

It was the alpha and omega of political wisdom. Like a sort of holy spirit, democracy was expected to enlighten the masses with political wisdom" (Vandýs 1979, 320). All three countries guaranteed freedom of speech and of the press, religion, and conscience. Minorities gained far-reaching rights; in Estonia, they gained free choice of national identification, education in the minority's mother tongue, and a cultural autonomy that, according to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, "had no equal in Europe." The institute qualifies this assessment, however, by noting the fact "that democratic institutions, as operated during the period of parliamentary government . . . never functioned properly" and caused the "state of parliamentary atrophy" (*Baltic States* 1938, 43-44).

The political structure and party formation were similar in all the Baltic countries, but the parallels were especially notable in Estonia and Latvia. The Farmers' Union in Estonia, headed by Konstantin Päts and Johan Laidoner, and the Peasant League in Latvia, led by Karlis Ulmanis and General Balodis, were conservative nationalist parties, whereas the Left was represented by strong social-democratic parties. Communist parties were banned in Estonia after the 1924 coup but participated in national elections under various pseudonyms. In the center, nationalist liberal parties led by intellectuals played a leading role: the Estonian Peoples' Party under Jaan Tõnisson or the Democratic Center in Latvia are examples. In Lithuania, the Christian Democrats represented agrarian interests with the National Party, whose ranks included the most important politicians in Lithuania—individuals such as Antanas Smetona and Augustinas Voldemaras.

Land reforms were the first and most important legislative actions enacted by the new Baltic legislatures. An Estonian land expropriation law of October 1919 destroyed the great estates and expropriated 98 percent of them to create more than fifty-six thousand new small holdings (more than doubling their number). The Lithuanian land reform of March 1922 fixed the size of private farms at 150 hectares (roughly 380 acres). The Latvian land reform in September 1920 expropriated more than one thousand large estates and created new farms from 22 percent of those lands while leaving 35 percent of the land, mostly forests, in state ownership.

Although radical land reforms resulted, in some cases, from the new democratic representation that, in the early years of independence, ensured a majority rule by coalitions of socialist, social democratic, and radical democratic parties, various peasant agrarian parties also played an important role. In fact the vast majority of the new political elite in

the Baltic nations stemmed from peasant communities and represented their interests. But if these democratic and agrarian interests tended to support land reform in nations such as Estonia, so too did nationalist sentiments. Most large estates in the Baltic region had belonged to economically powerful, ethnic minority groups of Baltic Germans, Russians, and Poles. Nationalist goals could thus also favor the transfer of land from minority ethnic groups to the majority group, as happened in Lithuania. In all these countries, land reform proved an easy goal when independent states were emerging. But the merger between agrarian reform and nationalism eventually proved lethal to multiparty parliamentary democracy and social reform legislation, because they were quickly subordinated to more purely nationalist goals, which proved to be short-lived in the Baltic region. "Each started with an ultra-democratic Constitution, and each . . . passed through a phase of dictatorship" (*Baltic States* 1938, 41).

### The Making of Czechoslovakia

Although the Polish and Baltic national revolutions aimed at reconstructing formerly independent states, national movements in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe led to the formation of entirely new states with no tradition of unity or independence. This occurred in the case of the northwestern and southeastern "brotherly" Slavic peoples, who formed the relatively small, new multinational states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Czech national movement had reached the mature stage of an organized political mass movement, but it preserved the cautiousness and moderation that had characterized it from its incipience. Before World War I, motivated by fear of German designs on Bohemia, Czech nationalists attempted to gain extensive autonomy within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and to effect the Dual Monarchy's "trialistic" (Austrian-Hungarian-Slav) reorganization. Despite the inherent cautiousness of the movement, there had been signs of a trend toward radicalization even at the end of the nineteenth century—signs such as the popularity of the Young Czech movement.

The Slovaks in Northern Hungary originally had even more limited goals than the Czechs, because Slovakia had never existed as an inde-

pendent country. The national movement did not reach its higher, separatist stage until the war. In spite of intellectual forerunners such as Bernolák, Havlíček, Strobar and his *Hlas* group, Milán Štefánik, and a few others, "Czechoslovakism" had an even less vigorous history, and a Czechoslovak movement barely existed. The masses were not mobilized by the concept of "a Czechoslovak nation in two branches," in which, as Štefánik stated, "the Czechs are Slovaks who speak Czech, and . . . the Slovaks are Czechs who speak Slovak" (Zacek 1969, 191). The few Slovak students who studied in Prague and established their *Československá Jednota* (Czechoslovak Association) at the turn of the century could not initiate a mass movement.

