

Migrant Nation-Builders: The Development of Austria-Hungary's National Projects in
the United States, 1880s-1920s

Kristina Evans Poznan

B.A. Vassar College, 2008

M.A. College of William & Mary, 2011

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation charts the ways in which migrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire crafted new forms of identification in the United States, complicating their relationships with their home and host states. Transatlantic migration and migrants' heightened nationalism were, I argue, causative factors in the dismantling of the Habsburg Empire into ethnically-based states after World War I. Rather than focusing on a single ethnic group, *Migrant Nation-Builders* looks broadly at early multilingual immigrant institutions, Austro-Hungarian and American perceptions of panslavism, and the splintering of immigrant institutions in the United States along linguistic lines. The project traces the long arm of the homeland authorities, especially the Hungarian government, in trying to manage migrant loyalty in America, and follows return migrants from the United States back to East Central Europe to track their influence on domestic politics. Finally, it examines the dual effects on migration of new borders in Eastern Europe and restrictive immigration legislation in the United States.

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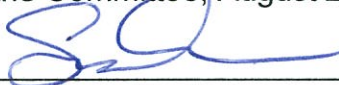
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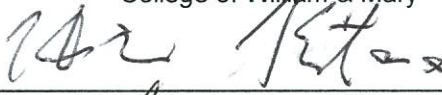
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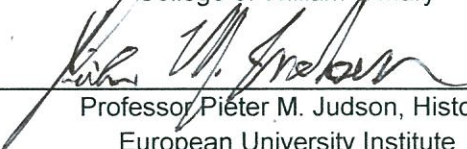
Committee Chair
Courtesy Professor Scott Reynolds Nelson, History
College of William & Mary



Courtesy Professor Cindy Hahamovitch, History
College of William & Mary



Associate Professor Hiroshi Kitamura, History
College of William & Mary



Professor Pieter M. Judson, History
European University Institute

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Writing this dissertation helped me better understand not only history but my own family's experience of living in an East European borderland and migration, even though only one of my four grandparents was a product of this main period of Eastern European migration. My father's and maternal grandfather's experiences as members of the Hungarian minority in southern Slovakia and their migration experiences familiarized me with the complex processes of identification that both a minority experience and a migration experience prompt. They displayed what lies between nationalism and national indifference. My father's firm identification as a Hungarian was not tempered by but rather coexisted with his ability and desire to preach in churches and translate in the Connecticut court system in Slovak and Czech alongside Hungarian. My parents sent my brother, Attila, and me to Sokol on E 71st street and Hungarian school on 82nd street on different days of the week. Thank you to Rev. Béla and Julianna Poznan and Attila for their continual support. My grandfather, Rev. Dr. Francis Vitéz, passed away several years before I developed an interest in Eastern European history, but his own migrations experiences, his constant reminders for me to speak Hungarian, and his book collection influenced this project.

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Introduction

“[Immigrants] thought of themselves as fighters, lovers, poets, dancers, singers, and children of the Almighty before it occurred to them that they were also members of definite national and political groups,” Slovene-American author Louis Adamic wrote in his 1932 book, *Laughing in the Jungle*.¹ This dissertation will explain *how* immigrants came to think of themselves as “members of definite national and political groups” by explaining the relationship between mass transatlantic labor migration from Austria-Hungary to the United States and the rapid spread of separatist nationalism, leading to the Habsburg Empire’s dissolution. In addressing this relationship, we learn about United States history, Central and Eastern European history, migration history, ethnic history, diplomatic history, and the history of nationalism itself. The story features an ensemble cast of governmental officials and migrants, and is set in both the North America and Central and Eastern Europe.

Previous generations of scholars sometimes argued that national oppression in Eastern Europe caused emigration, citing examples like Štefan Osuský, who migrated to the United States as an adolescent and became a leading Slovak politician in adulthood. According to Osuský, members of Slavic minorities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire like himself migrated to the United States because of an oppressive national climate at home. “In spring of 1905 the [Hungarian] minister of education, Count Apponyi, came to the lyceum to pay an inspection visit,” Osuský explained. “He came to our class when we had Latin. Latin was my favorite subject and I was very good in it,” he continued. “After the exam Count Apponyi called me and asked me in Hungarian, ‘What is your name,

¹ Louis Adamic, *Laughing in the Jungle: The Autobiography of an Immigrant in America* (New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1932), 104.

young lad?’ I answered, ‘My name is Osuský.’ ‘Where are you from?’ ‘From Brezová.’ He replied: ‘Brezová, isn't it the nest that breeds all the revolts against Hungarians? You, however, are going to be a good Hungarian!’ He didn't ask me whether I'd be a good Hungarian citizen, but simply if I'd be a good Hungarian,” Osuský reflected. “I remembered the words of my father's not to mix into politics. . . . I paused a little to think about the best answer. Obviously, I could not agree to be a good Hungarian, I could not even force myself to say anything like that, so I remained silent.”² Osuský no doubt experienced this incident of Count Apponyi's national chauvinism, but his personal trajectory — feelings of national animosity spurring migration — are, I argue, not representative. For the vast majority of migrants, migration came *first*, followed by a swelling of separatist nationalism while abroad.

Much more typical, I argue, is the story of Andrew Lichanec, who immigrated to the United States from Klenóc, Austria-Hungary in 1913.³ When he arrived in Logansport, IN, ethnicity and language very suddenly took on a new significance in his life. “I spoke more Hungarian at that time,” he explained to an interviewer for the Ellis Island Oral History Project. But when he arrived in the United States, his uncle told him, “You're not a hunky, a Hungarian.” This negation of a Hungarian identity in America meant that Lichanec had to learn not one but two new languages and take on multiple new identities. To fit what should have been their mother tongue and ethnic affiliation in Austria-Hungary, his father told him to learn Slovak. “So here my father was teaching me

² “Czech Republic and Slovakia - Štefan Osuský, . . . ideas defining a free society,” (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, Stanford University, n.d.).

³ This dissertation will use the official place name of the location in the time period that is being referred to, recognizing that this is an imperfect approach. In many cases I will indicate what country that municipality is in today. Very large cities, like Vienna, will be referred to by their standard English name. In quotations, I will retain the author's usage.

Slovak, then I went to school, they were teaching me English. And I tell you, I had a little problem there,” he recalled. Lichanec himself, like his father, began to identify nationally as a *result* of his migration and the proliferation of Eastern European nationalisms in migrant communities.

When migrants from Austria-Hungary came to the United States in the late nineteenth century, as Lichanec’s story illustrates, their identifications frequently sharpened, dissolved, and coalesced again. Lichanec and his family members became more culturally Slovak as they became American. Countless migrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire experienced similar ethnic fashioning and refashioning. At churches, social clubs, bars, butcher shops, and newsstands from Connecticut to Michigan, migrant nationalists persuaded those they deemed co-nationals to join them in building up a local exclusive ethnic community and lobbying for the best interests of their “nation” back in Austria-Hungary. But which possible articulation of ethnic identity an immigrant would choose – German, Austrian, Hungarian, Jewish, Slavic, Bohemian, Moravian, Czech, Slovak, Czechoslovak, Ruthenian, Polish, Ukrainian, Transylvanian, Romanian, Yugoslav, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Wend – was not as forgone of a conclusion as it may seem to readers today.

The United States was a critical venue for the nurturing of new identities among migrants and encouraging political action. In the United States, migrants encountered multiple American regimes of categorization, a free immigrant press, increased mobility and opportunities for association, and limits on the powers of the Austro-Hungarian government in clamping down on ethnic separatism. Upon arrival, many individuals prioritized their home regional or religious identity over an ethno-linguistic one, as the

national movements of many Slavic peoples in Central and Eastern Europe were still in the making. Rather than all having a clear national identity upon arrival, the experience of living abroad inspired the national identity of many immigrants from Austria-Hungary. Some maintained hybrid identities or remained indifferent to an exclusive ethnicity, but over the course of the early twentieth century the strengthening of national movements on both sides of the Atlantic transformed many of migrants into nation-builders. The success of American immigrant nationalists determined, to a large extent, which national projects in Central and Eastern Europe would achieve states and which would not, in concert with the World War I priorities of the United States government. American bureaucrats had a sizable influence on which Eastern European groups came to be considered sufficiently defined or cohesive nations and therefor potentially worthy of a state at the close of World War I. The Immigration Bureau, the U.S. Census, and social scientists all had different and evolving conceptions of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the roster of nations as the U.S. saw them in the 1910s was codified in the Versailles Treaty. This dissertation will reconstruct the transatlantic debate over identities that started in controversy and led to world war, with lasting consequences for migrants well into the twentieth century.

This project joins a small group of works that looks at the process of ethnic identity formation (also referred to as “ethnicization”) for the Austro-Hungarian Empire from a transatlantic perspective. While scholars have already argued that the experience of migration was significant in inaugurating or augmenting the national or ethnic consciousness of some Europeans, they have yet to fully explain the significance of nation-building abroad for a multiethnic state like Austria-Hungary where nationalizing

projects were fiercely contested. The role of migration in national identity formation is different for immigrants coming from a unifying state like Italy, on which many scholarly models are based, than for a splintering empire populated by people increasingly identifying as different ethnicities.⁴ Historians have observed the pride that many American immigrants displayed once their co-nationals in Europe achieved an independent state, but have been less attuned to the role of those immigrants in attaining that state, not to mention the hardships that new state borders created for immigrants from the so-called “belt of mixed populations.”

Since the research for this project began in 2012, several significant new books have appeared that make this study one of a cohort of critical scholarly appraisals of North American-Austro-Hungarian migration, and new studies in relevant subfields have undergone a “transnational turn,” further informing this project and the questions it asks. Nicole Phelps’s *U.S.-Habsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, Tara Zahra’s *The Great Departure*, and Annemarie Steidl, Vladimir Fischer-Nebmaier, and James W. Oberly’s *From a Multiethnic Empire to a Nation of Nations*. Together, these works have thoroughly updated the history of migration from Austria-Hungary to the United States, reflecting several historiographic developments.⁵ The study and writing of

⁴ For analysis of the Italian case, see Mark Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁵ Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference: Sovereignty Transformed* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016); Steidl, Fischer-Nebmaier, Oberly, *From a Multiethnic Empire to a Nation of Nations* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2017). Also worthy of mention are Brian McCook, *Borders of Integration: Polish Migrants in Germany and the United States, 1870-1924* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011) and Ulf Brunnbauer, *Globalizing Southeastern Europe: Emigrants, America, and the State since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2016), which focus on geographically adjacent areas and include parts of the former empire. Before this new

history has benefitted tremendously in recent decades from the transnational turn, revealing overlooked global connections and new opportunities for research and interpretations. This is evident in U.S. immigration and ethnic history in the increased attention to migrants' home states; in Eastern European history in the proliferation of studies of borderlands and the interconnected histories of lands formerly encompassing the Habsburg Empire; and in the reconceptualization of U.S. diplomatic history as the study of "America and the world."

Scholars of nationalism have delved more deeply into how ethnically-based definitions of nations have been historically constructed and have argued against the omnipresence of firm ethnic descriptors and ahistorical tellings of nation's origins. In the process, they have conceptualized a variety of expressions of identification that defy rigid ethnic categories, including hybrid identities and the concept of "national indifference."⁶ Much of the migration literature on migrants from Austria-Hungary, until recently, was written before the rise of critical nationalism studies and focused on single ethno-linguistic group. While a tight focus on a narrowly defined community can have many

generation of literature, classic works from the 1980s included the works of Julianna Puskás (on Hungarians), M. Mark Stolarik (on Slovaks), and Paul Robert Magocsi (on Carpatho-Rusyns). Notable works in the intervening years include subsequent books by Puskás, Stolarik, and Magocsi; June Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism* and Robert Zecker, *Streetcar Parishes*; and several books by Tibor Frank and Steven Béla Várdy. Significant works on European migration include studies by Leslie Page Moch and Josef Ehmer, et. al., *European Mobility*. Full citations can be found in the bibliography.

⁶ For theoretical frameworks, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, and the works of Anthony D. Smith and Rogers Brubaker. Notable studies on the evolution of ethnic identities in the Habsburg Empire and its successor states include Pieter Judson's *Guardians of the Nation*, Jeremy King's *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans*, Tara Zahra's *Kidnapped Souls*. A forceful articulation of the place of the United States in these processes is Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta, and Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12, no. 1 (1992), 3-41.

benefits, many of these studies drew strict and somewhat artificial boundaries around the groups that they were studying, ignoring evidence of multilingualism, integration with other Austro-Hungarian migrants who spoke different languages, and the coalescing of communities around religion and place rather than ethnicity. “With few exceptions . . . , those who have described the process of ethnicization have either totally ignored evidence of mixed identities during the wary stages of immigrant settlement or, because of the sparse and inconsistent nature of the evidence, at best have dismissed it with a few passing comment,” historian Béla Vassady noted.⁷ Works that treat immigrant communities’ embrace of panslavism at the turn of the twentieth century, for example, remain very few. Many turn-of-the-century nationalists admitted knowing that nations were at least partly constructed, even if they believed that blood mattered. Migrant journalist and author Thomas Capek described famous poet Ján Kollár as “By birth a Slovak, by affiliation a Bohemian, but by preference a ‘Slavonian patriot’”⁸ Many transatlantic migrants could be described in similarly varied ways, and many considered themselves Americans on top of their mix of European identities. This work builds on recent studies by nationalism scholars to showcase a range of ethnic self-identifications

⁷ Bela Vassady, Jr., “Mixed Ethnic Identities among Immigrant Clergy from Multiethnic Hungary: The Slovak-Magyar Case, 1885-1903,” in *The Ethnic Enigma: The Salience of Ethnicity for European-Origin Groups*, ed. Peter Kivisto (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute Press, 1989), 47. Vassady was one of the few historians, until recently, who directly addressed this historiographic problem directly in own work. Despite the challenge of multiple language and sometimes competing narratives, Ewa Morawska’s, *For Bread and Butter*, Dominic Pacyga’s *Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago*, Josef J. Barton’s *Peasants and Strangers*, Michael P. Weber and Roger Simon’s *Lives of their Own*, and David C. Hammack, Diane L. Grabowski, & John J. Grabowski, eds. *Identity, Conflict, and Cooperation* also grappled with these questions on the city level. “The streets of Chicago created ethnic consciousness in a peasantry that had tended to identify with their village and region rather than the larger concept of Poland,” Pacyga concluded (xv).

⁸ Thomas Čapek, *The Slovaks of Hungary: Slavs and Panslavism* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1906), 18.

and governmental labels, from individuals who described themselves by region of origin or religion rather than ethnicity to the most ardent separatist nationalists.⁹

Modern historiography about the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and its successor states faces an uphill battle against powerfully nationalist historiographies. Even scholars who accept the constructedness of ethnicity struggle against a current of primordialist views and narratives that focus on national foundings. Particularly problematic is the concept of Austro-Hungarian governmental sources and especially interwar Hungarian histories require carefully reading to distinguish the imperial bugaboo of panslavism – synonymous with disloyalty, agitation, and betrayal – from panslavism as concerted action among individuals from different Slavic-language-speaking groups from within and sometimes without Austria-Hungary to argue for autonomy or formal recognition within the Empire. Panslavism historically, in Europe and the United States, has taken many forms, from a Russian-led movement to unify all Slavic-speakers; to Austro-Slavism, usually proposing a tripartite rather than dual configuration for the Habsburg lands; to South Slav (later Yugoslav) and Czecho-Slovak alliances.¹⁰ In all of these forms, opposition to panslavism and Slavic nationalisms one thing that Austria and Hungary, still adjusting to and seeking to protect the dualism of the monarchy, could largely agree on, especially in their foreign policy in the United States.

The reasons for Austria-Hungary's dramatic dissolution remain a central question in Central and Eastern European historiography; this study argues that transatlantic migration *must* be part of the answer. Although studies looking at the rise of nationalism

⁹ This work also reappraises terms like “panslav” and “magyarone” that were once common in describing political affiliations in relation to nationalism but have fallen out of use since. See, in particular, Chap. 2.

¹⁰ Alexander Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia: Slavic Hungary, the Czechoslovak Language and Accidental Nationalism* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009).

in the Habsburg Empire have examined every possible factor contributing to heightened separatist nationalism, analysis of the place of emigration and return migration in many of these studies is surprisingly sparse. A secret memorandum from the Hungarian Undersecretary of State to the Prime Minister in 1902 clearly explained, “For the institution of national statehood it is absolutely necessary that the ruling race . . . become the majority of the population. . . . Providence . . . has granted another population factor which has significantly raised the proportion of the Hungarian element at the expense of the nationalities,” he continued. “This important new factor is the mass emigration of the non-Hungarian population.”¹¹ Austrian and Hungarian governmental authorities recognized great significance of emigration in the functioning and the politics of the Empire, and historians of nationalism in the Habsburg Empire can no longer sideline migration. Around 3,547,000 emigrants departed Austria-Hungary for overseas destinations between 1876 and 1910, amounting to 7–8 percent of the 1910 population.¹² While Pieter Judson’s recent *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* makes a compelling case for an empire brought asunder by military defeat rather than undermined by internal ethnic tensions, *external* ethnic tensions in the form of separatists nationalism among the Empire’s emigrants in the United States played an important role in the shaping the post-war future of Austria-Hungary.¹³

¹¹ Quoted in Puskás, *Ties that Bind, Ties that Divide: 100 years of Hungarian Experience in the United States* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 90. See also Monika Glettler, *Pittsburgh-Wien-Budapest: Programm und Praxis: der Nationalitätenpolitik bei der Auswanderung der ungarischen Slowaken nach Amerika um 1900* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1980), 401-6.

¹² [William P. Dillingham], *Emigration Conditions in Europe* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), 351.

¹³ Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016).

Aggregately, migrants from Austria-Hungary were the fourth-largest contributor to the United States in the two decades before the First World War, but their significance in American history and historiography is often understated. This is particularly the case when they are divided up by post-war national group. Austro-Hungarian migrants joined Irish, Italian, and German workers in transforming industrial labor in America, and were among the central subjects in many of the famous incidents of and classic literature on U.S. immigration history and labor history.¹⁴ Scholars of U.S. migration and ethnic history as well as scholars of U.S. foreign affairs have all turned their attention to issues of mobility and the relationship between migrants and their home and host governments,¹⁵ showing a strong convergence of interests in to subfields that previously had little in common. This dissertation makes a compelling case for the benefits of further integrating migration history and diplomatic history to ask new questions and also to find new sources to answer old ones.

This study draws on archival material from both sides of the Atlantic and brings together governmental sources and sources produced by migrants themselves. The holdings of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, the Austrian State Archives, and the Hungarian National Archives, particularly underutilized by previous scholars, are rich repositories of information on both governmental affairs related to

¹⁴ For examples, see hallmark studies Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), and John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

¹⁵ Recent studies that have informed the methodology of this work, alongside those already mentioned, include Donna Gabaccia, *Foreign Relations*; Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*; Roger Daniels, *Coming to America*; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Madeline Y. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home*; and many others cited below.

migration and on Central and Eastern European migrants' lives in America. While Austria-Hungary's linguistic diversity and its status as two states under one emperor-king pose several challenges to historical study, it also has some archival benefits: many documents appear in both Vienna and in Budapest or in both German and Hungarian, creating a second opportunity to decipher difficult handwriting or faint type, and materials collected by various branches of the Austro-Hungarian government were routinely translated into German and/or Hungarian from a host of languages. Governmental sources are put in conversation with the personal papers of individual migrants found in small archives across the United States, records of immigrant clubs and churches in the United States, and a wide variety of newspapers.

Understanding the process of Central and Eastern European nation-building in the United States requires exploring a series of overlapping and intersecting histories, which unfold in the chapters that follow. Chapter 1 explores multilingualism and the founding and dissolution of multiethnic immigrant organizations in the United States, charting the timeline of ethnic splintering in America compared to back home. Chapter 2 traces the long arm of government of Austria-Hungary in affairs of the Empire's subjects in the U.S., as well as the American government's views on migrants from Eastern Europe and Austro-Hungarian governmental interference on U.S. soil. Chapter 3 follows return migrants back to Austria-Hungary, analyzing homeland governments' competing desires to entice migrants home but exclude individuals and ideas that they perceived as a threat to the imperial order. Chapter 4, set primarily during World War I, reveals the turn to separatism among migrant nationalists and the expansive role that some of them received, with the help of the U.S. government, in determining the post-war order. Finally, chapter

5 analyzes the dual effects of new European borders after 1918 and American immigration restrictions passed in the early 1920s on Central and Eastern European immigrants in the United States. Post-World War I borders, accompanied by the staunching of the flow of new immigrants by the war and restrictive quotas in the United States, together recast the relationship between many immigrants and their homelands. Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the First World War peace treaties remained a contentious issue in the interwar era for many migrant groups whose nations were losers in the settlement, and affects politics even into the present.

Chapter 1

Austro-Hungarian Migrants and Ethnicization Abroad

Migrants to the United States from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were notoriously difficult to categorize. The Empire was home to over a dozen linguistic groups, with varying degrees of affiliation to a group identification based around language or the idea of a nation. As we will see below, religious and regional identities were far more salient for most migrants than ethno-linguistic ones, particularly in rural areas. Nationalism was concentrated much more heavily among the bourgeoisie, and even there it competed and often coexisted with cosmopolitan imperial patriotism. Many migrants were multilingual in various ways, able to communicate in two or more of the empire's many languages. Yet for decades, scholars assumed a natural, preexisting, even biologically determined ethnicity among Austro-Hungarian subjects, both at home and as migrants to the United States. Part of this assumption comes from official sources. Austro-Hungarian census records and U.S. naturalization records list only a single nation of origin or mother tongue, so statistical information on the multilingualism of imperial subjects is famously hard to come by. The vast majority of immigrant studies discussed a single ethnic group, and assumed that migrants had a fixed national identity before stepping foot in the United States. The dismantling of Austria-Hungary made such an approach seem appropriate, as many Slavic nationalist projects achieved states. Furthermore, many of the sources that historians rely on to write migration history were written by committed nation-builders, who continually called on their fellow migrants to reorient their worldview to a national identity. Histories thus frequently gloss over the abundant evidence of other affiliations

and cooperation among those who might *later* consider themselves members of different nations. This chapter will illuminate the process by which many migrants from Austria-Hungary came to develop a more fixed, exclusive ethnic-national identity *as a result of their migration to and their time in America*. I argue that migration to the United States was, for many, a critical process for *forging* an ethnic affiliation. Migrants who arrived in the United States with a fixed, conscious national identification were the exception rather than the norm.

Migration abroad was the key factor in people's ethnic fashioning and refashioning. "National consciousness among the immigrant peasants was much stronger than among those who had staid in the old country," historian Julianna Puskás explained of migrants from the Kingdom of Hungary near the turn of the twentieth century. "Forming ethnic groups was the first step in the process of adaptation, and it was here that many immigrants first became really aware of their Magyar consciousness." Puskás suggested "the pressure of the prejudices of American society" as the key factor in the development of their national consciousness.¹⁶ Puskás's language, however, still suggests that Magyar consciousness was an innate thing that Hungarian migrants inherently had in themselves somewhere and had to discover. M. Mark Stolarik, foremost among the historians of Slovak America for decades, complained of the "common American error" "incorrectly label[ing]" Slovaks as Hungarians.¹⁷ Stolarik's framework, like that of countless historians of his generation who wrote Eastern European migration

¹⁶ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States (1880-1914)* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982),

173.

¹⁷ M. Mark Stolarik, *Growing Up on the South Side: Three Generations of Slovaks in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1880-1976* (Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell University Press, 1985), 63. Geopolitically, it was not an error.

history, employs “ethnic origin” as the primary category of analysis long before many migrants themselves recognized national identity or ethnicity as the primary way of identifying who they were. Historians must consider each migrant on a full spectrum from nation-builder to nationally indifferent. Each underwent a constant evolution in his or her place on this spectrum and was influenced by factors like class, family, and what communities they are migrating from and to. Indeed, even long ago a few scholars astutely noted that the “borders between Croat and Slovene identity,” for example, “which seem so firm now to scholars of ethnicity and then to nationalists, were capable of great elasticity”¹⁸ and that nation-building was a “complex, erratic, paradoxical phenomenon within immigrant communities from the heterogeneous ethnic regions of Austria-Hungary.” Beginning in the late nineteenth century, nurturing a national identity seemed to become a *moral* imperative in many nationalist circles. Nation-building is revealed to be a much more elastic process when we look at the views and choices of migrants themselves alongside those of competing governments and blustering nation-builders. As one historian described it, nation-building and national identity formation were “complex, erratic, paradoxical”¹⁹ As Conzen, Gerber, Morawska, Pozzetta, and Vecoli synthesized in “The Invention of Ethnicity” in 1992, scholars now see ethnicity as created rather than primordial, and this study agrees. Ethnicity is “continuously being reinvented in response to changing realities both within the group and,” in the case of migrants, “the host society.”²⁰

¹⁸ Robert Harney, *Toronto: Canada's New Cosmopolite. Occasional Papers in Ethnic and Immigration Studies* (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1981), 16.

¹⁹ Vassady, “Mixed Ethnic Identities among Immigrant Clergy,” 47.

²⁰ Conzen, et. al., “The Invention of Ethnicity,” 5.

This chapter will discuss, first, the fluid, mixed identities of Austro-Hungarian migrants through their multilingualism, arguing that one's dominant language did not simply equate to an obvious ethnic affiliation for an individual. This began to change as migrants began to identify increasingly by ethnicity. Governmental agencies in Europe and the United States externally categorized them according to ever-changing national, ethnic, and racial labels, contributing to the stiffening of ethnic categories. The ethnicization process was due not only to blatantly political national activity in the United States, but also to the changing relationship between religious and ethnic identity and the soft power of migrant social institutions. All of this culminated in the splitting of migrants' early multiethnic institutions and their individual association with a single ethnicity, based primarily on tongue. The timelines for the politicization of ethnic identification and separatism in the United States unfolded earlier than in East-Central Europe. Rather than fleeing from a nationally repressive, crumbling empire, migrants came to the United States seeking opportunity and in the process changed the way they saw themselves both individually and communally.

It is critical to remember that migrants seldom considered nationality in their decisions to migrate; their motives were overwhelmingly economic. Although political complications stemming from national identification figured prominently in the emigration of a notable few, push factors for most migrants were dominated by concerns relating to work and taxes, followed by land. In 1904, the Hungarian government collected reports from the sheriff of each county that had seen high rates of emigration. County officials were tasked with explaining the causes and magnitude of emigration and what changes could potentially stem its tide, breaking down their discussion into different

language groups. The causes that the county officials cited were overwhelmingly economic. Their proposed solutions dealt at length with the struggles of agricultural families, particularly as they related to their tax burden, the availability and unavailability of work at different times of the year, and landlessness. In Bereg County, the sheriff proposed a decrease in taxes and reform of interest laws, governmental coordination of off-season home production of baskets and straw products to generate off-season income, and public assistance for obtaining more and better farming implements and machinery. Some sheriffs explained that speakers of different languages tended to cluster around certain occupations that faced somewhat different economic challenges or labor needs in many counties; for example, local Hungarian-speakers were more geared toward farming and local Slovak-speakers more geared toward herding. But others stated that the reasons for emigration were the same for the area's Slovak-, Rusyn-, and Hungarian-speakers (when they could even be distinguished). Ethnicity was not a salient push factor for emigration in *any* of the county reports. The closest were some Hungarian-speaking migrants from Zemplén County, who chose to migrate to the United States after seeing that some Slovak-speakers had made good money abroad. Even as Budapest officials asked about nationality in the migration equation, village and county officials continually responded with answers about occupation and class (seasonal unemployment and high taxes), reflecting the factors that migrants themselves cared about the most.²¹ Migration itself changed all of this.

²¹ MNL OL, K26, 630 cs., XVI tét.

The Multilingual Migrant

Multilingualism was a fact of everyday life in much of Austria-Hungary and among its migrants. Immigration to the United States was particularly strong from the northern counties of the Hungarian Kingdom, where Slovak, Rusin, Hungarian, German, and Yiddish were all spoken. Bohemia, Transylvania, and Vojvodina were also linguistic borderlands, and German was widely spoken in many cities and larger market towns, even in areas that were not otherwise German-speaking. The Empire's extensive school system contributed to multilingualism. With public schools supplemented by a host of religious schools, instruction could be received in an array of languages. Even in non-German-speaking areas, German knowledge expanded through the school system.²² As German was the primary bureaucratic language of Austria, all those with aspirations to work in government and civil service learned it. But German was far from the only language used in official matters. Emperor Joseph II's attempts to make German the official language of the empire in 1784 produced an aggressive backlash among the nobility in Hungary, who used Latin as the official language of Parliament and favored the use of Hungarian instead, thwarting the greatest opportunity to implement a single imperial language. Hungary's Nationalities Law of 1868 mandated official record-keeping in Hungarian in the Hungarian half of the Empire and enumerated minority language rights in areas where at least one fifth of the population requested them; while the promised minority language rights were honored only selectively, the law nonetheless heightened multilingual knowledge.²³ An 1880 decree made Czech a language of

²² Schooling in others languages was, however, much more common in Cisleithenia than in Hungary.

²³ See László Kontler, *History of Hungary: Millennium in Central Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), Mark Cornwall, *Last Years of Austria-Hungary: A Multi-*

administration in Bohemia, elevating the status and careers of civil servants who spoke both Czech and German.²⁴ The Imperial & Royal Army encouraged multilingualism, giving all soldiers a working knowledge of German-language commands, authorizing the use of other regimental languages, and allowing for greater social mobility for non-Hungarian speakers than most other occupations in Hungary.²⁵ So, too, did imperial commerce, which connected disparate parts of the empire through trade.

Migrants, not surprisingly, then, had rich and varied linguistic histories, reflecting the richness of the linguistic genealogies of their families and the richness of the linguistic landscape in Austria-Hungary. Statistics on multilingualism in Austria-Hungary are sparse and sometimes highly politicized,²⁶ but migrant testimonials offer an abundance of evidence on their multilingualism, changing language use, and challenges in identifying themselves. Migrant George Zemanovic's father had spoken Slovak at home, Hungarian at school, and German while serving in the Austro-Hungarian military; he always "reverted" to German to cuss. His mother spoke Slovak and Hungarian, which

National Experiment in Early Twentieth-Century Europe, 2nd ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), and Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia*.

²⁴ Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006) and Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), esp. 59.

²⁵ Istvan Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848-1918* and essays in Laurence Cole, Christa Hämmerle, Martin Scheutz, eds. *Glanz-Gewalt-Gehorsam: Militär und Gesellschaft in der Habsburgermonarchie (1800 bis 1918)* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2011).

²⁶ See, for example, Tamara Scheer, "Habsburg Languages at War: 'The Linguistic Confusion at the Tower of Babel Couldn't Have Been Much Worse,'" in *Languages and the First World War: Communicating in a Transnational War*, ed. Christophe Declercq and Julian Walker (London: Palgrave, 2016); László Marác, "Multilingualism in the Transleithanian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918): Policy and Practice," *Jezikoslovlje* 13.2 (2012); and Susan Gal, Polyglot Nationalism. Alternative Perspectives on Language in 19th century Hungary," *Langage et société* 136, no. 2 (2011).

she learned while living with her sister in Budapest.²⁷ As Yolán Szency Batta, from present-day Santovka, Slovakia, remembered, “when I came out I spoke Bohemian good. Bohemian and German . . . and Hungarian.”²⁸ Adolph Norman, from present-day Bratislava, was schooled in Hungarian, German, and Hebrew, and perhaps also spoke Yiddish.²⁹ John Chomos, describing his home village of Vășad in Transylvania, explained, “This is at the juncture of the Hungarian and Roumanian border. . . . [B]order town people talked both languages.”³⁰ “[In] the part of Europe we came from, the Balkans,” Mimi Pintorich explained, in addition to “Slavish,” “we understood German, we understood Hungarian.”³¹ Knowledge of a variety of languages was widespread and utilitarian in a multi-ethnic empire.

Migrant Louis Zauneker’s multilingualism defined his encounter with America. On the one hand it eased his passage, as he could communicate widely with other migrants. On the other hand, it prompted difficult questions about his personal identity once he left the Hungarian-Yugoslav borderland and arrived in Cleveland. “I made some friends on the ship,” he explained to an interviewer. “They spoke every language that you could think of, and I could speak German, I could speak Hungarian, and Slovenian [sic]. So I could speak to those people. So I wasn't completely lost.” Rather than seeing himself as voyaging alongside a bunch of “others,” Zauneker shared a common lot and common

²⁷ Interview of George Zemanovic by Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., August 4, 1993, in *Ellis Island Oral History Interview, Series EI, no. 365*.

²⁸ Interview of Yolán Batta by Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., December 6, 1990, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series EI, no. 013*.

²⁹ Interview of Norman Adolph by Nancy Dallett, May 21, 1986, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series AKRF, no. 145*.

³⁰ Interview of John Chomos by Brian Feeney, May 11, 1988, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series NPS, no. 159*.

³¹ Interview of Millie Cranford by Nancy Dallett, November 14, 1985, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series KECK, no. 081*.

languages with his fellow travelers. Rather than disdaining speakers of other languages and being glad to abandon Europe to leave them behind, he seems unproblematically indifferent to languages and nationality. It was only upon his arrival in the United States that he had trouble explaining who or what he was. Trying to enroll in school, he recalled, “I remember the first thing [the teacher] asked me what my name was. ... In German my name was Ludwig Vukan, in Hungarian it was Lajos Vukan, and in Slovenian it was Laici Vukan, and then when I came to America, they asked me what my name was” and he did not know how to answer. While Louis Zauneker’s facility across three languages and his identification with three different names might be more fluid and flexible than many other migrants, his multilingualism and his questioning of his identity as it related to language were widely shared.³²

Adding English was, of course, the most common next step for migrants, but some migrants learned new *European* languages in preparation for or as a result of their migration. As we learned in the introduction, Andrew Lichanec learned Slovak not in Europe but in America, as he was learning English. Migrant Irma Willishitzs Schmidt’s mother sent her to live with an aunt to learn German before bring Irma out to America, presumably to expand her job prospects. Once over, she quickly got a job doing housework in a German-speaking home, and eventually married a German immigrant.³³

Emery Kanarik, whose Budapest family spoke Hungarian, used Slovak at the market, and learned German and Hebrew in school, benefitted from his multilingualism in American

³² Interview of Louis Zauneker by Willa Appel, February 6, 1986, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series AKRF, no. 157*. For recent scholarship on the concept of national indifference, see Tara Zahra, “Imagined Non-Communities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69 (Spring 2010), 93-119. See also the special issue on national indifference of the *Austrian History Yearbook* 43 (2012).

³³ Interview of Irma Willishitzs Schmidt by Janet Levine, February 17, 1994, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series EI, no. 426*.

to earn his livelihood in German translation.³⁴ One migrant settling in central New Jersey, added Hungarian to her linguistic repertoire of Slovak and English, communicating with neighbors around each others' kitchen tables. The *Bécsi Magyar Ujság*, a Hungarian newspaper published in Vienna, reported in 1884 that Slovaks in America were “fervently learning Hungarian” to make them more desirable to employers, to communicate on the job with Hungarian-speakers or perhaps to take advantage of the better impressions among some employers of Hungarian workers over Slavic ones.³⁵

Ethnic neighborhoods coalesced in countless American cities, but rather than enclaves, they were cultural meeting grounds not entirely unlike the diverse areas than many Austro-Hungarian migrants came from. Cleveland featured churches from nearly half a dozen groups “all within a one-mile radius of that center point of the West Side Market at the corner of West 25th and Lorraine:” Hungarian Calvinist, Irish Catholic, German Lutheran, German Catholic, and Slovak churches all in close proximity.³⁶ Mimi Pintorich, whose family settled in Bridgeport, Connecticut, observed that “in our area it was . . . Hungarian *and*, uh, Yugoslav community, ” with Italian-Americans also in the immediate area.³⁷

The linguistic pluralism of individuals and communities gave migrants more options, whether in marriage, business, recreation, or worship. Historical sociologist Ewa Morawska found intermarriage rates as high as 25-30% for Slovaks and Rusins in

³⁴ Interview of Emery Kanarik by Andrew Phillips, May 24, 1989, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series DP, no. 029*.

³⁵ *Bécsi Magyar Ujság*, May 11, 1884.

³⁶ Interview of John Chomos by Brian Feeney, May 11, 1988, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series NPS, no. 159*:

³⁷ Interview of Millie Cranford by Nancy Dallett, November 14, 1985, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series KECK, no. 081*. Emphasis added.

Johnstown, PA at the turn of the century.³⁸ In New Brunswick, New Jersey in 1905, in-group marriage between Hungarians was common (only Budapest and Cleveland had more Hungarian speakers), but women listed in the local census as Hungarian were married to men born in Austria, Bohemia, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the U.S. Hungarian men were married to women born in the same places, as well as England and Canada.³⁹ Beyond marriage, other facets of community life made ethnic blocs porous. “Whomever did have an establishment better be able to talk two or three languages to be able to maintain a good [business],” John Chomos remembered.⁴⁰ “I was singing in every club,” regardless of language, Philomena Skapik recounted, “with the Hungarians, with the . . . Bohemian[s].”⁴¹

Austro-Hungarian migrants’ multilingualism eased the difficulty of learning English for many of them, as they were already used to learning and juggling multiple languages. “The language [English] was so easy to me compared to German,” Emery Kanarik recalled.” “It was marvelous. German had all these rules about feminine gender and neutral and masculine gender, . . . Your nose has to have a gender. It’s just ridiculous. . . . English, compared to this, was a cinch.”⁴²

³⁸ Morawska, “The Internal Status Hierarchy in the East European Immigrant Communities of Johnstown, Pa., 1890-1930’s,” *Social History* 16 (Fall 1982). 84. Mutual Intelligibility of Languages in the Slavic Family estimated the mutual intelligibility of Eastern Slovak and Rusyn at 82%.

³⁹ David Burden Smith, “The Hungarians in New Brunswick, New Jersey to 1920: A Social Geography,” (M.A. Thesis: Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey, 1965).

⁴⁰ Interview of John Chomos by Brian Feeney, May 11, 1988, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series NPS, no. 159*.

⁴¹ Interview of Philomena Samek Skapik by Janet Levine, February 15, 1994, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series EI, no. 425*.

⁴² Interview of Emery Kanarik by Andrew Phillips, May 24, 1989, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series DP, no. 029*.

When, with successive generations, knowledge of multiple European languages waned, served not simply to Americanize Europeans but as a language that facilitated continued communication between disparate Austro-Hungarian communities. In Cleveland's Buckeye Road neighborhood, at one time the largest concentration of Hungarian-speakers outside of Hungary, English offered a neutral language of communication. "When we stepped out" in Buckeye, John Chomos recalled, "we spoke English to my Slovak friend, or to my Irish friend, or to my German friend."⁴³ The Cleveland Board of Education's "Many Peoples, One Language" campaign promoted English in a multicultural city. The advertisement for adult English and citizenship courses featured the text in multiple languages, including English, Italian, Polish, Hungarian, and Hebrew, all in the same text size. The image featured an obviously immigrant couple, but without any specific markers of European national dress.⁴⁴ While language policies favoring German and Hungarian in Austria and Hungary were favorite grievances among nationalists – American social scientist Emily Balch explained that nationalists in Europe "indignantly repudiate the use of languages which they understand perfectly well"⁴⁵ -- nationalists seldom complained about the predominance of English in the United States.⁴⁶ While some might lament the loss of the languages of the motherland, even to the most ardent nationalists, learning English had fewer overtones of national betrayal.

⁴³ Interview of John Chomos by Brian Feeney, May 11, 1988, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series NPS, no. 159*.

⁴⁴ "Cleveland: Many Peoples, One Language." Broadside.

⁴⁵ Emily Greene Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910), 33.

⁴⁶ The main exception was supporters of parochial schools, who saw private education as a way to teach both Catholic values and minority languages outside of the American public school system.

