

## **Conditions of Democracy in German Austria and Hungary, 1918–1919**

**Ibolya Murber**

With the end of the First World War, the longstanding and apparently God-given Habsburg order broke apart. The war-weary population was angry and mobilized, and longed for stability and prosperity.<sup>1</sup> The long-lasting war with its devastating consequences functioned as a catalyst for democratization. The political and socioeconomic crises at the end of the war posed the utmost challenge for the new political elites, especially those on the losing side. No government considering itself civilized could deny the right to vote to the returning soldiers, who had risked their lives for the nation. Nor could it be denied to the many women who had replaced the men in the workplace. The democratization of political life promised a certain easing of the postwar crisis and inserted itself into the transnational democratization trend. Out of the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy arose the first democratic experiments in Central Europe, which had however to struggle with politically and socioeconomically unfavorable conditions and a lack of democratic experience. At the end of the lost war a rapid democratization of political life was proclaimed in both successor states. But its outcome and duration were completely divergent in Austria and Hungary. The democratic experiment survived in Austria until 1933,<sup>2</sup> while its counterpart had already failed in Hungary by 1919,<sup>3</sup> although both provisional governments equally committed themselves in the late fall of 1918 explicitly to the construction of a democratic republic.

This study will analyze the Austrian and Hungarian transitions to increased democratization in the postwar years. Democratization is understood in terms of the contemporary democratic praxis, not a fixed model of democracy. The focus will be on the diversity and variety of forms of these democratic experiments, which were strongly dependent on structural and procedural conditions as well as the respective political cultures of both countries. My analysis is based mainly on a review of contemporary Austrian and Hungarian legislation, the protocols of

the Austrian and Hungarian Councils of Ministers, archival documents, and contemporary press reports.

### **Concepts of More Democracy**

The history of democracy has established itself as a concept in the contexts of academic study and memory politics. The earlier approaches based on modernization theory assumed that states with a democratic deficit would see the so-called Western model of democracy (constitutional and liberal democracy) as desirable.<sup>4</sup> The concept of “Western liberal democracy” was a product of the First World War. “It was the period after the First World War, in which democracy took on a mass democratic image, synchronized different speeds of development and experimented with new formulas for the procurement of freedom and equality, and in which was constituted what we came to recognize as Western, liberal, social democracy.”<sup>5</sup> The concept of Western democracy at war’s end was, however, nothing more than a hope for a comprehensive democratization in Europe.<sup>6</sup> But this democracy was in 1918 more an expectation than a real experience of democratic practice. In Central Europe after 1918, on the ruins of the Habsburg Monarchy, democracy was something in the process of formation; it was a transition to a democratic order. This period fell between the symbolic proclamation of a democratic form of government and the moment<sup>7</sup> when citizens could for the first time elect their executive and legislative bodies in a free and fair vote. In this period the structures and institutions of democratic government were being constructed, and confirmed by the population by means of the elections to a constitutive National Assembly.

The successful transition from the authoritarian monarchy to a democratic republic lasted in the case of Austria from November 12, 1918, when the democratic republic was anchored in law, until spring of 1919, as on February 16 the voting for the constitutive National Assembly took place and on March 12 the constitutive National Assembly ratified the Law of November 12, 1918 regarding the organization of state and government. For Hungary, the determination of the time period of the transition to democratic governance is no easy undertaking, which itself points to the failure of the establishment of democracy. In public discourse, by the end of October/beginning of November 1918 the adjective “democratic” in the context of the change of government was in fact on everyone’s lips. During these autumn days the Social

Democratic Party newspaper, *Népszava* [Voice of the People] emphasized day in and day out that Hungary was experiencing a democratic new beginning. However, Count Mihály Károlyi, provisional prime minister, spoke of the “young republic with a democratic foundation” only on November 16, the day of the proclamation of the republic.<sup>8</sup> At the end of 1918, the Hungarian Council of Ministers did not define why it regarded its own policy as democratic.

In spite of all of this, in no legal act—using contemporary terminology, in no *néphatározat* [people’s decision] or *néptörvény* [people’s law]—was it established that Hungary was a democratic republic. The written declaration of a democratic structure in Hungary was missing. In public discourse, democracy was packed in elegant phrases and promises and constantly theorized. Since up to the point of the establishment of the Hungarian Council Republic in March 1919 as a matter of fact no elections to a constitutive National Assembly actually took place, one can also establish no endpoint for the abortive democratic transition.

Democracy is a fundamentally controversial concept; it is a “concept of expectation.”<sup>9</sup> At the end of World War I, democracy was shaped by expectations and hopes, and subsequently also by experiences. The concept of “democracy” is contested, which also has to do with the variety of democratic models. Basically, it is concerned with a political form of government, which presupposes a sovereign state. Until the end of 1921, with the allocation of Burgenland to Austria, full state sovereignty in Austria and Hungary did not exist.<sup>10</sup> The partial foreign occupation burdened and even obstructed the population’s democratic expression of opinion. The residents of the Italian-controlled South Tirol and the Sudeten Germans of the Bohemian and Moravian areas did not take part in the Austrian elections held on February 14, 1919. Because of South Slavic occupation, the vote in southern Styria and southern Carinthia also took place only partially. As compensation for this, 50 seats in the constitutive National Assembly were retroactively assigned.<sup>11</sup> In the first Public Law of November 23,<sup>12</sup> the provisional government of Hungary in fact adopted the general and equal right to vote, but up to the end of February 1919 announced no elections for a constitutive National Assembly. The provisional government justified the postponement of the elections by the foreign occupation of Hungarian territory. Interior Minister Vince Nagy explained this reasoning in mid-January 1919 in Budapest to Archibald Cary Coolidge, leader of the US political mission, as follows: holding the vote would *de jure* confirm the surrender of the occupied territories.<sup>13</sup>

In assessing the democratic composition of a government after World War I, we must keep in mind the wide gap between contemporary attributions and objective political science criteria. The discrepancy between self-perception and the perception of others rested on several factors. It was not possible in Central Europe to import a consummate democratic model from the West. At war's end there was no catalogue of criteria, no sanctioned system of rules for an effectively functional Western democracy. "Democracy in the early twentieth century was far from becoming a reality, as little in Great Britain as elsewhere."<sup>14</sup> Democratic structures and institutions between the world wars were characterized by diversity and a richness of forms.

### **Modernity and Political Participation in the Fin de Siècle<sup>15</sup> Habsburg Monarchy**

The effort for more political participation was at the end of the nineteenth century a transnational and long-term process. Samuel P. Huntington described the democratization drives across the history of democracy as waves.<sup>16</sup> According to the American political scientist, the first wave of democratization took place between 1828 and 1926. In this wave, a series of states overcame the hurdles to democracy,<sup>17</sup> if with great variations in democracy and its institutions and structures. These extranational democratic impulses awoke the appearance that the extension of voting rights and political participation were signs of modernization. Thus, the democratic expectations, also in the Danubian Monarchy at the end of the nineteenth century, became projection screens for progress, which resonated with the optimism about progress of the then still-prevailing liberalism.

