Introduction

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Efforts to integrate Central and Eastern Europe have precedents as early as the 14th and 15th centuries. One such precedent is the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was established in 1385 and dominated the north-eastern half of the region for more than four centuries. In the middle of the 15th century, the Czech king George of Poděbrady (1420–1471) outlined a plan for a pan-European confederation, with the western half 'coordinated' by the French and the eastern half by the Czech ruling house. '*The sometimes peaceful, sometimes very combative need to organize the whole of Central and Eastern Europe or a part of it into a larger unit or units crossing linguistic and ethnic boundaries was constantly present in the political thinking of the region from then on*'.[1]

The Napoleonic Wars brought about fundamental economic, political, and social changes throughout Europe. The main ideological drivers of such changes from the beginning of the 19th century onward were the ideas of liberalism and nationalism. These were soon joined by conservatism and socialism, which sought to deal with the social consequences of economic processes. Although Europe was often at war, there was also always a strong desire for peace. The ideas of European or regional integration that emerged during the period under discussion intended to serve the cause of peace. Their importance was heightened by the two World Wars that occurred in the 19th century. Although ideas to unite the peoples of Europe were born long before, integration plans began to emerge in the first half of the 19th century not only in theory but also in practice.

This book is a continuation of the volume entitled *The Development of European and Regional Integration Theories in Central European Countries*,[2] which presents theories about European and regional integration formulated in ten Central European countries: Austria, Hungary, Romania, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, and Ukraine.

The integration concepts described therein can be separated into four larger time intervals: (1) from the Napoleonic Wars to the end of the First World War, (2)

1 Romsics, 1997, p. 7.
2 Gedeon and Halász, 2022.

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from the end of the First World War to the end of the Second World War, (3) the communist regimes between 1948 and 1989, and finally (4) from the collapse of communist dictatorships until the enlargement of the European Union.

In addition to the plans developed in the countries included in the previous volume, German and French plans that were applied to the Central European states will be presented in this book. German designs had already appeared in the 19th century. The basis of these ideas was the idea of 'Mitteleuropa', which referred to the creation of an economic area under German leadership. The French plans were born after the First World War and intended to boost the economy of the states within the region.

The previous volume clarified the ways in which various ideas can be linked to specific persons. This volume presents the lives and work of the thinkers who developed plans for European integration in order to give the ideas a 'face', as they were often influenced by the life paths of their developers. Among the theoreticians, we find politicians, economists, priests, officials, and writers who approached the question of integration from the perspectives of their professions. In addition, the thinkers' ideas were influenced by their nationalities and the historical and political situations of their countries.

Defining the borders of Central and Eastern Europe is not an easy task. The various ideas draw the outline of Central Europe not only considering the geographical location of each country, but also their cultural and historical characteristics. Throughout the course of history, contemporary politics have also played a role in the definition of the area, and theories about the area have often served political purposes.[3]

As we will see, the individual integration concepts assigned larger and smaller areas to the region depending on historical traditions, geopolitical and economic interests, as well as on the location of ethnic groups. However, it was undisputed that the Habsburg Empire was located at the centre of Central Europe, which united several small nations.

As smaller groups of people living in the grip of the great powers realised that they could not survive in isolation, ideas emerged for two main courses of cooperation. One aimed at reforming the Habsburg Empire while remaining within it, and the other saw the solution as cooperation among small states that would become independent after the disintegration of the Empire.[4] National movements also occurred during this era.

In this first period, thinkers rose to the fore who tried to define their nation's development by embedding it in integration plans. Here, we can primarily think of Poland, which was divided several times by the great powers, and whose territorial unification such powers aimed to achieve through various federal ideas. Their best-known representative was Prince Adam Cartorisky (1770–1861). Another theorist of

3 Mező, 2001, p. 81.
4 Segesváry, 2004, p. 4.

the period was Walerian Krasiński (1795–1855), who conveyed the political suggestions of Prince Adam Czartoryski's Hotel Lambert to the Berlin court regarding the Prussian policy towards Poles in the Prussian partition.

Ukraine was also a participant in some of the plans for a Polish federation. However, the goal in Ukraine in this period was uniting the nation by removing Ukrainians from the humiliating condition of living on the Russian outskirts and in the Polish kresy and creating their own state. Here, Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–1895) was a prominent ideologist of Ukrainian autonomy who worked on the development of a state system based on federalist principles.

