York – London 1988, 291–332; Oskar Halecki, Borderlands of Western Civilization. A History of East-Central Europe, San Antonio 2000, 9–13; István Bibó, The Art of Peacemaking: Political Essays, New Haven – London 2015, 25–224.

3 Alexandru Ghișa, Romania and Hungary at the Beginning of 20th Century: Establishing Diplomatic Relations (1918–1921), Cluj-Napoca 2003, 3.

4 Cf. Ludwig von Mises, Nation, State, and Economy: Contributions to the Politics and History of Our Time, New York 1919 [1983], 50, 69, 112, 119; Bernstein, Conflicts, 2–3, 9.

5 Francis Ludwig Carsten, Revolution in Central Europe, 1918–1919, Berkeley 1972, 11.

Vienna system and resulted in the First World War. Here Francis Ludwig Carsten did not come to an accurate conclusion when he assumed that the conflicts among the empires and "their struggles for influence and supremacy, had brought about their destruction."[6] The struggle for influence and supremacy had been persistent before, but this time it was instigated by revolutionary ideologies such as nationalism and Pan-Slavism while socialism emerged in the background. Pan-Slavism undermined the monarchical solidarity of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. This instigated the war and finally resulted in the establishment of Yugoslavia, a new multinational state instead of Austria-Hungary. Consequently, as a result of the First World War, the grand dynasties such as the Romanovs, the Hohenzollerns, and the House of Habsburg fell. The social and national revolutions in the former empires not only led to the triumph of the republican form of government of the new nation states and the new multinational states such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, but also to the rise and spread of Bolshevism as a new challenge to the nation state, the parliamentary system, and the international security and world order as a whole.

Thus, before and during World War I, Central Europe experienced the clash between Pan-Slavism and *Mitteleuropa,* but after the war the anti-Bolshevik struggle and the *Cordon Sanitaire,* which included Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Romania. Thus, the Vienna system, created by Count Klemens Lothar von Metternich-Winneburg zu Beilstein and then revised and amended by Prince Otto von Bismarck, Count von Bismarck-Schönhausen and Duke of Lauenburg, was simultaneously replaced by two contradictory systems: the Versailles system by Woodrow Wilson and the Soviet system by Vladimir Lenin.

2. The Revolutionary Origins of the Great War in Central and Eastern Europe

The appearance of Pan-Slavism as a revolutionary ideology was related to the Springtime of Nations, or the European Revolution of 1848. While the Austrian Empire was weakened by the revolution, the Czech historian František Palacký convened the First Slav Congress in Prague in June 1848. The Congress demanded that the Austrian Empire be transformed into a federation of nations.

Nevertheless, by the 1860s, Pan-Slavism had become particularly popular in Russia as an instrument to establish Russian leadership over Austro-Hun-

6 Ibidem.

garian and Ottoman Slavs.[7] In Geoffrey Hosking's view, the appeal of Pan-Slavism as a messianic idea in Russia was geopolitical and caused by the defeat in the Crimean War; "it seemed desirable for Russia to seek compensation within Europe."[8] Thus Russian Pan-Slavism played a role in the revolutionary ideology aimed against the Habsburg dynasty and the territorial integrity of Austria-Hungary[9] to unite all Slavs into the Russian-dominated Slavic confederation.[10]

After the Berlin Congress of 1878, Pan-Slavism began to influence Russian foreign policy. As a result, the League of the Three Emperors collapsed.[11] Even as early as 1876, the Russian Emperor Alexander II had asked the German Chancellor Prince Otto von Bismarck if Russia could count on German neutrality in the event of a possible conflict between Austria and Russia. Otto von Bismarck made it clear that Germany was not indifferent to Austrian policy. As a result of the Russian aggressive position towards Austria-Hungary, on 7 October 1879, the German–Austro-Hungarian Dual Alliance (*Zweibund* in German, or *Kettős Szövetség* in Hungarian) was concluded. Moreover, Russian Pan-Slavism and Russian territorial claims on Dobruja made Romania join the Triple Alliance in 1883.[12] After the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878, Pan-Slavism in Russian foreign policy and public opinion reached its peak in 1912–1913, during the so-called "Slav banquets" (the anniversary of the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman yoke) and the First Balkan War.