The endogenous democratic traditions in the Habsburg Monarchy went back decades. The revolutions of 1848 served as a starting point, which in collective memory accompanied the ideas of nationalism and democratization under the sign of liberalism. In late fall of 1918, the Social Democrats of German Austria<sup>18</sup> and Hungary also appealed to the liberal democratic traditions of 1848. The traditions of 1848<sup>19</sup> symbolized for the Hungarian Social Democrats their demands for a republic, national independence and social emancipation.<sup>20</sup> In the fin-de-siècle period, however, nationalism in the Austro-Hungarian Empire increasingly detached itself from the liberal and democratic traditions of 1848. Particularly in the Hungarian half of the realm, an aggressive majority nationalism crystallized vis-à-vis minorities,

seeking to protect the alleged dominance of the Hungarian nation, the “supremacy” of the Hungarians. This “supremacy,” the superiority of the Hungarian-speaking population, was based not just on the growth in the number of citizens declaring themselves as Hungarians, but also their supposed higher level of culture as well as their political and financial dominance over the ethnic minorities.<sup>21</sup> The 1897 Badeni Crisis,<sup>22</sup> however, made it clear in the Austrian half of the Empire that the ethnic German representatives to the Imperial Council were not prepared to let go of the linguistic dominance of the German over the Czech language.

The expansion or rejection of the right to vote was in the Habsburg Monarchy closely bound up with the nationality question. The political elite of the Dual Monarchy considered the ethnic-linguistic endeavors in the second half of the nineteenth century, in light of the traditional German-speaking and Hungarian dominance as well as the unity of the empire, as a threat. The example of voting rights shows that the governments in Vienna and Budapest followed different concepts regarding their defense against ethnic minority demands. The expansion or rejection of the right to vote reflected the persistence of the traditional political elite as well as the political influence of the proponents of democracy. In Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century the majority of the socialist and liberal Left agitated for more democracy.<sup>23</sup> In the Habsburg Monarchy, the political supporters of democracy were otherwise engaged. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it was the Social Democrats who decidedly engaged in the struggle for the general right to vote and for more democracy. The establishment of a democratic state and the introduction of the general, direct right to vote had been part of the political agenda of the party since the fifth Day of the Worker in 1868.<sup>24</sup> The Christian Social Party stood for the idea of universal voting rights for men from 1896.<sup>25</sup> With the 1907 expansion of voting rights in the Austrian half of the empire, the highest decision makers had in mind the preservation of their own power as well as the forestallment of the breakup of the Empire,<sup>26</sup> and not the democratization of the country. This moderate and evolutionary path to more democracy stood under the sign of saving the empire, and served the consolidation of the imperial power structure. Direct elections, the secret ballot, and the general right to vote for men,<sup>27</sup> however, also made possible the formation of two mass parties: the Social Democrats and the Christian Social Party. With that began the development of a mass society and the political integration of the worker and the rural population into state and society. In the wake of the Imperial Council elections

of 1911, both mass parties rose to be significant political and democratic forces in their half of the empire, which made possible their participation in the consolidation of state power after the end of the lost war.<sup>28</sup>

The nobility of the Hungarian kingdom, whose grip on the reins of political leadership stood unaltered at the beginning of the twentieth century, on the other hand, protected its traditional privileges and not only resisted all centralizing tendencies from Vienna, but also blocked all attempts at the expansion of voting rights with the justification that this would endanger the national predominance of the Hungarians. Furthermore, the aristocratic political elite protected its supremacy over rising social classes, such as the politically organized workers and the still rather apolitical peasantry. This persistence and political leading role on the part of the nobility hindered the evolutionary and not war-dependent development of a political mass society. Because of the prevention of the introduction of universal suffrage, only parties made up of dignitaries, which to be sure intended no political representation of the new rising social classes, served in the Hungarian Parliament; thus, no mass parties could establish themselves. The Hungarian Social Democratic Party, founded in 1890, following the German and Austrian model, indeed stood for the democratization of political life, which for its part was also seen as a solution to the recognized threat of nationality problems. The greatest weakness of the party was however that, as a result of the restricted voting rights, it developed as an extraparliamentary opposition, and could not build up the strict and disciplined party and trade union structure of a mass party, as was the case in the Austrian half of the empire and in Germany. There did exist in Hungary on the cusp of the First World War further parties that took up democratization in their party platforms. The National Christian Socialist Party [Országos Keresztényszocialista Párt], founded in 1907, remained an oppositional minority in Parliament until the end of the war. The National Civic Radical Party [Országos Polgári Radikális Párt], founded in June 1914, represented the urban, democratically oriented intelligentsia, and demanded the introduction of universal suffrage and the secret ballot. But these measures found an extremely limited level of support among the Hungarian population. In the Hungarian half of the empire, the process of governmental and social integration of workers—not to mention the agrarian population, divorced from politics, which made up the overwhelming majority (over 60%) of the population—had not even begun. Democratic traditions in the Hungarian half of the empire before 1914 were anchored neither in the political

leadership nor in the population; thus here the chances for a successful development of a democratic state after the crisis-filled war years were far worse than in the Austrian half.<sup>29</sup>

### **The First World War and Democratization**

The development of a mass society began in the Danube Monarchy around the turn of the century. The first portents and trends appeared in the rapidly growing big cities of Austria-Hungary (Vienna, Budapest, and Prague). This period of social change threw into question the survival chances of the monarchy as a form of government and the position of the nobility, already before the war. Neither the Habsburg royal family nor the nobility in general was willing however to abdicate its longstanding positions of power. The First World War was waged in the name of national and imperial interests. The liberal narrative regarding the outbreak of the war sees it as the defensive reaction of a regime which had resisted the socioeconomic modernization and democratization of the turn of the century. Thereafter it saw no other choice but to fight a war for the retention of its positions of power.<sup>30</sup>

On the one hand, the world war made possible the concentration of power in the executive branch and a restriction of citizens' rights and freedoms in all of the war-fighting states. Thus the war, especially in its first years, had an autocracy-producing rather than a democracy-producing effect. On the other hand, the "democratization of war," to use Eric Hobsbawm's phrase, points to the fact that wide swaths of the population were directly affected by the consequences of war, either on the military or the home front.<sup>31</sup> The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy indeed declared war in the summer of 1914 with ambitious war aims; it however suffered one defeat after another on all fronts. It gained temporary control of territory starting in 1915, but only due to the economic and military support of its German allies, which necessarily led to power asymmetry in the German-Austrian alliance.<sup>32</sup> The war began with a completely self-imposed domestic "castle truce," with the closing of ranks on the part of the state, the political parties, and the population in the entire Habsburg Monarchy. The war aims were the common denominator, which was meant to temporarily paper over the already existing chasm between the two halves of the empire, as well as the constantly increasing social tensions arising from modernization and industrialization. The declaration of war and of an expected quick

victory before the end of 1914 veiled only for a short time the many-sided and complex problems within the Habsburg Monarchy. The economic capacity of the monarchy was not sufficient over the course of the war for the simultaneous waging of war and the adequate feeding of the population. Thus the governments in Vienna and Budapest, like all of the warring states,<sup>33</sup> were forced to give in and to centrally direct the supply and demand of the civil population.