Yet a merged Czech and Slovak national movement gained momentum during World War I. Its history is inseparable from the role of its charismatic leader. Thomas Masaryk, the influential professor of sociology and liberal-democratic Czech nationalist member of the Austrian *Reichsrat* (Parliament), who was head of the Realists Party. Masaryk was convinced that the Entente would win the war, and he recognized the political opportunity to be gained through alliance with the presumed victors. In the fall of 1914, while walking in the old streets of Prague with his close ally, Eduard Benes, Masaryk broached the issue of gaining Czech independence and the tactics needed to achieve it. In a few weeks, he left Austria-Hungary for the West. In a few months, Benes followed him, and the two men began energetic organizational and propaganda activity. In April 1915, in a memorandum to the British and French governments, Masaryk argued for the establishment of an independent Czechoslovakia. In September, Masaryk and Benes founded the Czech Foreign Committee, which gained broad recognition from various Czech immigrant groups in the West. In February 1916, the committee was reorganized as the Czechoslovak National Council with the participation of Milán Štefánik, a Slovak émigré.

Masaryk recognized that a Czech army that could join the Entente to defeat the Central Powers would strengthen the bargaining position of the council. The opportunity to create a military organization was provided when Czech soldiers, including two entire regiments, deserted during the massive Russian offensive. In early 1915, Masaryk set up a Czech division, the *Dynazina*, which was placed under the operational command of the Russian army. In May 1917, Masaryk went to Russia, where, in discussions with the provisional government, he agreed to organize a Czech legion to be recruited from Czech and Slovak prisoners of war. The new Czech forces were to fight with the Entente army. In August 1917, Benes

gained French authorization for this plan and the legion began expanding: in October, it numbered thirty thousand men and grew to roughly ninety thousand by the end of the war. A second Czech legion was organized in Italy. After the Bolshevik revolution, the Czech legion in Siberia fought against the Red Army, occupying Penza and Kazan, and assuming control of the strategically important Trans-Siberian railway. The unit's considerable service against the revolution—besides symbolizing the conflict between the class and national revolutions—significantly helped the Czechoslovak cause of independence. In the summer and early fall of 1918, the Entente powers recognized the Czechoslovak National Council as a government in exile. President Poincaré declared at the Versailles Peace Conference that "in Siberia, France and Italy, the Czechoslovaks have conquered their right to independence" (Masaryk 1927, 265).

Masaryk, Benes, and Štefánik also worked successfully together for a general recognition of the various Czech and Slovak immigrant organizations in the West. American Czech and Slovak organizations met in Cleveland as early as October 25, 1915, and approved the demand for "independence of the Czech lands and Slovakia" and for "the union in a confederation of the Czech and Slovak nations." Masaryk arrived in Pittsburgh, met with the leaders of these organizations on May 30, 1918, and signed an agreement that declared: "We approve of the political program which aims at the union of the Czechs and Slovaks in an independent state composed of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. Slovakia shall have her own administrative system, her own diet and her own courts. The Slovak language shall be the official language in the schools, in public offices and in public affairs generally" (Lettrich 1995, 288–90).

Beside the agreement with the Slovak immigrant leaders, Masaryk achieved another major diplomatic success with the Ruthenian emigrant organization. A Ruthenian National Council was formed by Ruthenian immigrants in the United States and declared its separation from Hungary at a July 1918 meeting in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Gregory Zharkovich, the president of the council, turned to President Wilson for support and was advised by the latter to join the Czechoslovak state. Although the Ruthenians were not related either ethnically or linguistically to the Czechs and Slovaks and no national movement to join them existed, nevertheless, on October 26, 1918, Zharkovich and Masaryk signed an agreement in Philadelphia to join the autonomous unit of Transcarpathia to the Czechoslovak state. Thus, the outlines of a new state were determined. But still missing was a spectacular endorsement, a revolutionary declaration at home of Czech independence. This soon followed.

The overly cautious, moderate national leadership in Prague was replaced by a militant group in the spring of 1918. Karel Kramář, the renowned leader of the Young Czech movement who had just been released from an Austrian prison, became the leader of the *Národní Výbor* (National Committee). Public discontent had become visible in January, when a series of strikes were organized. In July, all the parties joined a national council, and on October 14, a general strike took place.

