

# A HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

DEBRECEN, 2024

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Edited by  
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## PREFACE

The conduct of official affairs between states, i.e., diplomacy in the broad sense, and international relations in the broad sense differ in several respects. From a historical point of view, European diplomacy and its practice originated in fifteenth-century Italy, when the rulers of the various city-states (Venice, Florence, Rome, Parma) opened permanent embassies in one another's courts. After the Thirty Years' War, the system of diplomatic missions became widespread throughout Europe, as did diplomatic reports, the official language of which was French for a long time (replaced by English after 1945). The history of diplomacy in this sense is the history of the formal, semi-formal, and informal relations among governments, with foreign policy as its main practical domain.

The history of international relations does not have such a long historical tradition. Jeremy Bentham, the English utilitarian philosopher, coined the word international in 1789, the year of the French Revolution. For a period of roughly one hundred years from the turn of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth, international relations meant, in addition to diplomacy, the conduct of international trade and finance, an activity that was the privilege of a very narrow elite. However, the information revolution since the beginning of the twentieth century has changed the nature of international relations. A wider range of people began to take an interest in foreign policy and diplomacy, and the (often distorted) 'images' of different nations of the world were formed, images which governments sought to manipulate to further their own interests, although in part as a consequence of this, these governments were increasingly unable to disassociate their policies from public opinion. As René Rémond pointed out in his two-volume work (*L'États Unis devant l'opinion française, 1815–1852 – The United States in the View of French Public Opinion, 1815–1852*), published in French in 1962 and still considered a methodological cornerstone in the history of international relations, the study, historical analysis, and practice of international relations became multilayered, diverse, and complex.

The Institute of History at the University of Debrecen (the authors of the volume) has consciously sought to present the history of international relations from a historical perspective and on the broadest possible spectrum, covering the turbulent centuries of international relations. Therefore, in addition to classical analyses of the history of diplomacy, attention has been paid to the theoretical foundations of the discipline, its ideological and institutional aspects, and the various foreign policy concepts. Moreover, the inclusion of economic, social, and military history aspects was inevitable, as insights from these fields have always been closely linked

to the development and understanding of the history of international relations.

The History of International Relations has been part of the educational programme of the Institute of History at the University of Debrecen for more than a decade and is included in the BA and MA specialisations in the bachelor's and master's degree programmes. The History of International Relations subprogramme of the Doctoral School of History and Ethnography is based on this. The next step in international relations education is the BA in International Studies, launched at the University of Debrecen in September 2020, which was implemented through the cooperation of three faculties, the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, and the Faculty of Economics. The aim of the Bachelor of International Studies is to train professionals who can navigate the world of international relations, are able to represent national and regional interests, and are sensitive to global issues. Theoretical and practical background and historical perspectives on diplomacy and foreign policy are an integral part of the training of international experts, for which this volume provides useful guidance.

The authors of the academic textbook and the lecturers on the subject hope to provide students and the wider reading public with a comprehensive and innovative overview of the history of international relations in order to further a more nuanced understanding of the ever-changing world of international affairs, diplomacy, and foreign policy.

We are grateful for our colleagues for all their help and efforts in the production of this volume: Melinda Jakab, Ádám Novák, Sándor Ónadi, Csenge Tímár, and Ábel Kónya.

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1.

**THE SYSTEM OF INTER-STATE AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS AND THE BASICS OF DIPLOMACY**



## Diplomacy – Foreign Policy – International Relations (*Katalin Schrek*)

The nature of inter-state relations has changed from one historical period to another, yet there are constant and reoccurring concepts that accompany the communicational forms between actors of the international order. Diplomacy, foreign policy, international relations, envoys, ambassadors, consulates, or embassies are commonly used terms in everyday life, which one tends to confuse or use interchangeably, as synonyms. This is particularly true of the triad of diplomacy – foreign policy – international relations. However, for students and researchers studying the system of inter-state relations, it is essential to define the practical and semantic meanings clearly and to know the actual mechanism of the diplomacy – foreign policy – international relations system. Therefore, in this chapter, an attempt is made to demarcate the individual levels of inter-state relations and to clarify the definitions associated with them and laying down the foundations necessary for the mastery of the subject.

Let us start with diplomacy, which in itself has many different meanings. *“The conduct of relations between sovereign states through the medium of officials based at home or abroad [...] Diplomacy is therefore the principal means by which states communicate with each other, enabling them to have regular and complex relations.”*<sup>1</sup> The criteria of the conduct of diplomacy is fulfilled by the peaceful settlement of particular affairs and problems and, therefore, the aim of diplomacy is to maintain peaceful relations.<sup>2</sup> According to another viewpoint: *“The use of tact in dealing with people. [...] a skill which is hugely important in the conduct of diplomacy [...]”*<sup>3</sup> while clearly including the institution or system of institutions themselves and the human resources, which are responsible for the conduct of diplomatic acts and the management of inter-state relations. In this context, the Head of State, the Head of Government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the officials and officers of the diplomatic service are all present in shaping the diplomatic processes. Diplomacy is therefore a set of instruments through which the external action of the state takes form.<sup>4</sup> In practical terms, it is equivalent to contact between governments and it is a basic condition for the implementation of foreign policy, however, it is not the same as either foreign policy or international relations.<sup>5</sup>

In comparison, **foreign policy** refers to the totality of all the external activities of the state, which can be interpreted broadly. In addition to the political sphere, the economic sphere can also be included, since governments, in both the

classical and modern era, have placed (and continuously place) great emphasis on establishing trading partnerships, terms of trade, export-import orientation and cooperation with other states. As the process is largely controlled at a government level, all outward and cross-border activities are part of official foreign policy. At this point, the question of whether foreign policy in itself can be identified with international policy can be raised. In the theoretical interpretation of inter-state relations, it is essential to distinguish between the two. The essence of all this is that foreign policy refers to the relations and interactions of a particular state with other countries. On the other hand, the interpretation of international politics does not focus solely on the perspective of a state but encompasses the whole of the state's relations and the bidirectional interactions with the concerned states.<sup>6</sup>

The broadest and most comprehensive concept is **international relations**, which, in addition to the official external activities of governments, encompasses all relations outside the realm of state policy.<sup>7</sup> This includes economic, cultural and scientific relations, as well as the world of sport and the activities of civil society organisations and/or non-governmental organisations (NGOs and INGOs). Therefore, it is clear to us that the constellation of these three concepts – diplomacy – foreign policy – international relations – creates a kind of upward and widening structure that ranges from diplomatic relations, through extensive and generally conceptualised state foreign policy to multi-stakeholder and multi-factor international relations. The latter go hand in hand with the phenomenon of the pluralisation of actors, i.e. the widening circle of actors involved in international processes. Today, the term transnational relations is also widely used to cover **transnational linkages** and can be used to describe all activities that are not under the control of official state and foreign policy bodies.<sup>8</sup>

Following the clarifications, guidance on the use of certain terms must also be provided. This is essential due to the numerous examples in the national and international literature where the above-mentioned definitions are used indistinguishably and as synonyms. The most prominent of these is the term 'international relations', which is a distinctly twentieth century term, but which is mostly used retrospectively in historical and political studies. Although it is regularly used in relation to the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries (we are no exception in this respect), it should not be forgotten that it does not have the same meaning concerning the modern era as it has concerning the twentieth century, and especially the era after the end of the Cold War.

The constantly changing factors of the present influence the interpretative framework of inter-state relations. In the last decades, new concepts have been

introduced with the changes of power constellations: coercive diplomacy, linkage-policy or even the post-Westphalian perspective, which put the triad of diplomacy – foreign policy – international relations into a new perspective.

The first significant change in the practice of politics is the blurring of the distinction between diplomacy and war, as many transitions can occur between them, during which one can no longer refer to peaceful relations or even war. This also resulted in the change of the relationship between diplomacy and war by introducing a new alternative: **coercive politics**.<sup>9</sup> The method already experienced in the bipolar world after the Second World War might be even more relevant today, if one just thinks of the relationship between the United States and the Middle East, but of course, many other examples could be mentioned. Coercive behaviour as we understand it today has a historical antecedent, embodied in the ultimatum of the classical diplomatic era. The essential difference, however, is that the formulation and sending of the ultimatum was indeed the last (ultima) resort from a diplomatic point of view, and the response to it was the practical decision between maintaining peace or entering into a state of war.<sup>10</sup> The policy of coercion that emerged after 1945 differs in many respects, as it can be of political, military or economic nature<sup>11</sup> in its orientation and its outcome is by no means as clear and straightforward as that outlined in the ultimatum. The use of coercive policies is not only occasional but can also form a permanent part of a country's regional policy.

A very different perspective is the linkage policy, which is based on the principle, in addition to being interest-oriented, that in line with the foreign policy, but free from previous constraints, progress should be made on certain issues, matters and in relations with countries, thus guaranteeing new opportunities in other areas along the lines of a widened foreign policy margin. The origins of this policy date back to the 1970s, when Richard Nixon encouraged the Soviet Union to soften its position in the disarmament negotiations by opening up to China.<sup>12</sup>

The globalisation approach aims to address the all-embracing nature of external relations, which is primarily of economic importance, but also has a strong impact on international politics, which poses a new challenge for nation states. This is when the so-called post-Westphalian approach comes in, which basically refers to the act that in certain cases the state in question has to go beyond its own nation-state framework, for example along the economic and financial cooperation with non-state partners, or in the case of socio-cultural changes and transformations that have a completely different impact. Therefore, one can no longer talk about traditional political frameworks, but rather about post-national contexts.<sup>13</sup>

*Ambassadors – Embassies – Consular Service*

A well-organised and efficiently operating institutional background is essential for the functioning of the diplomatic service. Ambassadorial and diplomatic representation has existed in different forms from state to state and even nation to nation since antiquity, but permanent diplomatic representation – although there were examples in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – and regulated forms of relations between states became widespread only after the Peace of Westphalia (after 1648). This is when permanent residences were established. In the past, occasional, ad hoc ambassadors represented the sending state and there were few permanent embassies. There have been many changes in the **sending of envoys**, the representation, collection and transmission of information and in diplomatic practice itself, from one historical period to another (see later in chapters on the specific features of Roman, Byzantine or Italian diplomacy). Nevertheless, the general rules, such as the letter of introduction, written instructions, the payment of travel expenses by the state or even the observance of the principle of diplomatic immunity, show continuity from antiquity to the modern era. The real turn towards modernity came in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when all the great and middle powers had created separate ministries for their relations with other countries and foreign ministries with their own (well-trained) staff.

Behind the official foreign policy coordinated at government level was an extensively constructed infrastructure, and the foreign ministries that emerged in the modern era were adjusted to carry out increasingly regulated and thematic activities. The head of the institution is the foreign minister (the name may vary in different countries) who, in consultation with the government and, where appropriate, parliament (e.g. Britain) or the monarch (e.g. Russian Empire), sets the direction of the policy and defines its main components along with the economic, political, cultural and military aspects. The foreign minister is responsible for inter-state relations and is assisted by officials and diplomats with a wide range of tasks. The specialisation within foreign ministries emerged during the nineteenth century, with the creation of departments, divisions and subdivisions dedicated to specific areas, regions, countries or even functions. For example, in the British ministry's practice, there were special branches, in Russia there were separate divisions for the east and the west (primarily European), and the foreign affairs management of the Viennese cabinet and other courts were similarly differentiated. The background work carried out by the various departments or branches and the intelligence gathering activities of those on active missions abroad help create the overall picture necessary for a multi-faceted assessment of the situation by the foreign policy leadership.



Alongside the institutional system of foreign ministries in the home country, the institutional network built up abroad was just as important. The system of legations, embassies and consulates constituted the official foreign representation. Here too, however, it is important to clarify the conceptual differences. Embassies were set up in the capitals of the major states, while legations were the representations of small and medium-sized powers. The title of **ambassador/minister** changed accordingly. There were diplomats who were sent to a country with a special mandate to carry out a specific task (e.g. to conclude an association agreement, to mediate in a conflict, etc.). They were usually called minister plenipotentiary, or agent or temporary agent. The envoys were delegated by the government of the sending country or, in earlier centuries, by its ruler, and in all cases, the choice of the person had to be approved by the host country. **Hugo Grotius** argued in his famous work (*De iure belli ac pacis* – On the Law of Peace and War) that international law does not in itself oblige a state to receive foreign envoys, but that the reason for refusal must be made clear. Of course, many factors may have played a role in the justification of such a decision.<sup>14</sup> In the modern diplomatic period, there were also cases in which the foreign ministry of the host country objected to the person of the appointed envoy. In such cases, feedback was sent to the partner state, suggesting that the nominee's appointment be withdrawn and requesting the appointment of a new person. Usually, the rejection of an envoy was due to a political issue or a problematic past record. If the **agrément** was approved, the envoy could take up his/her post.<sup>15</sup> In cases where the two parties could not reach an agreement, the sending state was sometimes left without official representation in a country for a longer or shorter period. A special staff of first and second secretaries assisted the appointed diplomats. In addition to carrying out the administrative tasks of the day, they helped draft and copy letters, reports, notes and memoranda and worked under the envoys' supervision.

On the other hand, **consulates** and **consular services** showed a completely different aspect of foreign representation. The idea behind the establishment of consulates was to provide citizens of the sending country with direct assistance and support from the government of the home country in any situation, whether it was a visa or passport problem or a trade or economic issue, through consulates in the host country. In these cases, citizens themselves could usually seek legal assistance. The consulate was therefore primarily a public service, responding to the needs of the civilian population, and in this sense it was not a political representation. However, the consuls played an important role in providing information, assessing and understanding local conditions, and, like the ambassadors, they had a wide network of contacts and the reports they sent home to the Foreign Ministry contained extremely valuable data. Today, in addition to providing services to

citizens, consulates also perform important **cultural diplomacy functions**, as do embassies.

As a result, the development and establishment of professional diplomat training became a crucial issue. In the Habsburg Empire, Chancellor Kaunitz was the main advocate of the establishment of institutionalised education for future foreign representatives. Austrian diplomatic training took place at the **Orientalische Akademie** within the University of Vienna, under the guidance of clergymen, then after 1833, the Academy became an independent centre for foreign affairs.<sup>16</sup> At this point, a specific attitude concerning diplomatic and foreign service training – which was definitely valid regarding Eastern Europe – can be identified, according to which the training programme was closely linked to the acquisition of appropriate language skills and the knowledge of the cultural, religious and socio-economic conditions of the regions concerned. Alongside the Habsburg example, this was typically the structure of the Russian Empire's diplomatic training, which was based on the **Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages**, designed to provide knowledge in Eastern European languages and cultures.<sup>17</sup> In addition to diplomatic training, the priorities that drove Austrian and Russian foreign policy in the nineteenth century are clearly visible in the efforts of the two states. The knowledge of Eastern languages and historical-political traditions was vital for not only the Ottoman Empire and the peoples and territories under its jurisdiction, but also for Britain and France, because of the opportunities offered by important trade routes. We also wanted to reflect on the impact of Oriental studies, Oriental languages and **orientalism** on the process of modern diplomacy and the training of diplomats. In the English system the most prominent training institutions were the most respected and oldest universities (Cambridge, Oxford), while diplomatic and civil service training institutes were established throughout Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century. These included the diplomatic school founded by Johann Daniel Schöpflin in Strasbourg and the Free School of Political Science (*École libre des sciences politiques*) in Paris.<sup>18</sup>

### *International Regulations*

**In the shaping of inter-state relations, old and new elements have been combined.** Alongside the centuries-old traditions and procedures, modern trends have also been gaining ground, giving a different perspective to the ways in which relations between nations and countries are established and cultivated. However, there is a common consensus on the fundamental rights that sovereign states have under universal law. According to these, **every state has the right:** a) to determine

its own foreign policy, b) to ensure the state's international representation, c) to recognise other states, d) to establish diplomatic and consular relations, e) to conclude international treaties, f) to wage war and make peace.<sup>19</sup>

The first significant step forward in making relations between states permanent was the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War. However, the detailed regulation of the relations between countries was only introduced at the Congress of Vienna, which closed the chapter of the Napoleonic Wars. On 19 March 1815, the document entitled '*Regulation Concerning the Relative Ranks of Diplomatic Agents*' was issued that defined the titles of delegates and the order of the reception of envoys.

Diplomatic ranking after 1815	
Level I	Ambassador
	Papal legate
	Nuntius (Nuncio)
Level II	Envoy
	Ministers
	Internuntius (Internuncio)
Level III	Chargé d' affaires en pied

From 1818, the title of Resident Minister was created which occupied a position between the second and third levels established in Vienna.<sup>20</sup> The provisions of 1815, with the additions of 1818, remained in force until 1961, when the system of international relations was again reorganised.<sup>21</sup> In the meantime, certain roles gradually changed throughout the twentieth century. After 1945 for example, the envoy-ambassador divide began to fade and most countries sought to maintain ambassadorial relations, a trend that can still be observed today. The position of minister (envoy) has been retained, but nowadays it no longer refers to the first-ranking foreign representative of a country, but to the person next in rank to the ambassador in the delegated diplomatic staff. This person also has important professional and representational responsibilities as the second-ranking representative of a country. The title can be *minister* or *minister-counsellor*.<sup>22</sup> The Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and Consular Relations of 1963, respectively, introduced major revisions. These two conventions still pro-

vide the basic principles and provisions for international relations, supplemented by a number of other treaties:

- the 1946 and 1947 Conventions on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and its Member States,
- the 1969 Convention on Special Missions,
- the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties,
- the 1975 Vienna Convention on the Representation of States in their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character,
- the 1978 Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of Treaties,
- the 1983 Vienna Convention on Succession of States in respect of State Property, Archives and Debts,
- and the 1986 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties between States and International Organizations or between International Organizations.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy. Eds. Berridge, G. R. – Lloyd, Lorna. New York 2012. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Mariano, Randolph: Mapping and Searching for a Theory and Concept of Library Diplomacy. Information Research 27. (2022: October). [DOI](#) (Downloaded: 14 January 2024).

<sup>3</sup> The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy. 70.

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<sup>5</sup> Ormos, Mária – Majoros, István: Európa a nemzetközi küzdőtéren. (Europe on the Interna-



tional Stage). Budapest 2003. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Kiss, J. László: Változó utak a külpolitika elméletében és elemzésében. (Changing Roads in Foreign Policy Theory and Analysis). Budapest 2009. 52.; Lamb, Peter – Robertson-Snape, Fiona: Historical Dictionary of International Relations. London 2017. 115–116.

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<sup>11</sup> Ronzitti, Natalino: Sanctions as Instruments of Coercive Diplomacy. An International Law Perspective. In: Coercive Diplomacy, Sanctions and International Law. Ed. Ronzitti, Natalino. Leiden–Boston 2016. 1–3.

<sup>12</sup> Kissinger, Henry: Diplomacy. New York 1994. 717–719.

<sup>13</sup> Duquet, Sanderijn: EU Diplomatic Law. Oxford 2022. 62.; Kiss, J. L.: Változó utak a külpolitika elméletében. (Changing Roads in Foreign Policy Theory). 152–153.; Falk, Richard: Revisiting Westphalia, Discovering Post-Westphalia. The Journal of Ethics 6. (2002: 4) 311–352.

<sup>14</sup> Halász, Iván: Diplomácia és diplomaták. A diplomácia intézménytörténete és civilizációs meghatározottsága. (Diplomacy and Diplomats. The Institutional History and Civilisational Factors of Diplomacy). Budapest 2010. 71–72.

<sup>15</sup> The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy. 6–7.

<sup>16</sup> Pfusterschmid-Hardenstein, Heinrich: A Short History of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. Wien 2008. 11.; 13.

<sup>17</sup> Volkov, Denis V.: Russia's Turn to Persia. Orientalism in Diplomacy and Intelligence. Cambridge 2018. 74.

<sup>18</sup> Goetze, Dorothee – Oetzel, Lena: Early Modern European Diplomacy. A Handbook. Berlin–Boston 2024. 534.; Hamilton, Keith – Langhorne, Richard: The Practice of Diplomacy. Its Evolution, Theory, and Administration. New York 2011. 105.

<sup>19</sup> The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy. 72.; 190.; 248–249.

<sup>20</sup> The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Diplomacy. 72.; 190.; 226–227.

<sup>21</sup> Denza, Eileen: Diplomatic Law. Commentary on the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Oxford 2016. 1–10.

<sup>22</sup> Duquet, S.: EU Diplomatic Law. 206.

<sup>23</sup> The conventions are available in the United Nations Treaty Collection – Depository ([Chapter III, XXIII](#)). (Downloaded: 14 January 2024).

2.

PATTERNS OF INTER-STATE RELATIONS  
IN THE EARLY AND LATE MIDDLE AGES  
(3<sup>RD</sup>–15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)

## The Foreign Policy System and Diplomacy of Rome From Augustus to Justinian (*Levente Takács*)

*“If someone strikes an ambassador of the enemy, he is regarded as having acted against the law of nations, because ambassadors are regarded as sacred. And likewise if, when the ambassadors of some people were with us and war was declared against it and the reply was given that they were free to remain; for this befits the law of nations. So Quintus Mucius was accustomed to reply that someone who struck an ambassador was surrendered to the enemy whose ambassador he was. If the enemy did not accept him, the question arose whether he remained a Roman citizen. Some people thought that he did, some the opposite, because whomsoever the people had once ordered to be surrendered seemed to have been expelled from the state, as happened when someone was forbidden fire and water. Publius Mucius seems to have held this view. But the question arose most notably in the case of Hostilius Mancinus, whom the Numantines did not accept when he was surrendered to them; a law was later passed about him, however, making him a Roman citizen, and he is even said to have held the praetorship.”<sup>1</sup>*

The passage above comes from the massive codification work ordered by Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian I (527–565). The emperor’s jurists summarised and edited the full body of Roman law. The *Digesta*, which included the excerpt above, was also a piece of this work arranging the fragments from the works of earlier master jurists into fifty books. The last book covers the operation of municipal governments, and a title deals with legations (*legatio*). The chapter in question is a good illustration of the Roman worldview. These envoys left their city for Rome or the provincial capital to intercede in the affairs of their community before the emperor or the governor (e.g. in a border dispute with a neighbouring city). The issues covered by this chapter do not belong to the modern notion of diplomacy or foreign policy. The chapter includes answers to questions such as whether it is possible to buy a house or conduct other private affairs while fulfilling an ambassadorial mandate. Therefore, the rules are not inter-state. Rather, they regulate relations within a state.

In any case, several elements that are among the basic principles and concepts of modern diplomacy are contained in the excerpt. The **law of nations** (*ius gentium*) did not quite mean the same to the Romans as we mean today by the modern term international law, although it is often used in this sense. The inviolability of envoys was not guaranteed by bilateral or multilateral treaties between sovereign

states, but by the fact that this custom had long been an accepted rule among peoples. The *ius gentium* essentially contained rules that applied to all peoples, i.e. it was considered a right that all peoples enjoyed. This included, for example, a system of rules on the sending and receiving of envoys. Furthermore, the right of peoples contained the law of war and peace and a set of norms stripped of their sacral background that governed the relations between Rome and other entities.<sup>2</sup> The **inviolability of envoys**, or in modern terms **diplomatic representatives**, is an ancient principle that prevailed in the ancient Greek world. Nevertheless, this right was still violated in some cases. In Caesar's work on the Gallic wars, there is a fragment, which can probably be considered a later insertion, in which Caesar keeps the sacrosanct envoys handcuffed.<sup>3</sup>

The disproportionality of the Digesta's section on embassies fits well with the Romans' understanding of the relations of **the inhabited world**. Rome is the centre of the world. The Romans considered themselves masters of the inhabited world, as the empire under Rome's rule meant the whole world.<sup>4</sup> Cicero believed (rep. 3.15.24.) that the Roman people held the world under their rule, but this idea culminated during the reign of August, when this thought was depicted in works of art, poetry, and coinage. The Romans clung to this idea despite the fact that their geographical knowledge extended far beyond the borders of the empire, as is illustrated by the work of the geographer Ptolemy.<sup>5</sup>

**The power ideology** that characterised the Roman's worldview affected their foreign relations and diplomatic relations. Emperor Augustus (31/27 BC–14 AD) contends in his work written towards the end of his life that, "*Embassies from kings in India were frequently sent to me never before had they been seen with any Roman commander. The Bastarnae, Scythians and the kings of the Sarmatians on either side of the river Don, and the kings of the Albanians and the Iberians and the Medes sent embassies to seek our friendship. The following kings sought refuge with me as suppliants: Tiridates, King of Parthia, and later Phraates son of King Phraates; Artavasdes, King of the Medes; Artaxares, King of the Adiabeni; Dumnobellaunus and Tincommius, Kings of the Britons; Maelo, King of the Sugambri; [...] rus, King of the Marcomanni and Suebi. Phraates, son of Orodes, King of Parthia, sent all his sons and grandsons to me in Italy, not that he had been overcome in war, but because he sought our friendship by pledging his children. While I was the leading citizen very many other peoples have experienced the good faith of the Roman people which had never previously exchanged embassies or had friendly relations with the Roman people. The Parthian and Median peoples sent to me ambassadors of their nobility who sought and received kings from me, for the Parthians Vonones, son of King Phraates, grandson of King Orodes, and for the Medes, Ariobarzanes, son of King Artavasdes, grandson of King Ariobarzanes.*"<sup>6</sup>

This was how the Romans recognised the existence of other states and tribes. Rome's relationship with its international partners was described by the concept of *amicitia* (friendship), which was not an alliance of equals or a treaty of friendship but a relationship where Rome's interests prevailed. Entities outside the empire sent admiring envoys, gave hostages, and received kings. The attitude of the Romans can largely be explained by the historical situation. On the European frontiers of the empire, tribes and tribal kingdoms (mostly Germanic) were the neighbours, while along the African borders, nomadic tribes of the Sahara were wandering and raiding, but they were not equal opponents of the Roman Empire, which had a population of 50,000,000, had hundreds of thousands of troops, and was spread to three continents. China, ruled by the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD), was at the very edge of the Roman geographical horizon. Both Chinese and Roman annals report on this.<sup>7</sup> However, the Chinese state was beyond the Roman political reach and thus had no effect on the Roman worldview or on Roman diplomatic relations. Only one similarly powerful and organised state was known within their political and economic horizons.

The attitude of Romans is well reflected by the fact that they did not even treat the great power which defeated them multiple times as an equal, at least not theoretically, though they did treat it differently from the northern Germanic tribes living on the other side of the Danube and the Rhine Rivers. The **Parthian Empire** under the reign of the Arsacid dynasty emerged in the third century BC and gained great power status after annexing most of the areas of the Seleucid Empire, which was abolished by the Romans. The Romans were forced to treat this state, which was located in what is now Iran and Iraq, as more or less an equal from the first century BC, when the two states became neighbours, and they made clear distinctions between their Parthian partners/adversaries and other international partners. The following description refers to the reign of the emperor Claudius (41–54): *“He allowed the ambassadors of the Germans to sit at the public spectacles in the seats assigned to the senators, being induced to grant them favours by their frank and honourable conduct. For, having been seated in the rows of benches which were common to the people, on observing the Parthian and Armenian ambassadors sitting among the senators, they took upon themselves to cross over into the same seats, as being, they said, no way inferior to the others, in point either, of merit or rank.”*<sup>8</sup> The Parthian Empire was the only partner of the Roman Empire that the Romans did not consider a vassal. The Parthian Empire survived until the third century, when it was replaced by the Sassanian dynasty. The new power inherited the status of the Parthians in Roman foreign relations.

### *Roman Foreign Policy from Augustus on*

The most significant diplomatic events of the early imperial period also fit into the Roman–Parthian relationship. In 53 BC, the Roman general Crassus suffered a major defeat at the hands of the Parthians. The Parthians took possession of the Roman military symbols along with prisoners and territorial gains. When these spoils of war were reclaimed and delivered to Rome in 12 BC, this was a celebrated triumph of Augustan diplomacy.<sup>9</sup> This act is also depicted on the breastplate of the emperor's most famous statue, in Prima Porta. Instead of taking military action, Augustus settled the situation in the East through diplomacy, which he presented as his own action. This was a symbolic sign that **foreign policy** was now entirely under the control of the emperor. This was recorded in a phrase of the Senate's resolution listing the powers of the Emperor Vespasian (69–79), which stated that "*he may conclude treaties with whomever he wishes.*"<sup>10</sup>

The definition of foreign policy objectives, the question of war and peace, and the conclusion of treaties were prerogatives left to the emperor. However, there was no qualified personnel for such diplomatic acts. The administration of envoys was the responsibility of the governors and imperial freedmen, as it is made clear in the correspondence of Pliny the Younger. In the early second century, as a governor of the province of Bithynia in Asia Minor, Pliny conducted official correspondence with the emperor Trajan 898–117). During his governorship, he received a visit from the Sarmatian king's envoy (tabellarius), and he was expecting the arrival of an embassy (*legatio*) from Bosphorus. For the former, the governor provided an itinerary (*diploma*). No information is to be found about the arrival of the latter legation and the purpose of its mission, but it is known that the emperor's freedman, Lycormas, asked the governor to detain the legation until his arrival.<sup>11</sup> The governor carefully informed the emperor of all the details, although none of the matters mentioned in the letters seem significant in retrospect.

During the reign of Claudius, the leader of the small Roman force occupying the kingdom of Bosphorus feared an attack and sought outside support. He sent legates (*missis legatis*) to the king of a neighbouring nation, with whom an alliance (*societas*) was concluded. In the local war, one of the opponents, after giving hostages (*datis obsidibus*), prostrated himself before the emperor's image, i.e. submitted to the Romans, while the other surrendered. The fate of the defeated opponent was clarified by means of letters and legates (*legatos litterasque*) sent to the emperor. The emperor in fact approved the acts of the locals.<sup>12</sup> Rome's interests in this conflict were represented by a Roman eques commander of the garrison, a king of a local tribe friendly towards Rome, and the procurator of the emperor. The early imperial era did not have a well-developed diplomatic apparatus, so

the emperor had to rely, when making occasional use of freedmen and slaves, on the experience and local knowledge of provincial officials. This was not only the case in minor conflicts, but also in the conduct of complex diplomatic acts of great importance. One of the largest diplomatic events of the first century was a Roman–Parthian confrontation. In the 50s, the feud between the two states over the questionable exercise of power over a buffer state called Armenia was renewed. The war, which lasted for years, resulted in Rome’s recognition, in 63, of the authority of Tiridates, a Parthian ruler, over Armenia, with the proviso that he would formally be a vassal of the Roman emperor. The event, held in Rome in 66 AD, was accompanied by a glittering display (gladiatorial games, decorative lighting, theatrical spectacles, triumphal march). Nero placed a diadem on the head of Tiridates, who prostrated himself before Nero and called him his lord.

The complex situation in Armenia was made difficult by the lack of a well-developed diplomatic apparatus and intelligence network. At one point, Nero’s government was only informed of the real situation by the centurion accompanying the Parthian envoys. As was the practice in the period, the agreement was not reached by permanent professional diplomatic envoys, but by the particularly young son-in-law of Corbulo, Annius Vinicianus, who was in charge of the Roman military movements in the east, and Tiberius Iulius Alexander, who had been assigned to this war as an unspecified assistant (*minister bello datus*).<sup>13</sup>

Apart from the kneeling oath and coronation, which expressed the symbolic relationship between two states, an interesting addition to the **foreign policy institutional system** was that the words of Tiridates were interpreted by a former praetor.<sup>14</sup> In view of the grandiose ceremony typical of Nero, it is perhaps not by chance that the first record of an imperial office which retained its function until late antiquity comes from the time of this emperor. At this time, the imperial court already had an *officium ad missionis*, which was responsible for organising the imperial audience and recording the proceedings. According to an account from the third century, the office was headed by a *magister admissionum*, who also kept records (*libri actorum*). As the name suggests, the most important task of the members of the office was to organise the presentation of the emperor’s documents, not only for foreign embassies but also for those in Rome.<sup>15</sup>

### *Roman Foreign Policy in Late Antiquity*

In the third century, Rome’s foreign policy environment changed significantly, both in the East and on the Danube frontier. The Parthian Empire was replaced in the 220s by the **Sassanid (Persian) Empire**, which laid claim to the former

territories of the Achaemenid Empire, the Roman territories of Asia. This was enforced not only in principle, but also by an aggressive foreign policy. Shapur I (241–273) successfully led campaigns against three Roman emperors, captured the capital of Syria, took control of major Roman provinces and even captured the Roman emperor Valerian in 260, who died in captivity. The *modus vivendi* with the Parthians changed, most notably from the perspective of the role of **hostages**.

The hostage in ancient foreign relations was not a person captured and detained, usually by force, in order to extort the fulfilment of a demand. Reactions and procedures to achieve political ends by these means are part of the scope of silent or secret diplomacy in the modern world. In the operational system of ancient Roman foreign policy, hostages were persons handed over to or taken from the enemy as collateral. In the early imperial period, it was more the latter: the family members, especially sons, of the opponent's prominent, leading figures were used as collateral for contracts concluded in the interests of Rome. However, we know of no cases in which hostages were harmed because their country had broken the agreements with Rome. Their role was more important in cultural diplomacy and as a means of exercising cultural influence. In Rome, hostages learned and adapted to Roman culture, which they continued to represent once they returned home, thus becoming a kind of advocate for Rome's interests.<sup>16</sup> Acculturation went so far that some even adopted Latin or Greek names, such as an Alemannic king who changed the Germanic name Agenarich for the Egyptian–Greek form Serapio.<sup>17</sup> A well-known example of this phenomenon is Polubius, a second-century BC historian. Not only the German tribes, but the Parthian ruler also sent hostages to Rome.<sup>18</sup> This way, Rome's foreign partners and opponents symbolically acknowledged the superiority of the empire, which harmonized well with the Roman ideology of power.

In Eastern relations, late antiquity brought about a change in the situation of hostages. From the fourth century onwards, hostages become a short-term guarantee for the implementation of *ad hoc* agreements. They were not members of the ruling families and, most importantly, hostages were then handed over on a reciprocal basis, i.e. the relationship was no longer one-sided, as it had been in the earlier period.<sup>19</sup> One of the first examples of this change was the peace treaty concluded in 363 between the Romans and Persians.

The Roman emperor Julianus was killed in 363 during a campaign against the Persians. The retreating army proclaimed Iovianus ruler in a state of emergency. Negotiations began between the two sides. The Persians sent two nobles, the Romans Arintheus and Salutius, to negotiate, spending four days discussing the terms in detail. Ammianus Marcellinus wrote of the **peace treaty**: “*Now the king*



*obstinately demanded the lands which (as he said) were his and had been taken from him long ago by Maximianus; but, in fact, as the negotiations showed, he required as our ransom five provinces on the far side of the Tigris: [...] with fifteen fortresses, besides Nisibis, Singara and Castra Maurorum, a very important stronghold. Jovian, inflamed by these dangerous hints too continually repeated, without delay surrendered all that was asked, except that with difficulty he succeeded in bringing it about that Nisibis and Singara should pass into control of the Persians without their inhabitants, and that the Romans in the fortresses that were to be taken from us should be allowed to return to our protection. To these conditions there was added another which was destructive and impious, namely, that after the completion of these agreements, Arsaces, our steadfast and faithful friend should never, if he asked it, be given help against the Persians. [...] When this treaty was concluded, lest anything contrary to the agreements should be done during the truce, distinguished men were given on both sides as hostages: from our side Nemota, Victor, and Bellovaedius, tribunes of famous corps, and from the opposite party Bineses, one of the distinguished magnates, and three satraps besides of no obscure name. And so a peace of thirty years was made and consecrated by the sanctity of oaths [...].”<sup>20</sup>*

The hostages were no longer a guarantee of stability in the long-term the relations between two states, nor were they a pledge to keep peace. Rather, they were only taken (or rather, given) to enforce an armistice and to be present until the withdrawal of Roman armies. They are not relatives of the emperor but are merely high-ranking military officers and officials. According to Ammianus Marcellinus, the peace treaty included territorial provisions, the resettlement of some of the population, and arrangements with the allies. All this was backed up by historical arguments from the side dictating the terms, in addition to their current power positions. The peace was concluded for a fixed period and confirmed by an oath. Despite the thirty-year peace treaty, already around 369/370 a clash broke out between the two states over the question of the allied influence included in the treaty of 363. Romano–Persian relations, until the end of antiquity, consisted of a series of constantly renewed conflicts and the peace treaties that ended them. The last war between the two empires lasted for some 25 years (603–628), and it placed considerable burdens on the reserves of both states and thus facilitated the advance of the Arab conquerors.

In the Danube and Rhineland areas, the **Germanic tribes** began to become increasingly active again. In June 251, the emperor himself fell victim to a defeat by the Goths. The movement of Germanic Tribes demanded an ever-increasing effort to defend the borders. From the fourth century onwards, the Roman state also had to face the fact that the aim of the Germanic tribes was to enter and set-

tle in the territory of the empire. After the defeat at Hadrianapolis in 378 by the Goths, this became increasingly difficult to prevent.

Although the Roman state had survived the military and political vicissitudes of the third century, it had to react to the changing nature of its foreign policy environment and the challenges coming from beyond the borders of the empire. Diocletian's and Constantine's reforms transformed the army, defence strategy, and the tax and monetary system, and they also changed the way in which imperial power was exercised and built up an extensive administrative apparatus.

In late antiquity, the building of an imperial bureaucracy also involved the creation of **offices that dealt with diplomacy**. The most important official assisting the emperor in the management of foreign policy was the *magister officiorum*.<sup>21</sup> The *magister officiorum*, as one of the most important officials of the imperial court, had extensive responsibilities and powers. As far as foreign policy was concerned, he was responsible for receiving foreign embassies at the borders of the empire, organising their travel and accommodation, and also their appearance before the emperor. In the vast majority of cases, he also appointed the commanding officer who served at the head of the border guards. He was involved in foreign policy decision-making. He had the support, in his work, of several offices, the staffing of which was determined by imperial decrees.<sup>22</sup> In the Eastern Roman Empire, this included the so-called *sub adiuvae barbarorum*, which was basically made up of four foreign liaison officers working on a territorial basis. Three were responsible for matters relating to Asian neighbours and adversaries and one for matters relating to the Balkans.<sup>23</sup> The *magister officiorum* was also subordinate to the *magister admissionum* (or master of ceremonies), whose task was to arrange for the presentation before the emperor or the imperial council, not only in relation to foreign relations but also in relation to imperial officials.<sup>24</sup> The reception of foreign ambassadors before the emperor was a well-orchestrated, sometimes impressive ceremony. In 375, Valentinian I was working on the fortification of the Danube frontier. The emperor, who had recently led a punitive campaign against the Quadi, was visited by envoys from this people at Brigetius. The diplomatic event, which turned into a tragedy, was recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus: "*When it was decided that the envoys be received and allowed to return home with the grant of the truce for which they were asking (for neither lack of supplies nor the unfavourable time of year allowed further attacks upon them), on the advice of Aequitius they were admitted to the council-chamber. And as they stood there with bended limbs weak and stricken with fear, on being bidden to tell their mission, they gave the usual series of excuses and supported them by adding the pledge of an oath. [...] They added, and maintained that [...] the building of a barrier, which*

*was begun both unjustly and without due occasion, roused their rude spirits to anger. At this the emperor burst into a mighty fit of wrath, and being particularly incensed during the first part of his reply, he railed at the whole nation in noisy and abusive language, as ungrateful and forgetful of acts of kindness. Then he gradually calmed himself and seemed more inclined to mildness, when, as if struck by a bolt from the sky, he was seen to be speechless.*"<sup>25</sup>

The *magister officiorum* also supervised the post office and the intelligence services (*agentes in rebus*), and he was in charge of interpreters, such as Vigilans, who had been the Hun's interpreter in 449 as an attendant of the Hun envoy Edeco and then as a member of the (eastern) Roman delegation to Attila. The emperor Theodosius II (408–450) sent envoys to the Hun king after discussing this diplomatic move with Martialis, who was then *magister officiorum*.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Fall of the Empire and the Attempt to Restore It*

By the beginning of the fifth century, the power structure around the Roman Empire had undergone a decisive change. On the Asian frontier, the most important foreign policy partner remained the Sasanian Empire, with which the Eastern Roman state fought a series of wars until the seventh century. These wars tied up considerable forces and cost a great deal of money, but they did not change the *status quo* between the two empires, which had in fact existed since Augustus.

However, in Europe, **the Hun Empire** emerged, and in the first half of the fifth century, it moved its centre to the Tisza River and Lower Danube regions. The Eastern Roman Empire maintained intensive diplomatic relations with the Hun Empire, the details of which are described in the works of the rhetor Priscus, who had also visited Attila's court.<sup>27</sup> In 435, the so-called Treaty of Margus was concluded, in which a Roman legate led by the consul Plintha, who had arrived at the court of the newly enthroned Hun kings (Attila, Bleda), accepted the Hun terms. The agreement stipulated that the Romans would pay the Huns a fixed annual tribute, return any Huns who had fled or been taken prisoner in the empire, and would not enter into alliances with their enemies. In 443, the so-called Treaty of Anatolius contained similar one-sided terms in favour of the Huns. The amount of the tribute was increased and Hun prisoners had to be returned, while Roman would only be freed in exchange for money.<sup>28</sup> In subsequent treaties, the Romans also used money to buy peace. They were no longer dominant players in the negotiations, nor could they sit at the negotiating table as equals. In the face of the short-lived Hun Empire, the supremacy of the empire could not even in principle be maintained or accepted.

The expansion of the Huns led Germanic tribal alliances and kingdoms (Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, etc.) to seek and find new settlements mostly within the empire. This process, which began after the battle of Hadriano-polis (378), accelerated from the turn of the century onwards, thanks to the Hun advance. In the face of the Germanic tribes settling in the western part of the empire, the western Roman state put an old foreign policy institution back into practice. The so-called **foedus** was used to regulate the relationship between the settling barbarians and the empire. The barbarian chieftains or kings, recognising the Roman emperor's superiority, supplied the Romans with troops for their wars in return for territory and supplies (monetary contributions) within the empire.<sup>29</sup> In reality, the supremacy of the Roman state took the form of diplomatic gestures that did not affect the actual power relations, because within a few decades, the western half of the empire was divided into Germanic kingdoms with their own internal and foreign policies, which nevertheless continued to recognise the supremacy of the (Eastern) Roman emperor in Constantinople, at least symbolically. To a certain extent, Roman foreign policy was internalised territorially, as the empire maintained diplomatic relations with states which had been established on the (former) territory of the empire and which had rulers who derived their power from the emperor. However, the ideology of a single power was maintained, at least symbolically, for a short time in relation to the Germanic peoples. The different relations between the Huns and the Germanic peoples are illustrated by the issue of hostages. While Flavius Aetius, the outstanding general of the western part of the empire, was held hostage for years at the court of the Hun king, the situation was reversed for the Germanic tribes: the son of the eastern Goth king, Theoderic, was taken as a surety to Constantinople in 461, where he received an excellent education.<sup>30</sup>

The Eastern Roman Empire once even **attempted** to restore its sovereignty over the entire former imperial territory. Emperor Justinian I, while codifying the legal order and pursuing a largely defensive policy against the Sasanid Empire on the Asian frontier, attempted to **restore Roman sovereignty in the Mediterranean**. The defeat of the Vandal kingdom in North Africa and the Eastern Gothic state in Italy brought these areas back under the control and rule of the empire. Even the southern part of the peninsula was recovered from the West Gothic kingdom of Hispania. The bulk of the conquests were not maintained for another hundred years: in 625 Hispania was lost, in 695 Carthage fell to the Arab conquest, and in 751 Ravenna was taken from Constantinople (Byzantium) by the expansion of the Franks.

The Frankish Empire, headed by an emperor from 800 onwards, also put an end to the universal claim to primacy of the emperor, who was head of the East-

ern Roman and then Byzantine Empire, although it was in the spirit of *renovatio imperii*. However, this period does not fall within the scope of Roman foreign policy. During the thousand years of their state, the Romans developed many of the principles and procedures that are still part of the tools of diplomacy today: the principle of respect for treaties, diplomatic formalities and protocol, personal meetings, the inviolability of envoys, and the enshrinement in legalisation of principles recognised by all peoples have been part of foreign policy since the Romans, albeit not without precedent.

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<sup>1</sup> Pomponius: Quintus Mucius, book 37. In: *The Digest of Justinian*. Transl. and ed. Watson, Alan. Philadelphia 1998. 436. The Quintus Mucius Scaevola and Publius Mucius Scaevola mentioned in the quotation are notable jurists of the turn of the second and first centuries BC. C. Hostilius Mancinus was the consul of 137 BC, who, defeated in this capacity, signed a humiliating treaty with the Numantines. The treaty was not accepted by the Senate and Hostilius was handed over to the enemy.

<sup>2</sup> Földi, András – Hamza, Gábor: *A római jog története és intézményei*. (The History and Institutions of Roman Law). Budapest 2006. 41–42.; 66–67. (128–130. §§, 222. §). Takács, László: *A római diplomácia*. (Roman Diplomacy). Budapest 2013. 67–68.

<sup>3</sup> Caesar: *de bello Gallico* 3.9.3.

<sup>4</sup> Grill, Tibor: *Orbem terrarum subicere*. Világbirodalmi törekvések és földrajzi ismeretek Rómában. (Orbem Terrarum Subicere. Imperial Ambitions and Geographical Knowledge in Rome). Ókor XVII. (2018: 1) 61.

<sup>5</sup> Grill, T.: *Orbem terrarum*. 63–64.; 71.

<sup>6</sup> [Augustus: Res gestae divi Augusti 31–33](#). Transl. Brunt, P. A. – Moore, J. M. Oxford 1969. (Downloaded: 26 May 2023).

<sup>7</sup> Grill, Tibor: *A tenger gyümölcsei*. (Fruits of the Sea). Pécs 2016. 25–26.

<sup>8</sup> Suetonius: *Claudius* 25. 4. In: [The Lives of the Twelve Caesars – C. Suetonius Tranquillus](#). Transl. Thompson, Alexander. (Downloaded: 26 May 2023).

<sup>9</sup> Augustus: *Res gestae divi Augusti* 29.

<sup>10</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL) 6, 930.; *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* (ILS) 244.

<sup>11</sup> Plinius ep. 10. 63., 64., 67.

<sup>12</sup> Tacitus: *Annales* 12. 15–21.

<sup>13</sup> Tacitus: *Annales* 15. 25.; 28.; Peretz, Daniel: The Roman Interpreter and His Diplomatic and Military Roles. *Historia* 55. (2006: 4) 465.; Takács, L.: A római diplomácia. (Roman Diplomacy). 60.

<sup>14</sup> Suetonius: Nero 13.; Cassius Dio 63. 1–7.

<sup>15</sup> Suetonius: *Vespasianus* 14.; *Historia Augusta*: Aurelianus 12.; Peretz, D.: The Roman Interpreter. 467.

<sup>16</sup> Lee, A. D.: The Role of Hostages in Roman Diplomacy with Sasanian Persia. *Historia* 40. (1991: 3) 366–367.

<sup>17</sup> [Ammianus Marcellinus 16.12.25. In: The Roman History of Ammianus Marcellinus. I. Transl. Rolfe, C. J.](#) (Downloaded: 12 May 2024).

<sup>18</sup> Tacitus: *Annales* 13.9.

<sup>19</sup> Lee, A. D.: The Role of Hostages. 369 ff.

<sup>20</sup> [Ammianus Marcellinus 25.7.9–14. In: The Roman History of Ammianus Marcellinus. I. Transl. Rolfe, C. J.](#) (Downloaded: 12 May 2024).

<sup>21</sup> Takács, László: A római diplomácia. (Roman Diplomacy). 55.; Peretz, D.: The Roman Interpreter. 467.; Havas, László – Hegyi W., György – Szabó, Edit: *Római történelem*. (Roman History). Budapest 2007. 733–734.; Kelemen, Miklós: A birodalom kormányzása. A Késő-római Birodalom közszolgálat. (Governance of the Empire. The Civil Service of the Late Roman Empire). Budapest 2007. 21.

<sup>22</sup> *Codex Justinianus* 12.19.10.

<sup>23</sup> Kelemen, M.: A birodalom kormányzása. (Governance of the Empire). 28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ammianus Marcellinus* 15.5.18.; *Codex Theodosianus* 11.18.1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ammianus Marcellinus* 30.6.; Takács, L.: A római diplomácia. (Roman Diplomacy). 96.

<sup>26</sup> Lee, A. D.: *Information and Frontiers: Roman Foreign Relations in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge 1993. 41.

<sup>27</sup> Hunok és rómaiak. Priskos rhétor összes töredéke. (Huns and Romans. The Collected Fragments of Rhetor Priscus). Ed. and transl. Kató, Péter – Lindner, Gyula. Máriabesnyő 2017.

<sup>28</sup> Bayless, W. N.: The Treaty with the Huns of 443. *The American Journal of Philology* 97. (1976: 2) 176–179.; Pószán, László: A hunok és a nyugati germánok. (The Huns and Western Germans). In: Angi János – Bárány Attila – Orosz István – Papp Imre – Pószán László: *Európa a korai középkorban*. (Europe in the Early Modern Period). Debrecen 1997. 66–69.

<sup>29</sup> Sivan, Hagith: On Foederati, Hospitalitas, and the Settlement of the Goths in A. D. 418. *The American Journal of Philology* 108. (1987: 4) 759–772.; *Proculus: Digesta* 49.15.7.1.

<sup>30</sup> Pószán, László: Odoaker állama, vandálok, osztrogótok. (The State of Odoacer, Vandals and Ostrogoths). In: Angi János – Bárány Attila – Orosz István – Papp Imre – Pószán László: *Európa a korai középkorban*. (Europe in the Medieval Period). Debrecen 1997. 96–100. Constantinople used hostage taking as a diplomatic tool even in the Middle Ages, the best example being the Hungarian King Béla III, who as a child was held hostage in the court of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel (1143–1180).

## Byzantine Diplomacy

*(Attila Bárány)*

The unique form and style, exceptional methods and symbolism of Byzantine diplomacy are rooted in the concept of the **emperor**.<sup>1</sup> The Empire is not a separate entity in the modern sense, but the state or *republic* equates to the emperor in person. It is, therefore, not the Empire that engages in relations with foreign peoples but the emperor. In this peculiar ideological system, according to imperial doctrine, the Empire “rules” over **many nations**; it is the head of a polyarchy. The Empire unites the world’s peoples, all Christians, in a single polity, aiming to create a **universal Christian** world empire, *orbis Romanus*, which encompasses the whole Earth, *orbis terrarum*. Rome’s successor, *Rhomania*, is the universal Christian world, the unquestioned head of the *oikumene*, the basileus, whose power is rooted in Providence, placed on the throne by God, his place appointed by divine right. Surviving mosaic images and coins often depict Christ crowning the ruler *Archibasileus*. God reigns through the Emperor’s person.<sup>2</sup> In the fifth century the Byzantine envoy to the court of Attila, King of the Huns, Rhetor Priskos/Priscus of Panion/Panium or Panites (c. 410s/420s – after 472), recorded as had been argued before the Hun king “*that it is not right to compare God and man, meaning, Attila is a man, Theodosius, a god.*”<sup>3</sup>

In the Byzantine world order, in this universal Christian *oikumene*, there was one single world ruler alone, the **autocrat (autokrator)**. There is one God in heaven and one ruler on Earth. As executor of the divine plan, his predetermined mission is to **convert** non-Christians and assist Christ’s faith to **victory**. There can be no other prince who equals him. In this strict hierarchy, all take their place under him. His laws are valid throughout the **whole world**; his rule encompasses the whole of the former Roman Empire; all its former provinces are at most **temporarily** separated from him – such as Hungary or *Paionia*, the former province, of Pannonia. The war of any former province’s ruler against Byzantium is nothing short of a rebellion.<sup>4</sup> The crusaders also thought of the Kingdom of Jerusalem as restitution, as the restoration of Roman rule, and continued to use Byzantine money in the provinces of the Holy Land. In the mid-twelfth century, the mosaic inscription on the Basilica of Bethlehem proclaimed Latin rule as continuous since construction began “*during the reign of Emperor Manuel*” until “*the days of King Amalric*”.<sup>5</sup> The Norman conquest of Antioch, under Byzantine rule for centuries, was looked upon with even greater distaste, and Latin investiture was never recognised; only its Greek patriarch was considered legitimate.



That is why foreign policy in the modern sense does not make sense when considered in a Byzantine setting. It was impossible to close bilateral treaties in the Western sense of the word; the emperor would not negotiate terms, as he solely operated on the level of divine law. The West construe pacts and truces but the basileus would only issue commands in his mercy. It took time and effort for the Western, Latin world to accept this. It took centuries of reading between the lines for them to understand negotiating with the Greeks was possible but that the formal requirements of their Eastern, despotic heritage needed to be accepted. Suppose the Emperor wants to avoid entering a bilateral accord, as we understand it today. He would concede and agree to issue an imperial *chrysobull* with a golden bull, a transcendental revelation of divine inspiration, written in privileged, cinnabar-red ink resembling the crimson of the Holy Emperor.<sup>6</sup> At first sight, a commercial treaty might appear as a pact, but it was formally a grant of privilege, a command to a subordinate, to be read out in the churches of the Empire. In 1082, Emperor Alexios I Komnenos issued a golden sealed charter to the Venetian Republic, which reads as follows: “*In reward for the Venetians services, my Imperial Majesty has graciously decided, by this golden sealed charter, to allow them to trade freely*”. Venice had practically seceded from Byzantium but was *de iure* still part of the Empire, in Byzantine wording its territories being “*under the authority of our Majesty*”.<sup>7</sup> In foreign political matters the *basileus* issues a *prostagma* (order) and does not sign a truce. All the formal elements, all the protocol, implying that the emperor cannot be negotiated with; he solely imparts orders invested as he is with **universal power**; just as in the mosaics, he occupies a place virtually on a level with Christ and the Virgin Mary, mother of God. Human mortals can but kneel at his feet.

