

Ban a Slavonian landowner who knew Croatian but was otherwise barely more Croat in feeling than Conservative secretaries of state for Wales have been Welsh. Count Khuen-Héderváry, however, weathered the storm which greeted him, including a physical assault in the Croatian Diet. Neutralising the Croatian Serb minority by minor cultural concessions and controlling the Croat electorate (2% of the population) through the half of it who were state officials, he was helped too by the hostilities between the Strossmayerite camp in the Independent National Party (the National Party were Khuen's satraps) and the crusty Starčević's anti-Serb Party of Right. But both the old matadors of Croatian politics were vacating centre stage to pragmatic politicians with sights set lower. A merger of the two opposition parties in 1895 led to a split-off of Party of Right hardliners but only slightly dented Khuen's Diet majority. The turning-point, as so often in Dualist politics, could not come through parliamentary means but was mediated through mass violence: Croatian peasant riots in 1903 sent Khuen back to Budapest to deploy his fix-it skills, briefly, as Hungarian prime minister. Subsequently, a 'New Course' was being prepared which would bury the hatchet between most Croats and Serbs for a time, and underpin an intervention in Habsburg grand politics designed to get the south Slav world out of the rut into which Dualism had consigned it. This initiative was the Serbo-Croat coalition of autumn 1905 which burst upon the wider scene with its offer to aid the Hungarian Independence Coalition in its struggle against Vienna.

The Serbo-Croat coalition, based on party agreements in Austrian Dalmatia and Hungarian Croatia, serves to illustrate certain trends which were at work also among the nationalities of Hungary proper. These amounted to a realignment of small-nation strategies in the direction of 'realism' and some strengthening of their economic base. The number of all Croatian credit institutions nearly doubled between 1902 and 1907 and share capital increased by 60%. In 1905 the leading pro-nationalist bank was headed by a Serbo-Croat coalition MP, while the speaker of the Diet and president of the Serb Autonomous Party was the wealthiest of Croatian Serbs and closely affiliated to their strongest bank. Though one could hardly speak of industrialisation in a society with only 23,804 workers in firms of more than twenty employees in 1910 (up from just under ten thousand twenty years earlier), the falling percentage of Hungarian share capital and rising percentage of Serbo-Croat-speaking entrepreneurs pointed to a greater economic awareness in the political

class. A belated embourgeoisement in Croatian attitudes might be seen in the democratically slanted social Darwinism of its chief advocate, the Rijeka-based journalist Frano Supilo (1870-1917). Supilo sought allies for Croatia among Serbs, the Italian Left and ultimately the Hungarian independence movement against the onmarch of Germanism to the Adriatic. The terms of the deal with Croatian Serbs was to be Serb support for Croatian 'state right' in return for recognition of the Serbs as an equally entitled branch of a common nation. The terms with the Hungarian independentists were Croatian support for Hungarian state right against Austria but a fuller Croatian autonomy inside this framework, including the incorporation of Dalmatia. When politicians from smaller peoples were mostly condemned to passivity or fruitless twists and turns in the attempt to escape the reality of impotence, the Serbo-Croat coalition programme was a remarkably bold stroke and an important contribution to the Habsburg crisis of 1905-06.

Non-Magyars in Hungary proper had fewer resources. But between 1890 and 1915 their financial institutions multiplied over seven-fold and their capital nearly twelve-fold. That altogether this amounted to only some 6% of the capital in the country counted for less with the alarmed authorities than that it should have happened at all. For in the context of still largely monoglot peasant populations — only 13% of Romanians could speak Magyar in 1910 — the growth of non-Magyar economic networks made their millions even less penetrable for the state idea. Yet liberal assumptions remained too strong to permit simple repression. As a Magyar journalist wrote in 1904, the nationalities were now fighting with modern weapons:

Anti-national schools can be closed, dangerous associations can be dissolved, agitators can be jailed; but state citizens cannot be forbidden to form societies and financial institutions and offer their fellow citizens loans.¹³

Thus any government attempts to weaken the nationalities economically were more a matter of omission than commission. Non-Magyars emigrated disproportionately — two-thirds of the 1.4 million officially recorded emigrants from 1899 to the war — and a top-level decision was taken at the turn of the century not to try to counter the departure of poverty-stricken Ruthenians from the north-east, where the pattern of migration flows began. But once abroad non-Magyars often developed a stronger national awareness