Ideas formulated on an ethnic basis played a major role in national movements during this period. The 19th century saw the strengthening of the Pan-Slavic movement, the aim of which was to create cultural, political, and social unity among Slavic peoples. One of the movement's most prominent representatives, the Czech František Palacký (1798–1876), spoke at the First Pan-Slavic Conference held in Prague in 1848. Palacký aimed to implement the federal transformation of the Austrian monarchy, which would also have ensured the independence of the peoples of the Danube.

The main representative of Pan-Slavism in Poland was Walerian Krasiński, who gave the 'Pan-Slavic' idea a political character. He understood 'Pan-Slavism' as the unification of the Slavic nations into a supranational federation under the aegis of Russia.

During these years, the special relationship between Slovaks and Czechs was called into question regarding whether Slovaks should be a separate nation or part of the united Czechoslovak nation. The pan-Slavic poet Ján Kollár (1793–1852) was still advocating the latter alternative, but the younger Romantic generation, including Ján Palárik (1822–1870), was already thinking in terms of an independent Slovak nation.

The idea of Pan-Slavism remained alive in the intellectual life of many Slavic nations in Europe and generated several political concepts including Illyrianism, Yugoslavism, and Austro-Slavism. Illyrianism was the first to formulate the linguistic and ancestral kinship of the Southern Sava peoples using the concept of the Illyrian people, which can be considered synonymous with the Southern Sava peoples. Ljudevit Gaj (1809–1872), a Croatian linguist, politician, journalist, and writer, understood Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as Illyrian. Although there were several versions of Yugoslavism, it is essentially the idea of the unification of the South Slavic peoples.[5] Ideas proposing to reform the state structure of the Habsburg Empire, advocating the equality of Slavs, and intending to bring the empire under Slavic control, are collectively called Austro-Slavism.[6]

In the southern part of Central Europe, the formation of the framework of the Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian nations came together with the possibilities of

5 A. Sajti, 1987, p. 3.
6 Romsics, 1998, p. 3. See more in Chapter 4.

uniting with other nations. In Croatia, Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815–1905), as a supporter of Austro-Slavism, advocated for the federal transformation of the Monarchy. Milan Šufflay (1879–1931), as a supporter of Croatian-Hungarian unionism, wanted to ensure that the two states remained together even after the collapse of the Monarchy.

The Serbian Ilija Garašanin (1812–1874) was part of the generation that fought to increase the autonomy of the vasal Serbian principality. He was the creator of the first national programme, which was centred on the unification of all Serbs. However, Garašanin did not accept the argument that Serbia should lead a Yugoslav policy in its own interest. Instead, he was more focused on reinstalling the Serbian medieval state, an idea that was popular among the Serbian elite at the time. In Slovenia, Valentin Vodnik (1758–1819) was one of the founders of the Slovenian national movement.

On the part of Romania, one of the most decisive figures of the entire European integration, Aurel C. Popovici (1863–1919), can be singled out in this era for having proposed the reorganisation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire based on the principle of nationality. In his opinion, nationality seemed to be the only criterion capable of organising state formations at the time, unlike other desired goals such as ensuring peace and the freedom of economic exchange. In this way, he mainly hoped to strengthen the Romanian nation.

The situation of Hungary, which was organically connected to the Habsburg Empire, was also called into questioned during this period. The number of people belonging to other nationalities within the Empire already exceeded that of Hungarians. The political thinking of the era was therefore determined by the fear of territorial fragmentation. Most politicians proposed preserving unity by implementing some kind of integration plan. Miklós Wesselényi's (1796–1850) federal plan and Lajos Kossuth's (1802–1894) plan for the Danube Union can be highlighted in this period.

In Germany in the 19th century, Friedrich List (1789–1846) can be considered the developer of the first 'Mitteleuropa' plan. He expressed his doubts about the Keynesian economic policy and wanted to implement the union of Central European states primarily for economic reasons.

In the second period, the victorious Entente powers formed new state units based on various interests and considerations. In some places, the national principle came to the fore, while in others, it historical or even economic and transport aspects. After World War I, the first global international organisation – the League of Nations – was formed, and almost all European states were members for some time. Later, Germany's annexation of Austria, followed by its break-up of Czechoslovakia and finally its invasion of Poland, prompted Central and Eastern European elites to seriously reassess their policy of seeking alliances.

In this uncertain era, ideas about the unification of nation-states continued to grow. Among these, the pan-European movement started to implement the most comprehensive plan.