Hellenistic despotic cults partially inspired the autocracy of Byzantine Emperors, so some elements of their rule appeared inextricably linked to Oriental rulers’ cult of omnipotence. A comparison of an imperial *chrysobull* with a letter from the Mongol Great Khan shows striking similarities. The letter of 1246 from Güyük Khan to Pope Innocent IV is also a **one-sided** statement, not a letter in our sense of the word, not expecting any reply. “*By the power of the eternal heavens, the command of the [great] Khan of the sea of all the great people*”. The Khan expects nothing less than total “*submission*” to his will. The pope “*must come with the kings to pay homage in person*”.<sup>8</sup> Genghis Khan had spoken “*God’s command, which they disobeyed*”. Moreover, even the Basileus could say that “*by the power of God, all the kingdoms from East to the West have been given to us*”. The rulers of the East, like the Byzantine Emperors, were the fathers, the benefactors of the people; Alexander the Great himself adopted many of the **cult of the sun’s** features, and just as the great Khan commands all “*by the power of the eternal sky*”, and just



as Genghis is the mover of the oceans, even the elephants in the Hippodrome genuflect before the divine power of the *basileus*. The elements, nature, are cognisant too of his overwhelming supremacy: before the deity of Emperor Manuel I (1143–1180), even the flooded rivers bowed to his presence: “*The Danube does not flow uproariously, nor does it run wildly, [...] it cannot contain your charge [...] it has held back its foam, it has stretched out its back to you, [...] it has taken you to the other side on horseback*.” The “*trampling*” of defeated leaders, an integral part of triumphs, has become a victory celebration of divine revelation. The enemies of the head of the universal world monarchy must “*serve*” his “*power*”. They must “*lie*” at his “*feet*”.<sup>10</sup> Before Manuel, the vanquished “*put their necks under his feet*” and even “*threw their heads to the ground before his horse’s hoofs*.”<sup>11</sup> Those who resist the basileus “*are eradicated from among the peoples of the Earth*”, “*expunging their souls in their own blood*”.<sup>12</sup> Glory represents “*destroying*” and “*enslaving*” his opponents.<sup>13</sup> The elevation of the emperor’s will to *lex animata* reinforced the unworldly essence of the autocrat’s rule. Many of these legal principles would be transposed, mainly codified in Justinian’s Codex, into **Roman law** as it was “*re-discovered*” in the West. The Hellenistic practice of *proskynesis* (‘*prostration*’ with the face to the ground, total humiliation) became a regular protocolar element. Procopius writes, “*Those who were admitted into the presence of this royal pair, even those of patrician rank, were obliged to prostrate themselves; kiss both his feet and rise and withdraw*.”<sup>14</sup> In the case of the historian Anna Komnene’s father, Emperor Alexios (1081–1118), “*with a single glance of his eyes, all bowed down to the very dust in fear*”.<sup>15</sup> It is no coincidence that this was passed down in Russia and that in the early twentieth century, with a kind of servile obedience, the peasants, *mujiks* greeted the Father Tsar in this way.

The Emperor has acquired a **supra-human** entity on par with the apostles (*isapostolos*). In the fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea, one of the **church fathers** in the age of **patristics**, both legitimised Constantine the Great as a Christian monarch and introduced a Hellenistic theory into Christian theology. In Roman times, *Imperator Augustus Caesar* was already a Roman God, *divus*, and a deity, *Dominus et Deus*, he and his family were granted *divinitas*, which elevated them to a *Domus Divina*. The emperor enthroned at a dizzying height, was rendered all the more inaccessible to the commoner by the ceremonial trappings. The means of **exclusivity** of **purple** was a symbolism of power (i. e. “*born in purple*” = *porphyrogenetos*). The autocrat featured in the daily prayers of all his subjects. The person of the emperor represents the salvation of the Empire itself. He cares for all his people as God would. From Eusebius onwards, the Byzantine monarch transmuted into the image of God himself, and his task was to create a copy of the *Kingdom of Heaven* on Earth. The *regnum coeleste* also found a place in later

ideas, which today seem utopian: the Kingdom of Jerusalem was called by this name by its idealistic creators. The emperor, the “*heavenly purpose*” of the new messiah sent to Earth as part of the divine plan, is a divinely ordained missionary to create a likeness, a **mirror image** (*mimésis*) of the *Kingdom of Heaven*. In this, he is not limited; his will is **eternal**, and he is likened to the saints. The Emperor was “*protected by the Almighty [...] who has chosen and given dominion*” to him. At his coronation, he is anointed, becomes a kind of prophet, and reigns with **Christ**. This ideology invested him with the **ruling entity**, like the ‘*King of the Jews*’ on the accusatory plaque above his crucified head (*INRI, Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum*). It is not by chance that Byzantine depictions of Christ place him on a throne, or even at the head of the whole Earth, the *orbis*, and portray him as a world judge, a **Pantocrator**.

In addition, the *basileus* is endowed, “*by the Almighty*”, with “*holy intellect*”, “*the wisdom of God’s essence*”, that is, **Sophia** – see Hagia Sophia, the temple of Holy Wisdom – which lives in the chosen one, with which the Creator “*justifies his steps*”, with which he is always “*on an unshakable foundation*”. With the sacred wisdom “*no harm can befall*” the people, the emperor protects his people with sacral, magical power. This is captured by Anna Komnene when she says of her father, Emperor Alexios, that his “*face, bathed in light, was radiant with reality*”.<sup>16</sup> The “*crowns and headpieces*” on Hagia Sophia’s altar were not the work of the mortal but “*sent by God through an angel*” to Constantine the Great.<sup>17</sup>

The army proclaimed the *basileus* (*acclamatio*); the soldiers swore an oath on the life of their “*paternal benefactor*”, uniting the monarch with the Holy Trinity. **Militant** ideology is a feature of Byzantine statehood. Already in Justinian’s mosaic of Ravenna in San Vitale, we see that the military is one of the foundations of power. The “*sign of Christ*” is placed on the shields. Instead of the pacifism of the early Christians, the motto “*in this sign, you will conquer*” is prevalent, placed on weapons capable of obliterate human life. The army prays for the emperor’s victory; the enemies are to be made to “*fall before his face*”, as **Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus** (913–959) wrote, “*to lick the dust*”, prostrating themselves before the divine autocrat. Everything must be done to win, to crush the enemy.

The militant ideology is palpable in Constantine’s *De administrando imperio* (**On the Administration of the Empire**): it is fundamental to “*quake before*” the Emperor: your enemies will “*flee, as from a raging fire [...], their lips shall be seared, thy words as darts will wound thy foes mortally*”.<sup>18</sup> In the work of the emperor’s daughter Anna, Alexios, the emperor’s “*eyes shot out fearful flames*”, “*his look [...] inspired fear*”, and “*aroused terror*”.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, after all this, there is no question of anyone wanting to negotiate with a Byzantine ruler as an equal.<sup>20</sup> Foreign nations have no choice but to “*bring to thee their gifts*”, and he “*mayest be adored*” by the land’s in-



Fig. 1. Arab ambassadors to the the Byzantine court of Leo VI at Constantinople are shown the liturgical vessels of Hagia Sophia. Ioannes Scylitzes/John of Skylitzes, Synopsis Historiarum, 12th c.

habitants.<sup>21</sup> The Emperor aims to establish the peace of God, but if this can only be achieved through the force of arms, then war must be fought constantly in the interest of *Pax Dei*. In the words of St. Augustine, the goal of a just war is peace. We must be constantly on guard to keep the peace. Alexios is “*invincible*”. Almost comparable to Eastern despots, in the strong antiquarian characterisation of the historian princess, Anna Komnene according to which her father is a demigod with “*broad shoulders*”, “*a broad chest*”, “*a demi-god*”, who “*evoked in the multitude the greatest admiration and pleasure*” that the possessor of mighty arms protects

him from all enemies – as if reading about the sacral power of a Turkic Khagan.<sup>22</sup> The empire is protected by magic power, a weapon divinely obtained through holy wisdom that “*must apply [...] liquid fire discharged through tubes.*” Greek fire is a divine gift “*revealed by God through an angel*”. The “*angel gave strict orders*” that “*they should not dare to give of this fire to other nations.*”<sup>23</sup> A militant ideology in Christianity as seen today, pervades the existence of Byzantium. If necessary, it maintains its power by force of arms: its “*long-shadowed spear*”, as a transcendent force, a “*flaming thunderbolt*”, reaches “*from the limits of the Earth’s circumference to its borders*”. It dominates all peoples, not only the “*temporarily*” seceded provinces.<sup>24</sup> It is eerie to read today how the emperor is glorified in the heroic *orations* written for him: it is a virtue to “*pillage*” peoples, “*crush them to a pulp with his mighty breath [...] enslave all their kin*”.<sup>25</sup> How a court poet ‘celebrates’ brute force, regarding foreign peoples as inferior, as animals, is downright ghastly: “*If a Persian dog barks, // if a Scythian panther, if a Geta wolf // [...] crush it, [...] smash its jaws!*”<sup>26</sup> The sacrality extends to the family in purple: the people “*tremble at the power*” of the empress, “*beg*” her, and she “*commands*” them.<sup>27</sup> The empire must constantly be at war, the autocrat never rests, just as the **archangels** “*appointed by God*” stand guard with spear in hand. And even if there was a glimmer of hope for peace, all must be done to assure His Majesty’s supremacy, primacy; indeed, his patriarch’s primacy over the “*Bishop of Rome*” is recognised. The foreign ambassadors were received in a well-orchestrated ceremony, frightened to death by tongues of flame bursting from the mouths of lions built in the throne in the Sacred Palace, for majesty must be formidable to the common man. If the *basileus* lifted a finger during the exceptional audience, a “*human*” should have received a high favour.

The Hellenistic origin of the monarchical cult of the invincible **sun** (*sol invictus*) and the cult of *Victoria Victrix* lives on even when the Empire has long adopted Christianity. “*Thy throne shall be as the sun before Him [The Creator].*”<sup>28</sup> The rites of the pagan, despotic **Orient** thrive amid the animal fights of the Hippodrome, with the emperor, who is himself almost sacred, the “*bishop of those outside the Kingdom of Heaven*” (*episkopos ton ektos*). He can assume minor ecclesiastical orders, exercise **priestly functions**, offer communion like a priest and drink from the Holy Chalice. His coronation is also an ordination, conferring on him a sacred character. The Emperor retained and used the title of *Pontifex Maximus* and *rex et sacerdos* in practice, which also survives in the power principles of the Western kings. The emperor’s body lives, reigns and is present independently of the emperor. In many cases, in the sense of this *praesentia*, people pay homage to his image, his icon, and pray before the icon itself, even offer gifts, light candles and make processions. It is the icon itself that passes judgments and issues orders.



Devotion is to the emperor himself, but the veneration of his **icon** is far from the *adoratio* still acceptable to the Latin church. It is as if Christ was placing the crown on the basileus' head.

We might consider this interweaving of church and state, employing the Western term, as *caesaropapism*. The Byzantines did not object to secular and ecclesiastical powers not being separated. This was the natural state of affairs in the Empire. The Church grew into the state, and the state embraced it in a symbiotic relationship. According to the Byzantine doctrine on the Emperor, Christianity could not exist without its protector, the emperor, the *basileus* in the *oikumene*, forming an organism with the ecclesiastics. The empire is part of the Christian faith. Christians cannot have a church without the ruler of Rhomania. To attack Christianity is to undermine the power of the Romans, the Empire itself, and erode public affairs. Whoever denies the divinity of the emperor is a heretic. The emperor has special rights; he presides over the council, determines the criteria of orthodoxy, and issues proclamations in theological and dogmatic questions. There is no question who appoints the patriarch and who can have jurisdictional authority over clerics – yet this is the root of one of the gravest conflicts in the medieval Western world. Only the emperor can act as the guarantor of orthodoxy.

Just as the *kosmokrator* Christ rules the **universe**, it was sacrilegious even to consider anyone equal to the omnipotent authority of the universe, the emperor. Only the basileus is entitled to the title of Emperor, head of “*the family of monarchs*”. Even if a country was an ally, and Byzantium was dependent on the help of, for example, Tsar Simeon of Bulgaria against the Hungarians, it was only with the utmost ‘pain’ that the title of Tsar, derived from Caesar, was accepted for the ruler, but never acknowledged that the Tsar was at all to title himself “*Basileus of the Bulgarians and Romans*”.<sup>29</sup> Simeon could have only been “*archon of the Bulgarians*”, but by necessity, he was temporarily adopted by the Emperor as his “*spiritual son*”, which would have elevated him formally to the rank of *porphyrogenitus* and titled him “*basileus of the Bulgarians*”. To this end, however, a dynastic marriage was arranged, one of the Tsar’s daughters marrying Constantine VII. However, no barbarian, not even an Orthodox Christian, could be “*basileus of the Romans*”, and to assume the title of *autokrator* was sacrilegious.

The Empire held ardent debates about whether and how to accept the imperial title of “*Western Caesars*”. After all, there can only be one *imperator, augustus caesar*. How could any mortal usurp the title of Emperor? The autocrat is invested with **divine authority**. How could a human ever ascend the throne? No one can be equal: as Patriarch Antony IV put it in a letter to the Grand Duke of Moscow, Vasily I, “*there is only one basileus*”, “*the rest are usurpers*”.<sup>30</sup> However, they were

later forced to make concessions since they often needed the support of both Persian rulers and Holy Roman Emperors: the former could offer a defensive arm against the Arabs and Seljuks, while the latter kept the Normans of Southern Italy, who were continuously threatened Byzantium, at bay.



Fig. 2. Emperor Michael III receives a message. Ioannes Scylitzes/John of Skylitzes, Synopsis Historiarum, 12th c.

Moreover, in the thirteenth century, the Palaiologos Emperors who re-established the empire had already sought for the favour of the Seljuk emirs of Asia Minor or the Mamluk sultans of Egypt against the Mongols who threatened the Balkans. In these years of harsh necessity, Byzantium recognised the Holy Roman ruler as the Emperor of the Germans. In Latin language documents, they were given the title of *imperator*, though in Greek wording, they did not pronounce the word *autokrator*. But this was an improvement on the earlier rigid insistence that the Holy Roman Emperor be termed king (*krales*), and at most, they recognised with the utmost grace “the king of the Franks and Lombards, whom they call their emperor”. During his embassy at the end of the tenth century, the Bishop of Cremona, Liudprand, had a “long and tiresome dispute” about the title of emperor with the “*coropalates*” [kouropalates] of the basileus, the logotheta, who “called you [Otto, the Holy Roman Emperor] not emperor, which is βασιλέα in his tongue, but ρήγα, rather out of disdain, to insult you, which is king in ours.” (*Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana*).<sup>31</sup> During Liudprand’s legation, in the late 960s, envoys from the pope arrived in Constantinople to ask the Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas to enter kinship with Otto I. The envoy witnessed how the Byzantine court was outraged at the titling of Otto “as august Emperor of the Romans”, which they considered “sinful and bold”. “It did not trouble him [Liudprand] to refer in

writing to the emperor”, they said, “to the only universal, august, great emperor of the Romans, Nikephoros, by the title ‘of the Greeks’, and to some poor barbarian fellow by the title of the Romans”.<sup>32</sup>

During the decline of Byzantium, most Balkan powers wanted to replace the basileus. Even the Serbian Tsar Stefan Dušan, who described himself as an autocrat of “*all Serbs and Romans*”, sought to extend his power to the Balkans and Byzantine-ruled territories. The Byzantine ideology of power impacted the Balkan and Eastern European rulers to such an extent that they could only imagine replacing Byzantium and ruling themselves **over the entire Orthodox world**. After all, there can be only one autocrat on Earth, “*one above all*”. In Serbia, too, the First-Crowned Stefan Nemanjić sought such **absolute power**. Still as grand prince he appealed to the Pope and was crowned by Honorius III in 1216. In 1219, his brother Saint Sava asked the Patriarch of Constantinople to elevate the Serbian Diocese of Raška to the rank of an Archbishopric and detach it from the Metropolitanate of Ohrid.

Every Balkan prince longed for **autocephaly** so that he might become emperor in his own country under his “*own*” power, so that he could rule over the church, which was not under the rule of a Byzantine Metropolitan, so that he could use his autocephaly to found his “*own*” monasteries, under the – secular – power of the prince alone, as in Moldavia, for example, under the rule of Stephen III the Great. True, there were times when the policy of ‘Westernisation’ did not work: King Mihailo of Zeta received a crown from Pope Gregory VII and autocephaly for his archbishopric in Bar (Antivari), but his son Constantine-Bodin was forced to return under the “*protective shield*” of Byzantium, even though he rebelled in the hope of an independent state against the emperor. It is almost natural that, after Byzantium’s fall (1453), the Russian Tsar **Ivan III** of Moscow wanted to become the “*New*” or “**Third Rome**”, in the sense of the “*Third Rome theory*”, and thus in every way to **succeed** Byzantium: he became the sole autocrat on the globe, the emperor of all Orthodoxy. In all aspects, Moscow now represented “*Rome*”. From Byzantine chronology to church architecture and rituals, imperial rules, customs, and characteristics of the Empire had all been adopted and ‘copied’ (*translatio imperii*). Moscow could now claim to be the only power protected by archangels and warrior saints, like the patron saint of the Russians, St Andrew. For example, a strong Byzantine influence can be seen in the 1453 pact of the Moldavian Voivode Alexander II with John Hunyadi. The prince still considers Hunyadi King Vladislaus’s governor, who died some years ago. There is no mention that the country has a king, not incidentally, King Ladislaus V, who had already been recognised as king before the treaty, and Hunyadi is no longer governor. The text does not say a word about Moldavia not being in the hands

of Hunyadi, who ruled Hungary and represented the power, thus implying that Alexander's allegiance was primarily to Hunyadi, who was now respected as his "father": "[...] *we have made eternal peace with [our] father, John the Voivode. We have pledged to be his son until my death and to obey him as a true son of a father, [...] I will do nothing without [...] his orders.*"<sup>33</sup>



Fig. 3. Mosaic panel of Emperor John II Komnenos and Empress Irene/Piroska, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople/Istanbul

For a very long time, for many centuries, Byzantium refused to allow its *porphyrogenitus* monarch to **marry** "from outside", below the rank, and not to the closest aristocratic elite of the Empire or even to a spouse related to the imperial house, or from the blood of previous dynasties, from the "land of the barbarians".<sup>34</sup> If a foreign prince requested such a thing, it was branded as an "unauthorised claim".<sup>35</sup> Constantine the Porphyrogenitus also teaches that if "any nation of these infidel and dishonourable tribes of the north shall ever demand a marriage alliance with the Emperor of the Romans, and either to take his daughter to wife or to give a daughter of their own future wife to the emperor or the emperor's son, this monstrous demand of theirs also you shall rebut [...]"<sup>36</sup> By the tenth and eleventh centuries, the emperors were forced to change this practice and allowed others into their "magic circle of purple". They had to make concessions concerning their former strict position that the emperor alone existed. First to the Sasanid Persians, then to the caliphs, the Mamluk sultans of Egypt, and then to the Mongol Ilkhanids.<sup>37</sup> In the early days, empresses could only be **Orthodox**, but after a while, from the twelfth century onwards, it was no longer sacrilege to lead a Latin princess to the altar. Constantine himself states that "a dread and authentic charge and ordi-



nance [...] is [...] that never shall an emperor of the Romans ally himself in marriage with a nation of customs differing from and alien to those of the Roman order”, but adds permissively, “unless it be with the Franks alone”<sup>38</sup> By the second half of the eleventh century, the Greek position had “softened”. In 1074, Michael Doukas had agreed to his son’s betrothal to the daughter of his sworn enemy, the Norman Robert Guiscard.<sup>39</sup> In 1081, emperor Alexios also wanted to forge a marriage with Emperor Henry IV’s family.<sup>40</sup> The ‘revolutionary’ change, however, is most associated with the marriage of **Piroska**, daughter of St. Ladislaus, who was also of German descent through her mother and whose reddish-blond hair and ruddy face, not at all like the dark-eyed Byzantine *basilissa* types, is still venerated in the mosaic image of **Hagia Sophia**. Ladislaus’s daughter married to heir-to-the-throne John Komnenos between 1104 and 1105, during the reign of King Coloman. The Latin marriage may also have been accepted and followed by another Western marriage for the empress’s son, **Manuel**. Piroska – the bride was only allowed to use her new **Greek name** after the wedding and ascended the throne as Irene, a saintly woman, “distinguished by her modesty and adorned with the greatest virtues if ever there was such a virgin woman on Earth”.<sup>41</sup> Although the Byzantine sources never consider a Western ruler as an equal, John Zonaras, writing in the early twelfth century, “speaks of the prince of the people of Hungary”, addressing the king as “archon”.<sup>42</sup> Even Constantine Porphyrogenitus called Árpád, a chieftain, as *mezas arkon*, although opinions differ on the meaning of the adjective *mezas*, “great”.<sup>43</sup> It is known, however, that the **Holy Crown** of Hungary, the *corona graeca*, depicts **Géza I** as king, the “faithful ruler of Turkia” (*pistos krales Tourkias*), which, on the one hand, indicates a normalisation of relations after the conflicts of the 1070s – the siege of Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade) and the Niš campaign. On the one hand, Géza established a friendly relationship, just like his successor, Ladislaus, and did not take advantage of the throne crisis at the end of the reign of Michael Doukas. He married the niece of the later *basileus* Nikephoros III Botaneiates, Synadene, probably through the mediation of the emperor Michael.<sup>44</sup> Our Greek source on the matrimony makes it clear Géza is taken in Byzantium as “king” of Hungary (*krates*).<sup>45</sup>

However, Irene, who founded the *Pantokrator* monastery, must have significantly improved opinions on Latins since, at the time of her death, a series of eulogistic epitaphs immortalised her deeds and celebrated her glorious descent from “emperors” and “saints”. In the poems of Theodoros Prodromos, she is “descended from blessed ancestors [...] from the rulers of the whole Western world” and was “educated by Caesars”.<sup>46</sup> Byzantine diplomacy was keen to emphasise Piroska’s noble ancestry. Indeed, Piroska-Irene had German imperial blood in her veins, which Alexios Komnenos hoped to exploit as an absolute trump card. The *basilissa* was

descended from a German ruler through her mother, Adelaide, the wife of St. Ladislaus: her grandfather was Rudolph, a Swabian duke of Rheinfelden, who was elevated to the rank of anti-king by the imperial princes. The *Vita Irenae* glorifies her as “*born of blessed parents, of Western emperors*”: “*blessed*” may refer to St. Stephen of Hungary and his other ancestor, Blessed Richeza of Lorraine.<sup>47</sup>



Fig. 4. Monastery of Christ Pantokrator (Zeyrek Camii), Constantinople/Istanbul, founded by Empress Irene/Piroska of the House of Árpád, seen from the east

Byzantium was aware of the political weight of the Hungarian dynasty. Irene’s son Manuel took advantage of this in his ambitions for power in Hungary. In the middle of the twelfth century, the new ruler of Constantinople, wary of barbarians, was already proudly proclaiming, with sufficient pragmatism, that he was descended from the holy blood of the Árpáds. At the beginning of the twelfth century, the empire, shattered by the raids of the **Pechenegs**, the **Seljuks** and the **crusades** that were sweeping across the land, was no longer content to declare whom the divine *basileus* wished to marry but was forced to negotiate a marriage on the *terra incognita*, north of the river Istros, north of the Danube. Here, Byzantium had already approached their northern neighbours. Theodore Skutariotes refers to the “*prince of Paionia*” as someone “*whom the common language usually calls a king*”, from whom the emperor Alexios “*asks Piroska to be the bride of his first-born son, emperor John*”.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the ruler of the empire was even obliged to see “*that the king was willing*” and sent another envoy to Hungary concerning

the matter. The Hungarian princess was already so important to the Komnenos dynasty, who feared the Normans in southern Italy, that they sent an ornate delegation to fetch her and “bring the bride to Constantinople”.<sup>49</sup> The marriage had great political significance, which is why the sources say of the bride that “[...] extraordinary beauty has been found and taking this treasure of great price with them, they accompanied her with joy and delight [...]” to the Empire. The chronicler also saw behind the marriage that “[...] the Western peoples, and no less the Eastern ones, were troubled on every side [...]”.<sup>50</sup> The term “Eastern peoples” undoubtedly refers to the growing pressure from the Seljuks. In contrast, “Western peoples” refers to the ambitious Norman prince, Bohemond of Taranto, whose planned new campaign against Byzantium might have triggered a Byzantine–Hungarian rapprochement.

The Norman invasion of 1107–1108 failed: the conquering Bohemond abandoned the siege of Dyrrachium and made a peace offer to Emperor Alexios.<sup>51</sup> Coloman the Learned was also involved in the war conflict, as the kingdom was allowed to send envoys to the negotiations in Devol (Deabolis), which was almost unprecedented. The Empire gave room to others, a non-Orthodox ally, in an act of foreign policy. The peace treaty was concluded before 17 witnesses, two representing Hungary.<sup>52</sup> Palatine (“*zoupános*”, ζουπάνοϛ) Peres and Simon were no longer the envoys of a prince, “who came from the Dacians on the part of the king [*“kralés”* (κράλης)]”. Alexios himself called the Hungarian monarch “a kinsman”.<sup>53</sup> A poem by Prodromos in 1122 may confirm that Coloman was involved in the preparations for peace. It is also possible that the author celebrates Piroska-Irene with these lines – “*The Lombards and the Calabrians bring you gifts*” – because it was thanks to the Hungarian kinship that Alexios’ sworn enemy was defeated. The Normans of Calabria trembled at the “*power of the Basilissa*” and “*bowed down*” to Byzantine power because of it.<sup>54</sup> Byzantium was grateful to the Hungarians for their help, even indirectly, in the war against the Normans. The treaty of Devol is a typical example of how the Empire makes peace: the other side can never be equal. The Normans signed a treaty that humiliated them. Bohemond had not only been forced into an alliance with the emperor, but as his “*vassal*”, his “*servant and subject*”, his “*loyal man*”, he “*pledged himself to owe him military service*”.<sup>55</sup> He also swore to place Antioch under Byzantine vassalage, which had been captured by “*his own*” crusaders. The Normans had sacked Thessaloniki, and the only way Emperor Isaac II Angelos could resist their planned invasion of the capital was to tacitly agree to the former ‘hostage’, King Béla III, taking the territories under the Hungarian suzerainty of Manuel and sealing the deal, marrying the king’s daughter Margaret. Nor was the Hungarian side ungrateful: Béla assured Byzantium of his support in 1190 when panic gripped the hearts of the Greeks as Frederick Barbarossa’s crusaders prepared to besiege Constantinople.

Another Hungarian–Byzantine marriage was of great significance. In 1218, Andrew II, on his way back from the Holy Land, betrothed the already-crowned King Béla to the daughter of Theodore Laskaris, the head of the Byzantine successor state. Mary was brought to Hungary and, in 1220, was “*crowned Queen of Hungary*”.<sup>56</sup> The Hungarian marriage was parallel to the Empire of Nicaea's and its opening to the Latins and the Bulgarian state of the Asens.

The doctrine of sacral selection extended to the “*holy*” family living in seclusion in the solitude of the **Sacred Palace**, isolated from mortal men. The cult of the *porphyry* encompassed the entire *holy* family (*hagios*). The emperor also adopted the wives who married into the dynasties, became family members, had to adopt Orthodoxy and were given a new name, as Béla III later became Alexios.<sup>57</sup> Every moment of the emperor's life was governed by strict rules, with protocol dictating that his feet with purple sandals should not touch the same ground as ordinary people – just as Justinian's mosaic of San Vitale, Ravenna shows his feet covered with porphyry sandals. No human could touch the ruler's body. We would not be in Byzantium if there were no more manuals of all this court etiquette; even Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus wrote a piece (*De cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae*),<sup>58</sup> stating that religious devotions be observed in the emperor's presence, the requisite silence being kept by special officials (*silentarios*) according to the order of ceremonies.<sup>59</sup>

In Byzantium, politics is a closed world, with political decisions being made in the narrow, dark halls of the Holy Palace. Politics was **even less public** than in the Western world, where the Pope's policies had to be proclaimed to the people, *exclamatio*, after his election, as it is today in St Peter's Square after the white smoke has risen. Byzantine politics was initially known only to a body of a few officials titled *mystikos*, *sekretikos* or *sekretarios*, and in practice, they were not allowed to leave the purple-covered halls of the Holy Palace with their ‘secrets’. In Byzantium, there is no public sphere in the Western sense, no *res publica*, or it lives on in name only. The Roman **Senate** continues to exist in form and principle in the Middle Ages, as if nothing has happened. Consuls are elected, and their office determines political chronology, and the Roman ‘government’ nominally governs the empire together with the ruler of Rhomania. In reality, however, the monarch's **private** and **state** power remained inseparable, such as the private goods and private estates of the dynasty, and crown and state affairs are not separated as in the West.

In the West dynastic and crown estates are clearly distinguishable. In Byzantium, the administration of the state is not subject to the public gaze; there are no *curia* and *aula*, no court in which the royal judges discuss matters of public interest and nobody that governs public affairs, but there is also no private sphere,

no private **chamber** where the monarch can live a secluded daily life. Politics is the domain of the basileus alone; it is from his own private chamber, the scene of his daily life, his household, his bedroom (*koiton*), his dining-room, that affairs of state are conducted. This business is the sole prerogative of the ruler, part of his private affairs, where he alone makes decisions. In the West, too, there is the ritual symbolism of preserving the archaic name of a governmental organ in its original function, but in the English *Wardrobe* no one searches for the king's clothes – by the end of the Middle Ages, it has already become a separate war-funding organ. Byzantium also has a wardrobe, the *vestiarion*, which eventually, in the late centuries, becomes a genuine financial body. In Western kingdoms, the chamber is not used to supply the king's 'table' but becomes a financial management body. In Byzantium, however, with no division between the public and private spheres, everything depends on the personal decision of the autocrat, emphasised by the fact that the closed, private spheres of the monarch's life are transformed into offices of administration. The servants of the table genuinely work where the emperor lives. The **public sphere does not exist**. The secretaries draft the emperor's diplomatic letters, which are kept secret, and a series of officials guard his inaccessibility like the *khartouliarios* of the 'inkwell'.<sup>60</sup> All this will be partly inherited in the administrative machinery of the Sublime Porte. The Ottomans also keep a hermetically sealed court. Still, there, too, no one would think of the Sultan's most influential advisers as being truly "*the guardian of the soup bowl*" or "*the keeper of the ladle*", titles suggesting proximity to the Padishah, allowed into his private sphere where 'sublime' politics are conducted. In the West, it is also not unknown for the courtly order to be expressed in various archaic titles, determining positions held in the court. In Louis XIV's court it was a very important position to be the first to enter the king's bedchamber in the morning and draw the 'royal' curtains. He probably did not draw them with his own hands, but he was mostly a member of the royal dynasty, but the associated *dignitas* was what mattered.

The Byzantine emperors effectively ran the Empire from their private apartments, from which nothing could leak out since most 'state officials' were not even allowed to leave this 'purple world'. On the one hand, the army was controlled from here – even in the Ottoman Empire, the tradition of permanent regiments stationed in the city, the increased number of **bodyguards** dating back to Roman times, and the *domestikos* of the guards, the *tagma* regiments and the *scholae* who supervised them, were on hand even if a rebellion reached the walls of Constantinople or even the Palace.<sup>61</sup>

Procopius had a good grasp of how Justinian had taken power into his own hands and abandoned all formalities, keeping up the appearance of the former



principles associated with Roman rule: “Formerly, only a few were granted admission to the palace, and that with difficulty; but, from the time of the accession of Justinian and Theodora, the magistrates and all other persons were continually in the palace. The reason was that formerly, the magistrates administered justice and laws independently. [...] But this pair took control of all business themselves so that they might ruin their subjects, forcing them to humiliate themselves in a most servile manner. Thus, the courts of justice were empty nearly every day, [...] while crowds of men were in the palace.”<sup>62</sup> Even the historian perceived that a new era was dawning, claiming that “nothing that was established was allowed to continue.” Procopius considered Rome to be in the hands of the barbarians. The emperor “imitated the barbarians in language, appearance, and ideas.”<sup>63</sup> Justinian decided everything in person: “he did not entrust it to the Quaestor in the usual way, but for the most part delivered it himself by word of mouth.” Justinian did everything himself, and the secretaries “who fulfilled the duty of writing the secret dispatches of the emperor, were no longer present [...] for he wrote them nearly all himself, even the sentences of the municipal magistrates. No one throughout the Roman world being permitted to administer justice [...]. he immediately pronounced his verdict [...]. The Senate was as it were, but an empty shadow, [...] for none of its members were allowed to utter a single word.”<sup>64</sup> Even if we consider that Procopius was fuelled by his dislike toward the emperor and that his prejudices led him to exaggerate, the state system that later characterised Byzantium is still evident. True, if not only in the sense that “children play royalty”, but the sworn enemy of Empress Theodora is also right that the basileus’ decision is the law itself. There is no room for objection.

The Sacred Palace was the centre of the state as a whole. Public functions in the Western sense were performed by informally appointed courtiers, mostly endowed with ceremonial titles, who in some way preserved in their titles a link to the person and private sphere of the emperor, such as the *pappias* (key-keeper) or the *praepositus* of the sacred *cubiculum*, the guardian of the emperor’s residence. In addition, in the Roman tradition, many private servants – initially friends of the emperor (*amici Caesaris*), later those who lived with him in the basilica and later in the palace (*basilikoi*) – were given informal state mandates by simple imperial edict.<sup>65</sup> In this way, the administration of the state became opaque to contemporaries, and the **bureaucracy** itself became “*byzantine*”. Many arbitrarily conferred titles fit into a hierarchical system without concrete, practical function. Moreover, since Byzantine doctrine did not allow for the existence of any sovereign state outside the Empire, external powers, their leaders and princes were given the titles of the Byzantine court, giving the impression that at least independent Serbia or Wallachia was still part of the Empire. The doge of Venice was also invested with a court office, even though the Republic had *de facto* seceded long ago.

The Sacred Palace was also the centre of foreign affairs. The *logothetes* – faithfully copied in the Romanian principalities as *logofăt* in the spirit of *translatio imperii* – who was considered the chief minister, was in charge of all matters, from the post to the border guards and the police, in addition to the chancellery in the Western sense, the scribal services and the clerk's offices. This included the affairs of envoys, their reception and accommodation, the affairs of “foreign peoples” and their surveillance, for it was not alien to Byzantium that a secret police force should supervise every move a foreigner and even foreign merchant made. The office of the *logothetes* is thus strangely reminiscent of the system of communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe and Asia in the twentieth century: there too, the post office was under the direction of the Ministry of Interior, and here too, of course, skilled hands opened letters from abroad, and even in Byzantium, a system was already in place whereby travellers to the border zones needed a separate passport, just as someone who wanted to travel to Sopron in the 1950s needed a passport. The “foreigners’ police” was not brought ‘under the sun’ by the socialist regimes either. “Interior affairs” included messengers, couriers, mandataries, and interpreters, *dragoumanos*, who often enjoyed very high authority.<sup>66</sup> Vigilas, who attended the embassy of Priscus, “acting as an interpreter” knew full well that the Byzantine court had incited a member of the Hun king’s inner circle, the Scirian Edeko (father of Odoacer), to assassinate Attila.<sup>67</sup> The post of interpreter was also faithfully copied by the Balkan states dreaming of a third Rome under the name of *dragoman* or *drogman*.

The Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus’ *De administrando imperio* can also be considered a “handbook” of Byzantine diplomacy. In the Proem the emperor makes no secret of addressing his son, the heir-to-the-throne, Romanos, through his ‘manual’.<sup>68</sup> It explains “how each nation can benefit the Romans or hurt them”. The future basileus must also know “how other nations may be encountered in arms and subdued; [...] next, also concerning the difference between other nations, their origins and customs and manner of life, and the position and climate of the land they dwell in [...]”.<sup>69</sup> He also needs to know what happened in the past between “Romans and different nations”. By getting to know the peoples, one can see how to “know the difference between each of these nations, and how either to treat with and conciliate them or to make war upon and oppose.”<sup>70</sup>

The work, which uses diplomatic documents, intelligence reports and oral information, is an invaluable and irreplaceable source of early medieval **Hungarian history** precisely because the Byzantines built an incredibly precise ‘database’ of most peoples. It is the only source available about the Hungarian princes, their political organisation, their places of residence, their conquest of their homeland and their foreign relations. It was probably based on information from Termacsu

(Termatzus, Tormás), great-grandson of Prince Árpád, and Bulcsú, Hungarian leaders who visited Constantinople around 950 AD. The emperor speaks in detail about the dynasty of the Árpáds, the migrations and tribes of the Hungarians.<sup>71</sup>

Byzantine diplomacy, drawing heavily on the Roman ‘heritage’, took the **pragmatism** of the ‘enemy of my enemy is my friend’ principle to a high level. To put it mildly, the ‘practicality’ of the Byzantines later became almost a necessity and commonplace in the politics of the Italian city-states, and then, with the entry of the Ottomans into the international political arena, an almost everyday automatism. In the early centuries of the empire, it faced constant **external threats**: after the storms of the Slavic, Hun, Turkic, Arab, Avar and Bulgarian invasions, it could not rest for long and had to defend itself with renewed vigour against the attacks of the Pecheneg, Cuman, Seljuk and Mongol invaders, suffering the most lethal blows from its Christian neighbours: the Normans and then the **Latin** ‘crusaders’ in 1204 overthrew the centuries-old rule of Constantinople. The “*City Guarded by Angels*” was on its own and had to organise its own defence. Sometimes, its opponents joined forces against it, as in the Battle of Arcadiopolis in 970, when it stood against an alliance of Pechenegs, Hungarians, Kievan Rus’ and Bulgarians. Therefore, the Empire had to develop a defensive strategy, the first step being to understand their enemies as thoroughly as possible. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, in his *De administrando imperio*, for example, considers it “*advantageous*” for the emperor “*to keep the peace with the nation of the Pechenegs and to conclude conventions and treaties of friendship with them*” and therefore “*send every year [...] a diplomatic agent.*” In other words, every year, the tightness of the bond must be assured.<sup>72</sup> Our friends will be loyal to us in the face of our enemies, as they will be loyal to us in return. During Priscus’ embassy with Attila, “[...] *it was agreed that the Romans could not ally with a barbarian people if they were to make war against the Huns.*”<sup>73</sup> In 1261, a revived Byzantium and Genoa, formerly the supporter of the Latins and hostile to Venice, which had played a significant role in the fall of the City, became natural allies. According to their pact, “[...] *the Genoese Republic will not make peace, truce or treaty with the Venetian Republic without the knowledge and will of Our Imperial Majesty.*”<sup>74</sup>

Another guiding principle of the *Taktika* of Leo VI the Wise (886–912) was the need to constantly guard the security of the Empire, even if the adversaries, the Turks were “*neither neighbours nor enemies to us at present, but instead they are eager to show themselves as subjects of the Romans.*”<sup>75</sup> For us, in discussing Byzantine diplomacy, one of the essential issues is Emperor Constantine’s interest in the relations between different peoples. Even when Porphyrogenitus asks about the **Hungarians**, he does not hide the fact that their relations with the **Khazars** are crucial: “*They lived together with the Chazars [Khazars] for three years and*



*fought in alliance with the Chazars in all their wars. Because of their courage and their alliance, the Khagan-prince of Chazaria gave in marriage to the first voivode of the Turks.*” It is fundamental to the basileus that the khagan’s aim was that the Árpád-prince Levedi’s wife should “*have children by him*” and that in the end he “*had no children by this same Chazar lady.*”<sup>76</sup> Of exceptional importance to him is the relationship between the Pechenegs, the Hungarians and the Khazars: “[...] *the Pechenegs, [...] stirred up war against the Chazars and, being defeated, were forced to quit their own land and to settle in that of the Turks.*”<sup>77</sup> He goes on to say in detail that “*when the Turks had gone off on a military expedition, the Pechenegs with Simeon came against the Turks and completely destroyed their families [...].*” For Byzantium, the relationship between the Hungarians, the Moravians, the Pechenegs, the Bulgarians and the Rus’ was vital for the survival of the Empire. The Archangels can only preserve the City if “*Simeon is reconciled again with the Roman Emperor [...] as he has agreed*” with the Byzantines to “*crush and destroy the Turks*”. The Empire needs the enemy of the enemy, and that is why it must know him in every respect; being aware that Hungarians wanted revenge against the Pechenegs was vital. This is what fuels the supremacy of the Empire. The *basileus* must also know that the Magyar tribes “[...] *do not obey their princes, but they have an agreement that they will fight together with full devotion [...] by the rivers, in whatever part the war breaks out.*” One never knows which chieftain will ask for the bread of Byzantium: a gate must always be left open to receive the foreign chieftain. This is why Constantine baptised the Hungarian war-lord, Bulcsú.

It should be noted that Constantine also bequeathed this ‘testament’ to the young heir to the throne, “*Termachu is our friend*”. Most importantly, if our friends are the Pechenegs, if we live in peace with them, “[...] *neither the Russians nor the Turks can invade the Roman Empire with armed force, [...] because they fear the power of this people, which the emperor may turn against them while they are at war with the Romans. For the Pechenegs [if the emperor’s] gifts win them over, could easily invade the lands of both the Russians and the Turks.*” In the early 1070s, the Pechenegs invaded Hungary, allegedly at Byzantine instigation. The Greeks “*breaking the peace, voluntarily letting the raiders pass*”, made them “*plunder*” the country, to which Prince Ladislaus – the would-be saint – responded with preventive attacks.<sup>78</sup> In 1091, the Cuman invasion was also thought to have been **instigated** by the Byzantines or the princes of Rus’. Byzantium’s adversaries also found an excuse for military action: when King Stephen II led a campaign against the Byzantine Empire in 1127, “[...] *the occasion was provided by the fact that the inhabitants of Branitzova [Braničevo, present-day Serbia] attacked the Huns [Hungarians], who had come there to trade, in a predatory manner and treated them with*

*the greatest malice.*<sup>79</sup> At the end of the eleventh century, Emperor Alexios Komnenos fomented **rebellion** in Italy and organised resistance in Capua against the Normans, at the back of Robert Guiscard.

Furthermore, the Greeks used **money** when necessary: Alexios offered the German Emperor Henry IV a considerable sum if he sent an army to Italy to fight the Normans.<sup>80</sup> But then he had good reason to do so, as the Normans were “*raising their eyes like fierce savages*” to the Empire.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, Byzantium was also allied to St. Ladislaus by common interest since the expelled King Solomon had joined the Pechenegs in 1087 in invading Byzantine territory and pushing as far as Adrianople.<sup>82</sup> The ‘common enemy’ called for joint action.

The pragmatism of the Byzantines is expressed very vividly in Menander Protector’s work when the Turkic (Western Türk) khagan breaks the alliance because of Byzantium’s treaty with the Avars and yells at the Emperor: “*Are you not those very Romans who use ten tongues and lie with all of them?*” As he spoke, he placed his ten fingers in his mouth. “*As now there are ten fingers in my mouth, so you Romans have used many tongues. Sometimes you deceive me, sometimes my slaves the Uarkhonitai [the Avars] [...]. In a word, having flattered and deluded all the tribes with your various speeches and your treacherous designs, when harm descends upon their heads, you abandon them and take all the benefits for yourselves. Your envoys come to me dressed with lies and he who has sent you deceives me equally [...]. And your Emperor shall pay me due penalty, for he has spoken words of friendship to me while making a treaty with the Uarkhonitai [Avars].*”<sup>83</sup> The Byzantines’ unscrupulousness, hypocrisy and deceitfulness became a topos in later years, and “*Byzantine*” **insincerity** became a permanent epithet. There was, of course, political pragmatism elsewhere. Still, such generalisations could also have been the basis for, for example, how they wanted to bribe Edeko before Priscus’ embassy: “*Chrysaphios [the minister] said that Edeko could have a house with a golden roof and wealth if he would leave the Scythians behind and join the Romans [...] he would have a happy life [...] if [...] he kills Attila.*”<sup>84</sup> In the Hungarian chronicler, Anonymus’ eyes, too, the Greeks are not only duplicitous but also cowards, “*losing their minds in terror of the Hungarians*” and fleeing when it comes to open warfare.<sup>85</sup> Another reason for the defeat of King Charles I of Hungary in 1330 in Wallachia was that, after the peace treaty, the Voivode of Wallachia “[...] gave his word to the king he would obey him and grant him a safe return [...], he would also show the right way; the king turned back calmly, trusting in the word of the traitorous rouge [...]”, the Vlachs, on the other hand, had trapped them in a “*narrow gorge*”.<sup>86</sup> That is to say, the schismatic words of the Orthodox are ‘always deceitful’. The humanists of the late Middle Ages several times recounted how dishonest the Byzantines themselves were, whose internal wars enabled the Ottomans to cross the Straits, brought ruin

upon Christianity. The chronicler Bonfini asks “[...] *the gods to corrupt the Greeks, as it was they who first brought the Turks into Europe*”.<sup>87</sup>

Byzantine diplomacy was sophisticated; their every move was methodically and precisely planned, nothing was done without a reason, every decision was carefully considered, and the conclusion of a deal was often postponed for years in case the political situation changed. Their most successful methods, such as educating the sons and relatives of foreign potentates in Constantinople, “*re-educating*” them almost to become ‘Roman’, and showering them with various sonorous **palace titles**, were also used in later diplomatic practice. Just as the Byzantines asked for “*hostages*”, guarantors, to guarantee a peace treaty and taught them classical education, working diligently to ensure that the youth would themselves become Byzantine in due course, so the British educated the children of Indian Maharajas from Eton to Oxford over a long period; and as the sons of barbarians rose through the ranks of the Byzantine army, so the sons of Malay nobility learned the art of war in the service of His or Her Majesty. According to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, it was “*advantageous*” for Byzantium “*if the emperor was about*” to take “*guarantors, that is, hostages*” from the Pechenegs, who enjoyed the imperial “*benefits*”.<sup>88</sup> Theodoric the Great, as a royal offspring of the Ostrogoths, after a few years’ hostage Constantinople, almost considered Greek his mother tongue. The later King Béla III of Hungary, as a youth prince was taken to the City, and since Emperor Manuel had no sons for a long time, became the pretender to the throne, named as Alexios and endowed with the title of *despotes*. Simeon Tsar of Bulgaria also spent years in Byzantium, destined by his father, Khan Boris, to become a priest. Constantinople made him an excellent theologian, who even translated religious texts from Greek into Old Slavonic. The emperor adopted the son of a chieftain, in the old Roman tradition of *adoptio per arma*, and, becoming his father, he bestowed various **gifts** (*roga*) on his “*spiritual child*”, settling a marriage with a Porphyrogenita princess. The daughter Emperor Alexios III married to the Serbian king Stefan. Some refugee princes were also placed at the head of Byzantine provinces.<sup>89</sup>

The Byzantines deliberately bestowed extremely varied and enhanced offices (*hyper- or proto*) on the relatives of foreign princes – who would have known their way around the *basileopator* and *nobilissimos*, who could tell the relationship between *sebastos*, *protosebastos* and *sebastokrator*? – because they wanted to create rivalry between them.<sup>90</sup> It did not matter which prince followed whom in the procession on the way to the Hippodrome and who sat next to whom, close to the Emperor. In indirect politics and symbolic acts, the Byzantines were true artists. Everything had a message, not only for a particular prince’s country in question but also for its neighbours and adversaries. It was also a conscious political de-

cision when Alexios-Béla, shortly before a major campaign against Hungary in 1166, presided at a synod in the City along with the emperor and the patriarch, and later the prince – who was then the Byzantine heir apparent – participated in the military action against his own kin.

The Empire was often forced to recognise actual political ‘content’ behind the titles. Following the Manzikert triumph of 1071, the Seljuks invaded Anatolia, venturing as far as the Bosphorus. The empire needed a firm, strong ally. The only option was Venice, which was still, in principle, under Byzantine rule, but this entailed paying a severe price. The doge was given the prestigious title of *proto-sebastos*, and his title of *dux Dalmatiae* was confirmed. The Signoria became a virtually independent power.<sup>91</sup>

The Byzantines were masters at “*hosting the pretender*”. in 1127, for example, Prince Álmos was given “*asylum*” and “*shelter and nourishment*” (*nutritio*) in Constantinople. You ‘never know’ when a refugee prince might ‘come in handy’. Géza II, King of Hungary on the other hand, responded with the Greeks’ own weapon: he welcomed the son of Grand Prince Uroš I, his uncle Ban Beloš of the Serbian dynasty of Rascia, and aided the Serbs in their rebellion against Byzantine rule.<sup>92</sup> Later, the Empire welcomed the exiled Boris, the unrecognised son of King Coloman the Learned of Hungary, and the emperor even gave him a Komnenos-princess as his consort. Boris was grateful for the asylum and took part in Manuel’s campaigns against Hungary.<sup>93</sup> The Empire also often turned to establishing a league in certain countries to support Byzantium, supplying it with money or arms. Manuel placed two anti-kings on the Árpád throne, Ladislaus II (1162) and Stephen IV (1163), “*receiving them with cordiality*” and “*bestowing on them many benefits*”.<sup>94</sup> They also eagerly incorporated the sons of princes into the army, or even offered high positions to the lords of their opponents: behind the Normans of southern Italy, Greek diplomacy gladly approached the nobles opposed to the Norman leadership in Italy, or other Lombard lords, and enlisted them in their service. In the 1107 treaty of Devol, there were also Norman, Italian guarantors on the side of Byzantium, who were lured to the side of the Emperor against the Norman Prince Bohemond. It is also well known that Byzantium employed some of its opponents as mercenaries in its own bodyguard: in the heyday of the Varangian Guard, at the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh century, the Varangian army was more numerous than the Scandinavian forces that could attack from the north, from the Black Sea. And if the Varangians did threaten, Byzantium received Anglo-Saxons from the West, who fled after the Norman conquest of England in 1066, and settled them in the Byzantium. King Harald III Hardrada of Norway had only just left Byzantine service and was replaced by Saxons in “*New England*” in the Balkans.<sup>95</sup>

The Empire also “*nurtured*” **pretenders** to thrones and supported rival leagues beyond the borders of Byzantium. The ‘prince’ of Marosvár, Ajtony in Hungary, was deliberately “*built up*” by Byzantium in opposition to St. Stephen. He was “*baptised according to the rite of the Greeks*” in Vidin, and “*gained his power from the Greeks*”.<sup>96</sup> When Stephen turned against him in 1027–1028, he wanted a guarantee that Byzantium would no longer support him. King Stephen’s heir, Prince Emeric’s marriage to a Byzantine princess may have been part of this pact.<sup>97</sup>

When the Palaiologos dynasty gained the upper hand over the Latin Empire, which had submitted to the Mongols, and “*re-founded*” Byzantium (1261), Michael VIII – especially after the Mongols had sacked Thrace in 1263–1264 and again in 1265, and had come within a few hundred miles of Constantinople, having forced the emperor himself to retreat – pursued a policy of security with the Mongols. The seemingly unscrupulous, often double-dealer Byzantine policy was the lifeblood of the new, fragile Palaiologos power. Michael was also able to marry his illegitimate daughter Euphrosyne to the mighty lord of the Golden Horde, Emir Nogai, of Genghisid blood but in practice ruling in place of the khans, who concentrated informal power in his hands and ruled as a quasi-sovereign ruler west of the Dnieper. Constantinople was not particularly disturbed that the emir was already a Muslim.<sup>98</sup> The emperor not only signed a treaty of friendship with the Tartars, but at the end of his reign, Michael VIII was surrounded by Tatar auxiliaries in the City guarded by angels. The emperor even used Mongol troops against his internal Christian opponents, and reviving the Byzantine tradition, he created a Tatar bodyguard. In 1285, the emperor called in Tatar help against rebels in Thessaly.<sup>99</sup> In the fourteenth century the emperors frequently employed Ottoman auxiliaries against their opponents and shipped Muslim armies to Europe.<sup>100</sup>

Although Byzantine autocracy was based on the concentration of power, there was also a level of decentralisation of government. Leo the Wise’s *Taktika* also contains provisions for the military leaders of the territorial government units, the *theme* to decide for themselves on foreign policy issues other than war and peace, where appropriate, especially in the case of border districts. “*The general is the chief officer of the military theme under his command. The emperor appoints him; as far as the officers under him are concerned, some are promoted by his decision, although sent to him by the emperor, and others directly on his own authority. [...] the province’s administration is assigned to him, including military, private, and public matters. [...] The goal of the general is to [...] preserve it free from harm caused by enemies and from other wrongdoing, especially from disorder and mutiny.*”<sup>101</sup> Not only must he “*organise the army*”, but he has the right to negotiate, to make agreements with external powers on matters concerning his district, the **frontier line** which

he defends, the *limes*, partly preserved and partly refortified from Roman times. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the basileus ceded some of his sovereign powers. The *strategos* of certain *themes* were given full powers to conduct foreign affairs, receive ambassadors, conclude truces, establish independent relations, and enter into dynastic marriages. At key points, such as the Kherson in the Crimean Peninsula, the *strategos* could manage the Empire's foreign affairs on his behalf. The head of the *theme* was also entitled to make independent decisions to defend the frontier. A series of fortifications erected from Szerém (Sirmium, Srem, present-day Serbia) through Singidunum (Belgrade), Haram, Kő (Keve) to Barancs (Braničevo) formed the basis of medieval Hungarian frontier castles. The head of the empire, stretching from the Danube to the Persian borders, was forced to delegate his power. Nor did the head of the **Exarchate of Ravenna** have time to wait for instructions from Constantinople. Of course, this did not mean that the *strategos* of the *theme* had a completely free hand to take a stand in foreign affairs, say, towards the Pechenegs, for example, as they saw fit since they were under extremely tight control and were drawn mainly from a narrow circle of aristocratic families close to the imperial dynasties. Still, even during the twelfth-century, under the power of Manuel Komnenos, there were examples when the head of a Danube frontier region made alliances with the Árpáds and turned against the *basileus* (see, for example, Andronikos, the emperor's cousin at the head of the Naissos *theme* in 1153). Of course, the Árpáds themselves enticed the Komnenos dynasty members with promises of territories.<sup>102</sup>

In Byzantium, the *rhetors*, the 'expert' diplomats, specialised in a particular area or state. Quite reasonably, rhetors were 'trained' to 'specialise' in a particular people, a particular power, and to master its customs, religion and language. Priscus took with him "*Rusticius, who understood the Hun language. He had come with us to Scythia.*"<sup>103</sup> Throughout their 'training' rhetors had to demonstrate their knowledge of the customs and culture of foreigners. Many had already dealt with foreign ambassadors arriving in Byzantium before their missions. The envoy, as Constantine Porphyrogenitus considers important, had to be aware that "*Patzinakia is distant a five days journey from Uzia and Chazaria, a six days journey from Alania, a ten days journey from Mordia, one day's journey from Russia, a four days journey from the Turks' land, half a day's journey from Bulgaria; to Cherson it is very near, and to Bosphorus closer still.*"<sup>104</sup> A highly skilled rhetor knew that if he were on a mission to a powerful Muslim ruler or to the khan of a nomadic tribe, he would need to bring a suitable gift with a symbolic message, such as a noble, well-trained saker falcon. The messenger also had a **representational** task; he had to carry "*appropriate gifts*".<sup>105</sup> Priscus took "*silk garments and Indian gems*" to the tribal chieftains of the Huns,<sup>106</sup> but he was aware of the importance of informal



representation, for example, to welcome the widow of Prince Bleda, Attila's brother with "three silver phials, red skins, Indian pepper, palm fruit, and other delicacies [...], which are esteemed by the barbarians as not produced in the country."<sup>107</sup> The rhetor had also to be aware of what the Huns valued. He also had to understand that "when we wished to pitch our tent on a hill, the barbarians who met us prevented us, because the tent of Attila was on low ground [...]."<sup>108</sup> The good ambassador also had to know the internal relations of each foreign nation: to whom, for example, he should give his gifts and in what order. Priscus reports that the Byzantine envoy to the Akatziri "[...] did not give them [gifts] in the right order to the kings of the people, so that [...] the most important received them second", and because he was "ignored, [...] he called on Attila to help him against his fellow kings".<sup>109</sup> War broke out, and the Huns launched war against certain tribes of the Akatziri. It would not be unprecedented to see behind this a conscious Byzantine *divide et impera* principle. Indeed, Emperor Theodosius II (408–450) had wanted the Akatziri "[...] to renounce their alliance with Attila and side with the Romans".<sup>110</sup> Although many of the Akatziri had surrendered to the Huns, some of their tribes would have been pleased to side with Byzantium against the Huns. In the refined world of Byzantine diplomacy, it would have been inconceivable to offend anyone's customs, for example, by serving pork or wine to Muslims. However, the Lombard Liudprand was kept waiting outside the Chamber of the Sacred Palace for three months, and the Greeks also attempted to "soften him up" by serving not beer but "Greek wine, undrinkable to them, mixed with pine pitch, mastic and resin" to the members of his delegation, which was considered a "disgraceful reception" and was greatly "deplored" by the envoys of Otto I.<sup>111</sup> Byzantine diplomats were aware of the customs of foreign peoples. If they knew that the "barbarians [...] held the meeting on horseback, it was against their custom to dismounting their horses. [...] the Roman ambassadors, in the same way, had gone to meet them".<sup>112</sup> The ambassadors' escort was carefully arranged, and if necessary, they were accompanied by locals so that the ambassador could get to know the 'destination country' even better. Priscus had been on several embassies and had experience. He visited visiting Rome, Damascus, and Alexandria. The good rhetor negotiated a treaty himself: "the Romans, through the intercession of the ambassador Anatolios, made peace with the Huns".<sup>113</sup> The ambassador had to fulfil his mandate under all circumstances. Priscus did not accept a mediator under any pretext: "[...] it was put forward that it was not the procedure for ambassadors not to meet [...] those to whom they were sent, and that they could only negotiate the purpose of their embassy themselves and not through the intermediary of others".<sup>114</sup> Theophanes, sent to negotiate with the invading Hungarians in the 920s, "acted wisely", "implementing whatever he wished".<sup>115</sup> The rhetors knew that they would have to risk their lives. Although the



Eastern powers were aware that they were entitled to diplomatic immunity under the “*law of nations*” (*ius gentium*), as we understand it today, and that the person of the envoys was **inviolable**, the Ottoman sultans sometimes interpreted this in their own way. Although the rhetors “*were not harmed a hair on their head*”, they sent them home with their noses and ears cut off, humiliated. The life of an envoy bringing bad news or making unauthorised claims was saved, but he could easily lose half an eye. Under the *ius gentium*, an envoy’s freedom could not be hindered, yet it happened even in Western Christian foreign policy. The Hungarian government’s **detention** of Sultan Suleiman’s *chiaus* (*çavuş*) in 1521 and his imprisonment for several years caused considerable trouble.