Ethnic Categorization in the Migration Bureaucracy and American Racial Science

As migrants left Austria-Hungary and entered the United States, countless European and American officials, fellow passengers, new neighbors, and employers asked them to explain their national background. Austria-Hungary's dualism and its mix of nationalities stymied American officials and social scientists. The American classification system of aliens in migrant records contributed to the ethnicization of migrants by often requiring that they articulate (or be assigned) a single race, nationality, mother tongue, or other marker of national identity. The categorization schemes of the U.S. Immigration Bureau, ethnographers, and racial theorists on both sides of the Atlantic indeed created the spectrum of ethnicities that outsiders would recognize. The U.S. government and social scientific community employed evolving classification systems that expanded and contracted and lumped migrants very differently in the decades between 1880 and 1930. Racial theories assigned essential characteristics to migrant groups and touted ethnic traits that made them appear to be better or worse employees. These types of theories and competition for jobs sometimes recast labor competition ethnically. Migrants' rivalry in the United States for jobs and Americans' goodwill were easily confused with homeland "hatreds," but in reality these American situations were creating or heightening European antagonisms, rather than reflecting or continuing them.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Governmental reports, settlement publications, employers, and unions had varying grasps of the relationship between ethnic tensions and labor tensions. While many observers were quick to ascribe ethnic dimensions to labor conflicts, these have likely been overstated. For every workplace scenario that divided workers by ethnicity, another brought them together, like the Kundtz factories in Cleveland. For past treatments of these matters, see Gordon, Edwards, and Reich, *Segmented Work, Divided Workers*, and John Bodnar, *Workers' World*.

The U.S. Immigration Bureau's categorization scheme was particularly influential, despite being wildly inconsistent and rather unorthodox. In 1902, the commissioner for the Royal Hungarian Commission of Agriculture, wrote to T.V. Powderly, the U.S. Commissioner-General of Immigration, to complain about the Immigration Office's misunderstanding of Austria-Hungary's dualism: Until 1899, migrants were categorized as coming from Bohemia, Hungary, or Austria. "Though this division was incorrect from the diplomatic standpoint," he explained, nevertheless it was easy to show the exact number of the Emigration of Hungarian citizens and of Austrian citizens," presumably by adding the figures for Bohemia and Austria together. "Austria-Hungary consisted since 1867 of two separat [sic] monarchies . . . ; there is no Austro-Hungarian Government, and no Austro-hungarian citizenship, there are only Hungarian citizens, and Austrian citizens."⁴⁸ From 1899 to 1910, the list of options included "Bohemian and Moravian," "Bulgarian," "Croatian and Slovenian," "Dalmatian, Bosnian, and Herzegovian," "German," "Hebrew," "North Italian," "Magyar," "Polish," "Roumanian," "Ruthenian" (other places written as "Russniak"), and "Slovak." Needless to say, some of these descriptors had more staying power than others. After 1910, the list was revised to reshuffle some of the categories, eventually eliminating northern Italian and combining several Balkan groups.

Geographic and nationality designations were further complicated by the breakup of the Empire after 1918 and the creation of new states, which will be discussed further in chapter 5. Post-war practices add another layer of complication and ambiguity to pre-war nationality designations. Migrants were assigned to quotas based on the state that their

⁴⁸ Letter from Alajos Paikert to T.V. Powderly, March 3, 1902, MNL OL, K26 575 cs., 20 tét.

place of origin now belonged, not by nationality,⁴⁹ but US citizenship paperwork began to include additional information in the 1920s to clarify migrants' pre- and post-war homelands and "race." Gergely Dorkó of Mollenaur, PA, who received his naturalization in April 1920, was still listed with a previous naturalization as Austria-Hungary, which had ceased to exist as a political entity in 1918. A few years later, Louise Kroncsis of Canton, OH who became a citizen in 1929, was listed as "race Magyar; former nationality Rumanian," adapting to the increased complexity of borders in the post-war era.⁵⁰

American social scientists, some of whom were deeply interested in migrants, likewise contributed to enscribing as well as muddling the nationality categories of America's East Europeans arrivals. In Margaret Frances Byington and Paul Kellogg Underwood's *Homestead*, part of the Pittsburgh Survey, they used "Slav" as a "generic term to include Magyars and Lithuanians, as well as those of the Slavic race."⁵¹ The Dillingham Commission's "Dictionary of Races or Peoples" entry for "Slav" sought to analyze the "many-sided Slavic stock" by the "numerous 'races' which comprise it." The "Classification of Slavic Tongues" included an Eastern & Southern Division of Russian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, and Slovenian, each with numerous sub-categories, and a Western Division of Bohemian (of which Tsekh [sic], Moravian, and Slovak were sub-categories), Polish, and Lusatian (Wend). Dillingham commented that the list was "of Slavic languages, not of physical races," noting that Bosnian and Herzegovian had been omitted, and raising questions over the exact placement of Macedonian, Bulgarian, and

⁴⁹ Emergency Quota Act, 67th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 8, 1921.
<http://library.uwb.edu/static/USimmigration/42%20stat%205.pdf>

⁵⁰ AHF, Oversize Box.

⁵¹ Margaret Frances Byington and Paul Kellogg Underwood, *Homestead: The Households of a Mill Town* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910), 12.

others. The Dictionary's entry on Slovaks raised the issue of whether Slovaks were actually Moravians or Czechs, and attempted to explain the diversity of Slovak dialects. As social scientists of all stripes – ethnographers, linguists, sociologists, anthropologists – and policy-makers published their findings, the options of nationality categories expanded and shrank, affixing some into the position of a “race” and others as only speakers of a “dialect.” This was dependent, in large part, on group size, the number of people in the United States to study, and the ability of some writers of a “nationality” or “race” to publish in English about it to gain an American social scientific audience. Social scientists scrambled to discover the truth, largely blind to their own role in creating the categories of East European nationalities.

The US press used a jumble of governmental, social scientific, and local labels (sometimes migrant-generated, sometimes nativist slurs), expanding but further inscribing the dominance of ethnic categories. Outbreaks of labor unrest or localized violence among migrants were often ascribed to old ethnic hatreds in the American press, rather than disputes over real issues in migrants' American lives. The *Washington Post* reported in 1903, for example, that the city of Whiting's “Slavs engage[d] in battle.” “On one side are Servians, Hungarians, and Croatians. On the other side,” it continued, “are those designated by the generic name.” All the police could deduce were that the “contest[,] begun in Europe,” was now being “fought out on the soil of Indiana,” a highly unlikely transatlantic continuation of a homeland brawl in the Midwest.⁵² In white American parlance, “Hunkie” and “Bohunk” did not strictly slur Hungarians and

⁵² *Washington Post*, Aug. 14, 1903.

Bohemians, respectively. The terms reflected Americans' ignorance of the migrants in their communities, but also the reality of migrant communities' national ambiguity.⁵³

Bureaucratic and other categories of nationality were selectively embraced and challenged by migrants, depending on local conditions and the development of national movements in their vicinity. Historian Josef Barton found that Cleveland's Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Slovaks, Poles, and Hungarians developed some pride in a "hunky" identity.⁵⁴ The multilingualism and lack of a firm ethnic identity of migrants confounded migration bureaucrats and Americans, and the shifting official definitions of what "nationality" or "race" continually influenced the roster of peoples migrants might belong to. Immigrant nationalists could use governmental or social scientific evidence to lend legitimacy to their national projects and bring others in to the nationalist fold. But as even the social scientists noted, many of the debates about nationality and race were muddled by religion. It was in churches, most of all, that migrants would be ethnicized.

Joint Institutions and the Parting of Ways: Migrant Churches Form and Split

From 1890 to the outbreak and aftermath of the First World War, scores of previously multi-ethnic institutions in the United States split into more linguistically exclusive institutions and hundreds founded by and for single groups. Churches, clubs, and societies had begun more inclusively, only to splinter along developing ethno-linguistic lines near and after the turn of the century. The parting of ways could take all forms, from an intentional separation to the slow building to dominance of a single

⁵³ David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White*, 43-45.

⁵⁴ Josef J. Barton, *Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 20.

language group. The dramatic effects of turn-of-the-century nationalization demand that we answer why migrants from Austria-Hungary were initially willing and *eager* to found multi-lingual institutions in the United States and why, at points both before and *after* World War I, many parted ways. Furthermore, we must explain why this history of early multiethnic roots was successively written out of the historical record. Churches are the most effective venue of migrant life to tell this story. Anniversary yearbooks, along with other institutional records, shed light on organizations' multiethnic or multilingual foundings, and also illustrate how these early collaborations were jettisoned from institutional histories with each passing anniversary. Hungarian-Slovak Protestant churches founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were the most common but by no means the only category of collaborative ventures among Austro-Hungarian migrants that later split into ethnically exclusive institutions.

“The First Magyar and Slovak Evangelic Lutheran & Reformed St. Paul Church” in Pittsburgh was among the first churches, if not the first, founded by Austro-Hungarian migrants in North America. According to a church history from 1960, “This unnatural union, which the Hungarian and Slovak brethren founded, collapsed” within two years in a “split of nationalities.”⁵⁵ The division of the church into the “Slovak Lutheran Church of Braddock” and the Calvinist-denomination “Pittsburgh and Vicinity First Hungarian Reformed Church” within two short years might suggest a simple split by nationality, but that notion ignores the reasons behind the church’s joint founding itself and the rapidly changing conception of what would have been considered “natural” in the 1890s. For migrants coming to the Pittsburgh area, interactions among Hungarian- and Slovak-

⁵⁵ “The Sowing and the Sowers” [100th anniversary album], (Pittsburgh: First Hungarian Reformed Church, 1990).

speakers was by no means exceptional. The title page of the church's original collection book celebrated "God's help" in the church's founding, in both Hungarian and Slovak,⁵⁶ the collaboration seems to have been completely genuine. The Lutheran and Reformed [Calvinist] union, however ethnically or linguistically coded, was the result of a compromise, as the two churches' future *denominational* distinction also suggests; while Lutherans and Calvinists both preached the gift of God's salvation through faith alone, Calvinists believed that faith itself was a gift that God gave only to a predestined few. Eight miles stood between the church in Pittsburgh and the new Slovak church in Braddock, indicating that distance and growing numbers in the city's vicinity also prompted the planting of the new Braddock church. Pastor Francis Ferenczy is said to have brought together Hungarian and Slovak Reformed people from a number of surrounding towns that he visited, including Homestead, Duquesne, and Rankin, all of which subsequently developed stand-alone churches in the coming decade.⁵⁷ Furthermore, a number of Slovak-speaking parishioners in Pittsburgh continued to worship with the First Hungarian Reformed Church, which continued to hold six Slovak-language services a year.⁵⁸ Thus, to interpret the 1891 split of the Pittsburgh church as an *ethnic* fissure does not completely stand up in retrospect.

While the Pittsburgh church split very early in its history, as many other hybrid undertakings did once they had the financial wherewithal to do so, a number of multi-ethnic churches remained intact well into the twentieth century. The heightened nationalism of the First World War and the subsequent peace settlements became the

⁵⁶ AHF, III.5, UCC, Pittsburgh, First Hung. Ref. Church, Box 2.

⁵⁷ "Seventy-Fifth Anniversary, 1890-1965," (Pittsburgh: The First Hungarian Reformed Church, 1965).

⁵⁸ "The Sowing and the Sowers."

impetus for severing long-standing unions into separate entities. American migrant churches pursued disunion partly as a response to new European borders and geographies of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. As the ecclesiastical centers of power shifted away from Europe to American-based denominations, multi-ethnic churches faced new challenges and overwhelmingly pursued the single-nationality option that we mistakenly assume they had chosen from the outset. In many ways like the Pittsburg church, the Perth Amboy Hungarian Reformed Church, founded in 1903 by Felvidék – or upland area – migrants from Hungary, is a classic example of a collaborative ethnic institution. In the album for the church’s twenty-fifth anniversary, celebrated in 1928, the historical profile for the church noted that “the Slovak speaking Reformed element took an active part in the churchlife from the very beginning.”⁵⁹ Slovak language services were offered one Sunday a month and even expanded as late as 1911. What, then, went wrong? “In 1924 the Slovak members, who had been connected with the church from the very beginning, seceded from the church. This action was taken by them on account of the political troubles and antagonism in Europe. The Slovak Reformed people here,” it continues, “were influenced by Bohemian Presbyterian ministers and their secession was made in a peaceful manner. The great majority went into the Presbyterian Church and a few remained with us who were satisfied with Magyar services.” Doctrinally nearly identical, the split was much more clearly ethnically motivated.

These few short lines are profoundly telling in the ways that they confirm post-war nationalism but at the same time subtly challenge narratives about ethnic exclusivity. First, the cooperative venture lasted for over twenty years. Second, the source claims that the split was prompted by *European*, rather than local, circumstances. Third, the split is

⁵⁹ AHF, III.5 HRCA, Perth Amboy, NJ.

said to have been caused by outside agitators in the form of Czech clergy, rather than disputes originating from within the community. Existing documents make it hard to definitively confirm or deny these latter two causal factors, but the church's early history nevertheless suggests decades of unremarkably peaceful shared history, followed by a seemingly velvet divorce. A bifurcating institution often yields a second set of documents from which to examine the institution's history, in this case in the form of a 1951 Golden Jubilee Book of the Slovak Calvinist Presbyterian Union, which has a chapter on the church coming out of the Perth Amboy split. The history therein clarifies for us the breakdown of the administrative roles that Austro-Hungarian governing bodies had played in immigrant churches and how that brought about ethnic separatism. When the Perth Amboy pulpit became vacant in 1923 with the bilingual pastor, Reverend Nánassy's, return to Europe, there was no longer a mother church mechanism to secure a bilingual minister and only Hungarian-speaking candidates applied for the position. It was then that Slovak speakers withdrew from the church and arranged for a Slovak Presbyterian minister from Jersey City to hold weekly services for them, founding the Slovak Presbyterian Church of Perth Amboy.⁶⁰ The Slovak yearbook speaks rather amicably about the split, as though a bilingual successor to Rev. Nánassy would have continued a viable union. A sizable faction of the remaining Hungarian-speaking congregation splintered off to found the John Calvin Magyar Reformed Church just a mile away over disputes about American denominational affiliations; not all splits were national.

The Perth Amboy case leaves us with as many questions as answers, but suggests a clear alternative to Pittsburgh's rapid, though also rather amicable, division along

⁶⁰ *Golden Jubilee Book of the Slovak Calvinist Presbyterian Union* (1951).

ethno-linguistic lines: a long-standing union with a post-war split. This alternative lends evidence to the interpretation that it required some ethnically divisive catalyst to drive multi-lingual congregations into difference national camps. As in Perth Amboy, it was a staffing problem that split the Slovak and Hungarian Calvinist Church in Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania. While the original minister had been bilingual, like many of the parishioners, and offered services in both Slovak and Hungarian, his successor could not preach in Slovak, angering many of the Slovak-speaking members who saw their native-language services disappear. In that case it was the Hungarian-speaking minister and some members who left to found their own church, leaving the original church to the Slovak-speaking congregants.⁶¹

In other cases churches' multilingual foundings were rewritten to fit national tropes. These retellings of church histories can seem blind to the different priorities of early migrant communities and the constructedness of national projects. At the start of the twentieth century, "the Slovak Calvins living in Greater Cleveland . . . were . . . worshipping God in three different Hungarian churches," a history of the Slovak Calvinist United Presbyterian Church in Lakewood, Ohio explained. "Even their names were enrolled in the membership of those churches." While the author recounts this as a cause for dismay, the integration of Slovak- and Hungarian-speakers in both work and social life was completely normal in the Cleveland vicinity (as it had been in northern Hungary). Why do these later yearbooks scoff at interethnic worship? The proposal to found an exclusively Slovak Protestant congregation arose in 1917, well into the war, followed the founding of an exclusively Slovak men's fraternal lodge. The creation of an ethnically exclusive social space in the form of a fraternal club apparently prompted

⁶¹ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, 186.

dissatisfaction with the lack of a comparably exclusive religious space. The yearbook states in no uncertain terms that “when Men’s Lodge No. 33 was organized and the people had an occasion for frequent meetings which afforded them opportunity to exchange their views, the enthusiasm [‘to organize an independent Slovak Calvinistic Church’] was revived.”⁶² By 1917 many Slovak-speaking Americans and Hungarian-speaking Americans hoped for different outcomes for the war.

It is easy to forget that amid growing national separatism and linguistic differentiation, ethnic churches also increasingly had to accommodate *English*. Many later-generation immigrants were multilingual in the sense of a single East European mother tongue and English, with parishioners no longer speaking other languages of the Empire. Holding a joint Hungarian-Slovak service would no longer be a mutually understood sharing of linguistic affinities as it had been at the outset, but instead a dated practice. The minister and presumably some older church members could continue to play a bridging role, but finding truly trilingual clergy — fluent in Hungarian, Slovak, and English — was an even taller order and increasingly difficult with U.S. immigration restrictions enacted in 1924.

Clergy, we see, were highly influential in the national disposition of migrants. As educated and often middle-class professionals, clergymen were overwhelmingly multilingual and initially among the most significant go-betweens between migrant communities and homelands; at the same time, they were also more likely to be nationalists than their parishioners, and many occupied influential community leadership positions to spread nationalism. Some persisted successfully in their roles as cultural intermediaries and leaders of peaceful multilingual congregations; others committed

⁶² AHF, Slovak Calvinist United Presbyterian Church, Lakewood, OH.

themselves whole heartedly to a national cause; others returned to Hungary. “Many shifted back and forth in identity,” historian Béla Vassady explains, “greatly frustrating and irritating both their Slovak and Magyar compatriots.”⁶³ “Apparently,” Vassady continues, “Hungarian and Slovak observers alike had difficulty accepting the fact that . . . the shifting of ethnic identity more often reflected practical opportunism and community politics than ideologically motivated nationalism.”⁶⁴ Indeed, Vassady’s observation of community politics is crucial: the language mix, nationalist sentiment, political tenor, and everyday concerns were widely different in a majority-Slovak congregation of Pittsburgh versus the mixed congregation of Bridgeport, Connecticut versus a primarily Hungarian parish in Indiana. Because of all of these factors, as well as their personal sentiments, clergy could be found all along the political spectrum from Habsburg loyalist to ethnic separatist.

Two points on this spectrum that deserve special attention are so-called panslavs and magyarones. Clerics’ nationalism could be expressed in conflicting ways in their relationship to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy: loyalty to the Hungarian government and/or the Habsburg monarchy, indifference to politics, or support for ideologies that gave greater autonomy or a new state for the Empire’s Slavs or emerging ethno-linguistic groups. Slovak-speaking clergy were present, for example, among Czech-oriented “Panslav” groups, exclusive Slovak nationalist groups, as well as pro-Hungarian “Magyarones.” This plurality among the largely Catholic Slovak clergy (who, we should note, very often preached to non-Slovak-speaking parishioners) illustrates some of the many ways migrants themselves chose to align themselves nationally and politically, and

⁶³ Vassady, “Mixed Ethnic Identities among Immigrant Clergy,” 55.

⁶⁴ Vassady, “Mixed Ethnic Identities among Immigrant Clergy,” 59.

how clerics' nationality views could be politically significant. "This great aggregate of humanity in a strange land" one Hungarian government official noted, "is for the most part in the hands of the priests, owing to the profoundly religious spirit of the Slovaks. . . . This great moral factor, however," he lamented, "is unfortunately wielded against us. . . . Only seven [of the Roman Catholic congregations are] presided over by patriotic priests [loyal to the Hungarian government], while the Slovak and Bohemian priests of Pan-Slavic sympathies, hailing from the Western Highlands lead the other 35."⁶⁵

Political Magyarism was widespread among a segment of emigrant clergy in the United States, as were accusations of panslavism. Middle-class professionalization in Hungary's growing school system, economic system, and urban cultural modernization were the *sine qua non* of pro-Hungarian Magyarism and also anti-Hungarian Slavic nationalisms. Culturally chauvinist elements of Magyarization abounded and chafed at many rising intelligentsia, while others experienced its benefits far more than its repressions. Among Rusin intelligentsia, according to John-Paul Himka, "the Magyarone orientation" was characterized as "*natione Hungarus, gente Ruthenus*; that is, Hungarian as far as political consciousness and high culture was concerned, with some room for an oral Ruthenian vernacular, colorful ethnographic peculiarities, and *Lokalpatriotismus*."⁶⁶ This offered an elevation of status and an acceptable expression of Rusin national pride. For clergy in northern Hungary, Magyarism could share political underpinnings with Austro-Slavism, believing, at least for the time being, that the Slovak

⁶⁵ "Hungary Exposed."

⁶⁶ John-Paul Himka also traces an "anti-Ukrainian sense of Ruthenian identity" to both Magyarone and Russophile roots, a strange combination before World War I but one that nonetheless forged early Rusinophylism after the war. See Himka, "The Construction of Nationality in Galician Rus': Icarian Flights in Almost All Directions," in Ronald Grigor Suny and Michael D. Kennedy, eds., *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 147.

nation's interests were best served within Hungary. The Hungarian government promoted Magyarism among emigrant clergy through kingdom-wide Magyarization in mid-late nineteenth century Hungary broadly,⁶⁷ and specifically through the intentional selection of clergy loyal to the government to serve emigrant congregations, which will be discussed further in the subsequent chapter.

Nationalists and governmental officials feuded endlessly over whether specific priests were too Magyar or too panslav, loyal or traitorous Slovaks or Hungarians. Long before historians like Tara Zahra, Pieter Judson, Jeremy King, and others began analyzing the side-switching, hedging of bets, and seemingly contradictory behavior of the so-called “nationally indifferent,” in Europe, Monika Glettler and Bela Vassady identified the lives of Jozef Kossalko, Ignác Jaskovic Ferenc Dénes, Imre Haitinger, and other priests, mostly from the Kassa diocese, as archetypes of ambiguity. These men engaged in Slovak national life in the United States, serving multilingual congregations, working for Slovak-language newspapers. But they did not seek political quarrels with the home government; for example, their papers were politically neutral or pro-Hungarian. Kossalko and Dénes were both active in the First Catholic Slovak Union, undermining their otherwise largely Magyar credentials. But when Kossalko founded the First Catholic Slovak Union, he intended it primarily as a religious alternative to the secular National Slovak Society, emphasizing religious over national community. Particularly among clergy, but also their congregants, religion and nation could be intertwined; for most migrants, like priests, religion initially won out. A Magyar

⁶⁷ For treatments of Magyarization, or the promotion of Hungarian language and culture through the public functions of government, see, for just one example, Bálint Varga, *The Monumental Nation: Magyar Nationalism and Symbolic Politics in Fin-de-siecle Hungary* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016).

political orientation reflected a “complex, enigmatic nature” and featured “frustration and mental anguish” for priests⁶⁸ when the development of East European nationalisms in the United States pressured many of them in increasingly nationalist communities to take a side. Some embraced Slavic nationalism confidently and their congregations followed, while others continued to emphasize their religious mission in the facing of rising competition from secular nationalist organizations.

These cases raise the counterfactual but fascinating question of how the ethnic tagging of migrant institutions, already begun by the turn of the century, would have played out without the acceleration of national separatism spurred by World War I.

Immigrant Institutions and the Ambiguities Beyond Ethnic and Religious Identities

As East European migrant communities became more established in the United States, other forms of association and socialization joined churches in migrants’ lives of leisure. Migrant organizations flourished, most of which were religious or religiously affiliated, but some of which were secular. Many migrant organizations sought to nurture their members’ home culture(s), being a bridge into increasingly political nationalism and, for some, active nation-building.

The disjointed correlation between religion and ethnicity across Austria-Hungary was a defining factor in the Empire’s diversity, cohesion, and division and this disjointed correlation has an equally important history among migrants in the United States. In Austria-Hungary, Catholicism unified under one Church many imperial subjects who spoke an abundance of languages in geographically disparate parts of the Empire. Some Protestant denominational affiliations in Hungary had marked linguistic affiliations, such

⁶⁸ Vassady, “Mixed Ethnic Identities among Immigrant Clergy.”

at the association between Reformed Calvinism with Hungarianism and Greek Catholicism's strength in Rusin-speaking areas, but these correlations were not without exceptions or complications. For example, most Slovak-speaking Protestants were Lutheran but some could be found in Reformed worship communities, particularly in borderland regions. Hungary promoted "Jewish" as a religious affiliation, not an ethnic or racial one, in contrast to most other areas of Europe, encouraging Jews to also identify themselves with an ethnic nation.⁶⁹

Whereas migrants' primary group affiliation in Austria-Hungary came from confession, the development of national projects abroad transferred the locus of identity to ethno-linguistic group. This transition was never complete and unfolded in different ways in different places, but this greater emphasis on national affiliation vis-a-vis religious affiliation in describing oneself to others was widely shared among migrants and also reflected in the organization of migrant institutions. Although the American immigrant congregations discussed above prioritized geography, denomination, and shared languages in founding churches, in the years leading up to World War I ethnicity around a single shared language *became* the dominant form of migrant organization.

Religious affiliation was central to the identity of many Europeans and, as we have seen, an imperfect fit with national affiliations. In interviewing older migrants, Morawska found that "an old immigrant, asked about his nationality (ethnic background) would hesitate, ponder and then alternate between the two" – in this case Rusin and Slovak -- "correcting himself back and forth and adding to his own confusion by

⁶⁹ Some scholars consider this evidence of Hungary's embrace of its Jewish population, while others consider such policies as forced assimilation.

declaring religious adherence (Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic).”⁷⁰ Migrant John Chomos, while identifying as a Hungarian, went to a German Lutheran church, becoming Lutheran although he had been raised a Greek Catholic.⁷¹ Mark Stolarik found in Bethlehem, PA that Slovak-speaking Greek Catholics took on a Rusin identity when they affiliated with the Rusin-majority Greek Catholic church, instead of the Slovak-speaking Roman Catholic church⁷², valuing their Greek Catholicism over their Slovakness. This adoption of a Rusin identity was not necessarily purposeful, but a community-based evolution or forging of identity tied to local circumstances and expression of worship. An excellent local priest or the geographic proximity to a church building could draw congregants.

Religious affiliation far outweighed language of instruction for many parents when approving of marriage partners or choosing schools for their children. In Homestead, “the only Catholic school was St. Michael's, and it was a Slovak school,” Elizabeth Martin (nee Feczko) remembered. “So we had to learn the Slovak language, the English language, because we only knew Hungarian.” A teacher at the school, Sister Alberta, used her own multilingualism to help the students who did not speak Slovak. “At lunchtime she would take all these Hungarian children into her office and she would translate or have us repeat or read.” Despite the additional difficulty of learning a new European language that the family did not identify with, Elizabeth’s mother, Mary Feczko, considered it worth it for her daughters to have a Catholic education. While Mary Feczko prioritized confession over language, her experiences in Europe might have

⁷⁰ Morawska, “Internal Status Hierarchy,” 103.

⁷¹ Interview of John Chomos by Brian Feeney, May 11, 1988, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series NPS, no. 159: Interview of John Chomos by Brian Feeney, May 11, 1988.*

⁷² Stolarik, *Growing up on the South Side*, 49, 51-59.

indicated that an additional language of instruction did not have to mean any negation of her family's first language, and objected to the coupling of a national judgment with her religious choice for her daughter's schooling: when registering Elizabeth for the school, the "Catholic Slovak . . . pastor had written down F-E-C-K-O and that sort of angered my mother because she wanted a Z in it," a more Hungarian spelling.⁷³ With the priest's intervention, Mary Feczko's school choice became about ethnic politics at the same time as religious education.

Organizations founded around either shared confession, perceived nation, and language struggled with issues of inclusion and exclusion, national activism and national indifference, their secular purpose and their religious purpose, even as they gained enormously in membership and popularity. We can track migrants' enthusiasm for ethnic cultural life and nationalist projects through membership, events, and also monetary contributions. A range of organizations and causes – family, local churches and associations, and homeland projects – competed for working migrants' meager leisure time and donations. As we know, immigrants were most likely to invest their time in labor to send money back across the Atlantic specifically to family, but investing in ethnic-American institutions would strengthen the community there and do good work through churches, parochial schools, and cultural organizations. Leaders attempted to simultaneously build up institutions for the benefit of migrants personally but also for "the nation." One Slovak-American estimated that "welfare societies" had paid out a "grand total of . . . over \$250,000,000" by 1944, and that the publishing of Slovak-American newspapers cost half a million dollars annually. Alongside the commonly

⁷³ Interview of Elizabeth Martin by Nancy Dallett, January 22, 1986, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series KECK, no. 125: Interview of Elizabeth Martin by Nancy Dallett, January 22, 1986.*

recognized organizations of mutual benefit societies and churches, clubs like the Czech and Slovak Sokols were important in building national life abroad. In addition to strengthening “physical culture,” the “Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol of the United States’s aim was “to educate and instruct its members in the Slovak language and history,”⁷⁴ subjects that were routinely deemphasized if not excluded from education in Hungary and, of course, American public schools.

Many secular organizations, like churches, started out serving a wider subset of the multilingual Austro-Hungarian community, though these too were sometimes quickly made ethnically exclusive. Newark’s First Hungarian Sick Benefit Society, a very early Austro-Hungarian immigration organization, was founded by a mixed membership of Hungarian-, German-, and Slovak-speakers. A Budapest newspaper reported in 1884, as reported by the newspaper *Amerikai Nemzetőr*, that “The society’s name is Hungarian, conversational language Slovak — and it’s [sic] books are administered in German; but whatever they do or say — their feelings are Hungarian and [they] are proud that they are Hungarian, as the colors on their badge also indicate.” One of the long-term goals of Hungarian members of the group, the article continued, was its “operative Magyarization.”⁷⁵ (What “operative Magyarization” means is unclear, but it raises many questions.) By the late 1890s, one of the Bohemian sokols (gymnastics clubs) in Chicago had broadened to become the “Bohemian-Slovak Falcons.”⁷⁶

Impulses varied among communities as to whether service to the nation was part of their service to God, or if God was best served through institutions that served a

⁷⁴ University of Pittsburgh Archives, Slovak Gymnastic Union Sokol, Lodge 255, Box 1

⁷⁵ Excerpt from “Budapest” via “*Amerikai Nemzetőr*,” AHF 1.3 Kende Géza Papers, Box 5, 1887-1930

⁷⁶ *Svornost*, May 17, 1898.

broader swath of the migrant community with national questions put aside. Often times very local circumstances in the make-up of the migrant community or the activity of particularly ardent nation-builders dictated how this would be balanced. The Johnstown, PA newspaper *Cerkovnjaja Nauka*, published by the Greek Catholic church, addressed both the Slovaks and Rusins⁷⁷ who made up the membership, serving one Catholic community in two languages. To immigrant nation-builders, migrants should not have to compromise their nation. If there were no congregation in their mother tongue, rather than use an “other’s,” they should found one. Thus, in New York City, conversely, the existence of an older Slavic (primarily Czech-speaking) community and the comparatively lesser importance of specific Protestant denominational differences prompted instead the founding of ethnic churches. It helped, of course, that the city had large enough of a population to host a number of Eastern European churches. The first Hungarian church in New York opened membership to all Hungarian immigrants regardless of religious affiliation⁷⁸, including Protestants, Catholics, and a self-professed Jew among their initial members. Chicago’s Bohemian community, on the other hand, struggled to forge a pan-Bohemian community unobstructed by religious quarrels. “In all important national undertakings, and especially at festivities, the Bohemians should act in harmony,” the newspaper *Svornost* declared in 1884.

In this way we will create a good name among other nationalities. On these occasions to classify ourselves as good Catholics or Liberals would be an absurdity. Having these ideas in their minds, the Bohemian Sokols [gymnastic clubs] have invited the Bohemians belonging to the Catholic church to their festivity thus emphasizing that the Sokols are not sectarian in matters of religion. Every good and honest undertaking and this one too, will always find a destructive individual, whose desire is to keep the local Bohemian community divided into two hostile groups and who endeavors to fire again the hatred of one

⁷⁷ Morawska, “Internal Status Hierarchy,” 84.

⁷⁸ Puskás, *From Hungary to the United States*, 186.

Bohemian for another. ... Every lawful citizen is welcomed by the Sokols, whether he be a Catholic, Protestant, or an unbeliever; as long as he conducts himself properly he will be treated with honor and respect.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, many nation-based organizations were divided by religious or political affiliation, even as nation-builders hailed the unity of the nation as the most worthy goal. Despite the founding of a secular National Slovak Society in Pittsburgh in 1890, the First Slovak Catholic Union was founded later that year as well as its women's auxiliary in 1892, followed by the Slovak Evangelical Union in 1893 and the Slovak Calvinist Union in 1901. For the founders of these organizations, a religious affiliation set them apart from the secular National Slovak Society. Politics, of course, played a prominent role in all of this. According to June Alexander, Father Kossalko founded a Catholic alternative to the National Slovak Society because he was a Magyarone and "opposed Slovak nationalism"⁸⁰, but also because he feared that part of the process of Americanization was Protestantization. By 1902, according to Alexander, the National Slovak Society had just over 41,000 members, while the First Slovak Catholic and Ladies Union had roughly the same number and the Protestant Slovak Unions had 10,000. Religious societies thus edged out a secular society in migrants' choices, though other factors like the quality of insurance, publications, advocacy, local access, and social factors certainly played a role alongside religious priorities.

Nationalists also had to fight an uphill battle against continued national indifference. The immigrant press was full of entreaties for migrants to support projects for their communities, churches first and foremost but also newspapers themselves, benefit societies, clubs, and discreet events like lectures. In turn-of-the-century Chicago,

⁷⁹ "The Catholics and the Sokols," *Svornost*, Aug. 16, 1884.

⁸⁰ June Alexander, *The Immigrant Church and Community: Pittsburgh's Slovak Catholics and Lutherans, 1880-1915* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 16.

for example, local Bohemians were asked through the paper to contribute to a home for the elderly and an orphanage and to attend T.G. Masaryk's lecture series. Articles calling for support of these institutions and events did not hide their disappointment when donations and interest were limited. "Already there has been much complaint about the indifference of our citizens toward the 'Home.' Everywhere, in everything, we see an almost staggering indifference to the undertaking,"⁸¹ the editors of *Denní Hlasatel* complained in 1901. When T.G. Masaryk came to offer lectures at the University of Chicago the following year, the paper once again complained about Chicago Bohemians' tepid commitment to hear an emerging leader. "Hardly anyone attends his lectures at the university and when he lectures among us, we burden him with useless questions Unionists, socialists, catholics, liberal and protestants can have profit and pleasure from the professor's lectures, but they must not expect Mr. Masaryk to be a referee in our quarrels and arguments."⁸² That newspapers engaged in continual entreaties and admonitions suggests that migrants' commitments to national projects was rarely as great as nation-builders would have liked, especially until promoting national life found the proper way to piggy-back on activities or institutions that offered migrants other benefits in their daily lives.

East European Jews warrant special consideration in the place of religion and ethnicity in migrant life. While Judaism and Yiddish helped forge a Jewish-American community among Jews coming from all over Europe, the often German- and Hungarian-speaking Jews of Austria-Hungary sometimes did not speak Yiddish, and were therefore

⁸¹ *Denní Hlasatel*, Apr. 20, 1901.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Jul. 11, 1902.

set apart from Jews who did.⁸³ One migrant from Poland observed, “The Hungarian, and maybe Roumanians . . . spoke only Roumanian or Hungarian. . . . They don't speak Jewish or they don't, I never hear them.”⁸⁴ The economic and social benefits of Hungarianness in Hungary created a substantial Jewish-Hungarian population that defined itself as Jewish religiously but Hungarian culturally, an identification that migrants carried to America with themselves. Historical sociologist Ewa Morawska noted that Johnstown’s Hungarian-speakers “counted as ‘theirs’ the Jewish Hungarian professionals,” who “not only served the Christian Hungarian community in Johnstown, but took active part in the Hungarian national and cultural celebrations and even in the church events. In no other East European group in the city — although they all dealt regularly with Jews in business and sought their professional services — did social and cultural relations reach such a degree of closeness.”⁸⁵ Many other Hungarian Jewish immigrants confirm this. “We landed in Yorkville because that's where the Germans and Hungarians lived,” Lazarus Salamon explained. “Most of the Jews landed on the East Side but we were closer culturally to the Germans and Hungarians. We would rather mix with them than with Russian Jews. We were too far apart. . . . A lot of Jews from the East Side went to the Bronx, but the Hungarian Jews, . . . they came to Astoria.”⁸⁶ “I cook Hungarian way. I bake Hungarian way. That's my custom,” Julia Blau, who arrived

⁸³ For literature on this topic, see Tibor Frank, *Double Exile: Migrations of Jewish-Hungarian Professionals through Germany to the United States, 1919-1945* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009).

⁸⁴ Interview of Milton and Max Shatsky by Andrew Phillips, June 25, 1989, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series NPS, no. 034: Interview of Milton and Max Shatsky by Andrew Phillips, June 25, 1989*.

⁸⁵ Morawska, “Internal Status Hierarchy,” 84.

⁸⁶ Interview of Lazarus Salamon by Debra Allee, May 29, 1986, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series AKRF, no. 175: Interview of Lazarus Salamon By Debra Allee, May 29, 1986*.

Yoland Jacobowitz, stated simply.⁸⁷ This phenomenon of considering oneself religiously Jewish but culturally Hungarian was ubiquitous and spoke to Jews' greater integration into Hungarian society compared to many other areas of Central and Eastern Europe. Other Jewish American migrants could not always understand this duality. "A Russian/Jew and an Hungarian/Jew are in my opinion two different worlds and one does not and can not understand the other," one mother explained. "My own daughter, who was born in Russia, married an Hungarian/Jewish young man. She adopted all the Hungarian customs and not a trace of a Russian/Jewish woman remained with her."⁸⁸ The plight of the Russian Jewish mother speaks powerfully to the primacy of religion over ethnicity in migrants' affiliations; she presumably made no objections to the marriage since her daughter had succeeded in finding a Jewish man, but found cultural/ethnic reasons to lament the union after the fact. Jews remained integrated in the Hungarian-American community much longer than others, though the abundance of Jewish-American organizations, with their own brand of Jewish nationalism, drew them away from Hungarian circles.

In time, nation-builders and immigrant communities found ways for national life for the social purpose of the migrant community and political activism on American and homeland issues to synergistically support each other. With a firm national community with a rich social life and political clout, some consolidated national groups could seek alliance with either other consolidated national groups on projects of shared interest or

⁸⁷ Interview of Julia Blau by Dana Gumb, September 19, 1985, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series AKRF, no. 36: Interview of Julia Blau by Dana Gumb, September 19, 1985*.

⁸⁸ Letter from Anonymous Russian Jewish Mother, February 08, 1906, in *America's Immigrants: Adventures in Eyewitness History*, Rhoda Hoff, ed. (New York: H.Z. Walck, 1967), 156.

feel that they could safely expand their aspirations without threatening the identity of the core.

Slavic migrant contributions to Slavic American churches, societies, schools, and sokols could be interpreted by Hungarian governmental officials from a nationality politics standpoint anywhere on a spectrum from nationally tagged or proud but innocuous, to dangerously pan-Slavic. Migrant donations to Slavic organizations back in the Habsburg Lands, for example to the Matica Slovenska, were even more directly worrisome and seemingly confirmed Austrian and Hungarian governmental officials' fears about the threat that migration and the development of Slavic nationalism abroad posed to the Empire's stability. When American Slovaks donated modest sums to the Russian Red Cross in relief aid in 1904 during the Russo-Japanese War, Hungarian officials looked into this as seemingly obvious evidence of panslavism.⁸⁹ When Croats protested against Hungarian rule in the city of Agram, today Zagreb, Chicago Bohemians expressed Slavic solidarity against Austro-Hungarian power. "It is our duty as Bohemians, to make collections for the benefit of our Croatian brothers and help them in their battle with the savage Hungarian hordes. Croats live among us, associate with us, and participate in all our national undertakings," Czech-language paper *Denní Hlasatel* reported in 1903. Reminding readers that Croat Chicagoans had supported Bohemian Day in 1893, the paper declared "it is now time that we showed, that we sympathize with the unfortunate Slovak nation, which is being set upon, destroyed and murdered, and that as true Slavs we stand with them."⁹⁰ With the Austro-Hungarian government's concerted effort at the 'containment' abroad of all things Pan-Slavic, voluntary donations of any

⁸⁹ MNL OL, K26, 631 cs., 16 tét.