After the announcement of the unconditional surrender of Austria-Hungary, the Czech National Council declared independence: "We have thrown off the chains of slavery. We have risen to independence. With our unbreakable will and with the sanction of the whole democratic world, we declare that we are standing here today as executors of a new state sovereignty, as citizens of a free Czechoslovak Republic" (Lettrich 1955, 288-89). Two days later, in the famous Martin Declaration, the Slovak National Council announced that "the Slovak nation is a part of the Czechoslovak nation, united in language and in the history of its culture" and declared that the Slovaks would join the new independent Czechoslovakia (*Declaration* 1955, 289-90). In Štara Ľubovňa, a Ruthenian national council was formed, and on November 8, 1918, it declared the separation of Ruthenia from Hungary. "The work abroad was decisive," stated Masaryk on the foundation of the Czechoslovak state, but, he added with an evident exaggeration, "this work was rendered possible by the general resistance of the people at home to Austria-Hungary, and by the revolution after Vienna had capitulated to President Wilson" (Masaryk 1927, 367).

A map of Czechoslovakia was ultimately designed in the back rooms at the Paris Peace Conference. Masaryk and Benes attained all their goals in a masterful fashion. Using an argument from history, they restored old medieval frontiers in the northwest, incorporating more than three million ethnic Germans and nearly one hundred thousand ethnic Poles in the Sudetenland and Silesia. In the southeast, they were no such historical precedents, and thus they defended ethnic-national arguments against Hungarian rule, thereby incorporating more than seven hundred thousand Hungarians into the new nation. With nearly 140,400 square kilometers and 13.6 million inhabitants, Czechoslovakia proudly embodied the Wilsonian principle of self-determination for the region, breaking a nearly four-hundred-year-old tradition of Habsburg rule in Czech lands and a millennium of Hungarian domination in Slovakia. In the meantime, the structure of the new nation denied the same prin-

ciple for the German, Hungarian, and Polish minorities, which represented nearly 30 percent of the population.

The roughly 6.5 million Czechs, more than 2.2 million Slovaks, and about 0.5 million Ruthenians in this common state had rather different images of their "marriage." Some believed firmly in "Czechoslovakism" and that the process of nation building in the twentieth century could create a united nation just as it had in the West a few centuries before. Most Czechs, however, thought that national homogenization should occur under their leadership within a centralized state. Even Masaryk, although a genuine democrat, held steadfastly to the vision that "Slovaks are Czechs despite the fact that they use their dialect as a literary language" (Kann and Zdenek 1984, 391). The majority of both the Slovak and Ruthenian political elite, however, desired autonomous status in a federal republic. Moreover, other national groups that were incorporated into the Czechoslovak state did not give up aspiring to rejoin their neighboring *Vaterland*. Multinational Czechoslovakia thus was extremely vulnerable to the burning national and minority issues.

Yet the founding fathers strongly believed that a prosperous, democratic, Western-type Czechoslovakia would cope with these initial difficulties. Although they rejected cantonization and federalization as alien to the envisioned Czechoslovak nation, they nevertheless established a democratic parliamentary system. The new constitution of February 1920 created a bicameral system consisting of a three-hundred-member parliament and a one-hundred-and-fifty-member senate elected according to a modified system of proportional representation which reserved a strong role for party leaders in deciding how seats were to be filled. Although the constitution was based on the British model, certain elements of the French and American systems were also incorporated. For example, the president was elected by a joint session of the two legislative houses (as in France) but enjoyed significant executive power (as in the United States). The post was designed for Thomáš Masaryk, who was unanimously elected president by the first Constituent National Assembly in November 1918 and then reelected by the first National Assembly in May 1920. The democratic political system guaranteed extensive liberties and human rights. The republic was a *Rechtsstaat*, a constitutional state that guaranteed freedom of press, speech, and assembly. Czechoslovakia was the only country in the region where even the Communist Party acquired full legality and parliamentary representation.