Even Rhetor Priscus could not be sure he would return from his mission alive. What we know of the Huns is best known from his surviving *Fragments*. His work gives us an insight into the workings of early Eastern Roman diplomacy. Even Attila was aware that the seriousness of a Byzantine embassy depended on rank: he demanded that not just anyone but only the “*most distinguished*” of the former consuls should go on a mission to him.<sup>116</sup> The Hun king was aware of “*the rights of the people*”; “*he cried out in his heart that he would have him [Vigilas the interpreter] impaled and made food for birds if he did not respect the rights of envoys*”.<sup>117</sup> Priscus was open to everything, even willing to drink with the barbarians, and even observed, and made a note of it in case it might be of interest to future envoys, that “*to gratify the wife of his friend, he ate, just as he sat on his horse, his attendants raising the tray to his saddlebow*”.<sup>118</sup> Byzantium needed all the **information** it could get about foreign peoples, anything of Attila himself: as he “*showed himself temperate; [...] his cup was of wood, while the guests were given goblets of gold and silver. His dress, too, was quite simple, merely appearing to be clean. The sword he carried at his side, the latchets of his Scythian shoes, and the bridle of his horse were not adorned, like those of the other Scythians, with gold or gems or anything costly*”.<sup>119</sup>

Following Roman tradition, it was customary to **dazzle** the envoys with the glory of the prince and the splendour of his court. In the Hippodrome, ceremonies were performed in their honour, or they were led through the walls of Constantinople. However, when necessary, Byzantium could also humble itself and ask for peace in its own way: it ended a conflict with Hungary in the twelfth century by dazzling its adversary with gifts. As Abu Hamid al-Gharnati, a Muslim traveller to Hungary recorded, “*the lord of Constantinople came asking for peace, bringing with him much treasure and Muslim prisoners of war*”.<sup>120</sup> There were times when the Empire was also prepared to ‘please’ its esteemed ‘partners’ with regular donations. Manuel Komnenos wanted to oust the Venetians from Levantine trade, thus, ordered to give their adversaries, “*the Republic of Genoa 500–500 hyperpyrons as a festive gift every year*”.<sup>121</sup> There was a time when Byzantium was pre-

pared to pay tribute and ransom its captive citizens in the interests of peace. Only rarely did Hungarian invasions in the tenth century end in an event such as when a Hungarian warrior, Botond “*struck a blow*” at the “*iron gate*” of Constantinople and “*cut a breach in it*”.<sup>122</sup> Still, Constantinople sought to forestall military action and pay: “*a ransom of eight gold pieces per head was ordered for the refugees*”. The Hungarians “*rushed to the capital and captured every Thracian soul*”, so the emperor sent an envoy “*to make a pact with them*”, and they agreed to guarantors.<sup>123</sup> After a while, the invaders themselves preferred to “*ask in advance*” the tribute: “*Give us all that you have and go wherever you like*.”<sup>124</sup> There were times when the Empire preferred to pay regular tribute, such as to Attila in the late 440s. “*And the treaty shall be so kept and continue in force until the Romans pay the royal court of Scythians the sum of 700 pounds of gold per annum*.”<sup>125</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bréhier, Louis: *Les institutions de l'empire byzantin*. Paris 1949. 11–21.; 49–58.

<sup>2</sup> Kazhdan, Alexander: *The Byzantine Notion of Diplomacy*. In: *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, Cambridge, March 1990. Eds. Shepard, Jonathan – Franklin, Simon. (Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, 1). Aldershot 1992. 3–21.; 10.; 14–15.

<sup>3</sup> Hunok és rómaiak. Priskos rhétór összes töredéke. (Huns and Romans. The Collected Fragments of Rhetor Priscus). Transl. and ed. Kató, Péter – Lindner, Gyula. Máriabesnyő 2017. (Hereinafter referred to as Priscus) *Excerpta* (= exc.) 8. p. 17.; Priscus, *History*: In: Blockley, R. C.: *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire*. 1. Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus. I–II. (ARCA, Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs, 6). Liverpool 1981–1983. II. 223–376. (Hereinafter Priscus, Blockley edn.) 11, 2. p. 247.

<sup>4</sup> Kazhdan, A.: *Byzantine Notion*. 16.

- <sup>5</sup> Bréhier, L.: Les institutions. 237–238.
- <sup>6</sup> Kazhdan, A.: Byzantine Notion. 16.
- <sup>7</sup> From the chrysobull of Emperor Alexios Komnenos I, 1082: Középkori egyetemes történeti szöveggyűjtemény. (A Collection of Medieval Historical Sources) Ed. Sz. Jónás, Ilona. Budapest 1999. 448. (Hereinafter KETSZ).
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- <sup>10</sup> The speech of Euthymios Tornikes. In: Moravcsik, Fontes Byzantini. 145.
- <sup>11</sup> The speech of Michael Rhetor. In: Moravcsik, Fontes Byzantini. 128.
- <sup>12</sup> The speech of Michael Rhetor. In: Moravcsik, Fontes Byzantini, 127.; 143.
- <sup>13</sup> Unknown Rhetor. In: Moravcsik, Fontes Byzantini. 126.
- <sup>14</sup> Procopius: The Secret History. Transl. Atwater, Richard. Ann Arbor 1961. cap. 6.
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- <sup>19</sup> Komnene, A.: Alexiad, Lib III. 3. pp. 85–86.
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- <sup>22</sup> Komnene, A.: Alexiad, Lib III. 3. pp. 85–86.
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- <sup>24</sup> Unknown Rhetor. In: Moravcsik, Fontes Byzantini. 126.
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- <sup>27</sup> Poem by Theodoros Prodromos for Wreath Ceremony of Alexios Komnenos. In: Moravcsik, Fontes Byzantini. 169–171. A. 171.
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## Empire and Papacy

*(László Pószán)*

For centuries, one of the most important features of the international relations of medieval Europe was the fact that, in parallel with the diversity of Christian kingdoms, the Christian world was also interwoven by and organisation with a uniform tradition, rooted in antiquity and the Roman past, and based on more or less the same principles and institutions: the Church. Christianity, which became the state religion in the fourth century, the idea of **populus Christianus** became a spiritualized version of the Roman notion of the **populus Romanus**, a universalistic cultural and political power, thus this Roman heritage was strongly engraved in the minds of the scribes and clergymen of the Christian world a sense of cultural unity and, connected to that, the illusion of some kind of political unity. The great framework of the history of Europe in the Middle Ages can thus be described as a history of ideas and attempts to create Christian universalism.

The struggle between the empire and the papacy, with its universal claims to power, was essentially political and diplomatic, with only a minor actual military, battlefield aspect. This meant that the opposing sides sought to make their positions and views known, accepted and recognised as widely as possible. For instance, in Central Europe, the princes of the Bohemian House of Přemysl (due to their vassal position) generally sided with the emperor, while the Piasts of Poland or the Hungarian kings of the House of Árpád tended to support papal policy.<sup>1</sup> The claim to political recognition of universal supremacy over the Christian world often saw both the emperor and the papacy intervening in the internal life of other countries, as patrons, arbiters, with titles derived from secular (essentially feudal) or ecclesiastical law. This was the explanation why these two powers had the most active and geographically most extensive diplomatic networks in the medieval Catholic world. (In the East, Byzantium had similar diplomatic organisation and foreign policy). Envoys and agents of the emperor and the pope were constantly on the road with some kind of task. The diplomatic activity of the Holy Roman Emperors and the Holy See did not decrease even in the late Middle Ages. For example, Pope Pius II (1458–1464) sent out 24 legates during his short term of office, an average of four a year. Emperor Frederick III (1440–1493) entrusted 120 legates with diplomatic tasks during his 53-year reign, an average of two per year.<sup>2</sup> Following the Gregorian reform, which established the primacy of the Pope within the Church, the Holy See was in a favourable position in terms of diplomatic opportunities, because it could generally count on the

support and the behaviour of the clergy, who shared the primacy of the **Sacerdotium**, in the interests of the papacy.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, wherever the clergy accepted the unquestionable leadership of the papacy, the Church itself became **de facto** part of Rome's diplomatic network. However, the same possibility was also present for the empire, since for a long time ecclesiastical leaders of the empire opposed the centralising ambitions of the papacy and aligned themselves behind the emperor. Holy Roman rulers exercising their right of investiture could count on the service and support of the imperial church. On both sides, the diplomatic functions were mainly performed by the clergy, similarly to other countries and provinces of Europe. Princes usually sent clergymen as ambassadors, or entrusted them with negotiations and diplomatic duties. This was, of course, also due to the fact that Latin, the most visible sign of Christian cultural unity in the Middle Ages, was the language of international politics, and was spoken mainly by the educated clergy.<sup>4</sup> Political representation and diplomatic activity, based on the dignitaries and organisation of the church, prevailed in the realms of political influence, both in the relationship between the papacy and the empire. The papacy had no direct means of secular coercion, only the **interdictum** (prohibition of the administration of the sacraments) and the **excommunicatio** (excommunication from the Church), and the policy of universal domination of the *Sacerdotium* found its armed support in the aspirations of the princes for independence and in the secular forces opposed to the rulers. The opposition between the popes and the emperors, which escalated into a military confrontation, was thus essentially an internal war between the emperor and the German princes who opposed him, an armed conflict between the duchy of Tuscany, the Norman kingdom of southern Italy, which feared the imperial power expanding into Italy, or the Italian cities, which felt their privileges and economic interests threatened. In the centre of Europe, to the east, north, west and south, the emperor's influence was stronger, and in the peripheral areas of the Christian world (Eastern Europe, the Baltic, Scandinavia, Iceland, Ireland, England, Scotland, Spain, France, southern Italy and Sicily, the Balkans, the Holy Land) and in the border regions with other religions (the Russian and Tatar worlds, the Islamic world), the papacy's position and influence were stronger. William the Conqueror, for example, sought the confirmation of his English crown from the Pope, not from the Emperor.<sup>5</sup> But of course both sides sought to step outside these boundaries and to strengthen their own interests at the expense of the other. Rome sent legates and nuncios to the *Imperium*, just as the Empire maintained diplomatic relations with the Christian peripheries, the princes of Rus, Byzantium and the Muslim rulers.<sup>6</sup>

Authorization of the medieval envoys were essentially ad hoc; their mandates being linked to current tasks. However, in some respects the papacy was in an ad-

vantageous position, as an archpriest who supported the papal supremacy could be appointed as the Holy See's *de facto* permanent diplomat, when it granted special status to certain archbishops. Those with the title **legatus perpetuus** or **legatus natus** represented the Apostolic See permanently in the territories of their diocese and jurisdiction. At the end of the Medieval Era, the archbishops of Canterbury, York, Reims, Cologne, Prague, Toledo, Graz, Salzburg or Esztergom had such *legatus perpetuus* powers. A similar "permanent" representation was only established by the empire in the first third of the fifteenth century, when Sigismund of Luxemburg sent permanently resident imperial envoys to the Sforza court in Milan. While the papacy and the empire, with their universal claims to supremacy, were for a long time content to send legates and other delegates on ad hoc diplomatic missions for specific matters, certain monastic orders sought to maintain permanent ambassadors both to the Holy See and to the imperial court in order to promote their interests more effectively. For example, the Teutonic Order, founded at the end of the twelfth century, acquired the right to have a permanent envoy (*procurator generalis*) with full authority in the Papal court from the thirteenth century onwards.<sup>7</sup> In 1216, Emperor Frederick II granted the Teutonic Order the privilege of having two members as permanent residents of the imperial court, where they could represent the monastic knights on a permanent basis. These two members of the order moved with the imperial court and followed the emperor wherever he went.

During the long conflict between the papacy and the empire, both sides tried to justify their universal sovereignty with political, theological, historical and legal arguments, which consequently required an intense diplomatic activity and foreign policy. Both the **Imperium** and the **Sacerdotium** sought to convince the ecclesiastical and secular authorities and dignitaries of the Christian world of their position and to neutralise or negate the arguments of the other side. Thus, the imperial and papal diplomacy primarily served the role of political propaganda, in which the use of language, the use of words, gestures, the symbolic content of certain actions and protocols adapted to political content were of particular importance. The ideal of the empire and the imperial concept originated in the late Roman era and was handed down to the Middle Ages, according to which the **Imperium Christianum's** ruler is the Vicar of God on earth, and his power derives from the Lord and he himself is *propagator et defensor fidei* (propagator and defender of the faith). This religious idea assigned religious and missionary tasks to the emperor, whose mission was to bring Christianity to victory everywhere.<sup>8</sup> However, in the second half of the ninth century, with reference to the so-called **Donation of Constantine** (*Constitutum Constantini*), the papacy already made universal claims to sovereignty. Pope John VIII (872–882) claimed the leading of

*Christianitas* as a papal office and considered the Church of Rome as the “retainer of the sovereignty over all peoples”. (*omnium gentium retinet principatum*). On this basis, the pope is entitled to confer the title of emperor and to crown him, whose main duty is to defend the Roman Church (*defensor ecclesiae Romanae*).<sup>9</sup> This idea of the papacy, in connection with the imperial coronation, was subsequently repeatedly raised, and the imperial crown was sought to be understood as a beneficium bestowed by the Pope. With the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire in 962, the ideal and political reality of the empire was revived in the West. The chronicler Widukind called Otto I (936–973), who revived imperialism, *amor mundi et totius orbis caput* (beloved by the world and head of the whole globe).<sup>10</sup> The emperors who succeeded him exercised universal supremacy by governing “Rome, the head of the world” (*Roma caput mundi*) as heads of the “great family” of Christian kings, while at the same time maintaining full control of the Church of Rome, the “mother of all churches” (*mater omnium ecclesiarum*), i.e. the bishop of Rome, the pope. Otto III (983–1002) was in every sense an emperor Romanus: he lived in Rome and ruled his empire from there, and with it the Church.<sup>11</sup> Conrad II (1024–1039) was the first German monarch to claim the title of king of not only Germany but also of the Romans (*rex Romanorum*), thus indicating his claim to the imperial throne. His son Henry III (1039–1056) did the same, so that the title “King of Rome” or “King of the Romans” became an expression of the political claim to universal imperial supremacy. In the seal of Conrad II, and thus on all the letters he sent, was the inscription *Roma caput mundi tenet orbis frena rotundi* (Rome Capital of the World, which holds the reins of the globe), making it rather clear to everyone that the emperor was the head of the Christian world. During his reign, in the use of words and the documentary practice of the imperial chancellery, Rome referred to the synonym of the emperor (and not the pope).<sup>12</sup>

The Western Christian *Imperium*, established in 962, had no fixed boundaries, as the theorists of imperial power understood it, because of the duty to spread the faith. As Christianity took root in more and more areas, so did the empire itself. As the emperors worked with zeal to spread the Christian faith, so the Christian empire of the great family of Catholic princes, led by the emperor, grew. In 1000, the year of the millennium, Otto III added the term *servus Iesu Christi* to his titles, which had hitherto been used only for the apostles, and from 1001 he used the title “the servant of the apostles and emperor of the Romans by the will of God the saviour” (*servus apostolorum et secundum voluntatem Dei salvatoris Romanorum imperator augustus*).<sup>13</sup> These titles reflect the divine duty of the imperial dignitary, the task of spreading Christianity, and the notion that the empire is in fact the house of God (*domus Dei*) on earth. His ruler, as Vicar of God on earth, was responsible before God for having done all he could to spread

Christianity. This 'house' was also the place of the Christian kingdoms under the emperor's rule. The emperor alone, as head of this 'house' and of the great family of Christian princes, had the right to confer the title of king. The power of kings came from God, but only through the mediation of his earthly vicegerent, the emperor, which meant a hierarchical relationship. It was in the spirit of this political ideal that Otto III sent a crown to the Hungarian Grand Prince Stephen (Vajk) and proclaimed Bolesław the Brave king of Poland and 'brother and ally' (*frater et cooperator imperii*) of the Empire.<sup>14</sup> In 1085, Henry IV (1056–1106) granted the Czech prince Vratislav a royal title (which was not hereditary at the time), and Frederick I (Barbarossa) (1152–1189) granted prince Vladislav II a hereditary royal title. When Henry II (1002–1024) was crowned emperor (1014), he took the title of "*servant of the servants of Christ*" (*servus servorum Christi*) instead of "*servant of the apostles*", which had been the title of popes since Gregory the Great (590–604).<sup>15</sup> This implied a change in the conception of the imperial dignitary as an apostolic office and, by taking over the previous title of pope, it called into question the pope's position within the Church and his right to dispose of *plenitudo potestatis*. The pope was *iudex ordinarius omnium*, i.e. the judge of all canon law matters within the church.<sup>16</sup>

The minority of Henry IV (1056–1106), the regency and the internal weakening of the empire (the Saxon rebellion in 1073) created a favourable situation for the reform efforts proclaiming the **freedom of the church** (*libertas ecclesiae*) and the supremacy of the pope. At the Council of Rome in 1059, Pope Nicholas II (1059–1061) succeeded in having the new Pope elected by the College of Cardinals alone. The election had to be held in Rome and this process excluded the emperor, the Roman noble families and generally all secular elements. However, the 1059 Council of Rome was not a universal one, and many prelates did not attend, so the emperors did not regard it as normative. Pope Innocent II (1130–1143), for example, had the support of Emperor Lothair II (1125–1137), as opposed to Anacletus II (1130–1138). When the majority of the cardinals elected Alexander III (1159–1181) pope in 1159, Frederick I recognised his own supported candidate, Victor IV (1159–1164), then Paschal III (1164–1168), and then Callixtus III (1168–1178), as pope. The emperor, as the defender of the Church and head of the Christian world, held a council in Pavia in 1160, where the clerics who supported him excommunicated Alexander III. In response, Alexander and his supporters excommunicated Frederick and his supporters from the Church.<sup>17</sup> With the papal election regulations of 1059, Nicholas II wanted to ensure that the main thrust of Church policy for the future could be set in relation to the aims of the papacy, since the cardinals were appointed by the Pope. From the time of Gregory VII (1073–1085) onwards, most of the papal legates were selected from

the cardinals.<sup>18</sup> A year before the Council of Rome in 1059, Cardinal Humbert gave a new interpretation to the concept of *simonia*, including in the category the appointment of clergy to church offices by a lay person. He thus questioned the emperor's authority over the church and the right of investiture. On the basis of this, the Council of 1059 argued that the imperial title and coronation does not elevate the emperor above the Church, but, as Pope John VIII claimed in the ninth century, obliged him to defend the Catholic Church and Christianity, and thus formulated the idea of the Church's supremacy over the secular power. The ecclesiastical policy of the supremacy of the *Sacerdotium* rejected the sanctity of the monarchs, including the emperor, and considered them as laymen who, for the salvation of their own souls and those of their subjects, had to accept the guidance and leadership of the Church (more precisely, the papacy).<sup>19</sup> It was under Pope Alexander II (1061–1073) that the collection known as the Dictatus of Avranches was written, which emphasised the secular authority of the Roman Church under the Pope, by stating that all temporal powers were subject to the Pope and that the Pope alone was entitled to the badges of authority (*insigne quod vocatur regnum*).

From the middle of the eleventh century, increasingly explicit formulation of the papal vision of power led directly to the publication of the very radical *Dictatus papae* in 1075, under Pope Gregory VII. According to this document, the Pope alone could use imperial (i.e. universal) symbols of power, he was the only one whose feet all princes kissed, and he could dethrone or crown emperors and kings. The leadership of the Christian world was given to the pope not the emperor. In the twelfth century, the term *potestas absoluta* appeared in connection with the notion of *plenitudo potestatis* (plenitude of papal power) within the Church, which included not only ecclesiastical power but also temporal sovereignty and became a linguistic form of expression of papal sovereignty. In 1245, Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254), at the General Council of Lyon, declared that the Roman Empire (i.e. the Empire) was subject to the jurisdiction of the Holy See.<sup>20</sup>

In the diplomatic-political struggle between the empire and the papacy, because of the extensive correspondence coming along with it, the terms used in the Chancellery's practice became rather important. From the time of Gregory VII, the papal chancellery systematically sought to relativise and diminish the Empire and imperial dignity. It consistently used the term *regnum Teutonicum* instead of *Imperium Romanum*, and the formula *rex Teutonicorum* instead of *imperator augustus*, in order to place the empire and the emperor on a same level with other Christian kings. The designation "German king" or "German kingdom" reduced the authority of the emperor, since his empire was "Rome", which was above the other Christian kingdoms. The political (and diplomatic) ambition of



the Gregorian papacy was to “*demote*” and make the empire a kingdom, so that the emperor, as German king, was in effect equal to other European rulers, and the papacy was the universal supreme power over Christian kings of equal rank. The Pope, through his power of loosing and binding, could judge the **apitude** (*idoneitas*) of rulers, the aspects, and criteria for which were determined by the Church.<sup>21</sup> The Gregorians imagined rulers as obedient servants of the Church, wielding their swords in accordance with the will of the Pope. In contrast to the papal arguments for sovereignty, which emphasised the notion of *idoneitas*, it was under the Salian emperors that the authority of the ruler based on Roman law began to appear, understood essentially as the acceptance of the emperor’s government wherever Christians lived.

From the mid-twelfth century, during the Stauf dynasty, the relationship between the papacy and the empire became more pronounced than ever before. From 1157 the term *Sacrum Imperium* (Holy Empire) appeared in imperial charters, as a reaction to the Gregorian papacy’s attempt to secularise the power of the monarchs and to make them more like other laymen.<sup>22</sup> In imperial charters, the terms Roman Empire and Holy Empire were used in the same sense, as synonyms for each other. The Stauf emperors thus emphasized the divine purpose and mission of the *Imperium*. Similarly to the Church, the *Imperium* is also ‘holy’ and ‘Roman’, and above it stands God directly.<sup>23</sup> However, the Holy See strongly resisted any assumptions of similarity or identity between *Romana ecclesia* and *Romanum imperium*, and consistently continued the diplomatic practice of avoiding the use of the term *imperium* in papal documents. After the peace treaty with Frederick I (1177), Pope Alexander III used the word only once in his 19 surviving documents. The papacy refused to accept the vast territory under the rule of the Staufs, stretching from Sicily to the Baltic Sea, as an empire, but, like the previous popes, referred to it only as *regnum Teutonicum*.<sup>24</sup> In the Ottonian and Salic period, the emperors used primarily the term *caput mundi*, “*head of the world*”, which at the same time interpreted the empire as the family of Christian princes and the emperor as its head. However, a hymn of praise written in 1163 already called Frederick I *domini mundi* (*lord of the world*).<sup>25</sup> The earlier concept of the emperor as ‘head of the family’, i.e. essentially private law, took on a broader, public law interpretation in the Stauf period, derived from Roman law. During the Staufs’ reign, imperial diplomacy also argued that the *Imperium* was older than the Church (and the Papacy) and that Jesus Christ was born in this Roman Empire.

The *Imperium*, the universal supremacy and its divine purpose and mission, was handed down from the Romans to the Franks and from there to the Germans (*translatio imperii*). Linked to this political ideal was the concept of Frederick

I to try to have Charlemagne canonised (1165). At the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century, according to the interpretation of imperial diplomacy, God divided the various tasks in the world into three parts: the *sacerdotium*, or the affairs of the Church, was entrusted to Italy, the *studium*, or the affairs of knowledge, to France, and the *imperium*, with its universal power over the world (*dominium mundi*), to Germany. This implied that the imperial dignitary could only be held by German monarchs. Therefore, from the thirteenth century onwards, the title of German monarchs increasingly included the terms *futurus imperator* or *futurus caesar*, while the ruler elected by the German ecclesiastical and secular princes was called not a German but a Roman king as the ruler of the Roman Empire, who was also the emperor (*Romanorum rex semper augustus*).<sup>26</sup> This argument questioned the necessity of a papal coronation to obtain the imperial dignitary. The title *Romanorum rex* and *augustus* were closely linked in the documentary practice and use of words of the Staufs, which expressed the fact that the ruler elected by the German princes was the successor of the Roman emperors, regardless of the coronation of the pope, i.e. the election of the German king was also the election of the emperor.<sup>27</sup> In the Ottonian and Salian periods, the titles of German king and Holy Roman emperor were still understood separately, but the Stauf rulers ascribed a mutually conditional content to the two titles. Therefore, it is not surprising that the first Stauf ruler, Conrad III (1138–1152) used the title of emperor without papal coronation.<sup>28</sup> The use of the term “*Holy Roman Empire*” indicated the same content, because it endowed the power of the ruler with sacral meaning. If the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church can elect the pope by divine inspiration, the ecclesiastical and secular princes of the Holy Roman Empire could also elect the emperor led by god; i.e., they can elect the *augustus* without papal consent. The term *Sacrum Imperium*, or *Sacrum Romanum Imperium*, meant more than the person and universal authority of the emperor. It also included the prince-electors, who elected the ruler of the empire under divine inspiration (*denuntiatores divine providentie*). This Stauf-era political ideal became a legal reality under Emperor Louis of Bavaria (Wittelsbach) (1314–1347). On 16 July 1338, the German princes declared that the monarch of their choice did not need a papal coronation or confirmation to be the legitimate ruler of the *Sacrum Imperium*. In August 1338, the Emperor’s law, entitled *Licet iuris*, stated that imperial *dignitas et potestas* (imperial dignitary and power) came from God alone, and that only with the support of a majority of the princes entitled to vote could one become King and Emperor of Rome (*statim et sola electione est versus rex et imperator Romanorum*). Just as in the Roman Catholic Church, the elected Pope immediately became the successor of St. Peter, the elected German ruler immediately became *augustus*, the ruler of the Empire.<sup>29</sup> Despite the cate-

goric opposition and rejection of the Papacy, the idea that the election by German princes could elevate a person to the position of Emperor resonated in contemporary Europe. From the second half of the thirteenth century until the sixteenth century, French politics was almost always accompanied by the ambition to elect a French king or a French prince as king of Rome.

If the empire originated its political position from the ideal of *translatio imperii*, the papacy also tried to interpret it and support it according to its own taste. Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) based his political communication, his diplomacy and the language of his documents on this idea, which was also advocated by the emperor. According to the papal Curia's arguments, it was the papacy who played the *translator* role in the transmission of the Roman heritage, i.e. the supreme institution and power to transmit it. It was the Apostolic See that passed the Roman Empire from the Greeks (i.e. Byzantium) to the Germanic peoples in the person of Charlemagne (*Romanorum imperium in persona magnifice Karoli a Grecis transtulit in Germanos*). The *translatio imperii* did not only mean that the pope transferred the Roman Empire to the Germans but also that he had given the German princes the right to choose their rulers, so the right to hold the imperial office still came from the Pope.<sup>30</sup> Since it is the Pope who **anoints, consecrates** and crowns the emperor, he has the right to examine and, if necessary, reject the candidates of the princes. The selection of the emperor is therefore "*principally and finally*" (*principaliter et finaliter*) for the pope, i.e. the source of imperial power is the Apostolic See.<sup>31</sup> While the imperial chancellery used the formula *Romanorum rex semper augustus* so as to say that the Roman king was *augustus*, the papal diplomacy used the title *rex Romanorum imperatorem electus* to emphasise that "*only*" an emperor was elected.<sup>32</sup> The Stauf rulers also often referred to legal system of the late antiquity and Roman law, against the papacy. From there was the principle adopted to refer to the emperor as *animata lex in terris* (**living law on earth**). At the imperial assembly in Roncaglia in 1158, four Roman jurists (*doctores*) from Bologna hailed Frederick I as the law incarnate. The diplomacy of his grandson, Frederick II (1215–1250), sought to prove by means of ancient Roman public law arguments that the papacy could have no role in the election of the emperor. He claimed that the *populus Romanus* delegated its right and power to the emperor, meaning that it was the Roman senate who elevated the *Imperator Augustus* to the dignity of emperor, and the papacy and the Church had and will have nothing to do with it. The reference to ancient Rome and its legacy, carried on by the medieval emperors, was also expressed by Frederick II in his buildings, which were visible and presented to all. Following the example of the ancient emperors, he erected a triumphal arch and his own statue in Capua, and in Cremona he held an actual triumphal march in 1237, in the style of ancient times.<sup>33</sup>



Fig. 1. Frederick II and his Falcon

To make its power clear and unchallengeable, the papacy also used spectacular demonstrative means. It attempted to place chivalry at the service of the Church by creating the concept and content of the *miles Christi*, by putting aside private law and feudal relations, and by enveloping the everyday life of military society, knighthood, the values and ethics of chivalry, and even the act of war itself, with the holy war proclaimed in the name of Christ, the crusades, in Christian rites. Nothing demonstrated the leading role of the Holy See in the Catholic world better than the Crusades, for it was the Pope who called it, who determined its purpose and its time, and who proclaimed it as the Lord's will. Anyone who ignored or opposed this, turned against God and committed a serious sin. On the other hand, crusaders were forgiven of their sins and saved, as they served the Lord, not the earthly powers. This service was possible wherever the Pope declared a crusade for political interests. Pope Innocent III extended the applicability of the crusade to all possible opponents and enemies of the Apostolic See, and announced that the Christian knights were to defend the Church and Christianity with the guidance of the pope. He declared the duty formerly attributed to the



emperor to be the general duty of the nobility, independently of the monarchs, and gave religious content to their lives. The Gregorians deprived the dignity of the monarchy of its sacral character, but by the Crusades, they gave a sacral character to the activities of the crusaders and thus enhanced their social status. By the twelfth century, rulers felt the need to have the religious prestige of the crusaders and embarked on crusades, i.e. they took up arms and went to war at the call of the Pope; the Holy See could demonstrate more than ever its leadership and supremacy in the Christian world.



Fig. 2. The Excommunication of Frederick II by Pope Gregory IX

However, the fact that the military action of Frederick II forced the papacy to abandon Rome (and Italy) in the first half of the thirteenth century and to support the French king, and thus gradually came under the influence of those who supported it, significantly curtailed the ideal of papal supremacy. Urban IV (1261–1264) added six French cardinals to the College of Cardinals and offered the crown of Sicily to King Louis IX (1226–1270) brother Charles of Anjou (who defeated the Stauffs in Italy). Martin IV (1281–1285) was chancellor of France before being elected as pope, after which he continued supporting French political

interests. Celestine V (1294) was already completely under the influence of the Angevins, and even moved his seat to Naples. This example was followed by King Philip IV of France (1285–1314) when he moved the seat of the papacy from Italy to Avignon.<sup>34</sup> However, at the same time, the ideal of imperial universalism did not disappear, partly because of the internal conflicts and strife between the Italian states, and partly because of the new consolidation of the Empire from the first third of the fourteenth century. Dante, for example, considered a world monarchy, independent of the papacy and governed by an emperor, to be the only feasible way to create universal peace, just like the first Roman emperor Augustus had done it when Christ was born. The dissolution of the Roman Empire caused a series of wars and conflicts that followed, and would continue to do so until the reestablishment of an empire as a universal power.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the power struggle for the throne that broke out between the Wittelsbachs and the Luxemburgs in the mid-1340s, Louis of Bavaria and his opponent, and also his successor, Charles IV (1346–1378) continued to promote the political ideal of imperial universal power. Following the re-regulation of the election of the emperor by Louis of Bavaria (1338), Charles IV made agreements with Popes Urban V (1362–1370) and Gregory XI (1370–1378) that the bishops in Germany could only be appointed with the consent of the emperor. The Western schisma, that happened after 1378, further weakened the position of the church and created real opportunities for the imperial ideas of supremacy. Contemporaries were looking forward to a universal council to restore the unity of the Church, and in the lack of a legitimate pope, Emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg (1410–1437), the Emperor took the destiny of Christianity into his own hands. Just as the first universal council (Nicaea, 325) was convened by Emperor Constantine to settle the disputes between the many Christian denominations, so it was the emperor who had to put an end to the chaos of the schism in the Western Church. The kings, princes and prelates of the Christian world of the time took note of this clear claim to universal supremacy, accepted it and did not hinder the establishment of the Council. Sigismund invited to the Council of Constance not only the ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries of the Roman Catholic world, but also the Greek (Byzantine) Emperor and the Orthodox Church, in order to remedy the schism that had existed between the Eastern and Western Churches since 1054, alongside the Western schism. In the time of Sigismund of Luxemburg, the **ideal of imperial supremacy** no longer included only Catholic Christianity, but also the **Orthodox world**. After all, the ecclesiastical union was not established, but following the election of Martin V (1417–1431) as Pope, the Emperor's clear leadership succeeded in ending the schism in the Western Church. It was confirmed for all that the true head, protector and ruler of the Catholic world was

the emperor.<sup>36</sup> The emperor, however, could be no other than the German and Roman ruler chosen by the German princes, so that from the second half of the fifteenth century the Empire became known as the “*Holy Roman Empire of the German nation*”<sup>37</sup> Although the papacy still tried to reclaim its former political role by declaring crusades against the Turks and calling for Christian unity, it did not achieve the success it had in the eleventh or twelfth centuries.

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## The System of Medieval Diplomacy

(*Attila B*árány)

Medieval diplomacy did not know and use the institution of **permanent embassies**. Each envoy was given a mission, he delivered a letter or a gift, and in some cases, he interpreted the purpose of his mission, and returned home after completing it. In most cases, especially before the fifteenth century, the task of the envoy was to deliver the royal letter entrusted to them. **Royal letters** were the main source of medieval foreign policy. One of the shocking moments in medieval Hungarian history was when, in May 1241, Béla IV, fleeing from the Tatars, sent Stephen Bánca, former chancellor and Bishop of Vác, to Pope Gregory IX.<sup>1</sup> The bishop informed the Pope about the Mongol devastation and was then entrusted with the organisation of a crusade.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the death of Gregory IX meant that no more aid was provided, however, Béla IV was aware of the feud between Emperor Frederick II and the Pope, and therefore charged his envoy with the task of asking the Emperor for help at the same time. In return for his help against the Mongols, Béla was also willing to accept imperial vassalage, a point later invoked by the rulers of the empire. The interesting thing about the offer, however, is that the original of the letter has not survived and is known only from indirect, narrative sources, namely from those of the imperial chancellor's notary Richard of San Germano and the annals of the monastery of St. Pantaleon in Cologne.<sup>3</sup>

The most prestigious Western ambassadorial mission to come to early Árpádera Hungary arrived in 1093. According to the legend of Saint Ladislaus the princes "*of the Franks, Lotharingians and Alemannians* [preparing for the crusade...] *asked Ladislaus [...] to be their leader and guide*".<sup>4</sup> However, there is just one 'slight problem' with the story. The king died in 1095 (29 July) before Pope Urban II announced the Crusade at the Council of Clermont (26 November), so the envoys should have known about the war effort long before. Nevertheless, it is possible that the organisers and *later* the leaders of the First Crusade had contacted Ladislaus during his lifetime, and that news of his battles against the Cumans and the Byzantines may have reached the West earlier.

The letters of the monarch were usually written by the **chancery**, but in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there were examples of the monarch **dictating** the text himself. Behind the blunt, extremely concise letter of Louis the Great to Joanna of Naples, written after the assassination of his brother, Andrew (Aversa, 1345), in just three sentences, one can sense the indignation of the king. He would

not tolerate that the letter abide by the rules of diplomatic protocol: „*The indecent life you have already led, the possession of royal dignity, the neglect of punishment [...] prove that you were guilty of the murder of your husband. [...] the avengers of sins, the immortal gods live on.*”<sup>55</sup> In the sixteenth century there were already examples of rulers actually writing letters themselves: the tireless, hard-working King Philip II of Spain often drafted his letters himself, and insisted on personally examining them and then signing them with his ‘trademark’, his handwritten ‘signature’: “*Yo el Rey*” (“*I, the King*”). This is quite different from the legendary account of **Procopius’ Secret History**, lamenting the decline of “old” Roman civilisation and the rise to the throne of the new “barbarians” and, of the Thracian–Illyrian low-born bodyguard officer, Emperor Justinus (518–527). “*They cut out the shapes of four letters from a piece of wood, these signify in Latin that I have read (it) [...] They dipped a pen into the ink [...], and put the pen in the Emperor’s hand, then they laid the piece of wood on the paper to be signed, and guided the Emperor’s hand so that his pen outlined the four letters [...].*”<sup>56</sup>

There were also rulers in the Middle Ages who considered it important to have a full overview of state affairs and insisted that any letter or instruction that came from them should be placed before their eyes. Signing *manu propria*, ‘with one’s own hand’, did not automatically mean that the monarch was fully aware of what was communicated above his signature. Even Charles VI the Mad, King of France (1380–1422) or King Henry VI of England (1422–1461, 1470–1471), who often lapsed into years of immobility and catatonic schizophrenia, signed documents without being fully aware of their contents. A great politician ruler like King Henry II of England (1154–1189), however, could not sign anything that did not reflect his personal will, which is why his travelling chancery followed him everywhere.

One cannot assume that a pope with little affinity for politics would have verified the content of even the *briefs* (Latin: *breve*), the relatively concise, simpler papal letters, authenticated by wax seal, mostly used in **papal diplomacy** – yet the “*angelic pope*”, the former hermit Celestine V, ‘chosen’ by the powerful Cardinal Benedetto Caetani in 1294 on to the See of St. Peter definitely did not. Obviously, not every pontiff could have been an Innocent III, but the *motu proprio* term in the signature, which became common practice from the sixteenth century onwards, was intended to indicate that the Pope was indeed acting “*on his own initiative*” – not upon petition or request. One of the first **apostolic** letters in Hungarian history, sent by Gregory VII to King Solomon in 1074, faithfully reflects the will of the infallible head of the Church who issued the *Dictatus papae*, that the monarch had obtained “*the sceptre of the kingdom by apostolic [...] grace*”, since “*Hungary, which Stephen I offered and handed over to St. Peter with all rights*

and powers, belongs to the Holy Church of Rome”.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, a Renaissance pontiff such as Leo X of Medici (1513–1521) could not have failed to notice the smallest detail in curial diplomacy.

For each mission, the envoy received a separate letter of safe-conduct, *salvus conductus*, which also confirmed his mandate. If the envoy returned, he received a new *salvus conductus*. With a *salvus conductus*, no one could stop him at the borders, he enjoyed a certain privilege similar to today’s diplomatic immunity, and he could move freely between ‘ports’, he had free *passagium* between *harbours* (*portus*) – the origin of today’s *passport*. In 1416, Bertalan Mokcsai, who oversaw preparing King Sigismund’s negotiations in England, needed a special letter of safe-conduct from the English monarch to cross from Calais to Dover.<sup>8</sup> Today’s diplomatic practice retains traces of this in that even today ‘*extraordinary and plenipotentary*’ envoys are appointed, who are called ‘extraordinary’, not ‘permanent’. Their credentials also preserve this archaic practice: their title – *Excellentia* – still refers to „exceptionality”, „distinguished authority”. The members of today’s *corps diplomatique* enjoy similar consular rights, let us just think of the cars with light blue ‘CD’ plates, or the consular corridors at airports. For each mission, the envoys received a letter of authorisation (*procuratio*), which confirmed what they were authorised to do (*mandatum*), what their ‘plenipotentiary powers’ and ‘abilities’ (*potestas, facultas*) covered. The Polish Chancellor Krzysztof Szydłowiecki was commissioned by Sigismund I the Old (1506–1548) in 1523 to attend the meeting with Ferdinand of Habsburg and Louis II, King of Hungary in Wiener Neustadt “to conclude agreements, to confirm or renew [with Ferdinand] treaties [previously concluded with Emperor Maximilian], or to abandon [certain things contained in] them”. “What he [the King] confirms as being considered lawful, accepted firm for ever as if he had established it himself.” The credentials always stated that the delegates were appointed and sent envoys (*designatus et missus*).<sup>9</sup> The envoys presented their **credentials, accreditation**, which is a modern term but derives from the original term (*credentialis*), as a proof of their mission. Even today, the ambassadors are to renew their accreditation when there is a change of government, even if they remain in post: they must show that there has been a change in who has entrusted them with the conduct of state affairs, who is giving him “*credence*”. In England, for example, the Audit Office granted envoys an advance on their **expenses**, which they had to account for in full on their return. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the envoys also had their own written **instructions** (*instructio*). Chancellor Szydłowiecki was given detailed instructions by the Polish monarch on how to deal with Ferdinand and Louis II on various matters, such as „Prussian” matters (*De re Prutenica*): “declare how desirable it is to meet the Archduke. [...] You must also visit the Papal Legate.”<sup>10</sup>

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there were already instructions reflecting the acute problems of the international situation, calling for immediate action, requiring the envoy to take real action and report back within a short time. In the case of the Hungarian envoys, János Drágfi, Master of the Treasury, Péter Korlátkövi, Steward, and István Werbőczy, Chief Justice – the latter being in fact the „brain” of the delegation –, who were commissioned to the Reichstag in Nuremberg, which was to be held in the autumn of 1522, then postponed several times, and finally held in December, the instructions given were all the more justified. At the given time the Turks had surrounded Rhodes, and the embassy’s task was to remind the Imperial estates with this trump card that they needed to help Hungary even more.<sup>11</sup> In 1468, Matthias Corvinus (King of Hungary, 1458–1490) gave his curial envoys a very concise and succinct instruction on how to deal with the Pope on a controversial issue concerning Csáktornya (Čakovec, present-day Croatia): he was to “*persuade His Holiness not to interfere in vain in such matters.*” The monarch made it clear that he does “*not expect the Apostolic See to judge our cities [...] in secular matters. Our kingdom [...] has its own customs and laws [...] all foreign interference is against our people.*”<sup>12</sup> Letters of *procuratio* were usually drawn up by the chancery, but there were also examples in the Renaissance, especially in the case of a strong-willed ruler like Matthias, who would not tolerate interference in his affairs, of **the ruler dictating** the dispatches himself. The above document is free of any ceremonial frills, so that the king’s own voice can be heard behind it. You can almost hear the great Corvinus himself, when he retorts with inimitable sarcasm his father-in-law, King Ferdinand of Naples, who sent him an Aragonese horse tamer instead of tangible help against the Turks: “*we never use such things in war. [...] it is a fact evident to half the world that we have grown up with arms; we have fought with many nations [...] on horses tamed by ourselves [...]. [...] we had no desire for mares jumping with tangled legs, [...] in serious matters [...] we [need] ones that are able to stand firm.*”<sup>13</sup>

As a counterpoint to this, in the age of the Jagiellonians in Hungary (1490–1526) the **estates** had more and more influence on state affairs, and the **Diet** of 1522 appointed envoys to be sent to the Reichstag, with the subsequent approval of the king.<sup>14</sup> The selection of the envoys – János Gosztonyi, bishop of Transylvania, Ladislaus Macedóniai, bishop of Szerém (Srem, present-day Serbia), István Werbőczy, Chief Justice – thus corresponded to the taste of the Assembly. In other states, however, in the second half of the fifteenth century and in the sixteenth century, the control of foreign policy was already concentrated in the hands of a single politician of great stature. No one can deny that in the heyday of Cosimo de’ Medici (†1464), Florence was single-handedly ruled by him, even though there were periods when he held no office other than the de facto empty title



of *Pater Patriae*. Alternatively, in the first decades of Henry VIII's (1509–1547) reign, all the strings of English politics were pulled by Chancellor Wolsey, while the king indulged in courtly and other pleasures.

The conclusion of an alliance, a trade agreement, or even the preparation of a royal **marriage** sometimes took years and **multiple** missions. The envoys of King Coloman of Hungary (1095–1116) carried out lengthy negotiations about the marriage of the daughter of the Norman Count of Sicily. In the spring of 1096, the first delegation from Hungary set out, after which Count Roger commissioned his own ambassadors to the court of King Coloman asking the king to send another delegation. When the new Hungarian embassy arrived in Sicily, the Count sent yet another group of envoys to the Hungarian king. When the second delegation to Sicily returned, Roger then “*set the date on which he would send his daughter to the king.*”<sup>15</sup> The movements of the four delegations between Palermo and Hungary took a fairly long time considering the sea voyage conditions of the time. Due to the unpredictable storms in the Mediterranean at the time, there was little sailing from late autumn to early spring other than coastal voyages. Here, four crossings of the Adriatic were necessary. Travelling by land was not an option at the time, as northern Italy was under the control of Emperor Henry IV, who was opposed to the pro-Papal Hungarian King and the Count of Sicily. The princess did not arrive at the court of King Coloman until the summer of 1097. There were also occasions when one or the other party asked for the marriage or alliance to be reconfirmed, either because of unfavourable changes in international relations or news of the health of the bride or groom-to-be. Here, too, the Norman count asked the first Hungarian envoys to be followed by others who “*possess some authority, dignity or status.*”<sup>16</sup> Thus, the second delegation was headed by Bishop Hartvik of Győr, one of Coloman's chief supporters. Preparations for the marriage of Matthias Corvinus to Beatrice of Aragon took even longer: from the initial diplomatic approach, to the marriage proposal to the bride-to-be by the envoys, to the betrothal, its repeated confirmation, and the conclusion of the marriage in Naples ‘by agency’ (**per procuram**) - where the ‘deputies’, Albert Vetési, Bishop of Veszprém and János Laki Túz, the ban of Slavonia, attended the marriage ceremony together with the monarch's wife, and the latter danced with the bride-to-be as was expected to the final ceremony, where the Queen's shoulders were touched by the Holy Crown, years had gone by.<sup>17</sup> Matthias had already approached King Ferdinand of Aragon in the late 1460s, but the actual negotiations did not begin until 1473, and even after the *matrimonium* was proclaimed in Wrocław in the autumn 1474, the bride was officially wedded *per procuram* in June 1475, the wedding was not held in Buda until late December 1476.



Fig. 1. The tomb of Saint Elizabeth (daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary, consort of Landgrave Louis IV of Thuringia), St. Elizabeth's Church, Marburg, late 13th c.

The medieval diplomatic system was gradually replaced by a new practice from around the mid-fifteenth century. Rulers did not always issue formal instructions; diplomatic negotiations were attended, even informally, by members of an inner circle close to the king. Councillors, members of the court, who were familiar with foreign policy, were regularly involved in the administration of affairs and acted without formal mandates. In 1416, Sigismund of Hungary wrote a special letter to János Kanizsai, Archbishop of Esztergom, asking him to come to Paris and join him in his forthcoming negotiations with the French king.<sup>18</sup> Most of the time, the chancery did not issue one-off instructions, and we often only know that someone had been involved in a matter for years, because a charter of donation from the monarch listed the 'efforts' he had been making in several countries where he had served his king. Some were no longer given an occasional assignment, but represented the king permanently at synods, where they worked for the unity of the church or "*the reformation of the empire*".<sup>19</sup>

It was only after the unprecedented councils of Constance (1414–1418) and Basel (later Ferrara–Florence) (1431–1449), which lasted for several years and covered the whole of Europe – which in modern times might just as well be regarded as 'pan-European congresses' – that the mandate of the envoys to the Council did not cease automatically. They followed the Pope elected at Constance, Pope Martin V to Rome, or they were transferred to the place of the synod and became delegates to the Holy See. In other words, having one person represent a power in

the Curia, even for years, meant a permanent representation. It was ever so often the case that one or the other actor on the European political scene maintained a permanent delegate in Rome, and even in the Holy Roman Empire, as the *Reichstag* diets met more and more frequently. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, for example, the Kingdom of Poland needed a permanent delegate, even for the period between two imperial assemblies, either in Nuremberg or Frankfurt. In the sixteenth century, the English envoys followed the imperial estates almost everywhere, even if, for example, only the elector princes (*Kurfürst*) held a special meeting in Speyer or Regensburg. If only the ecclesiastical elector princes met in Trier or Mainz, envoys of the most significant powers had to follow their assembly, too. Renaissance diplomacy was based more and more on permanent consuls and delegations. In the increasingly complex web of foreign relations, a growing number of powers felt the need to be in permanent contact with their allies, to obtain increasingly valuable news through their own channels, to have stable and reliable sources as well as receive constant, verified news about their opponents and rivals. The envoys, who were permanently stationed at their posts, not only supplied reports, but would also immediately inform the 'host country' of their principal's position on any issue. In this way, the **person of the envoy** also became important: it was no longer sufficient to employ a cleric, a prestigious abbot or provost, even someone with an important ecclesiastical position to go on a mission, but new men were needed who had the full confidence of the sovereign and had a clear political insight into the affairs of his country. Sigismund of Luxemburg, who, for example, assigned a layman to the secret chancery, did **not** commission **clergymen** to several important embassies. In 1416, during his negotiations in England, he entrusted the magnate Miklós Garai the younger, the Palatine with the task of negotiating with the French king and securing a peace settlement with England for the Council of Constance.<sup>20</sup> He accompanied Sigismund everywhere from Aachen to Paris. Sigismund's travelling entourage throughout Europe functioned almost like a modern-day diplomatic staff: members of the court often carried out missions, not only occasionally, but also permanently even if they were not given specific, official orders for a particular mission. The private letters of István Rozgonyi, for example, who held no high office in particular, bear witness to this. The *missilis*, although a secondary source, often provides unique data. Rozgonyi was exceptionally well versed in high politics, informed his cousin at home in detail about Sigismund's negotiations about the forced abdication of Benedict XIII of Avignon.<sup>21</sup> In addition, he wrote in detail about the king's "*negotiations with the French king's advisers to bring about peace between the French and English kings*" and his "*efforts to go to England to bring about peace*".<sup>22</sup> Miklós Várdai wrote several letters home to his father about Sigis-

mund's travels in Italy in the 1430s.<sup>23</sup> He was particularly well informed about major political affairs: in Siena, he also wrote of a meeting between Pope Eugene IV and Sigismund, and a meeting with the King of Aragon.<sup>24</sup>

Matthias Corvinus could no longer employ a humble Dominican, like King Béla IV's messenger to the Mongols, Friar Julianus, but relied much more on his closest confidants, like the **humanist** Gabriele Rangone, Bishop of Eger, who, although started as a Franciscan, pursued a brilliant career as a legate and cardinal. The 'official' envoys no longer merely reported on their travels and the affairs entrusted to them on the basis of a single commission – even Friars Julianus and Riccardus had already written a *relatio* on the Tatars, which was later included in the *Liber Censuum* of the Curia and later transcribed in a papal *transumpt* and made available to the participants at the first Council of Lyon (1245–1248) – but also sent **regular diplomatic reports**.

The institution of **permanent representations** was, however, not unprecedented: the merchant cities of Italy had permanent colonies and trading **depots** since the twelfth century. Venice, Pisa and Genoa had set up representative offices in the **Levantine** region in the eastern Mediterranean, and their *bailo* officials were in charge of trade on a virtually permanent basis, keeping watch over the members of the local colonies from Acre to Constantinople and Alexandria. As early as 1082, Venice was given “*three harbours*” for exclusive use in the city of Constantinople.<sup>25</sup> In the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Republic could have “*a church, a whole street, a square, a bath and a bakery in the cities, which they could own by perpetual right, free from all taxation*”. The citizens of Venice had the privilege of handling their cases before their own ‘court’.<sup>26</sup> In time, the *bailo* also became the political representative of the city-states and saw to it that the citizens of “*St. Mark*” in the Holy Land were “*as free as in Venice*”.<sup>27</sup>

Similar depots and **representative offices** were set up by the “**Lombard**” **banking houses** (but in fact more from Tuscany, Siena and Florence), and until the early fourteenth century by the Knights Templar, who were engaged in lending money and issuing bills of exchange, but with time these colonies also carried out political missions and sent regular reports. The Venetian *bailo* in London, the banker of the House of Medici in Paris and the Sienese Chigi representative in Nuremberg became **consuls** of their respective states and in the second half of the fifteenth century, they already drafted their reports almost every day and they sent **express reports**, dispatches (*dispacci*), which were carried by couriers daily. In the second half of the fourteenth century, Aragonese merchants, especially the city of Barcelona, set up so-called “**maritime consulates**” (*consulat de mar*) in the western basin of the Mediterranean.