The movement's leader was Richard Nikolas Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894–1972), who is regarded as the most prominent European visionary of the interwar period. To preserve peace on the continent, he aspired to unite all states on the European continent west of the U.S.S.R. in a confederation called 'Paneurope' with the aim of safeguarding peace, equality, and a customary union.[7]

In some states, members of the movement formed separate pan-European groups. In Austria, Ignaz Seipel (1876–1932) held the presidency for the Austrian branch of the Pan-European movement. In countries with multilingual populations, the group was divided into subgroups. Czechoslovakia, for example, comprised Czech, Hungarian, and German groups. On the Czech side, Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš (1884–1948) was an enthusiastic supporter of the movement.[8]

The Slovak Milan Hodža (1878–1944) maintained good relations with Richard Nicolas Coudenhove-Kalergie, who became Czechoslovakia's representative on the Pan-European Commission, which organised the Fifth Pan-European Congress in New York. He argued for the federal transformation of Central Europe to counter German and Soviet influence.

A pan-European group also operated in Poland. However, a disagreement arose between the group and Coudenhove-Kalergi in 1927 when the Earl advised the Poles to resign Danzig to the Germans; as compensation, they would receive some parts of Lithuania. After this incident, the Polish section's activity decreased.[9]

Alongside the pan-European movement was the regional idea of Jagiellonianism. The Jagiellonian concept formed the basis of federal plans that relied on the tradition of Jagiellonian power in Poland, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in the 15th and 16th centuries. These ideas idealised the leadership and power of the old Rzeczpospolita. Witold Kamieniecki (1883–1964) understood Jagellonism as an integration system that would have connected the area between the Baltic Sea and the Carpathians to Poland. Based on this idea, Stefan Gużkowski (1884–1959) envisioned a federation that joined Austria, Bulgaria, and Estonia in addition to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary. According to him, the federation would have been based on the principle of '*coperare sine violantia*' in opposition to the slogan of '*divide et impera*.'[10]

In addition to Jagellonism, the Intermarium concept was raised in Poland. 'Intermarium' ('Międzymorze') is a doctrine of the Polish foreign policy of the interwar period that refers to the tradition of the multicultural and multinational Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The 'Intermarium' doctrine assumed the creation of a voluntary and equal political, economic, and military alliance among Central and Eastern European countries located in the area between the Adriatic, Baltic,

7 See more: Ziegerhofer, 2022, p. 33.
8 Ligeti, 1926, p. 14.
9 Borodziej, Brzostek and Górny, 2005, pp. 95–96.
10 Ibid. pp. 96–97.

and Black Seas (the so-called 'ABC Seas'). Stefan Gużkowski linked the 'Jagiellonian idea' with the concept of 'Intermarium'.

The young Ukrainian Lysiak-Rudnytsky's (1919–1984) goal was a free Ukraine and to make Ukraine a full-fledged member of the European community. Another advocate of the independence of the Ukrainian people was the Czech Jaromír Nečas (1888–1945). He was a supporter of the League of Nations and criticised Coudenhove-Kalergi's pan-European plan because it aimed to exclude Great Britain and the Soviet Union from Europe.

After the First World War, the leading powers of the Entente believed that in the event of the collapse of the Monarchy, successor states should be created with the largest sizes possible in order to more easily resist the pressure of Germany, which was growing stronger over time. Therefore, they convinced the Serbs of the need to create Yugoslavia, which would have united them with Croats and Slovenes. Thus, on 1 December 1918, in Belgrade, Serbian Prince Regent Sándor Karađorđević (1888–1934) announced the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.[11] However, due to the internal political crisis caused by the Serbian predominance, on 6 January 1929, the king, Alexander I, introduced a royal dictatorship, changing the country's name to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which survived even after his death in 1934, along with the national strife that had existed until then. During the Second World War in Yugoslavia, in addition to their struggle against the occupiers, the nations that made up the state fought with each other.[12]

According to Croatian Vinko Krišković (1862–1951), the destruction of the Monarchy was a political failure for Europe, as was the way in which Central Europe had become a victim of neighbouring superpowers. As a supporter of Croatian-Hungarian Unionism, Milan Šufflay (1879–1931) criticised Yugoslavism. During this period, Dimitrije Mitrinović (1887–1953) was the propagator of Yugoslavism in Serbia. He was nevertheless deeply disappointed with the mode of unification and the national narrow-mindedness that was manifested during the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Slobodan Jovanović was also dissatisfied with the unification, considering that Serbian national strengthening was important.

In Romania, Constantin Isopescu-Grecul's (1871–1938) political activism during the First World War sought to achieve a federal transformation of and alliance with the Habsburg Empire. After the war in the summer and autumn of 1919, Isopescu-Grecul firmly advocated for the establishment of good Romanian-Hungarian relations, proposing that 'the peoples of the Lower and Middle Danube form an economic whole' to establish a Romanian-Hungarian Federation. Isopescu-Grecul advocated for 'a customs union that could be achieved' between the two countries, after which an alliance of the closest nature possible could be established.