On the eve of the First World War, Pan-Slavism became dominant in Russian foreign policy,[13] especially under the leadership of Sergei Sazonov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who believed that the dissolution of Austria-Hungary was the main task of Russia's foreign policy in Central Europe, as well as the establishment of the Polish, Czecho-Slovak, Hungarian, and Serbo-Croa-

7 Cf. Christopher Clark, The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914, London 2012, 78.

8 Geoffrey Hosking, Russia and the Russians: from the Earliest Times to 2001, London 2002, 313.

9 Cf. Robert Gildea, Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800–1914, Oxford – New York 2003, 240.

10 Cf. Pan-Slavism. URL: https://www.britannica.com/event/Pan-Slavism [accessed: 29 January 2024].

11 Cf. Sergei Goriainov, The End of the Alliance of the Emperors, in: The American Historical Review 23 (1918) 324–349.

12 Cf. Ghișa, Romania and Hungary, 7–8.

13 Cf. Dominic Lieven, Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia, London 2015, 263.

tian kingdoms as new allies of Russia.[14] The Russian Ambassador in Paris and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexander Izvolsky believed that the future powerful South Slav kingdom would be the counterbalance to Italy, Hungary, and Romania in the region.[15]

In January 1915, Sergei Sazonov was so enthusiastic about the disintegration of Austria-Hungary that he even rejected the possibility of a separate peace with it on the condition that Galicia be ceded to Russia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia. He stated, "Austria-Hungary must be dismembered!"[16] Moreover, in July 1915, the Russian Foreign Policy Ministry told the Serbian ambassador that Russia could not promise Serbia any territorial gains in the event of the conclusion of a separate peace between Serbia and Hungary.[17] Finally, in 1916, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs created a map of the planned disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the emergence of the newly independent states. On this map, the so-called Slavic corridor connecting Czechoslovakia and Serbia-Croatia and separating Hungary from Austria was proposed.[18]

In addition, there is evidence that some among Russia's ruling circles were involved in the plot against Austria-Hungary, which resulted in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Vladimir Dedijer and Edith Durham were positive that the Russian general staff and its two representatives in Belgrade, Colonel Viktor Artamonov and his assistant Alexander Verkhovsky, as well as the Russian Minister in Belgrade, Nikolai Hartvig, and even the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, were involved in this scheme.[19] Nikolai Hartvig, "a real ruler of Serbia," met the expectations of Serbian nationalists and en-

14 Cf. Сергей Сазонов, Воспоминания [Sergei Sazonov, Memoirs], Moscow 1991, 338–339.

15 Cf. Архив внешней политики Российской Империи [The Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire] (АВПРИ), f. Секретный архив [The Secret Archive], op. 467, d. 580/625, l. 11.

16 Maurice Paleologue, An Ambassador's Memoirs, vol. I, London 1925, 235–236.

17 Cf. АВПРИ, f. Секретный архив, op. 467, d. 577/608, l. 31.

18 Cf. АВПРИ, f. Особый Политический Отдел [Special Political Department], op. 474, d. 439, l. 47 (map).

19 Cf. Vladimir Dedijer, The Road to Sarajevo, New York 1966, 428, 433; Edith Durham, The Sarajevo Crime, London 1925, 197–199, 201; Николай Полетика, Сараевское убийство: исследование по истории австро-сербских отношений и Балканской политики России в период 1903–1914 гг. [Nikolai Poletika, The Sarajevo Murder: A Study on the History of Austrian-Serbian Relations and the Balkan Policy of Russia in the Period of 1903–1914], Leningrad 1930, 404.

couraged Serbia to stand up against Austria-Hungary.[20] The plan to eliminate Archduke Franz Ferdinand was discussed at a meeting of the "*Black Hand*" held in the Serbian General Staff building in the presence of Colonel Victor Artamonov, the Russian military attaché in Belgrade. It was Colonel Victor Artamonov, after consultations in St. Petersburg with Grand Duke Nicholas, who authorised the assassination of the Archduke, assuring Lieutenant-Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijevic (Apis) that if Austria attacked Serbia, "Russia would not leave" Serbia "without protection."[21] The plan to eliminate Archduke Franz Ferdinand was also known to the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, as two weeks before the terrorist attack he asked his Romanian counterpart Ionel Brătianu how Romania would behave if Archduke Franz Ferdinand "disappeared" and the war between Russia and Austria-Hungary started.[22] On the eve of the terrorist act in Sarajevo, the Russian Minister in Belgrade, Nikolai Hartvig, wrote to the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs: "official circles in St. Petersburg expected the news of the Archduke's assassination."[23] Lastly, during the meeting at Tsarskoe Selo on 22 July 1914 (before the Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum to Serbia), the Grand Duchesses Anastasia and Milica told the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Maurice Paleologue, that their father, the King of Montenegro, had informed them via telegraph that the war would soon start, "nothing would be left of Austria," and "Germany will be annihilated."[24]