King Peter IV (1336–1387) also issued a *lex mercatoria* specifically for maritime merchants, which after a while became a kind of customary international law in the Mediterranean basin, and consuls were protected by open royal patent. In many respects, the Aragonese laid the foundations of the present-day consulates, with the consul acting not only in commercial matters but also as a **general agent for merchants** in Barcelona and Valencia. In addition to having their own depots, the merchant houses also had representatives, **agents** or couriers acting as independent intelligence agents in most commercial hubs (e.g. Antwerp) and courts. In Venice, the ‘news exchange’ of the late Middle Ages, the couriers collected all possible information and ‘bought’ any ‘Turkish’ news from anyone coming from the Balkans or from Hungary. The hunger for information of the time also played a part in the fact that the news was immediately disseminated, and at first there was even a market for manuscript newsletters – thousands of copies of Marco Polo’s stories were already being copied in *scriptorium h scriptoria* at the beginning of the fourteenth century, such was the demand, and then the heyday of the printed and often illustrated newsletters (*journal, giornale, Zeitung*) emerged.



Fig. 2. Corte del Million. The houses of the Polo family in Venice, 13th–14th c.

The diary of Girolamo **Priuli**, a sixteenth-century Venetian merchant and banker (*I Diarii*), gives a vivid picture of how the Republic's communication system worked. In 1501, for instance, it signifies what value a single piece of news had and what impact a single messenger's report could have on contemporary political life: "a letter arrived from an envoy of the Signoria", explaining why the Portuguese king's initiative to travel had "caused [...] more damage to the Venetian state than a Turkish or any other war could have". It had an extraordinary impact, almost shocking the Republic, and it provoked so much interest that it was "subsequently printed". The great geographical discoveries were a tragedy for Venice, the beneficiary of the traditional trading system: "The King of Portugal sent ships to India [...] bringing so many goods, and of such great value that it is difficult to estimate them. [...] one ducat brings more than a hundred. [...] the king of Portugal can call himself the king of money. [...] everyone visits this country to get goods, and so leaves his money in Portugal. From this derives the benefit of being able to organise similar trips every year. [...] the worst possible thing that could happen [...] in relation to the Republic of Venice. The wars and other troubles [...] are, in comparison [...], insignificant, [...] the city of Venice owes the prestige [...] which it enjoys only to the sea, [...] navigation is threatened with great ruin".<sup>28</sup>

The **Thurn und Taxis** family, which organised the Habsburg postal service, was originally of Lombard origin. Although their couriers already made regular journeys between Italy, Innsbruck, and Vienna, and later the Netherlands, in the mid-fifteenth century, and were entrusted by Emperor Maximilian I and later Charles V with the operation of a regular postal service between Vienna and Brussels and Rome, their heyday dates from the seventeenth century. The network of South German merchants and **Fuggers** was kept up to date with amazing speed. The first news of the Battle of Mohács to reach Europe was reported by the Tudor envoy from the very distant Granada on 4 September 1526. Due to this very intricate mechanism of spreading information the news had already reached a remote corner of Spain six days after 29 August! In comparison, the first domestic news was only received at midnight on 30 August by the ambassador to the Holy See, Baron Giovanni Antonio da Burgio, in Buda, who reported about the event on 5 September,<sup>29</sup> and Kristóf Frangepán, who was on his way to the battlefield, wrote from Zagreb on 5 September,<sup>30</sup> and the (secret) chancellor István Brodarics did not report to Poland until 6 September.<sup>31</sup> And Archduke Ferdinand, who was in Innsbruck, considered to be 'close' compared to Granada, only learned of the defeat on 7 September.

From the middle of the fifteenth century, Milan and Mantua also maintained



consular representations from Burgundy to the Hanseatic cities. In the 1470s, the marriage of Matthias and Beatrice was also facilitated by the fact that the Dukes of Ferrara from the House of Este, who maintained dynastic relations and alliances with the House of Aragon in Naples, established channels of communication with the court in Buda and had permanent envoys in the city. It is not surprising that Queen Beatrice's entourage stayed in Ferrara for weeks, interrupting their journey to Hungary.

It was in 1454 that it was no longer just a sovereign power, but an alliance system, the **Holy League**, as a separate entity, that maintained a permanent envoy in Rome or in England. At the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Venice already had a **mission** in Istanbul, similar to the embassies of today, with a full staff under the *bailo*.<sup>32</sup> The Holy See was not lagging behind the other Italian city-states: the Curia also "*posted*" envoys to their respective "*stations*" with an almost permanent mandate for years. In Hungary, for example, it was almost indispensable to have a permanent envoy to report on Turkish news, in the years before Mohács it was for example Baron Burgio, who was no longer a cleric but a layman. His letters are an invaluable source of Hungarian history. He depicts, for example, the Hungarian king's military preparations and his march before Mohács very vividly: "*The Turks are already gauging the depth of the Drava above Eszék (Osijek, present-day Croatia) and have the bridges ready for the crossing. [...] His Majesty is now in Tolna, but even now, he has not been able to rally the nobility of the country to his camp with his numerous commands. [...] they are there, [...] without any military order. [...] He has also sent the Palatine with a couple of lords, their banderia and the county troops [to Osijek] [...] the lords refuse to go, [the county nobles] are beginning to leave for home.*"<sup>33</sup> At the beginning of 1526, almost half of Europe was watching Burgio: he was in the possession of information according to which the Turks were "*advancing on the road to Transylvania*".<sup>34</sup> It was also important from the point of view of the interests of the Levantine trade whether a new front would develop in the eastern Balkans in the Wallachian Plain.

At this time, the emperor (and King of Spain) also maintained permanent envoys: from London via Venice to Ragusa: the **source of news** in Hungary in the years before Mohács was the Habsburg envoy to Buda, Andrea dal Burgo. (The idea of a permanent representation was not particularly welcomed by the Hungarian estates, who feared that, for example, the Republic would gain excessive and harmful influence with envoys, and in the Jagiellonian era, they banned foreign envoys from the country.<sup>35</sup>) In Europe, however, the Holy See's ambassador, the **apostolic nuncio**, has always been and still is accorded exceptional authority: in England, for example, the court order provides that during the *présence*, when the monarch is *present*, i.e. appears before the public, and the ceremonial event

is attended by foreign ambassadors, the first in line to address is the Holy See's ambassador, accredited to the United Kingdom.

As diplomacy became an increasingly complex and multifaceted occupation, and as the envoy himself had to spend months and sometimes years abroad instead of the usual occasional visit of a few weeks, the activity itself required a whole person, so that the ecclesiastical and secular nobility were left out of the diplomatic staff and **professional** 'specialists' came to the fore.<sup>36</sup> It was no longer possible to send a provost or an abbot, or even a court dignitary, a member of the royal house to Rome but someone who was familiar with the maze of the Curia, who knew the way of the business, who could navigate the bureaucracy, who had local knowledge and "*contacts*" as well as who was "*known*". Although Queen Beatrice's brother, Giovanni d'Aragona, held high ecclesiastical offices as Archbishop of Esztergom and Cardinal, he also represented his brother-in-law, Matthias at the Holy See for four years, as he was related to half of Italy as the son of the King of Naples.

Although the international language of the time was Latin, and for a long time envoys came from among the clergy, and especially those who had mastered the art of eloquence, and within **rhetoric** not only the *ars dictaminis* – the science of letter writing, the *dictamen* – but also the *ars dictandi*, were well versed in the formulae of other literary works, were also able to render the content of their mandate **orally**.

Envoys had also previously been required to be able to render the contents of the letters entrusted to them, and what is more, in many cases they did not even write the specifics of letters of great importance, lest they fall into unauthorised. A royal letters says "*the bearer of our letter will tell us more by word of mouth*",<sup>37</sup> and even justified "*sending our devoted subject*" because there are "*things we cannot write about*".<sup>38</sup> King Emeric of Hungary was accused of robbing the bishop of Vác, the supporter of his rival brother, Andrew. As the counterpart had filed a complaint against him in Rome, the king suddenly felt it urgent to send a 'counter-envoy' to the pope, who presented his version of the story and tried to convince the Holy Father "*not to believe what the bishop would tell you*" what had happened in Vác. Emeric wrote his own version of the sacking of Vác to Innocent III: "*Bishop Boleslaus of Vác, [...] lies (when he claims) that we have robbed the treasures of his church, and even beaten him*", although that is not the case, since "*we have asked him gently to open the chamber where he is allegedly hiding the treasures of the unfaithful. We strongly urged him [...] to open the chamber*", but he did not do so, and dared to "*insult the king with slander and abusive words*", so he only had himself to blame.<sup>39</sup> It was a matter of which party's man would reach Rome first.

In the sixteenth century, certain **humanists** worked on their speeches, *orations* for a long time, and the most important ones were published in **print**. The orations delivered at the opening of the *Reichstag* assemblies were celebrated, and a famous orator was no longer considered a diplomat, but an artist and writer. The envoy sent by Louis II of Hungary to the imperial assembly in Worms in 1521, Hieronymus Balbus, a Venetian-born provost from Pozsony (Pressburg, present-day Bratislava), who had studied at the universities of Paris and Padua, was one of the most sought-after *orators* of the time, and it is no coincidence that his works were subsequently published, and he was employed by the Habsburgs. In one of his speeches to Charles V in 1521, he gave a diagnosis of almost surgical precision of the state of affairs in the Jagiellonian era. He said “*the country has lost many men and strength since the death of King Matthias*” and that “*it no longer has any power [...] they are wary of getting into any kind of quarrel with the Turks*”. He gives a sobering assessment of Louis II’s relations with the Porte: peace is more important than anything else. With a startling sense of reality, he paints a picture of war preparedness: “*no money, no captaincies*” (i.e. not organised, territorially-based defence structure), “*no infantry, no supplies, no munition*”. No „adequate military service”, the country’s armed forces “*reduced to almost nothing*”, “*doomed to failure compared to the strength of their enemies*”.<sup>40</sup> A true humanist masterpiece is the letter of János Hunyadi written after the victory in Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade). It revives an antique topos in such a way that it has become symbolic in Hungarian historical literature, i.e. it is as if the great Hunyadi had fought a battle in the fields among the stones of the ruined castle: “*the Turks destroyed the castle with their cannon fire to such an extent that we must call it a field instead of a castle. [...] We clashed with them in the middle of the castle as if we were in a field*”.<sup>41</sup>

For the sake of greater efficiency, the speech of Ladislaus Macedóniai, Bishop of Szerém, at the Imperial Assembly of Nuremberg in 1522 was printed in **German** in Augsburg that year and distributed to the participants.<sup>42</sup> Given the urgency of the Turkish threat, the envoy no longer simply spoke in the context of the **bulwark of Christianity** (*antemurale Christianitatis*), but sought to emphasise – in German, the use of which was considered less and less sacrilegious, since Luther had appeared in Worms the year before and the language of the commoners had gained ground in state affairs – that with the loss of Hungary, Germany was in imminent danger and that the country “*can only be the defender of Germania with help*”.<sup>43</sup> “*Hungary has hitherto been a shield and a bulwark for Germany*” and “*the weapons of the Hungarians*” gave the Germans “*peace*”. However, “*Muhammad [...] is engulfing the whole world in a great fire [...] and his neighbour’s house is already burning*”.<sup>44</sup>

It was inappropriate to interrupt the *orator* during his long eloquent speech, so Matthias only sent envoys to the papal court to urge the allocation of **aid** against the Turks, who were able to support the legitimacy of his request with endless **rhetoric masterpieces**. The papal chamberlain László Vetési, educated at the University of Ferrara, in 1475, recounted at length before Pope Sixtus IV that “*the kings of the Pannonians have guarded the authority of the Church most strongly, more steadfastly than any others [...] they have always shown themselves more resistant to the Turks’ mighty and powerful nation for the sake of the divine religion and the salvation of the Christian people [...] the Pannonians are considered to be the wall of defence of the whole Christian republic*”.<sup>45</sup> The Hungarian envoys who appealed for help against the Turks often hackneyed the vital importance of the “*shield of Christianity*” (*clipeus Christianitatis*), so that when the threat became imminent, it was difficult to invoke it repeatedly. A more pronounced speech imposed almost ultimatum-like conditions: László Macedóniai pleaded in vain that “*Hungary is in mortal danger, we cannot wait a lifetime for a great campaign, the whole world must agree on arms as soon as possible [...]*”<sup>46</sup> Emperor Charles V listened to him with respect but offered no tangible help.

In Renaissance Europe, no power could afford to empower for example, people who were not familiar with, say, the intricate affairs of the Republic of Venice and did not speak the Veneto dialect before the Signoria. **Expertise** meant a great deal: it made no sense to send people who were not familiar with Ottoman diplomacy and its complex system of rituals to the Sublime Porte. Even if someone used to be a London merchant decades earlier, the Tudor government would have sent him to Ragusa with absolute confidence if he had ‘wit’ in **Levantine** affairs. Apparently, the Venetian Republic and the Holy Father himself, sent Marco and Niccolò Polo to the court of the Great Khan of **Mongolia** because they already had the **local knowledge** and mastered the language. To fill a post required long decades of experience. In the sixteenth century, those who had spent years or decades at a court played an extremely important role in the foreign policy of states. Sir Robert Wingfield, a Tudor imperial envoy, spent decades at the court of Emperors Maximilian and later Charles V, and years afterwards, in 1526, he was the source of information on Hungarian affairs for the English chancellor Thomas Wolsey, the all-powerful *éminence grise*. The various powers set up complete **consular services**, with permanent staff and **chargés d’affaires** who, with their knowledge accumulated over many decades, became the masters of certain affairs, and became, for example, our ‘man in Krakow’ or ‘man in Madrid’. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the ‘**art**’ of diplomacy was mainly practised by **Italian** humanists, who were to be found in important

consular positions from England to Poland, although they were still paid in the traditional way, with a prebend. An English benefice – the See of Salisbury – was granted to the eminent Tudor diplomat Lorenzo Campeggio. He was a special envoy, *legatus a latere*, appointed for the purpose of the anti-Turkish crusade and the eradication of heresy in the Empire – without even visiting his diocese. (It is true that such reservations were opposed by the English monarch.) Even as a cardinal and legate to the Holy See, he always reported to Cardinal Wolsey first. It is no accident that Henry VIII's 'great matter', his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, was also handled by Italians. Among the ambassadors, however, we find an increasing number of **laymen** or **humanists** not ordained as priests, and even some who spent decades as **bankers** or **mercenary commanders**. Girolamo Ghinucci came from a family of Sienese bankers to become the Pope's nuncio to England and then a most influential envoy of the Tudor government. Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, a prominent figure in Curia politics during Leo X's pontificate, was consulted by all the candidates for the imperial election of 1519, presided over five dioceses, but was never consecrated bishop.

From the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, the rulers of the major powers were informed about everything. In every important court and commercial hub, we find not only imperial, Spanish, Papal, French, Burgundian, Neapolitan or English ambassadors, but also Venetians, Milanese, Mantuans, Florentines and Ferrarese. Politicians knew exactly how powerful, for example, the Archbishop of Esztergom, Tamás Bakócz, was in pre-Mohács Hungary, what the political position of Queen Mary of Habsburg was, what informal influence János Bornemissza, the castellan of Buda, had, or who the supporters of John Szapolyai, the Voivode of Transylvania – later to be king – were, and even how the Frangepan (Frankopani) family were in what relationship towards to the Turks at a given moment. At the English, French and Spanish courts, at the Signoria in Venice, they tried to obtain, through various channels, **copies** or at least **extracts** (*extractum*), *ex litteris* summaries of almost every letter, news items, intelligence reports (*intelligentia*), or envoys' dispatches. These were collected and arranged in *registers* by topic, country, or "*issue*" (Turkish or Levantine). In Venice, there was a special subdivision for "*Hungarian news*". Of great value are the reports of Francesco Massaro, who was based in Hungary in the early 1520s. The Venetian ambassadors provided one of the smoothest channels of communication, passing on information to the 'friendly' powers almost daily from the Signoria, which was based on the Republic's network covering the areas from Cyprus through Portugal to the Netherlands. The Venetian agents even obtained copies of the sultans' letters and, when it was in the interests of the Republic, their representatives in

Buda, Krakow or Spain shared them with rulers of various powers. In the case of matters that could not be postponed, the Signoria consulted the leaders of a particular state. On one occasion, the Venetian ambassador read out a letter from the Sultan to the English royal council, urging the chancellor to reply without delay. Each envoy also held 'external' meetings at various courts. Venice's envoy in London also regularly discussed Turkish affairs with the Papal, Spanish and French representatives in England. England maintained a special **agent** for Turkish and Levantine affairs in Venice: Pietro Vanno obtained first-hand information from Baron Burgio in Buda, for example.

The best ambassadors had very good geographical knowledge and could plan ahead: Rhetor Priskos/Priscus of Panion/Panium knew when he would arrive at Attila's court and what the travel possibilities were in the Carpathian Basin of the time: "*a good pedestrian can get from Istros to here in five days*".<sup>47</sup> At the end of the Middle Ages, merchants also used complete travel guides. The *Practica della Mercatura* by Pegolotti of Florence, based on data collected as an employee of the Bardi banking house in the late 1330s, is not just a 'guide' or 'Baedeker', but contains vital information of great importance for those wishing to trade with the Orient: "*The journey from Tana to the Volga Delta takes 25 days by an oxen cart, but only 10–12 days by a horse cart. For an escort, there are enough [...] armed men. [...] To Sara by water it is a one-day [...] trip on the river. It is possible to go by land, but it is cheaper by water*".<sup>48</sup>

In the sixteenth century, the Polish king learned from his own **spies** (*explorator*) "*kept at no small expense in Turkey*", that "*the Emperor of the Ottomans intends to attack Hungary with all his forces in the summer of the following year [...] in order to take possession of it*".<sup>49</sup> There were also permanent "*correspondents*" reporting from Rome, who often worked under the patronage of a cardinal in the Curia: the institution of the **cardinal protector** was established. Foreign policy decision-makers also had their own sources of news in Constantinople. Thus, it is possible that some Western courts knew even before the Hungarian court had this information that Sultan Selim I was making preparations for war against Hungary in 1520, and they even knew of the delay in the military preparations due to an anti-Ottoman rebellion.

The intelligence service in **Ragusa** worked very well, especially in "*Turkish affairs*", the Western powers obtained information through their merchants' couriers. In the autumn of 1526, for example, there was a feverish demand for information from the agents in Ragusa, since no one knew where Suleiman was heading after Mohács. Although Venice had received news in the beginning of October that the Padishah was retreating to his winter quarters, no one wanted to



believe it. Even when Rome was informed that Suleiman had set out from Buda for Pétervárad (Petrovaradin, present-day Serbia) no one felt safe in Europe, and sultan's intentions were shown by the fact that he had dispatched his artillery and "an army" towards Constantinople. The most reliable source was a report from an agent in Ragusa that 3000 Turkish ships were heading south on the Danube. Ragusa's information was based on intelligence from Smederevo, however, the point was that as the Turks had just appeared below the castle were needed to march back, since the Persian Shah Tahmasp I having won a victory on the eastern frontier.

Another important news channel was Rhodes. The Knights Hospitallers, who "inherited" some of the depots after the dissolution of the Order, also played a role in the provision of news. The colonies and convents of the Order of Malta, who were forced to move first to Rhodes after the loss of the Holy Land (1291) and then further afield in the 1520s, provided much valuable **information**, for example on Ottoman affairs. Governments regularly received first-hand information from the Knights of St John. The Ottomans being occupied with **Persia** or **Egypt** were especially interesting for Vienna, Krakow, or Madrid. News were vitally important to the knights themselves, and the Grand Masters of Rhodes, given its strategic position, played an active role in the higher politics. The Hospitallers also relied on information from their own network, and their news sources were highly reliable. They had to be well informed about the Hungarian situation as well. In 1522, the Hospitallers also appealed for help at the same time as the Hungarian king when the Ottoman fleet blockaded the Crusaders' island.

By the sixteenth century, reports, express news, couriers, and merchants' **accounts** created such a tangled **web** that the problem of which report to credit was more difficult due to the abundance of information about a major event. For many weeks after the Battle of Mohács, nothing was known about the fate of **Louis II** until mid-October of that year, when his body was discovered and on 19 October Ferenc Sárffy, the captain of Győr, wrote a report to Chancellor István Brodarics, Bishop of Szerém. The report details how the body was meticulously identified by the King's former chamberlain, Ulrik Czetrich (Czettritz): "*he took hold of the right leg of the corpse, carefully washed it [...] and discovered the mark on his Majesty's right foot. [...] we washed first his head, then his face, and recognized him quite accurately by the marks which [...] had been on his teeth.*"<sup>50</sup> This was necessary because a cavalcade of **conflicting reports** had been circulating throughout Europe since the beginning of September. Although Sultan Suleiman sent a victory report to Venice very early, on 5 or 6 September, and although he later boasted that he had taken the king's head to Istanbul and that it was embalmed,

even the Pope himself did not know for a long time what had really happened to the king.<sup>51</sup> In Zagreb, it was said that *“the king had escaped”*.<sup>52</sup> The papal envoy from Buda, Johannes Verzelius, who had left for Vienna, informed the Holy See on 6 September, but was unable to say anything about the fate of Louis,<sup>53</sup> nor did Queen Mary on 9 September report anything to the Polish king.<sup>54</sup> Chancellor Brodarics wrote to the Holy See on 10 September, but did not communicate anything more than the fact of the defeat.<sup>55</sup> During September, the Empire was in complete chaos as to what had happened to the King. Archprince Ferdinand of Habsburg himself said that *“we do not know where the king is or what has happened to him”*. A few days later, he was forced to say that *“we do not know whether he has disappeared in battle”*. Nevertheless, for the Archprince it was important to know, since the fate of not one, but two thrones depended on whether Louis was alive or had died. In Antwerp, Archprincess Margaret of Austria also received conflicting news, although she tried to obtain information through the channels of the Welsers, which were considered reliable. The Spanish and English envoys reported daily, but were told either that King Louis *“has managed to escape with four men”*; or that *“some know that he [the king of Hungary] is dead, some that he has escaped”*; or that only *“his horse was wounded”*. *“Some say the king fell [...] some say he drowned in the Danube, others say he fled to Bohemia.”* Or the *“Hungarians have been defeated, but [...] the king is safe”*. Even if he had died, *“his body has not been found since”*.<sup>56</sup> A most reliable Fugger courier in the Netherlands was the first to report with certainty that Louis II had been killed.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, in most cases, states were not content with information from a single source, but sought to confirm it from several sources and to ascertain its authenticity. They also tried to obtain *“control”* information from as many sources as possible. The Papal, Venetian and imperial agents coordinated their intelligence among themselves. For a long time, however, historiography *“judged”* and *“indicted”*, for example, Ladislaus IV, King of Hungary (1272–1290) on the basis of a single news report of great importance, although the core of the judgement of the king’s *“fraternisation”* with the Cumans was a letter to the Pope by Archbishop Lodomer of Esztergom, which was hardly free from prejudice, in which Ladislaus *“evidently proclaims that he has allied himself with the Tatars and has become one himself”*.<sup>58</sup>

In the age of Renaissance diplomacy, the ‘art’ of politics became increasingly **pragmatic** – think of how Machiavelli justified the actions of the autocrat in the interests of the state in his work, *The Prince*. The idea of crusades, which was becoming obsolete, could also be sacrificed on the altar of politics. As early as 1202, when the Crusaders sacked Zara (Zadar, present-day Croatia) because of the Venetians’ money, which they had long been waiting for, it could be explained how the respectable Dalmatian citizens, who were of Latin rite, could be *“enemies*

of the Cross". The humanist Pope Pius II, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, also took it for granted that his Italian adversaries were also the unrepentant enemies of the ecclesia, and that "*we were at war with the Turks when we were raiding the lands of Sigismondo [Malatesta]*".<sup>59</sup> In all his statements and **phraseology**, Matthias' action against the Turks, his uncompromising fight, was central. "*We will devote all our care, effort, determination and wisdom [...] to the salvation of the Christian faith.*" – he wrote to Pope Calixtus III.<sup>60</sup> He was keen to stress that "*the Turks are our eternal enemy*". However, the Hungarian ruler, called "*the strong champion of Christ*", by Pius II, was happy to make overtures to the Ottomans when desperate times needed desperate measures. He was even willing to acknowledge his common kinship with the Sultan: in a letter to Mehmed II the Conqueror, he wrote that "*common blood flows in our veins*".<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, in order to win over the Ottoman pretender to the throne, the fugitive Prince Cem (Djem), he addressed him as "*our brother and kinsman*", and, in recalling the "*kinship*" between them, even offered to welcome him into his court, and even "*accompany him to his country*", and to do his utmost to secure his succession.<sup>62</sup> The Holy See would have expected that if his father's virtue was "*so deeply rooted in his soul*" and "*never to be torn out by any force*", Matthias would eradicate the *secte Machometice*, but instead he alarmed the papal envoy that he, who is, of course, "*the bulwark of Christianity*", finds nothing objectionable in holding a friendly conversation with his dear "*cousin*", the Ottoman Sultan – otherwise considered the main enemy of Christianity –, even about a future collaboration. According to his family 'tradition', his grandmother's sister had been kidnapped by the Turks and taken to the Sultan's harem, where she gave birth to the ruler's son, and he was therefore related to the Sultan's family. We can hardly prove this relationship, but one can imagine the chill running down the back of Emperor Frederick III – who was already threatened by the possibility that the Ottomans could **pass through** to Austria –, when he heard that Mehmed had bequeathed a sabre in his will to his 'dear brother' Matthias, who proudly showed it to every envoy, or when in the peace treaty of 1488, Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512) called Corvinus "*his brother and kinsman*".<sup>63</sup> Matthias's correspondence with the sultans contains several surprising momentums. At one point he writes of "*mutual goodwill and the desire for peace*", at another he expresses his pleasure that "*we could reach a good peace agreement with each other [...] for we considered it unworthy of us to quarrel with your Majesty [...] instead of mutual quarrelling, it would be easier if we expanded the territories under our power at the expense of other princes*".<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, it seems as if the king himself was most surprised at the way "*the Turks, on their march through our territories, did us no harm, and even openly said that they did not wish to harm us*".<sup>65</sup>

The emerging systems of **leagues and alliances** became increasingly volatile, and the **constellations** changed almost daily. This is why, on the one hand, envoys had to be in permanent **daily contact** with their courts, and on the other, they had to be aware of every move of the political leaders and, in many cases, decide for themselves if an immediate resolution was urgent. In the years of the **League of Cambrai** (1508–1510), almost no party knew when another member would withdraw from the alliance. There was no time for an envoy to write home for new instructions and wait for them to arrive when, for example, the French King Francis I was captured by the Habsburgs at the Battle of Pavia (1525). A proper consul had to react immediately. The **pragmatism** of Renaissance politics is vividly illustrated in the letter written by John Hunyadi after the Battle of Varna (1444), in which, in addition to the adulation of his own deeds, he mentions, as an aside, at the end of the letter, the not so insignificant detail that Vladislaus I had fallen and the Turks had finally won (“*without defeat*”, but “*we retreated*”, yet “*we inflicted no less pain on the enemy than we had received from them, so [...] they paid a mournful and bloody price*”).<sup>66</sup> In 1445 his report to Rome, Andrea Palacio wrote from a quite different perspective, from that of the Polish court. The whole *relatio* is in fact a eulogy of King Vladislaus I, a true humanist *panegyric*: it is as if Hunyadi were not even in the battle, the glory, the triumph, the laurels belong to the young hero, and the subtle detail that the king was ultimately killed in battle is not even revealed in the account. “*God then poured power into the king, so that he who escaped unharmed was saved by the king’s help and talent. [...] in the battle he did more than the human body can do, he wrought with his own hands*” pure “*havoc*”, and what is also not a small, insignificant detail: the Sultan Murad fell (!), killed by the king himself with his own sword. The final message of this ‘artistic’ account is that the glorious young knight cannot die, but “*he never appeared again, nor was anyone found who saw him fall or be captured*”.<sup>67</sup> Thus, in the case of an envoy’s report, one cannot abstain from the critical evaluation of the sources.

Diplomacy was very often not conducted in public. There were of course **secret** missions. Lőrinc Tari, known for his **pilgrimage** to St. Patrick’s Cave in Ireland may have believed wholeheartedly in the purifying power of *peregrinatio*, but this did not prevent him from also carrying out a political mission for Sigismund: negotiating with the Archbishop of Armagh in Ireland and, during his journey, with the King of England about their participation in a planned universal council in 1411. Tari later resumed his disguise as a *peregrinus* and carried out a mission in Venice. He had to find out, during the king’s conflict with the Republic, whether the Signoria was willing to negotiate a truce or even to launch a joint campaign against the Turks.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, Péter Cseh Lévai, Master of the Horse was preparing a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in 1415. Nevertheless, the ardent

pilgrim also conducted negotiations on his way to the shrine of St. James *en route* to Aragon. Furthermore, he was given a new mandate to negotiate with the King of Castile while he was on his way to Compostela.<sup>69</sup> In addition, he not only represented Sigismund, but also the king of France.<sup>70</sup> His voyage to Castile was 'explained' by the fact that he also wanted to visit Granada, which was in Muslim hands, to test himself in the fight against the Moors.<sup>71</sup>

*Peregrinatio* was often a symbolic part of the mission. In his 1416 negotiations, Sigismund made a point of visiting the relics of St. Denis near Paris and the shrine of St. Thomas Becket in Canterbury. Louis the Great's mother, Elizabeth Łokietek, travelled to Italy in 1343 to make arrangements for the coronation of her younger son Andrew as King of Naples, and made a pilgrimage to Rome to do so. "*On the altar and relics of St. Peter the Apostle she placed, with the generosity of the queens, magnificent gifts. [...] She went down to Bari, and she prayed to St. Nicholas; she honoured him with gifts [...]*".<sup>72</sup> There is of course no reason to doubt the queen's personal piety and devotion, but it must have been a political message both to the papacy and to the Neapolitan Angevin court, which maintained extraordinary respect to the prestigious relics kept in Bari, that she even made donations in these places.

At the end of Krzysztof Szydłowiecki's instructions, the Polish king added a 'reminder' of the "*things to be discussed in secret*".<sup>73</sup> It is understandable that it did not even concern the wider public of the meeting that in Moldavia it "*seems necessary*" to "*provide someone else*" to replace the Voivode as "*head of the principality*". Moreover, the Polish chancellor's diary contains a report on a discussion held in private, the instructions for which are not even contained in the secret *memorandum*, and which the king probably gave only orally. Such was the importance of discussing Louis II's behaviour and agreeing on ways of reforming the court. At the meeting in Wiener Neustadt in 1523, the Polish chancellor retired to his own quarters with only Ferdinand, the imperial and Hungarian chancellors and the Habsburg envoy to Hungary: they secretly discussed (*secrete tractaverunt*) that Louis II "*was declining in character, his morals were corrupt [...], anyone could enter the chamber [...] he showed himself naked. There is no order at the table, [...] he gives everything away. Whoever wants to, writes a letter, and he signs it [...]. [...] he does not care how much he needs to defend the country's borders. [...] he has nothing to give to the officers*".<sup>74</sup> There were, however, other matters that the envoy discussed in an even closer circle, at the end of the day, with Archduke Ferdinand in his palace, but beyond "*the king's morals*", the envoy's diary contains no more details.

Medieval diplomacy has a specific, **secondary**, sub-surface layer, which exists mainly in a **symbolic** space defined by rituals and customary laws, mostly in the field of **courtly representation**, and which can be identified from secondary

sources. In the Middle Ages, the political scene was much broader and more varied than today, covering all the “*stages*” of court life, including the ceremonial events of **chivalric** culture, ceremonial **processions**, feasts, receptions, weddings, baptisms, funerals, hunts, princely **gifts**, donations, pious foundations. In these **informal** spaces, a symbolic, **indirect** policy-making took place, including the order in which a baby was to be held at the baptism of an heir to the throne, or the order in which newlyweds at royal wedding were to receive gifts from the representatives of powers present. This policy-making did not take place in the usual set-up of today, not in the framework of formal negotiations, conventions, treaties, but in the context of heraldic elements, emblems, the externalities of court etiquette, which are less tangible for the modern man.

Since medieval man could not read, the various **heraldic symbols** and emblems were of great importance. The *salvus conductus* were also intended for those who did not understand Latin. It was necessary to communicate in a visible way to border guards on whose behalf the courier carrying the letter – the court herald, herald or messenger, **courier**, which was becoming an increasingly permanent position – was acting and thus had had free passage (*safe conduct*). It was inadvisable to stop an envoy waving a ‘*passport*’ with two keys crossed upon it bearing the Pope’s coat of arms – with the two keys: “*to loose and bind*” – symbolising his dual power, especially in the time of the Borgia or Medici popes. A two-headed eagle, the imperial emblem, could later be replaced by the insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece, the chivalrous princely society that became the court order of the Habsburgs: whoever wore the chain of the Order around his neck was accredited by the *devise*, an order of merit itself, no special credentials were needed, and no one questioned the link to the imperial house. At the Council of Constance, it was a deliberate and bold political act when Sigismund, attempting to put pressure on the French Avignon party and to represent his alliance with the pro-union and anti-Avignon English monarch, appeared wearing the *insignia* of the English Order of the Garter.

The princely **gifts** were of great importance: in 1416, it was no coincidence that Sigismund gave the gilded icon of St. George to King Henry V of England. He was aware of the Plantagenets’ attachment to the chivalrous saint. The princely gifts could outbid each other, and the sky was the limit. Louis the Great, for example, presented Emperor Charles IV with a crystal jug guarding the tablecloth of the Last Supper.<sup>75</sup> It was an amazing relic, one that could have been touched by Christ. One wonders how it did not run through the minds of contemporaries that the pious apostles, consuming their meagre supper, had even laid a tablecloth for themselves, and that it has survived all this time.





Fig. 3. King Louis I the Great of Hungary on the frontispiece of the *Secretum Secretorum* (c. 1360)

In **etiquette**, it was easy to misunderstand if an ambassador accepted too many gifts. To prevent this, the Venetian Republic forbade outright not only the envoys but also the doge himself from accepting anything of value. In the Signoria's system, no one was allowed to be bribed. From the thirteenth century onwards, the Doge had to take an oath (*promissioni ducali*) before his consecration that “*we will not take gifts [...] from anyone, whatever they may be, [...] nor will we allow them to be taken, except for rose oil, [...] perfumes, [...] for us and our delegates*”.<sup>76</sup>

A well ‘staged’ **royal entry** or **wedding** must have been of extraordinary importance.<sup>77</sup> In 1457, Ladislaus V, King of Hungary sent an embassy to France to ask Princess Madeleine of Valois to marry him. In Tours, Charles VII organised a sumptuous **reception** for them, which was to present almost the whole kingdom, in a particular order of course: “*the Cardinal of Constance, the Archbishop of Tours, the Lord of Mans, [...] the Chancellor of France and members of the Council; Prince Philip of Savoy, the Count of Foix, the Count of La Marche*”.<sup>78</sup>

Masters of ceremonies oversaw who should follow whom as part of the royal procession, and who should sit where, and how far from the royal party, accord-

ing to the extremely important **seating order**. On Sigismund's visit to France in 1416, there was also a problem that when the king visited the Parliament, that is, the supreme court in Paris, "*on a day of trial*", he sat "*above the first president, where the king is accustomed to sit when he visits the Parliament, which has caused discontent in many*". According to the king's ill-wishers, it was no accident that he had "*taken the wrong*" seat, as evidenced by the further indignation caused by the fact that Sigismund "*wanted to see the trial of a case already pending [...] for which a knight and a commoner had claimed the right*". The latter was unfit for office because he was not a knight. "*Then the Emperor drew a sword [...] knighted him [...] saying, « the case which you have brought against him has ceased, for he is now a knight » [...] at which people were appalled, as on other occasions they had already had to endure that the emperors wished to maintain the right of supremacy over the Kingdom of France*".<sup>79</sup>

The organisation of an event had to reflect the alliance and partnership relations. The marriage of Matthias and Beatrice of Aragon in 1476 was intended, among other things, to "*dispatch a report*" about the Hungarian king's **partners** in the struggle against the Habsburgs, which was seen as the main concern of the monarch. The princes of the Empire who were opposed to Frederick III could 'protest' here with their presence. The Wittelsbachs all sent their representatives. Christopher, Duke of Bavaria and Munich (†1493), represented the dynasty in person at the wedding. The prince was knighted by the King "*with the sword of St. Stephen*" and "*sat closest to the Queen, immediately to her left*". As a 'reward' he also received an annuity.<sup>80</sup> The Rhineland branch of the house, the Elector of the Palatinate was represented by Otto II of Pfalz–Mosbach (1461–1499). Envoys were sent to excuse the Duke of Burgundy and the King of England for not being present. However, the ambassadors from Venice, who had very frosty relations with the Hungarian monarch, were repeatedly told "*where their place was*": in the wedding procession to Buda, the Venetians "*wanted to ride beside the king, the queen, the son of the king of Naples, [...] the archbishops [...] and the princely envoys [...] until they were pushed back into line*". On another occasion upon their arrival at court, they also "*tried to get to the king's side, but the seneschal forced them back to their place from behind the princes' envoys*".<sup>81</sup>

The decision about the person who could replace a monarch at a wedding also carried weight. Vladislaus II married Anne of Foix, **through envoys** in France in 1502, and at the wedding in Hungary, the young bride's guardian, King Louis XII of France, could not be present in person, but was replaced *per procuram* by the Hohenzollern Prince Elector, Joachim Nestor of Brandenburg, who was on very friendly terms with both courts, and his cousin, George, Margrave of Brandenburg–Ansbach, who later became Louis II's tutor.

At the 1515 Jagiellonian–Habsburg royal meeting in Vienna, the royal entry itself had an exceptional impact. An envoy, representing England, a country which was important to Emperor Maximilian, preceded such prestigious persons as William Wittelsbach, Duke of Bavaria and Casimir of Brandenburg (Margrave of Bayreuth, from the House of Hohenzollern, a nephew of King Vladislaus II and Sigismund I, King of Poland). His European partners meant a great deal to the Habsburgs, as Maximilian went to war in Italy immediately afterwards. At the wedding of the royal offsprings – Louis Jagiellon and Mary of Habsburg – the envoy again occupied a place of honour, standing behind Crown Prince Louis, ahead of Archduke Charles of Habsburg, the ambassador of the Duke of Bavaria – himself having a Habsburg mother –, and all the imperial princes, as well as the Hungarian and Bohemian lords. The joint princely hunt that concluded the meeting played an important role in protocol: first the betrothed, Crown Prince Louis, Anne Jagiellon and Mary of Habsburg (Ferdinand was not present) “*shot a fallow deer and a stag with an arrow*” and “*offered it to Vladislaus*”; then the three sovereigns took part in a “*splendid stag hunt*” in Wiener Neustadt.<sup>82</sup>

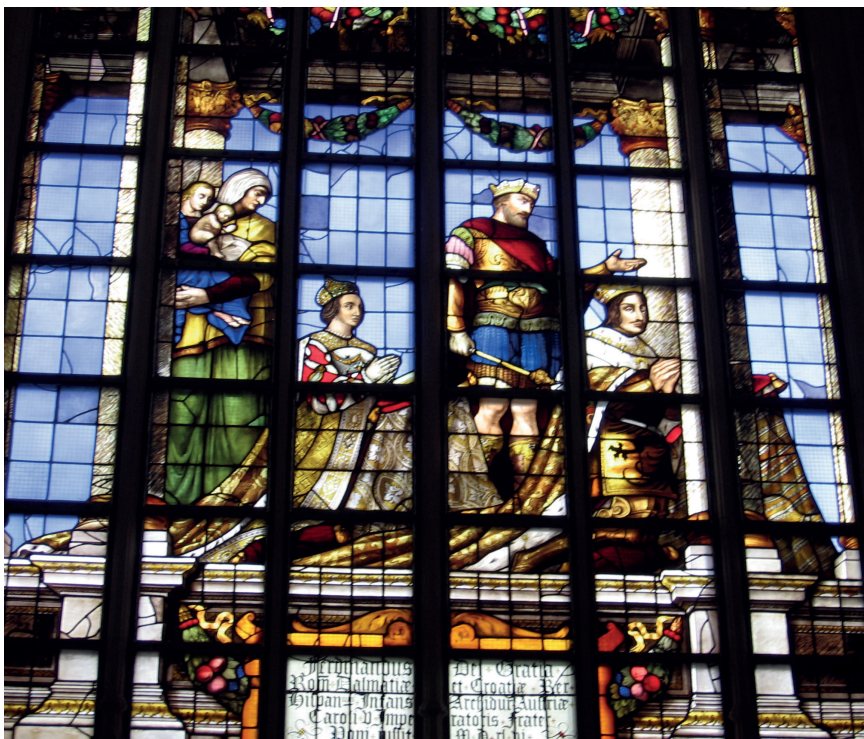


Fig. 4. King Ferdinand Habsburg and his consort, Anne Jagiellon, St. Michael and St. Gudula Cathedral, Brussels, Blessed Sacrament chapel, 1547

At royal weddings, there were court **dances** and **jousting tournaments**, and of course, there were strict rules about who danced with whom, and who fought whom, and in what order. The allies of the states were ranked according to their 'order of importance'. At Matthias's wedding, it was of course the sworn enemies of the Habsburgs, the dukes of Bavaria and members of the House of Wittelsbach, who were allowed to joust and dance in prestigious positions. At the **banquets**, various mystery plays were performed, live images, **interludes** with live actors, which of course had a message, and the actors of foreign policy understood this special 'body language' well. The coronation of King Henry VI of England as monarch of France in Paris in 1431 naturally included interludes designed to emphasise the ancient origins of the English Plantagenet dynasty. At the reception of the envoy of King Ladislaus V to France in 1457, the Valois ruler honoured the delegation by staging a public spectacle, "*a castle with [...] a great tower in the middle [...] and on the highest part of it the banner of King Ladislaus' coat of arms*".<sup>83</sup> It was customary, in the Byzantine tradition, to dazzle the envoys with the glory of the prince and the splendour of his court. In the Hippodrome, ceremonies were performed in their honour, or they were led through the walls of Constantinople, to celebrate the grandeur of the Empire.<sup>84</sup> It was as if the Byzantine era was coming to life in 1483, when the papal envoy to Hungary, Bartolomeo Maraschi, in his report, could not disregard that he was **led through** the palace of the great Corvinus. In his *relatio*, he lists at length the splendid treasures of the King's court, which, "*to say nothing against Italy, is not less illustrious or grander*", and, struck with amazement, and reports of "*gazes with open mouth at the costly garments, carpets, curtains, [...] gold plates, laden with gold, jewels and pearls*", which "*could not be carried away by 50 carts*".<sup>85</sup> Miklós Oláh's *Hungaria*, written in 1536, no longer depicts the Hungarian Renaissance court at its peak, but Matthias' palace in Visegrád still had such a remarkable effect on an Ottoman envoy that he was almost speechless: "*as the royal courtiers*" – presumably deliberately – "*led him from the city to the palace, according to custom, [...] looking down into the courtyard*", he "*saw that splendid place [...] and the throng of court dignitaries [...] resplendent in gowns of silk, silver, and gold, [...] he was struck with such admiration and amazement that he forgot his whole commission as an envoy, [...] and that was all he could utter: the Emperor salutes you.*"<sup>86</sup> Although the story has many topical elements, and it is not without suspicion that its author intended it (also) as a parable, this kind of diplomatic 'metacommunication' was indeed widespread.

Medieval diplomacy also made use of **forgery**, with fictitious letters and **fabricated** documents. The *Fourteenth Century Chronicle Composition* also claims that one of the first known letters in Hungarian history was the result of a forgery,



and not even a secret one. In 1051, the Danube fleet of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III, who attacked the country, was turned back in such a way that they captured a “*courier*” sent to the Emperor by Bishop Gebhardt of Regensburg, who was stationed with the fleet at Győr, “*asking him where he had to wait for him*”, and then a reply was written and it was “*sent to him by a hospes*”, who “*pretended to have been sent by the Emperor*”. The letter read as follows: “*You must know [...] that the great and grave affairs of our empire compel us [...] to return to Teutonia, for our enemies have invaded our empire. [...] destroy the ships [...], come to us to Regensburg, [...] it is not safe for you to stay any longer*”.<sup>87</sup> Although one is inclined to suspect an antique topos behind the chronicler’s narrative, and even the fact that a letter from a German *hospes* in Hungary could lead to the burning of an entire imperial army does seem suspicious. It is certain, however, that the German army, suffering from famine in the Vértes Mountains, did not receive supplies from the ships on the Danube. This suggests that the alleged forger Nicholas Bishop of Győr had an excellent understanding of imperial chancery practice.

It is thought that Joan of Arc’s famous letter to the Hussites was also a creation of the English government, who were willing to do anything to burn virgin at the stake, to get the French and Burgundian leadership to hand over Joan rather than have her march through their country towards Bohemia, inciting the people. The letter puts the following words into the mouth of the Virgin of Orléans “*if I was not busy with the English wars I would have come to see you long before now; but if I do not find out that you have reformed yourselves I might leave the English behind and go against you, so that by the sword – if I can not do it any other way – I will eliminate your false and vile superstition*”.<sup>88</sup>

This is one of the reasons why the **encryption** of envoy reports may have become widespread in the Renaissance. Diplomats wrote using a cypher, which ranged from the simplest, key-operated, single-alphabet type to the most complex – even for today’s researchers – multi-alphabet, individual, created-language type, which is difficult to decipher. An illustrious prince or a politician with a high opinion of himself, such as Miklós Zrínyi, wrote in his own **cypher**, had his own code and cryptographer. Although a sixteenth-century Italian report is perfectly legible, ‘only’ the names of states, princes and politicians, dates, places and the essentials, the relations between the powers, are encrypted.

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<sup>2</sup> Kiss, Gergely: Dél-Magyarországtól Itáliáig. Bánca nembeli István (1205 k.–1270) váci püspök, esztergomi érsek, az első magyarországi bíboros életpályája. (From Southern Hungary to Italy. The Career of Stephen Bánca (1205 c. –1270) Bishop of Vác, Archbishop of Esztergom, the First Cardinal of Hungary). Pécs 2015. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Ricchardus de S. Germano Chronicon, a. 1189–1243. MGH *Scriptores in Folio* 19. (*Annales aevi Suevici*). Hrsg. Pertz, G. H. Hannover 1866. 380.; *Annales S. Pantaleonis Coloniensis*. Hrsg. Cardauns, Hermann. MGH SS 22. (*Historici Germaniae saec. XII. 2*). Hrsg. Pertz, G. H. Hannover 1872. 535.

<sup>4</sup> *Legenda Sancti Ladislai regis*. In: *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regum que stirpis Arpadianae gestarum*. Ed. Szentpétery, Imre (et al.). I–II. Budapest 1937–1938. [Eds. Kornél Szovák – László Veszprémy. 1999]. II. 521.

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<sup>6</sup> Procopius: *The Secret History*. Transl. Atwater, Richard. Ann Arbor 1961. cap. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *ÁAL* 88.

<sup>8</sup> Zsigmondkori oklevéltár. (Charter Collection of the Age of Sigismund). Eds. Mályusz, Elemér – Borsa Iván – C. Tóth, Norbert – Neumann, Tibor – Lakatos, Bálint – Mikó, Gábor – Péterfi, Bence. I–XV. (A Magyar Országos Levéltár kiadványai II. Forráskiadványok 1., 3–4., 22., 25., 27., 32., 37., 39, 41., 43., 49., 52., 55., 59., 61.). Budapest 1951–2022. V. no. 1812. (Hereinafter *ZsO*).

<sup>9</sup> Krzysztof Szydlowiecki kancellár naplója 1523-ból. (The Diary of Chancellor Krzysztof Szydlowiecki from 1523). Ed. Zombori, István. Budapest 2004. 11.; 12.; 109. (Hereinafter *Szydlowiecki*).

<sup>10</sup> *Szydlowiecki*. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Iványi, Béla: Adalékok nemzetközi érintkezéseink történetéhez a Jagelló-korban. (Contributions to the History of Our International Contacts in the Jagiellonian Era). 1–3. *Történelmi Tár* 2/7. (1906) 1.: 139–151.; 2.: 161–197.; 3: 321–367. here 3: 344–348.

<sup>12</sup> Mátyás király levelei 1460–1490. (Letters of King Matthias 1460–1490). Ed. V. Kovács, Sándor. Budapest 1986. 63. (Hereinafter *ML*).



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<sup>14</sup> Szabó, Dezső: *A magyar országgyűlések története II. Lajos korában.* (History of the Hungarian Diets during the Reign of Louis II). Budapest 1909. no. 47.; *Politikatörténeti források Bátori István első helytartóságához (1522–1523).* (Political History Sources Concerning the First Governorship of István Bátori, 1522–1523). Published by C. Tóth, Norbert. Budapest 2010. no. 117.

<sup>15</sup> Malaterra, Goffredo [Geoffrey]: *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his Brother Duke Robert Guiscard.* Transl. Wolf, Kenneth Baxter. Ann Arbor 2005. cap. 4. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Malaterra, G.: *Deeds of Count Roger,* cap. 4. 25.

<sup>17</sup> [Aragóniai Beatrix magyar királyné életére vonatkozó okiratok.](#) (Documents Relating to the Life of Beatrice of Aragon, Queen of Hungary). Ed. Berzeviczy, Albert. Budapest 1914. (Downloaded: 5 May 2024).

<sup>18</sup> ZsO V. no. 1728.

<sup>19</sup> ZsO V. nos. 449.; 450.; 455.; 886.; 1782.; VI. 1553.

<sup>20</sup> Árvai, Tünde: “Magnus comes de Hungaria” – Garai Miklós nádor Nyugat-Európában. (“Magnus comes de Hungaria” – Palatine Miklós Garai in Western Europe). In: *Causa unionis, causa fidei, causa reformationis in capite et membris. Tanulmányok a konstanzi zsinat 600. évfordulója alkalmából.* (Causa unionis, causa fidei, causa reformationis in capite et membris. Studies on the Occasion of the 600th Anniversary of the Council of Constance). Eds. Bárány, Attila – Pósán, László. Debrecen 2014. 316–327.; 323.

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<sup>22</sup> Áldásy, Antal: *Rozgonyi István levele Párizsból 1416. márc. 14-ről.* (Letter of István Rozgonyi from Paris, 14 March 1416). *Történelmi Tár* 3. (1902) 575–577.; *Középkori históriák oklevelekben, 1002–1410.* (Medieval Histories in Charters, 1002–1410). Ed. Kristó, Gyula. Szeged 2000. 243.

<sup>23</sup> E. Kovács, Péter: *Zsigmond király Sienában.* (King Sigismund in Siena). Budapest 2014. 49.; 127.

<sup>24</sup> E. Kovács, P.: *Zsigmond király Sienában.* (King Sigismund in Siena). 49.; 127–129.

<sup>25</sup> *From the Chrysobull of the Emperor Alexius Komnenos I, 1082.* In: *Középkori egyetemes történeti szöveggyűjtemény.* (A Collection of Medieval Historical Sources). Ed. Sz. Jónás, Ilona. Budapest 1999. 448. (Hereinafter KETSZ).

<sup>26</sup> *The Privileges of the Venetians in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1124.* In: KETSZ. 220.

<sup>27</sup> *The Privileges of Venetians.* In: KETSZ. 221.

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<sup>29</sup> *Mohács Magyarországa: Báró Burgio pápai követ jelentései.* (The Hungary of Mohács: Reports from the Papal Envoy Baron Burgio.). Transl. Bartoniek, Emma. Budapest 1926. no. 49.

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<sup>32</sup> Barta, Gábor: *Bevezetés.* (Introduction). In: *Két tárgyalás Sztambulban. Hyeronimus Łaski tárgyalása a töröknél János király nevében. Habardanecz János jelentése 1582. nyári sztambuli tárgyalásáról.* (Two Negotiations in Istanbul. Hyeronimus Łaski’s Negotiations with the Turks on Behalf of King John. Report of János Habardanecz on His Talks in Istanbul in the Summer of 1582). Eds. Barta, Gábor – Fodor, Pál. Budapest 1996. 5–62.

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## Trade War and Economic Diplomacy in the Middle Ages

(*László Pószán*)

Although the two terms in the title above are different, in many respects one follows from the other. Whenever economic diplomacy fails, more radical steps follow, such as targeted customs duty increases, restrictions on trade, and embargoes. Economic diplomacy, however, is not always concerned with actual business and economic issues. It is often linked to the achievement of political objectives and seeks to achieve them by exerting pressure in the economic field. However, the reverse is also true: in the case of politico-military conflicts, it is not at all surprising that the opposing parties (and even outsiders) also use means of transport and trade. Nevertheless, strictly speaking, economic diplomacy is the establishment of agreements between two (or more) countries on trade in goods, customs duties, taxes, etc. This was no different in the Middle Ages.

### *Armed Conflict, Trade War, Embargo*

Such economic instruments were generally used in the Middle Ages to achieve political goals and military plans. This most often meant the embargo of weapons, raw materials essential for military purposes, or essential food supplies for countries at war. State prohibitions on trade were already known in the Roman Empire of the Domitian period and were included in the *Corpus iuris civilis* of the sixth century. Iron, grain, and salt, which were strategic resources, were **banned from export**. With the ban on these products as exports, the intention was to weaken the enemy's military potential and weapon stock and to make it more difficult to supply the enemy's population (and soldiers). Such economic policies persisted into the early Middle Ages. In the Carolingian period, the Capitularies of Herstal (779), Mantua (781), an unknown place of issue (803), and Diedenhofen (805–806) prohibited the sale of leather scale mail and other military equipment outside the borders of the Frankish empire and even prohibited merchants from transporting such products within the empire. These provisions practically prohibited trade of military equipment and weapons and sought to create a monopoly on these items for the ruler. The Edict of Pîtres (864), in the context of the systematic Norman raids in the West Frankish state, prohibited the sale not only of military equipment and weapons but also of horses, as the Normans, arriving on boats, could only invade the country by horses, due to a lack of navigable rivers.