The socioeconomic burden of the world war intensified the political, economic, and social transformations of modern society,<sup>34</sup> the majority of which resulted from the structural change from an agrarian into an industrial society. This transformation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in addition burdened the multiethnic composition of the empire. Just like the Tsarist Empire of the Romanovs, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy of the Habsburgs was a multinational imperium, shaped during the First World War by widespread war weariness as well as socioeconomic strain.

The material and human resources for waging war became ever more exhausted during the second half of the war. Up until 1917, the demands of the front could be “satisfactorily” addressed; as of 1918, however, the provisioning of the troops threatened to collapse. Hungary had always served as the “breadbasket” of the monarchy, but in the last years of the war strict state rationing of foodstuffs had to be instituted even there. Nevertheless, in the Hungarian half of the realm adequate state provisioning could be guaranteed up until the end of the war, even if at the cost of starving the urban population of the Austrian half. This supply discrepancy deepened the gulf between Austria and Hungary, both on the governmental-political side and at the level of the population.<sup>35</sup> State provision of foodstuffs was highly relevant to the rising discontent on the part of the population. The failure of state provisioning in the last two years of the war undermined citizens’ trust in their government. This loss of trust weakened the population’s internal acceptance of the state, the bureaucracy, and the ruling dynasty, as well as exhausting the integrational capabilities of the Dual Monarchy.

In spring of 1917, after the February revolution in Russia and the entrance of the US into the war, democracy came into fashion, leading to the increasing participation of the masses in politics, especially in the defeated states. The declaration of a democracy-professing republic in Russia in February 1917 took on a central role in the course of the war. This Russian announcement of a democracy deprived the Central Powers of their argument that they were fighting a defensive

war. The Bolsheviks' peace offering shook up the military chances of the Central Powers. The events in Russia pushed the Left in the Danube Monarchy and the German Empire unavoidably into an intensive democratic platform. "The democratic 'zeitgeist' was vehemently reflected in international debates."<sup>36</sup> But it consisted of two completely different understandings of a new social order, which from 1917 condensed into a propaganda war. With the entry of the US into the war began the crystallization of the idea of a "Western" democracy. This was based on a contemporary assumption: that democratization, the spread of the Western democratic model, was an inevitable function of modernity.<sup>37</sup> But in 1918 democracy was in practice only an expectation, rather than an experience. "War was supposed to bring democracy, and democracy would in the future make war impossible."<sup>38</sup> On the one hand, the idea of a liberal and social democracy was legally anchored and internationally institutionalized in the peace treaties of 1919–1920. On the other, the idea of the Bolshevik "total democracy"<sup>39</sup> began its triumphant progress after the Communists' accession to power in Russia in November 1917. This new type of regime strove from 1919 on for international expansion, in the form of Council Republics in Hungary and Bavaria, as well as within the framework of the Communist International (Comintern).

The Hungarian Social Democrats broke with the politics of the castle truce in the summer of 1916, and their Austrian comrades in the autumn of 1916, after Friedrich Adler assassinated Prime Minister Karl Stürghk.<sup>40</sup> The social democratic parties began to intensively engage in political struggle again, which also manifested itself in an increase in membership of their trade unions. The war's interminability encouraged the display of power on the part of Austrian Social Democracy; this power shift in favor of the Hungarian Social Democrats was far less pronounced. The growth in the socioeconomic tensions caused by the war called for an intermediary between the government and the workers. The tight labor market led in the last years of the war to the expressions of workplace grievances in the form of large numbers of walkouts and strikes. These furthered the radicalization of workers' culture, which in turn was reflected in new battle cries, such as demands for peace and democracy. In order to retain their own supporters, Social Democrats in both halves of the empire after 1917 needed radical solutions. The Party however supported the strikes only as long as that brought them advantage and increased their room for maneuver.<sup>41</sup> In this can be seen Austromarxism's "specificity" and ambivalence.

The significant difference lay rather in the positions of the two parties vis-à-vis political power. The Austrian Social Democrats led a mass party, and starting in 1916 they were active as a strong oppositional party in the reactivated Imperial Council. With their countrywide network of trade unions, they could use well-established intervention mechanisms to defuse the radicalism of labor conflicts. Especially in the second half of the war, there was no shortage of labor conflicts and rebellions across the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The fact that the traditional political leadership in Vienna was forced by the threatened collapse of food provisioning to make concessions was a necessary condition for the governmental and political integration of the Austrian Social Democrats. This integration of the Social Democrats, already at hand before the war, was decisively propelled by the failure of the state supply system. The imperial power elite increasingly treated the Social Democratic Party and its trade unions as a partner, mirroring the situation in Great Britain, France, and Germany.<sup>42</sup> Social democratic politicians received positions in the state supply system that constituted the first governmental roles for the party in its history. The general expansion of further social services compelled by the wartime conditions drove the absorption and further integration of the workforce into state structures.<sup>43</sup> These social achievements pointed the way towards the construction of a democratic welfare state at war's end.

The Hungarian Social Democrats, due to the extremely limited property-qualified voting rights, remained in extra-parliamentary opposition until the war's end. For that reason, despite its nationwide trade union network, in the case of labor conflicts it could offer no experienced and state-recognized mediation potential. Hungary's aristocratic political elite recognized the labor clashes of the last war years as a political but not a social conflict, and employed ever heavier state repression. As the provisioning crisis in the Hungarian half of the empire seemed less serious, the traditional political leadership did not see it necessary to share political responsibility with the Social Democrats and thereby further their political integration.

Since food shortages were less severe in Hungary, the state and the political elite were much less in need of a social democratic intermediary to "tame" unsatisfied industrial workers. The great estate owners of the political class took a restrictive position towards labor conflicts until the end of the war, which closed off the possibility of democratization. The state interventions on behalf of employees after 1917 were

carried out separately at the level of enterprises, and mostly concerned only the improvement of labor conditions and provisioning, as well as wage increases.