After the Belgrade palace coup of 1903, Serbia became the centre of Pan-Slavism and revolutionary terrorism in the Balkans, threatening Austria-Hungary.[25] The Serbian Pan-Slavic project aimed to undermine the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy through revolutionary terror and establish Yugoslavia. The Serbian Pan-Slavists assumed that the predictable collapse of Austria-Hungary would occur as a result of a possible military conflict with Serbia following the assassination of the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. The broadest masses of people from all Slavic regions of the Habsburg Monarchy would rise up to fight against Austria-Hungary. Thus, according to the idealists of the Yugoslav

20 Dedijer, The Road to Sarajevo, 431; cf. Eugene de Schelking, The Game of Diplomacy, London 1918, 192; Clark, The Sleepwalkers, 112.

21 George Thomson, The Twelve Days, 24 July to 5 August 1914, New York 1964, 47–48; Dedijer, The Road to Sarajevo, 398, 432–433; Clark, The Sleepwalkers, 410–412.

22 Cf. Полетика, Сараевское убийство, 406.

23 Dedijer, The Road to Sarajevo, 432.

24 Paleologue, An Ambassador's Memoirs, vol. I, 22–23; Wilhelm II, The Kaisers Memoirs, New York – London 1922, 252; Gareth Russell, The Emperors: How Europe's Rulers were Destroyed by the First World War, Stroud 2014, 75.

25 Cf. Clark, The Sleepwalkers, 38–56, 58–59, 82–83.

movement, the expected war should end in total defeat and the dismemberment of the monarchy as a consequence. As a result of its dissolution, according to their predictions, Galicia and the part of Hungary up to the Danube as well as part of Budapest (Pest) would be ceded to Russia, and the other part of Budapest (Buda) to Serbia, together with the entire southern and western part of Hungary and the South Slavic lands of Austria-Hungary; Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia would be united with the Slovak lands of northern Hungary, forming a new independent state; Poland would be united "*under the sceptre of the Russian Tsar*;" and Romania would be incorporated with Transylvania and southern Bukovina.[26] So, the Serbian Pan-Slavists expected a revolution in Austria-Hungary, in other words the downfall of the monarchy and dissolution of the empire. As Count Ottokar Czernin remarked, "the Archduke Heir Apparent was the victim of Greater Serbia's aspirations; but these aspirations, which led to the breaking away of our Southern Slav provinces, would not have been suppressed, but, on the contrary, would have largely increased and asserted themselves, and would have strengthened the centrifugal tendencies of other peoples within the Monarchy."[27]

Hence, the Austro-Hungarian note to Serbia (23 July 1914) should be considered a self-defence measure, in accordance with Article 1 of the III Hague Convention of 1907, which provided the opportunity for declaring war after a motivated ultimatum. Moreover, the Austro-Hungarian armed intervention in Serbia after the official rejection of the Ultimatum by the Serbian government was nothing more than a preventive external counter-revolution as it was not only meant to punish the terrorists but also to replace such a revolutionary dynasty as Karadjordjević[28] with another European dynasty like that established in Romania and Bulgaria.[29]

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26 АВПРИ, f. Особый Политический Отдел, op. 474, d. 278, l. 2 (my own translation); cf. Петр Искендеров, Балканские корни Первой мировой войны [Piotr Iskenderov, The Balkan Roots of the First World War], in: Елена Серапионова (ред.), Первая мировая война и судьбы народов Центральной и Юго-Восточной Европы: Очерки истории [Elena Serapionova (ed), The First World War and the Destiny of the Peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe: the Essays of History], Moscow 2015, 280–297, 287–288.