11 Sokcsevits, 2018, p. 82.
12 See more: Major, 2005.

The issue of nationality remained a central problem in Hungary during this period as well. Taking this into account, Oszkár Jászi (1875–1957) developed a plan for the United States of the Danube.

In the period between the two World Wars, ideas about economic cooperation were given greater emphasis. In Germany, Friedrich Naumann (1860–1919) further developed the Mitteleuropa plan at the beginning of the First World War, the central element of which would have been an alliance between Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Due to the formulation of Germany's leading role, this plan caused a great response at the political level throughout Europe.

France gained leading influence in the Central European region in the period between the two wars. France's goal was to permanently weaken the continental German hegemony and to suppress German influence in the region.[13] The Briand Plan of 1930 and the Plan Constructif of 1931 followed by the Tardieu-Plan in 1932 were established to solve the economic difficulties that arose in the 1930s, which included the ideas of the Hungarian Elemér Hantos (1881–1942). Further, Gusztáv Gratz (1875–1946) connected the economic plan with Hungary's political rapprochement with its neighbours.

Otto Habsburg (1912–2011), who emigrated to the US after the Anschluss, proposed in 1942 that the states of the Danube region form a federation under the name United States of the Danube Region.

After World War II, the idea of uniting states to preserve peace began to be realised. At the first congresses for integrating Europe, very little was said about the participation of the states under the influence of the Soviet Union. In these states, the idea of a Central European common identity and regional solidarity was strongly present in the intellectual opposition groups of rights defenders that had been forming since the 1970s. This was particularly true of the Czechoslovak, Polish, and Hungarian democratic opposition circles.

Thus, for example, the Czech Vaclav Havel (1936–2011) demanded that communist states respect human rights and freedoms. In Serbia, according to Borislav Pekić, who also served a prison sentence, democracy reconciles the interests of citizens within the nation, and would integrate those of the European peoples. In the 1970s, the Croatian Bonifacije Perović (1900–1979) was convinced that the national idea would win against Soviet communism, and that the location of this struggle would be Central Europe.

According to the Slovenian Edvard Kocbek (1904–1981), due to its ethnic and cultural diversity, Central Europe became the sphere of various imperialisms and a constant focus of international tensions and conflicts. The Slovenian France Bučar (1923–2015) qualified the emergence of European integration from an economic point of view, proposing that the long-term survival of Europe depends on whether it can maintain its nations as separate entities. According to the Croatian Ivo Lendić (1900–1982), the reconstruction of Yugoslavia after the Second World War

13 Domonkos, 2015, p. 2.

was purely due to British interest without considering the historical and cultural context.

According to the Austrian Cardinal Franz König (1905–2004), the realisation of a united Europe would have been a guarantee of peace. According to him, Austria – due to its central location – was responsible for its eastern neighbours.

After the collapse of the communist regimes, democratic elites took the lead in many states in the region, either alone or in partnership with transforming post-communist elites. Even before the final collapse of the Soviet Union (1991), the region began to reposition itself in foreign and geopolitical terms. The idea of a 'return to Europe' played an important role in this process.

On 24 August 1991, Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Yugoslav member republics also declared their independence one after the other, which led to a civil war and could not prevent the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

Presently, the countries under discussion are member states of the European Union, with the exception of Serbia and Ukraine. However, there are also closer groups of regional cooperation within the Union, such as the Visegrad Group and the Three Seas Initiative.

In April 1990, Vaclav Havel – who became the first president of Czechoslovakia and then the president of the Czech Republic in 1993 – initiated a meeting of representatives of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland in Bratislava, which became the nucleus of the Visegrád Troika (after the division of Czechoslovakia, the Visegrád Four). The Austrians Erhard Busek (1941–2022) and Emil Brix (1956–) stated in 2018 that they firmly believe that regardless of all of its problems, the future of Europe will be determined within the area designated as Central Europe and politically organised within the framework of the Visegrád Group (V 4). Central Europe is and should continue to be a project of peace. The Visegrád Group is an important means of ensuring regional collaboration and the enforcement of common interests within the European Union.

The current volume, like the previous volume, maintains divisions by country, within which the thinkers addressing European integration and their plans for the given state are presented in chronological order. So many life paths and plans – which often intersected – were dedicated to the sake of the peace and prosperity of Europe. Many of these great theorists can still be looked to as role models today.

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