### **Late Fall 1918 – Spring 1919: The Hopeful “Wilsonian Moment”**

The downfall of the Habsburg Empire opened the way to a new international order for Central Europe. The victor states were aiming to divide the centuries-old multinational realm into smaller, democratically organized national states. But as to the question of what this Central Europe of small states should look like, there were in 1918 different, competing concepts, one “Eastern” and one “Western.” In his appeal to the self-determination of peoples, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin proclaimed the self-delineated, rather theoretically considered, territorial sovereignty of every people. US President Woodrow Wilson understood under the same slogan the self-government of a democratic administration.<sup>44</sup> Although the word “democracy” appeared nowhere in his ultimately famous Fourteen Points, he delivered “the message of global democratization.”<sup>45</sup>

In the last year of the war both transnational “ideological offensives”<sup>46</sup> reached the crisis-wracked Habsburg realm, where they hastened its disintegration and offered a new orientation for the region’s rebirth. Numerous obligations of modernity had piled up in complicated fashion in Central Europe by the end of the war. Territorial independence and the sovereignty of the nation formed the uncontested main goal. A further amalgamation of demands for national autonomy and increased participation crystallized in political discourse in the late fall of 1918.<sup>47</sup> The global “Wilsonian moment”<sup>48</sup> had finally reached Central Europe. The “messianic” expectation of understanding between peoples was attached to the person of the American President. The projection screen “democracy” in this way underwent a new extension of meaning: democracy became identified as the path to a “just peace” based on the right of nations to self-determination.

“Democracy” in the year 1918 in the Danube region had “suddenly” come into fashion, even become normality,<sup>49</sup> and served as a counterproject to that of the authoritarian “hated elders,” which could be identified with the Habsburg Monarchy with all its weaknesses and the war with all its suffering. Behind this declaration stood the contemporary assumption that Central Europe’s social and economic deficit stemmed

from a lack of sovereignty on the part of national states. According to these conceptions, the emergence of new national states and their democratic self-organization would open the door for economic catch-up on the ruins of the authoritarian Habsburg Monarchy.

At the beginning of November 1918, Count Mihály Károlyi, provisional prime minister of Hungary, as well as the Hungarian Social Democrats espoused this position, as the questions of state sovereignty and a republic as the form of governance came to the fore.<sup>50</sup> Thomas G. Masaryk, president of Czechoslovakia, characterized the First World War as a struggle between the “feudal” autocracy of the Central Powers on one side and the ideas of democracy and freedom of conscience, borne by the Entente, on the other. Subsequently, Czechoslovakia would be the “agent of the civilized and democratic West” in the East, guaranteeing the new order.<sup>51</sup> The popularity of a putative democracy was also increased by the recognition that at Versailles only parliamentary democracies were acceptable as participants in the negotiations.<sup>52</sup> The new political actors hoped by means of the declaration of a democratic new order to gain more sympathy from the victors, and thereby also better peace settlement conditions. Of course a rooted, stable democratic political culture was lacking across wide social strata. Especially in Hungary there were hardly political forces—aside from Social Democracy and some radical intellectuals—standing behind the political slogan “democracy.”

### **Democratic Actors in Austria and Hungary**

The transition from monarchical authoritarian state to liberal democracy in Austria and Hungary was due to war and crisis, and the social democratic parties played a significant role in it.<sup>53</sup> Total war with its mass mobilization and industrial military production raised the value of the workers and their political representatives, the workers’ parties, vis-à-vis all war participants. The war could no longer be waged without the mass of workers. Those leftist parties that proved their national loyalty during the world war could leave behind their marginal position on the political spectrum. The organizations of the workers pushed unexpectedly quickly into the center of political life in the second half of the world war, and especially at the end of the war. In the vanquished states of the Central Powers, in Germany, Austria, and Hungary, the Social Democrats with governmental responsibility rose to be the driving forces of

democratization. The end of the war brought the simultaneity of the rise of both democratic and anti-democratic elements; both were offspring of the war. This simultaneity demonstrated that the Western model of liberal democracy was in no way seen as the only solution to the complex problems of that time. It was exactly the rise of Bolshevik, anti-democratic models as bogeyman that for the first time forged a community between the Western democracies. This new Western community of values identified itself as the counterpole to “world revolution,” and prepared for battle. But in parts of Central and Southern Europe, which had been particularly impacted by the world war and its consequences, another bogeyman crystallized, which mixed and conflated the radical leftist and social democratic visions of the future. The resulting aggressive anti-Bolshevism/anti-Marxism gave propulsion for the radical right wing, and smoothed the way to the undermining of the Western model of democracy between the world wars.<sup>54</sup>

At the end of the war the struggle for political power was over how the old political elite could hold its ground and how the new political elite could generate new legitimacy. Despite a spectacular rupture at the level of the constitution and state institutions, there were multiple continuities. “Old” and “new” existed side-by-side in the transition period. Totally new centers of power formed, such as the grassroots-democracy-oriented workers’ and soldiers’ councils. But the old bureaucracy also remained at first completely untouched. Another great challenge of the turbulent postwar moment was to carry out political and economic consolidation, intertwined with the demobilization of a radicalized population.

The time had come for new actors and structures. On October 21, 1918 the provisional National Assembly of German Austria was constituted from the German-speaking representatives in the former Imperial Council,<sup>55</sup> and decided on the formation of its own Austrian state: “German Austria.” The government formed on October 30 under the Social Democratic leadership of Karl Renner was made up of parliamentary deputies of the old Imperial Council, and gained its legitimacy from neither the emperor nor elections. This continuity of personnel between old and new brought tested competencies in political negotiation and personal networks into the new government. Thanks to the universal male voting rights of 1907, these politicians, apart from the German National Party,<sup>56</sup> had a considerable following.<sup>57</sup> All of the parties of the Imperial Council took part in the grand coalition of the Social Democrats, the Social Christians, and the Greater German People’s Party,<sup>58</sup>

and thereby gave their assent to the joint management of the crisis. The party leaders could thus count on being able to have a mitigating effect on the population by means of their party networks.

The new government and the Provisional National Assembly earned symbolic legitimation by operating until November 11 concurrently with the old imperial regime and the Imperial Council in Vienna, in parallel and without conflicts. The negotiated proclamation of November 11 declaring Emperor Charles's renunciation of any role in government gave the new power holders a further injection of legitimation.<sup>59</sup> The strength and importance of Austrian social democrats among the various parties was evident as they laid down several conditions regarding governmental participation.<sup>60</sup> The bourgeois parties, moreover, approved of the crisis management initiated by Austromarxists because they themselves lacked a sustainable crisis program.<sup>61</sup>

In the case of Hungary, the transition of power at first appeared to proceed, as in Austria, on constitutionally regulated tracks. However, in contrast to Austria there was until the end a lack of broad political consensus, but also of popular political participation. On October 24, 1918 a counter-government, the Hungarian National Council, constituted itself; within a week it formed the core of the new regime. This National Council was assembled from a parliamentary opposition party, led by the liberal-democratic Count Károlyi. Another two extra-parliamentary opposition parties also took part, namely the National Civic Radical Party, the party of the critical urban intelligentsia, and the Social Democrats. Because of the limitation of voting rights by property qualification and the lack of mass parties, the members of the National Council—except for the Social Democrats—had no party networks to fall back on. There were in Hungary before 1918 only parties of dignitaries, which focused their activities on the period of parliamentary elections, and beyond these labor-intensive periods they carried out no or almost no collective political activities in the name of their parties. Their representatives in Parliament were in fact active as individuals, but the parties as umbrella organizations played only a minor role.