⁹⁰ *Denní Hlasatel*, May 25, 1903.

size funding potential threats to the social order and any type of coordinated Slavic activity immediately raised alarm.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that much East European “ethnicization” and nation-building took place in the United States, phenomenally accelerated by transatlantic migration. Governmental and social scientific bureaucracies, immigrant churches, and secular immigrant institutions all contributed to the rise of “nationality” or “ethnicity” becoming the primary way that many migrants (though by no means all) described themselves. By 1903, the Austro-Hungarian government and Hungarian officials in particular decided to act more purposefully. In the subsequent chapters, we will see, first, how the homeland Hungarian (and to some extent Austrian) government responded to these developments, and subsequently how some of these East European national developments were spread back to the Habsburg Empire.

Chapter 2

The Long Arm of Austria-Hungary: Managing Migrant Loyalty in the United States

Austria-Hungary's leaders perceived mass migration as a population crisis and were thus highly interventionist in its response to trans-Atlantic migration to try to maintain the loyalty to the Empire of migrants in America. The Austro-Hungarian government initially opposed emigration but subsequently decided instead to insert itself into the migration process, to both restrict and facilitate migration in ways that would theoretically protect citizens but still serve the countries' needs. Historian Tara Zahra has argued that "As policymakers recognized that they could not completely seal their states' borders, they increasingly sought to control and redirect emigration for the good of both migrants and the state. Two strategies," she continues, "served these goals: transforming mass emigration into purposeful forms of 'colonization,'" – planting and nurturing settlements of citizens elsewhere– "and expanding social protections for citizens abroad, creating what amounted to new transnational welfare states."⁹¹ But Austria-Hungary's intervention was more aggressive than that, particularly in regard to nationality politics: governmental intervention sought to keep migrants loyal to their home governments and to quash the threat of competing nationalisms. This chapter will explore the very active role that the Austro-Hungarian government — especially the joint Foreign Ministry and the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office — played in overseeing migrant loyalty in the United States beginning in 1902 until the outbreak of world war, to examine both its successes and the protests it inspired.

The Foreign Ministry and branches of the Hungarian government used a number of methods to address the challenges that accompanied migration (like the depopulation

⁹¹ Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 69.

of some villages and changes in the labor supply) and integrate themselves into migrants' lives abroad. Their tactics began at home and subsequently travelled across the Atlantic. The first method was legislative, to control the terms of legal exit and attempt to channel emigration through certain sanctioned routes. Intervention then followed migrants overseas: the government integrated itself into the migration bureaucracy at multiple levels, putting people on the ground in the United States to watch and work on the government's behalf, and finally attempting to integrate the home government into migrants' American lives through the press, church, and cultural events and institutions. Austria-Hungary operated way-houses for migrants in New York City, utilized a large and growing consular network in the United States itself, subsidized a number of immigrant newspapers and social organizations, sent religious figures to serve migrants' spiritual needs, engaged in cultural education and propaganda, advocated on behalf of its subjects in serious labor problems, and, most controversially, spied on migrants, particularly those whose ideas were perceived as a threat to the Empire. The Austro-Hungarian government would be involved in migrants' journeys in all phases – from departure through the duration of their time in the U.S. to, for some, their return.

Austria-Hungary's responses to emigration and its actions in the United States reveal some of the challenges of the Empire's dualist structure in responding to an issue with both foreign (and therefore joint) and domestic (and therefore separate) implications. While the dual monarchy shared a military and set joint foreign and economic policy, domestic affairs were handled through separate parliaments in Austria and in Hungary. Emigration was not simple to categorize as an exclusively foreign or domestic affair, as it inherently blended the two. The Empire operated unified consulates in various locations

in the United States, serving migrants from both Austria and Hungary, but emigration was just as much a domestic affair in relation to the depopulation of counties, different official Austrian and Hungarian ports of embarkation (Trieste and Fiume, respectively), and different internal needs for labor. Thus, an examination of the long arm of Austria-Hungary inevitably includes Austrian initiatives, Hungarian initiatives, and also concerted efforts.

Hungary concerned itself with emigration and migrants' lives abroad much more actively at the outset of twentieth century than Austria. Governmental approaches differed in the two halves of the Empire on how to manage loyalty and diversity; while Austria experimented with constitutional equality and the distribution of representation for constituent peoples (for example, the Moravian Compromise of 1905, which apportioned seats between German- and Czech-speakers in the Moravian Diet), Hungary pushed for cultural identification as Hungarian (regardless of "blood") to build a more unified and homogenous nation-state. As the emigration of Hungarian-speakers from Hungary picked up in the last years of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, after early years of migration dominated by Slovak- and Rusin-speakers, Hungarian officials became increasingly concerned with maintaining the modest statistical majority that Hungarian-speakers recently held within the Kingdom. Thus, Hungary participated with Austria in the functions of the joint Foreign Ministry's initiatives, but also pursued more intervention in the lives of its migrants abroad under the purview of the Prime Minister's Office and other Hungarian ministries outside the Foreign Ministry that did not require consensus with Austrian officials.

The Austro-Hungarian government sought to address the emigration crisis through several measures, some of which seemed to or really did contradict each other. To limit and control legal migration, Austria-Hungary would define the laws surrounding emigration and support it by providing designated domestic ports and a series of migrant services to facilitate to the process. The Empire essentially traveled across the Atlantic with migrants to support them in their lives abroad bureaucratically, religiously, and culturally. The home governments nurtured ties between the homeland and America, to keep migrants loyal in their time abroad and welcome them home when they were ready to return. But Austria-Hungary's long reach across the Atlantic could just as easily be manipulative as supportive, especially to Slavic nationalists. Austria-Hungary's efforts to maintain the loyalty of the Empire's citizens consistently backfired.

The controversy surrounding Hungary's transatlantic campaign for migrants' loyalty is encapsulated in a scathing 1906 remark from U.S. Immigration Bureau inspector Marcus Braun, who had himself immigrated to the United States from Hungary. He described the position of the Hungarian government as follows: "Let them gather in the American dollars, but let us continue our paternal (?) supervision. Let us prevent them from assimilating with the American people; . . . let us insist that they, instead of becoming Hungarian-Americans, remain American-Hungarians, let us edit for them their newspapers; let us teach them by our own teachers and preachers; let us continue our control over them." "The Government of Hungary," he concluded, "went about the accomplishment of these purposes with a vengeance."⁹²

⁹² Marcus Braun, *Immigration Abuses: Glimpses of Hungary and Hungarians: A Narrative of the Experiences of an American Immigrant Inspector while on Duty in Hungary*. . . . (New York: Pearson Advertising Co., 1906.), 77-78.

Emigration as Perceived Crisis

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Austro-Hungarian government spoke of transatlantic emigration as a growing crisis. Europeans had migrated seasonally for centuries, but transatlantic labor migration, while sharing some similarities with intra-European labor migration, posed new challenges. Transatlantic migrants went further and stayed longer; ultimately, their movements transformed many migrants' home villages and their relationship to it.⁹³ Authorities treated emigration as a "crisis" (rather than as an opportunity, as many migrants did) because of uncertainties it introduced to central issues in Austro-Hungarian politics, including population (particularly in regard to the tax and labor base), nationality, and military questions. "That a nation like that of the Magyars loses yearly a percentage of its inhabitants by emigration is a very deplorable affair," U.S. Immigration Bureau inspector Marcus Braun observed. "The Magyar patriot has indeed reason to weep over the fate of his country," he continued. Mass migration on such a great scale "threatened the very life of the nation."⁹⁴

Population was a concern to Austro-Hungarian governmental officials in both an absolute and relative sense. Emigration, one official explained, threatened "not only Hungary's population with catastrophe, but also its great power standing." As Zahra has explained, "In an era in which demographers saw population as a measure of political, economic, and military strength, these numbers induced panic in the halls of government and beyond. . . . To many, the loss of millions of workers represented a disgraceful symptom of underdevelopment, poverty, and imperial decline."⁹⁵ Emigration was perceived to effect the Empire in so many ways that it prompted leaders from all walks of

⁹³ McCook, *Borders of Integration*.

⁹⁴ Braun, *Immigration Abuses*, 73-74, 77.

⁹⁵ Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 26, 52.

life to object to the changes it would bring. Conservative military officials and landowners, who in Hungary were often also members of the tax-exempt aristocratic parliament, were particularly concerned. “The most harmful” effect, one official explained, was the threat to Hungary’s ability to defend itself with the loss of men eligible for military conscription, particularly in areas around Kosice, Zagrab, and Pozsony/Pressburg where the army was trying to strengthen recruitment. Emigration also caused the “total disintegration” of families and “threaten[ed] the state’s economic strength with serious danger,” the official continued. The most robust workers emigrated; as they were usually young men, this further impeded the establishment of new families. Hungary thus stood on the brink of depopulation, many feared, not only from the loss of emigrating individuals but due to its perceived long-term disruption to natural population growth. If mass migration were to continue unchecked, “Hungary, like the monarchy, would be unable to keep pace in peopling with the other great powers.” In its effect on defense and economic strength, emigration, officials feared, would “induce the decay of the monarchy’s world standing.”⁹⁶

The issue was not just how many people were leaving; it also mattered *who* was leaving. Emigration in general, officials argued, had to be curtailed or controlled, but with special attention to maintaining the numerical supremacy of Hungarian speakers, estimated at roughly 51-54 percent of the population in the 1900 and 1910 censuses. Authorities became alarmed when emigration, initially higher among Slovak speakers from Hungary’s northern counties, began to catch on among Hungarian-speakers as well. Some lawmakers, in fact, saw emigration as a means to Hungary’s linguistic consolidation; Undersecretary of State Count Kuno Klebelsberg explained to Prime

⁹⁶ Report of Jul. 22, 1907. HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3269.

Minister Kálmán Széll that “Providence . . . has granted another population factor which has significantly raised the proportion of the Hungarian element at the expense of the nationalities. . . . This important new factor is the mass emigration of the non-Hungarian population.”⁹⁷ Thus, he concluded, it was “not opportune” to hinder their emigration.⁹⁸ Hungary’s governmental programs to entice return migration, discussed more fully in the next chapter, focused heavily on Hungarian speakers. Governmental attempts to manage migration were by no means limited to the titular nation, but maintenance of a Hungarian-speaking majority was imperative.

High governmental officials feared the grave implications for the economy of migrants’ lost labor potential, while local officials, in many cases, were quicker to see the economic benefits of emigration despite its political and societal costs. Baron Louis de Levay, Royal Hungarian Commissioner of Education, explained that emigration drained the base of taxpayers and laborers who could “very profitably be employed at home.”⁹⁹ Many Hungarian officials would have agreed, of course, that the tax base would be weakened but disagreed about employment prospects. Village mayors frequently cited lack of remunerative employment, at least seasonally, as migration’s primary cause. Villagers sought work abroad primarily because their seasonal jobs did not earn enough to pay their expenses and high property taxes, which overwhelming burdened the peasantry because of aristocratic exemptions.¹⁰⁰ The government claimed it had already

⁹⁷ Quoted in Puskás, *Ties that Bind*, 90.

⁹⁸ Klebelsberg, quoted in Tibor Frank, *Ethnicity, Propaganda, Myth-making: Studies on Hungarian Connections to Britain and America, 1848-1945* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1999), 90.

⁹⁹ Louis de Levay, “The Hungarian Emigration Law,” *North American Review* 182 (Jan. 1906).

¹⁰⁰ Ivan T. Berend, *History Derailed: Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), chap. 4.

begun to take measures at home for industrial development, land settlement, and parceling projects, but insisted that curtailing emigration was the “responsibility” of the royal Hungarian government, to serve as a “counterweight” to this “destructive migration.” Since emigration fever was still so great, the operations would have to be carried out in America as well, so that “we can hold on to emigrants not yet saturated by ideas dangerous to the state, and, when possible, have return migration.”¹⁰¹

After several years of rhetorical opposition to emigration, the Hungarian government concluded in 1902 that migration to the United States could not be stopped and was actually in the country’s economic interest, bringing in about “100 million crowns yearly.” “But it must be prevented from expatriating the people emigrating,” officials insisted. Thus, while the government continued to restrict emigration and control its “manner and route” to best benefit Hungarian businesses and governmental coffers, it endeavored “to keep Hungarian patriotism alive in the emigrants and to bring back all who have finished making their living.” Prime Minister Kálmán Széll promised the establishment of a “bureau or institution in America itself for the protection of emigrants, to keep the Hungarians in America good Hungarian citizens.”¹⁰² While these measures might quell fears at home about permanent depopulation, and did try to eliminate corruption by steamship ticketing companies sending agents to the countryside, they raised new concerns about government paternalism and ran counter to Americans’ desire to see migrants Americanized. Historian Julianna Puskás astutely observed that the outcry in Hungary over emigration was not exclusively about emigration itself, but the

¹⁰¹ Report of Jul. 22 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3269.

¹⁰² Chester to Department, Jun. 18, 1902, NARA, T-531, Roll 4.

“catalogue” of social and political tensions it brought into clearer focus,¹⁰³ including divergent national projects.

Crisis Management through Legislation

In 1902, Austria-Hungary began to take more decisive action to curb and control emigration, first through legislation and subsequently through more on-the-ground means. The Hungarian Parliament passed the Emigration Act in 1903, which outlined measures to curb emigration, channeled migrants who chose to leave Hungary to the Hungarian port of Fiume on the Adriatic, temporarily banned the usual routes via German ports, and laid out the government’s initiatives to maintain migrant loyalty in America. Austria promoted travel through its domestic port of Trieste, served by the Austrian Lloyd, Austro-Americana, and Canadian Pacific Railway steamship lines. As former Hungarian Parliament member Louis de Levay explained to *North American Review* readers three years after the law’s passage, the purpose was to “restrict emigration (as far as possible), and to lead the inevitable current of emigration into a channel that would . . . remove entirely the abuses from which the country and people have sorely suffered,”¹⁰⁴ by which Levay meant “the daring activity of foreign agents and their native accomplices” in swindling poor Hungarians to emigrate for the sake of commissions. The law and subsequent reactions to it reveals Hungary’s desire to become a protector in the emigration process, but also the power of money to trump ideology among politicians legislating migration. The law proved highly controversial and highlighted divisions in Hungarian political camps. Mass emigration persisted, and in fact grew exponentially.

¹⁰³ Puskás, *Ties that Bind*, 93

¹⁰⁴ Levay, “Hungarian Emigration Law,” *NAR*.

The law spurred new abuses even as it attempted to resolve others and became a model for emigration restriction in neighboring countries.

Legislation and other governmental attempts at control of migration put the Hungarian government in the compromised position of profiting from the migration of its own citizens or, worse, outright corruption. In an open letter to the parliamentary committee on emigration from 1905, author G.Z. scathingly characterized the Hungarian government's involvement in the emigration business through the 1903 law as "legalized barter in human beings." It was one thing to protect emigrants from Hungary from known North German Lloyd agents and promote its own port to offer migrants a domestic, economical alternative; it was quite another, G.Z. claimed, for the government to claim an interest in migrants' welfare but operate under the philosophy "Emigration from our country is heavy, let us make it profitable." "As a consequence of these orders," he charged, "... the hyenas of emigration ply their nefarious business under official protection."¹⁰⁵ Prime Minister Széll "was guided by noble intentions" in preparing the emigration bill, but his successor, István Tisza, exhibited "unseemly haste" in granting a monopoly on passenger shipping to the English Cunard Line out of the Hungarian port of Fiume and to the Central Ticket Office in sales, all of which enriched investors in these government sponsored monopolies at the expense of the exodus of the country's own population, all in the name of the good of the country.¹⁰⁶ To start, Fiume was not well positioned or sufficiently developed to become Hungary's only legal embarkation point. "I yield to none in my ardent desire to see our Hungarian port prosper materially," G.Z. explained, "but it is impossible not to notice the unfortunate geographical location of that

¹⁰⁵ G.Z., "Emigration Miseries, Legalized Human Barter...", in Braun, *Immigration Abuses*, 81, 95.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 84-85. For more on the Cunard contract, see Puskás, *Ties that Bind*, 91.

port for the transportation of our emigrants”); while the ocean trip from Bremen to New York took ten days, from Fiume it took eighteen or more. Furthermore, rather than limiting migration, the law and the accompanying monopolies for Adria Shipping Company, Cunard Line, and Central Ticket Office, employing “commission-hungry officials,” were responsible for the record-breaking numbers of emigrants from Hungary in the years immediately following its passage. G.Z. sarcastically explained that the outcome of Tisza’s “patriotic and beneficent exertions” was that Central Ticket Office stocks were “now quoted considerably higher!”¹⁰⁷ The law was a mess, and migrants continued defy it and flock to German ports when they could.

Baron Levay’s defense of the 1903 law in the *North American Review* was intended to rectify “misrepresentation” of it in the American press, but many of his arguments confirm why the law was so controversial. Levay explained that the law attempted to staunch the emigration crisis by “restraining . . . individuals who attempt to propagate the emigration idea among the people” – namely German shipping company agents. This included an “interdict upon speeches in public meetings recommending emigration, and upon advertisements, placards and notices in newspapers,” resulting in “two months’ imprisonment and heavy fines.” Levay admitted that the Hungarian Government, in doing so, “has gone to the extreme limits of a free state against its free citizens,” but justified it to protect the country from “irreparable economic and moral injury” and “to respect the laws of foreign Powers, especially those of the United States.”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ G.Z. “Emigration Miseries, Legalized Human Barter . . .,” in Braun, *Immigration Abuses*, 98, 85-88, 93.

¹⁰⁸ Levay, “Hungarian Emigration Law,” *NAR*.

The United States Bureau of Immigration paid special attention to European migration and the effects of foreign legislation by sending agents to explore the situation on the ground. The Hungarian government did not take well to the arrival of Special Immigrant Inspector Marcus Braun, sent to find out more about the 1903 Emigration Law and migrant conditions in Europe more broadly. Working for the Immigration Bureau, Braun, who had been born in Hungary, traveled throughout Europe — from London in the west to Odessa in the east, from Hamburg in the north to Fiume in the south — looking into European countries’ and shipping companies’ compliance with U.S. immigration laws, particularly the exclusion of unfit migrants. Hungarian paranoia about Braun’s mission and findings created an international incident: while in Budapest, Braun accused Hungarian police of tampering with his mail. He was detained for the outburst, setting off diplomatic drama over his treatment as an agent of a foreign government.¹⁰⁹

Braun offered only mild critiques of Austro-Hungarian management of emigration, just a small part of a continent-wide report. But he levied a much stronger critique in his subsequently published pamphlet, which also reprinted a scathing assessment of the Hungarian government’s legislative solution by a member of the Hungarian Parliament. Braun’s initial findings on Hungarian emigration exposed the work of migrant traffickers luring peasants to emigrate from the countryside, and also other smaller-scale problems like the premature issuing of American passports to women claiming to be the wives of male migrants who had already become US citizens, without the proper proof of their marriage and the husband’s American citizenship.¹¹⁰ Braun’s report praised Austria-Hungary’s opposition to contract labor migration and local

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, “Braun to the Hungarians,” *NYT*, Jul. 1, 1905, 4.

¹¹⁰ Braun, *Immigration Abuses*, 87, 93.

officials' clear public records of paupers, who were ineligible for a passport. Braun's report — far more concerned with the wrongdoings of steamship company agents and subagents — could hardly be considered a smear campaign against Hungary. Far more damning was his 1906 pamphlet, *Immigration Abuses: Glimpses of Hungary*. Braun openly critiqued the Hungarian government, which had wronged him and jeopardized his standing in the U.S. Immigration Bureau. "Instead of making Magyarland a land worth while to live for, one also worth to die for," he explained, the government had instead pursued repressive policies in the 1903 law and other misguided attempts to addressing the emigration crisis.¹¹¹

Hungary's attempt at a legislative solution to the emigration crisis thus failed practically, politically, and diplomatically. Various aspects of the law proved both ineffective and controversial with the public, western steamship companies, and the American government, and furthermore was nearly impossible to enforce. Hungarian citizens continued to emigrate via the closer German ports that offered shorter transatlantic journeys and cheaper fares. Criminalizing emigration routes did little to create goodwill among migrants and a desire to return, one of the central goals of addressing the emigration crisis in the first place. The government would have to consider other means to maintain migrant loyalty.

Managing the Crisis through Migrant Services

The migration of hundreds of thousands of migrants back and forth across the Atlantic was accompanied by a considerably smaller but significant migration of imperial bureaucrats to European ports and across the Atlantic. Foreign governments spent the

¹¹¹ Braun, *Immigration Abuses*, 91, 77-78.

equivalent of hundreds of thousands of dollars and governmental man-hours on emigration management, aiming to check in with migrants in every phase of their journey from their home village to their new American community, and hopefully back again. The Austro-Hungarian government successfully integrated itself into many aspects of the migration bureaucracy at official and also unofficial levels to channel and oversee migration; block, assist, and keep an eye on migrants; and keep migrants in an imperial orbit.

Whereas late 19th-century migrants' interactions with homeland officials might have ended with the state railway conductor as they crossed the border into Germany, the intent of routing migration through Trieste and Fiume was to keep migrants in Austria and Hungary as long as possible for the government's and purportedly their own benefit. As we saw above, Hungary's attempt to consolidate ticketing and ship contracting in governmental hands was one of the greatest failures of the governmental response to emigration. Nevertheless, the services that Austrian and Hungarian officials tried to offer at their national ports of Trieste and Fiume are significant. The greatest innovation at the Fiume port was the Hungarian government's facilitation of strict medical examination of migrants *before* they embarked on ships, screening for trachoma, skin diseases, tuberculosis, physical disabilities, and other conditions that were grounds for exclusion under U.S. law, sparing migrants from making the long journey only to be rejected at Ellis Island and forced to immediately travel back home.¹¹² Thus, Austro-Hungarian officials tried to lead migrants by the hand from the Trieste and Fiume docks to their ships, and be the first to welcome them in New York.

112 See for example, Frank, *Ethnicity, Propaganda*, 111-112. For more on migration and public health, see Richard J. Evans, *Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

The Austro-Hungarian government joined other European governments in establishing quasi-governmental immigrant homes in the United States. The homes each had an official agent at Ellis Island to advise new arrivals and offered subsidized food and lodging to migrants staying overnight in New York before continuing on to their final destinations or for a longer period of time as they sought permanent lodging and employment in the city. The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Ministry supported at least three homes, with the state purpose of preventing imperial citizens from being swindled. The curious division of these houses – one for German-speakers from the Empire, a Hungarian Home for migrants of all nationalities from the Kingdom, and a “Polish” (Austrian Pole) house for Catholic Slavic-language-speakers broadly – shows the ways in which the relationship between loyalty, ethnicity, and religion were very much in flux and inconsistent between Austria and Hungary. The inconsistencies between linguistic, territorial, and religious divisions among the homes show Austro-Hungarian government’s attempt to bureaucratically manage the contested nature of identity among Austro-Hungarians. Clearly the nationality politics that were being actively debated in the Empire about language, race, and citizenship were also being played out across the Atlantic.

As quasi-governmental but officially American-based institutions, the Emigrant Houses also illustrate the power dynamics and profound disagreements between Austro-Hungarian officials and various American parties. The Foreign Ministry had to work through American boards to operate the homes, and it sometimes disagreed with the Americans about who was to be served and at whose expense. U.S. Immigration and Health Department officials also influenced the homes’ histories, forcing their temporary

closure and stranding migrants in the short term, but ultimately bettering conditions by demanding renovations for reauthorization. Operated by ethnic Americans, subsidized by Austria-Hungary, and overseen by U.S. Immigration Service officials, the Emigrant Houses operated at the confluence of transnational interests and power.

The Leo House was charged in 1904 with overseeing “immigrants of German tongue, without difference of race or religion, coming hither from the Austrian Empire.” The home received a quarterly stipend of 1250 Austrian crowns to subsidize operating costs.¹¹³ Contracting with the pre-existing immigrant house, the Leo House, placed certain restrictions on who the home was willing to house in exchange for the governmental subsidy; it had previously operated as a German Catholic institution. The agreement with the Austrian Foreign Ministry dropped the religious affiliation, but when the Rector of the House, Urbam C. Nageleisen, was asked by the Austro-Hungarian consul general whether the home would also accept “Italians and Rumanians, hailing from Austria,” he replied that “the House is not sufficiently large and spacious enough to accommodate more than those of the German tongue.” Nageleisen’s letter explicitly excluding those of the “Latin race” exhibits the slippage between “race” and “tongue.”¹¹⁴ But even a stipulation that migrants be German speakers would not make for a mono-ethnic clientele. As we saw in chapter one, imperial subjects, especially from urban areas and major market towns, often used German as the language of business and secondary education; Leo House’s successor listed, among its guests for March 1913, Croats, Poles, Bohemians, and Rusins, ostensibly all also German speakers.

¹¹³ HHSStA, AR F15, Box 30.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

The different parameters at the Hungarian House reflect both the different priorities of the Hungarian government and different conditions dealing with American-based operators of the home. Inaugurating a new institution rather than contracting with an existing one, the Hungarian Relief Society had much more liberty in deciding who the home would serve. Dominated by ethnic Hungarians, the home nevertheless would house all migrants hailing from the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, “without distinction of nationality.”¹¹⁵ The new Hungarian House opened in 1909 to much fanfare from the immigrant press in New York, among both Hungarian-language and German-language papers.¹¹⁶ Advertisements were printed in Budapest for distribution to potential migrants in Hungarian, German, Slovenian, Romanian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, and Ruthenian, anticipating and actively soliciting among all the peoples of the Kingdom.¹¹⁷ This by no means suggests that Hungarian officials or the Hungarian Relief Society were embracing ethnic equality. Rather, the Hungarian government’s aims were to simultaneously provide migrant services to Hungarian subjects and to limit minority subjects’ potential ethnic separatism by offering services in a Hungarian orbit.

And yet the Hungarian House still became a subject of ethnic tensions. Slavic nationalists tried to have the Hungarian House investigated by U.S. officials on at least two occasions in 1910, likely affiliates of the “Slavonic Home,” an immigrant aid house not affiliated and in competition with those subsidized by the Imperial and Royal Foreign Ministry. According to Hungarian Home president Morris Cukor, false allegations were

¹¹⁵ HHStA, AR F15, Box 31.

¹¹⁶ *Szabadság*, Nov. 24, 1909; *Amerikai Magyar Népszava*, Nov. 22, 1909; *A Bevándorló*, n.d.; *Sonntagsblatt der New-Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, Nov. 21, 1909; *New Yorker Revue*, Nov. 21, 1909; *Morgen-Journal*, Nov. 21, 1909.

¹¹⁷ HHStA, AR F15, Box 31.

made against the home directly to U.S. officials by a “pronounced Pan-Slav” with ties to the president of the Slavonic Home.¹¹⁸ In the scramble to offer influential migrant services, the nationality politics of the Hungarian Kingdom were being played out in New York.¹¹⁹

The Polish St. Joseph’s Home provide for the final segment of the Empire’s migrant population. As with the Leo House, the Foreign Ministry contracted with an established institution to house Slavic-language-speaking migrants, presumably just those from outside Hungary. The majority of migrants served there were likely Polish-speakers from Austrian Galicia, but also migrants from the handful of other Slavic-language-speaking groups in Austria who did not also speak German. Thus, Austria’s approach to dealing with the linguistic diversity of migrants differed drastically from the Hungarian tactic of keeping all citizens under the same roof. Still, a Polish-led home was an arguably safe choice from a nationality politics standpoint. Although it is unclear why the St. Joseph’s home was selected for the contract, Polish-speakers were less frequently involved with the panslavic separatist movements that the Empire so feared.¹²⁰

Austro-Hungarian sponsored houses did not have exclusive rights to migrants’ business; a number of private houses competed with the government-supported ones, even without the benefit of subsidies, to further nationalist aims. “Self-identified Polish, Slovak, Czech, or Hungarian associations, homes, and cooperative societies increasingly . . . encouraged migrants to think of themselves as Polish Americans, Czech Americans, or Hungarian Americans, rather than as loyal subjects of the Austrian Kaiser,” Zahra

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ MNL OL, K106, 91 cs., 54 tét.

¹²⁰ Because of the partitions of Poland, Polish-speakers tended to be anti-Russian, while the nascent Czech and Slovak nationalist movements at times favored connections with Slavic-speaking Russia.

explains. These national homes were “founded precisely on the rejection of Austrian patriotism,” Austrian Consul von Ploennies lamented.¹²¹ The failings of the Leo House to accept all Austrian migrants further undermined Austria’s ability to compete with ethnically-oriented houses. The Leo House’s inability or unwillingness to accept Italian-speakers from the Austrian half of the Empire would inadvertently have routed them to Italian houses operated by the Society for Protection of Italian Immigrants or the Italian Benevolent Institute. With the Italian government, like the Austro-Hungarian government, actively pursuing a close relationship with its migrants abroad, the possibility that Italian-speaking Austrian subjects, primarily from the region surrounding Trieste, would associate with an Italian institution and seek unification with the new Italian state was a reasonable threat.

The Emigrant Houses were thus places of both ethnic coexistence and contestation. Of the thousands of pages of archival material on the homes, the only mention of ethnic conflict is bureaucratic – the Slavonic Home’s alleged sabotage attempt – not ethnic violence between migrants themselves. Subjects of the same crown arriving across the Atlantic, the peoples of the Emigrant Houses had more in common than their divergent paths in America and the new states formed after the First World War suggest. Rather than a multiethnic anomaly, the transnational spaces of the Emigrant Houses in New York City reflect the realities of diverse empires and the increasingly globalized world accompanying mass transatlantic migration.

Through sponsorship of the Emigrant Houses the Austro-Hungarian could, if indirectly and imperfectly, continue to protect and channel migrants in their formative first days in the United States; after that, the task fell primarily to political and religious

¹²¹ HHStA, AR F15, Box 29.

agents of the Austro-Hungarian government, specifically consuls and clergy. Consuls and consulates in foreign countries had initially fulfilled economic functions, but transformed to fulfill more political roles as migrants joined trade as the main concerns between states. Austria-Hungary's first consuls in the U.S., for example, were not Austro-Hungarian diplomats, but rather American businessmen who would coordinate and promote Austro-Hungarian goods on the U.S. market. Their duties rapidly transformed to issuing visas and proof of citizenship and managing migration affairs. As historian Nicole Phelps has argued, in the age of mass migration states "began to claim jurisdiction over their citizens anywhere in the world, and they expected their claims to sovereignty over the bodies of their citizens to trump territorially based claims to jurisdiction."¹²² With a series of consulates abroad, Austria-Hungary and the United States could coordinate complicated affairs of citizens in that country.¹²³

The number of Austro-Hungarian consulates in the United States to assist and oversee migrants mushroomed dramatically in the 20th century, performing a number of duties with both practical and ideological purposes. Alongside Washington D.C., New York, and Philadelphia, by the outbreak of World War I the Empire had operated consulates in Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, St. Paul, Charleston and Clarksburg in West Virginia, along with Pittsburgh, Hazelton, Uniontown, and Wilkes-Barre in Pennsylvania.¹²⁴ For migrant workers who intended to return to the Empire, these

¹²² Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations*, 107. For a broader discussion, see all of chap. 3.

¹²³ Phelps, "State Sovereignty in a Transnational World: US Consular Expansion and the Problem of Naturalized Migrants in the Habsburg Empire, 1880-1914," *German Historical Institute Bulletin Supplement: Beyond the Nation: United States History in Transnational Perspective* 5 (2008): 41-59.

¹²⁴ This includes both official consulates and some technically classified as "honorary posts," but for the purposes of migrant oversight abroad there was no strict distinction between the two. Other posts existed, primarily at ports, for more economic purposes. For

consular services were important resources. Practically, consuls could advocate on behalf of Austro-Hungarian citizens in problems with citizenship, labor, and international exchange. Their areas of assistance varied from helping migrants connect with family members in the United States to helping deceased clergymen's families return home. Consular offices also facilitated the payment to family members back home of migrants' insurance benefits when they died in mining accidents. The consuls did not take a particularly pro-active role in ameliorating labor conditions, resolving strikes, or addressing widespread employer abuse, but they *did* help migrants hold companies responsible for paying benefits. Consular offices also promoted imperial loyalty among migrants and surveilled anti-Habsburg or anti-Hungarian activity at the Foreign Ministry's instruction. Many aspects of the American Action program were coordinated through consular employees, who collected reports from loyal ministers and sent articles from the American immigrant press hostile to the Empire back to the Foreign Ministry. Even if migrants were largely unaware of consular offices' role in surveillance of nationality problems, they found other reasons to complain about the consular officials. In 1911, the Czech-American National Council asked Bohemian deputies serving in the imperial diet in Vienna to lobby for more Czech speakers among the Austro-Hungarian consular agents in the United States.¹²⁵

Back home, the Austrian and Hungarian governments and the Foreign Ministry attempted to influence migration and migrants' experiences in the United States by nurturing relationships with American consuls (and later ambassadors) in Austria and

a complete list, see Rudolf Agstner, *Austria(-Hungary) and its Consulates in the United States*, chap. 12 and annex 1.

¹²⁵ "The Cesko-Americka Tiskova Kancelar," *Denní Hlasatel*, Apr. 29, 1912; "The Third Year of Activity of the Cesko-Americka Tiskova Kancelar," *Denní Hlasatel*, Nov. 17, 1912.

Hungary. In some cases, U.S. consuls in the Empire actively negotiated the citizenship status of Austria-Hungarian migrants with the Austrian and Hungarian governments, especially in regard to migrants who had already begun the process of applying for American citizenship – a testy situation that was usually negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The number of U.S. Consulates in Austria-Hungary expanded rather modestly in number but greatly in the breadth of their activities and the volume of work with the onset of mass migration. The United States initially had its consulate-general in Vienna with only a consulate in Budapest, a fact that rankled Hungarian politicians. Vienna was elevated to the status of an embassy in 1902 while Budapest was elevated to consulate-general in 1904. The two-year delay had offended some Hungarian politicians, who resented the United States' fundamental misunderstanding of Hungary's sovereignty in the dual monarchy. The U.S.'s commercially oriented consulates in Trieste, Prague, Reichenberg, Carlsbad, and Fiume now turned more and more of their attention to migration, particularly in Trieste, Fiume, and Budapest.¹²⁶ Successive consul-generals in Budapest proposed the addition of a consular office in Kassa, the largest city in upper Hungary where the largest number of migrants came from, but a Kassa office never materialized, largely because of U.S. budgetary constraints. Hungarian migrants had to continue to travel to Budapest to call on the American government, an outcome that likely pleased the Hungarian government since American visa services and foreign advocates would not be as accessible to upland migrants.

As we have seen, Austria-Hungary's bureaucratic presence in emigration is difficult to overstate; agents or members of the Austro-Hungarian government could be

¹²⁶ Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations*, 110-113. Fiorello LaGuardia transferred from a lower rank at the Budapest office to lead the office in Fiume.

involved in every phase of migrants' transatlantic journeys, became increasingly accessible on the ground in the United States, and were there when migrants returned home. The imperial military, in particular, kept close track of the return of male migrants of age for military service; migrants were able to gain the assistance from the United States government only if their American citizenship was confirmed. While the Hungarian emigration law had been largely a failure, Austria-Hungary's bureaucratic presence in migration was organized, decently funded, and pervasive.

Managing Political Loyalty on US Soil: Political Intervention and the American Action

Austria-Hungary's intervention in migrants' American lives grew over the early years of the 20th century, sometimes in concert with the Foreign Ministry and consular service and, in other cases, somewhat outside it. Through this mix of interventions, Austria-Hungary subsidized arguably necessary migrant services for all subjects of the Empire, while simultaneously suppressing Slavic nationalisms, at home and abroad. The "American Action" was one of at least three organized programs the Hungarian government was pursuing to deal with a growing crisis of loyalty to the Kingdom. Other initiatives addressed the situation of Hungarians living in Croatia-Slavonia (which the kingdom administered) and Romania (which it did not).¹²⁷ These actions, taken as a whole, indicate a broad effort to promote political loyalty at the periphery. The

¹²⁷ Paula K. Benkart analyzes the American Action in "The Hungarian Government, the American Magyar Churches, and Immigrant Ties to the Homeland, 1903-1917," *Church History* 52 (Sept., 1983): 312-321. However, she mistakenly assumed that the "American Action" ended in 1917 because that is when the University of Minnesota's microfilm collection of its records ended. Documents from other departments of the Hungarian archives, the Austrian State Archive, and local churches complicate her story, as I describe below.

Hungarian government's sincere interest in the welfare of its migrants can be viewed as tainted by assimilationist nationality aims, just as in Hungary itself. The American Action program, operated through the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Religion and Public Instruction, was the most active at attempting to maintain migrant loyalty abroad through the political press, churches, and cultural events and institutions. The following section will explore the long arm of the Austro-Hungarian government in attempting to maintain the political loyalty of migrants from Austria-Hungary, primarily through the American Action but also other initiatives.

The main goals of the American Action were to bolster Hungarian identity abroad to encourage return-migration of Hungarians and to assure that Slavic return migrants were not openly antagonistic to Hungarian political leadership and did not bring openly oppositional ideas back to Europe; the Action's goals, as we will see below, would quickly come into conflict.¹²⁸ Attempts to strengthen the Hungarianness of Hungarians living in the United States antagonized leaders of Slavic national movements and simultaneously gave Slavic nationalists opportunities to publicize their grievances before the American press and public. This only further confirmed Austria-Hungary's perception of the need to combat panslavism and Slavic national projects in America. The American Action addressed migrant Hungarian-, Slovak-, and Rusin-speakers in somewhat distinct campaigns, subdivided further by religious denomination.¹²⁹ Since many migrant communities, as we saw in the previous chapter, were linguistically mixed,

¹²⁸ Benkart describes the second goal as follows: "Hungarian authorities designed the Action program to prevent American Hungarian nationalists from championing the cause of Hungarian independence and threatening the political structure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire" (ii). I argue that they were *far* more concerned with mitigating the threats posed by Slavic nationalists than by Hungarian nationalists; they saw their greatest threats among the Hungarian population as socialists, not Hungarian nationalists.

¹²⁹ MNL OL, K26, 630 cs., 16 tét., 1450.

the subdivision of the Action's program sometimes aided rather than retarded the division of the Austro-Hungarian emigrant community into distinct camps.

Although much of the work of the Action could be conducted through the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Religion and Public Instruction, foreign financial transactions could not, bringing the joint Austro-Hungarian Foreign Ministry into the program's administration and into migrant services more expansively. The actual expenditures for the Action had to be paid out of Foreign Ministry accounts. The Foreign Ministry was on the same page in many of the issues relating to the press in particular; subsidizing organs of the immigrant press was among the most effective investments of the Foreign Ministry in managing migrant loyalty abroad.

By offering financial support to newspapers, awarded first and foremost for "patriotism" and fidelity to the Empire, the Austro-Hungarian government could assure a patriotic message and that the right kind of information would be passed on to its subjects. One Slovak-language newspaper, the *Slobodni Orel*, justified the continuation of its government subsidy by explaining that it sent free copies of the paper to heavily panslav areas, to try to sway the readership back to imperial loyalty. In another case, from 1914 when the First World War was in full swing and the stakes for the Empire high, the Foreign Ministry offered 20,000 crowns in start-up costs and a 4,000 crown annual subsidy for a pro-monarchy newspaper to circulate among South Slavs in the United States.¹³⁰ Austria-Hungary's support of the immigrant press emphasized the centrality of information, influence, and patriotism in the Empire's intervention in the United States.

¹³⁰ HHStA, PA XXXIII, 99.