Therefore, the ban on selling horses was intended for defensive purposes. However, the measure also had a **religious content**. The pagan Norse were not allowed to transport goods and merchandise that could harm Christians.<sup>1</sup> From the end of the eleventh century, in the context of the papacy's aims of universal supremacy, it was precisely the reference to **Christian content** that became the dominant feature of **economic prohibitions**, which were reinforced during the Crusades. It was the papacy that initiated the bans on trade of arms, iron, and wood for shipbuilding. These bans applied to Arabs and Turks, but they were also extended to the pagan Slavic and Baltic tribes. In 1179, the **Third Lateran Council** decided that anyone who sold iron, weapons, or wood to the Muslims would be excommunicated. Since the medieval Islamic world did not have an abundance of raw materials (iron) for weapons production or of forests which would have provided wood suitable for shipbuilding, it seemed an obvious way for the Christian world to weaken Islam by banning the sale of products essential to them.<sup>2</sup> Since the Third Council of Lateran, the Curia published the list of banned goods three times a year on the occasion of the great ecclesiastical celebrations, when large numbers of people gathered in Rome. As long as plans to relaunch the crusades were still entertained in Europe, the ban on trade in militarily strategic goods was maintained, because it could cause serious damage to the Muslim world. At the same time, the full enforcement of the embargo would have had serious economic consequences for Christian Europe, as it would have led to the disappearance of **Eastern goods** from its markets. This was mostly an issue of concern for the Italian cities that had always been intended to play a major role in the future crusade (transport of troops, supplies, setting up war fleets, etc.).<sup>3</sup> It is no coincidence that, despite political tensions and various armed conflicts, the relations of the Italian trading cities with the Islamic world were rather peaceful and cooperative, as they were based on mutual interests. The Ottoman expansion and the endeavour of Venice and Genoa to keep their positions did not prevent any of the sides from cooperating in the **Levant** region. In 1402, Turkish troops fleeing from Timur Lenk were transported across the Dardanelles by Genoese ships, and in 1422 and again in 1444, Genoese ships transported Ottomans across the straits for good money.<sup>4</sup> **Venice** was the first Christian state to establish **lasting diplomatic relations** and exchange ambassadors with the Ottoman Empire. Relying on its network of diplomats, spies, and merchants, Venice had the most extensive information on the Turks, and the other Christian states relied on information from la Serenissima. To strengthen its intelligence and diplomatic effectiveness, in 1551, Venice also established a Turkish language school (Giovani di Lingua) in Istanbul.<sup>5</sup> But the city of the lagoons had already established diplomatic relations with the Islamic world for its commercial interests long before that, in the thirteenth





Fig. 1. 1493 view of Venice, from Hartmann Schedel's Nuremberg Chronicle

century. In 1283, the High Council sent an envoy to Tunis for one year and then extended this mandate for another two years.<sup>6</sup> Italian cities interested in the Levantine trade often appealed to the Papal Curia and requested exemptions from the various export bans, at least for certain quotas, and also sought to be allowed to send a certain number of ships to Saracen ports. The Holy See usually only allowed one or two ships, making it virtually impossible to trade with the Arabs (or Turks) legally. It was necessary to obtain a licence for one or two ships from the Curia in order to avoid ecclesiastical punishment, since prohibitions from which the papacy itself had been exempted could no longer be consistently enforced. Thus, instead of strict prosecution, those who engaged in sinful trade were obliged to pay only a fine into the papal treasury to support the future crusade. Enforcement and control of the **papal export bans** depended on the attitude and behaviour of the local bishops of each port city, who were in a position to control the loading operations, which were under the authority of the city port officials. That the enforcement of papal prohibitions and the control of trade had already proved ineffective and unmanageable in Christian ports is demonstrated by the actions of Pope Nicholas IV (1288–1292), who charged the Knights Templar and the Knights Hospitallers with the task of keeping 20 armed galleys permanently cruising the Islamic coast and preventing trade between ‘false Christians’ (*falsi Christiani*) and Muslims.<sup>7</sup> Following the fall of Acre (1291) and the expulsion of the knightly orders from the eastern Mediterranean, it was the king of Cyprus who tried to combat the illegal trade and to control the sea routes, though he did not actually have the power to do so (and he sought to do so only to ensure his own safety). When, in 1365, King Peter of Cyprus (1359–1369), supported by the Genoese and Venetian navies, laid siege to Alexandria, an important Muslim port of the Levant trade, the rival Italian cities were busy consolidating their business

positions rather than engaging in military activity, and they began negotiating directly with the Egyptian sultan.<sup>8</sup>

Trade warfare as a way of asserting political ambitions and exerting pressure also appeared in the thirteenth century in the conflicts among the Christian powers. When Emperor Frederick II (1215–1250) was in a military alliance with the second Lombard League, an alliance of northern Italian cities, he banned the export of grain from Sicilian ports to weaken the enemy because the Lombard cities were not self-sufficient and needed substantial imports.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to Venice, Bologna also frequently resorted to blocking the Po river, thus preventing the transport of grain by river to Venice. **Trade warfare** was also used as a tool in the conflict between England and France under Edward I (1272–1307) and Philip IV (1285–1314). The English king banned the export of wool to Flanders because the rich merchants and cloth manufacturing towns of Flanders sided with the French king, but these towns were dependent on the import of wool as a **textile raw material**. At the same time, the ban on the export of English wool hit England's economy hard, as it caused a significant loss of income. It was thus impossible, quite understandably, to keep in place for long, and it never really had much of a noticeable impact. The French king took a similar step in 1293, when he banned all shipments from his country to England, and no ships were allowed to enter French ports from there. Given that France's main exports to England were grain and wine, the French measure affected the English population, but it was not enough to end the conflict.<sup>10</sup> The largest commercial war of medieval Europe was fought by the Holy Roman and Hungarian ruler **Sigismund of Luxemburg**, who, in connection with his **war with Venice**, had a broad and conceptual economic vision, in addition to his political-power goals. He wanted to reshape the trade, transport, and traffic system of the Central European region better to suit the interests of the empire and Hungary, and in 1412, he imposed a trade embargo on Venice. He closed the Alpine roads from northern Italy to the north and gave many local landowners the right to seize and confiscate goods transported by Venetian merchants, as well goods taken to Venice by others. The **blockade** was not perfect, but it caused serious disruptions (and loss of income) in Venetian trade. The course of the war, however, was not substantially affected by the trade prohibitions.<sup>11</sup> But Venice also used the trade export ban for political ends. For example, in the struggle for the conquest of Dalmatia, it forbade the merchants of Zara (Zadar) from exporting any goods from Venetian territory (1359) and prohibited trade with Ragusa and Cattaro (Kotor) (1372–1373) and even with the whole of Dalmatia (1378).<sup>12</sup>

In the Middle Ages, it was not unknown for conflicts of interest, especially economic ones, to lead to armed confrontation and war. Military conflicts

between Italian city-states engaged in long-distance trade were practically all fought over business rivalries. Amalfi, the first Italian city to develop lively trade links with Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, was defeated by rival Pisa (1135), but soon afterwards, in the mid-twelfth century, Pisa had another rival: Genoa. In the thirteenth century, there were three naval wars between the two cities (1241–1254, 1257–1258, and 1282–1284). The war ended with the defeat of Pisa (1284). However, for its leading role in the **Levant trade** and for business opportunities, Genoa had to face another rival, much stronger than Pisa: Venice. The rivalry, which began in the thirteenth century, turned into an armed conflict in 1253 and lasted until 1270. The war brought no results for either side, but it undoubtedly strengthened Genoa's position. While the fall of Byzantium in 1204 and the establishment of the Latin Empire **increased Venice's commercial opportunities**, the Byzantine Restoration (1261), with Genoa's help, strengthened Genoa's commercial position again. The new Venetian–Genoese naval war between 1293 and 1299 and the peace of Milan (1299), which brought it to an end, did not change the situation: the Adriatic remained a Venetian interest, while the Ligurian Sea **remained a Genoese one**. The economic rivalry did not diminish in the following century, and the two merchant cities fought two more naval wars (1350–1355, 1378–1381), still without a settlement. The peace of Turin (1381) essentially repeated the earlier peace of Milan. The rivalry was finally decided by the advance of Ottoman Turkish power, which caused far greater damage to Genoa than to Venice, as *la Serenissima* had it's a more skilful and better prepared diplomatic apparatus. Between 1453 and 1475, the Turks seized Genoese trading posts and colonies on the Black Sea and the Aegean. But it was not only in the Mediterranean but also in the north of Europe that they finally resorted to arms to assert their economic interests. The Hanseatic League, an organisation of German cities involved in northern trade, provided a legal framework, privileges, and protection for individual merchants and businesses. By the middle of the fourteenth century, the main purpose of the Hansa, which by the mid-fourteenth century comprised more than 200 towns, was to protect the security of their jointly acquired privileges, long-distance trade, and transport against foreign powers and merchants. When King Waldemar IV of Denmark (1340–1375) reconquered the provinces of Skåne, Halland, and Blekinge in the southern Scandinavian peninsula, the other side of the Sund Strait between the Baltic and the North Sea (1360) and then took Visby and Gotland (1361) from Sweden, the commercial interests of the Hanseatic League were seriously damaged. The Hanseatic cities of Lübeck, Hamburg, Bremen, Kiel, Wismar, Rostock, Stralsund, Greifswald, Anklam, Stettin, Kolberg, Kulm/Chełmno, Danzig/Gdańsk, Thorn/Toruń, and Königsberg/Kaliningrad and the Prussian cities of Gdansk, Thorn/Toruń, and Kralin,

Braunsberg/Braniewo) declared a blockade against Denmark and besieged the castle of Helsingborg (1362), which controlled the shipping traffic of the Sund Strait, but the Danish naval fleet was victorious. Hansa was forced to conclude a ceasefire. As King Waldemar still refused to give up the new customs duties and trade restrictions that had been detrimental to north German merchants, the Hanseatic League again imposed a trade embargo on Denmark and decided to raise a naval fleet. To cover the cost of the war, which had been launched out of commercial interests, the Hanseatic League introduced an ad valorem tax called the *Pfundzoll* (1367). The war, which lasted three years, was eventually won by the alliance of German merchant towns. The League regained its former trade and tax privileges and the Danish castles (Helsingborg, Malmö, Skanör, and Falsterbo), and their revenues, which controlled the **traffic through the Sound**, were pledged to the Hanseatic League for 15 years (1370). The same thing happened a few decades later, during the reign of the Danish King Eric of Pomerania (1412–1439). He tried to facilitate the participation of English and German merchants in the Baltic trade, to the detriment of the Hanseatic League. He founded the town of Landskrona on the eastern shore of the sound to provide a strong bridgehead for the rivals of the north German merchants. He also damaged Hanseatic interests by granting considerable trading privileges to the cities of **Malmö and Copenhagen** and revoking many Hanseatic privileges (1423). He built a series of castles on both banks of the Sound in order to control and tax the shipping traffic through the strait (1429). After the new Dano–Hanseatic War (1423–1435), Eric of Pomerania was forced to restore the privileges of the north German cities, the most important of which was the exemption from the Sund toll.<sup>13</sup> In the fifteenth century, the activity of (and competition from) English merchants in the Baltic Sea region increased, which the Hanseatic League tried to prevent with the introduction of restrictive measures. The escalating conflict between 1469 and 1474 led to open sea warfare between England and the Hanseatic League, which ultimately resulted in the success of the merchant cities.<sup>14</sup>

There were also conflicts, however, in which Hansa could only reach its goals through economic means and trade blockades. The first time the north German merchants resorted to this means was in 1284–1285, when they wanted to exert pressure on Novgorod. In 1282, **Eric Magnusson** (1280–1299), King of Norway, revoked the privileges of the Hanseatic League in his country. In response, the north German merchants stopped the vital supplies of grain, flour, and malt to Norway, forcing King Eric to retreat a few years later. He not only restored the privileges of Hansa but increased them as well and paid compensation for the damage caused by the trade blockade (1285).<sup>15</sup> The embargo against Flanders between 1388 and 1392 reasserted the privileges of the League here, and half a cen-

tury later, between 1451 and 1457, when the Hansa again had to impose a trade blockade against Flanders, it was again successful. The political importance of the Hanseatic League was ensured by the fact that it negotiated independently with foreign powers, concluding treaties and alliances, imposing economic punitive measures and blockades, and even launching wars while relying on its economic strength to defend its interests. The Hanseatic cities were effectively linked to the political alliance primarily through the implementation of trade embargoes, wars, or joint measures for the safety of shipping. However, this could never be complete, because the diversity of trade relations often hindered the interests of the individual cities, weakening cohesion among them. Because of its geographical location, Cologne, for example, was less interested in the free navigation of the Sound than the Wends or Prussian Hanseatic cities were.

The Hansa was not a centralised organisation, but a malleable, changeable formation, shaped and moulded by the merchant groups of newer and newer generations and associations, who served as the leaders of the cities. Its **main forum**, the embodiment of a fictitious community of interests, was the **Hanseatic assembly**. It had jurisdiction over all fundamental economic and political questions affecting the community of cities, including treaties with foreign powers, decisions on trade blockades or wars, the admission of new cities to the league, and the exclusion of old ones, but its decisions had to be approved by the councils of the individual Hansa cities. In reality, however, the Hansa assembly, which dealt with the affairs of more than 200 cities, was a forum of little more than 15 to 20 large cities. The other cities generally did not attend these meetings, their membership in the alliance being expressed essentially in the exercise of foreign trade privileges.

### *Economic Diplomacy*

Economic diplomacy in the modern sense was not unknown in the Middle Ages. It occurred mainly between city states and cities engaged in long-distance trade, but also between rulers. As early as the tenth century, 'interstate' trade treaties were concluded between Byzantium and Kievan Rus, which essentially allowed Varangians to go to Constantinople and trade there within the framework of the treaties. Under the terms of a treaty signed in 907 by Grand Duke Oleg (882–912) and Emperor Leo VI (the Wise) (886–912), merchants from the lands of the **Rus**, like other **merchants**, were allowed to spend a month in Constantinople but could only enter the capital unarmed, through a single, designated gate, and with no more than 50 people at a time. A Rus/Varangian merchant could

only purchase silk cloth worth 50 gold solidus.<sup>16</sup> In 1231, Emperor Frederick II and the Emir of Tunis concluded a trade treaty that mutually allowed Christian and Muslim merchants to move around North Africa and Sicily. When a famine broke out in Tunis in 1239, the emperor used this for political ends, demanding an annual tax payment from the African Arab emirate in return for grain shipments from Sicily.<sup>17</sup>

From the last third of the thirteenth century, Venice sent ambassadors and commercial agents to many Italian and European cities (Padua 1284, Almissa 1285, Ortona 1286, etc.) In Apulia, the Venetian consul was essentially the general representative of Venetian merchants. His negotiating power and authority were so broad that between 1282 and 1299 no Venetian diplomatic delegation had to be sent to Naples. **The magistrate** (bailò) **of the Venetian colony** established in Constantinople after the foundation of the Latin Empire (1204) had even more extensive powers. He not only represented the business interests of the city of the lagoons, but also took part in all the political decisions of the new state. But Venice's economic interests extended beyond the Levant trade to the western Mediterranean, and in 1400, it concluded a trade treaty with the Moorish-ruled Granada. In the Middle Ages, all Venetian ambassadors had to strive to act for the benefit and glory of the city of St Mark (and its merchants). As early as 1238, the Venetian High Council forbade its ambassadors and envoys from accepting gifts, which they had to hand over to the city officials on their return home. While Venice sought to secure its economic interests abroad through diplomatic channels, the city's prominence in the Levant encouraged others to have permanent representation in Venice. German merchants, for example, had already built their own **trading house** (fondaco dei tedeschi) in the first third of the thirteenth century on the Grand Canal near the Rialto bridge, which in later times often served as a base for imperial envoys to Italy. In January 1336, Charles I of Hungary and King John of Bohemia concluded an agreement under the Treaty of Visegrád (1335), which regulated the trade routes in the region (one finds the contention in the secondary literature that this trade agreement was only one element in a series of preparations for the campaign against the Austrian princes).<sup>18</sup>

In addition to economic diplomacy, which also concerned foreign relations, there were also negotiations and agreements in the Middle Ages that dealt only with business, the transport of goods, product quality, and financing. In order to facilitate trade among the Hanseatic cities, for example, the north German trading cities sought to coordinate and standardise the **weights and measures** used in trade. Salt, for example, was measured according to the Lüneburg standard, as decided in 1385, 1405, and 1411, while grain was measured according to the Thorn and Danzig (i.e. Prussian) standards (1420). The herring trade was based





Fig. 2. Map of Marienburg (Malbork) Castle

on the Rostock barrels from 1358, and in 1420, the city of Stettin was punished for deviating from this decision. To ensure the safety of goods in transit, the Hanseatic League stipulated that ships carrying 100 loads had to have at least 20 armed men on board and more for larger vessels. In addition to coordinating weights and measures, some of the major cities belonging to the Hansa also sought to coordinate their monetary policies in order to reduce costs that would necessarily result from the conversion of different currencies. In 1373, Lübeck, Hamburg, Rostock, Stralsund, Wismar, Greifswald, Stettin, and Denmin agreed to standardise the coinage used for minting, and a few years later (1379), they decided to issue a new common currency, the Witten, worth 4 denarii.<sup>19</sup> Such far-reaching economic decisions were preceded by lengthy discussions, mostly in the form of correspondence. The correspondence of the Hanseatic cities amounted to a remarkable volume (for example, the archives of Danzig/Gdańsk preserve nearly 18,000 letters up to 1526).<sup>20</sup> By the mid-thirteenth century, Lübeck and Hamburg already employed city postmen and couriers (*nuntius consulum*, *nuncio dominorum Lubicensium*, *stades boten*), and more and more Hanseatic cities began to follow their example. This extensive correspondence and writing enabled the Hanseatic League to react quickly and more or less uniformly to changes and to put its **economic decisions** into practice.<sup>21</sup>

Diplomatic activities on financial and trade issues have sometimes been linked to unexpected places. At the **Council of Basel**, for example, the Procurator of the **Teutonic Order** came into contact with the Albert Bank in Florence, which expressed an interest in opening a representative office or branch in Prussia. The related negotiations were conducted by the delegates of the Order of the Knights present at the Council. In addition to the negotiations to open a bank branch, the

Council was also the venue for a number of important exchange transactions. In 1434, the city of Danzig, on behalf of the Grand Master, sent a bill of exchange (von Lubeke durch eynwechsel) from Lübeck for the expenses of the ambassadors of the Teutonic Order, which could be cashed at the Bueri banking house, which had business relations with the House of Medici, or at the Medici themselves. It was also through this bank that the Knights' envoy to the Papal Curia, the Mayor of Danzig, and the Archbishop of Lund conducted their financial transactions.<sup>22</sup>

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## The Role of Church Forums and Institutions in International Relations in Medieval Europe

*(László Pószán)*

Medieval Europe, which was made up of numerous kingdoms and principalities and was politically, ethnically, culturally, and economically diverse, was nonetheless arguably unified, at least to some extent, by a single institution with a set of more or less consistent principles, a far-reaching infrastructure, a single tradition, and a single language (Latin): the Church, the sphere of vision of which included not only the whole Christian world but also missions and diplomacy in areas beyond it. The structure, theological principles, administration of the sacraments, ecclesiastical punishments, and major ecclesiastical policy decisions of this institution, which covered a vast geographical area, were usually the subject of universal councils, which tried to establish general rules and resolutions. The first **universal council, held in Nicaea (325)**, was convened by Emperor Constantine, who invited the bishops of the Roman Empire to meet in the great hall of the emperor's summer palace, where Constantine himself was present and delivered a speech. Between 220 and 250 bishops were present. The vast majority came from the Eastern provinces of the Empire, but a few Latin bishops were also present.<sup>1</sup> The Council of Nicaea offered for the first time an opportunity for ecclesiastical dignitaries to meet face to face with one another and with the emperor and his officials. Given that the political boundaries of the Roman Empire at the time were still essentially coincident with the extent of Christianity, councils were not yet international contacts, but they clearly were by the Middle Ages, the era of the Christian kingdoms that succeeded Rome. In the Middle Ages, universal councils were not exclusively religious, ecclesiastical forums. They were also attended by kings, princes, or their envoys, and many secular issues were discussed. In the history of international relations, councils were the largest diplomatic events of the Middle Ages.

The general councils of the Western world developed from those councils, which were first organized by the reforming popes initially for a limited number of participants (some in Rome and some elsewhere) but which definitely included bishops from outside Italy, to discuss general ecclesiastical (and necessarily secular) issues. It was in this context that the right to convene, suspend, transfer, or dissolve such gatherings and to preside in person or by proxy, set the agenda, and ratify and promulgate resolutions gradually came to be the right of the Pope.<sup>2</sup> A council also offered an opportunity to fulfil the **political ambitions of the papa-**

cy. Pope Nicholas II (1059–1061), for example, issued his famous decree on the election of the pope at the Roman Council of 1059, which was attended by 113 bishops. **Gregory VII** (1073–1085) convened a council (1075) to fight against the investiture of the laity and simony and to introduce celibacy for priests, to which he invited for the first time abbots as well as archbishops and bishops. He also used his envoys to persuade lay authorities to attend the council to discuss issues of concern to them. The logic of papal supremacy meant that both the clergy and the laity had to be represented at councils. When **Pope Urban II** held a council in Piacenza in March 1095, according to a contemporary chronicler, it was attended by some 4000 clerics (including 200 bishops from Italy, France, and Germany and a large number of lower priests) and thousands of lay people. Because of the large number of participants, this council was a demonstration of power and a show of support for the policy of church reform, just like the Council of Clermont, held six months later in November 1095, where, alongside the clergy, a huge lay crowd also gathered. Here, Pope Urban II renewed the ban on secular investiture and forbade priests to take oaths of fealty before laymen.

Another decision of the Council which caused a great stir throughout Europe was the declaration of a crusade to liberate the Holy Land. It led to crowds of people from almost every part of the Western Christian world setting out for Jerusalem, and it showed more than ever that the Pope was the universal authority of Christianity, whose words could prompt the faithful to take up arms and go to war. The extent and intensity of the lay religious enthusiasm expressed in the crusade contributed greatly to consolidating the position of the papacy, which was seeking to implement the Gregorian reform. But the council also proved a **political forum**, not only for the Holy See but also for the interests of the emperor, because the Holy Roman emperors, as the supreme rulers of the Christian world and the Church, were also constantly convening councils, like the former Roman emperors, which reinforced their position. When **Gregory VII** forbade lay investiture at the Roman Council in 1075, thus declaring all personal decisions of **Emperor Henry IV** concerning the Church null and void, the Emperor immediately convened a council in Worms in January 1076, where the prelates loyal to the Emperor and the imperial ecclesiastical organisation (who were not small in number) declared Gregory VII deposed from the papal throne as a false monk.<sup>3</sup>

In the struggle over the investiture and universal power, the councils not only served to raise the prestige of the popes and further the goals of the emperors. They also increased the weight of the bishops and abbots, since the fate of an important political decision depended on their attitude. For example, the **First Lateran Council** (1123), which was attended by some 300 bishops and abbots, confirmed the Concordat of Worms, which had been concluded the previous year. It was the

first great council of the Catholic Church after the schism of 1054, the first great council of the Catholic Church to be called universal, the greatest meeting point and forum of Western Christianity, convened by the Pope with the support or approval of the Emperor Lothair III (1125–1137). The **Second Lateran Council** (1139) was held in response to strife within the Church and between the two elected popes (Anacletus II 1130–1138 and Innocent II 1130–1143). According to the Annals of Melk, 500 ecclesiastical dignitaries attended the council, though Otto of Freising reported nearly 1000. Specific lists of the bishops who attended the **Third Lateran Council** (1179) are available, giving a total of 291 names, but the actual number of participants was much higher. There were 124 archbishops from various parts of Italy, 79 from Spain, 5 from Dalmatia, 8 from the Holy Land conquered by the Crusaders, but also some from the Churches of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and Germany were represented with the archbishop or one of his episcopal delegates. Alongside the dignitaries, there were also envoys from almost all the monarchs. The whole of the Western Christian world was also represented at the **Fourth Lateran Council** (1215) through ecclesiastical and lay delegates. Among the delegates, 404 bishops are known by name, including representatives from Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic regions (Hungary, Poland, Livonia) which had not yet participated in universal Catholic councils. The number of abbots and priors present exceeded 800. The Council met only three times (on 11, 20, and 30 November), but it took decisions on very important issues. It created the inquisition **to combat heresy**, required all Christians to go to confession at least once a year, required archbishops to hold an annual provincial council to keep abreast of the current situation in the archdiocese, and decided to announce and prepare for a new crusade, which already directly involved the secular princes.<sup>4</sup>

**The First Council of Lyon** in 1245 was closely linked to the struggle between Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) and Emperor Frederick II (1215–1250) and the fact that the Pope had to flee Italy to escape the imperial troops. This had an impact on the number of participants, since, because of Frederick II's ban, only a few bishops came from the empire (and from the central and southern parts of Italy) and only a few from England. The invitation to the council was accepted mainly by French and Spanish prelates. The number of bishops who attended was between 140 and 150, which was considerably less than the previous universal council. In addition to the proceedings against the emperor, who was accused of heresy, association with infidels, perjury, and the deposition of Frederick (which, incidentally, did not disturb the emperor's actual position in the least), the council dealt with the loss of Jerusalem (1244), the situation of the Latin Empire, and the Mongol invasion of Central and Eastern Europe. The convening of the Sec-



ond Council of Lyon (1274) was linked to the fact that the papal throne remained vacant for years. After the death of Clement IV (1265–1268), the divided cardinals were unable to agree on a new pope for three years. The new Pope, Gregory X (1271–1276), who was finally elected, felt the need to regulate the election of the Pope better but also wanted to negotiate a new crusade and a union with the Greek Church. Although the number of participants in the council did not reach that of the 1215 council, it was larger than that of the First Council of Lyon. There were 6 archbishops and 28 bishops from the German territories, 31 delegates from France, 50 from the Iberian Peninsula, and a large number from Italy and other Christian countries. Archbishops, bishops, and abbots were also invited, as were the heads of the ecclesiastical orders of knights, and the secular rulers also sent their envoys to Lyon. The law on the election of the pope, called *Ubi Periculum*, which was adopted here, stipulated that 10 days after the death of the pope, the cardinals should meet in strict seclusion (**the conclave**) to elect a successor. If the election did not take place within three days, the cardinals would receive only one plate of food at noon and at dinner for five days, and after that only bread and water. The cardinals present at the conclave would be deprived of their ecclesiastical income for that period. However, the new crusade and the planned union with the Orthodox Church did not move forward. Nevertheless, the council was also the scene of an important political decision: the contest between King Alfonso X of Castile (1252–1284) and Rudolf Habsburg (1273–1291) for the German crown was decided in Rudolf's favour.<sup>5</sup> The topics discussed at the Council of Vienne in 1311–1312 clearly demonstrated the influence of King Philip IV of France (1285–1314) on the papacy, with the issue of the Knights Templar coming first, followed by the reconquest of the Holy Land and the reform of the Church. Unlike before, not all the bishops were invited to the council, only those whose appointment was approved by the French monarch. Not surprisingly, most of the participants came from Italy and France, and the presence of the Archbishops of Tarragona, Braga, Compostela, York, Armagh, Dublin, Cologne, Magdeburg, and Bremen was intended to show that the council was truly representative of all parts of the Catholic world.

From the Second Lateran Council to the Council of Vienne, the question of the crusade, including the preparations that would need to be made and the issue of financing, which also involved the secular princes, was raised at every turn as a matter of concern for Christianity as a whole, and this highlighted the universal nature of the Councils. In the hundred years following the Council of Vienne, in the context of the Avignon era of the papacy and the schism in the West, no new universal councils were convened in the Catholic Christian world. The need arose in connection with the call for the abolition of the schism and the restoration of



Fig. 1. Emperor Sigismund

the unity of the Church. In 1409, at the initiative of the College of Cardinals, a universal council was convened in Pisa, within the sphere of influence of the French in Florence, at which both Popes Benedict XIII (1394–1417) and Gregory XII (1406–1415) were to have been present in order to resign simultaneously and clear the way for the election of a new pope, as they had previously promised. However, the attitude of the two popes was primarily determined by the position of the various European powers on the issue, since the policies of the various rulers also influenced the attitudes of the heads of the churches in those countries. Wenceslas, who had been abdicated the throne of the empire (1399), hoped to regain his crown by making an agreement with the cardinals who had initiated the council. Under this agreement, the Cardinals would recognise Wenceslas as the ruler of the empire and Wenceslas would regard the new pope elected by the Council as the only legitimate leader of the Church. But Ruprecht (1399–1410), who held the imperial dignitary, sided with Gregory XII in Rome and objected

to the fact that the council was convened by the College of Cardinals. He argued that in the absence of a legitimate pope, the Roman (German) monarch alone had the right to do convene the College, and he thus questioned the legitimacy of the council. Despite his reservations, the Pisa Council was nevertheless held, and it was attended by almost 100 archbishops, almost as many bishops, 200 abbots, 100 dioceses, and 13 universities. King Sigismund of Luxemburg, the King of Hungary, also questioned the legitimacy of the council initiated by the cardinals, and the Hungarian delegates did not attend. On 5 June 1409, the Council of Pisa deposed Benedict XIII and Gregory XII and elected a new pope, Alexander V (1409–1410). Alexander, however, did not achieve the original goal of ending the schism, and in fact he further complicated the situation. Since the two previous popes had not recognised the legitimacy of the Council, the Western Christian world now had not two but three popes.<sup>6</sup> Gregory XII was supported by the Holy Roman ruler Ruprecht, Sigismund of Luxemburg, Naples, Venice, and Rimini. Benedict XIII was backed by the Iberian Peninsula and Scotland, and the new pope elected at the council had the most support, but he died less than a year after having become pope and thus did not hold office for long. The cardinals who had supported him elected a new pope, John XXIII (1410–1415), the following year.

In the same year, Ruprecht died and was succeeded by **King Sigismund of Luxemburg**, who, as a Holy Roman monarch, saw himself as the head of the Christian world and whose main task was to abolish the **Western schism**. He thought this could be achieved in the same way that the conveners of the Council of Pisa had also declared: each pope must resign and a new universal council must elect a legitimate head of Church. Politically, the question of who was entitled to convene a universal council in the absence of a legitimate pope was hardly insignificant. Sigismund clearly claimed for himself the universal supremacy of the imperial dignitary. Through active and skilful diplomacy, he was able to get this accepted by the other rulers and dignitaries of the Christian world of the day, but his greatest political success was to persuade both the warring European powers (England, France, Poland, the Teutonic Order, etc.) and the rival popes to attend the planned **Council of Constance**. The imperial invitations to the council were sent not only to the ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church, but also to the Byzantine Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople, in the hope that, in parallel with the abolition of the Western schism, the East–West schism, i.e. the question of union between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, could be discussed again after the Second Council of Lyon. Sigismund managed to ensure that a council representing the whole of Western Christianity could begin its work in Constance in November 1414. Alongside Pope John XXIII, the clergy was represented by the legates of the other two antipopes, 33

cardinals, 50 archbishops, 145 bishops, 124 abbots, and 750 theologians with doctorates from 14 universities. The secular dignitaries present included the emperor himself, all four German secular electors, several other imperial princes, 114 counts, and ambassadors sent by the European rulers. Thus, the number of secular participants in the council was at least as great as the number of ecclesiastics. The Council of Constance (1414–1418) also dealt with many more secular matters than previous councils had. As the head of the Christian world, Sigismund also wanted to resolve the major political issues of contemporary Europe, such as the Anglo–French conflict and the conflict between the Teutonic Knights and the Polish–Lithuanian state. Several imperial princes and representatives of imperial cities (including several Hanseatic cities) attended the council, where Sigismund also wanted to discuss imperial issues. The Council of Constance thus became by all accounts the **largest political forum in contemporary Europe**, providing not only ecclesiastical content but also a forum for international diplomacy and imperial assembly. In this way, Sigismund demonstrated that the **Empire embraced the whole Christian world**, and thus he was its responsible leader in all matters. His ultimate goal was the complete settlement of ecclesiastical questions and the establishment of peace in Europe, and he then planned a great European crusade against the Turks, who threatened the whole of Christendom. Even if his grand plans could not be realised, it was still thanks to his diplomatic efforts that the schism which had divided the Western world since 1378 was brought to an end and, with the deposition of the previous popes and the election of Martin V (1417–1431), Latin Christianity finally had a pope once more.<sup>7</sup>

After the Council of Constance, it remained an open question whether the council was a one-time forum for establishing the order and unity of the Church by means of a great ecclesiastical legislation or whether it would become a permanent institution of Church government, and if so, with what frequency it should be convened. What would the relationship of the universal council towards the legitimate pope be, or in other words, where would the focal points of ecclesiastical life be placed once ecclesiastical life had returned to normal? This was in practice the main theme of the Council of Basel (1431–1437), which finally took the position that the Council was superior to the Pope, who was bound to act according to the ecclesiastical laws and rules laid down by the Council. As in the Council of Constance, the question of union with the **Greek (Orthodox) Church** was on the agenda, because the threat of the Turks had oriented Byzantium and the Orthodox Church towards the West. From 1436 onwards, the Pope and the delegates of the Council held parallel negotiations in Constantinople on where to hold the united East–West ecumenical council, which was to decide on the future unification of the Church. The German council delegates suggested **Basel**,

where the council was already meeting, the French suggested Avignon, and the envoys of Pope John IV (1431–1447) preferred a city in Italy. The councils of Constance and Basel also differed from the earlier universal councils in that the council itself was **diplomatically active**. The Council of Constance sent envoys to Lithuania (1416) to obtain first-hand information on church organisation and missionary activity there. The Council of Basel acted as a political actor in its own right to promote Church unity in the East and West by sending envoys to Constantinople (1436). The Council of Basel played a major role in settling the **Czech issues** that had proven intractable for Sigismund from 1419 onwards, when, in 1433, in the light of political considerations of the moment, it reversed its earlier position, according to which the moderate Hussites (the Utraquist) were heretics. Sigismund subsequently defeated the Taborites (1434) and was able to take the Czech throne.<sup>8</sup>

From the point of view of international relations, the **Council of Ferrara–Florence** (1438–1445) was the most far-reaching and the **largest diplomatic forum**, with some 700 Greeks present, because the main theme of the Council was the restoration of Christian unity. On 6 July 1439, the representatives of the Eastern and Western Churches signed the Bull of Union, *Laetentur Coeli*, which, albeit briefly, achieved Christian unity.<sup>9</sup>

While the councils of the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, convened by the popes, dealt with the question of the Crusade essentially from the point of view of the universal supremacy of the Apostolic See (even when a specific event justified the plan for a new campaign), in the late Middle Ages, the councils were convened to discuss the political developments of the day, including the growing military threat of Ottoman Turkish power, and to counter the advance of Islam. Following the Turkish conquest of **Constantinople** (1453) and the establishment by the Ottomans, decades earlier, of a foothold in the Balkans, Italy and, by extension, the papacy, felt threatened. In 1459, Pope Pius II (1458–1464) convened a council in **Mantua** (1459–1460) to finance a European crusade against the Turks, at which the so-called “*Ottoman tithe*” was adopted (the high priests would pay a tenth of their ecclesiastical income into the papal treasury for the campaign against the Turks). In 1462, a large alumina mine was discovered in the territory of the Papal States (the Medici were also involved in the use of the mine), the proceeds of which were also intended to finance the crusade. Although many crusaders were gathered in Rome for the 1463 crusade, the plan never came to fruition because most Christian rulers (and states) refused to take part.<sup>10</sup>

Among the ecclesiastical institutions, the **Papal Curia** was a real international meeting place in the Middle Ages, where ecclesiastical and secular ambassadors from different parts of Europe and often ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries

and authorities were constantly visiting. At the same time, messengers, couriers, nuncios, and legates from the papal court were almost constantly on their way. In international diplomacy, the papacy played an active role in two areas in addition to its own secular and ecclesiastical political aims: it tried to act as a mediator and peacemaker in conflicts between kings and states, and, partly related to this, it adjudicated in secular matters. In the Middle Ages, the Curia attempted to act as a kind of international judicial forum for appeal, which in practice essentially meant a role as arbitrator called upon by the parties to a dispute, so at this point, the judicial and diplomatic mediation activities were also linked. Papal envoys were most often able to be effective in settling a truce between warring Christian powers, because the Church had at its disposal a larger body of legal and negotiating experts than any other institution or political body in Europe, as well as a wider range of instruments with which to influence negotiations. These included, for example, the granting of dispensations for legal marriage, the dispensation of vows, redemption, the issuing of indulgences, and the granting of full and partial indulgences. At the same time, papal mediation necessarily meant that the limits of the latitude of the legates appointed by the Curia were in fact set by the negotiating parties themselves, not by the pope. The papal legates could do no more than facilitate the negotiations leading to a peace settlement and add the opinion of the Apostolic See to confirm the terms on which the parties to a dispute had agreed.<sup>11</sup>

Within the Curia, **diplomatic matters** were basically **handled by the Chancellery**. In the Middle Ages, the papacy developed the ceremony of welcoming foreign ambassadors and secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries to such perfection that the secular states (most notably the Italians) tried to follow the example of the papal court in their foreign policy relations and practices. The arrival of foreign ambassadors was announced well in advance so that the papal court would know exactly when they would arrive. A mile from Rome, the arrivals would enter an inn and change their clothes. Instead of their travelling clothes, they would put on the robes of the monarchs who had sent them, the servants would unharness the horses, clean the harnesses, and, following their masters, they would put on their fine clothes. Meanwhile, from Rome, a welcoming committee of ambassadors of the right rank went out to meet the arrivals. This could even be the pope himself, but for the most part the delegations were greeted by cardinals, archbishops, or bishops before entering Rome. The foreign ambassadors were then allowed to enter the city and go to their designated accommodation. Their **formal reception** (which also had its own ceremony) usually took place on the second day after their arrival in the **Consistory**.<sup>12</sup> Alongside the pope (and usually with



his knowledge), the College of Cardinals itself also carried out diplomatic activities, sending and receiving ambassadors.

Among the ecclesiastical institutions, the monastic orders, present in almost every part of the Christian world, were themselves an important part of international relations, with their network of monasteries and convents, their internal and external flow of information, and their personal movements. In the early Middle Ages, there was already some cooperation and contacts among the separate, autonomous **Benedictine monasteries**, but from the tenth century, **Cluny** became a political factor in both the ecclesiastical and secular spheres, and under its leadership, a powerful Benedictine monastic confederation, a **congregation**, was established, which required extensive diplomatic activity. By the twelfth century, more than a thousand abbeys belonged to the Cluny congregation (thus accepting the leadership of the abbot of Cluny), and at least as many monastic communities had adopted the rules and monastic aspirations of the congregation, though they were not legally part of the monastic community.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to the Benedictines, the **Cistercian order** was centralised from the outset, with a **universal chapter** (*capitulum generale*) of all Cistercian abbots meeting every three years as the supreme decision-making body, and decisions taken there were binding for all monasteries. This structure required constant and continuous communication between Cistercian communities hundreds or even thousands of kilometres apart. In the mid-twelfth century, the order already had monasteries everywhere, from Scandinavia to Sicily and Portugal to Poland. The Cistercian Order had 328 abbeys in the mid-twelfth century, 525 in 1200, 694 in 1300, 712 in 1400, and 742 in 1500, making it the first powerful international organisation in Europe alongside the papacy.<sup>14</sup> Even more centralised than the Cistercians were the **mendicant orders** (**Dominicans, Franciscans**) and the **monastic orders of knights**. Mendicant orders were headed by a minister general (*minister generalis*), initially elected for three years, but for 12 years as of 1260. Under him were the provincials (*minister provincialis*), who were in charge of the provinces and who met at fixed intervals in the general sessions held by the chapters to decide on matters affecting the orders as a whole. In the Franciscan order, provinces were further subdivided into custodies (*custodia*, which were headed by *custos*), which included several monasteries. Given that, in addition to their centralised structure, the mendicant orders played a major role from the outset in preaching and evangelising on the frontiers of Christianity or in very remote areas, the flow of information within the Dominican and Franciscan orders and the network of contacts with ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries extended over a wider geographical area than ever before. For example, half a century after its foundation (1216), the Dominican

Order had 394 monasteries in 1277, and it had 526 by the beginning of the fourteenth century. The Franciscans spread even more rapidly. In 1282, they had 1583 monasteries in 34 provinces.<sup>15</sup> The grand masters at the head of the ecclesiastical orders were elected for life and, like the mendicant orders, the estates and houses of the European orders were organised into so-called provinces, which covered the whole Christian world.



Fig. 2. Honorius III Approving the Rule of St Dominic in 1216

The earliest **Order of Knights Templar** (1118) had 28 orders in 1300, each headed by a *provincial magister* appointed by the Grand Master, who regularly supervised their work and the functioning of the orders through *visitors*. The main task of the European network of estates was to provide for the material needs of the Knights Templar fighting in the Holy Land, including the supply of money, arms, horses, and other goods.<sup>16</sup> At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the **Order of St John** (1147) had 7 orders in Italy (Messina, Barletta, Capua, Rome, Pisa, Venice and Lombardy), 4 in the Iberian Peninsula (Portugal, Castile-Leon, Navarre, Aragon), and 15 in the rest of Europe (England, Ireland, Scandinavia, Germany, Hungary, Northern France, and Auvergne). After the **dissolution of the Order** (1312), the Templar estates passed to the Hospitallers, who further increased the number of priories (Toulouse, Aquitaine, Champagne, and Catalonia). The Knights Hospitallers differed from the Templars in that it not only had an extensive network of estates throughout Europe, but also established its own monastic ecclesiastical state in the **Aegean**, in the **Dodecanese islands**, with its centre on **Rhodes**. The governance of both the Order and the state of the Knights Order followed the international character of the monastic chivalric community. The knights belonged to seven '*langues*' according to their origin, and each '*langue*' was entitled to nominate an officer of the Order and of the State. A 13-member electoral body set up by the Grand Chapter of the Order as a whole decided on the person of the Grand Master (*magnus magister*), and the knights of the '*langue*'

of Provence elected the deputy Grand Master, the *magnus praeceptor*, who was responsible for the Order's property, income, and finances. The Auvergne 'langue' had the right to appoint a marshal (*marescallus*) from its own ranks. The marshal was in charge of equipping the fleet and providing arms and armour. The *magnus hospitalarius*, chosen by the French 'langue', was responsible for the knights' estates and their supplies. The Italian 'langue' appointed the commander-in-chief of the fleet (*admiratus*) and the Aragonese 'langue' appointed the chief officer in charge of the clothing of the members of the order (*magnus conservator*). The English 'langue' chose the commander of the light-armed auxiliaries (*magnus turcopolerius*) and the German 'langue' appointed the treasurer (*tresararius*). The Castilian 'langue' was the grand chancellor (*magnus cancellarius*), who was in charge of the administration of the knightly order.<sup>17</sup> Like the Knights Hospitallers, the **Teutonic Order** (1198) had its own state in **Prussia** and the **Baltic**, and it also had a network of orders throughout Europe. Most of its possessions were in **Germany**. The orders here and, from the mid-fourteenth century, in the **Mediterranean** (Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, and the Greek territories) were under the control of the German Master. An exception was made for the possessions in central Italy, which were the domains of the permanent knight-errant envoy to the papal Curia and were under his jurisdiction.<sup>18</sup> In addition to administering the international network of orders, the orders of knights, as organisations which made it their life's work to fight the enemies of the Church and the Christian faith, were involved in day-to-day political developments and maintained extensive diplomatic relations with the papal Curia, the various ecclesiastical dignitaries, emperors, kings, secular princes, and often the enemy (Saracens, Tatars, pagan Lithuanians, Orthodox, heretical Hussites, etc.).

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3.

**GREAT POWER POLITICS AND THE RENEWAL OF  
DIPLOMACY (15<sup>TH</sup>–16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)**

## The Persistence of Dynastic Politics During The Wars in Italy (*Attila Györkös*)

One of the significant events of the first half of the sixteenth century was the series of conflicts known as the **Italian Wars (1494–1559)**, in which practically all the states of Europe were involved, directly or indirectly.<sup>1</sup> From the point of view of diplomatic history, it is of particular importance as the opposing parties concluded very diverse military-political alliances, often rearranging the international balance of power over a few years. The conflict in Italy brought with it a renewal of the diplomatic system, with the establishment of **permanent embassies**, although not yet universal, and the first formulation of the later so commonplace **principle of the balance of power**.

The monarchs of France, who had won the Hundred Years' War, gradually consolidated their rule by gaining most of the autonomous feudal provinces within the kingdom. In 1481, one of the great aristocratic families, the dynasty of the Angevins, died out, and not only did their holdings along the Loire and Provence, part of the Holy Roman Empire, become French territory, but their Valois relatives also inherited the claim to the throne of Naples from the Dukes of Anjou. **Charles VIII (1483–1498)** used this as a basis for declaring war in 1494 to seize the kingdom of southern Italy. In his argument, we find the crusading ideal so popular at the time: in addition to the dynastic reasons, he considered the war just because he wanted to use the ports of Italy to launch a campaign to liberate the Holy Land.

Charles was careful to neutralise his potential opponents before the war, settling decades-old conflicts with his neighbours in a series of international treaties. The famous humanist historian Antonio Bonfini, who was at that time at the Hungarian court, aptly recorded these events. "*There came the year [1494], which was known for an alliance between the majority of the Christian princes of the West, in which Charles VIII, King of the Gauls, made peace with Maximilian [the Holy-Roman Emperor]; and with Ferdinand, King of Spain, returning to him Perpignan and the neighbouring province of Roussillon, to which the King of the British Isles [Henry VII] and the other princes of the West also joined.*"<sup>2</sup>

In the fifteenth century, Italy was a politically fragmented area, with dozens of smaller and larger states on the peninsula, often seeking to increase their influence at the expense of each other. After the Peace of Lodi in 1454, which ended the war between Milan and Venice, the practice of sending permanent envoys to each other's territories to prevent a further conflict became widespread. The system of resident embassies, which replaced the occasional medieval envoys, brought about

a revolution in international relations: the American historian **Garrett Mattingly** credits it with **the birth of modern diplomacy**.<sup>3</sup> Although it did not prevent further minor conflicts in Italy (e.g. the War of the Pazzi, 1478–1480, or the “*Salt War*” in Ferrara, 1482–1484), they remained low-intensity and a balance of power between states was established. The contemporary historian Francesco Guicciardini rightly called the decades between 1454 and 1494 the “*happy times of peace*”.<sup>4</sup>

This balance of power, outlined above, was broken by the attack of the French. Charles VIII had entered Italy as an ally of the Duke of Milan, Lodovico il Moro, and the Medici-controlled Florence had also traditionally pursued a pro-French policy. The traditionally good Milanese-French relations were reflected in the **first permanent embassy across the Alps**, which the duchy of Milan established with France in 1464.<sup>5</sup> However, the arrival of foreign troops, caused a political landslide. When the French forces marched through Tuscany, the people of Florence revolted against Piero de’ Medici’s rule and the fanatically puritan Girolamo Savonarola, a Dominican friar, temporarily seized power in the city famous for its love of splendour (four years later he was declared a heretic by the Pope and burnt at the stake). **Pope Alexander VI (1492–1503)**, under the shadow of arms, gave in to Charles VIII out of necessity and handed some fortifications over to him, but was already secretly organising a coalition against the Northerners. Southern Italy quickly surrendered, and the French monarch was crowned King of Naples in February 1495. His victory, however, proved temporary.

His successes not only infuriated the Italian states, but also the Western powers, who were afraid of the strengthening of the House of Valois. In April, a broad anti-French coalition was formed under the leadership of the Pope, which was joined by the former ally Milan and the Republic of Venice. Charles VIII not only had to evacuate Naples, but his army had to fight its way home to France.

The young Charles VIII died in an accident, without an heir (he was on his way to a ball game when he tragically hit his head on the lintel of a low door of the castle of Amboise). His successor, **Louis XII (1498–1515)**, from the branch House of Valois-Orléans, did not give up the ‘*Italian dream*’, but acted according to other priorities. His grandmother was a descendant of the Visconti family, the dukes of Milan, who had been expelled from the country, and so the acquisition of the province of Lombardy became the new focus of French foreign policy. Having invaded Milan in 1499, and a year later crushed a rebellion organised by Lodovico il Moro, his diplomacy was geared to securing his new claim with the nominal ruler of the territory, the Holy Roman monarch. He negotiated with the **Emperor Maximilian I (1493–1519)**, offering him 100,000 gold pieces in exchange for the title of Duke of Milan and his daughter Claudia as wife of the infant Charles of Habsburg. None of the treaties concluded by them between

1501 and 1505 (Trento, Blois, Hagenau) came into force, so neither the marriage nor the investiture took place. The Franco–Habsburg conflict over Milan was not settled and remained the main source of discord between the two sides. The complications surrounding the duchy led French diplomacy to conclude an ‘eternal alliance’ with Venice, which had been hostile to them four years earlier, but then joined France for a number of territorial concessions in 1499, and also to establish relations with central Europe (Hungary, Bohemia, Poland and Lithuania), which was ruled by the Jagiellonians, in 1500. The ostensibly anti-Turkish coalition was in fact intended to serve as a kind of anti-Habsburg south-eastern counterweight, but in practice it never really worked. The only concrete result was **the marriage of Anne of Foix, a lateral relative of the French royal family, to King Vladislaus II of Hungary and Bohemia in 1502.**<sup>6</sup> Pope Alexander VI, who had previously organised an anti-French coalition in Italy, was won over by the granting of the Duchy of Valentinois to his illegitimate son Cesare Borgia and arranged his marriage with a French aristocratic wife.

Meanwhile, Spanish–French relations have also become increasingly complicated. For the united Spanish state, southern Italy had always been of particular importance, as the collateral branch of the Aragonese dynasty held the Kingdom of Naples. In 1500, Louis XII concluded a pact with **Ferdinand of Aragon (1479–1516)** under which the Spanish and French would have divided Naples between them (Treaty of Granada). However, after the joint conquest, the parties could not agree on the division of the territories and a conflict developed between them.<sup>7</sup> One anecdotal case is the “*Challenge of Barletta*”, as depicted in the comedy *Soldier of Fortune* when thirteen French knights faced off an equal number of Italian knights in Spanish service. The jousting duel ended in victory for the latter, and its memory is deeply carved in Italian history. The war itself was eventually won by the Spaniards (1504), who had a better organised infantry, and from then on French interest focused increasingly on northern Italy.

The constant and rapid changes in the alliance systems of the Italian wars may at first glance be seen as chaotic. To understand them, the main principle should be borne in mind that the small states of the peninsula continued to pursue a policy of equilibrium, only they had to take account of the intervention of external powers. If a great power, be it France, Spain or the Holy Roman Empire gained too much influence in Italy, other states tended to equalize it with new allies, which again led to the strengthening of another power, and so new coalitions, with a constantly changing composition, had to be formed, in order to maintain the balance.

A good example of this apparent chaos, but diplomatically very consistent political process, is the series of events of 1508–1513. The Venetian Republic was

involved in a series of border disputes with its neighbours, who had formed an alliance against the Signoria (**League of Cambrai, 10 December 1508**). The treaty, nominally against the Turks, brought together the previously hostile French, the Spanish, the ecclesiastical state under **Pope Julius II (1503–1513)**, the Empire and some minor Italian duchies (Ferrara, Mantua), all of whom wished to act together against Venice. However, after the French defeated the army of the Republic at Agnadello in 1509 and seemed able to establish a lasting settlement in northern Italy, in an unexpected turn of events, Julius II made peace with Venice and in 1511 created another league, this time to expel the French. Most of the former allies, the Empire, the Spanish and even **Henry VIII's England (1509–1547)** joined. In just over two years, two coalitions with virtually the same partners but with completely opposite aims were formed.

The history of the League of Cambrai also has Hungarian connections. During the war against Venice, coalition forces were looking for further allies, so in 1510 a Franco–German delegation visited Vladislaus II. Their offer was to give Dalmatia, which was lost under Sigismund of Luxemburg, to the Kingdom of Hungary in return for entering the war against the Signoria. Hungarian foreign policy found itself in a difficult situation: the offer was promising but the conflict would have meant the loss of one of Vladislaus' most important allies in the fight against the Turks. Venice had for decades provided substantial financial support for the maintenance of the southern outpost. The work of the League's envoys are relatively well known from the research sources, however, the interpretation of the results of the negotiations is not commonly agreed on in modern Hungarian literature. Older works have attributed to the fact that Vladislaus' Hungary did not actually participate in the war, and thus did not regain the Adriatic, to Venetian '*intrigue*' and corruption. Today, other aspects may be worth examining. **From the point of view of Hungarian diplomatic history, it is significant that the Venetian Republic (the first of the European powers) had maintained a permanent embassy in Buda since 1499.** As a consequence, the merchant republic had long been able to learn about the structure of Hungarian domestic politics, its actors and motivations. Thus, when the forces of the League wanted to involve the Hungarian kingdom in the war against them, the Venetian ambassador in Buda knew exactly who to persuade at home and how to remain neutral<sup>8</sup> (it should be added that this non-intervention policy also served Hungarian interests by maintaining the aforementioned aid).

The period from 1515 to 1519 marked a turning point in the history of the Italian wars, with dynastic changes leading not to a resolution of the conflict but to its escalation. During the wars of 1512 and 1513, France was temporarily ousted from northern Italy, but with the coronation of the ambitious **King**

**Francis I (1515–1547)**, French foreign policy took on a new impetus. In 1515, Francis defeated the dreaded Swiss infantry at Marignano, retook Milan and in the following year, he was able to conclude a favourable ecclesiastical agreement with the new **Pope Leo X (1513–1521)** (**Concordat of Bologna, 1516**). However, French victories were overshadowed by the changes in the grand politics. In 1516, the Spanish throne was vacated by Ferdinand of Aragon's grandson, Charles of Habsburg (**Charles I, 1516–1556**). Three years later, Charles's other grandfather, Emperor Maximilian I, died, and the young Spanish king was elected to the head of the Empire (as **Charles V, 1519–1556**). France was thus caught in the pincers. Its southern, eastern and northern borders were all surrounded by Habsburg possession.

The series of conflicts, also known by historians as "*the great duel*"<sup>9</sup> erupted in 1521, when Spanish and imperial forces once again invaded the Duchy of Milan and the English king followed suite with northern France. Francis attempted to retaliate three years later, but his troops, who had been besieging Pavia for months, were destroyed in February 1525, and the French king was imprisoned by the Habsburgs for a year, only to be released after the Treaty of Madrid (24 January 1526), when he was forced to surrender Italy and Burgundy, leaving his two sons as hostages.

Previous Hungarian historic literature often recalled that the French-led **League of Cognac**, concluded on **22 May 1526**, was in some ways responsible for the defeat at the Battle of Mohács, mainly due to the lack of international support for the Hungarian Kingdom. However, beyond the chronological parallel, it is rather difficult to find an actual link. Francis I, who had escaped from captivity in Spain and had declared the Treaty of Madrid null and void, did find links with the small Italian states, and in addition to Venice, the Medici-controlled Florence and Pope Clement VII (1523–1534). Additionally, from the merchant family, he also became an ally of the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza II, who had been brought to power by imperial troops a few years earlier. The coalition, also presented as an anti-Turkish 'Holy League', was supported by the English monarch. Here again we see the principle of the balance of power, as mentioned earlier, since the Habsburgs' excessive strengthening was not to anyone else's taste. However, the Hungarian envoys who asked for international aid in 1526 were heard, and the Empire, and even distant Portugal and England, offered financial aid – although this was too late due to the financial and logistical conditions of the time.<sup>10</sup>

The War of the League of Cognac was marked by two major events. The first was the so-called **Sacco di Roma, or sack of Rome, in 1527**, when unpaid imperial mercenaries in Italy stormed and ransacked the papal seat, causing incredible material and moral damage and destroying many works of art. The captured Pope



Clement VII was forced to reconcile with Charles V, who was crowned emperor three years later in Bologna (Charles had only been an elected monarch). The conclusion of this phase of the war was a more interesting event in international relations and was a clear demonstration of the growing role of women in Renaissance diplomacy. As exhausted opponents refused to negotiate directly with each other, peace was brokered by their female relatives. The so-called **Peace of Cambrai**, or more commonly known as the **Peace of the Ladies**, of 5 August 1529, was negotiated by King Francis I's mother, Louise of Savoy, and her sister-in-law and aunt of Emperor Charles V, Margaret of Habsburg, in the palace of Mary of Luxemburg in Cambrai. The agreement also involved another lady: the French monarch married Charles' sister, Eleonora of Habsburg.