27 Count Ottokar Czernin, In the World War, London – New York – Toronto – Melbourne 1919, 32–33.

28 Cf. Clark, The Sleepwalkers, 5. 13–20. The Karadjordjević dynasty was formally invited to rule Serbia after the so-called May Palace Revolution of 1903, committed by radicals, for whom monarchy was nominally indispensable to avoid international intervention.

29 Cf. Сазонов, Воспоминания, 216; Alexander Watson, Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I, New York 2014, 42.

As Gordon Martel has pointed out, Russian Pan-Slavism was a cause of the war.[30] Instead of upholding the principle of monarchical solidarity, Russia, as Friedrich von Pourtalès remarked, took a position of "the advocate of regicides."[31] The German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg observed in his memoirs that the Russian-backed Serbia encouraged secessionist movements among the Slavs of Austro-Hungary, and the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was an attack not only on Austria-Hungary but also on the European order as a whole, as the dissolution of Austria-Hungary "was a necessary part of the realisation of the Russian plans … But this purely European dispute was only given force enough to cause the World revolution."[32] Moreover, on 17 September 1914, Grand Duke Nicholas, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Imperial Army, issued a proclamation to the nations of Austria-Hungary, encouraging them to overthrow "the Habsburg yoke" and realise their national aspirations[33]. In other words he affirmed the realisation of the Pan-Slavist programme, which incited the revolution in Austria-Hungary.

Thus, Pan-Slavism, as a revolutionary utopian idea aimed to undermine the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and instigated the First World War which resulted in the collapse of both the Russian Empire and Austria-Hungary due to the social revolutions sparked by this idea. Revolutionary socialism in conjunction with proletarian internationalism was another utopian and messianic idea which gained traction at the end of the First World War. Furthermore, the leaders of the Bolsheviks, Lenin and Trotsky, began to spread the idea of the World Revolution by means of the so-called "export revolution", with the final aim at the creation of the "World Soviet Republic" or the "World Communist United States of the Soviet Republic"[34] in Central Europe, by first attacking Romania, Finland, and Ukraine in 1918, and then Poland and the Baltic States in 1919.

30 Gordon Martel, Origins of the First World War, London – New York 2017, 95.

31 Friedrich von Pourtalès, Telegram to Gottlieb von Jagow (Saint Petersburg on 25 July 1914), in: Imanuel Geiss (ed.), July 1914: the Outbreak of the First World War. Selected Documents, New York 1968, 185–186, 186.

32 Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, Reflections on the World War, London 1920, 163–164.

33 АВПРИ, f. Особый Политический Отдел, op. 474, d. 211 (my own translation); cf. Paleologue, An Ambassador's Memoirs, vol. 1, 132; Watson, Ring of Steel, 182.

34 Pavel Miliukov, Bolshevism: An International Danger, Its Doctrine and Its Practice through War and Revolution, London 1920, 8; cf. Павел Милюков, Национальный вопрос (Происхождение национальности и национальные вопросы в России [Pavel Milyukov, National Question (The Origins of Nation and National Questions in Russia)], Prague 1925, 185–187.

3. Mitteleuropa and the Cordon Sanitaire: Containment vs. Counter-Revolution

The term *Mitteleuropa* appeared on the wave of the Springtime of Nations, also known as the Revolution of 1848, in German kingdoms and the Austrian Empire. Karl Ludwig von Bruck and Lorenz von Stein used the term to refer to the German-Slav region "in-between", the area between West Europe and Russia. The first political advocate of Mitteleuropa was the Austrian minister-president Prince Felix Ludwig of Schwarzenberg. His desire was to restore the prestige and preeminence of the Austrian Empire among the Great Powers, which was on the verge of dissolution over the course of the Revolution of 1848–1849. If the Monarchy was allowed to disintegrate, its pieces would be picked up by other powers, such as Russia, Italy, and Prussia.[35] Contrary to Pan-Slavism, an aggressive expansionist idea directed to dissolve and conquer the territory of Austria-Hungary, the concept of Mitteleuropa was a defence of the status quo in Central Europe, a conservative response to revolutionary nationalism and irredentism, aimed at uniting the Germans and Slavs of Central Europe under German control and hegemony to halt the *Russian Menace*. At the same time, Prince Felix of Schwarzenberg tried to follow the traditional conservative course of Prince Klemens von Metternich, the Vienna system, as Edward Crankshaw pointed out, by "fixing Austria's position and influence by an intricate network of treaties." However, times had changed; on the one hand, he "was working under pressure in a revolutionary epoch,"[36] and, on the other hand, the Russian threat was increasing. Under these circumstances, Austria-Hungary chose rapprochement with Germany.[37] The first step for project Mitteleuropa was the conclusion of the Dual Alliance (also known as *Zweibund* or *Kettős Szövetség*) in 1879. The alliance was designed to defend Austria-Hungary from any potential Russian aggression arising through a rival in the Balkans. In Henry Kissinger's view, Otto von Bismarck initiated this alliance with Austria-Hungary "to build a barrier to further Russian expansion."[38] At the same time, the alliance was designed as a defensive measure, and its members agreed not to attack or threaten Russia: "The two Governments, for