The American Action's Religious Work

Since churches were often the most significant ethnic organizations in migrants' lives, they were the best venue for the state to promote homeland loyalty. Austro-Hungarian governmental concern about imperial loyalty and the threat of panslavic nationalism in the United States was widespread, but among no groups more than minority newspapermen and the clergy. Very early on, Hungarian nationalists pinpointed churches as crucial sites of nation-building in the United States; through otherwise holy religious observance, Hungary's migrants would be politically compromised. The *Budapesti Hirlap* (*Budapest News*) reported from the *Amerikai Nemzetőr* (*American Guardian*) as early as 1884 of the political danger associated with Hungary's Slavic-language speakers associating with other Slavs in the United States and called on the government to intervene. "Hungarian Slavs . . . are forced to listen to the homilies of other denominations and Czech panslav missionaries. . . . The problem also grows in that the Slovak brothers in America fall entirely into the hands of Polish and Czech panslav priests and stuffed with these ideas they return to the homeland. To help with this problem is such an important national interest that we call it to attention not only of the clergy but the government also."¹³¹

The architects of the American Action recognized the centrality of migrant religious institutions and used churches and the clergy as their primary conduits of intervention. The files of the Prime Minister's Office contain an elaborate table of Catholic priests serving churches of Hungarian migrants, featuring their name, nationality, their national conduct or attitude, congregation, where they went to seminary, what diocese they had served in in (Austria-) Hungary, whether they had ever been fired

¹³¹ *Budapesti Hirlap*, Nov. 21 [1884?], reporting from the *Amerikai Nemzetőr*.

from a post, whether they had taken any action in regard to the formation of an Eastern European diocese in the United States, and various other notes. The column on nationality and national conduct illustrates the full range of government diagnoses of panslavism, from “Slovak Angry panslav” to “very suspicious” to “Hungarian-Slovak loyal,” with additional notes to denote the level of threat over whether or not they “scribble” in the press and evidence of alcoholism; others were merely labeled “American Pole.” A subsequent report from Nuber, the consul in Pittsburgh, categorized Slovak priests serving in the U.S. into three groups: those under Father Januschek of Scranton, who had appointed a large number of young panslav clergy in America; and those under Jankola and Stass, who founded a Catholic newspaper in which Hungary and Hungarians were attacked in articles.¹³²

Austria-Hungary had limited influence over how new American congregations chose their ministers – indeed, the process was rather ad-hoc in the late nineteenth century – but the Ministry of Religion and Public Instruction and homeland religious authorities tried to influence the process in whatever way possible, often by using allies among the loyal clergy. Braddock, PA parish priest Béla Kazinczy came in person to the Austro-Hungarian consulate in Pittsburgh on 11 April 1902 asking that three patriotic Slovak-speaking priests who could also speak Hungarian be sent to Charleroi and Dusquesne, PA, which had started their own congregations. His account is clearly refracted through the lens of the consul’s own nationalism. “From a Hungarian cultural perspective, and the state’s interest,” Nuber passed on to his superiors, “it would be important that a good Hungarian-feeling Slovak-speaking roman catholic priest would end up in these two communities. . . . the leadership of these new communities fall into

¹³² MNL OL, K26, 575 cs., 20 tét.

the hands of a Czech, Moravian, or Slovak panSlav priest.”¹³³ Thus, the Hungarian government worked through the Reformed Church of Hungary and through the Catholic Archbishop of Esztergom to place ministers and priests loyal to the monarchy in new and vacated clerical posts in the United States. This created an international contest over clerical vacancies that brought Austria-Hungary into greater contact and sometimes conflict with the Vatican, American Catholic officials, and American Protestant denominations that saw these immigrant churches as a fruitful mission field for themselves.

The most tangible outcome of the American Action was Hungary’s subsidizing of Hungarian churches, particularly Reformed churches. The localized funding of Calvinist congregations could make their finances uncertain. The Hungarian government made the salaries of clergy serving in their congregations livable by supplementing their church paycheck with a government stipend, and by subsidizing an education back in Hungary for clergymen’s sons. So vital were these supplemental salaries from the Reformed Church of Hungary that the clergy fell into dire financial straits when the First World War prevented them from receiving these stipends.¹³⁴

By far the greatest ecclesiastical expense was the Hungarian government’s refinancing of Hungarian-American church loans through the General Credit Bank in Budapest.¹³⁵ Churches founded before 1905 often had mortgages with American banks, facilitated by American Reformed or Presbyterian mission projects, but many congregations later formally joined the Reformed Church of Hungary and took advantage of mortgage refinancing. The Ministry of Religion and Public Instruction was aware that

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Kuthy to Consul General of Sweden, Aug. 3, 1918, HHStA PA XXXIII, 101.

¹³⁵ MNL OL, K26, 1122 cs., 21 tét.

financial support was the only real way to entice churches away from American denominations to pursue union with the mother church, and therefore frequently offered a few hundred dollars in outright grants for building and improvements, alongside the thousands in loans.¹³⁶ Bringing emigrant churches under the umbrella of the Reformed Church in Hungary enabled homeland religious leaders to more effectively assure patriotic candidates served as ministers. The Ministry of Religion and Public Instruction and the Prime Minister's Office considered the massive costs of taking on these loans well worth the national and spiritual benefits of ecclesiastical union, and the potential benefit of thwarting Slavic separatism.

The Hungarian government's meddling efforts did not go unnoticed and unprotested by Slavic nationalists. In 1902, a group of Slovak and other Slavic priests serving in America published a secret message from an officer at the Hungarian Ministry of Religion and Instruction, Ferenc Komlóssy, to the Archbishop of Esztergom, the head of the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church. It detailed steps the Church might take to assure the loyalty to the Hungarian state of minority priests serving in the U.S. How Slovak- and Ruthenian-American priests came to possess a copy of Komlóssy's letter is unclear, but it quickly became the central document in a Slovak-American propaganda war and Hungarian attempts at damage control. The priests published it in two pamphlets, the aforementioned *Hungary Exposed* and a similar volume, titled *Memorial Presented by the Roman Catholic Priests of Slovak Nationality*,¹³⁷ specifically to the Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of the United States. The volumes, one Hungarian official noted,

¹³⁶ HHSStA, Ministerium des Aussern, AR F15, Boxes 27-28.

¹³⁷ *Memorial Presented by the Roman Catholic Priests of Slovak Nationality...* (Wilkes-Barre, 1902).

were printed with “mournful” black covers.¹³⁸ On the same cover of *Hungary Exposed*, the Slovak and Ruthenian priests identified themselves as the “Irish of Hungary.” *Hungary Exposed* illustrates the backlash against the “American Action” and how the United States had become a new front in the nationality politics of the Hungarian kingdom. A host of questions abound in these documents that are pertinent to Austria-Hungary’s interventions abroad more generally: Was there an effective and unobtrusive way to maintain the loyalty of former imperial subjects on American soil? Whose responsibility was it to oversee the best interests of migrants coming from Hungary: priests themselves, the Vatican, American Catholic officials, or Austro-Hungarian officials? What role, if any, would American public opinion play in identity politics among immigrants from the Empire?

Speaking from the government’s perspective, Komlóssy justified keeping Slovak- and Rusin-speakers from the Kingdom now in America “under surveillance in the interest of their spiritual guidance,”¹³⁹ a statement that reveals the inherent tension between benevolence and chauvinism in Hungary’s migrant welfare. The Vatican seemed to agree to the necessity of serving migrants abroad; the Hungarian government had already made arrangements with the Congregation of Propaganda Fide to appoint an Apostolic Delegate from Hungary to Washington D.C. to oversee emigrants.¹⁴⁰ “This great aggregate of humanity in a strange land,” Komlóssy explained, “. . . is for the most part in the hands of the priests, owing to the profoundly religious spirit of the Slovaks.” “This great moral factor, however,” he lamented, “is unfortunately wielded against us.” Only seven Roman Catholic parishes were presided over by patriotic priests, he complained,

¹³⁸ MNL OL, K26, 605 cs., 20 tét.

¹³⁹ *Hungary Exposed* (n.d.).

¹⁴⁰ MNL OL, K26, 605 cs., 20 tét.

“while the Slovak and Bohemian priests of Pan-Slavic sympathies, hailing from the Western Highlands lead the other 35.”¹⁴¹ Simply put, the predominance of Western Slovak priests in American congregations was pushing Slovaks closer to Czechs and other Slavs and away from Hungary. Komlóssy complained of “schismatic bishops” based in San Francisco and Alaska who lured Ruthenian-American congregations to join the Orthodox Greek Catholic denomination in the U.S. “Inasmuch as part of the immigrants intend returning to Hungary,” Komlóssy reasoned, “there is imminent danger that those whom the Russian propaganda has moved to secede, may on their return spread erroneous views among their co-religionists at home.” Komlóssy offered two solutions: the government should “prohibit the emigration of . . . hostile spirited priests,” and the bishop should send only “well-meaning priests speaking the *eastern* Slovak dialect” [emphasis added] to fill vacancies and new posts. He included a list of parishes where patriotic priests might be sent in the future. Priests who were loyal to Hungary could be used to report on panslavic activity and the conduct of their less trustworthy and even traitorous colleagues.¹⁴²

The priests’ most scathing charges against the Hungarian government called the document “highly pernicious,” featuring accusations of “espionage,” “coercion,” “intimidation,” and, most damningly, “discouraging [immigrants] from American citizenship.”¹⁴³ The intended secrecy of the document was quickly recast as evidence of “plotting” and “scheming.” In their *Memorial*, the Slovak priests highlighted the threat that Hungarian surveillance and intervention posed to the Americanization of immigrants

¹⁴¹ *Hungary Exposed*.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* For more on Slovak dialects and Slovak nationalism, see Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia*, chaps. 5-6.

¹⁴³ *Hungary Exposed and Memorial Presented by the Roman Catholic Priests of Slovak Nationality*.

and to American sovereignty. Komlóssy's suggestions, they explained, "would seriously interfere with the rights and privileges of ecclesiastical [sic] authorities in the United States." "From the time they land at our sea ports," the priests assured American audiences, "our Slovak people recognize one country only –that country is the Republic of the United States." Komlóssy's order, they charged, "retards the natural process of Americanization among our Slovak and Ruthenian fellow countrymen."¹⁴⁴ The preface to *Hungary Exposed* and the priests' *Memorial* also reveal the tension between their appeal to American sensibilities about immigrant assimilation and their obvious discontent at Hungarian governmental attempts to thwart the Slovak nationalist project. The priests charged that Komlóssy's interest in the spiritual welfare of Eastern Slovaks was insincere. "Under the guise of the spiritual necessities of the faithful," they charged, "it really aims at the political tutelage of the Slovaks and Ruthenians of the Greek rite in the United States. 'Well meaning priests' does not mean pious, good and efficient priests" to Hungarian officials, they complained. "A priest of the Slovak nationality may be ever so painstaking in the discharge of his function," but "if he preaches to his people in Slovak and instructs them by means of their native language, in which after all they can best commune with their God, he is doomed to fail."¹⁴⁵

The pamphlet authors claimed that officials in Budapest were attempting to limit the use of the Slovak *language*. But the Hungarian government's grievance was articulated not against the use of Slovak itself. Indeed, Komlóssy's letter called for more Slovak-speaking priests for Slovak-American congregations, and even suggested sending Slovak-speaking nuns as part of their American mission work. The problem of language

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ *Memorial Presented by the Roman Catholic Priests of Slovak Nationality*.

for the Hungarian officials was framed, intentionally, as a matter of “dialect.”

Congregations of Eastern Slovaks in America needed priests who spoke the Eastern dialect, an arrangement that would conveniently shelter those congregations from priests who spoke the Western Slovak dialect or Czech and were more likely to hold panslavic or Slovak nationalist views.¹⁴⁶

In the wake of the publication of *Hungary Exposed*, the issue of language and the geography of panslavism concerned Austro-Hungarian officials assigned to American affairs. One government communiqué lamented that, before emigration began to the United States, panslavism had been unknown in the northeastern counties of Hungary, where the eastern dialect of Slovak was spoken. The allegedly panslav, western Slovak priests serving in America now comprised an expansive network of aid organizations seeking to “ply” the people with wide-circulating Slavic-American newspapers, and even, he suggested, pálinka [distilled brandy] dispensers, all leading the Eastern Slovaks astray. In this way, he stated, “the returning Eastern Slovaks take the dangerous seedling [of panslavism] to heretofore immune soil.” The “Roman Catholic Priests of Slovak Nationality” who wrote the open letter to the American bishops, were, according to Hungarian officials, not really all “Slovak.” Among the twenty-nine signatories, seven were identified as Czech, one as Moravian, one Polish, and one German. Of the remaining eighteen signers, sixteen were western Slovaks and only two were eastern Slovaks.¹⁴⁷ The relatively high number of those listed as “Czech” and the variety of “Slavs” made it easy to label dissident priests panslavic. But what Czech, western Slovak,

¹⁴⁶ *Hungary Exposed*. Easterns Slovaks were always perceived as more pro-Hungary than western ones. Again, see Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia*, chaps. 5-6 for extensive discussion of the politics behind these linguistic distinctions.

¹⁴⁷ *Memorial Presented by the Roman Catholic Priests of Slovak Nationality*.

eastern Slovak, panslav, Magyar, Hungarian, and American all meant as labels in 1903, as we know from Chapter 1, is not as clear-cut as labeling priests by nationality makes it seem. Indeed, the Hungarian government itself was relying on this multiplicity of meaning, intent on convincing Slovak-speakers at home and abroad that Slovak language use or identification and Hungarian loyalty were not mutually exclusive.

The two American newspapers that covered the conflict – the *Washington Post* and the *Boston Evening Transcript* – reported very differently about the dispute. The *Washington Post* largely took the Slovak- and Ruthenian-American accusations against the Hungarian government at face value, quoting heavily from the pamphlet and offering little additional information. The headline for the article, “Priest Exposes Plot,” echoed the priests’ language in calling Hungarian actions a “scheme.” The most severe charge, according to the *Post*, was the Budapest government’s efforts to “Prevent the Americanization of Slovaks and Ruthenians.”¹⁴⁸ The headlines, however, were more critical than anything in the article itself. The headlines in the *Boston Evening Transcript* struck a much more mixed note. The mildly condemnatory title of “Hungary Active Here . . . Tries to Retain Hold on Slavonians and Ruthenians,” was quickly followed by much more amenable subheadings “No Objection to Their Becoming Citizens, Seeks Loyalty Only of Those Likely to Return.” The *Boston Transcript* relied on Joseph Horvath, then editor of the Hungarian-American newspaper *Szabadság*, for additional insights on the situation. For him, the defection of Hungarian Greek Catholic churches in America to branches of the Russian Orthodox church in the U.S. was not as much a matter of political panslavism, as the Hungarian government feared, but expedient practice in linguistically mixed immigrant congregations and the practical lure of Russian financial

¹⁴⁸ *Washington Post*, Jul. 26, 1903.

support for churches. Horvath's reframing of the issue put the emphasis not on the invasive actions of the Hungarian government in Slavic churches in the U.S. but specifically on emigrants likely to return to the Empire. "The purpose of this edict was not to make of Hungarians in this country less loyal citizens of America," he assured American readers. "The purpose was only to avoid sowing the seed of disloyalty among those liable to go back to Hungary."¹⁴⁹ But *Szabadság* was by no means free of propaganda; the paper received subsidies from the Hungarian government and regularly denounced panslavic activity. While there is no evidence that Horvath had consulted Austro-Hungarian consular and other officials on how to respond, a man in his position would be skilled in the art of making Hungary's intervention seem innocuous. In a recurring theme of the American Action, it is questionable whether the intensive backlash by Slavic nationalists made Hungary's interventions in American worthwhile.

"Be Ever Loyal to Your Country"¹⁵⁰: Cultural Propaganda and Backlash

The American Action and Austria-Hungary's long arm in the United States featured consistent use of cultural propaganda. Communities of migrants from Austria-Hungary hosted visiting dignitaries and some groups received banners and statues from organizations in the mother country. Events surrounding these items and people featured prominent cultural symbolism, from the traditional Hungarian goulash and Dobos cake served at visiting journalist Géza Kende's farewell supper to the concerts of Austrian music held in conjunction with the Chicago World's Fair. And yet these cultural celebrations also became flashpoints for national protest. The celebrations for a visiting

¹⁴⁹ *Boston Evening Transcript*, Jul. 27, 1903.

¹⁵⁰ Flag caption, as translated in *Senate Documents, Vol. 10* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 1080.

Hungarian official knit the Hungarian-speaking community in the United States together, at the same time that it became an ideal opportunity for Slovak-speakers to protest his policies back home and his presence in the United States. Alternating jubilation and backlash met much of Austria-Hungary's cultural propaganda, best seen in the arrival of a ceremonial banner in 1902 and visits by Count Albert Apponyi, Hungarian Minister of Education, in 1904 and 1911.

In 1902 the Hungarian Nationality League, an organization in Hungary, decided to send a decorative flag to the United States "For the Hungarian Americans"¹⁵¹; it was the first major event to bring large numbers of Hungarian-Americans together from different sub-regions of the United States as a coherent immigrant community and with an explicit symbol of the mother country. The celebrations planned for the arrival of the flag and its tour between various Hungarian-American societies was highly successful in nurturing public expressions of Hungarianness abroad, in the spirit (if not the jurisdiction) of the American Action program. The gift of the flag also illustrates the ways that migration heightened the national consciousness not only of emigrants but also of those who stayed behind: a branch of the nation living elsewhere prompted a greater perceived need to consolidate the Hungarian nation as a whole.

The dual meaning of "Hungarian" – one of ethnicity and one of citizenship – was enormously significant in the reception of this gift. According to Tihamér Kohányi, editor of the leading Hungarian-American newspaper, *Szabadság* [Freedom],

The flag that they are sending refers to the "American Hungarians," all of us, who were born in Hungary. The Slovak, the Croat, the Romanian, who

¹⁵¹ "Az amerikai magyaroknak – az Országos Nemzeti Szövetség, 1902." Géza Kende, *Magyarok Amerikában: Az Amerikai Magyarok Története, 1583-1927* (Cleveland: Szabadság, 1927), 169. Kende's book, published after the First World War, exemplify Hungarian delusions about the place of minorities in the Empire.

believes in the sanctity of this flag, should not believe that those who are planning this event or those who only speak Hungarian want to, with this flag, distance those who do not speak Hungarian so, but are the Hungarian homeland's citizens.¹⁵²

Kohányi was perhaps naive, perhaps disingenuous in calling for the participation of all with “true patriotic feeling.”¹⁵³ The imagery and culture of the event were decidedly Hungarian in the narrow sense: one hundred young women dressed in red, white, and green; a Ráckoczi march for the procession music; and speeches in Hungarian and English, not in any of the kingdom's other languages. The delivery of a flag, so often a symbol of sovereignty, became a flashpoint for anti-Hungarian protest. The series of receptions held for the flag succeeded in uniting American Magyars, but provoked American Slavic nationalists. While Slavic opposition accomplished little in terms of prompting American governmental opposition to the flag or the Hungarian government, the sudden appearance of Hungarian symbolism in the United States, as we shall see, galvanized more American Slavs into becoming immigrant nation-builders. Increasingly segregated geographically and linguistically, the Empire's former subjects were increasingly diverging politically in North America.

The opponents – primarily Slovak-speakers and, according to one source, Hungarian-speaking socialists – were quick to get their own perspective into major New York City newspapers and to President Roosevelt, but to little avail. Anthony S. Ambrose, President of the National Slavonic Society of the United States of America, informed the U.S. State Department of the flag tour and alleged that it was a gift from the Hungarian government, paid for “by official representatives of that Government” and aimed at “prevent[ing] their [immigrants'] absorption into the great body of the American

¹⁵² Ibid., 176.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 177.

people.”¹⁵⁴ Ambrose’s letter to State Department notified authorities and ensured that a duty would be levied on the shipment, but otherwise failed to elicit objections from the American government. The *Springfield Republican*, after reporting on both sides, concluded that “the most jealous patriotic scrutiny fails to detect a menace to American institutions in this banner of the Hungarian people.” Referring to it as a “banner” rather than a “flag,” a verbal distinction that does not really exist in Hungarian, lessened its association with sovereignty.¹⁵⁵ The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office insisted to the State Department that “the Hungarian National League which first started and carried out this idea has been actuated in doing so by patriotic, and not political, motives.” “No blame can be attached to anyone,” the Foreign Ministry official reasoned, “who exhorts his countrymen, even when living in a foreign land, to be faithful to their native home.”¹⁵⁶ The State Department briefly looked into the details of the case, noting that the German Emperor had bestowed a similar gift on German singing groups in Chicago, and turned to other matters.¹⁵⁷ But Slovak-Americans had cooperated in protesting Hungarian incursions in the United States, a practice they would find reason to repeat again.

Hungarian Count Albert Apponyi’s American tours in 1904 and 1912 prompted a similar set of reactions: jubilant Hungarian celebrations, Slavic protest, and no opposition from the American government. The mixed reactions to Apponyi’s visit again illustrate the contradictory outcomes of Austria-Hungary’s intervention abroad. An extremely prominent member of the Hungarian aristocracy and government was coming to US soil to personally nurture connections between the home state and the Hungarian

¹⁵⁴ NARA, T-157, Reel 48; *Springfield Republican*, Sep. 1, 1902.

¹⁵⁵ *Springfield Republican*, Sep. 1, 1902.

¹⁵⁶ NARA, T-157, Reel 48.

¹⁵⁷ *Springfield Republican*, Sep. 7, 1902

communities abroad, strengthening the cohesion of the community and ties to the mother country. But at the same time, Apponyi's tour became a flashpoint for Slavic nationalists to protest the government's nationality policies at home and Apponyi's chauvinism in particular. Apponyi, for whom Hungary's education laws colloquially known as the *Lex Apponyi* were named, was also the aristocrat who had personally insulted Stefan Osusky, prompting his emigration, discussed in the introduction to this dissertation. The lack of response to Apponyi's 1904 visit contrasted with his 1912 tour shows how rapidly migrants were dividing into strict national camps in the United States. The backlash is instructive in the ways that the American Action failed to stem Slavic nationalism and even contributed to the sharpening of ethnic tensions between Slavic nation-builders and the Hungarian state.

The primary purposes of Apponyi's visits to the United States in 1904 and 1912 were to lecture at Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference and at various universities, and to nurture Hungary's ties with the United States government, but both featured numerous occasions to engage in the cultural politics of Hungarian emigration and promote Hungarian unity with the mother country. Apponyi met with Theodore Roosevelt during both of his visits and spoke to both Houses of Congress in 1904. Western politicians credited him with keeping the peace in Austria-Hungary's fragile dualist compromise, overlooking his chauvinism on minority policy. Apponyi's tours fit neatly with the American Action's goal of promoting Hungarian identity abroad, not only because of American respect for him but, like the traveling banner, cultural events that the Hungarian-speaking community across the northeast and Midwest could participate in. A particularly significant moment was Apponyi's visit to the statue of 1848 revolutionary

Lajos Kossuth in University Circle in Cleveland, which had been erected in 1902 by the United Hungarian Societies, an umbrella organization for many of the Hungarian-oriented clubs in the city. The statue's unveiling in 1902 and accompanying parade featured the participation of a number of the city's nationalities, given Kossuth's high status among '48-ers more broadly.¹⁵⁸

Slavic protests during Apponyi's visit in 1912 were particularly notable (as well as troubling to Hungarian officials) because American Slovaks were joined by Czechs and Poles, groups that would not have been affected by Apponyi's educational laws in Hungary. The Czech paper *Denní Hlasatel* reported that "the harassing of Count Apponyi, the archenemy of the Slovak people" was the Cesko-Americka Tiskova Kancelar's (Czech-American Press Office) "outstanding achievement" of the year, noting that the press effort "succeeded in minimizing the ill effects of the Count's visit to this country."¹⁵⁹ Indeed, the Washington Festival Committee rescinded Apponyi's invitation to lecture after threats that protesters would "ruin" the event.¹⁶⁰ Apponyi charged that "a systematic Czech campaign . . . [to] make our Slovak emigrants, at least politically, into Czechs" was responsible. While organizers feared massive Slavic protest at Apponyi's lectures in Chicago, they were uneventful. "The terrorism then practiced by the Czecho-Slovak group," as Apponyi phrased it, came later, in the newspaper coverage of the event: "malevolent lies" of "uproar and wild disorder" at the lecture in the Chicago press, even though the only altercation at the lecture itself, Apponyi claimed, had been one

¹⁵⁸ A monument was raised to Havlicek in Chicago by Czech residents of the city in Douglas Park.

¹⁵⁹ "The Cesko-Americka Tiskova Kancelar," *Denní Hlasatel*, Apr. 29, 1912; "The Third Year of Activity of the Cesko-Americka Tiskova Kancelar," *Denní Hlasatel*, Nov. 17, 1912.

¹⁶⁰ Albert Apponyi, *The Memoirs of Count Apponyi* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935), 187-88.

hostile question from Hungarian-speaking socialists who blasted Apponyi's lack of support for expanding the franchise in Hungary.¹⁶¹ Furthering the propaganda effort, the Slovak National Committee compiled *Count Albert Apponyi: The so-called Angel of Peace and what he stands for in Hungary*, "on behalf of the non-magyar immigrants."¹⁶² The committee reprinted critiques of Apponyi by western intellectuals like R.W. Seton-Watson, purposefully using "non-Slavs" as the "witnesses to truth" to convince international audiences of Apponyi's unwarranted reputation as an "Angel of Peace."

Conclusion

Austria-Hungary's transatlantic reach to maintain migrant loyalty in America featured many successes in promoting migrants' community and church life, particularly for the Hungarian government in regard to Hungarian speakers. It may have bolstered the imperial loyalty of some migrants at the individual level, but failed to keep the Empire's national projects from developing rapidly overseas. The Empire's migrant Slavs increasingly embraced conceptions of the nation that operated outside the bounds of imperial loyalty, and forthrightly opposed it. Migrants increasingly viewed Hungary as an oppressor, including those migrants for whom national oppression played no part in their migration. Austria-Hungary's long arm across the Atlantic provided vital services to early twentieth-century migrants and to new arrivals, but many of those who had been in the United States for a number of years and who increasingly supported Slavic national projects chafed at the Empire's cultural propaganda. When Marcus Braun himself interviewed Prime Minister Tisza about Hungary's emigration situation and suggested

¹⁶¹ Apponyi, *Memoirs*, 189-191.

¹⁶² [Slovak National Committee,] *Count Albert Apponyi: The So-called Angel of Peace and what he Stands for in Hungary* (Cleveland, 1911).

that that the American Action's distribution of patriotic literature, flag tour, and church work created "friction among the various nationalities" coming to the United States from Hungary, Tisza emphatically replied, "Why, we have to do something to protect ourselves against Pan-Slavistic disturbances constantly going on and tolerated in the United States."¹⁶³ At every turn, the competing goals of Austria-Hungary's intervention – to keep migrants loyal to the homeland and to mitigate the effects of separatist nationalism overseas – worked against each other. And it was not America's problem: imperial officials worried about the consequences of heightened nationalism returning to the Empire with return migrants, as we will see in Chapter 3.

¹⁶³ Quoted in Frank, *Ethnicity, Propaganda, Myth-Making*, 117-118.

Chapter 3

Bringing Migrants back Home: Americanization, National Activism, and the Threat to Imperial Order

Migration to North America was a temporary affair for many Central and Eastern European migrants at the turn of the 20th century, including those from Austria-Hungary. Estimates suggest that in the early decades of mass transatlantic migration, before 1909, 17 to 27 percent of the Empire's migrants returned to the Empire.¹⁶⁴ U.S. Labor Department counts of migrants who returned between 1908 and 1923, (broken down by "race or nationality,") suggest 66% of Hungarian migrants returned, 57% of Slovaks, 19% of Czechs, and 17% of Rusins. Despite the wide variety in statistics, the overall fact remains clear: return migration was widespread.¹⁶⁵ While Austro-Hungarian officials initially opposed emigration and considered it disloyal to leave the homeland, their attitudes changed. The economic benefits to the sending country, their inability to stop it, and its potentially temporary duration inspired this change. Even as the Hungarian government continued to discourage and police the exit of emigrants, Hungarian officials began to actively promote return migration, particularly of desirable "patriotic" subjects.

As Hungarian officials reconciled themselves to the thought of emigrants who might return, they began to try to mitigate emigration's economic consequences, and to influence nationality politics by encouraging particular categories of return migrants. The rationale behind the American Action, we saw, had been in the words of the Prime Minister, "to keep alive among emigrants national feeling and *on that path the intention*

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Mark Wyman, *Round-Trip to America: The Immigrants Return to Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), 11.

¹⁶⁵ U.S. Secretary of Labor, *Eleventh Annual Report...* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923), 133.

to return.”¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, Hungarian governmental tactics to encourage return migration emphasized maintaining migrants’ loyalty to their home country, a path which appeared to justify, at least to themselves, governmental surveillance and intervention abroad, particularly of Slavic national activity in the United States. “Patriotism” became the primary criterion in assessing which migrants were most desirable to draw back.

The Austro-Hungarian government entertained a number of plans in the two decades before the First World War to bring migrants home, many of which fell under the auspices of Hungary’s established “American Action.” “Unlike its Austrian counterpart,” diplomat and scholar Rudolf Agstner has written, “the Hungarian government actually bore the cost of repatriating its co-nationals. One Hungarian official justified the expense, arguing that it was necessary to “prevent the depopulation of the Holy Crown of St. Stephen.”¹⁶⁷ The simplest proposal was to subsidize return journeys for migrants. The Emigrant houses that the Foreign Ministry supported in New York City, discussed previously in Chapter 2, could also be used for shuttling migrants back to the empire, housing not only new arrivals but also those about to board ships home.¹⁶⁸ Several small cohorts of travelers made use of these direct subsidies, most notably “families left destitute by the incapacitation or death of their principal breadwinner” in industrial or mining accidents.¹⁶⁹ These were only the most modest of much more extensive return migration campaigns, which attempted to address a much wider array of governmental

¹⁶⁶ Letter from Werkele to Darányi, Jul. 7, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXII, 100, 3269. Emphasis added.

¹⁶⁷ Franz Pidoll, “Oesterreichische und Ungarische Einwanderung nach Nord-Amerika,” May 3, 1911, quoted in Rudolf Agstner, “From Apalachicola to Wilkes-Barre: Austria(-Hungary) and its Consulates in the United States of America, 1820–1917,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 37 (2006): 171.

¹⁶⁸ HHStA, AR F15, 30-31.

¹⁶⁹ Pidoll, quoted in Rudolf Agstner, “From Apalachicola to Wilkes-Barre,” 171.

priorities and migrant actions.

Although return migrants could help mitigate some of the losses of transatlantic emigration, they also posed threats to the imperial order. Some return migrants were inevitably at odds politically with the government. This was especially the case for Slavic-language-speaking migrants who had further developed a sense of nationalism that opposed the empire's privileging of German- and Hungarian-language institutions, and migrants who developed more democratic beliefs in their personal theories of government. The proliferation of separatist nationalism, democratism, and socialism were all threats that the Austro-Hungarian government considered carefully in crafting return migration campaigns.

Return migrants could help or hurt the empire both economically and politically: emigration could drain labor and population, but could also be a source of remittances; a return migrant might be one who failed and had spent her savings pointlessly on foreign steamship tickets, or be someone who brought back skills and capital to invest in the homeland economy. This spectrum of economic outcomes made it sometimes difficult for governmental officials to decide how to act in regard to emigration and how to spin the economic arguments for return migration. One ambassadorial report in the late summer of 1908 observed that return migrants were "handsomely equipped with money," while other reports indicated that among migrants returning to Fiume the average carried far less money back than what they left with and that the return of a few well off individuals heavily inflated the average. Migrants who had been in the United States for 3 or 4 or even 12 years were returning with just 6,000 crowns. In one batch of return migrants, 298 brought money back with themselves while 129 did not, raising the real concern that they

could require public assistance. Lean financial times in the U.S. after the Panic of 1907 prompted fears of large wave of return migrants, as one official put it, a “panicky return migration.”¹⁷⁰

Hungarian governmental officials were eager to circulate tales of migrants’ poor fortunes in the United States to discourage further emigration. The *Kivándorlási Ellenőr* (Emigration Monitor) and *Kivándorlási Értesítő* (Emigration Bulletin) newspapers were brimming with stories of migrants’ failures, from the penury of return migrants to unfortunate cases of those who suffered or even perished on the ship en route across the Atlantic. An article titled “Things to Know” warned, “everyone is mistaken, who hopes that as soon as they arrive in America, they will immediately find work and that employers will be grasping for them.” It further cautioned that steam and electricity had already replaced many manual jobs and that the employers were responding to bad economic conditions in 1903 by “strongly reducing their business and releasing workers.” The ranks of the “desperate” and “unemployed” were expanding at a “frightening rate.”¹⁷¹ Other issues of the bulletin shared statistics of mass unemployment in American cities.¹⁷² Reports of migrants’ successes, like Ambassador Hengermüller’s 1908 report emphasizing their accumulated wealth, threatened to arouse “suspicion” about the

¹⁷⁰ HHSStA, PA XXXII 100, fol. 203.

¹⁷¹ *Kivándorlási Értesítő*, Nov. 22, 1903. Both newspapers, *Kivándorlási Értesítő* and *Kivándorlási Ellenőr*, were run by journalist-entrepreneurs Albert Barabás and Jenő Hegyi. Barabás and Hegyi edited a number of other small newspapers together. They were controversial figures in Fiume, accused of both slander and bribery, but well connected as journalists and traders, and able to transition between different ventures. One of Hegyi’s other papers, *Magyar Tengerpart*, was financed by the Hungarian government, and their migrant papers may have been as well. Although primarily journalists and traders, Hegyi authored and co-authored several works on emigration, witnessing migrants come and go firsthand in Fiume. Thank you to Gábor Egrý for bringing them to my attention.

¹⁷² *Kivándorlási Ellenőr*, Feb. 15, 1908.

governments' reporting on migrants' misfortunes. In much the same way that the government subsidized migrant papers friendly to the monarchy in the United States, so too could they subsidize papers devoted to migration news to publish articles aligned with their interests.

The politics of emigration and return migration intersected powerfully with nationality politics. Hungarian governmental efforts to encourage return migration explicitly strove to maintain Hungarian-speakers' margin of population majority in the kingdom. 54 percent were primarily Hungarian-speakers according to the 1910 census, but as low 48 percent by some other estimates, worrying officials in Budapest.¹⁷³ In serving Hungarian-speaking communities, promoting patriotism and promoting Hungarianness largely overlapped and were easily intertwined (at least to a point). However, Hungary's efforts at managing migrant patriotism and return migration were not limited to those they considered ethnically Hungarian. Some officials sometimes promoted the return of Hungary's Slavic, German, and other migrants to the countryside so long as those migrants were "patriotic." But other officials argued that simply excluding national minorities from return migration campaigns was more expedient. In the end, Hungarian governmental programs that prioritized the return migration of Hungarian speakers prevailed because they both addressed the goals of repatriation and gave the monarchy a stronger position in homeland population engineering. Debates inside the government show the slippage between theory and practice, as transnational contests for identity lost out to the simpler task of attaining national goals through exclusion.

¹⁷³ *A magyar szent korona országainak 1910. évi népszámlálása. Első rész. A népesség főbb adatai* (Budapest: Magyar Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 1912).

Interested parties in the United States recognized that migration for many immigrants was temporary and that a sizeable minority would return home. As in Austria-Hungary, officials, employers, and shapers of public opinion in the United States disagreed on whether to accept the status quo of cyclical migration, prevent more immigrants from arriving in the first place, or endeavor more strongly to make arrivals into new Americans.

Labor, Land, and Money in Cycles of Migration

Issues of loyalty and nationality mattered in discussions of return migration, but issues of livelihood, labor, and land were also crucial, and involved a host of Austro-Hungarian governmental agencies in the return migration campaign. As we saw in previous chapters, Austria-Hungary's joint Foreign Ministry coordinated affairs at Ellis Island and worked with local institutions in New York City to house migrants traveling in both directions. Hungary's Ministry of Religion and Public Instruction worked actively in the United States to maintain migrants' loyalty in America. The governmental monopoly awarded to the Central Ticket Office tried to keep the profits earned in the business of emigration domestic, simultaneously enriching Hungarian noble members of parliament who invested in it. When it came to return migration, other agencies, too, became part of the effort, especially where there was money to be made. Hungary's Ministry of Agriculture looked to return migrants as prospective buyers for declining aristocrats' surplus land, and the national postal service sought to get a share of the profits of migrant remittances.

Many Eastern European individuals' earning potential was limited by the

unavailability of land, paucity of local jobs outside of agriculture, and high taxes on small landholdings, pushing them abroad for work and wages to pay their taxes on their land at home. These interrelated issues of work, land, and taxes in the monarchy reemerged whenever governmental officials actually examined individual migrants' choices. Migrants complained to Dr. János Baross of the National Hungarian Economic Association that the taxes on their small farms, just 3 to 10 holds of land, were higher than their estates' value! "Those among us who do not have land are much happier than those who do," explained migrant András Vojtoka from the town of Csicsér. "The day laborer earns what he needs to live, unburdened by taxes or debt, but we," Vojtoka continued, "could no longer bear the expenses." Baross confirmed to his colleagues that day laborers probably had it easier than smallholders with "dwarf" estates; the "overfragmentation and pulverization of peasant estates" was among the main causes of migration visible not just in Vojtoka's home county but across the whole uplands region and the whole country.¹⁷⁴ When the Prime Minister's Office surveyed sheriffs in counties with high rates of emigration about what could be done to curtail it, many responded, not surprisingly, that villagers frequently returned of their own accord once they could afford to purchase land.¹⁷⁵

Hungarian governmental and non-governmental agencies devoted extensive resources and brainpower to examining questions surrounding emigration and return migration. The National Hungarian Economic Society sponsored the Uplands Emigration

¹⁷⁴ *A Felvidéki kivándorlási kongresszus tárgyalásai, megtartott Miskolczon...* (Budapest: Pátria, 1902), 156, 153. Baross's recommendation was hardly progressive – a modified primogeniture under which there would be a minimum size to landholdings for offspring to inherit; other siblings could either pay annual rent to the inheriting offspring (157). A list of expenses by social rung/property holding is provided on 196.

¹⁷⁵ Various county reports can be found in MNL OL K26, 630 cs., 1905-XVI.

Congress in the city of Miskolc in 1902, with participation by representatives from county economic societies (essentially chambers of commerce), county officials, and industry bureaus. The panels explored wide-ranging topics on emigration's effects, from economic affairs pertaining to the agriculture, forestry, mining, and viticulture industries to the strengthening of the middle class, the partition of estates, taxes, and credit systems.¹⁷⁶ Congresses like this recognized the economic realities that pushed individuals to emigrate and would have to be rectified to prevent further losses and draw substantial numbers home.

The government's plans and migrants own decisions both had to take into account the changing availability of work on both sides of the Atlantic; changes in the American labor market contributed considerably to pull factors drawing migrants to the United States, but also pushing them home. Big strikes and industrial panics produced an uptick in return migrants as the American labor market became either inhospitable or saturated. The Panic of 1907 stands out as evidence to this: as tens of thousands of migrant workers were laid off in industrial areas from Pittsburgh to St. Louis, Europeans flooded home by the thousands.¹⁷⁷ In response, the Interior Ministry requested that various Budapest public works offices, included the water, landscaping, and cleaning departments, hire return migrants whenever possible as day labor to deal with the emergency influx of unemployed returnees. Newspapers regularly circulated this and other kinds of intelligence about migration conditions. The *Kivándorlási Ellenőr* reported in February of 1908 that the Cunard ship "Carmania" brought home 1,700 return migrants to Fiume, departing back to New York with only 239, showing the extent of consequences of the

¹⁷⁶ *A Felvidéki kivándorlási kongresszus tárgyalásai, megtartatott Miskolczon*, chaps. 1 and 3.

¹⁷⁷ See Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 81.

1907 panic. It further reported that migrant families were lined up at the Austro-Hungarian consulate in New York, “begging” for travel fare home.¹⁷⁸ Other papers reported not only on job opportunities for industrial workers, but also advice on places where work had become hard to come by. They encouraged workers to stay home, go elsewhere, or go home for a time until prospects changed. Mining and other industrial accidents prompted bursts of return migrants, whether fellow workers lucky to escape death and inspired to head home, or families returning to Europe into the arms of family after the loss of their breadwinner.¹⁷⁹

As much as government officials bemoaned the emigration of industrial workers, many workers were leaving precisely because there were too many of them for available positions and that very fact made them difficult to draw home. Questions about return migration featured a complicated interplay between agricultural and industrial work. The Trade Minister reported to Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza in 1905 that vocational workers had left Hungary mainly from the steel and machine sectors because of a surplus of workers; drawing them home, as the Prime Minister wanted, would be impossible because those industries remained saturated with labor.¹⁸⁰ It was pointless for the government to target industrial workers for return migration unless it wanted to invest first in expanding the steel and machine industries to employ them. A subsequent note in

¹⁷⁸ *Kivándorlási Ellenőr*, Feb. 15, 1908.