The war government named by King Charles IV<sup>62</sup> resigned on October 30. In the face of unrest in Budapest, the last monarch of the Austro-Hungarian Empire approved the appointment of Count Károlyi to head the government of Hungary.

His government coalition was not as broad as the one in Austria and Germany. It consisted of the small liberal-democratic party of Károlyi, the National Civic Radical Party of Oszkár Jászi, and the

Social Democratic Party. The Hungarian Christian socialist movement was fragmented, and it was much smaller than its Austrian equivalent. The moderate National Christian Socialist Party, under the leadership of Sándor Giesswein, supported the Hungarian National Council and Károlyi's program at the beginning, but did not join the provisional government.

For many people Károlyi embodied the break with the past and the hope for a new beginning and a better future,<sup>63</sup> because of his social program and message of peace, expounded in Parliament for months. Count Károlyi, as scion of a high noble family, was one of the richest men in the kingdom, and was the son-in-law of Count Gyula Andrássy, the monarchy's last foreign minister. Although Charles released the government one day later from its oath to the monarch, the royal appointment provided the Károlyi government with symbolic legitimation.

Károlyi was, at the end of October 1918—also in the eyes of national conservatives and liberal conservatives of the old political elite like Count Pál Teleky or Count István Bethlen, the future prime minister—an acceptable figurehead, who seemed a suitable representative of Hungarian interests.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, the new government exhibited no wide-ranging personal continuity between old and new, as was the case in Austria. Except for Prime Minister Károlyi and Interior Minister Count Tivadar Batthyány, the old political elite was not represented in the new government. Moreover, Batthyány left the cabinet already in December 1918, as Károlyi's policies became "too far to the left" for him.<sup>65</sup> The often oppressive central and decisive role of Prime Minister Károlyi closed off the possibility of a course correction and minimized political adaptability to the oppressive circumstances.

Hungary's new beginning was thus not based in an understanding between political parties, as in Austria; politics crystallized around the person of Károlyi. He dominated state affairs, not only because of his accumulation of positions,<sup>66</sup> but much more due to the weakness of the parties. It was not that the party leadership of the Hungarian Social Democrats was less "clever" than that of their Austrian brothers-in-arms, or that they lacked political talent.<sup>67</sup> The party leadership, due to its previous restriction to extra-parliamentary opposition, did not possess those competencies and experiences in making politics that their Austrian comrades already held in autumn of 1918. They had up to the declaration of the Council Republic a mere four months to "learn politics." With these limited proficiencies and so little political experience, they had to take on the task in March 1919 of ruling the country and

stopping the advance of foreign armies. The almost hopeless international situation of Hungary simply demanded too much of them. Thus, they entered into an unfortunate party fusion with the Communists, and jointly proclaimed the Council Republic. It was a flight into the future.<sup>68</sup>

In November 1918, the Communist parties in Austria and Hungary were established. Both Social Democratic leaderships recognized the threat of a "Bolshevik experiment" and, equally, that posed by the foundation of Communist parties. The direct sphere of activity of both Communist parties was, however, at first restricted to several seats on the workers' councils in the capital cities and a number of street demonstrations. The Hungarian Communist party pursued a consciously populist politics, coupled with sharp and censorious criticism of the government program and with it of the participation of the Social Democrats in the regime, and finally aimed at the complete undermining of the state's power.<sup>69</sup> In the face of this party the Social Democrats on March 21 saw themselves forced to go along with a fusion of parties and an undemocratic takeover of power, to save the country, with fatal consequences.

### **The Implementation of Democratic Institutions**

The new rulers in Austria and Hungary took different paths in implementing the basic conditions for democracy. There was a basic consensus that such a democracy included the separation of powers, institutional control by the judiciary of the democratically legitimated executive, and a popularly elected parliament.<sup>70</sup> In the case of German Austria, Ernst Hanisch has established that an overemphasis on parliamentarism developed as a reaction to the weak position of the Parliament in the monarchy.<sup>71</sup> The authority of the dynasty as well as its supporters, namely the bureaucracy and the army, passed in late autumn to the political parties.<sup>72</sup> Their representatives agreed that the provisional National Assembly should be assembled proportionally from the delegates chosen in the last Imperial Council elections of 1911. To forestall unnecessary political rivalry and tension, the balance of power between the parties would not be put into question before the first elections. On October 30, 1918, the provisional National Assembly announced that it alone held the highest state authority. The Austrian provisional legislature was recruited from the old Imperial Council and was endowed with three presidents of equal status. The provisional legislative body bestowed executive powers on the provisional government (State Council)

at the end of October 1918. The creative function was given to the National Assembly.

Democracies differentiate themselves from other political systems through a high degree of opportunity for the citizens to participate in the selection of their political leaders.<sup>73</sup> In both states the general, secret, and direct right to vote was declared in late autumn of 1918. But the realization of the democratic promise proceeded differently in the two cases. It is instructive which institution approved these voting rights last, and whether the National Assembly elections actually took place. On 12 November the provisional National Assembly of German Austria<sup>74</sup> approved the law on the form of state and government of German Austria. The provisional National Assembly proclaimed in Article 9 the general, secret, and direct right to vote. The same article also fixed the date of the election of a constituent National Assembly for January 1919. The elections, held with a slight delay on February 16, 1919, ratified not only the interim consensus politics and a certain loyalty of the majority of the population to the provisional government's crisis management, but also conformed to the democratic expectations of the victorious powers.