35 Cf. Edward Crankshaw, The Fall of the House of Habsburg, New York 1963, 56.

36 Ibidem, 98.

37 Cf. Roland Usher, Austro-German Relations Since 1866, in: The American Historical Review 23/3 (1918) 577–595, 584.

38 Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy, New York – London – Toronto – Sydney – Tokyo – Singapore 1994, 158.

their part, affirm it to be their common intention that neither of them shall take occasion … to attack or menace the Russian Empire."[39]
In the following year, the Dual Alliance was transformed into the Triple Alliance by the addition of Italy. Just like the Dual Alliance, the Triple Alliance was meant to be purely defensive in nature, triggered by the Russian threat.[40] Based on this, it can be assumed that the Triple Alliance was intended to fulfil the following three principal tasks:

- keep international relations in Central Europe stable
- protect Central Europe (especially Austria-Hungary) from the Russian threat
- make Germany the dominant power in Central Europe

The Triple Alliance thus marked the beginning of the realisation of the German *Mitteleuropa* project. At the same time, *Mitteleuropa*, or the Triple Alliance, might have been effective in the case of a war against Russia, or Russia and Serbia together.

The next step was the growth of the Alliance. For instance, Romania joined the Alliance in 1883 due to the fear of Pan-Slavism and the potential threat from Russia, despite its conflicting interests with Austria-Hungary.[41] Thus, by the beginning of the 20th century, *Mitteleuropa* had already created a geopolitical coalition, consisting of the core (Germany and Austria-Hungary) and the periphery (Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia before the May coup of 1903). Joseph Partsch described *Mitteleuropa* as a multicultural area, with German as its *lingua franca*.[42]

Before the First World War, Austria-Hungary's foreign policy was aimed at building a rapprochement with Russia, and the revival of the League of the Three Emperors. This plan was conducted by Baron Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal

39 Joint Memorandum Signed by the Austro-Hungarian and the German Plenipotentiaries Outlining the Purposes of the Alliance. Vienna, September 24, 1879, in: Alfred Pribram / Archibald Coolidge (eds.), The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1879–1914, Cambridge – London 1920, 22–25, 25.

40 Cf. Introduction, in: Pribram / Coolidge (eds.), The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 3–17, 3.

41 Cf. Ghișa, Romania and Hungary, 7–8; Joseph Partsch, Mitteleuropa: Die Länder und Völker von den Westalpen und dem Balkan bis an den Kanal und das Kurische Haff, Gotha 1904, 190.

42 Cf. Partsch, Mitteleuropa, 173.

and Count Leopold Berchtold, the foreign ministers of the Dual Monarchy.[43] The main concern for Austro-Hungarian security and integrity was the Balkan problem created in Serbia. As a response to this threat, Baron Alois Aehrenthal made the decision to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina.[44] Joseph Partsch believed that the incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into Austria-Hungary would prevent the project of Greater Serbia from being realised.[45]
Subsequently, *Mitteleuropa* developed from the defensive political-geographical concept of Joseph Partsch and Friedrich Naumann into the *Drang nach Osten*, a plan to separate Russia from Central and Eastern Europe by means of a strip of buffer states between Germany and Russia, as a response to the Russian Pan-Slavist aggressive foreign policy course and the subversive activity in Bulgaria and Serbia.[46] In 1898, Friedrich Ratzel wrote the following: "The German-Russian border is not the border between two states but between two worlds."[47]