¹⁷⁹ Wyman, *Round-Trip to America*, 86.

¹⁸⁰ Letter from the Minister of Trade’s Office to Tisza, February 11, 1905, IHRC 979, Reel 25. A selection of files from the Hungarian Prime Minister’s Office (MNL OL K26) related to migration to the United States is available in microfilm at the University of Minnesota’s Immigration History Research Center Archive (IHRC) as collection #979. This piece cites whichever version the author used. The microfilm and archival versions can be relatively easily matched up using dates and filing numbers on the documents. Reel 25 corresponds to the boxes for 1910, 14–15 t., even though it includes documents dated earlier, while Reel 13 duplicates files from the boxes for 1908.

the Prime Minister's office files referred to the reality of the Trade Minister's conclusions as "unpleasant," and archived his report.¹⁸¹ Seemingly intent on having a reason to entice industrial workers home anyway, the government instructed the Hungarian Industrialists' National Association to survey factories and identify those in need of "trustworthy and hard-working" return migrant employees so they could concretely place returning individuals in available jobs.¹⁸² The political will to encourage return migration, in this case, was clearly far more important than any real economic need.

Until 1906, the government's efforts had "endeavored only to keep the desire to return migrate alive," but had not yet engaged in actually implementing any return initiatives.¹⁸³ As the government's efforts shifted from the realm of emotion to facilitating return movement, its priorities shifted from migrants' national feeling to their pocketbooks. In laying out the return migration operation to the Foreign Minister, one official consistently emphasized spending return migration funds on migrants who had accumulated wealth in the United States. Hungary's return migration campaigns featured efforts to rescue unfortunate migrants from penury abroad, even as it sought to entice economically successful migrants to return home and enrich the country.

The return migration proposal of the Ministry of Agriculture is particularly worthy of attention as an example of the government's concrete effort to promote return migration. The central question was this: "How could we most practicably, avoiding state intervention, sell land to Hungarians in America . . . and thus, through resettlement,

¹⁸¹ Report of Mar. 3, 1905, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

¹⁸² *Magyar Nemzet*, Mar. 24, 1908.

¹⁸³ Letter to Aehrenthal, stamped July 22, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3269.

somewhat offset emigration?”¹⁸⁴ The greatest enticement, to make this “come true” rather than be an “empty desire”, according to the Ministry, was to “plant opportunities for return.” This meant concerted programs to provide not simply land but *estates*.¹⁸⁵ One Ministry of Agriculture official proposed having the state “unofficially” buy available properties and sell them to Hungarian Americans, factoring in some management costs that the state incurred. The favored alternative plan, which eliminated some of the difficulties and potential for corruption of governmental land ownership, was for the Ministry to create a compendium of parcels for sale, with information on how much was required in down payment or how much could be taken out in loans.¹⁸⁶ In the end they landed on contracting out the Ministry of Agriculture’s program to a non-governmental entity¹⁸⁷, either the Magyar Gazdaszövetség (Hungarian Farmers’ Association), an organization of medium-sized gentry and peasant landholders, or the Julian Society, which had done resettlement work among Hungarian-speakers to Hungary from Slavonia and Bosnia.

The Hungarian Farmers’ Association did indeed take up the task of “easing the acquisition of estates” for return migrants from the United States.¹⁸⁸ Familiarity with their “patriotic activities” helped them secure the right to operate the program.¹⁸⁹ The program

¹⁸⁴ Report of July 17, 1906, IHRC 979, Reel 13.

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Wekerle to Darányi, Jul. 6, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3269.

¹⁸⁶ Various documents in Alapszám 2658, IHRC 979, Reel 13, and Letter to Aehrenthal, stamped Jul. 22, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII 100, 3269.

¹⁸⁷ Letter from Wekerle to Darányi, July 6, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII 100, 3269.

¹⁸⁸ Letter to Ambrózy from Bernát, Apr. 19, 1909, IHRC 979, Reel 25. Phelps suggested that the plan was never implemented, but Hungarian governmental records and the newspaper coverage of the program suggest some evidence that it was to a limited degree. See Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations*, 186-189.

¹⁸⁹ Letter to Bernát from Ambrózy, May 7, 1909, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

was initially contracted for a few years, with a 30,000 crown yearly allowance.¹⁹⁰ The *Kivándorlási Ellenőr* reported in 1908 that 200 Hungarian Americans had applied to buy land under the Hungarian Farmers' Association's program, and that they planned to extend it to more Hungarian Americans and also Hungarians living in Romania, Bulgaria, and Bukovina.¹⁹¹ Also eligible were would-be migrants who the Farmers' Association could prevent from emigrating by selling them program land.¹⁹² The paper further reported that sixty-two properties/estates were currently for sale.¹⁹³ Government-assisted return migration had become a reality, however limited. The benefits of formulating a return migration program in this way served nationalist, social, and economic goals alike. Selling estates or even somewhat parceled estates to return migrants with cash, rather than to local peasants, would be significantly less disruptive to local class hierarchies, avoiding the unpleasantness of estate-holders having to sell their lands piecemeal to locals who might have worked on that very estate.¹⁹⁴ It also furthered Hungary's intended trajectory of increasingly mechanizing agriculture.

Governmental officials paid attention to community-building, knowing that repatriation would be more successful if returnees were able to feel a sense of community and pine for the often close-knit migrant communities they had left behind. Emigrants' family members still residing in Hungary could be tapped to both lean on their relatives in America to return and to spread word of the resettlement program. Rather than engaging in boosterism, relatives in Hungary could accurately depict the land for sale,

¹⁹⁰ Report of May 21, 1908, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

¹⁹¹ *Kivándorlosi Ellenőr*, Feb. 15, 1908.

¹⁹² Report of May 21, 1908, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

¹⁹³ *Kivándorlosi Ellenőr*, Feb. 15, 1908.

¹⁹⁴ Letter from Wekerle to Darányi, Jul. 6, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3269.

and lure back their families. Potential return migrants would be assessed for their suitability to the Ministry of Agriculture's resettlement program in their "financial situation" (ability to put down a 50 percent down payment) and also their "psychological morale/mood," essentially their re-assimilability and patriotism.¹⁹⁵

Implementing the government's return migration program would require sending trustworthy agents to larger Hungarian settlements in the United States to find individuals open to relocating back to Hungary *and* wealthy enough to purchase land. Utmost care would have to be taken to find agents capable of practicing great discretion so that they wouldn't spark a controversy over return migration propaganda.¹⁹⁶ They planned to use U.S.-resident ministers and priests already receiving stipends from the Austro-Hungarian government to preach return migration from the pulpit. Governmental officials recognized that this would not actually be in ministers' best interest, since the size of their congregations directly affected the financial health of the church and their personal salary. Thus, they proposed either a commission system based on the value of land they pushed (later rejected), raises for ministers for each of their congregants who repatriated, or some other form of financial incentive.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, M.P. Silvestri reported from Cleveland, Ohio that summer that the ministers in the area, even those receiving a government stipend, "would not gladly recruit" candidates for return migration, since doing so would, "in the long run, undermine the very position of their parishes."¹⁹⁸

Instead the Magyar Gazdaszövetség used its own agent North America, a János

¹⁹⁵ Report of February 29, 1908, IHRC 979, Reel 13, and Letter to Aehrenthal, stamped July 22, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII 100, 3269.

¹⁹⁶ Report of July 17, 1906, IHRC 979, Reel 13.

¹⁹⁷ Letter from Wekerle to Darányi, July 6, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3269. Letter to Wekerle, May 21, 1908, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

¹⁹⁸ Letter from Silvestri to Hengemüller, June 16, 1908, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

Skotty, to operate the program, but with only modest success. Skotty spent a month traveling around the United States trying to recruit migrants to buy land and return home to disappointing results. While many applied for the program, few were willing to actually commit to return migration. Magyar Gazdaszövetség director and M.P. István Bernát pessimistically reported that “few drove to proceed past the application stage,” either because the applicants did not actually desire to go home and buy land, or were holding out for “the state to truly, caressingly, bait them home,” essentially with better economic terms.¹⁹⁹

The lack of immediate success with Skotty’s first round of recruitment encouraged the Ministry of Agriculture and the Gazdaszövetség to ponder difficult questions about the relationship between migration, love of country, land, and security. What was the relationship between encouraging return migration and the land hunger among peasants back in Hungary? Why was it that some migrants were willing to buy farms on the other side of the world in the United States, but if and when they returned to Hungary they only wanted to live in the place where they were born? Did American farms produce better income and more stable living than estates at home?²⁰⁰

The relative lack of interest in governmental return migration programs among migrants in the United States encouraged the Hungarian government to explore expanding the program to Canada. There, one official concluded that success seemed much more promising on account of Hungarians’ reported inability to get used to the “inclement” weather and the much greater gender imbalance favoring men than among Hungarian-speaking migrants to the United States. Encouraging return migration from

¹⁹⁹ István Bernát to Ambrózy, August 10, 1909, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Canada had the added benefit, for the Ministry of Agriculture's program, that many more migrants there were working in agriculture rather than industry, and were "weathered in body and soul to hard field labor." They were now skilled specifically in "machine-driven intensive husbandry" and could become "master" models for the surrounding area's population at home.²⁰¹ Implied, but unstated, in the report is that migrant *farmers* in Canada could more readily imagine a future as *farmers* in Hungary than industrial workers in the United States who had much more varied goals beyond a future of husbandry.

It seems that most migrants, in the end, based their decisions to return on family, economic, and work-related factors, not because of governmental enticement. Rather than being discouraged by their time in the United States, the majority of those returned, even if they would have ideally stayed, were of "pretty good morale." In a governmental study on the "psychological mood" of return migrants, many blamed the poor work opportunities specifically on the presidential election in the United States in 1908 and were of the opinion that in a short time jobs would be plentiful again.²⁰² A minority of migrants were, however, according to the study, quite disappointed by their migration experiences or continuing poor fortune, and were nicknamed "Die Amerikamüden," the "weary Americans." The report indicated that "work aversion" and "sloth" likely contributed to their lack of success in the United States and continued troubles upon arriving home, contributing to their psychological inability to "enhappy" themselves. The most important finding from the study was that return migrants would migrate again once they believed that conditions in the United States to find work improved. Thus, even as

²⁰¹ Letter from Bánffy to Khuen-Héderváry, June 7, 1910, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

²⁰² Letter to Khuen-Héderváry, July 1, 1909, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

the government worked to encourage migrants to return back to the homeland, the cycle of movement would simply begin again. Psychological factors had little salience compared to opportunities for work.

Bringing Home the “Patriotic” Migrant: Return Migrants and Homeland Politics

The primary characteristic of a desirable return migrant, like a good citizen, was being *hazafias*, a good son of the homeland. Hungarian officials sending correspondence across the Atlantic in both directions frequently signed their missives, “with patriotic affection.” Every priest or minister that that Hungarian government sent to shepherd flocks of the *religious* faithful in the United States was inspected, first and foremost, for their patriotism, their faithfulness not only to church doctrines but to the government. It is no surprise, then, that this concept of patriotism, so ubiquitous in other realms of governmental rhetoric, would be prominent in return migration campaigns as well. Officials sought to restore the country in population and in spirit. It is no surprise, also, that migrants who did not fit governmental definitions of patriotism would be excluded to whatever degree possible from return migration campaigns.

Expectations for migrant patriotism were not completely consistent between the Austrian and Hungarian halves of the Habsburg Empire. Officials in Austria formulated their assessment of migrant loyalty primarily through friendliness to the monarchy, *Monarchie freundlich*, as opposed to Hungary’s *hazafias*, an adjective to describe one as a son of the homeland. Both concepts avoided ethnic criteria as their foundation, befitting a multinational state, but the Hungarian concept of patriotism suggested a more active love of and identification with the country. Austria’s articulation of friendliness toward

the monarchy allowed for a greater perception of ethnic difference and rested instead on an acceptance of the status quo in imperial power. (Though seeing eye-to-eye with the government became of crucial importance in the Hungarian definition of patriotism, also.)

Among return migrants, the most studied and most vulnerable to harassment by homeland officials were men who emigrated without completing their compulsory military service in the Austrian or Hungarian army.²⁰³ In terms of governmental efforts at expanding return migration, however, the government's enemies were not wayward would-be soldiers, but migrants who held nationalist views that challenged Austrian and Hungarian control in the Empire. Rising Slavic nationalisms in the United States and easier implementation of governmental programs among Hungarian-speakers made Hungarian-speakers the overwhelmingly prioritized targets of the major return migration initiatives. On the practical side, Hungarian governmental agencies had the most ties in place already with Hungarian-speaking Reformed and Greek Catholic institutions in the United States, initially involving Roman Catholics only incidentally in some plans²⁰⁴; in 1908 officials sought to include Hungarian Roman Catholic priests as well in the effort.²⁰⁵ Using existing channels for a somewhat controversial program made the

²⁰³ For the latest interpretations of the relationship between migration and Austro-Hungarian military service, see Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations*, 128-139 and Zahra, *Great Departure*, 55-61.

²⁰⁴ Letter from Wekerle to Darányi, July 6, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3269. Hungarian governmental programs were most easily established in Reformed churches because there was no Calvinist equivalent to the global bureaucratic oversight of the Vatican; the Reformed Church of Hungary could directly welcome congregations in the United States into their own church structure, or simply support congregations abroad without arranging for the equivalent of Vatican or diocesan permission in the United States.

²⁰⁵ Letter from Bánffy to Aehrenthal, February 24, 1908, HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3855.

expenses palatable.

But the targeting of Hungarian-speakers for return migration was about more than just practicality; it featured an overt element of anti-Slavic prejudice and a goal of population engineering. By advertising governmental return migration initiatives to certain segments of the Empire's migrants and not others, the government could recoup some of the losses of emigration in ways that protected or heightened the plurality or majority of Hungarian-speakers. This was true especially on the national level, as well as in particular localities. The Interior Ministry identified Transylvania as an important region to encourage return migration, as a way to bolster the ratio of Hungarian to Romanian speakers.²⁰⁶

Even in the Ministry of Agriculture's plans, where strengthening the country's agricultural sector would supposedly be the paramount goal, concerns about Slavic nationalism were front and center. Minister of Agriculture Ignác Darányi explained to István Bernát of the Magyar Gazdaszövetség that migrants from the linguistic minorities from northern Hungary should be excluded from purchasing land through the return migration programs explicitly because of alleged panslavic views. "Since the return of emigrated Slovaks is estimated at 19%, these people with panslav ideas slowly infest Felvidék [counties now in southern Slovakia] in this territory already exposed from a nationality standpoint — with the return of Ruthenians with Great Russian ambitions," he explained.²⁰⁷ The "strict keeping" of this stipulation was critically important, he explained, because "our emigrants' repatriation could easily produce the sad outcome, that with the Hungarian state's help, elements that stand in opposition to the Hungarian

²⁰⁶ Report of May 27, 1905, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

²⁰⁷ Report #4108, MNL OL K26, 575 cs., 20 tét.

state idea would return, and these elements would close out from land acquisition those . . . who represent the most acceptable material for settlement.”²⁰⁸ It was essential for “the protection of our moral world” to exclude Slavic-language emigrants who had been touched by “panslav agitation” abroad.

Writing Prime Minister Sándor Werkele in 1908, Darányi excluded Hungary’s Slavic-language- and German-speakers alike. “Among our slav-speaking emigrants . . . , such exceptionally strong panslav agitation is taking place, that these persons’ abetted return . . . is not bearable from the standpoint of the monarchy’s nationality situation or the Hungarian state’s nationality/minority domestic peace.” While German-speaking Swabians in Hungary were, from a nationality standpoint, of “good feeling,” “the emigrated Svabs in the United States naturally melted into the . . . alldeutsch [all-German] operation” there, which was incompatible with Austrian sovereignty. Thus, German-speakers would also be excluded from this first repatriation effort.²⁰⁹ While the Ministry of Agriculture’s return migration program was initially concerned with the land and the liquid capital of American return migrants, the program powerfully took on a nationalist purpose by 1908.

Minister of Agriculture Darányi was also careful to clarify that the resettlement program could only be executed “properly” if the “settlement’s moral foundation, homesickness, not business interests,” guided its implementation. Such an emphasis on homeland made for an uneasy fit when the program was outsourced to a private entity whose mission was to support the wellbeing of mid-sized landholders. Preserving the economic stability of the country’s agricultural sector in the face of mass emigration had

²⁰⁸ Report of May 21, 1908, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

²⁰⁹ Letter from Wekerle to Darányi, July 6, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3269.

been the point of the Ministry of Agriculture's involvement in the return migration campaign at the outset, making Darányi's Hungarian chauvinism and this emphasis on abstract homesickness and patriotism rather puzzling. The Ministry of Agriculture was now peddling primarily in the business of patriotism rather than cultivatable land.

Hungarian officials were concerned not only about the return of physical individuals promoting panslavism or Slavic nationalism, but also of writings by Slavic nationalists being sent home. The Hungarian government had several tools at its disposal to try to mitigate the effects of the return of undesirable people and materials. Local officials were asked to report on the reappearance of specific individuals, as well as who received mailings of known Slavic-American publications that had been identified as agitative. Alongside the presses in Prague and in Martin, officials identified presses in the United States as the source of newspapers, journals, and pamphlets distributed by the "American panslav anti-national movement." One policy adviser insisted to the Minister of Commerce that "preventative measures" should be taken, because by the time these material fell into readers' hands it was too late to do anything about them. The postal service, he advised, should track the return addresses of Czech-language materials coming to Slovak-speaking areas of Hungary from America and Austria and, if possible, obtain the list of subscribers to censor them more surgically.²¹⁰

In addition to separatist nationalism, return migrants returned home with other political ideologies that officials considered undesirable or threatening, regardless of their professed nationality. Many of the changes that migrants generally underwent in the United States were shared by Hungarian-speakers and Slavic-language-speakers: changes in economic condition, heightened political consciousness and growing desire for a more

²¹⁰ Report of László Szabó, March 3, 1907, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

democratic Hungary, and heightened modern class consciousness from working in an industrial setting. Too radical a position in any of these areas was thought to make migrants less assimilable to life back home and potentially a threat, thus subject to surveillance and harassment by local authorities upon their return.²¹¹ “Patriotism” thus signaled a non-threatening stance in nationality politics – a record clean of activism in anything that could be labeled panslav – as well as a non-threatening stance to the political and social status quo more broadly.

Back home, a host of political orientations were deemed threatening to the status quo, from democracy to socialism. “You could see . . . that they returned with new social ideas rather tinged with socialism,” one Hungarian official reported to the prime minister in 1909. The examples he gave of this, however, were merely an entitlement to demand “humane treatment” and their elation at being referred to by honorific titles like “Mr.” even by authorities in the United States.²¹² The social leveling that officials feared from return migrants was less of an immediate threat but more of a long-term one. On the whole, before World War I, migrants did not actively seek to revolutionize Hungary’s class structure and political system on their visits home, but did support more democratically inclined candidates, as we will see in the next chapter, and start to envision a more democratic future for Austria-Hungary. Return migrants’ social revolutionary views did not find much fruition until 1918. The consequences of return migration on separatist nationalism were apparent much more quickly, especially with the

²¹¹ See, for example, Zoltán Kramár, *From the Danube to the Hudson: U.S. Ministerial and Consular Dispatches on Immigration from the Habsburg Monarchy, 1800–1950* (Atlanta: Hungarian Cultural Foundation, 1978), 95–96, and Phelps, *U.S.–Habsburg Relations*, chap. 3.

²¹² Letter to Khuen-Héderváry, July 1, 1909, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

outbreak of World War I.

Return Migration and Interstate Politics

Drawing migrants home was a central priority in Hungarian foreign affairs, but it was not without diplomatic dangers. The Ministry of Agriculture's proposals were extensively debated in governmental circles, taking "great care and forethought" to avoid anything that would create "conflict with the American government."²¹³ Nevertheless, the status of return migrants was among the greatest points of contention between the Austro-Hungarian and U.S. governments, and occupied a significant portion of the activity of U.S. consuls based in Austria-Hungary. The mobility and tricky citizenship status of return migrants plagued diplomatic discussions between the two countries for decades. As Nicole Phelps, the preeminent scholar of U.S.-Habsburg foreign relations, has found, massive transatlantic migration prompted an international debate on ideas about territorial sovereignty versus sovereignty over one's own citizens. Officials in both countries attempted to align migrants' physical location with their land of citizenship, but migrants' propensity to move and to claim or denounce citizenships as fit their needs, made standardization continually difficult.²¹⁴

Austria-Hungary's compulsory military service was central to controversies about the return migration and citizenship of military-aged men.²¹⁵ Austro-Hungarian and American agreements on naturalization were laid out in an 1870 treaty that exempted

²¹³ Letter to Aehrenthal, stamped July 22, 1907, HHStA, PA XXXIII, 100, 3269.

²¹⁴ Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations*, 107.

²¹⁵ Phelps's survey of the U.S.-Habsburg consular records concluded that military services cases were the second largest issue that American consuls in Austria-Hungary had to deal with. *Ibid.*, 128-129.

migrants who acquired American citizenship from outstanding military commitments at home, but thousands of migrants who made return visits home were not yet full citizens and thus not covered by this treaty. And while migrants who had become American citizens were legally exempt from Austro-Hungarian military duty on their return to Europe, officials nevertheless hassled them, especially at the local level. Migrants returning to Austria-Hungary with a U.S. passport or other documentary proof of citizenship were fairly easy to spring if they were detained by European officials for evasion of military service. Those who had only filed “first papers” for citizenship, however, were not yet full citizens and therefore not entitled to assistance from American officials.²¹⁶ Migrants who had spent time working in the United States and become citizens but returned for an extended period to Europe and had no proof of intention to travel back could rarely receive the American consular assistance they desired.

As interstate relations between Austria-Hungary and her neighbors worsened with the 1908 annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the ensuing wars, the government tried to clamp down on the emigration of men of military age to keep the fighting force at home. In December of 1912, the Hungarian Ministry of the Interior issued a temporary ordinance banning the emigration of all eligible men who had not yet fulfilled their military obligations.²¹⁷ Hungarian officials opposed to emigration had long wanted to address the liberality of the 1870 treaty. During the First World War, in desperate need of soldiers, Habsburg officials began to interpret the 1870 treaty to mean that Austria-Hungary’s migrants, as *dual* citizens once they became Americans, were still eligible for mandatory military service at home. As the language of the treaty was vague on the

²¹⁶ Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations*, 132-4.

²¹⁷ From Vice-Consul in Budapest to Secretary of State, Dec. 12, 1912, NARA, RG 59 M708, Reel 33.

matter, U.S. officials did not protest this change in interpretation, especially as the diminishing opportunities for transatlantic travel made the issue moot.²¹⁸

If migration to the United States was only temporary for many migrants, so too could be the American citizenship they gained during their time in the United States. If a migrant's return to Europe was permanent, according to two new acts of Congress in 1906 and 1907, their American citizenship could be withdrawn. With no international standard on dual citizenship, citizenship's expiration, or expatriation, American and European officials were often left to negotiate cases on an individual basis. "Many naturalized citizens of Polish, Croatian, Hungarian or other origin, return to their countries of their nationality for the purpose of taking up their permanent abode therein and when the question of their military service is involved endeavor to obtain protection under the cloak of forfeited American citizenship," U.S. consul to Vienna Ulysses Grant-Smith complained in 1916. "Had it not been for the present war, there is no doubt that many such persons would have continued to reside in their former homes as American citizens without any wellfounded claims as such."²¹⁹

Alongside evasion of military service, return migration sometimes dragged American officials into Austro-Hungarian attempts to quash the spread of nationalism by migrants returning to the Empire from the United States. Phelps analyzed the case of Zdenek Bodlak, born in St. Paul, Minnesota to Czech parents, who moved to Prague to study music and wound up in prison in 1914 for sedition against the Austrian government. Although the American consul in Prague, Charles Hoover, opined that some of the Austrian government's methods at rooting out sedition would never be permitted in

²¹⁸ Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations*, 135.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 136, 138.

the United States, he recognized that return migrants, even as American citizens, had a responsibility to abide by local laws. Furthermore, he had little sympathy for migrants' interest in homeland national causes. Phelps summed up Hoover's thinking as follows: "If naturalized American citizens were more interested in Austrian politics than American politics and went so far as to return to Bohemia to promote nationalist ideologies, then they should not be able to hide behind the barrier of American citizenship."²²⁰

In all, American and Austro-Hungarian officials had nearly identical goals in regard to migrants – making them loyal members of their country – which thus put them in competition for the bodies of return-migrants and their confounding back-and-forth travels. American consular officials were rather dismissive of return migrants who had failed to conform to the expectations of American citizenship and embroiled themselves in politics at home. American nativists and proponents of immigration restriction might be glad to see migrants return to Europe once injured or too old to labor in the United States so they would not become a public burden, but the preference was overwhelmingly that migrants, while they could retain cultural affection to their homeland, reassign their political allegiance to the United States. These ideas put Austro-Hungarian return migration campaigns directly at odds with Americanization efforts in the United States.

American efforts to keep migrants ebbed and flowed with changes in industrial labor demands, and with the contest between nativists and their opponents, including Progressives and socialists. While American nativists applauded the return of every emigrant to their place of birth, the views of Americans sympathetic to migration was more varied. U.S. Special Immigration Inspector Marcus Braun, known to us from the

²²⁰ Ibid., 123-128.

previous chapter, blasted the Hungarian government's interventionism in the United States in his 1906 pamphlet *Immigration Abuses: Glimpses of Hungary*, specifically critiquing Hungary's efforts to draw migrants home. He suggested what Hungarian officials told each other about the migrants: "Let us prevent them from remaining there for good and let us insist that their stay out there be but temporary; let us insist that they, instead of becoming Hungarian-Americans, remain American-Hungarians," Braun mocked. "And when they have earned enough to pay off the mortgages on their farms [in Austria-Hungary] and their debts to the usurers, and have saved up enough to begin life anew," he continued, "let us receive them with open arms and kill the biblical fatted calf in honor of their return."²²¹ Braun's pamphlet reflected the interests of American thinkers and officials who expected migrants, once the beneficiary of American jobs and social services, to become Americans and continue to contribute to the American nation and economy.

A final form of return migration worth considering in Austro-Hungarian-U.S. relations is deportation. In 1903, the United States deported twenty-one Hungarian citizens between the ages of 18 and 51 (average age 35) who had crossed the Atlantic to Halifax and presumably attempted to enter the United States from Canada at an unauthorized location. Eight were from Kincses, near Ungvar, 4 from Domba [sic], and four from Déy/Decz [sic]. Twelve were being sent to Radnot (near Rimaszombat) and seven to Lipto Sz. Marton.²²² The majority hailed from Hungary's northern counties,

²²¹ Braun, *Immigration Abuses: Glimpses of Hungary*, 77-78.

²²² HHSStA, AF F15, 53. What's particularly fascinating about this document is the way that a bureaucrat has gone through and "corrected" names and place names. S.S. Assyria arrived in Halifax 25 April 1903. The migrants were deported from Black Rock, NY, 1 May 1903.

where agricultural output was low and economic investment was limited. While narratives of deportation at Ellis Island tend to focus on migrants who were found unfit for entry – for failing health exams or demonstrating their ability to not become a public expense – pre-WWI histories talk little about the deportation of able-bodied workers. Their arrival outside officially sanctioned channels reveals that, although the United States accepted the entry of hundreds of thousands of migrants annually, it, too, legislated the legal parameters for entry, well before the quotas of the post-World War I era. Not all return migrants returned to Austria-Hungary of their own volition.

Conclusion

While the Hungarian government's interest in migrant loyalty and patriotism remained consistent, its direct influence on return migration was limited. Count Miklós Bánffy, a huge proponent of return migration, was so disappointed with the lack of success by 1910 that he dejectedly suggested either a final push to make it happen or abandoning the return migration program altogether, despite it having been one of his pet projects for several years.²²³ Bánffy wrote the Prime Minister, Count Károly Khuen-Héderváry, that the administration had two choices: "Either to give up the action's resettlement branch once and for all and, in this vein, gradually decrease and completely end the action," or, "with a strong hand to compensate for the previous years' shortcomings, initiate broad-ranging socio-political, population, and homeland action, into which the Americans' resettlement could be inserted." Bánffy considered the latter the "only proper road open to the government." Chastising the prime minister for failing to properly support the endeavor, Bánffy ended his letter expressing... "with anxious

²²³ Letter from Bánffy to Khuen-Héderváry, 9 August 1910, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

patriotic feeling I call ... your attention to this affair's importance" and "undelayable importance without further delinquent omission."²²⁴

The American Action program continued to promote loyalty to Hungary through the First World War and even beyond into the early 1920s, hoping to draw migrants home. In the case of still "patriotic" minorities (always greater in the Hungarian governmental imagination than in actual numbers), they could join in Hungary's fight to recreate the dismantled kingdom. This effort largely failed. In the Hungarian Parliament at the outset of 1916, members of Parliament, already looking ahead to the end of the war, believed that there were "large numbers of Hungarians" who would "return to their mother country after the war." MP and University of Budapest economics professor Béla Földes asserted that "Hungarians now in America did not feel at home there," presumably due to discrimination against Hungarians as aggressors in the war, and that they should be "the first to be repatriated" and given opportunities to succeed upon their return.²²⁵

While many migrants who had intended their stay in the United States to be temporary were essentially trapped in America for the duration of the war, such a movement for mass return migration was wishful thinking in 1916 and far from accurate by war's end three long years later. The outbreak of war completely transformed the circumstances surrounding return migration. The extended period of time migrants spent in the United States during the war itself and the benefits of Americanization during the conflict ensured that thousands of Eastern European migrants who imagined their stay in America to be temporary would become permanent residents of the United States.

The introduction to restrictive immigration legislation in the United States

²²⁴ Letter from Bánffy to Khuen-Héderváry, 3 August 1910, IHRC 979, Reel 25.

²²⁵ Budapest Consul General to Secretary of State, Jan. 14, 1916, NARA, RG 59, M708 Reel 33.

likewise affected migrants' decisions, as what had once been a revolving door transformed into a gate, however porous, in the interwar era. With restrictions in place, migrants, we will see in chapter five, migrated as "birds of passage" far less than they had earlier in the century, fearing the gates might close more tightly behind them.

Chapter 4

Nationalism Turns Separatist: Migrant Nationalisms and the Collapsing and Coalescing of States in World War I

Migrant nation-builders are essential to understanding the transnational story of Austria-Hungary's destruction and the creation of specific nation-states out of its former territory after World War I. Migrants' nation-building activity in the United States before the war allowed a select number of national projects that had been developing on both sides of the Atlantic over the previous decades to emerge as nation-states by war's end. Migrant nationalists' creation of cohesive, distinct ethnic communities in the United States in the late nineteenth century recast the western imagination of Austria-Hungary from a jumbled mix of cultures arrayed under one emperor to a backward, unnatural multiethnic empire with distinct, distinguishable ethnic components that were being politically stifled. Nationalists both in Eastern Europe and the United States articulated alternatives to empire: discrete ethnic nations. A high-stakes *war* allowed some of those alternatives to become realities.

Migrant nationalists of different self-proclaimed nations did not have a level playing field in gaining the ear of policy-makers. As wartime enemies, German- and Hungarian-speaking migrants to the United States had little say in determining their homeland's fate, as the imperial government itself purportedly already represented German- and Hungarian-speakers' interests. Migrants' roles from these titular nations were limited to members of the U.S. wartime propaganda bureau, the Committee of Public Information, and whatever initiative individuals took to write in the press. Similarly, migrants whose national projects in the United States were not sizable,

cohesive, distinct, or strategically significant enough — for example, Rusyn-Americans — were likewise not granted the *exceptional* opportunities. Only migrant nation builders like self-identified American Czechs, Slovaks, and Poles succeeded at the task of nation building.

Migrants received a prominent role in nation-building when they could effectively partner with homeland nationalists, rally their ethnic organizations in the United States around the cause of statehood, and contribute to American war aims. Czech- and Slovak-American organizations had poised themselves well for these tasks, developing over several decades distinct, active, interconnected organizations with personal ties to homeland nationalists and politicians. Migrants had made Chicago a “hotbed of East European exile nationalism” for several decades. In Chicago and New York, migrants regularly protested the status quo in Habsburg politics. During wartime, they were also fueled in their protests by the American government. While German- and Hungarian-speaking migrants felt pressure after the outbreak of war to defend their loyalty to the United States and disown their homeland allegiances, “American authorities fostered this nationalism,” historian Tara Zahra explains, “hoping to incite Austria-Hungary’s Slavic minorities to rebel against their rulers.”²²⁶ Regardless of whether migrant nationalists supported causes that succeeded or failed at war’s end, their activism in transatlantic debates about nationhood, statehood, and citizenship warrant our further attention. War-time *necessity* put important discussions of Eastern Europe’s post-war options on U.S. soil. First Cleveland and then Pittsburgh became the self-titled cities of two foundational agreements in the establishment of a Czecho-Slovak state because American-based

²²⁶ Zahra, *Great Departure*, 82-83.

nationalists had the *luxury* to act on state-building in ways that many of their European counterparts simply did not have in the midst of war.

Migrant nationalists' ethnic interpretations of Austro-Hungarian imperial oppression melded with the United States' wartime enemy, suggesting an *ethnic* solution for the Empire's post-war future in the form of supposedly more democratic nation-states, but we need not follow suit. This chapter holds, as Nicole Phelps has argued, that the United States and other Allied powers saw East Europeans primarily in terms of race²²⁷; therefore, ethnicity and nationality took on oversized importance in the conflict. Providing a strong rebuttal to once commonplace arguments in Habsburg historiography, historian Pieter Judson explains that "the existence of nationalist movements and nationalist conflicts in Austro-Hungarian politics did not weaken that state fatally, and they certainly did not cause its downfall in 1918."²²⁸ Instead, he argues, Austria-Hungary's greatest challenges were related to wartime leadership and the "struggle for democratization" in the face of privileged political classes. But migrant nationalists, even more than their European counterparts, insisted on casting the Empire's social inequalities in *ethnic* terms – the oppression of Slavs by Germans and Hungarians, as opposed to the oppression of the landless and smallholders by German- and Hungarian-speaking aristocrats – and the Allied powers ultimately followed suit. To the United States and Western European governments wary of any association with social revolution, achieving Austria-Hungary's democratization through a nation-state solution to the "nationality problem" was far preferable to other ways of addressing the guilty Austro-Hungarian government's aristocratic militarism and chokehold on politics.

²²⁷ Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*.

²²⁸ Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 381.

Indeed, fanning the fires of nationalism became an explicit Allied goal to weaken Austria-Hungary in the very late stages of the war.²²⁹

In this way the Allies *chose* to reinvent Eastern Europe as a collection of nation-states. They did so by essentially empowering nationalists instead of, say, monarchists or socialists; they favored the creation of bourgeois states over aristocratic or proletarian ones. Considering the unfolding of Eastern Europe in this way expands interpretive possibilities and lets us reassess the centrality of “ethnic” conflict in the war, the peace process, and the diplomatic and nationalist histories written since. This vein of interpretation reminds us that nations are imagined and states established. They are not “awakened” and restored to a status they should have had all along. This interpretation allows us to see more clearly how transatlantic migration contributed to nation-states as the ideal of twentieth-century statehood and why some migrant nationalists, like Czech-American Emanuel Voska, helped make their dreams of nation a reality during World War I. Since a movement for democracy had to come from the “people,” ethnic nationalists in the United States were an effective proxy for their “countrymen” and thus promoted in getting a say as to how the landscape would be redrawn. According to Voska, while “Bohemia-at-home was divided in its opinions on the character of our visioned State, no such difference troubled Bohemia-in-America. We agreed . . . in imagining a democracy.”²³⁰

The significance of transatlantic migration, then, to the post-war outcome of Eastern Europe has two distinguishable phases: the long-durée importance of

²²⁹ See below and also “Austro-Hungarian Lines of Cleavage: Writer Says Allies Should Drive Wedge Between the German-Hungarian and Slav-Latin Groups to Bring Revolt,” *New York Times*, July 7, 1918.

²³⁰ Emanuel Victor Voska and Will Irwin, *Spy and Counterspy* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1940), 16.

transatlantic migration to Austria-Hungary's national politics through the building and promotion of cohesive, recognizable "ethnic" communities in the United States (discussed primarily in the preceding chapters), and certain migrants' opportunities to use wartime military and diplomatic circumstances to influence the war effort, shape the peace settlements, and influence the nation-building process. Wartime nationalist propaganda and negotiation profoundly affected the peace settlement *because* of widespread changes to East European nationality politics already wrought over three decades of massive transatlantic migration.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, Slavic national projects in the United States rather suddenly shifted in aims from broader rights and autonomy within Austria-Hungary to separatism. The difference between these two positions was dramatic, and yet the triumph of the nation-state model at war's end has frequently led politicians and later historians to think that independence was what all "nations" deserved and desired from the outset. In reality, as we have seen, the movement of thousands of people had significantly shifted the scale and aims of many East European national projects in such a way that made a series of separate states out of the Austro-Hungarian Empire a possible outcome of an early twentieth-century war. The separatist turn in migrants' views of European nationality politics was a monumental change in ideas that was necessary to make the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, rather than its maintenance as a state, the outcome of the war in the region.²³¹

East European nationalists' had a cacophony of theoretical plans for Austria-Hungary's future that, could not, of course, co-exist. At war's end some states found fruition in somewhat previously articulated forms, like a south Slav state, while others,

²³¹ See, for example, Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, 387.

like an enlarged Romania, became far more extensive than ever dreamed; others still, namely Austria and Hungary, suffered territorially diminished “rump” states, and some never achieved independent states at all, like Ruthenia. But in several cases, most notably the creation of Czechoslovakia and the reunification of Poland, the national aims of American migrants significantly influenced the form and the likelihood of statehood.

What many wartime discussions and histories written since often fail to admit is that state-building is an inherently subjective process. Paris Settlement politicians conceded that lines were not drawn *strictly* on the “national principal” of state boundaries exactly following linguistic/national boundaries — to do so would be impossible, and the culprits of the war had to be punished with some truncation of their “rightful” territory, after all. But they seem to have largely accepted that the creation of states around nationalities, in national categories forged and known to them in part because of migration, was somehow natural and objective. This chapter, building on “constructivist” interpretations in nationalism theory, maintains that post-war nation-states, like Austria-Hungary itself, were *all* constructions, based on a roster of nations influenced by the presence of migrants in the west and through the role, in part, of migrant nationalists.

Many of the high-level diplomatic discussions about wartime foreign affairs and post-war treaty-making are absent from this dissertation, as they have been well documented elsewhere. Also outside the scope of this chapter are the array of debates among peoples in the Habsburg Monarchy and exile communities in Western Europe. The more modest focus of this chapter is the often overlooked significance of North American migrants and transatlantic migration itself to the war and peace process, and should be considered in conjunction with other scholarship on the Great War.

Of only secondary importance in the pages below, despite extensive attention to migrants' imperial loyalty in previous chapters, is migrants' loyalty to the Empire or to the United States. Several excellent works already document migrants' willingness to display their American patriotism when called to do so,²³² and exemption from armed U.S. military service sensibly circumvented painful decisions for migrants of fighting against their kin on the battlefield. The Fourteen Points called for "autonomous development" for the peoples of Austria-Hungary. Autonomy was anathema to war-time Austro-Hungarian politicians, especially Hungarian aristocrats; it was enthusiastically embraced by the Empire's Slavic immigrants and seldom challenged by Hungarian-American nationalists, who increasingly saw union with Austria as an undesirable liability that should have been addressed decades before. The overwhelming majority of migrants had little reason to defend the imperial status quo, whether Hungarian- or Slavic-language speakers, making migrants' imperial loyalty rather irrelevant to the war. Major points of contention certainly materialized later over what form Wilson's suggested self-determination and autonomy should take and many protested where the boundaries of new states were rather unexpectedly drawn, but only after questions of wartime loyalties were already moot.