By contrast, in Hungary there was far less attention paid to the democratic legitimation of the provisional state power. The Károlyi government, installed by King Charles IV on October 31, arose out of the National Council convened on October 24,<sup>75</sup> an exclusive power center with no democratic legitimation. This provisional cabinet under the direction of the National Council vested itself in Public Law I of November 22, 1918 with, in addition to executive, legislative authority as well.<sup>76</sup> The provisional government hesitated in setting a fixed election date, thereby abandoning a timely democratic legitimation of its own power and cementing a makeshift solution with few democratic elements. The legislative authority in Hungary thus had no body elected by the population, but rather an executive based on self-legitimation. The legislative function was subordinated to the executive. The intention behind this was similar to that in Austria, only in reverse. The new Austrian political elite expanded the authority of the legislature in order to counter its weak position from the period of the Monarchy. Hungary went in the direction of no separation of powers. The public law of November 22 also dissolved the old Parliament, elected before the war in 1910, which had continued to meet throughout the war. In the Hungarian constitutional tradition, the former (aristocratic) Parliament until 1918 played an important, if only symbolic, role—governmental authority always resided in the executive. The new, self-confessed

democratic provisional government wanted nothing to do with the old elite of the Monarchy that sat in Parliament. This is why the executive and legislative power became concentrated in the provisional government, which dissolved the old Parliament. It was not the case that head of government Count Károlyi wanted to erect an authoritarian dictatorship in the sense of criteria defined by Juan Linz.<sup>77</sup> The aim of the Károlyi government was to demonstrate the final break with the old system and to legitimize the new policy. At the end of 1918 the representatives of the old elite were not pressing much for political responsibility in the struggle with the consequences of war.

The general and equal right to vote was proclaimed by the provisional government in late autumn as an important achievement for democratization. Outside pressure, on the part of the victors as well as the transnational democratic wave, was strong enough to compel democratic signals even in Budapest. However, the government's priority was in the first place not the democratic and social reorganization of the country, but the assertion of the right to the entire territory of the former Hungarian kingdom. The new political elite could not escape its historical limitations. No one wanted to relinquish the national basic consensus, the territorial sovereignty of the Hungarian nation, in favor of democratic and social renewal. Because of its stubborn insistence on the state concept of "greater Hungary," the new, purportedly provisional government robbed itself of democratic legitimation. The proclamation of the Council Republic finally thwarted the elections.

The Austrian Social Democrats were successful in the immediate postwar years in initiating a social legislative process leading to the construction of a democratic welfare state that became an example for all of Europe. The provisional government in Budapest, by contrast, missed the chance to advance the struggle against the consequences of war with an intensive social legislative process. It had more interest in territorial questions than in alleviating the misery of the population. The problems of the wide strata of the population, stemming from the socioeconomic transition from an agrarian to an industrial state and from the world war, were of little concern to either the old or the new political power holders. The provisional government indeed declared on November 11 the necessity of a land reform law for the agrarian population. The actual passage of the "land law" (Public Law XVII) was however left until February 16. The belated realization of this promise to the disaffected agrarian population could no longer appease the pent-up and long-ignored social tensions.

## **Conclusion**

Although the interim democratic crisis management in Austria, carried out predominantly by Social Democrats, was due to internal and external circumstances more successful than the Hungarian efforts at resolving the crisis with the participation of Social Democrats, political power in both states in general after 1920 shifted from “left to right.” Austrian democracy in the 1920s was able to become a symbol for the success of consensus-oriented crisis management in the immediate postwar years. The prevention of civil war was successful, but opposition to democracy increased among the right. In Hungary the concept of democracy however experienced a profound transformation. Democracy and the democratic actors of the immediate postwar years became discredited in Hungarian national memory in the interwar period. The national right-wing conservative regimes pinned the responsibility for the huge territorial losses, which made up almost two-thirds of the area of greater Hungary, on the democratic victor states. The old aristocratic political elite’s own blame for the separationist tendencies of the nationalities and the territorial losses was thus completely ignored. The national conservative restoration of the undemocratic Monarchy in 1920 accused the actors of the first democratic experiments of bearing sole guilt for the country’s decimation.

As a consequence of the postwar crisis management directed by the Left, a longing for the “good old days” of Right-oriented hierarchical order and its familiar enemy images arose. This rightward lurch was accompanied in both countries equally by the development and consolidation of long-lived stereotypes of “leftists” and Jews, who were accused of bearing affinities for the destructive revolutions. The military defeat, the social transformation accelerated by war, the unrecognized guilt, the territorial “amputations,” and the fragile national identity thus proved to be heavy burdens for both Hungary and Austria in the interwar period.

*Translated from the German by Richard S. Esbenschade*

## NOTES

1. This study was produced during my Edith Saurer Fellowship in Vienna in 2019.

2. Anton Pelinka, *Die gescheiterte Republik. Kultur und Politik in Österreich 1918-1938* [The failed republic: Culture and politics in Austria, 1918–38] (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017), 20.
3. Ibolya Murber, “Mitteleuropäisches Krisenmanagement nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Wege Österreichs und Ungarns in eine Konsolidierung” [Central European crisis management after the First World War: Paths to consolidation in Austria and Hungary], *Historische Mitteilungen der Ranke-Gesellschaft* 30 (2018): 359–78.
4. Anja Kruke and Philipp Kufferath, “Einleitung: Krisendiagnosen, Meistererzählungen und Alltagspraktiken. Aktuelle Forschungen und Narrationen zur Demokratiegeschichte in Westeuropa” [Introduction: Diagnoses of crisis, master narratives and everyday practices: Current research on and narrations of the history of democracy in Western Europe], *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 58, Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (2018): 12.
5. Tim B. Müller, *Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Lebensversuche moderner Demokratien* [After the First World War: Formative experiments of modern democracies] (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2014), 30.
6. Jens Hacke, “Die Krise des politischen Liberalismus in der Zwischenkriegszeit. Theoriegeschichtliche Sondierung” [The crisis of political liberalism in the interwar period: A theoretical-historical exploration], in *Nach dem “Großen Krieg.” Vom Triumph zum Desaster der Demokratie 1918/19 bis 1939* [After the “great war”: Democracy’s road from triumph to disaster, 1918/19 to 1939], ed. Steffen Kailitz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 70.
7. Steffen Kailitz, “Nach dem ‘Großen Krieg.’ Vom Triumph zum Desaster der Demokratie 1918/19 bis 1939” [After the “great war”: Democracy’s road from triumph to disaster, 1918/19 to 1939], in Kailitz, *Nach dem “Großen Krieg,”* 30.
8. *Népszava*, November 17, 1918, 5.
9. Reinhart Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten. Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache* [Conceptual stories: Studies on the semantics and pragmatics of political and social language] (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 68.
10. For more on the handover of Burgenland/western Hungary to Austria, see Ibolya Murber, “A burgenlandi impériumváltás 1918-1924: kikényszerített identitásképzés és politikai erőszak” [Burgenland’s imperial transition, 1918-1924: Forced identity formation and political violence], *Múltunk – Politikátörténeti Folyóirat* 34, no. 2 (2019): 181–214.
11. *Népszava*, February 28, 1919, 1.
12. *Corpus Juris Hungarici* [Hungarian Body of Laws] (Budapest: Franklin-társulat, 1919), 202.