The national revolution attempted to satisfy democratically not only

political and ethnic needs but also basic social demands. Between 1919 and 1923, a powerful labor movement developed that caused strikes in over fifteen thousand companies and resulted in a loss of almost thirteen million working days. The general strike of December 10, 1920, developed into a bloody battle in three places and claimed the lives of thirteen people. The Czechoslovak government not only suppressed the violence that endangered the young republic, but also tried to satisfy the masses. Masaryk himself admitted that the capitalist social system was one-sided and, therefore, had to be eliminated. On the first anniversary of the founding of the republic, he warned that, in the process of socialization, "one must keep carefully in mind the special qualities of the individual and the nation," but he also recognized the need for nationalization. Karel Engliš, a distinguished economist and cabinet minister, stated in the fall of 1920, "We will socialize the country together with the socialists, and we do it gladly. The Russian bourgeoisie failed to understand this and was, therefore, swept away." Even the right-of-center nationalist Karel Kramář said, "Mankind is, indeed, moving toward socialization" (Kohel 1977, 52, 60).

Although "socialization" did not take place, the government introduced important welfare measures. During the first five years of its existence, the parliament enacted 157 bills, introducing the eight-hour workday, retirement pensions, paid holidays, and social security. First in mines and then in industrial firms, over thirty workers' councils were legalized; these councils were authorized to supervise the social welfare system, to hire and fire, to supervise company books, and to mediate in disputes between workers and management. At the end of 1922, an unemployment benefit scheme was introduced that paid 20 percent of the daily wage, an amount higher, at that time, than in England, Germany, or France. In 1925, this percentage was raised to two-thirds of the daily wage, half of which was contributed by the government. Under an extensive housing program, more new homes were built during the 1920s than in the course of the preceding forty years. The Czechoslovak national revolution thus established a social welfare democracy, the only one of its type in Central and Eastern Europe.

### The Making of Yugoslavia

In its earliest stage, the South Slavic national revolution created a common Serbo-Croat literary language and also nurtured the

"Yugo-slav" (South Slavic) or "Illyrian" idea of unifying the various Slavic peoples of the Balkans. Although King Michael's plan for a coordinated Balkan revolt and the establishment of a Yugoslav Kingdom in 1867, a year before his assassination, was closely linked with emerging Serbian nationalism and independence, *Jugoslavinstvo*, the Yugoslav idea, appeared more militantly among the Slavs of Austria-Hungary. In its first stage, this movement sought cooperation among Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, and other South Slavic people within Austria-Hungary. Anton Tomšič and Josip Jurčič's *Slovenski Narod* (Slovene nation) announced this goal in 1868 and a "Yugoslav Congress" was held in Ljubljana in 1870. The Yugoslav movement, however, developed primarily in the early twentieth century. As Ivo Lederer notes, after the Bosnian crisis, *Slovenski Jug* (Slovene Youth), *Mlada Bosna* (Young Bosnia), *Ujedinjenje ili Smrt* (Unification or Death), and several other south Slavic societies,

shared two points in common: hatred of Austria-Hungary and the vision of an eventually united Yugoslav state. . . . By 1911, spurred by pro-Yugoslav currents in Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, and particularly in Dalmatia, Biograd, with the blessing of St. Petersburg, set out to realize earlier Serbian dreams of a Balkan concert. The new alliance produced dramatic results, and the triumph of Serbian arms in 1912-13 lent credence to Serbia's mission as the Piedmont of the South Slavs. (Lederer 1969, 428)

Ironically, the push for Serbian leadership and the establishment of a Yugoslav state emerged in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia. Nikola Pašić, the charismatic Serbian nationalist leader and prime minister, was an advocate of Greater Serbia and supported the cause of liberating Serbs who lived outside the kingdom in places such as Bosnia. The Bosnian Serb national movement strove toward the same goal, a fact that motivated their extremists to assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who was advocating a "trialistic" reorganization of the Dual Monarchy. When Gavriilo Prinzip shot the archduke in Sarajevo, his act blocked those South Slavic national goals that demanded autonomy inside the Habsburg Empire.