In 1903, John Strachey and William Thomas Arnold published the book *German Ambitions as They Affect Britain and the United States of America.* They emphasised the significance of the Central European Union of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Romania for Germany's foreign policy and described Russia as "a monstrous danger of the future," but at the same time a "Colossus with feet of clay."[48] According to their prediction, war between Germany and Russia was imminent, and in order to counter the Russian peril in Central Europe, it would be necessary to form a buffer of new states such as Poland, Ruthenia, and Greater Romania.[49]

After the outbreak of the Great War, Germany and Austria-Hungary intended to oust Russia from Eastern Europe as part of their strategy, in order to eliminate its influence in the Balkans and return it to the borders of the

43 Cf. József Galántai, Austria-Hungary and the War: The October 1913 Crisis – Prelude to July 1914, Budapest 1980, 9–10; Ottokor Czernin, In the World War, New York – London 2020, 51.
44 Cf. Galántai, Austria-Hungary and the War, 6–8.
45 Cf. Partsch, Mitteleuropa, 188.
46 Cf. Robert Bideleux / Ian Jeffries, A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change, London – New York 1998, 12.
47 Gertjan Dijkink, National Identity and Geopolitical Visions: Maps of Pride and Pain, London – New York 1996, 17.
48 John St. Loe Strachey / William Thomas Arnold, German Ambitions as They Affect Britain and the United States of America, London 1903, x, 26, 29, 68.
49 Cf. Strachey / Arnold, German Ambitions, 71–72.

pre-Petrine Grand Dukedom of Moscow.[50] In 1915, Paul von Rohrbach wrote that according to the interests of European security, the Russian Empire must be broken up into several territories to reduce the possibility of the "Russian Menace" attacking Central Europe. In this case, Germany should sponsor the independence of Finland, Poland, and Ukraine.[51] He believed that the separation of the western region (the Baltic countries) would reduce "the Russian Menace", but only the separation of Ukraine would "ensure a stable equilibrium in Eastern Europe."[52] On 11 August 1914, the State secretary of the German Foreign office, Gottlieb von Jagow, wrote to the German ambassador in Vienna, Count Heinrich von Tschirschky, on the geopolitical significance of Ukraine: "it is a way to relieve the pressure of the Russian colossus on Europe and to force Russia back as far east as possible … it is a possibility for Romania to obtain Bessarabia later, which is only feasible if an intermediate state between Romania and Russia appears."[53] In the Note of 20 November 1914, the Austrian government announced that the aim of Austria-Hungary in this war was to liberate the Ukrainian people from Russian domination and establish an independent Kingdom of Ukraine.[54] In other words, the establishment of an independent Ukraine became a matter of paramount importance as a counterbalance to Pan-Slavism and the Russian expansionism into Central Europe.

However, after the disintegration of Russia during the revolution, Pan-Slavism was replaced by Bolshevism as a new international threat. The British ambassador in Paris, Lord Francis Bertie, wrote in his diary on 4 February 1918: "Bolshevism is a contagious disease which, it is hoped, will spread to Germany and Austria; but the Entente will have to adopt old-fashioned quarantine rules to keep out infection."[55]

In 1918, Germany was the only power capable of suppressing Bolshevism. Nevertheless, German intervention was limited to Finland, Ukraine, and the

50 Cf. Сазонов, Воспоминания, 273; Fritz Fischer, Germany's Aims in the First World War, New York 1967, 547.

51 Cf. Henry Meyer, Rohrbach and His Osteuropa, in: The Russian Review 2/1 (1942) 60–69, 63–64.

52 АВПРИ, f. Особый политический отдел, op. 474, d. 36. l. 40 (my own translation).

53 Борис Греков, Национальный аспект внешней политики Германии в годы Первой мировой войны (Лига нерусских народов России) [Boris Grekov, The National Aspect of Germany's Foreign Policy during the First World War (The League of Non-Russian Peoples of Russia)], in: Виктор Мальков (ред.), Первая мировая война: пролог XX века [Viktor Malkov (ed.), The First World War: The Prologue of the 20th Century], Moscow 1998, 419–431, 423 (my own translation).