The war and the peace accomplished one thing above all else: making the nation-state the standard of Western statehood. The conflict and post-war settlements also made citizenship and ethnic identity much more fixed and subject to government control. Despite continuing evidence that identity was mutable, hybrid, and constructed, international diplomacy and popular opinion now functioned under the predominant assumption that it was discernible and biologically fixed and reemphasized the moral

²³² Alexander, *Ethnic Pride and American Patriotism*, chap. 1.

imperatives of nationalist beliefs.²³³ Working backwards from there, it is no wonder that histories of migrant nationalism suggested that migrants had been fighting Austro-Hungarian oppression all along, and had even left Europe because of it. The chapter below will examine the transatlantic separatist turn in East European nationalism and look at successful, semi-successful, and unsuccessful migrant national activism that attempted to influence Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, and Ruthenia, respectively.

The Separatist Turn from Empire and Confederation to Nation-States

The expansion of various Slavic national organizations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sought greater recognition, rights, and self-government for Slavic peoples in the Empire, but rarely sought complete separation Austria-Hungary or deemed a nation-state their goal until late in the First World War. Histories that posit an independent state as the goal of Slavic nationalists throughout the latter half of nineteenth century miss the variety of proposals and the creative evolution of nationalists' goals over the course of the sixty years following the 1848 revolutions. These decades featured various proposals for expanded national rights within a Habsburg state and a tremendous shuffling and reshuffling of affinities and alliances before advocating for a separate Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovak state, reunified Poland, enlarged Romania, and South Slav state became the goals at war's end. German- and Hungarian-speakers in the United States also had to contend with their mixed and changing views about their Austro-Hungarian home state. German-speaking migrants from Austria frequently joined communities of German-speaking migrants from Germany, making their views particularly difficult for historians to access. More accessible to us are Hungarian-

²³³ See more in Phelps, *U.S.-Habsburg Relations*.

speaking migrants' misgivings about Hungary's place in the Habsburg Empire. The Hungarian government's American Action program, as we saw, did little to emphasize Hungary's ties to Austria or the House of Habsburg. As we will see below, Eastern European national projects in the United States were contradictory and divergent and completely changed by the outbreak of war in Europe, and then changed again with the United States' declaration of war on Austria-Hungary.

Most Slavic national projects before WWI sought a federative Habsburg Empire or new federative East European state(s), built on shared history and the belief that very small independent states were not viable. Nineteenth century nationalists believed that "linguistic nations" could thrive within the framework of multinational Austrian and Hungarian "political nations." Even so-called panslavism had separatist and non-separatist forms, a spectrum emphasizing all Slavs under Russian leadership, the East-Central European region's slavs broadly, or the unity of Austria-Hungary's slavs alone. Among Slovak nationalists in Hungary, historian Alexander Maxwell firmly establishes "Hungaro-Slavism" as "the mainstream of pre-1918 Slovak thought," as a corrective to "several histories of Slovakia [that] mistakenly equate opposition to Magyarization and opposition to the Hungarian state."²³⁴ Many South Slavs sought independence from Austria-Hungary not to start independent states, but to join already autonomous countries in building a Slavic state or federation; others sought to remain in Austria-Hungary under a "trialist" (three-part) government that afforded them the same rights as Hungary had vis-a-vis Austria. In various parts of Imperial Austria in the early twentieth century, local legislative bodies forged a series of compromises that made many of the concessions that nationalists were seeking; the Moravian Compromise of 1905, Bukovina Compromise of

²³⁴ Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia*, 7, 50, 34.

1910, and Galician Compromise of 1914²³⁵ sought to define representation for various linguistic groups within a geographic area, recognizing nations (through language) as political categories but still part of the whole.

The longstanding resistance to separatism in many of the Slavic national projects gave way to the novel goal of independent Slavic states. In the case of Czecho-Slovakia, linguistic overlap encouraged mutual efforts between Czech- and Slovak-speaking migrants to achieve greater linguistic rights in Austria and Hungary respectively, but cultural cooperation did not readily suggest political union. Hungaro-Slavism kept many Slovak nationalists in Austria-Hungary from endorsing separatism or Czecho-slovakism in Europe.²³⁶ As American CPI journalist Will Irwin wrote, “Most nationalists in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia were still either monarchists, Russophiles or extreme radicals.”²³⁷ While Irwin intended those terms pejoratively, he nonetheless indicates a variety of political orientations among individuals and elected officials in the Empire, even among those who considered themselves nationalists. Among the growing group of nationalists who saw Slovaks’ best interests outside of a *centralized* and Magyarizing Hungarian kingdom, autonomy within Hungary, Austria-Hungary, or some federative Central European state were all options. A political union with Czechs was seldom endorsed even after the turn of the century. In 1906, Thomas Capek wondered, “wither do the Slovaks gravitate? Toward the Bohemians, who are their nearest and most natural allies? Certainly not.”²³⁸ Ivan Daxner expressed more openness to the idea but similar misgivings when he stated, “Away from the Magyars, but not into Czech subservience;

²³⁵ Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 315.

²³⁶ Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia*.

²³⁷ Will Irwin, “Introductory Note,” in *Spy and Counter*, xi.

²³⁸ Čapek, *Slovaks of Hungary*, 50.

we want to join Czechs as equals."²³⁹ During and after the war several prominent Czech and Slovak nationalists would argue that Austria-Hungary had kept the Czechoslovak people cruelly divided from each other in different halves of the empire, but such protests were largely after the fact. Joint Czech and Slovak political aspirations were a new product of both migration and wartime opportunities.

Czech and Slovak nationalists achieved a joint state that few had previously envisioned, but nationalists dreamed of many states that never materialized. National projects that never achieved a state offer a powerful corrective to the teleology behind many of the states that the war did indeed establish. While World War I is often heralded as a story of victory in both United States history and various Slavic national histories — a failure only for Germany, Austria-Hungary, and their few allies — Maxwell proposes recognizing a wide range of national failures alongside national triumphs. In his view, World War I was not the apex of “national awakenings” — a term that he likewise critiques — but a mixed record of successful and failed nationalisms. Taking Slovakia as his case study, Maxwell argues that not only Hungaro-Slavism but also All-Slavism (panslavism) and even Czechoslovakism “failed,” all losing out to the ultimately triumphant exclusive Slovak national project. These failures, furthermore, are often far more illuminating than narratives of heroic success.²⁴⁰ Whereas nationalists and scholars of the immediate post-war era could point to any kind of nationally coded institution as evidence of their nation’s existence and state-readiness all along, national projects that never won states remind us that things could have gone very differently. After 1918, there

²³⁹ Quoted in Dusan Caplovic, “Afterword,” in *Illustrated Slovak History: A Struggle for Sovereignty in Central Europe*, ed. Ladislaus J. Bolchazy, et. al (Wauconda, Ill.: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2006), 268.

²⁴⁰ Maxwell, *Choosing Slovakia*, 3-4.

was no all-Slav state, no Bohemia or Czechia, no Slovakland or Slovakia, no Ruthenia, no Croatia, Bosnia, or Serbia, or Slovenia. The post-war struggle of nationalists whose perceived nations did not achieve states after World War I points to the centrality of emigré communities and wartime exigencies in garnering the political will and circumstances to define an independent state. Such analysis is full of counterfactuals: had Rusyn-speaking migrants been more insistent on separate institutions rather than widely joining Slovak-speaking communities, might they have been able to lobby for a separate state that they did not yet perceive they needed to lobby for? Questions of this sort have, of course, no answer, but serve as reminders — constantly necessary in an era when we take nation-states for granted as the best and only viable type of state — that they are constructions.

The American Action's efforts at maintaining Hungarians' loyalty to the homeland notwithstanding, many Hungarian nationalists in the United States also increasingly held more separatist views toward the Empire, questioning Hungary's union with Austria. The legacy of the 1848 revolution and its leader Louis Kossuth provided a republican model of separatism for those who held little allegiance to the Dual Monarchy as such. In addition to suppressing Slavic national projects, historian Béla Vassady argues that the Hungarian government's American Action's subsidies to ethnic institutions in the United States also aimed "to defuse the Magyar immigrants' anti-Habsburg Kossuthism." In much the same way that the Action failed to contain Slavic nationalism abroad, however, it also proved largely "unable to cool" Hungarian-Americans' "passionate

Kossuthism”²⁴¹ The leading Hungarian-American newspaper, *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* [American Hungarian Peoples’ Voice], prominently featured a hand-penned letter from Kossuth’s son Ferenc of Hungary’s Independence/Independent/Opposition Party as the very first guest salutation in its twenty-year jubilee anniversary album, followed only afterward by the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to the U.S.²⁴² The cover featured a single-headed eagle alongside the Hungarian coat of arms – an American eagle, not a double-headed Habsburg eagle. The *Népszava* had been central in erecting a statue of Lajos Kossuth in Cleveland and statues of George Washington and Nathan Hale in Budapest, all clearly symbolic of anti-imperial independence.²⁴³

This strong vein of Kossuthism in Hungarian-Americans’ national views was highly problematic for the Hungarian government during the war, particularly when the central leaders of the government under Prime Minister Tisza were ardent Dualists committed to the union with Austria. At the same time, migrants’ Kossuthism was promising to the Independence/Independent/Opposition Party in Hungary, which ran on a platform of universal suffrage, independence from Austria (though divided into factions supporting *complete* separation and merely *greater* separation than the current Compromise), and sometimes alliance with Social Democrats. The party’s leftist wing, in particular, sought to harness the support of Hungarians in the United States, who were more unified in favor of a greatly expanded franchise than other any other homeland political issue.

²⁴¹ Béla Vassady, Jr., “The ‘Homeland Cause’ as a Stimulant to Ethnic Unity: The Hungarian American Response to Károlyi’s 1914 Tour,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 2 (Fall 1982), 41.

²⁴² Géza D. Berko, ed., *Amerikai Magyar Népszava Jubileumi Diszalbuma, 1899-1909* (1910), 10-11. Note that the various English translations of the Party’s name are here treated as interchangeable.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 57, 69-70.

Debates around migrants' place in Hungary's democratization can be clearly seen during Independence Party politician Count Mihály Károlyi's tours of the United States in April and July of 1914. Károlyi's visits were received with fanfare by Hungarian-American audiences and the American press, some opposition by Slavic audiences, and indifference on the part of the American government. Károlyi largely succeeded in unifying the Hungarian-speakers in the United States through his "homeland cause" of expanded suffrage and democratization, visiting New York (where he drew a crowd of 3,600), Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Bridgeport and smaller Hungarian-American communities. Band music on a harbor tugboat greeted Károlyi's arrival in New York harbor in April.²⁴⁴ Károlyi sought supporters among emigrants from Hungary by collecting financial support, utilizing the American and migrant press, and working through existing institutions to back his movement.

Károlyi's platform aimed at the common ground between Hungarian-American nationalists, socialists, and the rather politically indifferent, for all of whom expanded suffrage and democratization and greater distance from Austria were appealing. Independent Party member Dr. Sigismund Farkasházy explained to the *New York Times* that Hungary was "being oppressed by an oligarchic absolutism." Austria and Hungary were "bound by a kind of Siamese twin ligament," he explained, under which Austria had "reduced Hungary to a condition of economic bondage." Farkasházy played explicitly on the Independence Party's ties to Kossuth's legacy, stating, "the death of Francis Kossuth" -- previously the Hungarian Minister of Trade and Lajos Kossuth's son, who passed away in late May of 1914 -- "will have no effect on the progress of the Opposition," as Károlyi would carry forward "the great patriotic work of the Opposition Party" (again,

²⁴⁴ "Magyars Acclaim Hungarian Patriot," *New York Times*, Apr. 5, 1914.

Farkasházy uses Opposition as the English translation of the Independent Party).²⁴⁵

Prominent Hungarian-American New Yorker Alexander Konta reiterated Farkasházy's connection between Kossuth's revolution in 1848 and the Hungarian Independence Party's "Battle Against Austrian Autocracy." "As an American citizen, I sympathize, of course, with the party's aspirations toward a true democracy," Konta proclaimed.²⁴⁶

Károlyi's was an attempt to address democratization through governmental reform by social class *instead of* nation, based on people's identities simply as voting citizens rather than members of ethnic constituencies. This was the opposite approach of most Slavic nationalists, who tried to gain expanded rights and representation in the Austro-Hungarian political system. Unlike the Moravian and Bukovina Compromises in Austria, which created expanded rosters of voters in explicitly ethnic blocks, Károlyi's expanded franchise would grant suffrage to all males over the age of 21, to Hungarian-speakers and national minorities simultaneously, without any designated representation by language or ethnicity.

According to Béla Vassady, by embracing widespread democratization, Károlyi "hoped to minimize socialist and Slavic immigrant opposition in America" and build a broader coalition of emigrants from the Hungarian kingdom.²⁴⁷ Konta's influential article in the *Times* argued that "in Hungary's national life, as in her politics, the divisions are less and less those of race and increasingly those of party." A better way for Konta to phrase the problem, by 1914, however, was that the country now faced greater divisions by race *and* party. Konta explained that the oppression that retarded Hungary's

²⁴⁵ "Says 'Oligarchi Absolutism' Holds Hungary in Economic Bondage," *New York Times*, May 31, 1914.

²⁴⁶ "To Seek American Sympathy for Hungarian Liberty," *New York Times*, Jul. 5, 1914.

²⁴⁷ Vassady, "The 'Homeland Cause' as a Stimulant to Ethnic Unity," 47-49.

peace and prosperity was “not exerted by one race within the kingdom, the Magyars over all the others, but is exerted by Austria for Austria from Vienna.” For Slavic nationalists with grievances specifically against the Magyarizing policies of Budapest in the last several decades, Konta’s explanation of the Independence Party’s aims resonated in its democratization but likely stung Slavs in its disregard for Hungarian governmental culpability and scapegoating of Austria alone. “If the Magyars still oppressed the other races of Hungary for their own profit, the emigration from the country would be made up almost entirely of non-Magyar Hungarians, of Slovaks, Ruthenians, Rumanians, Croats, Serbs,” Konta reasoned, noting that the masses of Hungarian-speaking migrants were escaping that same class-based oppression as national minorities. In much the same way that democratically-motivated Hungarian nationalists like Konta were too dismissive of the racialized elements of the aristocracy’s rule in Hungary, Slavic nationalists did not particularly empathize with the class oppression faced by Hungarian-speaking peasants. For several decades, Slavic peasants’ poor fortune in Hungary has been continually explained by nationalists as *national* oppression. Regardless of how progressively democratic Károlyi’s program might have been compared to the aristocratic Hungarian government, by 1914 many Slavic nationalists by saw expressly ethnic representation or autonomy as the only suitable way to recognize Slavic-language-speakers’ rights and place in Austria-Hungary, not universal suffrage. The fight for Hungary’s democratization and escape from “Austrian autocratic rule” was broad enough to earn the backing of Hungarian-Americans across a broad spectrum of political persuasions, but not convincing enough to gain the support of Slavic nationalists in joining the Independence Party to create a “modern State . . . founded under the Hungarian flag.”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ “To Seek American Sympathy for Hungarian Liberty,” *New York Times*, Jul. 5, 1914.

Károlyi's tour and political appeal created a "nationalist dilemma" for Hungarian-speakers who had worked hand-in-hand with the Hungarian government to support Hungarian cultural life in the United States and also those on the left who opposed or eschewed homeland aristocratic politics. Unlike with national minorities, Károlyi's program hit the right notes with Hungarian-Americans. Károlyi did have some opponents among Hungarian Americans, but they could not viably challenge his independence platform and its greater resonance with migrants' American experiences as democratic citizens and sometimes voters. Hungarian nationalists who had worked through the American Action to promote loyalty to Hungary had been supported by the very Hungarian government that Károlyi was now opposing. Vassady points out the noteworthy opposition of Father Kálmán Kováts of Pittsburgh, who considered Károlyi's attempt to gain support from Hungarian-Americans potentially financially exploitative and an easy target for Slavic opposition. But in the end, "most" of the Hungarian clergy supported Károlyi's program. Károlyi's success in winning over Hungarian-speaking socialists was a similarly "major reversal" in migrant allegiances in homeland politics.²⁴⁹ The *New York Times* reported that "Because [Károlyi] is the most ardent advocate of universal suffrage in Hungary, the Socialists there have accepted him for a leader. Most of the Socialists at the meeting last night accepted him in the same spirit," though "a few could not forgive him for being an aristocrat and for being wealthy."²⁵⁰

Hungarian governmental and Slavic opposition did muddy Károlyi's attempt to gain the backing of the American government. The National Working Party and the Tisza government attempted to erode Károlyi's popularity in the United States using the

²⁴⁹ Vassady, "The 'Homeland Cause' as a Stimulant to Ethnic Unity," 50-53.

²⁵⁰ "To Seek American Sympathy for Hungarian Liberty," *New York Times*, Jul. 5, 1914.

familiar channels of the American Action.²⁵¹ On the Tisza government's behalf, Hungarian nationalist Alexander Gondos penned anti-Károlyi articles to circulate in the American and Budapest newspapers, under the name A.S. Glenn.²⁵² Gondos tried to bar Károlyi and his support staff's entry to the United States by publishing information that certain party members had engaged in duels, and were therefore criminals. In the press Gondos openly posed the question of whether "it was right for the minority party of a country friendly to the United States to solicit money in this country for a political campaign in that country," a question that raised complex issues about the United States' growing agenda as a promoter of Western democracy. U.S. Vice President Thomas Marshall replied that migrants who had become American citizens "ought not to be interested in any foreign Government," but specifically made an exception if it were "an effort upon the part of the people to change an oligarchy into a democracy." Gondos's attempts on behalf of the Hungarian government to undermine Károlyi's popularity with Hungarian Americans failed to erode Károlyi's popular program, but the Hungarian government's opposition to Károlyi did perhaps succeed in blocking his recognition by the United States. A State Department official noted that Károlyi's professed purpose in the United States in the spring of 1914 was to study migrants' "conditions" in America, but that they were well aware his aims were "to take the necessary steps to institute a propaganda in favor of a more democratic regime in Hungary."²⁵³

Since Károlyi was coming to the United States without the formal recognition of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Ministry, U.S. officials did not receive him in any official capacity. Migrant nationalists used Károlyi's visits to try to endorse him to American

²⁵¹ *New York Times*, May 31, 1914.

²⁵² Coffin, NARA, RG59, M708, Reel 3.

²⁵³ Coffin, Mar. 24, 1914, NARA, RG59, M708, Reel 3.

government officials – State Department files are full of telegrams and written endorsements from Hungarian-American societies and individuals²⁵⁴ -- but his opponents sent messages, too. Nonetheless, Károlyi gained thousands of supporters and \$30,000 in donations (many just \$1.75 apiece) to run a democratic campaign at home, but over \$16,000 of it was seized by the U.S. government under the Alien Property Act once the United States joined the war.²⁵⁵ Károlyi's platform of democratization was meant to "assure a nervous Washington that his purpose was not violent revolution but victory in a democratic election in Hungary," but if national minorities still considered Károlyi-style universal suffrage within a unified Hungarian kingdom as ethnic oppression, it was of little value to the United States as it formally entered the war. With the Austro-Hungarian Embassy's conspicuous non-recognition of Károlyi's travels as a state visit and Slavic migrants' rejection of Károlyi, the United States government declined to support Károlyi and pursued Austria-Hungary's democratization during and after the war through nation-states instead.

Migrant Lobbying in War-Time

When the United States declared war on Austria-Hungary in December 1917, already three and a half years into the conflict in Europe, it was not yet a war that promised to dismantle Austria-Hungary. But the war did portend a renegotiation of the

²⁵⁴ Report of April 1914, , RG59, M708, Reel 3.

²⁵⁵ "Ready to Arrest Agent of Károlyi," *New York Times*, May 26, 1914; "\$10,000 of His Fund Sought by Károlyi" *New York Times*, Apr. 2, 1925. The Budapest newspaper *Az Est* (which opposed the National Working Party of the government) argued that emigrant bankrolling of domestic political efforts was nothing new, and indeed pointed to "pan-Slav agitation in northern Hungary" being supported by "Hungarian Slavs in America" as precedent. If migrant donations were already being used by Slavic separatist movements, they could just as easily be put toward funding the effort for Hungary's separation from Austria.

balance of power among the Empire's peoples. In Europe and among migrants in the United States alike, the war encouraged many individuals who were rather nationally indifferent or non-political in their national life to declare a national identity and embrace its political implications. "So many of our people," one Czech nationalist observed, "had almost forgotten that Bohemia was once a nation, until the World War blew up the flame smoldering within."²⁵⁶

The war gave some nationalists – but not all – unprecedented influence in crafting new political entities, even if they had long ago migrated away from their Central and East European homelands. When looking at migrant lobbying, scholarship often emphasizes whom migrants were lobbying, rather than examining the lobbyists themselves. Thus, here it is not President Wilson or Secretary of State Lansing that take center stage: their contributions and oversights, triumphs and blunders in aiding, ignoring, and decimating various nations have been extensively explored, and their roles have been well documented, even overstated. The Wilson administration largely ignored the separatist politics of Austria-Hungary, Slavic and Hungarian alike, until 1918. Lobbying by East European or migrant nationalists at the presidential level before U.S. entry into the war was indeed largely "ignored," or, more generously, not acted upon.²⁵⁷ But migrant nationalists were at work, and in 1918 played a significant role in the major reversal of the American government from maintaining Austria-Hungary as a geopolitical entity to dismantling it. Wilson, Lansing, and West European diplomats at the Paris

²⁵⁶ Voska, *Spy and Counterspy*, 36.

²⁵⁷ Historian Tibor Glant argues, in opposition to histories that critique Wilson for "ignoring" Hungary Count Mihály Károlyi, that it was consistent with the administration's practice to avoid any real engagement with all such politicians before 1918. He concludes that "Wilson's anti-Hungarianism is only a myth." Glant, *Through the Prism of the Habsburg Monarchy: Hungary in American Diplomacy and Public Opinion during World War I* (Boulder, Colo.: Social Science Monographs, 1998), 56, 60

Settlement made it happen, but the writings and war-time work of migrant nationalists like Emanuel Voska, Charles Pergler, G.H. Mika, Marcus Braun, and Eugene Szekeres Bagger, instead, are the focus below. They illustrate the different roles that Czech-, Slovak-, and Hungarian-speaking migrants played in East European state-building during World War I, from their positions as leaders in American ethnic circles.

In addition to individuals, the institutional circles they operated in are vital to understanding migrant nation-building. Many migrant nationalists were involved with George Creel's United States Committee on Public Information, most notably Voska, making them agents of Americanization at the same time as nationalists. Institutionally, two of the most important organizations to consider are ones that we have already seen in raising the ethnic consciousness of the Empire's migrants: the Bohemian National Alliance of America and the Slovak League of America. Immigrant nation-builders often had American partners who were not migrants but supported different migrants' war aims, like Oberlin College sociologist Herbert A. Miller, who was a strong supporter of Masaryk and the Czech national movement, and Fiorello LaGuardia, who supported Hungarian Count Mihály Károlyi and a separate peace to found a democratic Hungary. Several national programs had American supporters, but with a variety of strengths, connections, and liabilities. Hungarian-American national leaders and communities had arguably less experiences with political protest and lobbying, as the government and the American Action took the lead in promoting Hungarian nationalism, a sharp contrast to Czech- and Slovak-speaking migrant nationalists.

Czech nationalist Emanuel Victor Voska was among the most influential of migrant nationalists and thought carefully about his dual role as a European nationalist

and American serviceman and citizen. Voska had come to the United States at the age of nineteen supposedly after a brief arrest by Austrian police; while some writers have attributed his “exile” to his national views, by most accounts he was not yet a nationalist and was arrested for seditious speech based on his socialist beliefs. Despite his radical views, Voska shifted his activism from class to nation in the United States, becoming a successful businessman and a leader in Czech-speaking circles.²⁵⁸ A master of propaganda, Voska must of course be read critically; for example, his commentary on a “clique of Hungarian nobles” hatching a “plot” sets his writing firmly in his nationalist camp.²⁵⁹ He nonetheless offers the most extensive and direct evidence of concerted ties between Czech nationalists living in Prague and the United States.

Voska went to Prague months before the war broke out in his role as a correspondent for the Czech-American newspaper *Hlas Lidu*, apparently perceiving an impending crisis and traveling all over Europe to collect information. Voska met the first night of his visit with T.G. Masaryk, leader of the Czech national movement in exile and later first prime minister of independent Czechoslovakia; Masaryk advised Voska not to come to his apartment again, lest he be targeted by Austrian police, but they began a longstanding collaboration. “Then we hatched an idea. The Fourth of July was coming. I would give a big dinner in honor of the day, inviting not only prominent men of the American community in Prague but citizens of Prague with American business connections—and, incidentally, the leaders of Masaryk’s movement.” Voska planned this to “avert suspicion,” and held “political conferences with Czech leaders under the disguise of newspaper interviews.” After the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz

²⁵⁸ Information about Voska’s early life is surprisingly sparse. See Dagmar Hájková, *Emanuel Voska: Špionážní legenda první světové války* (Paměť: 2014).

²⁵⁹ Voska, *Spy and Counterspy*, 1-2.

Ferdinand and Princess Sophie in Sarajevo, Voska was able, at Masaryk's request and using his American press credentials, to travel and gather information. In Trieste he learned from "leaders of the South Slavs" that it was not a Hungarian plot against the royal family, as he had originally thought; they "frankly admitted that Serbians fired the shots which killed the imperial couple." With a declaration of war unfolding, the American consul in Prague happened to be on vacation, and so Voska and his daughter helped out the assistant in charge for several weeks, furthering his ties with the State Department. Masaryk next sent Voska to meet with British members of Parliament and the Russian ambassador to London to indicate Masaryk's desire to establish a Czech movement with the Allies. Voska claims to have concealed documents in the soles of his shoes and wrapped around his daughter's corset ribs. As Masaryk suggested, he then returned to New York to "organize support for the revolution among our American Czechs."²⁶⁰

Back in New York, Voska devoted himself to collecting intelligence and facilitating communication for Masaryk's Czech national movement, building in part on his experience with social organization as a socialist and unionist in the Empire. A clerk at the Austrian consulate in New York warned Voska that Austrian spies would be present in the audience at a public meeting that Voska arranged at the New York's Sokol Hall. The clerk, a Czech nationalist, promised to identify other Czech employees at the Austrian consulate who shared their views. Voska pulled widely from the Czech-American community to recruit couriers to carry verbal messages from the Czech movement in the United States to two parties: Masaryk and his supporters in England, and Czech nationalists still in Austria. Voska relied heavily on migrants who had become

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 6, 8, 10.

U.S. citizens and held American passports. As long as the US was neutral, these migrants could pass through territory controlled by both the Allied and Central Powers. Voska explained how his group also issued counterfeit passports, used official Austrian passport forms purloined from the New York consulate to provide false papers for their agents, and even arranged for fake arrests of his couriers en route to Europe so that they would not be suspected as spies by the Germans or Austrians. Voska then sent agents to beg the Austrian diplomats to issue his couriers visas to return home to see dying relatives.²⁶¹ Masaryk and Voska used Metropolitan Opera House soprano Emmy Destinn as an agent to convince “monarchists, Russophiles, clericals, and radicals” among the Czech politicians in Prague to join Masaryk’s republican movement. She sang Czech folk songs from the Prague opera house and when arrested, feigned innocence as an American Czech, claiming that that she had no idea that to do so was a political act.²⁶²

Voska was active on the home front as well. He assisted with foreign language materials and support for Liberty loans, did work for Creel’s Committee on Public Information, started the magazine *The Periscope* to inform Americans about Central European affairs, continued to promote the Czechoslovak national cause in immigrant industrial circles, and sent dozens of updates to the Wilson administration.²⁶³ Various aspects of the global conflict of World War forced working-class migrants to choose between their class interests as workers and national interests in addition to choosing between their duties as Austria-born citizens and new Americans. The socialist-or-nationalist dilemma was one that Voska himself likely sympathized with, having reinvented himself in the United States from socialist to nationalist and businessman; the

²⁶¹ Ibid., 42-48, 66-68.

²⁶² Ibid., 55.

²⁶³ Ibid., 252-255.

Austrian-or-American dilemma was, for him, an obvious choice. Voska claims that “Many Czechs and Slovaks who thought they were good union men found in this crisis that they were better patriots.”²⁶⁴ The question for migrants was overwhelmingly complex: An Austrian propaganda film screened widely in East European communities in the United States while the US was still neutral, depicted a bomb made by a Slovak-American in an American munitions factory being fired in Europe, killing his brother. Workers, regardless of nationality, were called to resist longer hours and higher output quotas without compensation, or otherwise strike. In contrast, Voska’s group printed hundreds of thousands of pamphlets in several Slavic languages explaining that “victory for the Allies meant independence for their old countries,” discouraging labor strikes. In 1914 Germany and Austria called “their male nationals of military age to register at the consulates. Among our people—Czechs, Slovaks and South Slavs born under Austrian rule—,” Voska explains, “a good many had registered. Then they had joined our revolutionary societies and wanted henceforth no part of Austria. Now such men began coming to the secretaries of the Czech National Alliance or the Slovak Leagues to ask for advice. They had been summoned to the Austrian consulate and . . . ordered to Mexico ‘for service.’”²⁶⁵ Voska’s espionage work exposed a broader array of German-Mexican connections to Allied intelligence agencies, undermining efforts by Germany and Austria-Hungary to pull on their migrant population for military purposes using Mexican ports.

Voska took his efforts back to Europe once the United States entered the war, officially in the employ of the U.S. Army but working for Czech interests alongside his

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 145.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 204.

American orders — a dualism that featured at nearly every phase of his life. At the front lines in Italy, he engineered the distribution of propaganda to the soldiers of “subject races” serving in the Austrian army, airdropped leaflets in German and Hungarian encouraging soldiers to surrender and be treated to “sumptuous meals, including coffee and cigarettes” as POWs in Italy, and worked with the army to bring Czech and “Jugoslav” politicians to Italy from behind Austro-Hungarian lines.²⁶⁶ After the war, Voska immediately set out to work for the peace and Czechoslovak state-building. He claims to have carried loads of archival material from Vienna to Prague, proving Austro-Hungarian responsibility for causing the war. His office in Prague flooded the city with pro-Wilson leaflets (“his picture in every cottage”). He bluffed to requisition food rations from Austro-Hungarian military storage in Bratislava to feed Bohemian coal miners and, by providing them food during famine, dissuade them from Bolshevik revolution.²⁶⁷ All of these contributions make Voska among the most influential figures in the transnational effort for Czechoslovak statehood, in which migrants played an active role. Beyond Voska’s own exploits, his story reveals a wide network of migrant nationalists who worked with and through him in the United States to help their “nation” achieve a state under unique wartime circumstances.

Voska’s work in espionage, propaganda, and the military was complemented by Czech-American nationalist Charles Pergler’s political work in Washington D.C. and G.H. Mika’s work in the Slav Press Bureau. Pergler “moved his headquarters to Washington, where for two years he worked virtually as a lobbyist—for a nation which

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 278, 282-283, 288-289.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 297-301.

did not exist and a cause which was not demanding legislation!”²⁶⁸ Whereas Károlyi’s program had argued for the transformation of Hungary through democratic reform, the outbreak of war had shifted Masaryk, Voska, and a whole host of other Slavic nationalists’ programs to the dismantling of Austria-Hungary; it was Pergler and Mika’s jobs to convince American Slavs, the American public, and American diplomatic officials alike of this position. The Károlyi movement’s critique of Austria in the American press already did some of Slavic nationalist’s work for them; Slavic-Americans whose homelands were in territorial Hungary could add critiques of Hungary to Czechs’ critiques of Austria. Pergler and Mika’s writings and speeches emphasized terms like “oppressed,” “suppressed,” “subject,” and “captive” describing Austria-Hungary’s minorities, appealing regularly to the United States’ own anti-imperial revolution to found a republic.²⁶⁹ Pergler spoke before the House Foreign Relations Committee in February 1916, gaining the type of audience that Károlyi had hoped for but never achieved. Particularly influential was a February 1918 article in the *Times*, “Slavs in Austria Appeal to Allies . . . Don’t Want Autonomy,” arguing explicitly that “complete separation from Habsburg Empire Is Demand of the Oppressed Nationalities There.” Mika explained in no uncertain terms that “only . . . condition . . . under which the Czechoslovaks will be willing to accept autonomy and to continue within Austria-Hungary” was “the transformation of the Dual Monarchy into a Federal Republic.” Pergler’s characterization of Austria-Hungary described it as “a survival of

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 202.

²⁶⁹ For example, “Slavs Here Demand Complete Freedom” *New York Times*, Jun. 24, 1918.

mediaevalism, purely dynastic and artificial”; “its very existence,” he continued, “is a denial of the principles for which America stands.”²⁷⁰

The main strains of Hungarian-American lobbying, emphasizing a democratic but unified Hungary through a minority opposition party, were less compatible with American war aims by 1917 than Slavic-American calls for Austria-Hungary’s dissolution. This can be one explanation why Hungarian-American lobbying did not result in the same level of acceptance by the State Department and other Allied governments as Czech and Slovak efforts did, giving Hungarian-American nationalists like Konta few of the opportunities available to Voska, Pergler, Mika, and others. Hungary’s longstanding union with Austria, its wartime military alliance with Germany, and its intact government were indisputable facts; alternative democratic politicians were nearly impossible, diplomatically, for U.S. officials to embrace. As historian Tibor Glant explains, American diplomats with the Wilson administration declined to engage with the relatively little-known democratic Hungarian Count Mihály Károlyi on his 1914 and 1917 visits to the United States.²⁷¹ Although Károlyi was popular with Hungarian-American audiences and could plausibly present himself as an heir to Lajos Kossuth’s ideals to both Hungarians and, at times, the American public, he lacked the personal friendship with Roosevelt and respect in international academic circles that had made Count Albert Apponyi so popular among American diplomats and politicians a few years before. Many Hungarian nationalists had high hopes for Károlyi’s role in achieving their vision for Hungary’s post-war future, but not all democratic nationalists and American-

²⁷⁰ *New York Times*, Feb. 10, 1918.

²⁷¹ Glant, *Through the Prism of the Habsburg Monarchy*, 56-57.

based East-European nation-builders got the same opportunity to influence post-war state creation.

Just as Masaryk had immigrant nationalist supporters in the United States and in American governmental political circles during the war through Voska, Pergler, and Miksa, Marcus Braun and Fiorello LaGuardia promoted Károlyi's movement in U.S. diplomatic circles during the war, despite the American government's decision not to engage with him in 1914. Braun, we know, was a leader in New York City's Hungarian community and in diplomatic circles, but less so in church- and fraternal-based Hungarian circles, while LaGuardia, as we saw above, had been a consular agent in Budapest, Fiume, and Trieste earlier in the twentieth century. Braun provided the clearest articulation that a Hungarian independence movement from Austria, supported by Hungarian Americans, would undermine the Empire's war effort and best fulfill Hungarian dreams of self-determination. In a four-page memorandum that Braun discussed at length with LaGuardia, Braun argued to U.S. Secretary of State Lansing that Hungarian Americans were in the ideal position to give Hungarians back home the courage to back away from the Central Powers' war effort, since the Russian threat to them, the one practical reason to defend themselves on the side of the Central Powers, was now gone. Braun envisioned a flood of correspondence from Hungarian-Americans to their relatives at home and in the trenches to give up the fight. He further envisioned an "Independent Hungary," led by Károlyi and others who could lead the country in a post-Habsburg democratic future. Following the same tactics that the Hungarian government had used in attempting to maintain the loyalty of its citizens abroad, the "Independent Hungary" movement that Károlyi had begun would enter a war-time phase using the

ethnic press, leaders in the ethnic community, and clergy to preach an independent Hungary from the newsstands, the fraternal hall, and the pulpit — all means that the Bohemian National Alliance and Slovak League of America had also employed. Braun drafted a “Manifesto to American Hungarians to their Brethren of Hungary,”²⁷² but it seems that it never left the State Department.

The parallels to the Czecho-Slovak movement would be striking, if Braun’s vision had developed further. Despite LaGuardia’s enthusiastic support, Lansing and Wilson rejected the plan and LaGuardia’s multiple attempts at a separate peace.²⁷³ According to historian George Barany, Braun’s proposal and documentation of LaGuardia’s support of it were filed in September 1917 without any official comment. The LaGuardia-Károlyi partnership never became a Miller-Masaryk partnership; Braun did not get to play the roles that Voska or Pergler did for Masaryk. For one, the homeland politicians with whom Braun sought cooperation with were still back in Europe waging war, not traveling in the West gaining legitimacy and international support as Masaryk was. Károlyi favored Hungary’s break from Germany and attempted to reach out to Entente diplomats, with a host of proposals compatible with the direction of Western democracy should he come to power, including expansion of the franchise, feminism, and recognitions of labor. George Barany concludes that Károlyi “could not be counted upon as the political leader of a Hungarian anti-Habsburg national revolution in 1917” from the perspective of American officials, as he and his party continued to believe in the integrity of Hungary as

²⁷² George Barany, “The Magyars,” in *The Immigrants’ Influence on Wilson’s Peace Policies*, ed. Joseph P. O’Grady (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), 150-153.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 140, 155.

a “geographical unit” irrespective of the nationality questions.²⁷⁴ The interplay between different national projects is significant in the rejection of Braun, LaGuardia, and Károlyi’s bid: a Czecho-Slovak national project that had set itself on a course for an independent nation-state could not coexist with a democratic Hungarian national project that maintained “Hungary” as a political unit with its current borders. Where one pursued democratization through national self-determination the other did through universal suffrage without national distinctions. Geography dictated that they could not both be achieved.

Károlyi worked for his vision for Hungary’s post-war future without the backing of the United States. He succeeded briefly in becoming prime minister and provisional president of Hungary in October 1918, before being deposed by Socialists the following March. In practice, independence politicians and migrant nation-builders were accorded recognition much more from “oppressed” nationalities whose goals could be fit more easily with American and Allied war aims, not opposition party leaders of “nations” that had an official government that the United States would have to diplomatically bypass. European “independence,” in the end, would therefore take the form of nation-states, however constructed, instead of the democratization of existing political entities.

As the war waged on battlefields, in State Department and Foreign Ministry offices, in migrant fraternal organizations, and on the home fronts, it simultaneously raged in the press. While the migrant press featured the most ethnic vitriol, the pages of the *New Republic* put the debates between articulate nationalists before a wider American

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 168. In another interpretation, Václav Horčíčka argues that the United States prioritized pursuing a separate peace with Austria-Hungary collectively (Horčíčka, “The Bilateral Relationship between Austria-Hungary and the United States from April to December 1917,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015).

audience. Eugene S. Bagger boldly wrote in 1918, “I believe in the full victory of the Allies and in Czecho-Slovak and Yugoslav independence, not in spite of being a Magyar, but because I am a Magyar.”²⁷⁵ While Slavic nationalists had embraced separatism in large numbers several years before and Hungarian-American were increasingly inclined toward Austria, the vast majority of Hungarian migrant nationalists, like Károlyi, espoused social change *within* Hungary’s hallowed thousand-year-old borders. Bagger openly declared that Hungary’s backwardness stemmed from class inequality — specifically with the “corrupt junker oligarchy” in government — but by 1918 he believed that Hungary should embrace rather than resist Wilsonian self-determination. Vladislav R. Savic, writing for the “Jugoslav” perspective the next month in response to Bagger agreed, further arguing that “The Magyars here in America would do a great service to themselves and to the world if they should immediately organize and express themselves for complete independence and equality of all the races of Hungary. The attitude of the Magyars in this country may influence their people in Hungary and save the world many thousands of lives and billions of money.”²⁷⁶ In some circles Bagger was quickly branded a traitor for conceding that the division not only of Austria-Hungary but of Hungary itself would be an appropriate outcome of the war. His interpretation of Hungary’s faults, however nuanced or accurate, did not mean much when victory and punishment were to be doled out by nation, not classes within them, and Hungary’s borders shrank more than even he thought possible.