The Yugoslav movement gained momentum in Austria-Hungary, where the traditional Croatian national movement, which had sought to gain autonomy in cooperation with Hungary, was challenged by the energetic work of Franjo Šupilo, a Dalmatian Croat. Šupilo initiated the Fiume Congress in 1905 and fostered the collaboration between Croats and Serbs within Austria-Hungary. When World War I broke



out, the Croatian "Yugoslavists" recognized the opportunity and left the Dual Monarchy for Allied territory. Šupilo, together with Ante Trumbić and Ivan Meštrović, established a Yugoslav Committee in London in 1915. It had three Slovene delegates as well. The committee called for the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and the foundation of an independent Yugoslav state. The Yugoslav movement was particularly strong in Slovenia, where whole military units deserted on the Russian front and the Austrian authorities sought to halt mass resistance by executing several hundred Slovenes for "political crimes." In contrast, in Croatia the demand was for autonomy rather than for an independent Yugoslavia. When the *Reichsrat* gathered in the spring of 1917, the South Slav delegates issued their May Declaration, which demanded the creation of an autonomous body of all South Slavs living in the Dual Monarchy.

The turning point was reached in the summer of 1917, when the Yugoslav Committee organized its Korfu meeting. Because Pašić and his government had been exiled to Korfu after the Bulgarian invasion and lost his powerful patron, tsarist Russia, Pašić yielded in his opposition to the creation of a Yugoslav state. An agreement was forged, and the Korfu Declaration, which demanded a united, unified, and independent Yugoslavia, was drawn up and ratified on July 20, 1917. Pašić's dream of a Great Serbia was replaced by a Serbian-led Yugoslavia, structured as a constitutional monarchy under the Serbian Karađorđević dynasty.

By 1918, the initial demand for autonomy was changed to one of full independence at home as well as abroad. In the summer, a Yugoslav Democratic Party was founded in Slovenia and large mass demonstrations in Ljubljana demanded an independent Yugoslav state. In Zagreb, a national council of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs was established, and on October 29, 1918, the *Sabor*, the Croatian parliament, declared the dissolution of the union with Hungary and the foundation of a "State of the Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs."<sup>27</sup> The provisional government of the South Slav peoples of Austria-Hungary announced the creation of the new state to the Entente on October 31. Negotiations began with Serbia on the formation of a federal state, but, in the difficult military situation, the council voted for a unitary state and invited Prince Alexander to become its regent. The Serbian army entered Zagreb on December 1, 1918. Meanwhile, Montenegro's assembly deposed King Nicholas and proclaimed a union with Serbia, which was ratified by both the Serbian *Skupština* (Parliament), and the Zagreb council. On December 1, 1918, Prince-Regent Alexander proclaimed the union of Ser-

bia with the independent "State of the Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs," and thus the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes" (later renamed as Yugoslavia) was created.

Unlike the Czechoslovak state, Yugoslavia was established six weeks before peace talks began in Paris. It was not created as a result of extensive diplomatic activity in the Allied countries, but was created as a fait accompli at home, based on the leadership of the independent, strong Serbian "Big Brother."<sup>28</sup> The talks at Versailles, however, produced the finishing touches to the new arrangement and settled the debates and previous violence over border questions with Italy, Romania, Austria, and Hungary. The Yugoslav demands were harshly opposed by Italy, whose government sought to actualize the provisions of the secret London Treaty, in which Dalmatia and Istria, along with the port city of Trieste, were promised to Italy in return for its support of the Allies. At last, Italy gained large areas in Istria and Dalmatia. Romania, in turn, expected to receive the entire Banat, an area that it had been promised by the 1916 secret Treaty of Bucharest. Instead, the region was divided between Romania and Hungary along ethnic lines. In the end, an ethnically, culturally, and religiously pluralistic Yugoslavia of nearly 249,000 square kilometers and almost 12 million inhabitants was established. The nearly 9 million Yugoslavs consisted of Serbs and Montenegrins (43 percent), Croats (23 percent), Slovenes (less than 9 percent), Bosnians (6 percent), and Macedonians (3 percent). In addition, roughly one-half million Germans, Hungarians, Albanians, and "others" lived in the country. Ethnicity and religion did not necessarily correlate, although the Serbs were mostly Greek Orthodox (3.6 million), the Croats and Slovenes were primarily Catholic (4.7 million), and the Bosnians and Albanians were Muslim (1.3 million). The presence of a minority Protestant group (0.3 million) made the ethnic-religious diversity even more complex and subject to stress. Although the majority's mother tongue was Serbo-Croat, the eastern regions used the Cyrillic alphabet, whereas the western regions used the Latin alphabet. No other country in Europe—except the Soviet Union, which had preserved the old multinational empire—possessed such a diverse population. Whether the new state would be constituted as a federal republic or as a unitary nation was not decided in 1918. Two major concepts were considered. A federalist structure was advocated by the Croats, especially by the Croatian Peasant Party of Stjepan Radić, and a centralized, unitary, extended Serbian-led Yugoslavia was envisioned by the Serbs, in alignment with Pašić's Radical Party and the prime minister. The elec-