Fig. 1. Sack of Rome (May 6, 1527) after Martin van Heemsckerck (1555)

However, the martial relationship between the opponents did not bring a long-lasting truce. Between 1536 and 1538 there was another war for Milan, which ended in a truce, and in a moment of peace the emperor passed through France during 1539–1540, travelling from Spain to his lands in the Low Coun-

tries. The heroes of the “*great duel*”, who were meeting in person for the second time (the first time having been a year earlier), welcomed each other as members of the most important knightly orders of the two states. Charles thus became a member of the French Order of Saint Michael, while Francis became a member of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Elegant receptions and ceremonial processions accompanied the meetings, and they attended mass together at Notre-Dame in Paris.<sup>11</sup>

By the sixteenth century, however, personal relationships did not influence rigid superpower interests. When Francis’ ambassador to Turkey, Antonio Rincón was assassinated by imperial soldiers in northern Italy in 1541, war between the two sides broke out again. The incident reveals a number of diplomatic curiosities: while Francis saw the assassination as a violation of ambassadorial status, Charles saw the liquidation of Rincón as a means of preventing the mine-laying of a foreign agent negotiating with his opponent. As in the earlier and later periods, it was difficult in the sixteenth century to separate the activities of a diplomat from those of a spy or agent. Another novelty of the war that broke out was that the French were already fighting in a Turkish alliance, and the military operations involved the Hungarian front and the Mediterranean. The conclusion of the fighting in 1544 (the Peace of Crépy) also allowed the work of the **Council of Trent** (1545–1563), which had already been convened by the Pope, to begin.<sup>12</sup>

After the death of King Francis, his successor, Henry II (1547–1559), followed his father’s anti-Habsburg foreign policy. He preserved the Turkish alliance but also made a pact with the German Protestants, even though he harshly persecuted the new confession at home. With this external support, in 1552, he succeeded in cornering the emperor, who was almost taken prisoner, at home, by his opponents. While many fortresses in the Hungarian theatre of operations fell into Turkish hands, the French captured the Three Bishoprics in Lorraine (Metz, Toul and Verdun). The weary Charles V, through the mediation of his brother Ferdinand, made peace with the German Lutherans (**Peace of Augsburg, 1555**), concluded a truce with the French and then renounced all his powers (1556).

After he abdicated as emperor, the Habsburg Empire was divided, and while the Kingdom of Spain was inherited by Charles I’s son **Philip II (1556–1598)**, in collaboration with the colonies and the provinces of Italy and the Low Countries, **Ferdinand (1556–1564)** was given the title of Emperor and the Habsburg territories of Central Europe.

These changes are also pertinent in that the last phase of the wars in Italy was reduced to a Franco–Spanish confrontation, from which the empire had already been excluded. Under the impetus of the new Pope, **Paul IV (1555–1559)**, who was of Neapolitan origin and disliked Spanish rule, the French invaded Italy

again, while Philip's troops invaded France. Since **Mary Tudor I**, the Catholic Queen of England (1553–1558), had been Philip's wife from 1554, the island nation was also drawn into the struggles in the north. The latter proved to be the more important theatre of war: the Spanish defeated the French at Saint-Quentin in 1557 and a year later at Gravelines, while the French suddenly recaptured the town of Calais in January 1558, ending 211 years of English rule.

The war has exhausted all parties, both militarily and materially. In 1557, France and Spain declared bankruptcy.<sup>13</sup> After the early death of Queen Mary, **Elizabeth I** took the English throne (1558–1603) and returned to Protestantism, breaking with the Spanish alliance, while Pope Paul IV was forced to abandon his former ally under pressure from Spanish troops.

After more than five months of negotiations, in 1559, at the castle of **Cateau-Cambrésis**, the parties signed two major peace treaties that would fundamentally determine the balance of power in the second half of the sixteenth century. Fernand Braudel straight up divides the history of sixteenth century Western Europe into "*before and after Cateau-Cambrésis*".<sup>14</sup> The negotiations were not conducted by qualified envoys but, as was customary in previous centuries, by prelates and aristocrats. For example, the French Marshal Montmorency and the Spanish Duke of Alba, two major generals of the earlier conflicts, might have sat at the same table. On 2 April, the envoys of Elizabeth and Henry II agreed that the English owned lands on the continent would be French for eight years (but this remained the case for good). A day later, Henry and Philip's representatives agreed that the French should give up their territories in Italy and renounce all other claims on the peninsula. On the French side, the terms were made easier to accept by the fact that the peace did not affect the Duchy of Burgundy, which they had already acquired, and, interestingly, as the Emperor was not invited to the peace talks, the issue of the imperial cities captured in 1552 was not raised, thus, they too remained in Henry's possession. Although France was disappointed with the '*Italian mirage*',<sup>15</sup> it stabilised its frontier conquests.

In the custom of the time, the main guarantee for lasting diplomatic agreements was dynastic marriages. This was no different in 1559. Elizabeth of Valois, daughter of Henry II, married Philip II of Spain, who was only 32 but had already been widowed twice, while Margaret, sister of the French monarch, was to marry Emmanuel-Filibert of Savoy, commander of the forces that had won at Saint-Quentin.<sup>16</sup> In Paris, the end of the long war and the marriage treaties were greeted with celebrations that included jousting duels. In keeping with the surviving medieval tradition, the king also took up the lance resulting in a mortal wound on the field.

Although the most important war in Western Europe in the sixteenth century ended in 1559, another, more complex tension soon emerged. Henry's under-age successors were unable to deal effectively with the rising religious tensions in the country, while, as a champion of Catholicism, the victorious Philip II criticised that, peace had given him the strength to take on Protestantism in the Low Countries and England. There is no doubt that after Cateau-Cambrésis, international relations in Western Europe took a different direction. We are witnessing the birth of a new diplomacy, no longer dynastic, but confessional based.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a library of international literature on the Italian wars. One of the most recent of these: Mallett, Michael – Shaw, Christine: *The Italian Wars 1494–1559. War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe*. Harlow 2012. In Hungarian, an excellent political history summary is given in the book chapter of János Barta: *Az itáliai háborúk (1494–1559)*. (The Italian Wars, 1494–1559). In: *A kora újkor története*. (History of the Early Modern Period). Ed. Poór, János. Budapest 2009. 11–27.; and a shorter summary is given below by the author of this chapter: Györkös, Attila: *Az itáliai háborúk*. (The Italian Wars). In: Angi, János – Ifj. Barta, János – Bárány, Attila (et. al.): *Európa az újkorban*. (Europe in the Modern Period). Debrecen 2006. 286–292.

<sup>2</sup> Bonfini, Antonio: *Magyar történet*. (Hungarian History). In: *A Hunyadiak kora*. (The Age of the Hunyadis). Ed. Kulcsár, Péter. Budapest 1981. 236.

<sup>3</sup> Mattingly, Garrett: *Renaissance Diplomacy*. New York 2010 [1955]. 11–13.

<sup>4</sup> Guicciardini, Francesco: *Itália története 1494–1534. (History of Italy 1494–1534)*. Budapest 1990. 5–9.

<sup>5</sup> Mandrot, Bernard de: *Dépêches des ambassadeurs milanais en France sous Louis XI et Francesco Sforza*. Paris 1919.

<sup>6</sup> Györkös, Attila: *Reneszánsz utazás. Anna királyné 1502-es fogadtatásának ünnepei Észak-Itáliában és Magyarországon. (Renaissance Journey. Celebrations of the Reception of Queen Anne in Northern Italy and Hungary in 1502)*. Gödöllő 2016. 19–33.

<sup>7</sup> Autrand, Françoise – Bély, Lucien – Contamine, Philippe – Lentz, Thierry: *Histoire de la diplomatie française I. Du Moyen Âge à l'Empire*. Paris 2007. 164.

<sup>8</sup> Lakatos, Bálint: *Haag, Mrakes, Cuspinianus és Helianus. A német és francia követek tárgyalásai a magyar elittel az 1510-es tatai országgyűlés idején. (Haag, Mrakes, Cuspinianus and Helianus. Negotiations of the German and French Envoys with the Hungarian Elite during the Diet of Tata in 1510)*. Komárom-Esztergom megyei múzeumok közleményei 17. (2011) 223–238.

<sup>9</sup> Autrand, F. – Bély, L. – Contamine, P. – Lentz, T.: *Histoire de la diplomatie française*. 196.

<sup>10</sup> Bárány, Attila: *Magyarország és a külső segítség 1526-ban (Hungary and External Aid in 1526)*. In: „Nekünk mégis Mohács kell...” II. Lajos király rejtélyes halála és különböző temetései. (“We do need Mohács...” The Mysterious Death and Various Funerals of King Louis II.). Eds. Farkas, Gábor Farkas – Szebelédi, Zsolt – Varga, Bernadett. Budapest 2016. 35–54.

<sup>11</sup> Jacquart, Jean: *François I<sup>er</sup>*. Paris 1981. 245–246.

<sup>12</sup> Molnár, Antal: *A trienti zsinat (1545–1563). (The Council of Trent, 1545–1563)*. In: *A kora újkor története. (History of the Early Modern Period)*. Ed. Poór, János. Budapest 2009. 335.

<sup>13</sup> Tózsá-Rigó, Attila: *Az állami és üzleti szféra összefonódása a kora újkori gazdasági rendszerben. Újabb adatok a délnémet vállalkozói társaságok hitelezési tevékenységéhez. (The Intertwining of the Public and Business Spheres in the Early Modern Economic System. Recent Data on the Loaning Activities of South German Entrepreneurial Companies)*. *Századok* 149. (2015: 4) 832.

<sup>14</sup> Quoting his comment: *Garrisson, Janine: Royauté, Renaissance et Réforme, 1483–1559. Nouvelle histoire de la France moderne 1*. Paris 1991. 169.

<sup>15</sup> The original term „*mirage italien*” is adopted from Ivan Cloulas’ book. See. Cloulas, Ivan: *Charles VIII et le mirage italien*. Paris 1986.

<sup>16</sup> Le Roux, Nicolas: *Les Guerres de religion 1559–1629*. Paris 2009. 26–30.

*“The Unholy Alliance”<sup>1</sup>*  
**Ottoman Diplomacy and European Politics**  
**in the Sixteenth Century**  
*(Attila Györkös)*

Despite the spectacular successes of the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century, it remained a pariah in Western European diplomacy. It was generally believed that no alliance should be concluded with the so-called infidels. Throughout the period, Christian countries continuously negotiated among themselves over a possible crusader alliance, but as Domonkos Kosáry has noted, these alliances, which were nominally formed against the Turks, in reality were merely a moral justification for political struggle against one another.<sup>2</sup> Until then, the only countries that had negotiated with the Porte were those affected by the Ottoman advance. This includes, in addition to the treaties forced on the vassal Balkan states<sup>3</sup>, the agreements between the Hungarian kings and the sultans, in which Hungarian King Matthias or the Jagiellons sought to guarantee the security of the border regions.

The exception to the rather passive nature of late medieval Christian–Ottoman relations was the Venetian Republic, which, with its Mediterranean trading interests, considered it necessary to maintain constant contact with the Porte, and through the *bailo*, who led the Venetian colony in Istanbul and defended its interests, operated a kind of permanent embassy in the Ottoman capital and was represented by consuls in the major trading centres.<sup>4</sup> One note, however, should be added here: for a very long time, Western diplomacy only had information about the Ottoman Empire through the Venetians.

One of the first Western countries to break the ‘moral barrier’ which prevented any alliance based on mutual interest between a Christian country and the ‘infidel’ Porte was the Kingdom of France.

It is a recurring cliché in the secondary literature that in 1526 there was already a Franco–Turkish alliance that could be held partly or wholly responsible for the 1526 Battle of Mohács, at which the forces of the Hungarian king and his allies fell to the Ottomans. According to this account, the French King Francis I (1515–1547), who was at war with the Habsburgs, after having been defeated by the imperial troops at Pavia on 24 February 1525 and having himself been held prisoner for nearly a year by Emperor Charles V, wrote to Süleyman I (1520–1566) asking for help. Some older interpretations in the secondary literature even suggest that this request was the trigger for the Ottoman campaign against Hun-



gary. Today, there is probably some consensus among historians that Suleiman was motivated by his own empire-building logic, and it is highly doubtful that an actual agreement was concluded between France and the Ottomans in 1526. Francis I's letter to Istanbul asking for help has not survived, and we know only the reply given by Süleyman, which, however, only mentions support in very general terms, in the flowery language common in Eastern diplomacy. We do, however, have documentary evidence that the King of France politely refused any Turkish support in the spring of 1526, when he was released from his captivity in Spain.<sup>5</sup>



Fig. 1. The Battle of Pavia (1525)

Real Ottoman–French relations were established not on this occasion, but a good ten years later, and initially as trade agreements. Francis I sent envoys to Istanbul in 1535, and the treaty known as “*Capitulations*” was concluded. The treaty granted the French free trade in the empire, together with autonomous reli-

gious and judicial powers, or in effect, the same benefits enjoyed by the Venetians at the Porte. After the treaty was concluded, Jean de la Forêt, one of the leaders of the French delegation, remained in Istanbul as permanent ambassador.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to trade relations, the French and the Ottomans also sought to coordinate military actions. However, while Francis I would have expected effective Ottoman naval support in the Mediterranean against the Spanish and their Italian allies, the Sultan concentrated on the Hungarian and Persian theatres of war. Despite all the differences, signs of military cooperation exist dating back as early as 1536. When Charles V invaded southern France that year, Hayreddin Barbarossa, a corsair general of Algiers in Turkish service, was plundering pro-Spanish Genoa and its surroundings. The following year, the Turkish fleet attacking Corfu, a Venetian possession, had the support of thirteen French galleons.<sup>7</sup>

In the next phase of the Italian wars, from 1542 to 1546, this reciprocity became even clearer. After Charles V had granted the Duchy of Milan, also claimed by the French, to his son, the Crown Prince Philip (later King **Philip II of Spain, 1556–1598**), Francis I turned to the Turks for help. However, his envoy, Antonio Rincón, also known from Hungarian diplomatic history, was assassinated by the imperials in northern Italy, leading to a French declaration of war. As a prelude to joint action, Süleyman **conquered Buda and parts of central Hungary in 1541**. In response, the following year, a large Imperial–Papal force of some 30,000 troops attempted to retake the Hungarian capital, but without success. However, most of the Habsburg forces were already concentrated on the western front because of the French invasion of northern Italy, so nothing could prevent the Turks from expanding their conquest by occupying Central-Hungarian towns, such as Esztergom, Tata, Székesfehérvár, and Pécs. In addition, in that year, the Ottoman fleet led by Barbarossa helped the French in the **siege of Nice**. The ships spent the winter in the port of Toulon. Francis I had the city evacuated and the Sainte-Marie-Majeure cathedral was temporarily converted into a mosque. As one contemporary witness wrote: “*When you see Toulon, it’s like seeing Constantinople.*”<sup>8</sup>

After the death of King Francis in 1547, France and the Porte continued to pursue relations, and one of the most striking results of the alliance was the renewed joint action in the 1552 war. While the French ruler **Henry II (1547–1559)** was occupying the imperial bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun in Lorraine, Suleiman’s forces were besieging several Hungarian strongholds, including Temesvár (today Timișoara, Romania), Lippa (today Lipova, Romania), Szolnok, Drégely, and Eger, all of which they took, with the exception of Eger (which however fell to the Ottoman forces roughly a half century later). The following year, the joint fleet of the two states occupied Corsica under Genoese rule, albeit only for a short time.<sup>9</sup>

Turkish and French diplomacy were also involved in other ways in the events in Hungary. Even before Mohács, in 1522–1523, Francis I tried to win over Jagiellonian Hungary to an anti-Habsburg alliance. His envoy, the aforementioned Antonio Rincón, negotiated with the Voivode of Transylvania John Szapolyai, which turned out to be unsuccessful. After Szapolyai became king as John I (1526–1540), his power was called into question by Ferdinand of Habsburg, and war broke out between them, renewing relations with the French. Less than a year after Mohács, Rincón returned in the summer of 1527, but negotiations were slow, and the French were unable to offer any real military assistance. King John therefore appealed to the Sultan through his envoy Hieronim Łaski, a Polish-born ambassador. Negotiations at the Porte also dragged on for more than two months, but Łaski was finally able to return home with a treaty of alliance (29 February 1528). However, this coalition did nothing to help Szapolyai's desperate military situation: in the spring of that year, he was defeated by Habsburg troops near Kassa (today Košice, Slovakia) in the Battle of Szina on 8 March and was forced to flee to Poland.<sup>10</sup> The belated French treaty of alliance was only signed by Francis I (Fontainebleau, 28 October 1528) when King John was making arrangements to return home (he crossed the border on 3 November). In this agreement, the French paid 20,000 gold francs in financial aid to Szapolyai for the anti-Habsburg struggle. However, as was typical of the time, the well-known French envoy Rincón was only able to hand over the sum to John eleven months later, on 8 September 1529.<sup>11</sup> By this time, however, Szapolyai had already suffered humiliation on the very battlefield where the Hungarian armies had been defeated some five years earlier. Sultan Süleyman had forced him to kiss his hand, thus making Szapolyai the sultan's vassal in a symbolic gesture customary in Eastern diplomacy.

Thus, the first Western Christian state to enter an actual political-military alliance with the 'infidel' Turks was not France but the Hungarian kingdom of John Szapolyai. The relationship between the two states changed again in 1541. Suleiman, at the head of the invading Ottoman army which had liberated Buda from the imperial siege, offered the infant John Sigismund, son of Szapolyai, the eastern half of the Hungarian kingdom, now with a more restrictive vassalage. This was not only reflected in limited political space and annual tax payments, but also in the fact that the nascent Principality of Transylvania needed a permanent embassy in Constantinople to assert its interests.

This diplomatic status was established relatively late, in 1560, when Mihály Gyulay, a confidant of Isabella,<sup>12</sup> regent of Transylvania, was able to take up his position as *kapitiha* (permanent agent or envoy, *continuus orator*) in the Ottoman capital. The embassy's headquarters in Istanbul, the "*Transylvanian*

*House*”, was located in the Balat district of the Ottoman capital, inhabited by Christians and Jews. The rather modest residence also reflected the position of the envoy of the vassal state. Real authority was in fact vested in the occasionally chosen envoy extraordinary, who laid the annual tribute due to the Porte at the feet of the sultan.<sup>13</sup>

The other European states were relatively late in establishing permanent diplomatic relations with Turkey. Although Ferdinand I had sent envoys to the Sultan in May 1528 to obtain a free hand in the Hungarian theatre of war, his offer was so firmly rejected that the following year, Süleyman’s troops were already besieging Vienna.<sup>14</sup> The conflict was brought to an end for five years by the armistice of 1545<sup>15</sup> and then by the **Truce of Adrianople** (1547),<sup>16</sup> but after this period, not least due to the tactics of George Martinuzzi, who was the most influential politician of the Principality of Transylvania, fighting resumed (the memorable **Ottoman campaign of 1552**). A longer-term Habsburg–Ottoman settlement was only reached after the deaths of the former rivals (Ferdinand: 1564, Süleyman: 1566) with the **peace treaty (1568)** between Maximilian I and Selim II, again concluded only in **Adrianople**, which secured relative peace in Hungary for 25 years.

In peacetime, the Habsburgs also maintained a permanent embassy in Istanbul. From 1545, Giovanni Maria Malvezzi represented the emperor, first occasionally and then permanently during the transitional five-year period after the peace treaty, and during the long peace period of 1568 there was a continuous diplomatic presence in the Ottoman capital **until the beginning of the Fifteen Years’ War (1593)**.<sup>17</sup>

The other Western powers were relatively late to establish diplomatic ties with the Porte. The English and the Dutch initially traded with the Ottoman Empire under the French flag (the Franco–Turkish treaty of 1536 made this possible). Elizabeth I maintained a representative in Istanbul from 1580, but the diplomatic nature of this convergence was not incorporated into a treaty until three years later. The government of the United Provinces (later the Netherlands) had already sanctioned several decades of trade relations in 1612, when, after lengthy negotiations, it was able to send a permanent representative to the Ottoman capital.<sup>18</sup>

Following in the footsteps of the French, the English and the Dutch were only able to establish trade and then diplomatic relations with the Porte once they had become obvious rivals of the Habsburgs (Spanish and Austrian), the Ottoman Empire’s greatest rivals to the West. At the same time, unlike the French, the English and Dutch did not enter into a military alliance with the Turks.

European–Ottoman diplomatic relations had a number of specific features. One of the most notable of these was the **unilateral** nature of the relationship.

The Western Christian countries maintained permanent embassies in Istanbul, but there was no Turkish response, and the sultans continued to send only occasional envoys to the European courts. It should be added that this was not entirely unique in the diplomacy of the period. Even Jagiellonian Hungary, for example, did not establish a permanent embassy in Venice, although the Italian Republic had had a representative office in Buda as early as 1499.

The other phenomenon, which is different from European practice, is the scope of ambassadors. Contrary to Western diplomatic practice, European ambassadors were not allowed to move freely in the Turkish capital. Their activities were practically confined to occasional official meetings and their contacts were monitored. All this obviously made it difficult or well-nigh impossible for the ambassadors to fulfil one of their important tasks: intelligence gathering.

In the diplomatic practice of the time, **gifting** was a common practice. But while in Christian states, the gift from the sending country was expected to be reciprocated in roughly equivalent value, at the Turkish court, the gift was clearly expected and not necessarily compensated. It was therefore extraordinary (but obviously due to cold political considerations) that Hieronim Łaski, although he arrived at the 1527–1528 negotiations with the Porte with practically no money, managed to broker a treaty of alliance between Szapolyai and Süleyman.<sup>19</sup> Later, the Transylvanian envoys presented themselves at the Porte with gifts worth a few thousand silver thalers, but they had to give them not only to the sultan, but also to the grand vizier and other members of the divan.<sup>20</sup> The importance of the gifts is illustrated by the fact that when, in 1575, Henry III of France tried to ensure that the Sultan would not support Istvan Báthori, Prince of Transylvania, in the election of the Polish king, his failure was partly due to the delay of his envoys in supporting his request with gifts.<sup>21</sup>

The idea of the territoriality of the envoys (the principle that the person, residence, and belongings of the official envoy are not subject to the control of the authorities of the host state) also left something to be desired. It was not uncommon, but it did happen that, in the event of bad news, the Porte punished (imprisoned or even executed) members of the embassy of the sending country, making them responsible for the diplomatic turn of events. Hieronim Łaski, mentioned above, negotiated with the Sultan in 1540 in the service of Ferdinand, after his last turnaround. As a result of escalating Turkish–Habsburg tensions (see above), Łaski was arrested and taken prisoner by the Sultan for the duration of the campaign in Hungary the following year.<sup>22</sup> But he was not the worst off: when Venetian–Ottoman relations deteriorated in 1570 (because of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus), Marc' Antonio Barbaro, the Venetian ambassador in Istanbul, was



hanged, and in 1633, the French embassy interpreter, the Italian-born Balthasar Armen, was executed.<sup>23</sup>

Interpreters were an important part of the diplomatic machine, and they were trusted people. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the translator for the Transylvanian embassy in Istanbul received a substantial salary of 100 ducats a year.<sup>24</sup> Western ambassadors generally did not speak Turkish, so they communicated in Latin through the official court translator in the Porte, but in everyday life, they needed someone who understood Turkish. In addition, the sultan always issued documents in Turkish. It is typical that no one at the Habsburg court was initially able to read the letter from Suleiman brought home by the embassy in 1528, and it took weeks to decipher the contents of the document, which was almost equal to a declaration of war.<sup>25</sup>

Religious differences between the Muslim Ottoman Empire and the Christian powers made diplomatic relations difficult. As we have seen above, most European rulers were initially wary of establishing any “*unholy alliance*”. Nevertheless, Venice established a permanent embassy at the Porte for economic reasons, Transylvania out of necessity, and France out of political-strategic interest. While the Catholic Austrian Habsburgs sought to be represented at the sultan’s court to avoid war, Protestant England and the Netherlands sought primarily economic advantages through diplomatic presence. The history of Christian–Ottoman relations in the sixteenth century is an example of how religious animosities were slowly overridden by well-understood political interests based on reciprocity.

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<sup>1</sup> The term (*alliance impie*) was adopted and translated from the work of Edith Garnier in the abovementioned way. See: Garnier, Edith: *L’Alliance impie: François Ier et Soliman le Magnifique contre Charles Quint*. Paris 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Kosáry, Domokos: *Magyar külpolitika Mohács előtt*. (Hungarian Foreign Policy before Mohács). Budapest 1978. 12.

<sup>3</sup> For the Romanian principalities, see: Papp, Sándor: *Keresztény vazallusok az Oszmán Birodalom észak-nyugati határainál*. *Diplomatikai vizsgálat a román vajdák szultáni ’ahdnáméi körül*. (Christian Vassals on the Northwestern Frontiers of the Ottoman Empire. A Diplomatic Investigation of the Sultan’s ’ahdnâmes’ of the Romanian Voivodes). *Aetas* 17 (2002: 1) 67–96.

<sup>4</sup> Kerekes, Dóra: *Diplomaták és kémek Konstantinápolyban*. (Diplomats and Spies in Constantinople). Budapest 2010. 33.



- <sup>5</sup> Györkös, Attila: Mohács és a török–francia szövetség, avagy a “Nyugat árulásának” mítosza. (Mohács and the Ottoman–French Alliance, or the Myth of the “Betrayal of the West”). In: A magyar emlékezhelyek kutatásának elméleti és módszertani alapjai. (Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Research on Hungarian Memorial Sites). Eds. S. Varga, Pál – Száraz, Orsolya – Takács, Miklós. Debrecen 2013. 347–351.
- <sup>6</sup> Garnier, E.: L’Alliance impie. 107–108.
- <sup>7</sup> Anievas, Alexander – Nişancioğlu, Kerem: How the West Came to Rule. The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism. London 2015. 113.
- <sup>8</sup> Clot, André: Soliman le Magnifique. Paris 1983. 193.
- <sup>9</sup> Guitman, Barnabás – Tóth, Ferenc – B. Szabó, János – Korpás, Zoltán: A magyarországi török várháborúk nemzetközi háttere, 1547–1556. (The International Background of the Ottoman–Hungarian Wars, 1547–1556). *Világtörténet* 41. (2019: 2) 274–281.
- <sup>10</sup> On Turkish–Hungarian rapprochement, see: Két tárgyalás Sztambulban. Hyeronimus Laski tárgyalása a töröknél János király nevében. Habardanecz János jelentése 1582. nyári sztambuli tárgyalásáról. (Two Negotiations in Istanbul. Hyeronimus Laski’s Negotiations with the Turks on Behalf of King John. Report of János Habardanecz on His Talks in Istanbul in the Summer of 1582). Eds. Barta, Gábor – Fodor, Pál. Budapest 1996. 16–23.
- <sup>11</sup> For an acknowledgement of this, see: Archives nationales de France, Paris, J 955. No. 28. 1529.09. 08. Buda.
- <sup>12</sup> On his career, see: Horn, Ildikó: A hatalom pillérei. A politikai elit az Erdélyi Fejedelemség megszilárdulásának korszakában (1556–1588). (The Pillars of Power. The Political Elite During the Consolidation of the Principality of Transylvania, 1556–1588). Akadémiai doktori értekezés kézirat (Academic doctoral dissertation manuscript). Budapest 2012.
- <sup>13</sup> Bíró, Vencel: Erdély követei a Portán. (Transylvania’s Envoys at the Porte). Cluj 1921. 24–25.
- <sup>14</sup> Két tárgyalás Sztambulban. (Two Negotiations in Istanbul). 30.
- <sup>15</sup> Guitman, Barnabás: Fejezetek a schmalkaldeni háború történetéből. (Chapters from the History of the Schmalkalden War). *Világtörténet* 36. (2014: 2) 299.
- <sup>16</sup> Pálffy, Géza: A tizenhatodik század története. (The History of the Sixteenth Century). Budapest 2000. 34.
- <sup>17</sup> Kerekes, D.: Diplomataék és kémek. (Diplomats and Spies). 17.
- <sup>18</sup> Kerekes, D.: Diplomataék és kémek. (Diplomats and Spies). 56–66.
- <sup>19</sup> Két tárgyalás Sztambulban. (Two Negotiations in Istanbul). 52.
- <sup>20</sup> Bíró, V.: Erdély követei a Portán. (Envoys of Transylvania at the Porte). 30.; 38–39.
- <sup>21</sup> Kerekes, D.: Diplomataék és kémek. (Diplomats and Spies). 46.
- <sup>22</sup> Két tárgyalás Sztambulban. (Two Negotiations in Istanbul). 45.
- <sup>23</sup> Kerekes, D.: Diplomataék és kémek. (Diplomats and Spies). 68.
- <sup>24</sup> Bíró, V.: Erdély követei a Portán. (Envoys of Transylvania at the Porte). 97.
- <sup>25</sup> Két tárgyalás Sztambulban. (Two Negotiations in Istanbul). 26.

## The Search for a New Balance of Power: International Relations and Religious Conflicts in the Sixteenth Century (*Attila Györkös*)

The effects of Luther's reformation had a relatively late impact on international relations. Although Protestantism appeared in most countries in Latin Europe, its spread and the fight against it remained matters of internal affairs for a long time. The divide in confessions became an international issue when, from the mid-1520s, sovereign rulers converted to the new faith. The Protestant German princes formed a coalition in 1531 (the **Schmalkaldic League**), Henry VIII's England broke with the papacy in 1534, and in Scandinavia, Denmark (and Norway, which was united with Denmark in a personal union) introduced Lutheranism as the state religion in 1536. The kingdom of Sweden also became Lutheran between 1526 and 1544 as a result of a slower process.

Protestantism in Germany attracted the interest of the Western powers, especially France, after 1531. Francis I saw the anti-imperial Schmalkaldic League as a potential ally, but he refrained from establishing permanent diplomatic relations with the Lutheran princes who belonged to the League. During his reign, he sent only occasional envoys to these princes, apparently because he did not regard them as sovereign powers. However, he had a very different attitude towards the anti-Habsburg Scandinavian kingdoms. In 1541, he established a resident embassy in Copenhagen, which was later to be responsible for relations with Sweden. The strange irony of the situation was that the first ambassador to Denmark, Christophe Richer, was a practising Lutheran, while the French king persecuted members of the confession at home.

Henry VIII also showed interest in German Protestants after his break with the Pope, but he refused to establish formal diplomatic relations with them. His agent, Christopher Mont, followed the events of the empire and kept the monarch informed of religious conflicts through his network of agents. Although he was Thomas Cromwell's chancellor's man, his mission survived not only the downfall of his mentor, but that of many English monarchs: even early in Elizabeth's reign, he kept London informed of German affairs.<sup>1</sup>

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the religious conflicts within the empire were thus monitored by the English and French courts, but this did not lead to the formation of political alliances on either side. The situation of Protestant

doctrines in Germany at the time cannot, however, be separated from the development of international relations.

The **Diet of Worms in 1521**, for example, is most notable for the imperial ban imposed on Luther, who refused to renounce his views. For the young Charles V, however, who was making his first public appearance in German politics, the religious reformer's cause seemed at the time a secondary concern. Charles concentrated his efforts on winning the support of the estates to finance the impending conflict with the French. The first imperial Diet of Speyer in 1526 again postponed the Evangelicals' cause because of the wars in Italy, while the better-known second **Diet of Speyer in 1529** was overshadowed by news of a new Turkish campaign. For similar reasons, Charles concluded the so-called Peace of Nuremberg 1532, temporarily recognising the religious freedom of Protestants. He was focused at the time primarily on the Turkish campaign against Vienna.<sup>2</sup> The fact that Charles V personally had to secure his authority in many parts of the empire, which had grown, did not help the fight against the new religious tendencies. He spent only a few months in German territory, with long intervals between them. Between 1521 and 1530 and between 1532 and 1541 (two periods of nine years), he spent no time in German territory at all,<sup>3</sup> and thus in the absence of central power, the issue of Protestantism became a matter of agreements among local princes. When, in 1546, Charles did finally try to settle the confessional question militarily, his efforts had been made possible in no small part by the lull in the great power conflicts. The French war of 1544 ended in peace, and a year later, a truce was concluded with the Turks on the Eastern front. In his memoirs, Charles put the situation as follows: *"Their Majesties [the Emperor and his brother Ferdinand] reported to each other that the execution [of the campaign against the Protestants] should not be delayed any longer [...] They also thought that peace was at hand with France [...] the Emperor and the King of Rome sent some distinguished persons to the Turks to conclude an armistice, if they thought it useful. A truce was subsequently concluded [1545]. Their Majesties resolved to ally themselves with the Pope and to put into action whatever necessity should force them to do."*<sup>4</sup>

The **Schmalkaldic War (1546–1547)** caused by the abovementioned "forced necessity" resulted in an imperial victory, not least because the princes of the Protestant League were divided. Pope Paul III also sent aid, with financial support for some 12,000 infantry and five hundred cavalry.<sup>5</sup> However, the military victory did not lead to a violent eradication of confessional dissent. Charles was in an advantageous position, but he was forced to compromise. The Augsburg Interim (temporary regulation) of 1548 was adopted by the emperor at the imperial diet, despite the protests of some of the estates. The decree restored and made compul-

sory the Catholic ceremonial order, but it allowed Protestants to take communion of both kinds and it also permitted the marriage of clergymen. The law was put into effect with the use of force in many provinces, which did not resolve earlier tensions.

During the Schmalkaldic War, the members of the Protestant League received no outside help. At the sharpest point of the conflict, in the spring of 1547 (**Battle of Mühlberg**, 24 April), both Henry VIII and Francis I had already died (28 January and 31 March), and their states were tied by the problem of succession to the throne. However, the new French monarch, Henry II, did not take the strengthening of imperial power lightly. Between 1548 and 1552, he tried to weaken Charles V's position by military and diplomatic means. He invaded Piedmont, made an alliance with Pope Paul III (who supported the French cause afterwards), and strengthened the "*eternal alliance*" with the Swiss cantons, which had existed for decades and which gave him military support in the event of a new conflict. Last but not least, in January 1552, he agreed in a secret treaty with the German Protestant Union to provide military and material support in return for the cities of Toul, Metz, and Verdun in the conflict with the emperor.<sup>6</sup> This treaty became the prelude to a coalition which would have been unimaginable in earlier decades, which exposed the Habsburg territories to a triple attack during the year: the Catholic French in the west, the Muslim Turks in the east, in Hungary, and the Protestants in the interior.

The hard-won religious **Peace of Augsburg (1555)** finally brought confessional calm to the empire, but it also weakened central power. After the abdication of Charles V (1556), the emperor played no important role in international politics for some time, and foreign relations were essentially determined by the policies of the individual provincial princes.

England's diplomatic relations were largely shaped by the kingdom's medieval roots. From the beginning of the Hundred Years' War, the English dynasties that succeeded the French throne were keen to maintain close relations with Burgundy and then with the new dynasty of the Habsburgs after the duchy came under their rule in 1477.<sup>7</sup> This was an alliance that was partly economic and partly political. The Netherlands under Burgundian and later Habsburg rule was always the most important buyer of wool from England. At the same time, the close links with the region also provided an opportunity for the English kings to intervene in French domestic politics. The diplomacy of the Tudor dynasty, which came to power in 1485, followed these traditions. Their trade and power ambitions made them natural allies of the imperial family that ruled the Flemish territories, but their anti-French wish for revenge also made the nascent Kingdom of Spain part of their alliance system. The Treaty of Medina del Campo of 1489

provided for long-term political-military-dynastic cooperation, in addition to a few trade agreements. The best-known element of the coalition was the agreement concerning the younger Spanish infanta, Catherine of Aragon, married first the heir to the throne, Arthur Tudor, and then, after his death, to Henry VIII, who succeeded to the throne in 1509. The treaty of alliance did not remain on paper. In the early 1490s, when the virtually independent Duchy of Brittany was threatened by French invasion, Spanish, English and Habsburg troops tried to stop the Valois invasion, but unsuccessfully.<sup>8</sup> However, in 1512–1513, it was only through joint Spanish–English military intervention that the allies again tried to achieve results in Navarre and southern France.<sup>9</sup>

When the young descendant of the Habsburgs, who ruled Germany and Spain, assumed the imperial title as Charles V in 1519, Western Europe was effectively governed by three young men. Charles was 19, Francis I was 25, and the eldest Henry VIII was only 28. It is perhaps due to this ‘age sympathy’ and the resulting dynamism that the traditional ambassadorial contacts were initially coloured by the peculiarities of “*personal diplomacy*”. Charles visited his aunt, Catherine of Aragon’s husband, in England in May 1520. Henry received the emperor in splendid surroundings at Canterbury, and after his departure, he crossed to the Continent, where he met Francis a few days later in similarly sumptuous surroundings near Calais. The ornate tented camp erected by the two escorts and the riot of colours in the courtiers’ dresses reminded contemporaries of a place garbed in precious metal. The meeting of the “*Field of the Cloth of Gold*” (7–24 June 1520) proved to be a perfect occasion for reconciliation between the English and French monarchies, who had been at war with each other for almost two centuries. The two kings warmly hosted each other, with jousting tournaments, solemn masses, and banquets. Francis defeated his fellow monarch in wrestling, they admired each other’s beards (as was the new trend for men), and on one occasion, the French king walked unaccompanied into the English camp at dawn to wake Henry.

However, the 18 days of conviviality did not bring an agreement between the parties. Almost immediately after the meeting, Henry met the Emperor Charles between Calais and Gravelingen, on the border of continental England and Flanders on 10 July, to discuss the details of the anti-French alliance later known as the Great Enterprise, and England ended up joining the renewed Valois–Habsburg war in 1521 on the side of the Enterprise.<sup>10</sup> Personal diplomacy, while effective, did not resolve the conflict. Rather, it reinforced the old policy based on dynastic interests. Nevertheless, Henry, who was preparing for his divorce, did not take advantage militarily of Francis’s year-long Spanish imprisonment, which began in early 1525, and he even supported the anti-Habsburg League

of Cognac as a protector. On the one hand, he feared the growing power of Charles V, and on the other, he counted on the support of the French, who were on good terms with the Pope, for the ecclesiastical recognition of his break with Catherine of Aragon. When Francis and Henry met again in person in October 1532, the 'Most Christian' King of France gave Anne Boleyn the welcome due to a queen, though Boleyn became Henry's legitimate wife only a few months later, just after Henry's break with the Catholic Church.<sup>11</sup> Although Charles V was concerned about the gradual withdrawal of the English king from Rome, he was only really interested in the fate of his aunt Catherine and her daughter Mary Tudor. There was no break between the old allies, nor was there any break in the diplomatic relationship: the Savoyard envoy Eustache Chapuys continued to represent the interests of the empire in London between 1529 and 1545. At the same time, Henry, who had made a more moderate form of Protestantism the state religion (**Act of Supremacy of 1534**), was right to fear the formation of a Catholic alliance against him. He had all the more reason to do so because Pope Paul III had excommunicated him in December 1538 and the leaders of the two strongest Catholic powers, Charles and Francis, had met in person in July of that year,<sup>12</sup> and the following year, the emperor passed through France, which again gave rise to further talks. But again and again, personal relations were rewritten by great politics, and at that time, confessional affiliation did not play a decisive role. In 1544, Protestant England was repeatedly on the Habsburg side in the new conflict between the two Catholic monarchs, Francis and Charles.<sup>13</sup> This dynastic political rationale was overshadowed, however, by the mass influx of refugees from the Low Countries and France, who fled to England in the wake of religious persecution.<sup>14</sup>

The problem of confessional tension seemed to have been resolved in a way of its own when, in 1553, Henry VIII's eldest daughter Mary, who had been raised Catholic, became Queen of England. The new monarch, who earned the nickname 'Bloody Mary,' restored Catholicism in England, and Protestants were subjected to prosecution. The confessional change was followed by a dynastic relationship: Mary married Prince Philip of Habsburg, later King of Spain (1556–1598), after she came to power (1554). English public opinion was fearful of foreign influence, so the marriage contract contained a clause specifically stipulating that the two kingdoms could not be united in the hopes that this clause would quiet these fears, but the appearance of southern advisers in the court and England's involvement in the Habsburg-led continental war of 1557–1559 did much to damage the queen's domestic image. The loss of Calais in 1558 destroyed not only English hopes for France but also Mary's chances of ever gaining the favour of her people.



A world watched and waited for the spectacular coronation ceremony of **Elizabeth I (1558–1603)**, the sister and successor of the deceased queen. The Protestant-born new monarch was neither reluctant nor modest in her wide-reaching efforts and aims. Not only did she restore her father's faith on the island, she also used her financial, military, and diplomatic power actively to support the French Huguenots and Protestant rebels in the Netherlands during the religious wars of the second half of the sixteenth century. The period saw the birth of a new type of international relations. As Garrett Mattingly, the foremost expert on the period, has written: "*The European politics of the next half-century were to be determined more by religious than by dynastic issues.*"<sup>15</sup> The changes in diplomatic life were marked by the transformation of relations with England, the Protestant power par excellence: after Elizabeth I came to power, the papal and Venetian ambassadors left London, the former resident English ambassador left the Spanish court in 1568, and in 1584, the Spanish ambassador was expelled from England. By the end of the century, Italy, the main theatre of international relations in the period, had no representatives of any Protestant power.

In France, after the death of Henry II (1559), **Francis II (1559–1560)** and **Charles IX (1560–1574)**, who were both young and unprincipled successors, took power, but they did not show the same determination in foreign or domestic policy as their predecessors. In their place, the **Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici**, tried to govern, but her precarious position was exploited by the aristocratic factions of the time. The Calvinists, or **Huguenots** as they were known in France, were a minority, but in the south of France, they were in the majority among the nobility and the merchant-craftsmen of urban society. Politically, what mattered more was that the Huguenot movement was led by aristocrats who also played an important role in the royal court. The most prominent of these was Antoine, the king of Navarre,<sup>16</sup> a microstate north of the Pyrenees, and later his son Henry, who succeeded the French throne. Their prestige was secured by the title of monarch, but their wealth was derived from the revenues of the Bourbon province in central France. The family is referred to in the literature under various names, some Navarre, others Bourbon, but in the following we will consistently refer to them by the latter (Bourbon). The Huguenot elite included Antoine's brother, the Duke of Condé, as well as Admiral Gaspard de Coligny and several members of his family. The most important Catholic group on the opposite side was formed around the Guise family. The Guises were from Lorraine (the province was then part of the empire), but the large princely family acquired many French positions. Mary of Guise became the mother of Mary Stuart of Scotland, the wife of King Francis II of France, who would have been a lasting dynastic link at the head of an anti-English, Franco–Scottish confederation. Francis' untimely death prevented

these plans, but Scotland remained a lasting ally of the House of Valois. Francis of Guise, the hero of Calais, and his brother Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine, became leaders of the Catholic party, a role which was fully taken up by Francis of Guise's sons Henry and Louis after their father's death in 1563.

It was difficult to find a balance between the two parties. Although Catherine de Medici tried to find a solution to resolve the conflict between the radical Huguenots and the no less radical Catholics, the result was dramatic: between<sup>17</sup> **1562 and 1598, eight religious wars** ravaged France, with 18 unresolved agreements between them, which were constantly broken by the parties, indicating the fragility of the situation. The French religious war became a deterrent example of the failure of diplomatic settlement. France was not isolated internationally, however. The kingdom maintained an extensive network of ambassadors during the Wars of Religion, notably in Italy and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, in Turkey, but after 1559, a system of direct contacts was also established between the two Habsburg empires. A peculiar detail is that the French resident in Portugal, which was independent until 1580, was Jean Nicot, who in the 1560s sent Catherine de Medici what he thought was an interesting colonial product that could be used as a medicine. The envoy called it the '*Queen's herb*' (*herbe de la Roynne*), but in Paris it was known to everyone as '*Nicot's plant*,' also known as nicotine. This little anecdote shows that the ambassadors were transmitters not just of information but also of cultural customs, whatever we may think of the tobacco today. Paris also traditionally maintained a permanent and reciprocal relationship with England, and for Elizabeth I, who had no other network of contacts, France was the only way of keeping abreast of events in the Catholic world.<sup>18</sup>

During the French religious conflict that erupted in 1562, both sides formed their own confessional alliances to gain financial and military resources. The Huguenots needed this most, as the war had caught them unaware, and the contingents of Protestant townspeople and nobles were not sufficiently equipped, experienced, or well-funded. Elizabeth pledged her support for the reformed cause in the Treaty of Hampton Court of 20 September 1562. Expeditionary forces of about three thousand crossed the Channel in exchange for possession of some coastal towns. The treaty was not to the liking of many Huguenot leaders. The memory of the struggle for the possession of Calais was too fresh, and many saw this move as another British drive for territorial acquisition. Lutheran German princes also lent their support to their fellow Calvinists. In a number of diplomatic documents, they asked or called on the French King Charles IX to end the persecution and settle the issue in a spirit of tolerance.<sup>19</sup> More specifically, some of them intervened militarily in the war, such as Philip of Hesse and the elector palatine Frederick III of Rhine and later his son John Casimir, who, for

example, provided 10,000 soldiers for the Huguenot cause in 1568 and some 25,000 in 1575.

The much better-equipped French royal army could also not do without foreign support. Charles IX could count on some papal and Savoyard support, supplemented by troops from some German Catholic princes, including Louis of Baden. Thanks to the 'perpetual peace' treaties concluded during the wars in Italy, he was also able to put the Swiss at his service, but the general confessional divide is illustrated by the fact that only the forces of the Catholic cantons were at the king's disposal. Soldiers from the Protestant Helvetic provinces served in the Huguenot army on several occasions.<sup>20</sup>

The death of Francis, Duke of Alençon and later Duke of Anjou<sup>21</sup> in 1584 marked a major turning point in the history of religious wars from an international point of view. The passing of the penultimate heir of the House of Valois and designated heir to the throne, Henry, brought major changes in foreign policy. Francis, who was still courting Elizabeth Tudor at the turn of the 1570s and 1580s, died without a successor, leaving King Henry III (1574–1589) as the only male descendant of the dynasty, and his lifestyle suggested that he would not have an heir. This made it clear to every political actor that the successor to the throne would be Henry Bourbon, who traced his lineage back to Louis IX of Capet, but who, as the leader of the Huguenot party, was unacceptable to French society, which was predominantly Catholic. The Catholic League, created by the Dukes of Guise, therefore sought the support of the Spanish. Under the secret Treaty of Joinville, signed in December 1584, Philip II provided military and financial support worth 600,000 écu and recognised the rightful claim of Charles de Bourbon, Archbishop of Rouen and Cardinal, to the French throne in place of Henry.<sup>22</sup>

Instead of discussing the political history of the last phase of the religious war, it is sufficient to note that the Spanish were actively involved in French politics from this point onwards. After King Henry III was assassinated in August 1589, the crown was indeed taken over by Henry of Bourbon (as **Henry IV, 1589–1610**), confirming the fears of the Catholics. The protestant ruler made numerous gestures to secure his power. His famous conversion in 1593 not only secured him the throne but also meant a reconciliation with the Catholics, who made up the majority of the country. At the same time, Henry successfully used public sentiment to consolidate his power: he managed to frame Philip II's intervention as another Spanish war, so that the conflict for his own power could become a kind of revenge for the fiascos the state had suffered earlier, before 1559.

In his struggle for power, Henry IV was also helped by the international situation. Although the secondary literature only rarely touches on this detail, by

the end of the 1580s, virtually all of northwestern Europe was at war with the Spanish monarchy. This struggle could be seen as a kind of religious war, with the Low Countries in conflict with Philip II from 1568, England from 1588, and France, led by a Huguenot king, from at least 1589. It was a clash between northern Protestants and southern Catholics.

**The Low Countries, which became a Habsburg possession in 1477**, retained their territorial autonomy for a long time. It was precisely because of this situation that the region became home to a wide variety of Protestant movements, including Anabaptists, Lutherans, and later Calvinists. Philip II also sought to establish absolute power in the richest province of the Spanish crown, seeking to break down local autonomy and confessional freedom. Numerous movements opposed his efforts in 1566. The local nobility demanded the restoration of former liberties, and radical Protestant religious groups spontaneously carried out iconoclastic acts of vandalization (or protest) in churches. The authorities reacted badly to the crisis. With the provincial governor, Margaret of Parma (half-sister of the Spanish monarch), proving unable to deal with the situation, King Philip saw a solution in hard-line military action. The new governor he appointed, the Duke of Alba, one of the most prominent generals of the Italian wars, was a good soldier but a bad politician. He intended to put down what he described as a rebellion. This is how Admiral Hoorn and the Count of Egmont, leaders of the aristocratic movement, were executed, along with thousands of their comrades, and how the third most prominent member of the aristocratic opposition, William of Orange, was also condemned to death. Alba's policy proved a mistake. He alienated the otherwise royalist, if disaffected, members of the Netherlands' elite and sent a message to his fellow countrymen that there would be no mercy for the rebels. Yet those executed were not enemies of the crown. Hoorn was a confidant of Charles V and had spent part of his life in the Spanish court. Count of Egmont, governor of Flanders and Artois, was one of the leaders of the wars in Italy, along with his denouncer Alba, and a Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece. William of Orange, who had escaped reprisals, had also held important posts in the past: as governor of the provinces of Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, he had faithfully served the monarchy.

The massacres ordered by the Duke of Alba in 1568 led to open rebellion instead of calm. The complainers against Spanish rule soon found supporters in the Protestant powers. England opened its ports to the rebellious 'sea beggars,' and Lutheran German princes provided military support for William of Orange, who was organising resistance. They even received some Huguenot help during the lulls in the French Wars of Religion. In the **summer of 1572**, one of the triggers of the **Massacre of St Bartholomew's Eve in Paris (23–24 August)** was precisely

Admiral Coligny's plan to lead a campaign to help the Netherlands. The idea was a popular one, since for the French, a war against Spain would have meant a reckoning with previous defeats. However, the royal court was divided on the issue of confessions: the Catholic party did not approve of a war that would have been successful against the Habsburgs but would have supported Protestants in Flanders. The death of Coligny, the military leader of the Huguenots, was partly responsible for the bloodiest religious showdown in sixteenth-century French history.<sup>23</sup>

In 1576 and afterwards, the Queen of England was repeatedly asked to rule the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, but Elisabeth consistently refused the offer, and it was only nine years later that the island country started to support the rebels actively.<sup>24</sup> This was due to a change in the great power situation. When the French Catholic League and Philip II concluded a treaty at Joinville (see above), Elizabeth's government was faced with the possibility of soon having a Catholic France and Low Countries under Spanish influence as its immediate neighbours. In light of the emerging opportunities, it becomes clear why the island country was relatively quick to conclude the Treaty of Nonsuch (10 August 1585), according to which an expeditionary army was sent to Flanders under Lord Dudley, Earl of Leicester (the queen's minion), in exchange for control of Ostend, Brielle, and a few other port towns. The English influence over parts of the Low Countries, however, angered the Spanish, who broke off diplomatic relations with England and sought only to remove the Protestant Elizabeth. *The casus belli* (cause of war) came in 1587, when the queen executed her long-captive relative, Mary Stuart of Scotland, who had been driven from her homeland twenty years earlier and was believed to have been helped by Spain in her aspirations to succeed Elizabeth. The murder of a Catholic monarch by Protestants sparked outrage in many countries. The Pope protested, in France the League tried to suppress the Huguenots on suspicion of similar atrocities, and Philip II launched a fleet against England. But **the famous fall of the Armada in 1588** was only the beginning of a sixteen-year Anglo–Spanish struggle in which neither side was able to achieve a decisive victory over the other.

The “*north-south religious war*” at the end of the century ended slowly and with varying results. In France, the conversion of the Huguenot Henry IV to Catholicism and his willingness to compromise on confessional issues enabled him to conclude a favourable peace with the Spanish monarchy, which had previously been a constant interloper in the country's internal affairs (Peace of Vervins, 2 May 1598). In the same days, the **Edict of Nantes**, which established religious peace in the country for decades, was issued by the king (13 April–2 May 1598).<sup>25</sup> It was only after Elizabeth's death that England settled its relations

with Spain (Peace of London, 28 August 1604). During the long years of war, the Low Countries were divided both practically and politically, with the Catholic-majority southern provinces reconciling with Philip II as early as 1579 (**Union of Arras**), while at the same time the Protestant northern territories formed an anti-Spanish alliance (**Union of Utrecht**).<sup>26</sup> The north's long struggle for freedom ended in 1609 with an armistice that established *de facto* independence, although this was not legally recognised until after another war, at the time of the **Peace of Westphalia in 1648**.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, international relations earlier based on territorial and dynastic interests were reorganised along **confessional** lines. Religious-based politics did not completely overwrite the interests of the former great powers, but there is no doubt that it was during these decades that the emerging Protestant states found their place in the European sphere of influence, in many cases changing or reinterpreting the *status quo*. A few decades later, in the **Thirty Years' War (1618–1648)**, one might witness the coexistence of these two interests, and find that the series of wars was as much a religious one as a reflection of the continent's great power conflicts.

<sup>1</sup> Mattingly, Garrett: *Renaissance Diplomacy*. New York 2010 [1955]. 178.; 184.

<sup>2</sup> Krász, Lilla: *A reformáció és a német vallásháborúk*. (The Reformation and the German Wars of Religion). In: *A kora újkor története*. (The History of the Early Modern Period). Ed. Poór, János. Budapest 2009. 306.

<sup>3</sup> *Collection des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas*. II. Ed. Gachard, Louis-Prospér. Bruxelles 1874.

<sup>4</sup> Report of Emperor Charles V on the outbreak of the Schmalkalden War (June–July 1546). In: *Kora újkori egyetemes történeti szöveggyűjtemény*. (Collection of Early Modern History Texts). Ed. Poór, János. Budapest 2000. 188–189. (Abbreviations and insertions are by the author of this chapter).

<sup>5</sup> Guitman, Barnabás: *Fejezetek a schmalkaldeni háború történetéből*. (Chapters from the History of the Schmalkalden War). *Világtörténet* 36. (2014: 2) 300.