²⁷⁵ Eugene S. Bagger, “Because I am a Magyar,” *The New Republic*, Jul. 20, 1918.

²⁷⁶ Vladislav R. Savic, “Because I am a Yugoslav,” *The New Republic*, Aug. 24, 1918.

The Cleveland Agreement (1915) and the Pittsburgh Agreement²⁷⁷ (1918)

The Cleveland Agreement, forged between the Slovak League of America and the Bohemian National Alliance at the Bohemian National Hall in Cleveland on October 22, 1915, was the beginning of the formal movement for an independent unified Czech and Slovak state. The concept of Czecho-slovakism had longstanding transatlantic roots, particularly in literary circles, but became politically salient in this American context. The agreement simply declared the intention of the two organizations to work in concert for a Czech-Slovak state. Over the past several decades, Czech- and Slovak-speakers had come to share certain work and living spaces in the United States and formed two highly organized, nationally conscious ethnic institutions. Just months after the war broke out in Europe, the Bohemian National Alliance of America and the Slovak League of America joined forces with the goal of Czecho-slovak statehood. The Cleveland Agreement stands out as a pivotal moment in which national identity was very transparently constructed, finally embodying a century of intellectual musings on linguistic relatedness of Czech and Slovaks and the naturalness for their affinity to one another.

Contrary to after-the-fact interpretations, such an arrangement was by no means inevitable. The terms Čecho-Slav, Czecho-Slovak, Czechoslovak, and other variations joining Czechs and Slovaks did not come into use until 1913.²⁷⁸ Thomas Capek wrote in 1920 that “‘Published in the interest of the Čecho-Slavs in America’ is a legend that is printed under the headlines of pretty nearly every journal, irrespective of religious or political affiliation. Usually, if not always, that paper is being issued in the interest of one

²⁷⁷ Original held by the Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh, PA.

²⁷⁸ Google N-gram.

Čecho-Slav — namely, the publisher.”²⁷⁹ Nationalists could ride waves of wartime support, but even a committed nationalist like Capek saw artifice in ethnic pandering. Capek retroactively applied the concept of Czecho-slovakism to earlier decades which it had not yet existed, a practice that would be replicated by scores of other Czech and Czecho-Slovak nationalists, though notably not Slovak nationalists who objected to this coopting of what had been a separate Slovak national project.

The United States and Slavic Americans were again central to the formation of Czechoslovakia with the signing of the Pittsburgh Agreement on May 31, 1918. The agreement envisioned a federative state with Czech and Slovak halves, with both similarities and notable differences to Austria-Hungary’s dualism. The federative, rather than unified, state structure had been of utmost importance in achieving a consensus between Czech-speaking and Slovak-speaking American communities.

Tomaš Masaryk lobbied extensively for the Agreement before the meeting in Pittsburgh, building on the groundwork of Voska’s efforts and the connections of his American connections like American businessman and diplomat Charles R. Crane. While Masaryk was not a conventional migrant himself, he maintained American connections through Czech-American communities, academic circles, and his American family through his marriage to Charlotte Garrigue, who he had wed in Brooklyn in 1878.²⁸⁰ After fleeing Austria in 1914, Masaryk traveled to Europe and Russia before arriving in the United States in 1918. “The United States,” Voska realized, “was momentarily the center for diplomatic action”; the center would shift later back to England and to Paris,

²⁷⁹ Thomas Čapek, *The Čechs (Bohemians) in America: A Study of their National, Cultural, Political, Social, Economic and Religious Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 171.

²⁸⁰ Masaryk had already lectured in Chicago in 1902 and 1907; Zahra, *Great Departure*, 82.

but it was an opportune time for Masaryk to visit the United States. “The Czech National Alliance saw in his visit a new opportunity to make the United States Czechoslovak-conscious.” Masaryk’s visit made the most of American interest and temporary centrality in supporting the Czech national cause. Masaryk’s American appearances – like those of Counts Apponyi and Károlyi – featured welcome ceremonies, political speeches, and “picturesque demonstrations in national costume.”²⁸¹ An editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* welcomed Masaryk in glowing terms, and his May 7th arrival was greeted by an “by an indescribable hurricane of enthusiastic and stormy ovation,”²⁸² while his welcome in New York featured an “impressive parade” of the city’s immigrant societies.²⁸³ Visiting Chicago in late May 1918, Masaryk explicitly knit together America and Bohemia’s fates in the war effort. “I am certain,” he declared, “that without a free Bohemia there will be no free America. This is not talking big. . . . What is Austria? Nine nations and one dynasty which, assisted by army, bureaucracy and nobility, exploits all, even the Germans and Hungarians. America has a choice; it can opt for nine free nations or for one degenerated dynasty.”²⁸⁴ Masaryk largely succeeded in winning over a critical mass of migrant nationalists and American diplomats to his views.

At the end of the month, on May 31, 1918, the Czecho-Slovak National Council met under the presidency of Thomas G. Masaryk in Pittsburgh. The participants were not elected representatives of self-identifying Czechs and Slovaks in Czech- and Slovak-speaking areas of Eastern Europe, but instead mostly representatives of fraternal

²⁸¹ Voska, *Spy and Counterspy*, 258.

²⁸² *Slavie*, May 7, 1918, translated in George J. Kovtun, *Masaryk and America: Testimony of a Relationship* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1988), 31.

²⁸³ "Dr. Masaryk," *New York Times*, May 27, 1918.

²⁸⁴ Masaryk's speech to Czechs and Slovaks in Chicago, *Slavie*, May 31, 1918, translated in Kovtun, *Masark and America*, 24.

organizations like the Slovak League of America, the Czech National Federation, the First Slovak Evangelical League, and the Association of Czech Catholics, associations that were sometimes rivals for members in the American context but now unified behind a nationalist cause for their perceived people back in Europe. Among the Pittsburgh Agreement's signatories were many of the leaders of the Czech- and Slovak-American communities. Among Czech-speakers, Vojta Beneš was an organizer of the Bohemian National Alliance of America, Hynek Dostál was the editor of the *Hlas* newspaper out of St. Louis, Clevelander Josef Martínek was editor of the Czech-language socialist newspaper *Americké Delnické Listy*, Charles Pergler headed the war-time Slav Press Bureau and was a part of the Bohemian National Alliance and the Bohemian Chapter of the Socialist Party of America (and, much later, Czechoslovak ambassador to the United States), Rev. Oldřich Zlámal was an influential Cleveland priest, and Jaroslav Joseph Zmrhal was a principal and superintendent in the Chicago Public Schools. Among Slovak-speakers, Ivan Bielek director of the New York import company Czecho Slovak Commercial Corp, Ivan Daxner was the executive secretary of the Slovak League of America, Ján Adolf Ferienčík was the editor of the paper of Slavonic Evangelical Union of America, Ignác Gessay was a Cleveland journalist, Milan Getting was a publisher of the newspaper of the Slovak Sokol, Jozef Hušek worked for the Slovak League of America, Rev. Ján Kubašek was president of the Association of Slovak Catholics, Albert Mamatey was the president of the National Slovak Society and the Slovak League of America, Rev. Jozef Murgaš was a founding member of the Slovak League of America and a priest in Wilkes-Barre, Cleveland journalist Ján Pankúch worked for the Slovak League of America. Andrej Schustek was chairman of the first district of the Slovak

League of America, while Rev. Pavel Šiška was the League's financial secretary. Two-thirds of the signers of the Pittsburgh Agreement were migrant nationalists.

The Pittsburgh Agreement demonstrates migrant nation-building at its apex. Migrants assumed the prerogative as self-proclaimed members of the nation to act on European Czechs' and Slovaks' behalf. They scarcely admitted that building a European nation-state in Pittsburgh was not strictly democratic. In its four opening points, the agreement confidently declared a "Union of the Czechs and Slovaks in an independent state comprising the Czech Lands, and Slovakia" in a democratic republic, but specified that Czech Lands and Slovakia would have their own administrative bodies and courts and assured Slovak as the official language in Slovakia. The fifth and sixth points of the Agreement displayed more caution by migrant nationalists about acting on their European brethren's behalf. "The organization of the collaboration of the Czechs and the Slovaks in the United States will be amplified and adjusted according to the needs and according to the changing situation, by mutual agreement," it explained, while leaving the "detailed rules" of the new state "to the liberated Czechs and Slovaks and their legal representatives."

The Pittsburgh Agreement and Masaryk gained further recognition through the establishment of the Mid-European Union, founding on September 16, 1918 as an "informal union of . . . newly liberated nations," a sort of joint lobby and think tank to negotiate territorial disputes between the emerging nations and work for their mutual economic future. Meeting the next month in Philadelphia, their declaration "was signed in the same hall and that the same table as the American Declaration of Independence." Delegates represented the "Czechoslovaks, Poles, Jugoslaves [sic], Ukrainians, Uhro-

Russians [elsewhere in the document written as Uhro-Ruthenes], Rumanians, Italian Irredentists, Unredeemed Greeks, Albanians and Zionists, wholly or partly subject to alien domination"; other iterations included Lithuanians. Polish representation reportedly withdrew shortly thereafter over territorial conflict with Ukraine over territory in Galicia.²⁸⁵ Masaryk became the first president. Oberlin College sociologist Herbert A. Miller was the only American member of the organization and became its operating Director. Miller drafted the Union's resolutions "to resolve mutual differences and to solve common problems" for aspiring nations, which were adopted by the assembly and then presented to President Wilson.²⁸⁶ Despite the success of many of these national projects included in the Mid-European Union in achieving a state in the wake of the war, not all national projects resulted in states. Gregory Zatkovitch's attempt to gain a hearing for a Ruthene state at the Paris Settlement, despite inclusion in the Mid-European Union, failed,²⁸⁷ while Czecho-Slovakia's founding was confirmed.

Delegates' views varied widely on ethnic Czechoslovakism, with the overwhelming majority maintaining a view of two nations in one federative state, as both the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Agreements stated. Some appreciated the flexibility of a hyphenated Czecho-slovakism, and others still embraced Czechoslovaks as one people, cruelly divided by Austria-Hungary into different halves of the empire, to be properly reunited again. Although in the overwhelming minority at Cleveland and Pittsburgh, the language of a single "Czechoslovak nation" (*národ československý*) emerged in the state's founding declaration later on in Europe. The Washington Declaration, officially

²⁸⁵ "The Mid-European Union," *The European War XVII* (1918), 500-501.

²⁸⁶ Edward R. Kantowicz, *The Rage of Nations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 153.

²⁸⁷ Kristofer Allerfeldt, *Beyond the Huddled Masses: American Immigration and the Treaty of Versailles* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 31.

declaring the independence of the Czechoslovak state, was published on October 18, 1918 in Paris and declared a unified rather than federative structure, sidestepping the non-binding but unambiguous plans of the Pittsburgh Agreement. Many Slovak nationalists, particularly those in the United States, who were committed to a separate Slovak nation within the proposed Czecho-Slovak state under the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Agreements, were outraged and lobbied extensively against the structure of the new state. But with the backing of migrants, American diplomats, and western European diplomats, nationalists had succeeded in accomplishing a state for the Czechoslovak national project.

Conclusion

Correspondence in 1918 between President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of State Lansing referred to Austria-Hungary as the “artificial Austrian Empire.” Moving ever closer to seeing the western world in terms of nation-states, Wilson wondered “if even Hungary is any more an integral part of it than Bohemia.” “Hungary should also be definitely considered to be an independent nationality, no longer united with Austria,”²⁸⁸ he concluded. Wilson’s observation came too late for Károlyi. Even the most pro-Dual Monarchy Hungarian politicians would have vehemently insisted that Hungarians had been a separate “nationality” from Austria all along. Commentators the world over had printed thousands of pages and drawn millions of breaths debating which nations were “independent” nationalities and which were mere off-shoots. Comments like Wilson’s indicate that they failed to realize that their musings on ethnicity was itself a process of further construction, not some excavating of objective ethnic truth.

²⁸⁸ Barany, “The Magyars,” 166.

The Paris Peace Settlement left some migrants elated at the success of their national projects, others unsure about the new order, and still others bitterly disappointed. In 1920, Thomas Capek confidently wrote, “a Pole to Pole, no matter whether in the old country your John Lubomirski owed allegiance to Austria, Prussia, or Russia; a Čech to Čech; the Magyar to his own; the Austro-German to the Germans from the Fatherland. That State idea to which Austro-Hungarian statesmen have clung as tenaciously as the dervish holds fast to his fetich, is that moment proved an illusion, or rather a delusion: political boundaries that had separated people of the same race are seen to disappear as a rainbow fades. Only two binding ties survive: race and language.”²⁸⁹ Capek’s assessment shows how far the world had come so quickly in recasting Europe as a land of nation-states, however imperfect. The Allies maintained their privileges to Empire in non-western parts of the world, but no German Empire or Austro-Hungarian Empire would further threaten their vision of Europe. Race and language certainly won in theory, but the linguistic intermixture made the reality far messier. More political boundaries now separated “people of the same race” than before the war, since now thousands more miles of political boundaries existed in Europe, with sizable minority populations. In several cases, migrants’ war-time lobbying shifted to post-war revisionism. This is not surprising for those whose nations were “losers” in the war, like Hungarian-speakers seeking “Justice for Hungary,” but Slovak nationalists in the United States also became bitterly divided between those accepting of a single Czechoslovak nations and those insistent that Slovaks had been promised autonomy in a Czecho-Slovak federation.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ Čapek, *The Čechs (Bohemians) in America*, 58.

²⁹⁰ See June Alexander, *From Ethnic Pride to American Patriotism*.

Studying war can be sad business, a tragedy alongside a drama. Embarking on this project, studying nationalists, I expected to find few loyal migrants truly committed to the Habsburgs or to Austria-Hungary in my research. The accounts are littered with German nationalists, so easy to vilify as the culprits and enemies, especially since Americans tend to conflate most things historically German with Nazism. But here and there were migrants who were indeed committed to Austria-Hungary. Voska's spies uncovered several. Many were from borderlands areas or had mixed identities. One medical doctor in New York City, still a reserve officer in the Austrian army, lamented all the treason among his fellow migrants against the Empire and offered confidential information against separatists.²⁹¹ Other imperial loyalists, too, showed up at Austro-Hungarian consulate in New York, before the United States had entered the war, asking for help in dealing with consequences of problems with their loved ones in the troubled homeland, or offering to help stop those trying to break it apart.

Reflecting back on his work for the American war effort and the creation of the Czechoslovak state, Voska was confident about what "our patriotic Czechs and Slovaks" had accomplished: "popular acceptance of Habsburg rule . . . [was] as full of holes as a honeycomb." By his estimates, 50,000 "aliens belong to the subject Slav people of Austria" and had joined the American army, and 320,000 immigrants had joined the Bohemian National Alliance or Slovak National League.²⁹² "To a degree with few on this side of the water realize, the young Czechoslovakia regarded the United States as her motherland. The influence which made her a republic, not a monarchy . . . , came from

²⁹¹ Voska, *Spy and Counterspy*, 165.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 214.

the Czech and Slovakia colonies in the United States.”²⁹³ Voska’s own position as a migrant — an ardent Czech nationalist but U.S. citizen — had given him the ability to work in many circles and even to be a hero for his nation without being a resident or a citizen. Voska described his status during the war as a “peculiar position,” “under command of the American army but responsible also . . . to the Czechoslovak provisional government.”²⁹⁴ In much the same way that it was only a small handful of nationalized individuals who emigrated from Austria-Hungary to the U.S. *because of* nationalist reasons, it was likewise a small group of devotees like Voska who would return to take part in the national triumph. “I, for one, wanted to watch the baby grow up and to lend what help I could,” he recalled, referring to the new Czechoslovak state. Having bankrupted himself in the cause of establishing that state, he sought in the post-war era to capitalize on his transnational connections now as a return migrant. And yet, he could not so easily abandon his identity as an American, cultivated over several decades of living in the United States and serving the US army and government. “The feeling of a naturalized Czech or Slovak toward the country of his birth and that of his adoption was not so much a divided allegiance as a welded allegiance.” He kept his American citizenship, alongside acquiring Czechoslovak citizenships, and established in Prague the most New York of businesses: the city’s first large taxi company.²⁹⁵

²⁹³ Ibid., 304.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 289.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 304-5. Voska faced grave disappointment but also further benefits of his American citizenship later in life, when Nazi Germany took over Czechoslovakia in 1938-39. He and his family were able to leave Prague legally after the occupation and reestablish themselves in Long Island, where he wrote *Spy and Counterspy*. Voska, chap. 15. Subsequently, Voska revived his role as a valuable asset to both the United States government and the Czechoslovak government in exile during World War II, setting again in Czechoslovakia, but became a communist prisoner in the 1950s despite antifascism and his own socialist past. He died shortly after his release from prison.

While Voska comfortably embraced the fuzziness of simultaneous Czecho-slovak and Czech and Slovak identities at home and abroad, migrant communities struggled to make sense of a single Czechoslovak identity, as ethnic divergence had been a strong feature of their ethnicization in the United States. At the second anniversary celebration of the Pittsburgh Agreement in Chicago in 1920, a Slovak speaker addressed the continuing divide, blaming the Austro-Hungarian past for the belated discovery of Czecho-Slovak mutual support. But the article reveals continued unease with the question of whether Czechs and Slovaks and Czecho-Slovaks were indeed one and the same. "He assured us, the Bohemians, that every Slovak is a sincere brother of ours, a son of one mother - Slovakia. He referred to the frequently overlooked fact that until recently, the Slovaks did not have their own Slovak schools, that ever since childhood they were brought up to hate Bohemians and everything Slavic. Therefore, it is not surprising that many of them are still against us today, especially when they are continually instigated by hired or voluntary agents."²⁹⁶

"Failed" migrant nationalists licked their wounds in the aftermath of war. Many Hungarian Americans watched with dismay as Károlyi's democratic government fell and the kingdom was reduced to one-third its former size, putting many of their home villages outside of Hungary's new borders; those same Hungarian-American socialists saw opportunity in Hungary's 1919 Bolshevik revolution to bring about a classless society, even if in a much smaller territory, before that too fell to a conservative resurgence under noble-born Miklós Horthy, who ruled as Regent of Hungary through World War II. Rusin nationalists in the United States mourned the loss of Rusin nationalists at home who died

²⁹⁶ Andrej Schustek, "Yesterday's celebration of the twenty-eighth of October festivals arranged to celebrate second anniversary of Czechoslovak Independence, in Sokol Chicago Hall," *Denni Hlasatel*, Oct. 29, 1920.

while interned during the war at the Austria's Thalerhof camp, after being accused of association with Russia. The Thalerhof experience prevented any cooperation between Rusin nationalists in the US and those in Austrian Galicia and Hungary; their national projects would develop instead under the circumstances of the interwar period, having missed the war-time opportunities to make a claim for a state.

Chapter 5

Quotas and Borders: The Dual Effects of the Paris Settlement and American Immigration Quotas

After the First World War, two factors drastically changed how Eastern Europeans might migrate to the U.S.: first, new geopolitical borders in the region, outlined in the Paris Settlement treaties; and second, restrictive immigration legislation in the United States. While numerous historians have studied the effects of the break up of Austria-Hungary and the effects of U.S. quotas on East European migration *separately*, rarely have they explained the effects that these two major post-war developments had on transatlantic migration *together*.²⁹⁷ It is a curious oversight, as the combination of new state borders and quotas were of huge significance for many would-be emigrants and return migrants.

An American quota system was first passed in the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and then revised in the Immigration Act of 1924 (also known as the National Origins Act and the Johnson-Reed Act). This quota restricted emigration to the United States just as new political borders impelled many to leave. Especially in borderlands areas, thousands of individuals' home villages did not end up in the new state they identified with nationally. For migrants who had gotten stuck in Europe for the duration of the war, the location of new borders determined, in part, whether they desired to remigrate to the

²⁹⁷ For the effects of new borders on the region, see, for example, classics Oszkár Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929). The most recent treatment, forcefully arguing against a decrepit monarchy torn apart by rival nationalisms, is Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*. For U.S. immigration restriction, see, in particular, Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), and Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004).

United States afterwards. New borders also mattered tremendously for migrants already in the US deciding whether to return to Europe. Before the war, migration to the United States had served as a safety valve in Austria-Hungary for economic hard times. After the war, as the European economy was still reeling, the valve had been pulled almost shut. As historian Mae Ngai has argued, and Nicole Phelps has greatly expanded, “The U.S. immigration quota system helped to reinforce categories of racial nationalism, and the border controls it involved helped to discourage international movement, contributing to the governments’ desires to align of citizenship, race, and place.”²⁹⁸

One of the great ironies of the Paris Settlement was that, rather than creating homogenous nation-states aligned with so called self-determination, it instead reshuffled heterogeneous Eastern Europe into new states that had massive minority populations. This situation heightened irredentism, or a desire for border revision based on ethnographic or historical claims to territory. Indeed irredentism became one of the most prominent political ideologies in interwar Europe. While the United States’ entry into the war ground transatlantic migration nearly to a halt, the war’s end and the Paris Peace Settlement brought no definitive resolution to questions of migration, nationalism, and sovereignty. In fact, the immediate post-war period saw widespread upheaval and attempts by individuals and families to migrate quickly to reunite war-torn families, finally pursue pre-war migration plans, move across new borders to end up on the “right” side, and get to the United States before legislation made it impossible.

Furthermore, as historian Tara Zahra explains, the new states of East Central Europe sought to “‘filter’ their populations, retaining only the most desirable national

²⁹⁸ Mae Ngai, “The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law,” *Journal of American History* 86 (June 1999), 11.

citizens.” As a result, she continues, “Emigration policy became an explicit tool of new and more violent forms of nation building and population politics.” In some cases, therefore, minorities might have greater mobility to leave, but were not welcome to return home.²⁹⁹ In other ways, however, access to migration services were often more accessible to member of the titular nation than to minorities. Nevertheless, Zahra’s observations offer a useful starting point for digging into deeper detail about the consequences of the First World War on transatlantic migration from former Austro-Hungarian territory.

As transatlantic migration became possible again after the war, nativists in the American Congress rode a wave of isolationist, xenophobic, and anti-Bolshevik sentiment to pass laws reducing the sanctioned arrival of migrants to the United States, including those from “ex-Imperial Austria.” Representative of the genre of racialized exclusion in the 1920s quota laws is a report collected by the Secretary of Labor. The author concluded that continued “immigration of German and Magyar elements . . . would certainly . . . be appreciated due to the good elements of civilization, of intelligence, and activity of the two mentioned races,” but also warned of the “migratory flux” of the “numerous element of the Slav ex-Austrian peasantry, now all united in the two Republics of Czechoslovakia and Poland, and in complex, Serbian-Croatian-Slovene, composing the Yugoslav Kingdom.” “Almost all the Slavs can, for the present at least, be considered as dangerous vehicles for bolshevik infection.”³⁰⁰ (Other commentators were far less generous toward Germans and Hungarians.) The House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, chaired by Congressman Albert Johnson of Washington,

²⁹⁹ Zahra, *Great Departure*, 17.

³⁰⁰ *Restriction of Immigration: Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, . . . Sixty-eighth Congress, first session, on H.R.5, H.R.101, H.R.561 H.R.6540* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), 1171.

became an active agent of restriction, despite the staunch dissent of select Congressmen representing their immigrant constituents.

Across the Atlantic, European lawmakers, too, turned to questions of whether and how to legislate mobility in the post-war era. Czechoslovak Minister of Welfare Gustáv Habrmann argued in a 1922 speech that it was necessary to differentiate between Czechoslovak emigration before and after 1918, reinforcing that the conclusion of World War I had altered migration. Habrmann retold Czechs' and Slovaks' history of emigration for the last three hundred years in light of the recent developments. In the former period, Slovaks "groaned under the Hungarian yoke." The reasons behind the 1905 peak in emigration, he argued, could be found in Hungary's "political and cultural repression"; "no wonder the Slovaks left home lightheartedly to search for a new home for themselves in America." But after the "grisly war" had concluded, he argued, Slovaks emigrated because of poor "European conditions."³⁰¹ Habrmann's argument that economic privation was a new factor ignored the importance of economic considerations before the war, and the fact that that many Slovak nationalists objected to the Czechoslovak state's handling of Slovak autonomy after the war. We see in both periods an interplay between economic well-being and cultural questions, not to mention the way in which laws produced and constrained emigrants' decisions.

The far-reaching effects of new East European borders and restrictive immigration legislation in the United States opened a new chapter in the issues that we have explored over the previous several decades, including home governments' relationship to migrants, return migration, and new phases of nationalist projects. These

³⁰¹ Gustáv Habrmann, "The Essence of Czechoslovak Emigration," *Der Wiederaufbau in Europa* 16 (November 1922), translated into Hungarian in MNL OL, K28 171 cs.

issues now confronted the postwar issues of self-determination and the expanding and protecting of new states. The successor states to Austria-Hungary continued many of the practices of the pre-war period, and now migrants had to contend with greater restrictions from the American government alongside their home governments.

Legislating Nativism, Restriction, and Isolation

At war's end, in November 1918, it was not clear where the victorious Allies would draw the borders of new states to succeed Austria-Hungary and how far the United States would go in restricting the entry of migrants from the Eastern hemisphere. The unsettled details in both of these matters created a prolonged period of confusion, as potential migrants tried to maneuver how best to end up where they wanted to be while the opportunities existed to do so.³⁰² Further, the perceived radicalism of the Russian and communist revolutions in Eastern Europe strengthened the position of isolationists in restricting the continued arrival of Southern and Eastern Europeans, who might bring what historian William Appleman Williams has called a “rising tide of Revolution” to American shores.³⁰³

Especially for potential first-time migrants, the American quotas were a game changer. Already before the U.S. entry into the war, the Immigration Act of 1917 largely barred migration from Asia and the Pacific Islands, as well as some categories of

³⁰² Allerfeldt, *Beyond the Huddles Masses*, 5. Allerfeldt connects the Versailles Treaty and the passage of restrictive immigration legislation in American diplomatic circles and public opinion, but says little about how the changes that the treaty brought affected the continued movement of migrants themselves.

³⁰³ See Peter H. Buckingham, *America Sees Red: Anticommunism in America, 1870s to 1980s: A Guide to Issues and References* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982) and William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009 [1959]), especially chaps. 3-4.

individuals labeled “homosexuals,” “idiots,” “feeble-minded persons,” “criminals,” “insane persons,” “alcoholics,” and the illiterate. Prostitutes and anarchists were already barred. Building on previous legislation, Congress imposed new quotas on migrants from Europe.

The 1921 Emergency Quota Law capped immigration to the U.S. at 350,000 annually, assigning each country a quota of 3% of the population of its nationality in the 1910 census. The crafters of the law, most notably Washington Senator Albert Johnson, argued that post-war conditions in Europe were causing the “influx” in post-war migration that went against the United States’ best interests. The legislation allowed for just over 50,000 migrants from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire to enter each year (down from 200,000 some years), divided between successor states and neighboring states: 7,451 from Austria, 14,557 from Czechoslovakia, 71 from the port city of Fiume, 5,638 from Hungary, 5,786 from Eastern Galicia, 7,419, from Romania, and 6,426 from Yugoslavia.³⁰⁴ “To allow any great portion of the discontented millions of Europe to come here is not likely to aid the constructions of Europe,” the report accompanying the bill argued.³⁰⁵ The reasons for the act included American unemployment, a shortage of housing facilities in the United States, “the presence . . . of 10,000,000 or more unnaturalized aliens,” “the danger of spreading contagious and loathsome diseases,” and “the inadvisability of admitting aliens of the nationalities of the world, speaking their various languages faster than they can be assimilated.” In the committee phase the bill

³⁰⁴ *Restriction of Immigration: Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, . . . Sixty-eighth Congress, first session, on H.R.5, H.R.101, H.R.561, H.R.6540* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), 43.

³⁰⁵ *Restriction of Immigration, . . . United States House of Representatives, 67th Congress, 1st session, Report no. 4, April 19, 1921*” (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924), 16-17, 7.

was amended to allow migrants claiming “religious persecution in the country of their last permanent residence, whether such persecution be evidenced by overt acts or by laws or governmental regulations that discriminate against the alien or the race to which he belongs because of his religious faith” to enter outside the quota.³⁰⁶ This important provision later facilitated entry for several thousand Jews displaced by earlier pogroms and new bursts of anti-Jewish violence like Hungary’s White Terror.

The 1921 legislation had to account for new borders in Eastern Europe, since the map of the region in 1890 and in 1921 was markedly different. The law stated as follows: “In case of changes in political boundaries in foreign countries occurring subsequent to 1910,” the Secretaries of State, Commerce, and Labor would jointly “estimate the number of persons resident in the United States in 1910 who were born within the area included in such new counties or in such territory so transferred, and revise the population basis as to each country involved in such change of political boundary.” The birthplace of those individuals would retroactively become whatever country the physical territory of their birth now belonged to.³⁰⁷ But as we will see below, the information in the U.S. Census and other government documents made approximating birthplaces difficult. While seeming so precise, they were entirely figures of “guesswork.”³⁰⁸

Complications from the new borders and quotas were apparent in the bill even before it passed. State Department documents apprised the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization during their deliberations that while Jewish Romanians had “no difficulty in securing permission to depart, Transylvanians,” previously citizens of Hungary but now suddenly of Romania, “encounter great difficulty in obtaining the

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 3.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 17.

³⁰⁸ *Restriction of immigration, . . . , Sixty-eighth Congress, 915-922.*

authorization to emigrate.” The Bucharest consulate saw a marked uptick in these applications specifically “due to the fear of anti-immigration laws” in the United States. Reports from Zagreb indicated that in Yugoslavia, the number of prospective emigrants would double if the restrictions against the emigration of former Austrian soldiers were lifted,³⁰⁹ presumably because men who had fought for the Emperor were less likely to support a Yugoslav state in their political sentiments. The Commissioner General for Immigration for the Department of Labor Anthony Caminetti noted that peasant migration was likely to be higher from the “ceded districts” of Hungary, again tying migration explicitly to territorial change.³¹⁰

As the United States Congress debated immigration restriction in 1921, two notable voices of opposition were Jewish-American Representatives Democrat Adolph Joachim Sabath of Illinois and Republican Isaac Siegel of New York. Sabath had been born in Zabori, in Bohemia, and became a U.S. Democratic senator for Illinois in 1907. Although best remembered for his opposition to the Volstead Act, financial contributions to Czech-American girl Elsie Paroubek’s 1911 kidnapping/murder investigation, New Deal work, and promotion of American military action against Germany early in WWII, Sabath was a voice of continued opposition to Johnson. Siegel had been born and raised in New York, but had thousands of Eastern European migrants among his constituents and sought to aid Europe’s Jews, in particular, in successfully immigrating to the United States through organizations like the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and U.S. law. It was Siegel who successfully argued for the reclassification of the Polish and Russian quotas

³⁰⁹ *Restriction of Immigration, . . . 67th Congress*, 13.

³¹⁰ *Emergency Immigration Legislation: Hearings Before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, . . . April 15 and 26, 1921* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), 58.

in 1923, as the status of eastern Galicia and Bessarabia were still contested at the time that the 1921 quotas had been drawn up,³¹¹ a single instance of remediation for a widespread new problem.

The dissenting members of the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization -- Siegel, Sabath, and their colleague Rep. Robert S. Maloney – argued that Congress “should deliberate first and legislate afterwards.” If existing laws were “properly enforced,” there would be no need to put such restrictive new measures in place. They argued that “practically all who are coming to the United States are leaving Europe in order to join their families” and that “the reunion of families who have been separated since the war will be retarded, if not in many cases practically prevented” by the legislation.³¹² Because of a continued belief in family reunification, a number of different categories of potential migrants fell outside the quotas or allowed family members to receive preference for visas; for example, wives’ and children’s citizenship was usually dictated by the head of the family, often allowing them to arrive outside the quota. But Siegel, Sabath, and Maloney were firmly in the minority. In Congressional hearings, Sabath regularly defused hostile questioning against immigrant witnesses. He argued openly against the division of Europe into northern and southern and eastern categories and the racial assumptions that imbued those divisions; “I do not like to have any reflection cast upon people who do not deserve it,” he retorted.³¹³ But the Emergency Quota Act was just the beginning, and Johnson’s policies would become even more restrictive in the coming years.

³¹¹ *Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, Apr. 6, 1923.

³¹² *Restriction of Immigration, . . . 67th congress*, 19, 21.

³¹³ *Naturalization: Hearings Before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, . . . Serial 5, . . . May 26, 1921* (Washington: Government Press Office, 1921), 990.

The debates preceding the passage of the National Origins Act of 1924 continued to grapple with the problem of new Eastern European boundaries in assigning quotas to Austria-Hungary's successor states. The law further reduced the quotas, allowing each country a quota of just 2% of the population of that territory in the 1890 US census, rather than 3% of the 1910 census, and renewed debates about how the quota system discriminated against the region. The most significant debates in deliberations over the law were whether the 1890 or the 1910 census should be used in determining the quotas. While the 1910 census already listed hundreds of thousands of East European migrants arriving for industrial jobs, the 1890 census mostly encompassed only older, significantly smaller waves of migrants from Austria-Hungary, like agricultural Bohemians attracted by the Homestead Act, before industrial migration had really taken off. The switch to an earlier census was clearly intended to limit Central and Eastern Europeans at a time when the region was still facing massive upheaval with new borders.

Johnson and his fellow nativists thoroughly succeeded in putting a racialized rationale for exclusion into U.S. law. Johnson explicitly sought to “maintain the racial preponderance of the basic strain on our people and thereby to stabilize the ethnic composition of the population.”³¹⁴ The apportioning of nationality quotas for new states based on geography as opposed to ethnicity in Europe was clearly inconsistent with the logic of trying to maintain a “basic strain” of American “ethnic composition,” but such inconsistencies did not trouble American nativists. As Ngai concluded, “race and nationality disaggregated and realigned in new and even ways” under the quota

³¹⁴ Quoted in Maldwyn Allen Jones, *American Immigration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 277.

system.³¹⁵ In the end, the annual quotas for the region were set at 785 for Austria, 3,073 for Czechoslovakia, 473 for Hungary, 5,982 for Poland, 603 for Romania, and 671 for Yugoslavia.

In congressional hearings, questions about how to handle the problem of assigning quotas based on new borders continually popped up. While Johnson and his allies insisted that the necessity of restriction outweighed the finer details of quota allocation, even staunch restrictionists on the Immigration and Naturalization Committee occasionally betrayed their skepticism about the portioning of quotas for new states. Colorado Congressman William Newell Vaile noted that changing territorial borders made the census nearly useless for quota figures. “It is impossible to carry the country along for either Poland, Austria-Hungary, Germany, or Russia,” he complained. “Are those figures available elsewhere—the actual immigration from those four countries from the year 1890 on?”³¹⁶ “Do you think it would be all right to let the boundaries . . . [of] all of Austro-Hungary be Austro-Hungary for the purpose of determining the quota?” Johnson asked one witness. “How, then, would you determine?” Mr. Nathan Grosshand, a printer and newspaper publisher from Youngstown, Ohio, replied. Forcing the former empire to share a quota, Grosshand explained, would create even bigger problems than bad estimates for each country. “Your fight will come in between Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, and Czechoslovakia; each will claim more; that is the trouble you will have, Congressman.”³¹⁷

Committee members Congressmen Raker and Watkins displayed their utter lack of knowledge about the map and peoples of Europe on numerous occasions throughout

³¹⁵ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 24.

³¹⁶ *Restriction of Immigration . . . Sixty-eighth Congress*, 920.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 241.

the hearings. “What do you mean by Bohemians,” Raker asked one witness; “What are they? Bulgarians?” “What kingdom and what king did they renounce when they assumed naturalization in this country?”³¹⁸ Watson questioned. O.D. Koreff, a Pittsburgh newspaperman speaking on behalf of the Slovak League of America, called to testify in favor of basing quotas on the 1910 census rather than the 1890 census, faced an uphill battle getting the committee members to even understand the concept of Czechoslovakia. Speaking about the low crime rate among Slovaks in Allegheny County, PA, he was asked, “You mean including the Czechoslovaks?” “I am coming to the Czechoslovak part of it in a short time,” he replied; “I am at present speaking of the Slovaks only, as a distinct national group. . . . It is for them that I am asking consideration in the shaping of this bill, because if it should be based on the quota of 1890 it would not give them a fair showing.” Koreff argued that, even by the 1921 law, the figures for calculated the quota for newly created states were “not reliable and [were] unjust to Czech and Slovak immigration.”³¹⁹

The representatives of the Census Bureau had to admit several times during their hearing that data from the 1890 census made setting European quotas nearly impossible. While the 1920 census asked for the province or city of birth, earlier censuses had asked only for country.³²⁰ In the 1890s the list of options for nationality on the U.S. census had included “Bohemian” and “Slovak” as separate language categories. This made it easy enough to merge for a Czechoslovak quota, but it is unclear how many “Ruthenian”-speakers -- now divided into several new states -- could emigrate. The Immigration

³¹⁸ Ibid., 189.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 326, 331-332, 339. While it would be speculative to assert that Koreff argued for the 1910 census in case the Czech and Slovak regions of Czechoslovakia went their separate ways, his testimony does indeed seem to support that.

³²⁰ Ibid., 915-922.

Bureau's reports in the 1880s and '90s had complained of widespread irregularities in assigning nationality, mother tongue, and home place names to arrivals – such as sometimes continuing to list Bohemia as a country of origin long after the Immigration Bureau and Census Bureau had agreed to classify those migrants as coming from “Austria.” Now, this highly problematic data from the late 19th century was being used to set firm caps on the number of entrants from Central and Eastern Europe in the 1920s. In response to Sabath's questioning, Census Bureau representatives also admitted that while the 1910 census collected information on mother tongue, the 1890 one did not, and that census data on mother tongue had not been used in drawing up the nationality quotas for the 1921 Quota Act anyway. Estimates were further off, questioning eventually revealed, because wives' naturalization followed their husbands' and therefore added and removed them from the rolls of the foreign-born depending on who they married.³²¹

Hungarian officials kept tabs on unfolding debates in the U.S. Congress surrounding Johnson's bills, noting Siegel and Sabath's objections on the grounds that it was an “injustice” to categorize individuals by race and religion and went against the “American spirit.”³²² Nevertheless, the era of mass transatlantic migration was ending.

The Post-War Transformation and Truncation of Migration Bureaucracies

In the early twentieth century both Austria-Hungary and the United States had created massive governmental bureaucracies devoted to migration; the restrictionist period and the reshuffling of states in Eastern Europe would bring about a thorough revision of these arms of government on both sides of the Atlantic. Given Austria-

³²¹ Ibid., 915-922.

³²² Report of Jul. 5, 1922, MNL OL K26, 1233cs, 21 tét, alap. 9191.

Hungary's long arm in managing migration and migrant loyalty, the end of the Empire required the dismantling of Austria-Hungary's wide support networks for migrant institutions. The war had ceased nearly all official Austro-Hungarian governmental activity in the United States, but supposedly only temporarily; even if Austria-Hungary lost the war, there was little reason to believe, at the outset, that it would not *survive* it. Now, Austria and Hungary had to disentangle the Austrian and Hungarian strands of their joint foreign office, while the governments of the new successor states had to formalize their acting war-time governments and foreign ministries into legitimate post-war governments. And at war's end, the exclusionary terms of the 1924 National Origins Act were still far ahead in the future.