13. *Népszava*, January 18, 1919, 5.
14. Adam Tooze, “Ein globaler Krieg unter demokratischen Bedingungen” [A global war under democratic conditions], in *Normalität und Fragilität. Demokratie nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg* [Normality and fragility: Democracy after the First World War], ed. Tim B. Müller and Adam Tooze (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2015), 37.
15. Anton Pelinka and Karin Bischof, et al., eds., *Geschichtsbuch Mitteleuropa. Vom Fin de Siècle bis zur Gegenwart* [The history book of Central Europe: From fin de siècle to the present] (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2016).
16. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).
17. Some examples are the US, France, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Denmark (in 1915), the Netherlands, and Sweden.
18. The Austrian workers’ movement was also rooted in the revolution of 1848. On the role the 1848 revolution played for Otto Bauer, see Ernst Hanisch, *Im Zeichen von Otto Bauer. Deutschösterreichs Außenpolitik in den Jahren 1918 bis 1919* [Under the sign of Otto Bauer: German Austria’s foreign policy in the years 1918 and 1919], in . . . *der Rest ist Österreich. Das Werden der Ersten Republik* [. . . the rest is Austria: The creation of the First Republic], vol. 1, ed. Helmut Konrad and Wolfgang Maderthaler (Vienna: Gerold, 2008), 216.
19. For more on the tradition of the 1848 revolution in Hungary, see Árpád von Klimó, *Nation, Konfession, Geschichte. Zur nationalen Geschichtskultur Ungarns im europäischen Kontext (1860–1948)* [Nations, denominations, history: On Hungary’s national culture of history in the European context, 1860–1948] (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2003), 55–91.
20. *Népszava*, November 17, 1918, 1.
21. Iván Bertényi, “A századelő politikai irányzatai és Tisza István” [The political tendencies at the beginning of the century and István Tisza], in *A magyar jobboldali hagyomány 1900–1948* [The Hungarian right-wing tradition, 1900–1948], ed. Ignác Romsics (Budapest: Osiris, 2009), 45.
22. The Badenist Voting Rights Reform was an attempt by Prime Minister Kasimir Felix Badeni in 1897 to permit Czech to be the official language alongside German in Bohemia and Moravia. The ethnic German representatives to the Imperial Council rejected the equation of the two languages and used obstruction to paralyze the work of the Council. In 1899 this language ordinance was withdrawn, thus reestablishing monolingualism in Bohemia and Moravia. This caused the Czech representatives to adopt the tactic of obstruction.

23. Ian Kershaw, *Höllenturz. Europa 1914 bis 1949* [To hell and back: Europe, 1914 to 1949] (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2016), 193.
24. See the 1868 Manifesto to the Working Population in Austria, in *Österreichische Parteiprogramme 1868–1966* [Austrian party platforms, 1868–1966], ed. Klaus Berchtold (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg, 1967), 109–10.
25. The 1896 Platform of the Christian Social Workers' Party, in Berchtold, *Österreichische Parteiprogramme*, 169–71.
26. Peter Berger, *Kurze Geschichte Österreichs im 20. Jahrhundert* [A short history of Austria in the twentieth century] (Vienna: Facultas, 2008), 13.
27. The general right to vote for men applied to the elections for the Imperial Council; at the regional level the right to vote based on property qualifications remained.
28. Ibolya Murber, "Il lungo 1917 e la caduta della monarchia asburgica [The long 1917 and the fall of the Habsburg monarchy], *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea* 37, no. 1 (2019): 1–20.
29. Zsombor Bódy, "Élelmiszer-ellátás piac és kötött gazdálkodás között a háború és az összeomlás idején" [Between food supply market and centralized food supply during war and collapse], in *Háborúból békébe: a magyar társadalom 1918–1924* [From war to peace: Hungarian society 1918–24], ed. Zsombor Bódy (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2018), 151–94.
30. In this context, Christopher Clark's presentation of the responsibility of Serbia, Russia, and the Danube Monarchy is particularly impressive. *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).
31. Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994), 49.
32. An examination of the joint protocols of the Council of Ministers in the last years of the war makes clear that the common leadership of the monarchy was greatly concerned about its dependence on Germany, with all its sources and consequences, as well as about the loss of its own position as a great power.
33. Daniel Marc Segesser, "Der Erste Weltkrieg: Ein totaler krieg in globaler Perspektive?" [The First World War: A total war in global perspective?], in *Erster Weltkrieg. Globaler Konflikt – lokale Folgen. Neue Perspektiven* [World War I, global conflict—local consequences: New perspectives], ed. Stefan Karner and Philipp Lesiak (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2014), 39.
34. Aribert Reimann, "Der Erste Weltkrieg – Urkatastrophe oder Katalysator?" [The First World War: Seminal catastrophe or catalyst?], *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 54, nos. 29–30 (2004): 30–38.

35. Parliamentary debate on this question on February 26 1917, in *Képviseleti napló 1910* [Parliamentary Protocol 1910], Vol. 34 (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1917), 441.
36. Steffen Kailitz, “Nach dem ‘Großen Krieg’,” 39.
37. James Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1921), 4.
38. Tim. B. Müller, *Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, 31.
39. Jacob L. Talmon, *Die Geschichte der totalitären Demokratie* [The history of totalitarian democracy] (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).
40. In October 1916, Adler, son of the founding father of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, killed Stürghk, the Austrian Prime Minister, in Vienna. The perpetrator, a committed Social Democrat, declared during his trial that his deed had been a protest against the politics of the castle truce. The assassination split the party; the majority distanced themselves from it, while the radical leftists showed great sympathy.
41. Tamara Scheer, “Die Kriegswirtschaft am Übergang von der liberalen-privaten zur staatlich-regulierten Arbeitswelt” [The War economy in transition from a liberal private to a state-regulated work realm], in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918* [The Habsburg Monarchy, 1848–1918], Vol. 11, *Die Habsburgermonarchie und der Erste Weltkrieg* [The Habsburg Monarchy and the First World War], ed. Helmut Rumpel (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 2016), 480.
42. John Horne, “Arbeiterklasse und Arbeiterbewegung im Ersten Weltkrieg” [Labor and labor movements in World War I], in *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das 20. Jahrhundert* [The great war and the twentieth century], ed. Jay Winter, Geoffrey Parker, and Mary R. Habeck (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2002), 204.
43. Monika Senghaas, *Die Territorialisierung sozialer Sicherung. Raum, Identität und Sozialpolitik in der Habsburgermonarchie* [The territorialization of social protection: Space, identity and social policy in the Habsburg Monarchy] (Berlin: Springer VS, 2015), 247.
44. Jörg Fisch, *Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Völker. Die Domestizierung einer Illusion* [The right of peoples to self-determination: the domestication of an illusion] (Munich: Beck, 2010), 144–89.
45. Tim B. Müller, *Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, 32.
46. Manfred Rauchensteiner, “‘Das neue Jahr machte bei uns einen traurigen Einzug.’ Das Ende des Großen Krieges” [“The new year made for us a sad entrance”]: The end of the great war] in Konrad and Maderthaner, . . . *der Rest ist Österreich*, 38.