54 Cf. АВПРИ, f. Особый Политический Отдел, op. 474, d. 36, l. 42–43.

55 Sir Francis Bertie, The Diary, 1914–1918, London 1924, 254.

Baltic states, and determined by strategic reasons rather than attempts to restore pre-revolutionary order in Russia, as Berlin sought to create its own sphere of influence.[56] Even so, Germany managed to create the fence line of the buffer states, which blocked the spread of Bolshevism to Central Europe, and the restoration was successfully conducted within these states, such as the Kingdom of Finland, the United Baltic Grand Duchy, the Ukrainian State, and the Almighty Don Host, which became bases for the Russian counter-revolution and restoration.

The *Entente* intervention had a limited impact and was insufficient and unsuccessful. Hence, the *Entente* decided to create a *Cordon Sanitaire* against Bolshevism. As defined by Norman Saul, the *Cordon Sanitaire* was a set of measures by the French government to prevent communist influence and ensure stability in Europe by providing military and economic aid to newly independent and vulnerable states in Eastern Europe, such as the Baltic states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. The main objectives of the *Cordon Sanitaire* were the following:[57] the isolation of the USSR, the limitation of communist propaganda and the mitigation of the Soviet military threat.

From Yuri Felshtinsky's point of view, the *Cordon Sanitaire* was not a fundamentally new invention; rather, the *Entente* merely authorised the "fence line," created by Germany through the *Brest-Litovsk* system.[58] However, this is only partially correct. Firstly, the *Cordon Sanitaire* did not include Ukraine and the Don, these new states were erased from the political map of Europe. Secondly, the *Cordon Sanitaire* was directed not only against Soviet Russia but also against Soviet Hungary,[59] and thus, it included a broader set of states: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia).

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56 Cf. Speech of Friedrich von Payer in Reichstag, in: Kölnische Zeitung (8 Mai 1918); Абдулхан Ахтамзян, От Бреста до Киля. Провал антисоветской политики германского империализма в 1918 году [Abdulkhan Akhtamzyan, From Brest to Kiel. The Failure of the Anti-Soviet Politics of German Imperialism in 1918], Moscow 1963, 99.

57 Cf. Norman Saul, Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Foreign Policy, Lanham 2015, 90.

58 Cf. Юрий Фельштинский, Крушение Мировой революции. Очерк первый. Брестский мир (октябрь 1917 – ноябрь 1918) [Yuri Felshtinsky, The Failure of the World Revolution. Essay One. The Peace of Brest (October 1917 – November 1918)], Moscow 1992, 169.

59 Cf. Arno Mayer, Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918–1919, New York 1967, 9, 658, 834.

4. Conclusion

By the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the ideology of nationalism had gradually replaced dynastic solidarity. However, the Dual Alliance and the Triple Alliance corresponded with both national and dynastic interests. Instead of preserving dynastic solidarity within the framework of the League of the Three Emperors, Russia chose Pan-Slavism as a determinant ideology for its own foreign policy, which led to the collapse of both the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian Empires.

Pan-Slavism as a revolutionary ideology threatened not only the territorial integrity of Austria-Hungary, but also the Russian Empire, and provoked countermeasures from other Great Powers. One example is the concept of Mitteleuropa, which was a response by Germany and Austria-Hungary to Russian Pan-Slavism. *Mitteleuropa* was built up by the Triple Alliance as a conservative defense measure, with the goal not only to prevent the spread of Russia into Central Europe but also to save the dynasties and stabilise international relations. Oszkár Jászi argued that *Mitteleuropa* aimed to create the Central European multicultural community, and Russian Pan-Slavism was an expansive and "militaristic sentimental policy" that might produce "a constant threat to the peace of Central Europe."[60] Despite this, it was the Pan-Slavic idea that created new multiethnic states such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia which replaced the multinational and dynastic empires in Central Europe.

The next challenge to the stability of the system of international relations in Europe and the World order as a whole became Bolshevism. The Bolshevik ideocracy (the idea of the World Revolution) aimed at the creation of the World Soviet Republic, replaced Pan-Slavism, and was the resurrection of the empire, but under a new ideology.

The *Cordon Sanitaire* in Central and Eastern Europe against Soviet Republics was incapable of stopping the spread of Bolshevism, but it was a temporary measure taken by the war-ravaged Western Europe.

60 Oszkár Jászi, A Monarchia jövője. A dualizmus bukása és a Dunai Egyesült Államok [The Future of the Monarchy. The Fall of Dualism and the Danubian United States], Budapest 1918, 18–19 (my own translation).