tions in November 1920 for a constitutional assembly extended the franchise to all males over the age of twenty-one, except Germans and Hungarians. Although twenty-two parties competed, election results reflected a strict ethnic-religious division: the three leading Serbian parties gained nearly 44 percent, the Croatian parties nearly 20 percent, and the Bosnian Muslim Party 7 percent of the votes. Harsh political struggles occurred, and Radić's Croatian Peasant Party sought to block the road to centralism; in spring 1919, the Croatian nationalist leader had collected enough signatures for an appeal to the Allied powers to reestablish Croatian independence, and he pursued this anti-centralist course after the election. In response, Pašić prepared a draft for a centralist constitution and submitted it to the Constitutional Assembly on January 1, 1921. The draft proposed the destruction of the historical-national-minority framework by subordinating it to the framework of a centralized state. On this basis, an April 1922 administrative law introduced thirty-three *oblasti* (administrative territorial units), each with a maximum population of eight hundred thousand people. The tiny units were intended to prevent grouping along national lines. The Serbs thus sought to destroy the historic-ethnic framework that had promoted separatism and to foster the emergence of a Yugoslav nation. Another significant guarantee of centralism was provided by the strong position of the Serbian king, who gained the rights to control the army and to choose the prime minister of the new constitutional monarchy. Pašić and the Karadjordjević king—like Thomas Masaryk and Eduard Benes in Czechoslovakia—believed firmly in the possibility of creating a Yugoslav nation from the various ethnic-religious groups. They thought that success was only a question of time and of the thorough suppression of the opposition.

Despite this attitude, the constitutional monarchy was built on democratic principles. The unicameral parliament (*Skupština*) was based on proportional representation. All religions and human rights were recognized, and the two alphabets gained equal official status. Local autonomy was granted. Nonetheless, the Act of August 1921 provided a legal basis for harsh repressions against persons, parties, and movements that were considered by state authorities to endanger "security and order." This law quickly became an instrument that was used against the opposition.

The Serb proposal to create a unified Yugoslav nation provoked a sharp Croatian response: Radić and 161 Croatian deputies walked out

of the Constitutional Assembly, which, in their absence, easily passed the centrist "Vidovdan Constitution" on June 28, 1921. Its Article 126 created an effective legal guarantee against any changes by requiring a 60 percent majority for constitutional amendments. In response, Croat nationalists, who did not accept the concept of a Yugoslav nation and refused to amalgamate to it, began their crusade to build a Croatian nation. A permanent and dramatic Serbo-Croat conflict emerged, which undermined the peaceful and democratic development of Yugoslavia.

### Making a Great Romania

After the unification of the so-called Romanian Principalities in 1861 and the foundation of the Romanian Kingdom in 1866, millions of Romanians still lived outside the country in Habsburg-ruled Bukovina, in Russian-dominated Bessarabia, and, most of all, in Hungarian-ruled Transylvania. Transylvanian Romanians, who emerged in the late eighteenth century as the main carriers of Romanian national consciousness, initiated the first cultural-linguistic stage of the Romanian national movement, and developed the romantic Daco-Roman historical concept and supporting political arguments, becoming the prime movers of the late-nineteenth-century national mass movement. But they did not seek, at this stage, to join the Romanian Kingdom. The tradition of the famous *Supplex libellus Valachorum* of 1791—the petition that demanded that the Transylvanian diet recognize Romanians as a fourth nation of Transylvania, equal to the Hungarians, Saxons, and Szeklers, with proportional representation in the administration—remained alive throughout the nineteenth century. During the on-going struggle for recognition, Romanians focused on establishing within Transylvania an equal status for Romanian ethnic groups (55 percent of the population of Transylvania in 1910), the Romanian language, and the Orthodox Church. When the first Romanian political party, the National Party, was founded in 1881, it called only for the restoration of Transylvanian autonomy, which had been abandoned in 1865 when the Transylvanian Diet approved the union with Hungary. The Romanian government in Bucharest also did not seek unification with the Transylvanian Romanians. In Bukovina, both the Romanian National Party—which controlled the province's diet—and the Romanian society at large