47. Peter Krüger, “Die Friedensordnung von 1919 und die Entstehung neuer Staaten in Ostmitteleuropa” [The peace settlement of 1919 and the establishment of new states in East Central Europe], in *Das Jahr 1919 in der Tschechoslowakei und in Ostmitteleuropa* [The Year 1919 in Czechoslovakia and East Central Europe], ed. Hans Lemberg and Peter Heumos (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1993), 101.
48. Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment. Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
49. Tim B. Müller and Adam Tooze, “Demokratie nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg” [Democracy after the First World War], in Müller and Tooze, *Normalität und Fragilität*, 32.
50. *Népszava*, November 2, 1918, 1.
51. Ota Konrád, “Widersprüchlich und unvollendet. Die Demokratie der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik 1918 bis 1938” [Contradictory and incomplete: Democracy in the first Czechoslovak Republic from 1918 to 1938], *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 66, no. 2 (2018): 339.
52. Ewald Frie, “100 Jahre 1918/19. Offene Zukünfte” [1918/19 100 years on: Open futures], *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History* 15, no. 1 (2018): 104. The Hungarian Social Democratic Party newspaper wrote about the prerequisites for a democratic order in connection with Germany: the victors “will make peace only with a German government that is supported by a majority of the population.” *Népszava*, November 24, 1918, 5.
53. In this context, see Gábor Egry, “Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions: Local Societies and Nationalizing States in East Central Europe,” in *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, ed. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019) 15–42.
54. Ibolya Murber, “Ein Instrument ungarischer Außenpolitik? Die österreichischen Heimwehren als Akteure in transnationalen rechtsradikalen Netzwerken in den späten 1920er Jahren” [An instrument of Hungarian foreign policy? The Austrian militias as actors in transnational Right-radical networks in the late 1920s], in *Über Grenzen hinweg. Transnationale Politische Gewalt im 20. Jahrhundert* [Beyond borders: Transnational political violence in the twentieth century], ed. Adrian Hänni, Daniel Rickenbacher, and Thomas Schmutz (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2019), 125–50.

55. The legislative period of the Imperial Council constituted in 1911 was extended by an imperially sanctioned 1917 law until December 31, 1918.
56. The German-National Party should be seen as a classic party of dignitaries, which was however the largest party in the Imperial Council, on the basis of the Imperial Council elections of 1911.
57. Also excepting two of the state secretaries, Ignaz Kaup, State Secretary for Health, and Johann Loewenfeld-Russ, State Secretary for Alimentation, who were previously imperial officials.
58. After the National Council elections of February 1919, a coalition of the Social Democrats and Social Christians constituted itself, holding until June 1920.
59. This although ex-Emperor Charles retracted his renunciation of participation in government in his March 23, 1919 Feldkirch Manifesto, not published in Austria. Carlo Moos, *Habsburg post mortem. Betrachtungen zum Weiterleben der Habsburgermonarchie* [Habsburg post-mortem: Reflections on the persistence of the Habsburg Monarchy] (Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), 192.
60. The three-page-long list of the Social Democrats' conditions can be found in Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖstA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), Bundeskanzleramt (BKA), Neues Politisches Archiv (NPA), Staatsratsprotokolle (SRP) Box 1. State Council meeting of October 30, 1918.
61. Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist. Otto Bauer (1881-1938)* [The great illusionist: Otto Bauer (1881–1938)] (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), 147.
62. On December 30, 1916, Emperor Charles I was crowned King Charles IV in Budapest; he renounced his involvement in government on November 13, 1918.
63. Pál Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság. Az 1918-as összeomlás és forradalom története* [The cursed republic: The history of collapse and revolution in 1918] (Budapest: Jaffa, 2018), 137.
64. Even the ex-Prime Minister István Tisza argued on October 22, 1918 in Parliament that Károlyi had the “relationship capital” vis-à-vis the West and the Entente powers that Hungary needed. See *Képviselőházi napló 1910* [Parliamentary Record 1910], Vol. 41 (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1917), 401.
65. Ibolya Murber, “Az osztrák es a magyar válságkezelés 1918–1920. Hasonlóságok es különbségek a közös birodalom összeomlását követően” [Austrian and Hungarian crisis management 1918–20: Similarities and

- differences following the collapse of the common empire], *Századok* 152, no. 6 (2018): 1310.
66. Károlyi was head of government and foreign minister from October 31, 1918; on December 12, 1918 he took over the representation of the Defense Ministry as well, and between January 11 and March 21, 1919 he also served as president of Hungary. This mirrors the case of Karl Renner, who alongside the prime ministership took on further ministerial responsibilities, such as the Interior Ministry and the Offices of Internal Affairs, Education and External Affairs.
  67. The leadership of the Hungarian party exhibited a substantially lower level of education than the Austrian Social Democratic leadership. Of the Social Democratic members of the government, only Zsigmond Kunfi, Minister without Portfolio for Labor and Welfare between October 31, 1918 and January 19, 1919, had a university degree. The others at the top of the party did not even possess a high school diploma.
  68. In this context, see Tamás Révész, *Nem akartak katonát látni? A magyar állam és hadserege 1918-1919-ben* [They didn't want to see any soldiers? The Hungarian state and its army in 1918–19], (Budapest: Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2020), 175ff.
  69. For more on the role of Béla Kun, see Ibolya Murber, “Einflüsse der russischen Revolutionen auf die Sozialisten Otto Bauer und Béla Kun [Influences of the Russian revolutions on the Socialists Otto Bauer and Béla Kun], in *Russische Revolutionen 1917: Presseanalysen aus Vorarlberg und internationale Aspekte* [Russian revolutions 1917: Media analyses from Vorarlberg and international aspects], ed. Werner Bundschuh (Feldkirch: Rheticus-Gesellschaft, 2017), 149–63.
  70. Steffen Kailitz, “Nach dem ‘Großen Krieg’,” 31.
  71. Ernst Hanisch, *Der lange Schatten des Staates. Österreichische Gesellschaftsgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert* [The long shadow of the state: Austrian social history in the twentieth century] (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 1994), 266.
  72. Peter Berger, *Kurze Geschichte Österreichs im 20. Jahrhundert* [A short history of Austria in the twentieth century] (Vienna: Facultas, 2008), 57.
  73. Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchie: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 7.
  74. Article 2 of this law established German Austria as an integral part of the Republic of Germany.

75. The so-called National Council composed itself, in a not completely legally clear manner, from representatives of the administration as well as parties and various political and administrative bodies—with a constantly changing membership.
76. *Az 1910. évi június hó 21-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának irományai* [Records of the National Assembly House of Representatives constituted on June 21, 1910], Vol. 64 (Budapest: Pesti Könyvnyomda Részvénytársaság, 1918), 412.
77. Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2000).