<sup>6</sup> Autrand, Françoise – Bély, Lucien – Contamine, Philippe – Lentz, Thierry: *Histoire de la diplomatie française I. Du Moyen Âge à l'Empire*. Paris 2007. 228–229.

<sup>7</sup> Bárány, Attila: *King Matthias and the Western European Powers*. In: *Matthias Rex 1458–1490: Hungary at the Dawn of the Renaissance*. Eds. Draskóczy, István – Horváth, Iván (et. al.). Budapest 2013. 1–17.

<sup>8</sup> Bárány, Attila: *Magyarország és a bretagne-i háború (1488–1493)*. (Hungary and the French–Breton War, 1488–1493). In: *Urbs, civitas, universitas. Ünnepi tanulmányok Petrovics István 65. születésnapja tiszteletére*. (Studies in Honour of the 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday of István Petrovics.). Ed. Papp,



Sándor – Tóth, Sándor László – Kordé, Zoltán. Szeged 2018. 25–34.; Györkös, Attila: A “bolond háború” – avagy a francia monarchia és az arisztokrácia utolsó összecsapása a középkorban. (The “Mad War” – or the Last Clash between the French Monarchy and the Aristocracy in the Middle Ages). In: Elfeledett háborúk. Középkori csaták és várostromok, 6–16. század. (Forgotten Wars. Medieval Battles and Sieges, 6<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries). Eds. Pósnán, László – Veszprémy, László. Budapest 2016. 100–112.

<sup>9</sup> Györkös, Attila: Logisztika az itáliai háborúk korában. (Logistics in the Age of the Italian Wars). In: “A hadtáp volt maga a fegyver”. Tanulmányok a középkori hadszervezet és katonai logisztika kérdéseiről. (“The Supply was the Weapon.” Studies on Medieval Military Organisation and Military Logistics). Eds. Pósnán, László – Veszprémy, László. Budapest 2013. 149–164.

<sup>10</sup> For details of the meeting, see.: Ridley, Jasper: Henry VIII. London 2020 [1984]. 116–119; 130–145. Also see Jacquart, Jean: François Ier. Paris 1981. 120–123.

<sup>11</sup> Richardson, Glenn: Entertainment for the French Ambassadors at the Court of Henry VIII. *Renaissance Studies* 9. (1995: 4) 410.; 413–414.

<sup>12</sup> Le Person, Xavier: A Moment of “Resverie”: Charles V and Francis I’s Encounter at Aigues–Mortes (July 1538). *French History* 19. (2005: 1) 1–27.

<sup>13</sup> Adams, Simon: Tudor England’s Relations with Spain, the Holy Roman Empire and the Low Countries. *State Papers Online 1509–1714*. 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Györkös, Attila: A hugenották “nagy menekülése” a 17. század elején. (The “Great Flight” of the Huguenots in the Early Seventeenth Century). In: Migráció a kora középkortól napjainkig. (Migration from the Early Middle Ages to the Present). Eds. Pósnán, László – Veszprémy, László – Isaszegi, János. Budapest 2018. 159–170.

<sup>15</sup> Mattingly, G.: *Renaissance Diplomacy*. 190.

<sup>16</sup> Navarre was a trans-Pyrenean state, the southern part of which was conquered by the Spanish in 1512. However, the smaller part to the north remained independent until 1589, when it was incorporated into the French kingdom by Henry IV of Bourbon.

<sup>17</sup> Papp, Imre: A francia vallásháborúk és a nantes-i ediktum. (The French Wars of Religion and the Edict of Nantes). In: A kora újkor története. (The History of the Early Modern Period). Ed. Poór, János. Budapest 2009. 321–329.

<sup>18</sup> Jensen, De Lamar: French Diplomacy and the Wars of Religion. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 5. (1974: 2) 23–46.

<sup>19</sup> Tol, Jonas van: *Germany and the French Wars of Religion, 1560–1572*. Leiden 2019. 193.

<sup>20</sup> Le Roux, Nicolas: *Les Guerres de religion 1559–1629*. Paris 2009. 74–75.; 171.; 246.

<sup>21</sup> Francis Hercules (1555–1584) was the last son of Henry II. As one of the many royal descendants, he got the title of the Duke of Alençon, and after his last brother, the childless Henry III, succeeded the throne, he received the Duchy of Anjou, a title for the heir, in 1576. In the secondary literature, he is sometimes inconsistently referred to by one title or another.

<sup>22</sup> Charles was the half-brother of Henry Bourbon, but his claim to the throne was hampered by both his illegitimate lineage and his ecclesiastical position.

<sup>23</sup> Garrisson, Janine: *Guerre civile et compromis 1559–1598*. Paris 1991. 168–171.

<sup>24</sup> Adams, Simon: Elizabeth I and the Sovereignty of the Netherlands 1576–1585. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14. (2004) 309–319.

<sup>25</sup> Papp, I.: A francia vallásháborúk. (French Religious Wars). 329–331.

<sup>26</sup> Ifj. Barta, János: “Napkirályok tündöklése”. *Európa a 16–18. században*. (“The Splendour of Sun Kings”. *Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries*). Debrecen 2001. 117–118.



4.

**THE BIRTH OF MODERN DIPLOMACY  
(17<sup>TH</sup>–19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)**

## The Emergence of Raison d'état and its Adoption in the Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century

(*Katalin Schrek*)

European great power politics in the early modern period was essentially two-faced. On the one hand, state theory and the exercise of power concepts were strongly influenced by medieval traditions, which found their guidelines for managing internal and external relations in the ideas of Christian culture, religion, and universalism. Examples include the European aspirations to power of the Holy Roman Empire, the Papal States, or even France. On the other hand, however, already at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, political-philosophical theories appeared which offered a very different, completely new way of coordinating **ends, means, and ways** and which opened new perspectives for the shaping of foreign policy and diplomacy. The **ragione di stato** or **raison d'état**, which meant the primacy of the interests of the state above all else, marked out new emphases for dynastic great-power politics. The ideas of **Niccolò Machiavelli** are usually the point of departure for discussions of *raison d'état*. His work **The Prince** (1513) and his idea that "*the end justifies the means*" formed the basis for the definition of the concept of *raison d'état*. In his reflections on the means of exercising sovereign power and the attributes that a prince must possess, Machiavelli highlighted three important factors. The first is the **principle of political utility**, which is one of the most important means of retaining power. The prince must adapt his attitude to the circumstances, being **virtuous** or unprincipled, depending on the exigencies of the moment. For the measure of action is no other than the end.<sup>1</sup> As Machiavelli writes, "*This has to be understood: that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things for which men are held good, since he is often under a necessity, to maintain his state, of acting against faith, against charity, against humanity, against religion. And so he needs to have a spirit disposed to change as the winds of fortune and variations of things command him, and as I said above, not depart from good, when possible, but know how to enter into evil, when forced by necessity.*"<sup>2</sup>

Machiavelli believes, however, that virtue is of great importance. The ruler is only able to make the right decisions and take the right steps in the interests of the state if he possesses virtue. The latter also means that, in rational action based on the principle of political utility, virtue, strength, and wisdom can prevail as attributes of true **virtù**. All this is complemented by a third element, the necessity of **violence**, which is one of the foundations and corollaries of power. Violence

is also a demonstration of strength, and a prince who does not use it will not be able to secure his power in the long term, since he will present the image of a weak ruler in internal and external conflicts.<sup>3</sup> It is not by chance that Machiavelli advocated the creation of permanent armies for the defense of the state, no longer mercenaries but soldiers, trained and committed to the country and made up of local citizens. He expressed this view in his work *The Art of War* (1521).<sup>4</sup>

Although Machiavelli reflected primarily on contemporary Italian conditions in his treatises, his insights still had a strong influence on the political outlook of the early modern period, and his works generated much controversy. Machiavelli's realist approach was severely criticized by many political theorists of the transition period between the late Middle Ages and the early modern period. In his works *Ragguagli di Parnaso* (News from Parnassus, 1612–1613) and *Religione e ragione di stato* (Religion and State Law), **Traiano Boccalini** opposes Machiavellian doctrines, but at the same time, he continues his line of thought and provides a strong basis for the concept of *ragione di stato*.<sup>5</sup> **Tommaso Campanella**, who also did not completely reject Machiavelli's ideas, became a spokesman for a kind of religious line of anti-Machiavellian thought. His thesis on morality and the practice of political power, based on the separation of the two concepts, for example, was not criticized.<sup>6</sup> Among them, **Giovanni Botero**, whose work on the theory of states and international relations had a major impact on policymakers, stands out. Botero published several works on the subject, such as *Della Ragione di Stato* (The Reason of State, 1589) and *Relazioni Universali* (Universal Relations, 1591–1595).<sup>7</sup>

We turn now to the practical application of the concept of *raison d'état*. As a new way of thinking, it went beyond theory and became an actual part of foreign policy. The first signs of this came with the **Thirty Years' War** (1618–1648). The escalation of the internal imperial conflict between the Viennese government and the Czech orders led to a war on a European scale, in which the continental powers all played a part. In 1635–1648, also known as the Swedish–French phase of the war, France implemented a model of great power politics based on the primacy of the reason of state, which was introduced by **Cardinal Richelieu**. King Louis XIII's first minister (1624–1642) combined the idea of *raison d'état* with a pragmatic approach and a rejection of the denominational perspective. The result of the harmony of these three elements was a French policy of interest that rejected Christian convictions based on medieval traditions and Catholic aspirations for reclamation dictated by the spirit of the age and forged new alliances and military-political collaborations with the Habsburg dynasty's Protestant opponents purely on the basis of geopolitical considerations. The Richelieu turn brought about a situation in which a partnership based on religious considerations was no longer a sure bet in shaping Europe's diplomatic relations.



Fig. 1. Portrait of Richelieu

The Parisian government's involvement in the 'Thirty Years' War can be traced back to several factors. Obviously, the traditional Habsburg–Bourbon conflict was very much alive in the great power relations of the seventeenth century. By the 1620s and 1630s, the rivalry between the two dynasties had become geopolitically extensive. Austrian rule prevailed in Spain, and thus also in the states of northern Italy under Spanish influence, while the French court experienced the same phenomenon on its northern and eastern frontiers, where the southern provinces of the Netherlands and Franche-Comté were the domains of the Spanish branch of the Habsburg House. France badly needed to break the Austrian grip on the border regions, and the war that had been going on since 1618 offered an opportunity to do so. The other source of intervention was the very strong desire of the Viennese court to regulate religiously and politically the German princes and to further the internal political unification of the Holy Roman Empire. If Emperor Ferdinand II (1619–1637) had succeeded in his centralization drive, the Austrian Empire surrounding France would have become unbreakable, since



Vienna's ability to maintain the unity of the Central European region under the Habsburg dynasty would have guaranteed a stable foundation for the maintenance of Habsburg control over the outlying territories.<sup>8</sup>

Cardinal Richelieu believed that France needed to take advantage of the difficult situation in order to ensure its own defense. The alternative to action against the Habsburgs was to intervene in religious and denominational relations, since the attempt at regional centralization was accompanied by a revival of the process of counterreformation within the Empire. The relentless pursuit of further **recatholization** inflamed the Protestant League and fueled the fires of Habsburg opposition. It was at this point that Cardinal Richelieu, putting aside the **moral issues** of denominational affiliation, decided to take concrete steps in his domestic and foreign policy, treating cooperation with the adherents of the Reformation as a purely strategic matter.

The first important measure was taken in 1629 with the **Peace of Alès** (Edict of Grace). The decree confirmed the provisions of the Edict of Nantes and allowed Huguenots freely to practice their religion within France. Once an appeal had been made to show tolerance towards Protestantism, the internal crisis subsided and the “*most Christian country*”, as France had fashioned itself, could cooperate with Sweden, the Netherlands, and even, on another front, the Ottoman Empire in the struggle against the Viennese government.<sup>9</sup> Most of the criticisms of the subordination of religion to political or military interests were based on the immorality of any compromise on questions of faith, the fact remains that Richelieu's realpolitik was effective, efficient, and applicable in the long term. **Cardinal Mazarin** (1642–1661), who became the first minister after his death, did not change the concept and continued to cultivate the notion of *raison d'état* as a decisive element of policy, and the political approach of Richelieu's era continued to shape French diplomacy throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup>

### *Establishing a System of Controlled Contact and Balance of Power*

The Thirty Years' War was a major shock for Europe politically, economically, and demographically. It was a conflict in which most of the states of the continent were involved, either as belligerents or as victims of the campaigns. The conflict, which went on for three decades, had a lasting influence on the practical factors of inter-state relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy. The process was triggered, perhaps first and foremost, by the widespread emergence of the *raison d'état* idea, as described in the previous section, which set a new framework for the ambitions of the great powers and redefined the system of causal factors behind alliances and

coalitions. Furthermore, the security of the state and the protection of its borders from external threats became a priority. This led to a **defensive** attitude in the second half of the seventeenth century, which was clearly linked to the expression of the interests of the State at the highest political level. The gradual application of the principle of *raison d'état* by the major European powers contributed mutually and indirectly to the development of a system of equilibrium that would (reflexively) regulate the room for maneuver of the members of the international order, limit its excesses, and compensate for regional power vacuums.<sup>11</sup>

The Thirty Years' War came to a close with the **Peace of Westphalia**. Negotiations between 1644 and 1648 highlight the diplomatic procedures of the period, the difficulties faced by the diplomats, and the need for change. For nearly four years, the two opposing allied powers negotiated in two different locations, discussing and agreeing on the terms of peace and the way to end the war. The process was made more difficult by the fact that the war was still going on, which meant that the negotiating positions were constantly changing. In the end, two major peace treaties were drawn up, which together formed the Peace Treaty of Westphalia: the Osnabrück and Münster treaties. The episcopal cities of Rhineland-Westphalia were the venues for the negotiations, with the Habsburg delegation and representatives of the German princes and Sweden meeting in Osnabrück, while the Franco–Austrian and Spanish–Dutch meetings were held in Münster.<sup>12</sup> It is both revealing and arguably symptomatic of relations at the time, however, that no unified peace conference was convened at which all participants would have been present, there was no predetermined, regulated order for diplomatic negotiations, and informal bargaining played an important role. Although the circumstances under which the **Peace of Westphalia** was established do not show any substantial or paradigmatic shift in the ways in which international relations were negotiated, the European settlement of October 1648 opened a new era in the history of diplomacy. Its significance lay in the fact that, first, it established the sovereignty and equality of states before international law and, second, it laid down the foundations for **relations among states**, confirmed the need for the creation of permanent embassies, and facilitated the conditions for bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.<sup>13</sup>

At this point, it is worth noting some of the novel aspects of Renaissance politics, as examples of permanent embassies could already be found in fifteenth-century Italy, such as the envoy of the Prince of Milan, Francesco Sforza in Florence.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the idea of establishing envoy residences in the seventeenth century was by no means new. The novel feature of the spread of permanent diplomatic representation is that it was prompted by the need to avoid war and maintain peace. This latter line of thought, in addition to the establishment of **professional**



Fig. 2. Ratification of the Peace of Münster (1648)

**courtly representation**, also contributed to the development of another approach, namely the balance of power policy. After the losses suffered in the Thirty Years' War, no country wanted to risk a similar conflict. Avoiding war, defending the state, and keeping potential adversaries at bay became a general priority in the foreign policy of all the major European powers, leading to the establishment of a state of equilibrium after 1648.

But how exactly can we define the **balance of power**? In Henry Kissinger's interpretation, the world order of the seventeenth century was the eclipse of the principle of universality and the failure of the Holy Roman Empire's aspirations for the centralization of continental political power.<sup>15</sup> Defeat in the Thirty Years' War and the strengthening of France made it clear to Austria that the creation of a united Central Europe under its leadership in the political context of the Reformation and the new diplomatic approach had become impossible. And yet this defeat was not total. In 1648, the Thirty Years' War ended with none of the main rivals fully achieving its aims. France was not an absolute victor, and Austria had not been utterly defeated. In this win-loss situation, a kind of symmetry emerged between the control of France's influence and the potential for Austria's

strengthening, and this duality defined the framework of the equilibrium system in the seventeenth century. This was accompanied by the adaptation of the other European states to the *raison d'état* principle to defend their interests, sovereignty, and geopolitical position.

The dynasties sought to guarantee their own safety with expansion. The role and strength of the powers involved in the equilibrium system were constantly changing. Countries did not limit their own ambitions, only those of rival states, but as all the other powers were attempting to do this, the process became self-limiting, and this assertion of the self-interests of the European powers as the essential and exclusive priority led to the emergence of the system of balance of power. This system did not rule out the possibility of conflict, however. It did not usher in an era of continuous peace (neither in theory nor in practice), but created, rather, an international situation in which there was room for warfare as well as diplomatic solutions to disputes, and yet specifically because of the conflicts, no single country was in a particularly favorable position, and no single country could become strong enough to establish hegemony over the other European powers.

According to other theories, the balance of power system works because it uses the principle of **distribution of power** among the members of the international order. Other views, however, fundamentally question the framework within which the balance of power works, with the main issue being whether the balance of power can be considered a system at all. **Jack S. Levy** argues that the systems theory is an inherently flawed approach, as it assumes the existence of a well-developed, predefined, real system, operated according to ideas and goals, whereas there was no such level of consciousness in the seventeenth century or the nineteenth. Consequently, the balance of power must be seen not primarily as a system but as a theory, a theoretical perspective that offers a way of understanding phenomena in foreign policy and international relations.<sup>16</sup>

Another alternative is that the balance of power is best understood as a model of economic theory. **Kenneth N. Waltz's** theory goes back to Adam Smith and suggests that, as in the economic sphere, in the system of international relations a kind of invisible hand (*laissez faire*) guides events and maintains a state of parity. **Morton Kaplan**, **Arnold Wolfers**, and **A. J. P. Taylor** take a similar position.<sup>17</sup> **Inis L. Claude**, on the other hand, argues that the maintenance of balance is a simple automatism, since there is always a specific factor, a state, which acts as the guardian of equilibrium. And this role in the European great power system was clearly assigned to Great Britain.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Paczolai, Péter – Szabó, Máté: A politikatudomány kialakulása. A politikaelmélet története az ókortól a huszadik századig. (The Emergence of Political Science. The History of Political Theory from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century). Budapest 1996. 64.; Lucchese, Filippo Del: Political Philosophy of Niccolo Machiavelli. Edinburgh 2015. 65–84.

<sup>2</sup> Machiavelli, Niccolò: The Prince. Chicago–London 1998. 70.

<sup>3</sup> Bayer, József: A politikai gondolkodás története. (The History of Political Thinking). Budapest 2005. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Zuckert, Catherine H.: Machiavelli's Defense. The Art of War. Chicago 2017. 298–334.

<sup>5</sup> Meinecke, Friedrich: Machiavellism. The Doctrine of Raison D'étate and Its Place in Modern History. London 1998. 70–72.

<sup>6</sup> Kaposi, Márton: Machiavelli Magyarországon. A merész kortárs és a reneszánsz klasszikus fogadtatása 1541–1921. (Machiavelli in Hungary. The Bold Contemporary and the Reception of the Renaissance Classic 1541–1921). Budapest 2015. 114–116.; Devetak, Richard: Reason of State in European International Thought. In: Perspectives on International Political Theory in Europe. Ed. Paipais, Vassilios. Cham (University of St. Andrews) 2021. 32–33.

<sup>7</sup> Meinecke, F.: Machiavellism. 67–70.

<sup>8</sup> Kissinger, Henry: Diplomacy. New York 1994. 59–60.

<sup>9</sup> Kissinger, H.: Diplomacy. 61–62.

<sup>10</sup> Sturdy, D. J.: Richelieu and Mazarin. A Study in Statesmanship. European History in Perspective. New York 2004. X–XIV; 62–64.

<sup>11</sup> Kissinger, H.: Diplomacy. 66–67.

<sup>12</sup> Davies, Norman: History of Europe. Oxford 1996. 565.

<sup>13</sup> Wiseman, Geoffrey – Sharp, Paul: Diplomacy. In: An Introduction to International Relations. Eds. Devetak, Richard – Burke, Anthony – George, Jim. Cambridge 2012. 259.

<sup>14</sup> Mattingly, Garrett: Renaissance Diplomacy. Baltimore 1955. 73.

<sup>15</sup> Kissinger, H.: Diplomacy. 56.

<sup>16</sup> Levy, Jack S.: "What do Great Powers Balance Against and When?" In: Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21st Century. Eds. Paul, T. V. – Wirtz, James J. – Fortmann, Michael. Stanford 2004. 31.

<sup>17</sup> Levy, J. S.: "What do Great Powers Balance". 33.

<sup>18</sup> Levy, J. S.: "What do Great Powers Balance". 33.

## Challenges to the Balance of Power System (*Katalin Schrek*)

The balance of power system was a component of the foreign policy of all the European powers, but there was one state which was at the heart of maintaining this balance and which began to use the new mechanism as its main foreign policy concept, shaping the whole of its approach to international relations. From the second half of the seventeenth century onwards, the London government consistently followed the principles of *raison d'état* and balance of power in all cases, while in the monarchies on the other side of the La Manche, this system found challengers. Attempts to find weak points in the state of equilibrium sometimes posed a serious threat to European relations. In the classical period between 1648 and 1815, there were three major challenges to the balance of power system, two from France and one from the emerging Prussia, and a number of smaller ones (mostly from Eastern Europe). These efforts created a new situation that was important internationally, though they did not actually upset the balance of powers, but rather merely altered regional power relations.

The first major challenge was the **tour de force** policy of Louis XIV (1643–1715), who sought to make a show of strength against the weakened Habsburg Empire and against the stabilized neighbouring states and to take advantage of opportunities for territorial expansion. These were the mottos that most characterised French diplomacy in the decades following the Peace of Westphalia. The policy developed by the French monarch and his circle of advisors was to take advantage of the Holy Roman Empire, which had been left exhausted by the Thirty Years' War, and the Habsburg dynasty's attention to the Ottoman Porte (the era of the wars of reconquest from 1683 to 1699), and to use this much more relaxed situation to expand the **French gloire**. The government of Louis XIV opened two new avenues: the traditional war of territorial acquisition and the policy of reunification. The aim of the first method was essentially to use the familiar military means and the economic resources provided by the hinterland to wage successful campaigns against the French king's rival in his immediate neighbourhood. The perfect example of this was the war against the United Provinces of the Netherlands, in which France added Franche-Comté to its eastern frontier in 1679. The second strategy, also highly effective, was the **policy of reunion** in the 1680s, a new method of gaining an unarmed advantage by using international law as a reference.<sup>1</sup> Paris laid claim to territories which previously had been under the French



monarchy's jurisdiction but currently were outside its borders. Most of these territories were found in Flanders and Alsace-Lorraine. The new acquisitions were primarily of interest to the Netherlands and Austria, but they were also a signal to the other states that France was repositioning itself on the European political stage. This was all the more possible, since the results of Jean-Baptiste Colbert's **mercantilist economic policy** of recent years and the development of the army and navy had already paid off. The kingdom's economic performance is perhaps best captured by the fact that a large part of the state's annual budget was spent on maintaining a state army of nearly 300,000 men.<sup>2</sup>

However, the active French foreign policy soon became counterproductive and, somewhat foreshadowing the situation a hundred years later, a broad coalition of great powers was called into being with the aim of containing France's hegemonic ambitions. The origins of the **Grand Alliance**, forged under William of Orange, were the United Provinces of the Netherlands, which had been bound to England by a personal union from 1689 and thus had a partner state to fulfil its **ambition of revenge** after defeat in the **Franco–Dutch War**. This was joined by the Habsburg Empire in 1689, after the electorates of Brandenburg, Saxony, and Hanover had already joined the Dutch initiative because of the threats they faced. Finally, Spain, Sweden, and Savoy made the Grand Alliance complete.<sup>3</sup> Although the Spanish War of Succession (1701–1713), which erupted over Bourbon–Habsburg dynastic issues, could not be avoided, efforts to restore the balance of power proved fruitful and, as in 1648, the **peace treaties of Utrecht and Rastatt** ended with mutual compromise. The Habsburg Empire was enriched by the addition of new territories, with the Kingdom of Naples, the Duchy of Milan and the island of Sardinia in Italy, and South Germany in the neighbourhood of France. The government in Paris was also treated fairly. Louis XIV was able to keep his pre-1680 acquisitions, but he had to give up the territories he had acquired during the war and part of the Canadian colonies. At the same time, the Spanish throne remained in Bourbon hands, with no possibility of a personal union, and France could retain its pre-Heritage conquests, i.e. the Alsace territories acquired in the 1679 Treaty of Nijmegen and the 1697 Treaty of Rijswijk, as well as the reunion acquisitions.<sup>4</sup> With the possession of the North American territories and Gibraltar, England opened up a new perspective in its colonial policy: by strengthening its economic and political presence in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, it moved to a new level of great power, repositioning itself as the maintainer of a system of balance between the two great continental rivals, France and the Habsburg Empire.

The second great power to issue a challenge to the European order was the emerging Prussia. With the accession of **Frederick II (the Great)** (1740–1786) to the throne, a new era in Prussian foreign policy began. Over the course of the seventeenth century, Brandenburg–Prussia became a unified state, which, as a result of its cooperation with the Habsburg court, was elevated to a kingdom in 1701. In the decades of his reign, Frederick William I (1713–1740), while balancing the state budget, organised a strong and well-trained army, which, together with a conscription system unique in Europe, provided a stable backdrop for the wars of territorial conquest of the 1740s and 1750s. However, this policy of expansion was initiated by Frederick II (the Great), the heir of Frederick William I, who had contributed to the weakness of the Habsburg Empire. Frederick II ascended to the throne in 1740 and in his political theory, he was very critical of ignoring morality in politics, as he made clear in his work *Anti-Machiavel*.<sup>5</sup> Yet, after the death of Emperor Charles VI (1711–1740), he broke the treaty with Austria and marched his troops into Silesia. He did this despite the fact that the court in Berlin had previously accepted the **Pragmatica Sanctio**, which guaranteed female succession, and even after Maria Theresa had come to power, considered the Habsburg possessions to be a single, integral state. The sudden death of the emperor, however, created a new situation in which, although there was a predetermined scenario for dealing with it, the power vacuum in the leadership of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire significantly altered the international balance of power. The former adversaries who had come to an agreement with Charles VI found themselves with more room for manoeuvre, and Prussia, France, and Bavaria were far more likely to seek political advantages and territorial gains resulting from Austria's vulnerability than to pursue peace or the maintenance of existing treaties.

Prussia was the first to launch an attack on Silesia in December 1740, and it was joined by the governments of Paris and Munich. Prussia's basic aim, however, was solely to gain the economically valuable province of Silesia. It no longer gave its military support to France's ambitious plan to partition the Habsburg Empire or even to the claims of Prince Elector Charles Albert to the throne. The first phase of the war, known as the **First Silesian War**, ended in 1742 with the peace treaty between Vienna and Berlin. The war then continued with the participation of France and Bavaria, with the Habsburgs constantly seeking alliances. Prussia's re-engagement was accelerated by the intervention of Great Britain, which provided financial and military support to Austria in 1744 and had a major impact on the course of the war. In 1744, Frederick II re-entered the war, and this temporarily helped the anti-Habsburg coalition, but as Maria Theresa (1740–1780) confirmed the Prussian takeover of Silesia, further warfare became pointless, and

in 1745, a new peace in Dresden confirmed the Prussian–Austrian agreement of 1742. This brief period is known as the **Second Silesian War**. In the remaining years of the war, the Viennese court fought the Bourbons to retain the existing territories in Italy and those that had been taken over the years. In the final phase of the War of the Austrian Succession, from 1745 to 1748, the fact that Austria's integrity and survival were no longer under immediate threat was a significant change from the previous period. In these years, the distant fighting and territorial bargaining with France was more about the boundaries of the Habsburg Empire's sphere of influence than about the survival of the monarchy. Finally, the War of the Austrian Succession ended with the peace treaty signed at **Aachen** on 18 October 1748, as a result of which the Viennese government acknowledged the loss of most of Silesia and renounced its wartime conquests in Italy, including Parma and Piacenza which were now part of the Spanish Crown, and the Kingdom of Sardinia also gained smaller territories. An important result, however, was that, much to the dismay of the French, the Habsburgs retained their politically and strategically valuable province of the Netherlands.<sup>6</sup> From the point of view of diplomatic history and international law, the conflict over the Austrian succession also brought a new phenomenon, since, contrary to traditional procedure, Frederick II launched a war without prior warning (ultimatum and declaration of war), which was truly surprising at the time.<sup>7</sup>

The challenge posed by Prussia and France, which threatened to upset Austria and the status quo of great powers in Central Europe, seemed to be temporarily resolved. However, the lessons of the war and the role of the Habsburg Empire in the continental balance made it clear to the Viennese cabinet that the **modus vivendi** was only temporary and that Austria wanted to reunify its shattered territories. The new Austrian foreign policy, motivated by the desire for revenge, was led by **Chancellor Kaunitz** (1753–1792), who introduced a new approach to the management of foreign affairs. He represented Austria in Paris for many years after the Treaty of Aachen and therefore had a wide network of contacts and a useful source of information on the affairs of the French crown. Kaunitz set out a long-term foreign policy strategy for Maria Theresa, in which he identified the emerging Prussia as the main adversary of the Habsburg Empire, while his perception of France, the old great rival, as a potential ally was a major novelty. Such thinking again reflects the application of a pure, rationalist *raison d'état* policy. In 1753–1756, Vienna pursued a policy of conciliation with the French court along the lines of the Kaunitz policy, and on 1 May 1756, the two powers signed the **Treaty of Versailles**. For France, the Austrian alliance may have been relevant because Frederick II had sided with Britain in the renewed Prussian–Austrian

conflict and, in early 1756, they had formally recorded their mutual obligations in a treaty signed at **Westminster**. London pledged to support the Prussian king if Russia, as an ally of Austria, were to launch a war against him, while Frederick II guaranteed the integrity of the Electorate of Hanover.<sup>8</sup> Overall, therefore, we see that on the eve of the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, the alliance systems were completely reorganised, while the list of European powers involved was extended with the addition of a new member, the Russian Empire.

The war was fought on two fronts with two different objectives: the Austro–Prussian rivalry in the European theatre of war and the Anglo–French rivalry in the overseas colonies. The European front opened with the Prussian invasion of Saxony in August 1756, and Frederick II was able to push forward in the Czech territories in the autumn. For the Viennese cabinet, relief came in 1758, when **Empress Elisabeth** (1741–1761), who supported Maria Theresa, gave military aid to her ally and Russia entered the war. From then on, Frederick II was basically on the defensive. In 1758, Russian troops occupied East Prussia, and in August 1759, the Prussian side suffered a heavy defeat at Kunersdorf, while France launched an offensive in the western territories. The outcome of the war was then very much in doubt for Berlin. In an unexpected turn of events, the Prussian–Austrian struggle was finally decided by the death of Elisabeth on 25 December 1761 (according to the old calendar) and the succession of her nephew **Peter III** (1761–1762). The young Tsar, a great admirer of Frederick II and Prussian militarism, took a drastic step, breaking the alliance with Austria and immediately ceasing hostilities against the Prussians, helping the King of Prussia to victory.<sup>9</sup> In this impossible situation, Austria had no choice but to enter into negotiations, and in the peace treaty concluded at **Hubertusburg on 15 February 1763**, Austria finally acknowledged the loss of its richest province, Silesia.

As far as colonial struggles were concerned, Britain was determined to gain French territory in North America. Prime Minister William Pitt the elder (1756–1761) believed that Prussia's financial support for its war against Austria would create a favourable situation to weaken France. The idea was effectively put into practice, and by the autumn of 1762, British superiority was clear, although the final peace was not concluded until a few months later, on 10 February 1763 in Paris. Under the terms of the treaty, France lost Canada and its other colonial territories in North America (Quebec, Louisiana, and some islands on the northeast coast) and India.<sup>10</sup> The rivalry between the two Western European powers thus resulted in a victory for London and contributed significantly to the strengthening of the British colonial empire.

### *Conflicts in Eastern Europe*

From the point of view of European diplomacy, there were many regional wars in the eighteenth century. They included the **Great Northern War** between Russia and Sweden (1700–1721), which brought about a complete power reshuffle in the Baltic region, as well as Russia and Austria's struggles with the Porte and the Polish affairs.

The rise of Russia and its entry into the European great power system can be dated to the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the reign of **Peter I (the Great)** (1682–1725), Russia's foreign policy was ambitious. The young tsar had two main areas of expansion in mind: the **Baltic and the Black Sea**, with which he wanted to provide his country with cold and warm seaports. He first went to war against the Ottoman Empire on his own, and on the second attempt in 1796, the Russian forces captured the fortress of **Azov**. However, he could not find an ally among the European powers that would launch a comprehensive campaign against the Porte after the Turkish wars of the previous decades. But there were partners for an anti-Swedish coalition. During his European tour (1697–1698), Peter made the acquaintance of the **Saxon prince Augustus II (1694–1733)** and **Polish king (1697–1733)**, with whom he formed an alliance. The alliance with strengthened with the addition of Denmark, and in 1700, a joint war was launched against Sweden. Decades of victories (Narva 1704, Poltava 1709) and defeats (defeat at Narva in 1700 and Prut in 1711) in the Great Northern War required significant military and naval development on the Russian side, but by the early 1720s, the efforts had produced the expected results. In the **Treaty of Nystad** (21 August 1721), Russia acquired parts of Ingria and Karelia, as well as Livonia and Estonia, while taking over Sweden's role as a major power in the Baltic region.<sup>11</sup> Russia then turned its attention towards the Ottoman Empire and the Persian Empire.

After the Treaty of Karlowitz, which ended the wars of reconquest, there were a few years of truce, but the Ottoman Empire was not willing to accept its territorial losses in the long term, and in 1715, another war was launched in the Balkans. The Habsburg Empire, however, not only managed to defend its earlier acquisitions but also expanded with the addition of the Banat of Temes, Oltenia, and the northern territories of Bosnia and Serbia (including Belgrade). The conflict, which had originally begun as a Turkish–Venetian war, was concluded in **Passarowitz**.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the long-term retention of the acquisitions, which had been sanctioned in 1718, was a problem for Vienna. In 1737, war broke out with the Porte again, but this time, Austria had Russia as an ally, with whom it had been in close

contact and in coalition since 1726. The war in the Danubian Principalities and the North Balkan region ended with a negative outcome for Russia. Austria lost the Serbian territories it had acquired in 1718 in the separate Treaty of Belgrade of 1739, and Russia ended the war with unprecedented military losses, the extent of which could not be mitigated by its new acquisitions.<sup>13</sup> Campaigns against the Ottoman Porte then ceased for several decades. Russia was reinvigorated in 1768, when tensions between St. Petersburg and Constantinople arose over the Polish question (see Russo–Turkish War of 1768–1774), and on another occasion, the re-allied **Austro–Russian coalition** (1788–1791/1792) again joined forces to suppress Turkish power. However, the alliance was unsuccessful, and the allies ended the war in a half-hearted and independent manner. The Austrian side had already been forced to make a *status quo ante bellum* (retaining pre-war conditions and borders) peace in 1791 at **Sistova**. Russia, on the other hand, won its own battles, and in 1792, it concluded a very favourable treaty with the Porte in the city of **Iași**, which drew the border between the two empires along the Dniester in the Eastern Balkans and the Kuban in the Caucasus.<sup>14</sup>

The Polish–Lithuanian state was facing serious problems in its internal affairs, and the internal political functioning of the republic of nobles (*Rzeczpospolita*) was becoming increasingly fragile. The power of the elected king at the head of the republic was extremely limited, and the Polish nobles, who had the right of veto (**liberum veto**), could block almost any political reform or measure. On several occasions in the eighteenth century, Poland came under fire from the European great powers, and Polish domestic affairs usually attracted the attention of the neighbouring states when the question of succession to the throne became an issue. This was the case in the **Polish succession crisis of 1733**, when Stanisław Leszczyński wanted to come to power with French help, but Russian and Austrian diplomacy intervened to help Polish King **Augustus III (1733–1763)** ascend to the throne.<sup>15</sup> The new conflict arose after his death in 1763, when two major groups of nobles emerged. One was the party led by the **Czartoryski** and **Poniatowski** families, backed by the influence of St. Petersburg, while on the other side were the supporters of Augustus' heir apparent, led by the **Branickis**. Russia's regional influence was by this time great enough for her word to decide the issue, and **Catherine II (the Great) (1762–1796)** brought the Czartoryski relative **Stanisław Poniatowski** to power in 1764, who ruled as **Stanisław II August** until 1795. During this period, Poland was divided into three parts, with Austria, Prussia, and Russia taking their share.<sup>16</sup>

The Polish ruler basically had a pro-Russian policy, having previously served as a diplomat in St. Petersburg, and thus he had good relations with the Tsarist court. The source of the problem was the king's desire to introduce reforms to consol-



idate his government, which was complemented by his strong stance in favour of the Catholic faith. The latter was an excellent reference point for Russia and Prussia to intervene in Polish affairs in defence of the so-called **dissenters** (those of non-Catholic denominations, such as Orthodox and Protestants). Protestant confederations were formed in the West and Orthodox confederations in the East, the latter also asking for Russian support. Soon afterwards, Russian soldiers appeared in Warsaw, where the parliament decided to emancipate the dissenters and restore the old noble constitution. The events led to the formation of the reformist **Bar Confederation**, led by the previously pro-Russian Czartoryski family, which aimed to eliminate foreign opposition influence, mainly with French and Turkish support.<sup>17</sup> The Bar Confederation was eventually dismantled by the Russian armed forces after years of struggle, but it was not only the Poles that Catherine II had to contend with, but also the Ottoman Empire, for the Porte, in addition to providing support for Polish sovereignty, wanted to prevent Russia's expansion into Eastern Europe and the Eastern Balkans, and provoked war in 1768. The war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in 1768–1774 was Catherine II's first major military success, and it gave the St. Petersburg cabinet several advantages and privileges. In the **Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca**, signed on 21 July 1774, the Porte allowed merchant ships under the Russian flag free passage across the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, as well as open navigation in the Black Sea. A major success of St. Petersburg diplomacy was the declaration of **independence for the Crimean Khanate** and the territorial gains in the Black Sea region: the acquisition of the Kinburn fortress, the permission to fortify Azov, and the right of protector over the Orthodox Christian peoples of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>18</sup>

The first partition of Poland took place during the Russo–Turkish War, completely independently of the Porte, and was signed on 25 July 1772 by Austria, Prussia, and the Russian Empire. At that time, Poland was still economically and politically viable, and the new situation was ratified by the Polish Diet in 1773. However, Polish aspirations for reform were revived over time. In Poland, in 1788, Stanisław II August called a new reform Parliament, which adopted a new **liberal constitution** on 3 May 1791, which also provided for the introduction of a constitutional monarchy. Russian foreign policy was again activated by the events, with Catherine II condemning the French Revolution. The possibility of a state in her immediate neighbourhood that not only respected the ideals of the Revolution but might use them to establish a constitutional order was unacceptable to the St. Petersburg cabinet. With Russian support, the **Targowica Confederation** was formed to oppose the policies of Stanisław II August. In 1792, first Russian and then Prussian troops entered Warsaw, and in the meantime, the second partition was decided and approved by the Polish Diet in 1793. In November 1794,

following an uprising led by **Tadeusz Kościuszko**, **General Alexander Vasilyevich Suvorov** launched an offensive against Warsaw, and in 1795, Stanisław II August abdicated and was not replaced by a new monarch. The remaining Poland was divided between Russia, Prussia, and Austria in 1795.<sup>19</sup>

From Russia's point of view, the partition of Poland was significant because it removed potential threats and instability along the western territories and established the Neman and Bug Rivers as the new border. For Prussia, the partitions (in particular the acquisition of the corridor separating the West Prussian territories from the East) were a means of achieving territorial homogeneity. Austria also gained valuable Galician territory and salt mines. Poland ceased to exist, but it cannot be said that the partition (and thus essentially the elimination) of this Eastern European state upset the European balance of power, since its provinces were distributed among the major powers of the region, if not equally, then at least on the basis of proportional and realistic geopolitical considerations, and not unilaterally annexed by a single state.



Fig. 1. The Troelfth Cake. Allegory of the First partition of Poland

*The Path to Imbalance – the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*

The series of events that led to the total upheaval of the balance of power can be traced back to France. The process began with the revolution of 1789. Among the factors that led to the crisis of the Bourbon dynasty and the monarchy, the **economic crisis** caused by the accumulation of public debts and the increased taxes imposed on the subjects is mentioned first by almost all the significant historical works. A significant share of France's **financial difficulties** stemmed from its overinvolvement, after the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), in international affairs, such as the **American War of Independence** (1775–1783), which was seen in French foreign policy as an opportunity to take action against Great Britain. The overseas campaign had consumed huge sums of money, however, and although the American colonies had gained independence<sup>20</sup> from the British crown, Paris had not benefited much from its involvement in the war. The economic and demographic situation, together with the old feudal **social tensions**, thus contributed, along with the various burdens of war, to the outbreak of the revolution in July 1789.

The internal distrust of the reign of **Louis XVI** (1774–1792) was seen by most European states as an internal affair of France. It was also argued that there had been no events between 1789 and 1791 that would have damaged the international order or continental economic interests or would have required any intervention. The National Constituent Assembly began its work in the summer of 1789, and the process of transforming absolute royal power into a constitutional monarchy was set in motion. In August 1791, however, the relationship between the monarch and his subjects changed even more dramatically than before. The royal couple attempted to leave the country, and the **Flight to Varennes** completely shook popular confidence in the **Bourbon dynasty**. The situation of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had become precarious, and the queen turned to her brother, **Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II** (1790–1792), for help. It was the capture and detention of the royal couple that prompted the great powers (and increasingly their monarchs) to take a stand. On 27 August 1791, Emperor Leopold II and **King Frederick William II of Prussia** (1786–1797) issued the **Declaration of Pillnitz**, in which they expressed their common desire to restore the Bourbon dynasty to power, and the outbreak of war was becoming increasingly likely. Diplomatic tensions became serious in the spring of 1792 following the **Girondins'** rise to power. On 20 April 1792, the new government sent a declaration of war to Austria and then to Prussia to defend the constitution and the results of the revolution.<sup>21</sup> The preventive war was initially necessary to guarantee the borders of

the French Republic, but the ruling government also saw war as a new ideological tool, and it announced the **export of the revolution**.

Under the command of General Dumouriez, the French army defeated the Prussians at the Battle of **Valmy** on 20 September 1792 and the Austrians on 6 November 1792 at the Battle of **Jemappes**. The first of these two victories for the French forces had a particularly important psychological effect, as the French successes took the great powers by surprise. However, after the initial successes of the French national army, 1793 was a year of many difficulties. Following the execution of Louis XVI on 21 January 1793, Great Britain joined the anti-French coalition, which now included the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, the Kingdom of Naples and Sardinia, as well as Tuscany.<sup>22</sup> London's involvement in the war was motivated primarily by economic interests, as the Girondins had systematically dismantled the advantageous Anglo–French trade agreements concluded under the ancien régime and was now directly involved in the development of French domestic politics. Following the defeats in the North Netherlands theatre of operations, the Girondins' momentum waned and the domestic political situation became unstable. In June 1793, power was transferred to the Committee of Public Safety. During the period of the Jacobin dictatorship (June 1793–July 1794), the commitment to the war was stronger than ever, while at home there was a series of multifront struggles to quell the Girondin and royalist rebellions. Internationally, a turnaround came in the autumn with the victories at Hondschoote and Wattignies, and the same trend continued in the spring of 1794 with the triumph at Fleurus against the Austrians. The road to Belgium was opened, and the French Republic's resistance to the First Coalition (which, despite internal political crises and changes of government, namely the fall of the Jacobin dictatorship in the summer of 1794 and the rise to power of the Directory) was able to achieve lasting successes.<sup>23</sup>

At the beginning of 1795, the French proclaimed the Batavian Republic after the invasion of the Dutch territories. By then, Austria had lost the southern part of the Netherlands, and Prussia was the first to conclude a peace treaty with the French Republic, in **Basel** in April 1795. The loss of one of its main allies placed a heavy burden on Austria, while the theatre of war shifted to Italy from 1796. It was here that the young, talented strategist Napoleon Bonaparte emerged and successfully conquered the cities of northern Italy, and in 1797, France's newest sister republic, the Cisalpine Republic (from 1802 the Italian Republic), was proclaimed in Lombardy. The Viennese government found itself in a difficult position. Its partners slowly withdrew from the war, and Austria signed the Franco–Austrian peace treaty in Campo Formio on 17 October 1797, following

the defeats in Italy. In the treaty, Austria recognised the existence of the Cisalpine Republic and the loss of southern Italy and Lombardy. At the same time, it shared the territory of the Venetian Republic with France. The latter gained possession of other small Mediterranean islands in addition to Corfu, and the Habsburg Empire was enlarged with the addition of Istria, Dalmatia, and the city of Venice, with the forced peace bringing a temporary truce.<sup>24</sup>

The British government, on the other hand, came to terms neither with the economic losses it faced nor with France's conquest of the Mediterranean. The latter was becoming increasingly relevant, as Napoleon Bonaparte, who had won the victories in Italy, outlined a new foreign policy and military strategy to the leaders of the Directory on his return. The new concept focused on the conquest of Egypt, which was part of the Ottoman Empire, and the establishment of **French hegemony in the Mediterranean**. The London government therefore set about organising a second coalition, this time with the support of the great powers in the East. Bringing the Porte and the Russian Empire into a joint coalition was not an easy task, as they were rival powers in the Black Sea region.<sup>25</sup> But now the prospect of a common enemy meant shared foreign policy interests. In the **War of the Second Coalition**, the armies of General Alexander Vasilyevich Suvorov liberated northern and central Italy, and the fleet of Admiral Fyodor Fyodorovich Ushakov liberated the Ionian Islands and Corfu from French occupation (the islands where the Septinsular Republic was established). British forces occupied the island of **Malta**, and the Mediterranean fleet under Admiral Nelson struck Napoleon's Egyptian fleet at **Abukir** on 1 August 1798. However, the gains made by the coalition had dissipated by 1800. The effectiveness of the force under Suvorov was a cause of concern for the Austrians, who had succeeded in getting the Russian troops to leave Italian territory. As a new mission, they had to clash with the French in Switzerland (since 1798 the Helvetic Republic), crossing the Alps. Suvorov's troops suffered heavy losses during the crossing, and after the ordeal, they were unable to muster a fighting force in the battle of Zürich.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the British refused to withdraw from Malta at the request of **Tsar Paul I (1796–1801)**, which also caused great prejudice to Russian diplomacy, and the St. Petersburg cabinet withdrew from the anti-French alliance in 1800. In the meantime, Bonaparte returned from the Egyptian theatre of operations, took control of the fighting in northern Italy, and on 14 June 1800, defeated the Austrians decisively at **Marengo**, leaving Austria to follow Russia out of the war. The **Treaty of Lunéville** (9 February 1801), which brought the second Austrian coalition struggle to an end, confirmed the Treaty of Campo Formio and reaffirmed its territorial provisions.<sup>27</sup>





Fig. 2. The Balance of Power

Considering the circumstances, Britain had no choice but to pacify its relations with France temporarily in order to adapt to the situation. However, both sides were aware that the **Treaty of Amiens**, signed on 27 March 1802, would not come close to resolving the original problems, and both London and Paris regarded the agreement as a truce. It was not long before, in 1803–1804, the British possession of the island of Malta led to renewed disputes, and the following year brought another coalition war. This time, the core of the alliance was formed by Britain, Russia and Austria. The original idea was for the Austrian and Russian forces to attack the French on land and the British at sea, but the plan to tie up



French forces on two fronts was soon foiled, because although Admiral Nelson won one of the most glorious victories in world history at **Trafalgar** in 1805, the combined Russo–Austrian force failed miserably, and the land war was lost at **Austerlitz (2 December 1805)**. Austria was again in the most critical position. It had concluded a forced and humiliating peace in **Pressburg on 26 December 1805**. The Habsburgs lost their possessions in Italy and also ceded the provinces of Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Istria, and Dalmatia.<sup>28</sup> The considerable territorial losses, together with the **coronation of Napoleon as emperor (2 December 1804)** and the increase of French influence in the German territories (the formation of the **Confederation of the Rhine**, independent of the Holy Roman Empire, in July 1806) forced **Francis II** (Holy Roman Emperor from 1792 to 1806; in 1804, in response to Napoleon's imperial ambitions, he took the title of Emperor of Austria under the name Francis I) to take a serious step. He renounced the title of Holy Roman Emperor in August 1806, thus officially ending the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>29</sup> With the culmination of this process, Austria was reduced to a second-rate power, entirely at the mercy of France. Austria was thus temporarily eliminated as a potential candidate for a new anti-French alliance, but Russia remained active despite the 1805 failure, and Tsar **Alexander I (1801–1825)** began planning a new campaign. This time, Prussia, which had been neutral in French affairs since 1795, was persuaded to join the venture. In October 1806, an ultimatum was issued to the Emperor of France, thus beginning the War of the Fourth Coalition. Napoleon first targeted Prussian forces with his armies, and in October 1806, he defeated them in two major battles near **Jena** and **Auerstedt**. The two battles were devastating for Prussia, and Napoleon marched into Berlin without any particular resistance or hindrance, where he proclaimed the **Continental Blockade on 21 November 1806**. The French emperor used the measure to ban all trade and contacts with Britain in an attempt to isolate the great power economically and politically and then bring it to its knees. At the same time, war between France and Russia was still raging, and only the following year brought a ceasefire. Following the successes at **Eylau on 7 February 1807** and at **Friedland on 14 June**, Napoleon forced the Russian Tsar to make peace. The negotiations took place on a raft on the River Neman. Napoleon consulted each of the coalition parties separately and negotiated treaties according to a different strategy, the so-called **Treaties of Tilsit**. The first was the Franco–Russian treaty, signed on **7 July 1807**. According to the terms of the treaty, Alexander I recognised Napoleon as Emperor of France, political-territorial changes were made in Western Europe, and Russia joined the Continental Blockade and promised France military cooperation. A few days later, on **9 July 1807**, Frederick William III and Napoleon agreed on the criteria for peaceful coexistence, the Berlin government gave up the territories from the

second and third partitions of Poland, and a new state under French influence was created, the **Grand Duchy of Warsaw**.<sup>30</sup>

Napoleon succeeded in bringing the great powers of Eastern Europe into the French alliance system, and the Central and Eastern European region would have been at peace. In 1809, however, British capital and the Austrian desire for revenge sparked another war. Austria went to war alone against France, which was a considerable risk for the Viennese cabinet. The fighting that began in the spring of 1809 saw a change in the fortunes of the war: although the French forces were characteristically superior and had a clear path to Vienna, Napoleon could not break the defences of Aspern and Essling, which meant that the French invaders failed to take the two towns, something that had never happened before. In addition, **Napoleon's proclamation to the Hungarian nobility (15 May 1809)** fell on deaf ears and failed to mobilise the nobility against the Habsburg House. The war ended in a French victory, which Napoleon won with his successes at Wagram. The **Treaty of Schönbrunn (14 October 1809)** resulted in further territorial losses for Austria, with the annexation of Carniola and Carinthia, West Galicia, and several small German territories, in addition to the Adriatic region.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the Austrian Emperor Francis I had to make a sacrifice regarding the family. Napoleon wanted to found a dynasty, for which the ties with the Habsburgs would have provided a suitable base. **Chancellor Metternich (1809–1848)** supported the idea, seeing it as a pledge of long-term peace for Austria alongside the Franco–Austrian alliance. After preparations, in 1809 Archduchess Marie Louise married Napoleon Bonaparte, and a year and a half later, the heir to the French throne, “*the Eaglet*” Napoleon Bonaparte the Younger, later Duke of the Reichstadt, was born. With the alliance of Prussia and Russia and control over Austria, the French emperor was sure of his continental power. However, gaps soon appeared in the line of defence between French hegemony and forced alliances. The main source of trouble was the complete elimination of the British trade factor, which caused serious problems for many countries. One of the main victims of the blockade was the Russian Empire, which was deprived of its main trading partner by the Treaty of Tilsit. Although the Russian economy adjusted for a year or two, by the end of 1810, the situation had become untenable, and it was at this point that the Franco–Russian alliance came unravelling. A ukase in December opened Russian ports to ships from neutral countries, and the following year, the tsarist government imposed high tariffs on certain French imports.<sup>32</sup> Napoleon began to see Russia as a rival again.

It became increasingly clear to St. Petersburg that a breakup and the resulting Russo–French war was inevitable. The Tsar was preparing to avert a French inva-

sion of Russia and was doing everything in his power to launch a preventive war ahead of Napoleon's armies. He sought to win the support of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and Prussia, allied himself with Sweden and Britain, and concluded his ongoing war with the Ottoman Empire in the Treaty of Bucharest on 28 May 1812. But his efforts proved futile. Napoleon had already begun preparations for the Russian campaign in 1811, and he **launched the war against Russia on 24 June 1812.**

The French Emperor's campaign focused on the conquest of Moscow, as he believed that the capture of the ancient Russian capital would not only secure France's military presence in the Russian empire but would also have a strong psychological impact. The Russian strategy was essentially based on scorched earth tactics: to retreat as far inland as possible and cut off the French from any supplies. The **Battle of Borodino** took place on 7 **September 1812.** The French forces were able to overcome General Kutuzov's troops, but only after a difficult and costly battle was Napoleon able to continue his march to Moscow, where he arrived on 14 September. He might have been justified in thinking that Tsar Alexander I would be amenable to a deal following the French occupation of the city, but this was not to be. The psychological effect that Napoleon had anticipated provoked the opposite reaction from the Russian monarch, who declared that he would not negotiate as long as French troops were stationed on Russian soil, despite the fact that the ancient capital, Moscow, had been occupied by Napoleon. At this point, a stalemate developed. The Russian winter, poor supplies, a lack of logistics, and the condition of the French soldiers, who were exhausted by hunger and disease, made it impossible to continue the fight, which could have gone on indefinitely, provided the **Grande Armée** had survived the Russian winter.<sup>33</sup> Having considered all this, Napoleon finally decided to retreat and abandoned his plan to defeat the Russian Empire. Alexander I took advantage of the French reluctance to organise a counterattack, as the French Empire, which had seemed invincible until then, was showing real weakness for the first time. In a manifesto issued on 1 January 1813, the Tsar announced the resumption of the war and recruited allies. First, Russia entered into a mutual defence agreement with Prussia at Kalisz, and then, after the utterly fruitless Austro–French negotiations in Dresden, Austria also joined the emerging Sixth Coalition, with which Sweden and Britain were also associated. On **16–19 October 1813**, at the **Battle of the Nations at Leipzig**, the allied forces dealt Napoleon's army a severe blow, after which the coalition forces began their advance towards France and marched into **Paris on 14 March 1814.**<sup>34</sup>

The events of the spring of 1814 symbolically marked the end of the first French Empire and of the period of anti-French wars since 1792. The process of

collapse was unstoppable, and **Napoleon abdicated on 6 April 1814** and went into exile on the island of Elba. A year later, he attempted to reclaim power once more, returning to France in March 1815 (100 days), but the great powers negotiating at the Congress of Vienna organised a new coalition (now the seventh), and at the Battle of Waterloo on 18 June 1815, the allied forces led by the Duke of Wellington and General Blücher finally defeated Napoleon.