Once the war ended, European and American shipping companies immediately set out to resume passenger travel across the Atlantic for migrants. Companies required permits from the new governments of the post-Habsburg states to operate. Hungary, as before, serves as an instructive case study, even if now a much smaller country. U.S. Consul Grant-Smith worked hand in hand with American shipping companies to try to assure that they would have rights to carry Hungarian passengers to American shores. One American company objected vehemently that the British Cunard Line, which had enjoyed a monopoly contract for Hungarian emigration for several years out of the Hungarian port of Fiume, once again had the first and preferential permit from the Hungarian government to carry Hungarian citizens, even though Hungary no longer had a domestic port. Even war had not disrupted the economic interests between passenger liners and Hungarian governmental officials engaged in the business of emigration. To counteract the Hungarian government's measures, U.S. Consul Grant-Smith went as far

as to give visa preference to Hungarian emigrants who purchased their tickets with American shipping lines. Grant-Smith was chastised by officials in Washington for the action, but defended himself, saying that it was necessary to protect the United States' economic interests.³²³

When the Emergency Quota Act took effect in 1921, Hungary's quota was still at 5,638, but by the time the Johnson-Reed Act went into law in 1924, Hungary's quota was down to 437 migrants annually, making all the work that Grant-Smith and American shipping lines had put into obtaining permits nearly worthless. While obviously more than 437 individuals would *travel* each year—previous migrants or family members visiting, tourists, business travelers—the low numbers made Grant-Smith's extensive economic-diplomatic efforts moot. In this way, the post-war era posed unique challenges to migrants, businesses, and governments alike.

Austria-Hungary's prewar network of eleven consulates and three branch offices was shut down in late 1917 when Austria-Hungary and the United States declared war on each other. Until the fall of 1921 the neutral Swedish legation handled the affairs of Austro-Hungarian citizens in the U.S. to the extent they could. Austria and Hungary, now both independent, had to establish separate offices in cities where they both wanted to maintain a presence, while new states established offices for the first time. Austria-Hungary's sprawling, far-reaching system serving its diverse constituents all over the country was replaced with several offices for small Eastern European countries in big cities, with far less reach outside of major metropolitan areas.

Austria reestablished consular offices only in Washington, New York, and temporarily in Chicago, despite earlier plans to reopen permanent operations in

³²³ Various reports in NARA, RG 59, M708, Reel 33.

Washington, New York, one major Midwestern city (Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, or Milwaukee), Pittsburgh, and San Francisco. Imprecise US Census statistics made estimates of Austrian citizens difficult for Edgar Prochnik, sent to the United States in 1921 to assess Austrian consular needs. On the one hand, Prochnik argued that the US Census “was of particular value for us. It finally touches on the theory to which we adhered for many years with an incredible thoughtlessness,” he explained, “that of all nationalities of the former Dual Monarchy the German element had been the smallest and completely unimportant.” The number of Austrian Germans, it seemed, was higher than Habsburg authorities had thought. The census, he continued, “eliminates a fable, which until now has been responsible for the gross neglect of purely Austrian interests in the United States.”³²⁴ On the other hand, the 1920 US Census failed to make many of the distinctions he needed: it was impossible to distinguish between Austrians who had been naturalized as US citizens and those that were now Austrian citizens; distinguishing between Germans and German Austrians was still exceedingly difficult to do accurately; and “Ruthenes” and “Eastern Jews” in Pennsylvania and New York had “obstinately declare[d] [themselves] Austrian,” in protest of new Polish and Czechoslovak borders. This supranational Austrian imperial identity was, in fact, what the Habsburg Empire had desired from its subjects for generations, but Ruthenes, Galician Jews, and non-Germans broadly were not to be part of the independent new Austrian nation. The Empire’s former minorities, Prochnik wrote to his superiors in Vienna, were “persons who today can be disregarded.”³²⁵

³²⁴ Rudolf Agstner, *Austria(-Hungary) and its Consulates in the United States of America Since 1820* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012), 129.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 131-133.

Dismantling the old Austro-Hungary consular system required physical considerations, too. Hungary took its half of the consular furniture from the joint offices to its newly established operations in Washington, New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Cleveland, while Austria retained some for its new offices in New York and Chicago and sold off the remainder to Czechoslovakia.³²⁶ Although quicker to reopen operations in the United States than Austria, Hungary was operating two consular offices out of hotel rooms in 1922.³²⁷ Czechoslovakia replicated more of the geographical breadth of Austria-Hungary's former networks, establishing consulates in Washington, New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Omaha, as well as a short-lived office in St. Louis.

The fate of properties and assets in the United States seized from the Austro-Hungarian government and former Austro-Hungarian citizens remained contested for years, even decades, after the war's end. Austro-Hungarian Consul Alexander von Nuber became embroiled in one of the most notable of the alien property cases because of confusion over what was Austro-Hungarian consular property, held in his name as the leading governmental official, and what was his own personal property. Also tied up in the courts was \$16,000 that Count Mihály Károlyi had collected from Hungarian-Americans to support his campaign for democratic reforms in Hungary, well before the declaration of war between the United States and Austria-Hungary. Once war was declared, the balance of the account was seized by the U.S. Alien Property Custodian. "Legally, this money is mine," Károlyi explained, "as it was given to me with out any

³²⁶ Ibid., 129.

³²⁷ *Magyar Kivándorlókat és Visszavándorlókat Védő Iroda Naptára az 1922-1923 Évre* (Budapest: Hellas Irodalmi és Nyomdai Részvénytársaság, 1922), 53.

restrictions.”³²⁸ Károlyi had served as Prime Minister and then president of Hungary for five months, until rival conservatives established a regency under Admiral Miklós Horthy, whose administration waged a “White Terror” against liberals, socialists, and communists. Four Hungarian-Americans had filed requests with the Alien Property Custodian to have their contributions returned, as Károlyi had been exiled from Hungary in 1923 and his movement was essentially over; their claim was dismissed by the District of Columbia Supreme Court, but was not awarded to Károlyi at that time.³²⁹ Six years later, in 1931, Károlyi was still requesting the money, eventually filing suit in the District of Columbia Supreme Court.³³⁰

Although consular services slowly resumed operations, the wartime absence of assistance from homeland bureaucracies for over five years had left many ethnic institutions in the United States in the lurch. In particular, the extensive financial aid that the Hungarian government had extended to American churches, national clubs, and newspapers under the “American Action” was sorely missed and had to be renegotiated. While the end of the war and the loss of much of its historical kingdom might have served as a natural moment for Hungary’s American Action to begin to deal with Hungarian-speakers alone, this was far from the case in reality. Hungarian irredentists sought to reinforce Hungary’s claim on adjacent territories by courting the former Empire’s minority populations in the United States.

Unlike Austrian officials like Prochnik who proposed turning inward, Hungarian officials continued to promote pro-Hungarian political sentiments not only among

³²⁸ \$10,000 of his fund sought by Karolyi: Count Files Claim with Alien Property Custodian for Part of Seized Money,” *New York Times*, Apr. 2, 1925.

³²⁹ “Dismisses Claims on Karolyi Fund,” *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1926

³³⁰ “Karolyi sues for \$16,314,” *New York Times*, Mar. 12, 1931

Hungarian-speakers but also Slovenes, Slovaks, Ruthenes, and other Slavic minorities. The post-war Hungarian government continued to use the tactics of the long nineteenth century in its post-war quest to right some of the wrongs of the Trianon Treaty. In a 1923 report, a Hungarian governmental official blamed British historian and political activist R.W. Seton-Watson's *Racial Problems in Hungary* for misleading Western opinion on Slovak-Hungarian relations and argued that everyone was underestimating "Czech imperialism" and that Slovaks had been "chased into the Czech net." The report argued that, if possible, the Hungarian government should support and even "exploit anti-Czech sentiment" among American Slovaks. So long as disagreement continued between Czechs and Slovaks, the commissioner believed, Hungary would still have a chance to gain back Slovakia.³³¹ For at least the next sixteen years, the government retained a Hungarian Royal Commissioner for Hungary's Slovak Speakers, who kept abreast of the actions of the Narodny Slovensky Spolok and the Slovak League of America.

In addition to surveillance and propaganda, Hungarian officials attempted to resume many of the pre-war services that Austria-Hungary used to provide for its people in America while it still had the jurisdiction to do so. Governmental and religious authorities endeavored to comply with requests to supply priests speaking the Prekmurje dialect of Slovene to a congregation in Bridgeport, Connecticut, a community of 4,000 Slovene-speakers, 2,500 of whom were Catholic, and another in South Bend, Indiana, a community of 3,000. The majority of the former Empire's Slovene-speakers, often referred to as Vends, now resided in the new Kingdom of Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, though the new borders retained a minority in Carinthia in Austria

³³¹ Report of Mar. 17, 1923, MNL OL, K28, 170 cs., 334 tét.

and in Vas County in Hungary.³³² Slovene Americans were increasingly mirroring this split of more pro-Hungarian Prekmurje Vends and Yugoslav-oriented Krajina Slovenes in their church and social affiliations. At the same time, American religious authorities were now in a more powerful position to assert control over ethnic institutions in the United States. In many ways, the key figures to win over to the Hungarian side were no longer the leading Slovene-Americans, but the Bishop of Hartford.³³³

The jockeying for affiliations suggests how many migrant institutions continued to depend on homeland support. József Krampáts, publisher of a historically pro-Hungarian Slovene-American newspaper, wrote a scathing letter to the Royal Hungarian Legation in 1922 about the betrayal he felt that his entreaties for financial support for the newspaper now fell on deaf ears at the Hungarian consulate, while the new Yugoslav government had pledged over \$15,000. “Because from Hungary I receive nothing and the Hungarian consulate now does not consider me worthy of even correspondence, I am forced to change sides,” he explained, after faithfully serving Hungary for seven years. The “Prejkmurje American Vend Society’s” new banner was to be red, white, and green, modeled on the Hungarian flag, with a star in the center to represent the Vend people and rays emanating from it representing their continuing “fidelity and loyalty to Hungary.” But now, he would have to change the flag’s colors and send it to Belgrade rather than Budapest. He gave the Hungarian consulate a deadline of May 20 to comply with his requests for \$6,000 in support to “stay what I was: a Hungarian-Vend.” Krampáts was apparently well aware of the post-war restrictions on the Hungarian government to continue to engage in propaganda in the United States. “Don’t think: we won’t give

³³² Letter from the Bishop of Szombathely to Kánya, Oct. 3, 1922, MNL OL, K64, 5 cs. 10 tét.

³³³ In *ibid.*

anything to Krampáts, in place of *Zvezda* [Vogrszki Szlovecov] we can put other another newspaper instead. . . . You know well that Hungary cannot exert any kind of propaganda and if you put out a newspaper, deportation awaits you. For this reason it would be much better to come to an agreement with me and everything will be in order.” Krampáts’s words bordered on blackmail, and at the same time argued for a continuation of a stance that Austria-Hungary had espoused for decades: that soft power diplomacy of behalf of the homeland in the United States was work, and should be compensated as such.³³⁴

The care that Hungarian governmental and religious officials had put into migrant churches in the U.S. suffered the greatest difficulties in separation after the war. Many Hungarian Reformed churches, in particular, we saw in chapter 2, had officially joined and taken out or refinanced their mortgages with the National Bank of Budapest, and now had to make new arrangements for both their churches’ ecclesiastical membership and finances. As we saw, the Hungarian government had the closest relationship with Protestant churches because there was no centralized equivalent of a Vatican to contend with; now, those churches had to completely separate from the religious bureaucracy in Hungary. But how? Hungarian American congregations eagerly awaited the advice of the home church on how to move forward. Hungarian Consul János Pelényi supported union with the Presbyterian church body in the United States, who had supported several Hungarian-American congregations as “home” (domestic) missions; prominent minister Rev. Sándor Kalassay with the Reformed Church, with which they shared Calvinist theological views; and Rev. Zoltán Kuthy, with whom the Hungarian government had a decades-long working relationship, proposed an independent Hungarian Reformed

³³⁴ Letter of József Krampáts, May 2, 1922, in *ibid.*

Church body.³³⁵ The decision was pressing, as the ministers of several smaller congregations had been forced to take day jobs to support their families during the war when their salary supplements from Hungary stopped coming. Although the Reformed Church offered the Hungarian-language congregations greater autonomy, the bigger coffers at the Presbyterian Church made them more able to stabilize the churches' loan situations. Hungarian officials recognized that giving up a formal relationship with the American congregations would mean "radically changing our church politics."³³⁶

In the end, the Reformed Church of Hungary decided not to choose at all, but to sign an agreement with *both* the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Reformed Church in the U.S.A., and leave it up to American synods and congregations to decide where to go. Under the terms of the agreement, the Reformed Church of Hungary would receive payment in full for all of the outstanding loans on all of its churches in the United States, and the new American denominations would also pay ministers' back pay for 1919! Furthermore, the Hungarian American congregations would "be free to maintain and to cultivate amongst themselves such a unity as would serve best their common interest," as well as to "maintain a free and frequent intercourse with the Reformed Church of Hungary." Ministers at these congregations would have to acquire knowledge of the history of Protestantism in Hungary, with candidates from both the United States and Hungary eligible if they met this requirement.³³⁷

³³⁵ Letter to István Friedrich, Nov. 7, 1919, MNL OL, K26 1233 cs., 19 tét.

³³⁶ Letter of Nov. 11, 1919, in *ibid.*

³³⁷ Letter of Aug. 4, 1920, in *ibid.* "Agreement concluded between the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Reformed Church in the U.S.A. on the one hand and the Refor Church of Hungary on the other hand concerning the handing over of the Hungarian Reformed congregations in America hitherto belong to the latter Church, to the government of the American Churches"

The consequences for churches on the local level could be dire. While dozens of immigrant congregations had remained multilingual communities up through the end of the war, the break-up of homeland religious governing bodies had ripple effects in the United States. The Perth Amboy Hungarian Reformed Church, founded in 1903, serves as a useful example. In the album for the church's 25th anniversary, celebrated in 1928, the historical profile for the church noted that "the Slovak speaking Reformed element took an active part in the churchlife from the very beginning."³³⁸ Slovak language services were offered one Sunday a month and even expanded as late as 1911. But "in 1924 the Slovak members, who had been connected with the church from the very beginning, seceded from the church. This action was taken by them on account of the political troubles and antagonism in Europe," the yearbook explained. "The great majority went into the [Slovak] Presbyterian Church and a few remained with us who were satisfied with Magyar services."³³⁹ The 1951 Golden Jubilee Book of the Slovak Calvinist Presbyterian Union reveals more of the story behind the post-war Perth Amboy split. When the Perth Amboy pulpit became vacant in 1923 with the bilingual pastor, Rev. Nánassy's, return to Europe, there was no longer a mechanism to secure a bilingual minister and only Hungarian-speaking candidates applied for the position. It was then that Slovak speakers withdrew from the church and arranged for a Slovak Presbyterian minister from Jersey City to hold weekly services for them, founding the Slovak Presbyterian Church of Perth Amboy.³⁴⁰

In dismantling the Austro-Hungarian consular network and the overlapping networks of support for migrant institutions in the United States, Austria and Hungary

³³⁸ AHF, III.5 HRCA Perth Amboy, NJ.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ *Golden Jubilee Book of the Slovak Calvinist Presbyterian Union* (1951).

disambiguated their joint offices into separate ones, but resumed many of the same activities on a smaller scale. The Hungarian government continued to collect intelligence on and attempt to influence Hungarian-speakers, as well as the minorities that had belonged to the Hungarian kingdom historically, even if it could not match pre-war levels of financial support. Hungary endeavored to begin anew its support of leaders in ethnic communities loyal to the Hungarian state and their publications, even if on the level of “child’s play” compared to pre-war initiatives.³⁴¹ And they were joined in this transatlantic propaganda effort, now, by new states like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, looking to consolidate their own perceived migrant communities in the United States and protect against any threats to their generous new borders at home.

Leaving and Returning to the European Borderlands

Putting counts and percentages aside, the personal experiences of post-war migrants and their post-war relationships with governments reveal the many complications that new borders, quotas, and mixed identities created for individuals who did not fit neatly into national categories or new states. The lived experiences of migration after the war, as before, often defied the ethnic categories of the census and highlight the non-alignment of post-war nations and states.

The Treaties of St. Germain and Trianon guaranteed most residents of the Austro-Hungarian successor states the right to repatriate to their ethnic homeland if they found themselves residing outside of it after the borders were redrawn. However, most of these ethnic minorities (primarily German- and Hungarian-speakers) were encouraged to

³⁴¹ Letter from Széchenyi to Daruváry, Apr. 26, 1923, MNL OL, K64, 9cs. For the problems among the Hungarian-speaking Greek Catholic clergy and congregations in the United States, see K64, 13 cs., 10 tét.

remain where they were by their “homeland” governments in order to provide ethnographic justifications for future territorial revisions. Post-war governments, like pre-war Austria-Hungary, largely sought to keep people of the titular nation at home rather than migrating. As Zahra explains, “While claiming to represent the nation in a liberatory revolution in 1918, many national leaders worried that citizens would not stick around for the hard work of reconstruction. More than just a matter of national security or labor supply, emigration was now considered a threat to the very existence of Eastern Europe’s new states. Jan Žilka, from the Czechoslovak Masaryk Academy of Labor, praised the “positive consequences” of the quotas keeping people home.³⁴²

“In their determination to create nationally homogeneous populations,” Zahra explains, “East European governments also sought to reverse the prewar exodus to the West, encouraging ‘valuable’ expatriates to return home.”³⁴³ Czechoslovak officials hoped for at least 100,000 returnees from America. Hungarian officials initially estimated 300,000 return migrants, and eagerly awaited the capital they would bring home.³⁴⁴ As early as 1916, Hungarian Minister of Commerce and Professor of Economics Béla Földes was already planning a labor exchange and ways to save Hungarian migrants from the wartime discrimination they were facing in the United States. Földes reported that “many of the Hungarians now in America did not feel at home there and that such people should be the first to be repatriated and that opportunities should be given them to make a satisfactory living in Hungary.”³⁴⁵ Dr. Károly Mészáros had been working on return migration for the Hungarian government since 1914, and in 1919 embarked on a renewed

³⁴² Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 106, 108.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 113.

³⁴⁴ Letter from Ludwig to Werkele, Mar. 26, 1918, MNL OL, K26 1233 cs., 21 tét.

³⁴⁵ Földes quoted in NARA, RG59, M708, Reel 33.

campaign to draw migrants home after the war. Mészáros recognized that there were both pessimistic and optimistic interpretations of post-war return migration: pessimists would argue that migrants need not return home now to share in Hungary's sorry post-war fate, but Mészáros was an optimist. After a five-year hiatus in transatlantic travel because of the war, thousands of Hungarian-Americans would return home to help aging family, to mourn the loss of loved ones who had died in the interim, to feed their curiosity, and to help rebuild the homeland. He estimated that up to 200,000 might return, and crunched the numbers also for the counties in northern Hungary that had produced large numbers of emigrants and were now under Czechoslovak control. Writing to the ministers of the Interior, Finance, Commerce, and Agriculture, Mészáros calculated each return migrant would reliably bring a thousand dollars into the Hungarian economy, as workers in the United States all had had good-paying wartime jobs.³⁴⁶

But *emigration* continued even as European governments sought to draw migrants home, necessitating a two-pronged plan that simultaneously curbed continued emigration and promoted return migration, or at least compensated for the former with more of the latter. The Hungarian government found that opportunities abroad like employment in Westphalia mines and rebuilding projects in France could draw Hungarian workers away for as long as 16-20 years. "Tempting promises" of opportunities in the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Australia would also entice migrants to leave Hungary, especially in areas where there was a dearth of work. The Hungarian Interior Minister feared that the intelligentsia and the most valuable workers would leave, while those most likely to engage in return migration were "former peasants." He also recognized that,

³⁴⁶ Letter of Dec. 31, 1919 to Prime Minister and Report of Oct. 30, 1919, MNL OL, K26, 1233 cs., 21 tét.

though many emigrants had gained industrial experience working in factories in the United States, they were coming home to escape that kind of work, pay off their debts, and buy a house and maybe some land, not to continue in hard industrial labor at home. Thus, the best way to encourage return migration was to potentially reauthorize the 1909 law setting up a migration council, rebuild the Hungarian consular network in the United States as quickly as possible to expedite return migration, and facilitate the process for return migrants for acquiring land.³⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, these plans harkened back to the Ministry of Agriculture's plans from before the war, discussed in the previous chapter, emphasizing the sale of estates rather than acreage here and there, as well as putting migrants' dollars to work "for the home economy."³⁴⁸

And so the Hungarian government and allied organizations began rebooting some of their migration-related initiatives just as the American Congress was working on legislation to staunch immigration, despite the fact that Hungary was still dealing with a postwar refugee crisis and land shortage. The Hungarian League for the Protection of Territorial Integrity issued a 1920 pamphlet titled "What does the aspiring return migrant need to know?," sending 19,000 copies to the United States from the first printing alone.³⁴⁹ The Hungarian Emigrants' and Return Migrants' Protection Office (not unlike American Travelers Aid Societies) began operations again in July 1921, as part of these Hungarian efforts. Their yearbook offered concrete advice on sources of mortgage providers for setting up a farm back in Hungary, listing at least five land credit agencies and advertising cheap, easy credit. "We would like for every return migrant to find once

³⁴⁷ Ibid.,

³⁴⁸ Letter from Darányi to Huszár, Jan. 20, 1920 and Letter of Kovács to Teleki, Sep. 30, 1920, in *ibid.*

³⁴⁹ Report of May 10, 1920, in *ibid.*

again a happy and warm home here and not to deal in uncertain and adventurous plans.” That said, the Migrants’ Protection Office seems to have aided migrants whatever direction they desired to travel in: advice for emigrants was listed before advice for return migrants, and among their listed services was helping Hungarians over the new border with the acquisition of Czech visas.³⁵⁰

In reality, however, the number of returners never came close to European governmental imaginations and border dissatisfaction added strongly to the emigrating side of the equation. “In the first few years of our state’s existence, everyone in America was saying: don’t go back,” one Czechoslovak stated.³⁵¹ The reasons were manifold, but the implementation of quotas encouraged those already in the United States to stay, since it became increasingly uncertain whether they would be able to return to America later. From the beginning of July 1921 to the end of February 1922 (after the 1921 Quota Act but before the 1924 act), 2,913 Bohemians and Moravians came to the United States while 3,203 returned, a net gain for Czechoslovakia of only 290 individuals in an eight-month period. This was more than offset by the continued emigration of Slovaks, 5,859 of whom came to the United States while only 2,311 returned.³⁵² The Slovak-American paper *Obrana* reported in 1925 that among the Slovak Americans who did return home to Czechoslovakia, many trickled back to America.³⁵³ The Czechoslovak quota for 1922 had

³⁵⁰ *Magyar Kivándorlókat és Visszavándorlókat Védő Iroda Naptára*, 51-52. Czech visas page 34; The advice for return migrants helpfully suggested that they not bring damaged dollar bills and that they not keep cash where it could become ragged or tattered on the long journey, p. 46.

³⁵¹ Zahra, *The Great Depature*, 115-116.

³⁵² “Tide of Immigrants Flowing Outward,” *New York Times*, 9 April 1922.

Later that year, newspapers reported that 75% of emigrants from Czechoslovakia were from Slovensko. Report of Feb. 23, 1923, MNL OL, K28, 171 cs., based on *Kassai Ujság*, Nov. 23, 1922.

³⁵³ *Obrana*, Jun. 9, 1925.

filled before October,³⁵⁴ with Slovaks taking a significantly higher proportion of the quota, in part because of unfulfilled promises for Slovak autonomy. According to Hungarian reports, the Slovak League of America received a plea from Slovaks in Slovensko, who were frustrated at the continued shortcomings of the Czechoslovak government in ensuring rights and behaving democratically, and that they were “morally and spiritually decaying.”³⁵⁵

Other new states fared no better. Among Croatians and Slovenians, the numbers of migrants entering and leaving the United States were nearly equal.³⁵⁶ Poles, Romanians, and Serbians – winners in the peace treaties after the war – saw higher numbers of people returning to Europe than leaving, but Hungarians were fleeing, with 5,866 arriving to the United States and only 3,633 returning in the same period.³⁵⁷ Emigrants from Burgenland, the small section of former Hungary that had been transferred to Austria after the war, reportedly made up just over 50% of Austria’s emigrants in 1922, which the Hungarian government ascribed to the change in territorial sovereignty.³⁵⁸ A year later, another Austrian report indicated that Burgenland had produced 42% of all of Austria’s emigrants since the war. “With the annexation, Burgenland’s inhabitants have befallen difficult circumstances,” a Hungarian report concluded; “otherwise so many of them would not have taken the wanderer’s staff into

³⁵⁴ Report of Feb. 23, 1923, based on *Magyar Hirlap*, 9 Oct., 1922, MNL OL, K28, 171 cs. Other sources in the report indicated that migrants unable to go to the U.S. were heading, instead, of Canada and Brazil.

³⁵⁵ Report of Jan. 13, 1925, MNL OL, K28, 170 cs., 334 tét.

³⁵⁶ For more on Yugoslavia, see Brunnbauer, *Globalizing Southeastern Europe*, chap. 5.

³⁵⁷ “Tide of Immigrants Flowing Outward,” *New York Times*, 9 April 1922.

³⁵⁸ Undated report, MNL OL, K28, 171 cs.

their hands, to find a happier home for themselves. How wisely they arranged the people's fate at Trianon," he concluded sarcastically.³⁵⁹

Even among those migrant nationalists who did decide to uproot themselves again and return to Europe from the United States, their time abroad could permanently mark them as somehow outside the nation. Dr. Charles Pergler, who had been among the Czech-Americans most ardently fighting for the Czech national causes during the war, returning to Czechoslovakia after the war, served several diplomatic posts, and then, upon winning a seat in the Czechoslovak Parliament, had his citizenship status investigated by political opponents. (Pergler had indeed been an American citizen, but renounced it after the war when he took a position as the Czechoslovak minister to Japan.³⁶⁰) Several Hungarian return migrants filed complaints about difficulties that they faced upon returning to Hungary. Post-war return migrant Antal Lindenberger had tried to buy a new home three times, only to have the local Housing Office invalidate the purchase each time as he was "unauthorized" to do so. Two other families bought new homes in Hungary only to receive eviction notices, while others were refused residence permits. Even this small samplings reveals the frustrations of both return migrants and the chairman of Hungary's Emigration Council, Jenő Gaál. Gaál fumed at the pettiness of local officials in rejecting return migrants for the necessary permits because of small errors and omissions in paperwork formalities and at the long delays at the Ministry of Welfare in seeing to return migrants' grievances. His documented cases feature dozens of

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ "Disputes Czech Election. Foreign Office Seeks to Learn Whether Dr. Charles Pergler is American." *New York Times*, Nov. 23, 1929.

individuals who had made the move to permanently relocate to Hungary from the United States, only to be driven back.³⁶¹

The quotas were a deterrent to mobility even for those looking only to visit relatives, not relocate. In 1925, a group of Slovak American Catholics from Perth Amboy, NJ wanted to make a spiritual pilgrimage to Rome, followed by a return visit to Slovakia, but feared that, among those who were still not full-fledged American citizens, the Czech government would not allow them to leave *and* that the United States would not allow them to return! Father Szuchy reportedly wrote to President Coolidge asking for special visas for the non-citizen pilgrims assuring their reentry.³⁶²

While some European governmental officials hoped to push minorities out through the limited quotas and keep members of the titular nation at home, more often it was migrants themselves who sought to find alternative paths to America through ambiguities in their ethnic identity or creative use of various quotas in the region. Mary Bócán Chaty was born in the village of Hardicsa, near Kassa, in Hungary in 1904, which was Czechoslovak territory by the time of her emigration in 1921. Despite identifying as Hungarian and coming from a village that was labeled as two-thirds Hungarian before the war, she came on the Czechoslovak quota. “I was in Prague,” she recalled, “because I couldn't go in Budapest because I was in the Czechoslovakia territory.” These changes in administrative centers between the old empire and nation-states made migration considerably more difficult in some ways for her but more convenient in others. Whereas Budapest is three hours from Hardicsa on modern highways, it is over seven from Prague. With quotas in place, migrants had to travel to their respective new capitals multiple

³⁶¹ Addendum to Letter from Gaál to Vass, Apr. 1924, MNL OL, K28, 170 cs., 334 tét.

³⁶² Report of Feb. 23, 1925, in *ibid.*

times before managing to get a visa. On the other hand, Mary's migration was actually facilitated by coming on the Czechoslovak quota rather than the Hungarian one.

Hungary's annual quota was only 473, but Czechoslovakia's was over 3,000. Chaty was able to join her uncle in Trenton in 1921, and the very next year married a man who happened to be from her village of Hardicsa who had immigrated to the US as a child, under a completely different immigration regime without quotas.³⁶³

In 1925 a Slavic coffee merchant based in Fiume managed to have his daughter and son come to the United States on the German and French quotas, respectively, both departing from Fiume/Rijeka, because of where the children had been born as the family traveled for his business. After the death of his wife from tuberculosis, he had gone to New York and, since he spoke five languages, had gotten a job at the Italian Commercial Bank in the Foreign Department, leaving his children to be raised by their maternal aunts. By 1925 Mr. Greiner sought to bring his family to join him in the United States, his children and his sisters-in-law. "You're out of your mind if you think four people can come from one country!" a local councilman told him. But examining their papers, he noticed that the children had been born in Germany and France, enabling them to enter on the significantly more generous western European quotas.³⁶⁴

When Nick Frenkreis and his family arrived in 1921, Ellis Island was still figuring out how best to deal with migrants who arrived after a quota had already been filled.

³⁶³ Interview of Mary Chaty, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project*. The Ellis Island Oral History Project conducted several hundred interviews with migrants from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 1980s and '90s, easily over 65 years after many of the interviewees had arrived. Migrants from the post-war period are particularly well represented among this collection, as the last sizable East European cohort when people could arrive outside the quota, alongside those who were new "quota" migrants.

³⁶⁴ Interview of Emma and William Geiner by Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., March 3, 1991, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series EI, no. 028 . . . , March 3, 1991*.

Frendreis remembered staying at Ellis Island for over a week waiting for the calendar to turn, to get in on the next month's quota. Apparently authorities had decided that it was more effective to hold them at Ellis Island for a week than to send them home. The German-speaking Frendreises came from the Banát region where they had lived in mixed German-Serbian and Hungarian-Serbian village just miles from the new Hungarian-Yugoslav border.³⁶⁵

Max Schnapp came to the United States in 1923 from Austrian Galicia, suddenly part of Romania (and now part of Ukraine), from a small city with a majority Jewish population and a largely Ukrainian-speaking surrounding countryside. The surviving Schnappses had wound up in Vienna as refugees during the war after crossing the Carpathian Mountains on foot to escape Russian occupation; with the signing of the peace treaties, they were forced to leave Austria and go back "home," to Romania. They did not arrive in the approved window to retain citizenship, and so lost their citizenship and all their property. They identified culturally as German. One of the only men remaining in his family, his grandmother said to Max, "You're the only one that's left over. You will not be in the army if it's my last penny. You'll go to America." Because he had relatives that emigrated in 1911 and with the help of the JDC, he and his sister were able to join their uncle there, but they could not get additional relatives over for several years. "Imagine, from 1924, according to your quota, they had to wait till 1936 to be able to come to America."³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ Interview of Nick Frendreis by Kate Moore, April 26, 1994, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series KM, no. 041*.

³⁶⁶ Interview of Max Schnapp by Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., August 26, 1991, in *Ellis Island Oral History Project, Series EI, no. 075*.

Examples like these confirm that so much of the ethnic categorization tied to migration before and after was fluid or even artificial, even in an era when new European states and the U.S. were trying to control the movement of people. The Greiners, Frendreises, Schappses, and others all arrived on quotas that did not match their personal ethnic identification but their new state affiliations, although the quotas were capping entry based on the concept of “national origins.”

Conclusion

The complicated interplay between the Habsburg Empire’s dissolution, Trianon borders, and restrictionist US immigration laws continued to have similar consequences throughout the interwar era, as can be seen in Istvan Bacher’s case in 1940. “My mother was born in a town called Fiume, . . . and that was the best thing she ever did,” he recalled later in life. Bacher himself had been born in Vienna and grown up primarily in Budapest, but his mother’s birthplace played the greatest role in his mobility as a migrant. “That had a lot to do with our ability to leave Hungary and get on the Italian quota,” he explained. Fiume’s wild history in the aftermath of Austria-Hungary’s dismantling shows the difficulty of ethnic disambiguation of a multiethnic port that served a vast empire. While part of the Kingdom of Hungary through the First World War, both Italy and the newly established Kingdom of Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes made claims to Fiume at the Paris peace conference. After a two-year period as a free state with its own quota, Italy annexed Fiume practically in 1922, and officially in 1924 by treaty with Yugoslavia. It was because of this that Vienna-born, Hungarian-identifying Bacher and his family could come to the United States as Italians. When Bacher’s family sought to leave in the 1930s,

the Hungarian quota was already full for the next six or seven years. “The Italian quota,” on the other hand, was over three times the size and “... was open and relatively free,” he explained, “...because Mussolini discouraged any immigrations.” And so by this “fluke,” he, his mother, and brothers received their visas in 1940, just a month before Hungary officially entered World War II. But his father could not go with them. While Bacher’s father was “quite the patriotic Hungarian,” the interwar period saw the further racialization of ethnicity, making his status and his ability to emigrate precarious. The criteria for who counted as Jewish kept changing, too. “My father was Jewish,” Bacher explained, “And then he was non-Jewish. And then he was Jewish again.” Bacher’s parents divorced to make it easier for his non-Jewish mother Renee, István, and his brothers to leave on the Italian quota, since with the divorce and her custody they acquired her claim to Italian citizenship instead of retaining their father’s Hungarian citizenship. His first job in the United States, after arriving at Ellis Island as an “Italian,” was washing dishes in a Hungarian restaurant at the New York World's Fair in Queens. The Bachers serve as a prime example of the diversity of the Empire and its lasting consequences for migration. We know, of course, that the Trianon borders failed to create ethnically exclusive nation-states. We also see how the quotas – meant to be ethnic quotas – could only do so much to enforce ethnic criteria when applied geographically to new states that still featured mixed populations, as part of their Austro-Hungarian legacy. The oral history interviewer decades later asked Bacher what his mother’s maiden name was: “Levinsky,” he replied; “It sounds very Polish to me.”

Both new state borders in Central and Eastern Europe and immigration legislation in the United States must be considered together to understand post-war migrants’

experiences. The view from Ellis Island and the view from European ports, both drastically different in the 1920s than the 1900s, was the result of developments on both sides of the Atlantic. The interplay between European geopolitical borders and American regimes of exclusion had profound effects on the mobility on several generations of Central and Eastern Europeans in the 20th century, and transformed the bureaucracies of migration in the region. While many migrants in the United States rejoiced that their old homes were now nation-states, others sought to rebuild the glory of their homeland as it was before the war. In the end, ironically, many migrant nation-builders contributed to the hardships that their communities in America and at home faced in the post-1924 era: tighter restrictions on mobility, more limitations and longer wait times in reuniting transatlantic families, and less support from European and American governments for migration services.

Conclusion

“Austria has the advantage of having kept her well-known name from the collapse,” soon-be-Austrian ambassador Edgar Prochnik explained to officials back home in 1921. “Austria is a name having a good ring to it, a name one was accustomed to hear and use It is not so foreign a name as e.g. Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, . . . strange sounds foreign to an American ear.”

After decades of migration and years of world war, with hundred of thousands of migrants from the former territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the United States, most Americans still had little understanding of the peoples of Eastern Europe. On the one hand, the categories of race, ethnicity, nationality, mother tongue, and other markers are all fluid and fraught, and the map of Europe changed dramatically in the World War I era – who could fault Americans for confusing Hungarians and Bulgarians, Slovaks and Slovenes? On the other, even American policy makers who made decisions with life-changing consequences for Eastern European migrants displayed shocking levels of misinformation.

The United States had played a hand in crafting the borders of new states to succeed the Austro-Hungarian Empire, only to fail to ratify many of the peace treaties or join the League of Nations; Congress passed legislation greatly restricting migration for southern and southeastern Europeans based on admittedly inaccurate estimates of their so-called “national origins.” The new borders, rather than easing ethnic tensions by separating peoples into different states, tried and failed to put people into neat ethnic boxes and ramped up irredentism to one of the most important political ideologies in the region. And in the United States, post-war labels for people took their place alongside

Habsburg-era identities, adding even more variety.

Two institutions illustrate how starkly different views could be of the peoples of Eastern Europe: the University of Pittsburgh's Nationalities Classrooms in the Cathedral of Learning and the Cultural Gardens in Cleveland's Roosevelt Park. Both constructed in the 1920s-30s in cities well known for their Central and Eastern European immigrant communities, they nonetheless took completely different routes in enshrining those immigrant groups in public space. The Cathedral of Learning offered European *states* the opportunity to decorate "nationality classrooms," based on political sovereignty in the post-war era. The Cleveland Cultural Gardens, conversely, offered local communities the opportunity to design gardens by self-proclaimed ethnic groups. The Cathedral featured a single Czechoslovak classroom; Roosevelt Park featured separate Czech, Slovak, and Ruthenian gardens.

Both projects stemmed from a post-war impulse to celebrate American multiculturalism and the triumph of America's melting pot over the kind of nationalist conflicts that World War I had just wrought, serving as multicultural spaces in an era of restriction. The Cathedral and the Gardens are not simply proxies for American opinions of state legitimacy, but the fact that two projects chose such different methods to represent and codify the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe demonstrates that ethnicity and its place in defining people was still actively being constructed.

The University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning was commissioned in 1921 and began being used as a place of instruction in 1931. The nationality rooms were designed to celebrate a different culture that had an influence on Pittsburgh's growth, reflecting the significance of the city's immigrant population. "Each group had to form a

Room Committee, which would be responsible for all fundraising, designing, and acquisition.” Thus, while the Cathedral as a whole was a unifying project, the distribution of classrooms based on new political borders in Europe formally divided Pittsburgh’s immigrants. Pittsburgh residents hailing from Austria-Hungary could be represented by Austrian Nationality Room, Czechoslovak Nationality Room, Hungarian Nationality Room, Polish Nationality Room, Romanian Nationality Room, Ukrainian Nationality Room, or the Yugoslav Room. Governments contributed financially to some of the rooms.³⁶⁷

Cleveland’s Cultural Gardens differed markedly in their apportioning of the peoples of Eastern Europe after the Great War. The Cleveland immigrant communities represented with individual gardens include Polish, Czech, Rusin, Slovak, German, Hungarian, Hebrew, Ukrainian, and Romanian gardens. The Hebrew and German gardens were built first, both in 1926. Unlike the Czechoslovak Nationality Classroom, a Slovak Garden was dedicated in 1932 and a separate Czech one in 1935. Similarly, a Rusin Garden was dedicated in 1939 and a Ukrainian Garden was dedicated in 1940. The gardens “reveal the history of immigration to, and migration within, the United States,” historian Mark Tebeau explains. “They comment on how we have built communities and constructed our identities as individuals and collectives. The gardens reveal the stories of the major conflicts that gave shape to the century. . . . The gardens often have incorporated symbolism or design elements that subverted the message of unity and reflected ethnic tensions in Europe and Cleveland.” “It was no mistake,” he continues,

³⁶⁷ For an analysis of governmental participation in the creation of the Czechoslovak, Hungarian, and Romanian classrooms, see Zsolt Nagy, “National Identities for Export: East European Cultural Diplomacy in Inter-War Pittsburgh,” *Contemporary European History* 20 (2011): 435-453.

“that the Czech, Slovak, and Rusin gardens were arrayed themselves across a boundary street from the contiguous German and Hungarian gardens, suggesting how powerfully old cultural conflicts were felt.”³⁶⁸ More recently, the Yugoslav garden, dedicated in 1938, was refashioned as the Slovenian garden in 1991. A new Serbian garden dates to 2008, a Croatian garden to 2011.

The Nationality Classrooms at Pitt and the Cleveland Cultural Gardens are just two examples of the American spaces where debates about Eastern European immigrant identities continued to be played out in the United States, even as the numbers of brothers and sisters who could join them from overseas was greatly diminished. Migration from Austria-Hungary to the United States (and often back again) had a tremendous influence on the societies, and governments, of both places.

³⁶⁸ <http://www.culturalgardens.org/default.aspx>

Bibliography

Archival Abbreviations

AHF	American Hungarian Foundation Library, New Brunswick, N.J.
HHStA	Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Austria
IHRC	Immigration History Research Center Archive, Minneapolis, MN
MNL OL	Hungarian National Archives, Budapest, Hungary
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD

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