### *Plans for Peace*

If we look back at the events of the eighteenth century and the conditions under which the European system of balance functioned, we immediately see the general use of warfare as a crisis management method. Of course, diplomacy and the maintenance of inter-state relations were of paramount importance in this period, but overall, war was the way to settle disputes. It is no coincidence that the eighteenth century saw a revival of interest in peace plans and concepts and the emergence of several alternatives for the long-term maintenance of peace and order. There was a long tradition of similar ideas from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onwards, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam's *The Complaint of Peace* (1517) or Duke of Sully's *Grand Design* (1632). The first peace project of the eighteenth century came about during the period of the War of the Spanish Succession, from the pen of the **Abbé de Saint-Pierre**. The main dilemma that preoccupied the Abbé was the basic premise that peace could not be maintained if there were no guarantees to ensure peace. In *A Project for Setting an Everlasting Peace in Europe* (1713), he expressed his view that cooperation among states could be established within the framework of a great **general alliance** (*alliance générale*). He argued that, in addition to mutual partnership, peace lay in the regulated and coordinated operation of cooperation according to strict principles. Another important aspect, he insisted, was the enforceability of international treaties. The Abbé de Saint-Pierre contended that the most frequent source of conflict was the violation of existing treaties among states. Such a violation of the status quo reflected a disregard for the rights and sovereignty of states. This general phenomenon could only be eliminated if the state (or more precisely its ruler and his family) retained its present territories and rights.<sup>35</sup> This also meant that the great powers would once and for all renounce war as a means of asserting their interests. The means of resolving occasional conflicts among the members of the alliance was the Permanent Assembly, composed of the plenipotentiaries of the sovereigns, and "*The Great Allies [...] have renounced and renounce forever, for themselves and for their successors, the way*

*of arms; and have agreed henceforth always to take the way of conciliation through the mediation [...].*<sup>36</sup> At the same time, the alliance of great powers would act as a restraining factor against states which upset the peaceful balance of power and against internal strife or revolution in the member states, thus helping the ruler of the country concerned to maintain his constitution and preserve internal peace.<sup>37</sup>

The **alliance of Christian states** limited the scope of continental peace policy, while the Ottoman Empire was still dominant in southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean. The Abbé de Saint-Pierre therefore made a special point of relations with the **Islamic states**. In his view, the alliance of Christian states should enter into a united partnership with these states, so that there would be no obstacle to maintaining a balanced relationship and peace in this area.<sup>38</sup>

Saint-Pierre has had many critics. In 1740, Frederick II became embroiled in a dispute with the Abbé because of his current political ambitions, and his contemporaries criticized the allegedly fanciful nature of his visions (which they felt showed no realistic grasp of dynastic aspirations) and considered the renunciation of the dynastic principle and the assertion of traditional political interests as impossible and even utopian. **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** was perhaps the Abbé's best known critic, who expressed his views long after the author's death. While Rousseau did not dispute the incalculable benefits of the project, he also clearly saw the limits to the fulfilment of the Abbé's idealistic worldview. First, he saw the royal advisers and ministers with full powers as one fundamental source of problems, as these figures influenced the decision-making processes of the monarchy and shaped the foreign and domestic policy of the given state according to their own self-interests and to the detriment of the interests of the community. Second, any hope for enduring peace rested on the notion that such peace could be *"[...] firm and lasting, so as to prevent members from being tempted to break away from it as soon as they feel that their particular interest is contrary to the general interest."*<sup>39</sup> Rousseau thought the idea of European unity in a federal alliance among states was naive. However, when he reviewed and organised the bequest of Saint-Pierre in the 1750s, Rousseau himself reflected on the idea, and, using the Abbé's original concept, created his own plan. Interestingly, this vision was, in essence, the same as the much-criticised Project of the Everlasting Peace. Rousseau agreed, for example, that the rulers of European states should enter into a common alliance and that **war should be completely eliminated** from international practice. Problematic matters would be discussed in a permanent congress in a federal forum, with the powers renouncing any further territorial claims. Later, Rousseau's position changed, and in his *Judgement*, he distanced himself completely from the **absurd idea of a general peace**. For as long as political

interest prevails in the foreign policy of states rather than moral considerations, he contended, there can be no real alternative to an alliance.<sup>40</sup>

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who was also active in the eighteenth century, like his contemporaries, made serious theoretical investigations into the feasibility of the idea of European unity. His work *Perpetual Peace* (1795) was published during the French Revolutionary Wars, at a time of truce between France and Prussia. With the signing of the Treaty of Basel in 1795, the Hohenzollern court withdrew from the War of the First Coalition and did not take part in the campaigns to restore the continental balance for more than a decade. In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant linked the end of the state of war to the **international legal regulation** of inter-state relations, which “[...] shall be based on a federation of free states.”<sup>41</sup> Kant presents the legal context in several layers: a) the internal political system of states, b) the nature of the relationship among states, and c) the system of relations between citizens and foreign states.<sup>42</sup> Kant saw the democratic constitutional system, in which citizens would be empowered to make decisions on crucial issues such as the launch of a war, as the cornerstone of peace, since the people alone would be able to assess the human and material costs of war. But “[...] For the sake of its own security, each nation can and should demand that the others enter into a contract resembling the civil one and guaranteeing the rights of each.”<sup>43</sup> As regards relations among states, Kant stressed **respect for one another’s sovereignty**, that no state interfere by force in the internal affairs of another, and that “No independent nation [...] may be acquired by another nation by inheritance, exchange, purchase, or gift.”<sup>44</sup> Peace treaties must, both in theory and in practice, eliminate the possibility of a future war. Otherwise, they could only be regarded as indefinite armistice agreements. Last but not least, the establishment of peaceful relations necessarily entailed the gradual dismantling of standing armies.

After the thinkers of the eighteenth century, the work of **Claude Henri de Saint-Simon** also merits mention in connection with the Napoleonic Wars. In October 1814, the Count, remembered by posterity as the first representative of utopian socialist thought and a pioneer of sociology, published his work *The Reorganisation of European Society*, which he addressed primarily to the participants in the international congress meeting in the Austrian capital, the representatives of the great powers coordinating the peace process. Saint-Simon, who had lived through the French Revolution and the ensuing period of war, felt that the **system of balance** that had existed since the seventeenth century was not capable of maintaining **peaceful relations** among the great powers. He contrasts medieval Europe with modern Europe to illustrate the gravity of the situation, and, using the example of papal power, outlines the applicability of the principles needed to achieve peace. The strong and firm power of the Bishop of Rome, he argued, made



it possible to limit the ambitions of European rulers, since the Pope had become a factor completely independent of the influence of the countries concerned. He therefore proposed, by analogy, the creation of an all-powerful “*general government*”, which he believed could provide a real solution to the conflicts among the great European powers.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lynn, J. A.: *The Wars of Louis XIV*. 24–27.; 48.; 51.

<sup>3</sup> Kissinger, Henry: *Diplomacy*. New York 1994. 71.

<sup>4</sup> Kalmár, János: *A spanyol örökösödési háború (1701–1714)*. (The War of the Spanish Succession, 1701–1714). In: *A kora újkor története. (History of the Early Modern Period)*. Ed. Poór, János. Budapest 2009. 78–79.

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## The Congress of Vienna and the Maintenance of European Order until 1914

*(Katalin Schrek)*

Following the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the leading European states held a congress in Vienna to restore the balance that had become unstable between 1792 and 1814. There was practically no country on the continent that had not been affected politically, militarily or economically by the French hegemony that had been built up over two decades. Rulers and dynasties lost their countries, countless borders were redrawn, and new political principles were introduced. Napoleon Bonaparte's fall from power was only the first step in restoring order, and the lion's share of the work came after the war was over. But before the congress could meet in the Austrian capital, the Allies had to clarify a few fundamental questions. These included the attitude towards France, how to restore the internal French political system and how to form the coalition into an alliance. Negotiations began during the sixth coalition struggle. The first meeting of the representatives of the allied forces moving towards the French border took place in Basel in January 1814, where the future French ruler was discussed, but without reaching a resolution. In the early stages of the negotiations, several alternatives were considered. On the Russian side, due to his abilities, Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, who had broken with the Napoleonic order in 1812 to become King of Sweden, emerged as a candidate. The idea met with strong opposition from both the British and the Austrians, and seeing the reactions, Tsar Alexander I abandoned the proposal. For the Allies, finding the right person was a dilemma, since they could obviously not return to Napoleon and his family circle, but there were also objections and concerns about the Bourbons.<sup>1</sup>

Negotiations continued in **Langres**, where the **British–Austrian** political stance sought to counter Russian plans in a clear partnership. The unfolding conflict between Alexander I and Metternich was demonstrated by the gesture of the Austrian Chancellor's refusal to continue joint operations in the absence of consensus. With British mediation, the temporary difficulties were overcome and, under the terms of the **Protocols of Langres** in January 1814, the coalition partners confirmed the framework of their cooperation and decided to take joint decisions, including Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia, on issues affecting the post-war European order.<sup>2</sup>

The third stage of the preliminary negotiations was the **Congress of Châtillon** in February and March 1814. At Châtillon, not only did the Allies consult with

one another, but they also engaged in discussions with the French Emperor, who was still in legitimate power, through Armand de Caulaincourt, to negotiate the terms of a possible peace treaty. However, Napoleon's stubbornness on territorial issues and the tension between the Allies ruled out the possibility of consensus.<sup>3</sup> Presumably this contributed to the fact that at the last meeting before the Congress of Vienna, the four Allied powers at Chaumont concentrated their efforts not on the still unresolved problems between them, but on keeping the common enemy in check and laying the foundations for future peace. There was a risk that the alliance's strength would fade amid the protracted disputes and that Napoleon would take advantage of the situation to reassert his power by military victories. In the **Treaty of Chaumont** on 1 March 1814, Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia, laying the foundations of the future Quadruple Alliance, committed themselves to the establishment and maintenance of peace in Europe, and agreed to discuss the general European settlement and all questions arising from it in Vienna.<sup>4</sup> The fact that the Allies chose the imperial city as the venue for the congress was a meaningful gesture to Austria, the state that had suffered the most casualties in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.<sup>5</sup>

The Congress of Vienna, which met between September 1814 and July 1815, was based on three main principles: **restoration, legitimism and dynasticism**. In essence, this meant that in those countries where this was possible, the former monarchical form of government and the dynasty that had ruled legitimately before the French intervention would come to power. In those cases where the civic development based on the ideas of the French Revolution had reached a certain stage and there was no chance of restoring absolute monarchical power, or where to do so would involve major internal political tensions or even popular resistance, the great powers would give way and allow the creation of a constitutional monarchy. This was clearly the case in France, Switzerland and the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia. However, the great powers were cautious about constitutionalism, as they did not consider it to be a guiding principle applicable to themselves and only approved its introduction in cases of necessity. France's future constitutional-monarchical system had already been laid down in the **first Peace of Paris** of 30 May 1814, which imposed fair conditions on the defeated party: the retention of the 1792 **borders** and exemption from reparations.<sup>6</sup> One reason for this was that the French people did not want to be punished for the damage caused by the Napoleonic regime, and the other was that the great powers had no interest in making France economically and politically impossible, since it was a pillar of the European system of great powers and balances, and not a small or medium-sized power with no international weight. The decisions taken in relation to France had a major long-term impact on the future of Europe, and

the members of the anti-French alliance had to act with caution. This was a highly exemplary behaviour in diplomatic history, not only in the restraint shown by the victors, but also in the treatment of the loser as an equal partner.

The most difficult decisions were made regarding the Polish and Saxon territorial disputes. Russia claimed the whole of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, but Vienna and Berlin also wanted Polish territories. In addition, Prussia wanted to annex Saxony to strengthen its own integrity. Austria's interests on both sides would have been damaged by the expansion of neighbouring countries, and it sought Britain's help to counteract Russian–Prussian pressure. French diplomacy sought to exploit the fault lines between the allies, and Foreign Minister Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand then entered into negotiations with British Foreign Minister Robert Castlereagh and Chancellor Metternich. The consultations resulted in a secret treaty on 3 January 1815 against Russia and Prussia. In reality, the treaty carried little weight, as neither party undertook any specific commitments.<sup>7</sup> On the British and Austrian side, the temporary pro-French attitude was intended to control Berlin and St. Petersburg, while on Talleyrand's side it was intended to improve France's negotiating position. The tactics were successful, and an agreement was slowly reached in the Saxon–Polish territorial disputes. Prussia was

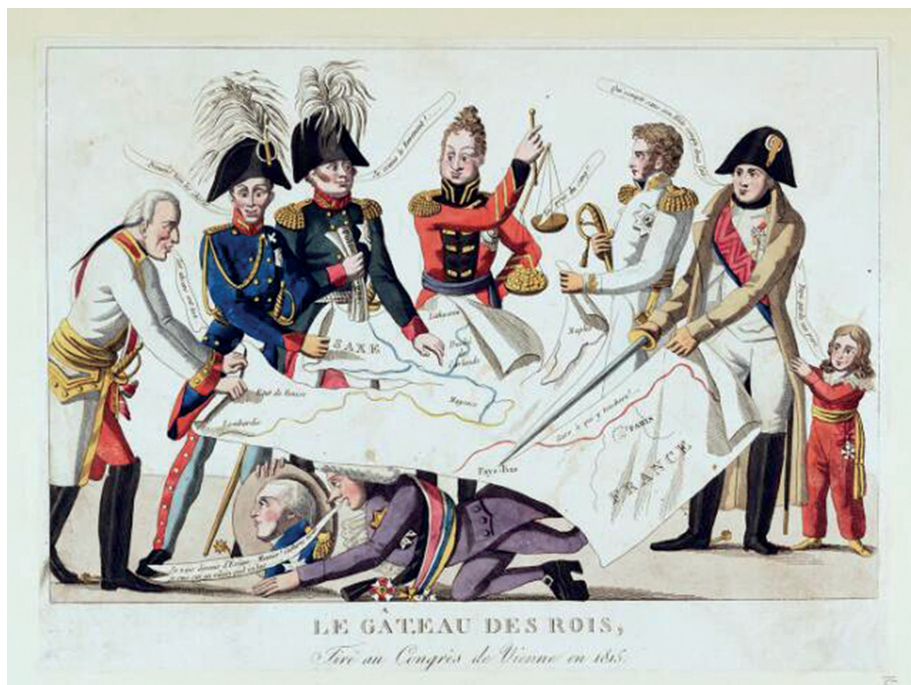


Fig. 1. The Congress of Vienna – Le gâteau des rois

granted the County of Toruń, the cities of Poznań and Gdańsk, part of Saxony and Pomerania. Russia was allowed to annex the remaining territories of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and to retain its previous acquisitions, which included Grand Duchy of Finland and Bessarabia. Austria's territory was expanded to include Galicia and Lodomeria, while Austrian influence was also established in Lombardy, Venice, Tuscany, Modena and the Kingdom of Naples. In order to limit France's room to manoeuvre, the German Confederation was created to act as a buffer state, as was the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which was united with Belgium, the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia and Switzerland. Finally, Britain was allowed to retain its wartime acquisitions, so that the Cape of Good Hope, Malta and the Ionian Islands all became British colonies.<sup>8</sup> The territorial agreements were set out in the **Final Act** of the Congress of 9 June 1815.

Restoration, the revival of **dynastic politics** based on traditional values, and compensation-based territorial solutions were the hallmarks of the peace system created by the Congress of Vienna. Beyond the political and diplomatic bargaining, the main question was how to maintain the new European structure. Although France was no longer the aggressor, the great powers still faced a dilemma as to how to judge its future behaviour. While they maintained a general distrust of the Paris government, they also needed to defend the restored balance of power. There was complete agreement that stability could only be sustained within the framework of great power cooperation, but it was not so clear exactly what the direction of this cooperation should be. What should the great powers be authorized to do? Several ideas existed in parallel. One of them was the creation of a **Quadruple Alliance**. At the beginning of this chapter, it was pointed out that the negotiations at Châtillon had essentially crystallised the four-power alliance, which was formalised in the Treaty of **20 November 1815**, coinciding with the signing of the Second Treaty of Paris.<sup>9</sup> The treaty between Great Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia maintained the Viennese order by resolving common affairs and restraining France, complemented by the congress system, which offered an alternative to resolving conflicts at the international level through joint dialogue.

The other partnership of great powers was the **Holy Alliance**, devised by the Russian Emperor Alexander I. From 1805 onwards, Alexander I, known as the diplomat Tsar, was a prominent and inescapable figure in the shaping of international relations, and was himself actively involved in diplomatic negotiations and agreements. After the War of 1812 and the results of the Sixth Coalition, led by Russia in 1813, the Tsar believed that the St. Petersburg government had earned the right to be the leading European power and that it had a duty to ensure peace on the continent. To this end, he conceived the idea of the Holy Alliance, a Christian-based partnership of rulers committed to common goals – the defence of



legitimate power and common action against revolutions. A declaration of intent to this effect was signed on **26 September 1815** by Tsar Alexander I of Russia, Emperor Francis I of Austria and Emperor Frederick William III of Prussia.<sup>10</sup> Although in the months that followed almost all the monarchs formally expressed their agreement to the Holy Alliance – with the exception of Great Britain, the Papal States and the Ottoman Empire – in reality the initiative never achieved its original aim and failed to create a common, comprehensive political cooperation among legitimate rulers. The majority of heads of state regarded the document as a statement of principle rather than an actual treaty, which was justified given that it did not have the formal characteristics of an international treaty. It did, however, lay the foundations for the later political-military cooperation between Austria, Prussia and Russia. This collaboration, characterized by shared principles and methods aimed at the suppression of popular sovereignty, constitutionalism and revolutionary activities, is commonly referred as the Holy Alliance.

Thus, after 1815, the Quadruple Alliance and the Holy Alliance tried to keep European affairs under control. The **congress system** provided a concrete solution for a time. Between **1818** and **1822** there were four congresses in total, each of which attempted to tackle a major international problem. However, the *Concert of Europe* in this form could not remain viable in the long term, largely due to crisis management, differences in political thinking and clashes of state interests. Beyond a certain point, collective cooperation proved insufficient to maintain the balance, and indeed, if we look at the history of the congresses, with the exception of the Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) meeting, the principles set out in 1815 were not fully implemented.

At the **Congress of Aachen** in 1818, the fate of France was decided. Following Napoleon's return, the great powers negotiated a peace treaty on more stringent terms than those of May 1814. The **Second Peace of Paris** (20 November 1815) already provided for 700 million francs in reparations, a permanent military occupation and external oversight of the French government, and fixed the borders of the country in accordance with the conditions of 1790.<sup>11</sup> The reigning House of Bourbon and the cabinet fulfilled the terms of the treaty within three years. Reparations were paid in full in 1818, and for this reason (as well as for France's "good behaviour") the four allied states attending the Congress of Aachen agreed that France was an important member of the international system and should therefore be restored to the ranks of the great powers and treated on an equal footing with the leading states. Aachen can be seen as a continuation of the Congress of Vienna, where the states that had previously formed an alliance against France gave their verdict on the changes in the French state between 1815 and 1818, its economic and political performance and the possibility of its rehabilitation in the

international system. As the Paris government had met all the conditions imposed on it, the states of the Quadruple Alliance once again voted their confidence in France, which became a full member of the **pentarchy** and a permanent participant in future congresses.

The greatest threat to the foundations of 1815 was posed by the nationalist movements that emerged. The first nationalist movement mobilising crowds emerged within the German Confederation. The **Burschenschaft movement**, which had started in Jena, was a movement for a unified nation, and by 1817 it had an extensive network.<sup>12</sup> A German student organisation, it was strongly opposed by the Viennese government and was broken up by a series of measures advocated by Chancellor Metternich. The **Carlsbad Decrees** of 1819, which kept German youth in check by tightening censorship, restricting university autonomy and organising a secret police force across German states, were an effective solution. At the same time, they also anticipated the difficulties of the years to come.<sup>13</sup> In the first half of the nineteenth century, three major revolutionary waves swept through Europe: the revolutions of 1820, 1830 and 1848. Without exception, these revolutions tested the stability of the Viennese system.

The **first wave of revolutions** began in Portugal and Spain in early 1820 and reached the Kingdom of Naples and Piedmont-Sardinia a few months later. The common feature of these events was that they mainly affected the Mediterranean region, and all the movements shared the same basic demand: the introduction of a constitutional order and the abolition of the institution of absolute monarchy. The introduction of fundamental laws would not end dynastic rule, but rather transform it into a constitutional monarchy. At the Congresses of Troppau, Laidbach and Verona, the five great European powers had to respond to these crises while maintaining the framework of 1815. In 1820, the situation in Italy was on the agenda in **Troppau**. Here Austria, Prussia and Russia reaffirmed their cooperation and decided to intervene to restore the legitimate order disrupted by the revolutionary situation, with the three states taking action ranging from negotiation to armed intervention, depending on the gravity of the situation. This was the point at which the great power cooperation established in 1815 (and later extended in 1818) broke down. The London government was not prepared to accept any armed intervention other than neutrality and peaceful mediation, and therefore could not sign an international treaty such as the **Troppau Protocol** (the majority of the British political elite did not want to get involved in European affairs, and Britain only sent observers to Troppau). France was of the same opinion. In Troppau, the pentarchy was divided into two camps: the Central and Eastern European states on one side, and the Atlantic states on the other.<sup>14</sup> The Viennese government called for military intervention to protect the Kingdom of Naples

and the Habsburgs' interests in Italy, but since this caused tensions with London and Paris, no decision was taken at the end of 1820. Negotiations resumed in January 1821 in **Laibach**, where Metternich's long-standing policy finally came to fruition and Austria obtained approval for an intervention in Italy, which took place in February 1821.

In 1822, the issue of Ferdinand VII and the Spanish revolutionaries was still not settled. There was little chance of restoring law and order and the power of the legitimate monarch, so military intervention was essential to manage the conflict. The only question was who would carry out the task. At the Congress of Verona, several alternatives emerged. Russia assured its partners of its willingness to help, and Alexander I proposed the deployment of 100,000 Russian troops. The enthusiastic support of the St. Petersburg government, however, caused more concern than relief among its allies, and the idea was left without a backer. Besides, there were only two realistic options: French or Austrian intervention. Of the two, the geopolitical balance was clearly tipped in favour of France, but it was feared that France would use the invasion of Spain to re-establish itself as an invading power in the Iberian region. In the end, the Viennese government voted in favour of Paris, and after the pacification of the Spanish internal political situation, the French army withdrew behind its own borders. This marked the end of the revolutionary wave of the 1820s and the end of the age of congresses. The European alliance of great powers in an organised framework (see Quadruple Alliance and congresses) came to an end, and collective consultation on international affairs was no longer possible. The balance of power was finally based not on the unity of the **pentarchy** but on the occasional alliances of major states.

The crisis in 1830 was different from the previous one. The **Paris Revolution**, which broke out on 27 July 1830, set off a new wave of revolutionary movements across Europe. The ultra-royalist government of **Charles X (1824–1830)** disregarded the political and economic importance of the bourgeoisie, and instead concentrated power almost absolutely in the hands of the conservative elite – an affront to the very values that the 1814 **Charter** and the goodwill of the allied powers had sought to protect. The three-day revolution was victorious; the Bourbon monarch, who had become the emblem of post-Restoration repression, was deposed, and **Prince Louis Philippe of Orléans** was enthroned with the support of the people (1830–1848). The internal change was drastic, but the continuity of the Vienna system was preserved, since the Bourbon dynasty remained in power, and the conditions for constitutional government were once again guaranteed. At the same time, the impact of the Paris Revolution was felt beyond the borders. It first kindled the embers of revolution in the neighbouring state of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, which had been established at the congress of 1815.

Not long afterwards, it spread to Warsaw, then under the jurisdiction of the Russian Empire. The course of these two events and the fate of the peoples involved, though seemingly unrelated, are intertwined at several points.

The **Kingdom of the Netherlands** was in a unique position. Formed from the federation of the Dutch and Belgian provinces in 1815 for geopolitical reasons, it was an excellent buffer zone – though not in the traditional sense. Rather, it was a strong barrier capable of holding back French expansionist ambitions in unexpected situations. Nevertheless, it played an important role in maintaining political balance and served as a defensive bridgehead for Britain on the continent. The Kingdom of the Netherlands was a virtual mirror image of 1814–1815: it symbolised the new beginning, the Europe constructed by the allied states, the legitimate order of law and the politics of containment. It was therefore shocking for the great powers that the revolution that had started in the Belgian provinces soon became a struggle for independence and secession from the Netherlands. The Belgian cause disrupted international relations. Russia wanted armed intervention, while Britain and Austria wanted to keep the kingdom together by peaceful means. In 1830, a **conference of great powers** met in London, but after months of negotiations, the participants were unable to come up with a solution that would appease the separatist aspirations. Eventually they realised that separation was inevitable, and in 1831 recognised the creation of an **independent Belgian state**. This was the first situation of such magnitude as to force a change in the international system established in Vienna.

But how does the Belgian Revolution and War of Independence relate to Polish national aspirations? The news of the Paris and Belgian revolutions were a kind of flashpoint for the events in **Warsaw**, but it is important to note that the discontent with the Russian government and the gradual emergence of national sentiment had been building for years. A decade and a half earlier, Alexander I had introduced a unique and quite liberal constitution in the Polish territories of the Russian Empire, guaranteeing the use of the national language in education and in the conduct of public affairs, and also allowing Polish troops to use their language of command. The political concession included both the establishment of a bicameral Polish parliament, which met every two years and had the authority to propose bills, and the abolition of the internal customs border between Russia and the more industrialised Polish regions as part of the economic stimulus.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, in the second half of the 1820s, **Tsar Nicholas I (1825–1855)** gradually began to dismantle elements of **Polish constitutionalism**, while simultaneously deepening the enlightened and patriotic mindset of the Polish intelligentsia through his extensive European contacts. These processes culminated in the revolutionary wave of 1830, the third and final stage of which was the uprising in Warsaw.<sup>16</sup> The

link with the Belgian events was twofold. Firstly, the Poles had been influenced by the Belgian revolutionaries, finding inspiration in their actions. Secondly, there was an ironic twist in that the uprising was initially launched by Polish troops, who were mobilized by the Russian military command in anticipation of potential intervention in the Belgian cause. However, these Polish troops were not deployed due to the lack of approval from the great powers. Another interesting aspect of Belgian–Polish relations is that, for decades after the suppression of the Polish Revolution and War of Independence, the St. Petersburg government refused to establish diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Belgium, as the new state showed solidarity with Polish patriots and granted asylum to many of the Polish soldiers and officers who had emigrated abroad following the actions of General **Ivan Fyodorovich Paskevich**.

Europe's **third great revolutionary wave** swept across the continent in 1848, brought about by the combined effects of the **agricultural crisis** that had begun in 1846, internal social tensions, and the influence of Enlightenment ideals and revolutionary trends. The starting point of the revolutionary wave was in **Palermo**, in January, but those events were more of a prelude to revolution in Europe. A few weeks later, on 22 February, the news came from **Paris** that crowds, dissatisfied with the power of Louis Philippe and the political leadership, had risen up at the news of the ban on banquets (social events that also served as political forums). Three days later the monarchy fell, the republic was proclaimed and the king fled to London. Following the French example, similar events took place in **Vienna** on 13 March, in **Pest** on 15 March and in **Berlin** on 18 March, as well as in Italy. Of the European powers, Britain and Russia were not directly affected, although the Tsarist court was seriously concerned that the Poles might receive outside support from revolutionaries in other neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, both powers took an active part in the events of 1848–1849.<sup>17</sup>

One of the biggest questions of the revolutionary wave was the unity of the Habsburg Empire. The Hungarian Revolution and the Hungarian War of Independence, along with uprisings of other nationalities within the Monarchy and the rebellion in the Italian territories, presented the great power of Central Europe with a challenge that fundamentally questioned its integrity. Without Russia's help, the cornerstone of European balance would cease to exist. It was in this situation that the Tsarist court, through the Münchengrätz Convention, provided support, and its intervention in Hungary created an opportunity for the Viennese court to deal with its internal crisis. In Britain, the Palmerston government also sensed the gravity of the situation and expressed sympathy for those fighting for national independence. At the same time, it should be stressed that, despite the general sympathy, the London cabinet could not and would not have provided

real patronage. This was because the break-up of the monarchy meant the breakdown of the European system of balance, which was an important tenet of the traditional British foreign policy approach. It was therefore also in the interest of the London government to consolidate the crisis in Austria and the German Federation. But it was left to Russia to take the actual steps. St. Petersburg played an important role in maintaining the Monarchy by crushing the Hungarian War of Independence<sup>18</sup> and in settling the Austro–Prussian conflict within the German Federation through its diplomatic intervention. The nationalist aspirations brought to the fore by the revolutionary wave of 1848–1849 signalled that Europe was entering the age of nation states, a demand that became increasingly evident in the second half of the nineteenth century.

### *The Balance of Power and the Eastern Question*

The **Eastern Question**, which came to the fore in European diplomacy in the 1820s, played a decisive role in shaping the foreign policy of the continental powers. The Eastern Question itself can be seen as a set of problems spanning from the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, which ended the **Russo–Turkish War** of 1768–1774, to the First World War. It includes issues related to the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the uprisings of the oppressed Balkan peoples and the intervention of the European powers – specifically, the conflicts of interest of the European states and the great power rivalry for control over the Ottoman Empire. From a chronological point of view, the Crimean War (1853–1856) can be seen as a kind of dividing line. On this basis, the period 1774–1856 can be considered an Eastern question, while the interval 1856–1918 is a Balkan question.

In the eighteenth century, the attention of the European powers was not yet absorbed in the internal crisis of the Ottoman Empire, and until the 1820s it was generally involved in some side conflicts in European affairs. Examples of this were the partition of Poland, the second coalition against France and the Napoleonic Wars. In its foreign policy, the **Porte** sought to preserve its regional position in the Balkans, the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, and to establish close economic cooperation with European states (mostly Britain and France). Because of its geographical location, it had direct territorial disputes and conflicts of interest with the Habsburg Empire, Russia and the Persian Empire, which were far from the main lines of European diplomacy. The internal economic and political structure of the Porte was complex and outdated. The government of Constantinople had serious difficulties in **dealing effectively** with the remote **provinces** and in containing the **valley lords** which had established extensive influence in the provinces. In the



Balkan areas, local authorities known as the *ayans* and in Anatolia as the *derebeys* almost autonomously controlled parts of the provinces, which they could also dominate militarily.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, central power was often unable to assert itself in these areas, and the valley lords implemented independent, often local and anti-Porte governance, which became a serious problem. In addition, a **corruption**-ridden imperial administration and an economic policy that almost completely neglected **industrial development**, as well as a domestic market that was vulnerable to foreign traders, further weakened the empire, which had suffered numerous territorial losses since the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. Taxes, local powers and peacetime janissary raids on the civilian population also made daily life difficult for the Balkan peoples, and the last decades of the eighteenth century saw the beginning of a process of national awakening in some areas, the first manifestations of which were **the First (1804–1813) and the Second (1814–1816) Serbian Uprisings** led by **George Petrović (Karadjordje)** and **Miloš Obrenović**. Initially, the movement, which aimed to limit the activities of the *ayans* and Janissaries and to normalise local livelihoods, did not seek to change its relationship with the Sultan. However, over time, the uprising became a civil war with the goal of achieving autonomy. Although the Serbian rebels achieved military successes, they were unable to rally great power support behind their achievements, and their position, typically in the context of the events of the Napoleonic Wars, was highly volatile (for example, the lack of Russian support after the Treaty of Tilsit (1807) and the Treaty of Bucharest (1812)) and the struggle led by Karadjordje failed in 1813. Miloš Obrenović, however, recognised the potential of cooperation with the Porte and succeeded in obtaining **semi-autonomous status** for Serbia in 1816; he was himself elected prince by the skupština (National Assembly) with the approval of the Sultan in 1817. In the Treaty of Adrianople, which ended the Russo–Turkish War of 1828–1829, the Ottoman government, under pressure from St. Petersburg, made further concessions for Serbia: religious freedom was guaranteed and Miloš Obrenović was granted the title of hereditary prince. In 1833, the Principality of Serbia was granted **full autonomy** under an **additional hatti-sherif**, and in 1838 the first constitution was introduced.<sup>20</sup>

While the Serbian uprisings did not capture the interest of the European powers or sway public opinion, the **Greek issue** was already at the centre of public attention. The Greek national movement was launched with a well-organised social base. In 1814, an organisation called the **Friendly Brotherhood (Philikí Etaireía)** was founded with the aim of laying the foundations for independence. They had an extensive network of international contacts, drawing on the Greek communities in the major European cities (Vienna, Odessa, Marseille, Paris, London). They received considerable informal support from Russia in organising the up-

rising, notably from the Greek-born foreign minister of the Tsarist court, Ioánnis Kapodístrias, and **Alexander Ypsilanti**, of Fanariot descent, who led the armed conflict.<sup>21</sup> Finally, in March 1821, the uprising against Ottoman rule began. The events that started in the Danubian Principalities quickly spread to the Peloponnese. Although the people of Wallachia initially joined in the fighting, it soon became clear that the long-term goals of the Greek and Romanian populations could not be put at the service of the same cause, and the persistent disagreements between Alexander Ypsilanti and **Tudor Vladimirescu** soon led to a break. By the summer of 1821, the Greek rebels found themselves without allies against the Ottoman forces.<sup>22</sup>

The resistance escalated into a full-scale war, and in the period 1821–1824 the Sultan's government treated the events in Morea as a completely internal affair. The fact is that the European powers, with the exception of Russia, did not really move to defend Greece. When the news of the uprising reached the Congress of Laibach, none of the states thought it necessary to take a position on the matter – except that the Greco–Turkish confrontation was seen as essentially an internal conflict of the Ottoman Empire – and the Constantinople government had to address it locally without outside influence or interference. Russia, while adhering to the principles of the Holy Alliance, was more closely involved in the events because of its protectorate over the Orthodox Christians. Then, slowly, between 1822 and 1823, Britain became involved – recognising the rebels as belligerents and even lending them money in 1824 – as the Greek War of Independence was now hampering trade in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.<sup>23</sup> Yet it was in 1824 that the atrocities of the Greco–Turkish war were burned into the European public consciousness with the **massacre on the island of Chios**, and from that point onwards European public opinion showed a great deal of sympathy for the Greeks, who had declared their national independence in Epidaurus in 1822. Philhellenic (or pro-Greek) movements were set up in London and Paris, with many British, French, German (etc.) volunteers going to help the Greeks personally.

Russia and Great Britain finally found a common interest in pacifying the region, and on 4 April 1826 they signed the **Protocol of St. Petersburg**. In it, they demanded that the Porte cease hostilities, and in return offered to mediate peace. Curbing the war was also a crucial issue because **Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839)** had requested military assistance from the Egyptian governor **Muhammad Ali (1805–1849)**, in exchange for Crete and part of Morea, to help overcome Greek resistance. The Egyptian army had already taken Greek bridgehead positions in early 1825. The Protocol of St. Petersburg had no effect on the Ottoman leadership, but it did help the Greek cause in that, on the news of British–Russian cooperation, France joined the international coalition by signing the treaty on 6 July

1827.<sup>24</sup> The three associated powers now demanded an ultimatum, rather than a note, from the Porte to end the Greco–Turkish war, and in response to the negative answer, the British–French–Russian alliance sent a fleet to the **Gulf of Navarino** and destroyed the Turkish–Egyptian fleet on 20 October 1827.<sup>25</sup> Another important moment for the advancement of the Greek cause was the **1828–1829 war** between Russia and the Porte, as Russian involvement in Navarino led the Porte to break the Akkerman Convention of 1826 with Russia. The war, which brought victory to St. Petersburg, ended with the **Treaty of Adrianople** on 14 September 1829. In it, the Russian negotiators succeeded in forcing Constantinople to end its campaigns against the Greeks, in addition to making territorial and political demands of a completely different nature (for example, Russia gained the Danube delta). Shortly afterwards, in 1830, a conference of great powers met in London to discuss the conditions for the creation of an independent Greek state. In the same year, a decision was taken to create the **Kingdom of Greece**.

In the 1830s, the focus of the Eastern Question shifted to the Middle East during the **First and the Second Egyptian Crises**. Egypt was a province of the Ottoman Empire, headed by Governor Muhammad Ali. Compared to other territories under the authority of the Porte, Egypt's independence was at a much more advanced stage. After Muhammad Ali came to power (1805), he introduced reforms concentrating on the economy, industry and, by the 1820s, military development. The main supporter of this process was France, which saw Egypt as an excellent investment.<sup>26</sup> As well as benefiting from it economically, the French government wanted to strengthen its position in North Africa, which was a key region in French colonial policy (see the conquest of Algeria in 1830).

After Egypt had supported the Porte in the fight against the Greeks, and suffered heavy losses with the destruction of its fleet in 1827, it demanded compensation from Constantinople. However, Muhammad Ali's demands for Syria and Palestine were fruitless. The Ottoman government had no intention of ceding the territories in question, nor of **compensating Egypt financially**. The protracted dispute eventually led to war; Muhammad Ali tried to force the Sultan to make a decision and in 1832 the Egyptian armies under Ibrahim Pasha marched towards Anatolia. Their greatest victory was at Konya on 21 December 1832.<sup>27</sup> The Constantinople government disbanded its janissary forces in 1826 as part of a comprehensive army reform, and the new type of force was not yet effective enough against the well-organised Egyptians, who were trained on the Western model. It soon became clear that the Porte could not cope with the situation alone and would need external help, so it tried to find a diplomatic solution. In a unique move in the history of the Eastern Question, the protection and support of the Ottoman Empire came from its greatest geopolitical rival, Russia. The Tsarist

court provided military subsidies to the Porte through a mutual defence treaty, in return for which the government in Constantinople agreed to close the straits to the naval fleets of the great powers if a threat arose to the Russian ally. The **1833 defensive Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi** increased the influence of the St. Petersburg government in the Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire, which displeased Britain and France, but the news of the preparations for an Ottoman–Russian defensive strategy put sufficient political pressure on Muhammad Ali, who, having assessed the balance of power, concluded a peace agreement with the Sultan in Kütahya on 4 May 1833.<sup>28</sup> Although the original problem was not resolved, there was a temporary truce in Ottoman–Egyptian relations.

The **second round** of the Middle East crisis took place in 1838–1841, and this time it was not reparations issues but an Ottoman economic policy move that triggered another war. The Porte had been negotiating for years with the British government to establish a comprehensive trade treaty, and in 1838 the **Treaty of Balta Liman** was finalized, which offered exceptionally favourable terms to British merchants. The convention, which facilitated the local purchase of raw materials and significantly reduced customs duties, applied to the whole of the Ottoman Empire, including Egypt. But the Anglo–Turkish agreement would have meant economic loss and a loss of political prestige for Muhammad Ali, who therefore refused to accept the imposition of coercive measures. The arbitrary nature of the Constantinople government and the protection of the internal (Egyptian) market provided ample justification for another war. However, Muhammad Ali's ambitions extended beyond this, aiming to create an independent Arab state that could serve as a regional leader, uniting the surrounding peoples and forming an Arab empire. The course of the conflict mirrored that of six years earlier, with the Egyptian troops advancing and bringing the Ottoman side to the brink of defeat, only to have the balance tipped once again by external help. The most striking difference between the two Egyptian crises was that, while in the first case the conflict was resolved by the intervention of a single country, in the second case it was brought to an end by a comprehensive international action. At the **great powers conference in London** in 1840, Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia recognised Muhammad Ali's authority in Egypt and Palestine, but not in the other territories under his control.<sup>29</sup> They also called on him to cease hostilities and return the territories he had conquered from the Porte. France was conspicuously absent from the great power consensus, as it continued to support the Egyptian struggle, a position it maintained until the autumn of 1840. However, seeing the determination of the European allies and the Palmerston foreign policy of actively defending the Ottoman Empire, Paris withdrew from Egypt and Muhammad Ali accepted the peace terms. The final act was the Straits Convention, signed on 13

July 1841, which superseded the provisions of the 1833 Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi and introduced a new regime for the use of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. In peacetime, the straits would be open to commercial traffic from foreign states, with no passage for naval vessels, and in wartime the Porte would decide who was allowed to pass. Russia's advantage in the use of the straits since 1833 had thus been lost.<sup>30</sup>

In the historical overview and interpretation of the Eastern Question, the Crimean War was a turning point. The conflict of 1853–1856 introduced new dynamics to the realm of international relations, influencing the domestic and foreign policies of the involved states. Furthermore, it played a pivotal role in the development of military science, information communication and medical care – bringing the period of innovations that spanned from the eighteenth century to 1856 to a close. To understand the immediate causes of the war, it is essential to examine the events of the 1840s. After the Treaty of the Dardanelles in 1841, the problems surrounding the Ottoman Empire quietened down. The lesson learned from the second Egyptian crisis was that the members of the European great power system would sooner or later have to face the possibility of the collapse of the weakening Eastern state – a fact reinforced by the Porte having lost virtually both of its wars with Egypt. The territorial integrity of the empire was solely due to international intervention. Britain consistently insisted on maintaining Ottoman power as a weak but excellent trading partner, while France took a fundamentally opportunistic approach. Depending on what was in the interests of the French government's colonial policy, there were times when it worked in favour of partition and times when it worked against it. Austria was closest to the British line, wanting to keep the Balkans at peace and avoid war with the Turks, while the peninsula was undoubtedly in the Austrian geopolitical line of sight. Prussia's energies were tied up in its internal affairs. The St. Petersburg government was the most diplomatically active in the area of partition plans. Russia first initiated negotiations with Great Britain on the future fate of the Porte in 1844, and then again in 1853. The British government considered the artificial partition of the Porte dangerous due to its fear of Russia's excessive strengthening and potential Russian control of the straits, so no agreement was reached. The Tsarist court was still hoping for Anglo–Russian cooperation, but seeing London's inaction, St. Petersburg took its own stance on Turkish policy. Its confidence was based on several factors. Firstly, following the revolutions of 1848, Russia's position in Central and Eastern Europe was strengthened. The **Treaty of Münchengrätz** of 1833, signed by Austria, Prussia and Russia after the first crisis in Egypt, reaffirmed the solidarity of the Holy Alliance states and their commitment to maintaining law and order. Russia assisted in preserving the integrity of the Habsburg Empire and expected

support from the Viennese cabinet and Prussia in times of need. In 1849–1850, Russia's mediation resolved the serious conflict between the two German states competing for leadership of the German Federation. Consequently, St. Petersburg counted on the cooperation from its natural allies in the event of Russia finding itself at war.

The Russo–Turkish confrontation had its origins in a religious and diplomatic dispute in 1852. At that time, French Catholic monks were granted special rights of use to the holy places, the same rights that **Orthodox Christians** already enjoyed. Russian diplomacy asserted the **exclusivity of Orthodox privileges** on the basis of the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. According to the treaty, the Russian Tsar held protectorate rights over Christians in the Ottoman Empire, and as part of this, Orthodox Christians were given a key to the Church of Bethlehem. The fact that the Porte also granted this privilege to French Catholics was, according to the Russian Foreign Ministry, a violation of the 1774 treaty. Constantinople rejected the Tsar's claim and retained the privileges of the Catholics. However, the religious issue soon escalated into a political one. In addition to confirming the right of the protector, the Russian government had already made other demands. **Alexander Sergeyeovich Menshikov** conveyed the St. Petersburg demands to the Sultan in Constantinople in February 1853, requesting an alliance similar to the 1833 **Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi**, which would give Russia an advantage in the use of the straits, and a replacement of the pro-British foreign minister, Fuad, alleging that he was obstructing the development of a closer Turkish–Russian relationship. Menshikov's mission failed, the Porte refused to bow to Russian pressure on either point, and Tsar Nicholas I and his advisers escalated the conflict. On 31 May 1853, Foreign Minister Karl Vasilyevich Nesselrode informed the European powers that Russia would invade Moldavia and Wallachia as a preventive measure. In response to this move, a conference was convened in Vienna in July 1853, with the agreement of Britain, France and Austria, to settle the **Russo–Turkish dispute** by diplomatic means. In the Vienna Note, the great powers confirmed Russia's rights under the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca and the Treaty of Adrianople. By then, however, war had become inevitable. The Porte refused to accept the guidelines of the Vienna Note and demanded the evacuation of the Danubian Principalities. As St. Petersburg did not comply in time, Constantinople declared war on Russia on **4 October 1853**.<sup>31</sup>

In the early stages of the war, Russian superiority prevailed, and on 30 November 1853, Admiral Nahimov inflicted a crushing defeat on the Turkish fleet in the **naval battle of Sinop**. It was then that the French and British leaders felt that they had to enter the war on the side of the Porte, or it would threaten to bring about the victory of Russia and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire.



France and Great Britain declared war on St. Petersburg in March 1854, and in the autumn of the same year the Allies won victories at the **Alma River** (20 September), **Balaklava** (25 October) and **Inkerman** (5 November).<sup>32</sup> The main objective was the capture of Sevastopol. The most important Russian bridgehead in Crimea, and the centre of the Russian naval base, held out against the siege for eleven months, finally surrendering on 8 September 1855. The fall of Sevastopol symbolised Russia's complete defeat.

In the meantime, Britain, France and the Porte sought to bring Austria into the fight, and were expected to help the Western Allies by opening a front in the Eastern Balkans. Austria was reluctant to comply, because it would have meant a permanent break-up of the Austro–Russian alliance, which would have been an unwise security policy move in the already tense relations with Prussia. Austria repeatedly delayed taking action, while trying to play the role of mediator. As a further stage in the mediation process, the **Four Points of Vienna** were published on 8 August 1854, stating that:

- a) **Russia would lose its influence in the Danubian Principalities;**
- b) **Russia would renounce its protectorate over the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire;**
- c) **the 1841 Straits Convention should be revised;**
- d) **freedom of navigation on the Danube was to be declared.**<sup>33</sup>

The Porte accepted the proposal, but St. Petersburg refused to accept the terms. In the meantime, Austria faced a crucial decision, as a new ally had emerged on the side of Great Britain and France: the **Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia**. Prime Minister Camillo Cavour (1852–1859, 1860–1861) openly aimed to bring the Kingdom into the European diplomatic mainstream after its participation in the war, and to use this advantage to elevate the question of Italian unity to an international stage.<sup>34</sup> Austria, fearing that a victorious war might result in the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia being granted territorial concessions in Italy, signed the **Anglo–French–Austrian defensive treaty** on 21 November 1855 in exchange for a guarantee from France to maintain the status quo in Italy.<sup>35</sup> The Austrian Empire temporarily defended its Italian possessions, albeit at a high price. Without the support of Russia, it was unable to stem the tide of Italian unification.

Russia ended the war in complete failure and with nearly half a million casualties. **Tsar Nicholas I**, a symbol of an era, **died on 2 March 1855**.<sup>36</sup> His son Alexander II (1855–1881), taking stock of the internal and external situation of the empire, called for a speedy ceasefire and a definitive end to the war. The peace conference opened in the French capital in February 1856, with the participation of all the major powers involved in the war. As with the Congress of Vienna, the

venue was of particular importance. France's domestic politics had changed a few years earlier. With the revolution of 1848, the Bourbon-led monarchy had fallen and a new republican form of government had been established. In the democratic system, alongside an elected government and parliament, the president of the republic played a key role and had many powers. **Louis Bonaparte**, the nephew of the late French emperor, had already made several attempts to return to his homeland, usually by plotting against the Bourbon dynasty and overthrowing the monarchy. The republican era provided an excellent opportunity to put his political ideas into practice. He first seized power as President of the Republic and then, on 2 December 1851, a well-prepared coup d'état led to a complete takeover. The French Republic reverted to monarchical form, and **France became an empire in 1852.**<sup>37</sup> This change was a source of concern for the European powers, who feared a resurgence of Bonapartism and a revival of expansionist Napoleonic foreign policy, so approving Louis Bonaparte – who, after assuming the title of emperor, became Napoleon III (1852–1870) – was a dilemma. The fact that Paris was the venue for the international peace negotiations of 1856 (25 February to 30 March 1856) was particularly significant, as it was also a formal acceptance of the legitimacy of Emperor Napoleon III. The main results of the peace negotiations were as follows:

- a) **Russia returned the city of Kars and the southern part of Bessarabia**, which had been annexed, to Moldavia;
- b) the **Black Sea was neutralised**, which meant that no state, including Russia, could maintain a naval fleet in the area;
- c) the St. Petersburg government lost the **Danube Delta**, which was placed under **international control**;
- d) and **the right of the Russian Tsar to protect the Orthodox subjects in the Ottoman Empire and Russia's influence in the Danubian Principalities was abolished.**

In addition, the following was included in the general measures of the Paris Peace Treaty for all:

- a) **insurance of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, for which the Porte received guarantees from the great powers;**
- b) **Moldavia and Wallachia became autonomous provinces within the Ottoman Empire;**
- c) **a decision was made to internationalise all Danube navigation;**
- d) **and the Straits Convention of 1841 was confirmed.**<sup>38</sup>

After the Crimean War, the problem of the Eastern Question also changed. After 1856, the issue of the independence of the Balkan nation-states came to the fore, so the problem of the period 1856–1914, which was linked to the Ottoman Empire, is now called the Balkan Question. The Crimean War not only marked the end of the first major phase of the Eastern Question, but also signified the conclusion of the great power system established in Vienna in 1815. The cooperation among the Holy Alliance powers was disrupted, leading to a reconfiguration of the European international system. In this new context, the establishment of long-term alliances, possibly decades-long alliances, gained significant value.



Fig. 2. Conference of Paris, 1856 – Le congrès de Paris, 25 février au 30 mars 1856.  
Fin de la guerre de Crimée

### *The International Order after the Crimean War, 1856–1871*

The Crimean War significantly reshaped the international balance of power. Russia, as the leading Eastern European power, was side-lined, its international prestige was diminished, and the loss of important strategic points and privileges meant that the St. Petersburg government had to focus on the internal crisis and the inevitable reforms. Most of the social tensions arose from the unsustainability of the old feudal system.

From a foreign policy point of view, 1856 was a year of lessons, which proved that the **Russian policy of foreign minister Nesselrode** from 1815 to 1856, which

included both European affairs and an active presence in the East and Central Asia, **combined with internal problems**, was too much of a burden for the empire. Moreover, it had to face the fact that, for the first time since the Napoleonic Wars, a comprehensive coalition of great powers had been formed to contain another state. Whereas forty years earlier Russia had been one of the leading figures in this cooperation, it had now become its target, the aggressor whose new victory against the Ottoman Empire had to be prevented in order to guarantee continental balance. Another new perspective was the broadening of the European horizon on the question of maintaining the balance. In 1815, the Ottoman Empire, despite being part of the French war period and having significant possessions in the south-east of the continent, was completely excluded from the Vienna settlement. In the meantime, however, all the leading states, with the exception of Prussia, had become directly involved and interested in the Eastern Question. The preservation of the Porte's power and territorial integrity became crucial to maintaining the balance of power, and defending it against Russia.

After 1856, the competition for **German unity** intensified. It became increasingly difficult for **Austria** to maintain its primacy within the German Confederation, especially in light of the events of 1849, when attempts were made to create unity with Berlin within the **Frankfurt Parliament**. Uncertain support and the intervention of Russian diplomacy resolved the situation. Although it was possible to temporarily postpone the Prussian–Austrian confrontation, the question of German national unity could no longer be avoided. In its implementation, two alternatives were offered: the **Greater Germany solution**, represented by the Austrian Empire, and the **Lesser Germany solution**, represented by Prussia. The main problem with Austria's concept was that it could not provide a genuine nation-state unity. It could not solve the contradiction between the millions of inhabitants of the Monarchy's territories (Bohemia, Kingdom of Hungary, Galicia) belonging to other nationalities and the autonomy of the annexed parts, which would have meant the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire. Compared to Austria, **Prussia** could guarantee more favourable conditions for an ethnically homogeneous future Germany. In 1834, it implemented the **Zollverein** (Customs Union), a plan drawn up by the German economist **Friedrich List**, which initially included the North German states, but which Prussia was constantly working to extend. **Economic integration** not only strengthened relations between the participating German states but also paved the way for **political unification**.

The issue was finally decided by a change in international relations. Austria was defeated in 1859 in the war with France and the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia – although the extent of the defeat was somewhat mitigated by Napoleon III's special peace agreement with the Austrians at **Villafra**nc

his Sardinian ally, as part of the French policy of counterweight. The support of the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia against the Austrians was the result of a secret convention which stipulated that in the event of a possible **Austro–Sardinian war**, the Paris cabinet would give aid to the northern Italian states in return for French possession of Nice and Savoy.<sup>39</sup> The agreement was honoured by both sides, but despite its interest in weakening the Habsburgs' influence in Italy, France did not want the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia to be overly strengthened by the acquisition of the rich and valuable provinces of Lombardy and Venice. By negotiating a sudden peace agreement, France was fulfilling its own geopolitical interests and giving something to both its ally and Austria. The Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia received Lombardy, and the Viennese cabinet reduced its losses by capturing Venice, so the French policy of compensation worked well.<sup>40</sup>

Although **Camillo Cavour** had expected more from the war in territorial terms, the defeat of the Austrians gave a great boost to the unification efforts and in 1860 all the **central Italian states**, with the exception of the Papal States, joined the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia. The situation was different in the southern parts, i.e., in the Kingdom of Naples, where the Spanish branch of the Bourbons ruled. The ancien régime here was firmly entrenched, so without outside intervention there would have been very little chance of integration. To win the provinces of **southern Italy**, the Redshirts under **Giuseppe Garibaldi** needed armed action. Following his **disembarkation in Marsala** in 1860, he fought a successful war of liberation against the Bourbons, and the Kingdom of Naples joined the Kingdom of Italy under **Victor Emmanuel II (1861–1878)** in the same year.<sup>41</sup> The creation of Italian unity is associated with 1861, but the process of reorganisation (**Risorgimento**) took several years to complete. Two new war conflicts were needed to obtain the missing parts. Following the **Austro–Prussian War of 1866**, the Kingdom of Italy finally obtained Venice, and after the **Franco–Prussian War of 1870**, the **Papal States**. These two foreign policy events completed **Italian unification**.

As the above events illustrated, Austria found itself caught in the crossfire of diplomatic battles for the creation of Italian and German national unity. After the struggles with Piedmont-Sardinia and France, a bread-breaking took place with Prussia in **1866** over the **Danish duchies**. The provinces of **Schleswig** and **Holstein** had long been in a personal union with the **Kingdom of Denmark**, but were not territorially part of it. The Danish government wanted to change this and attempted to annex the territories during the war of 1848–1850, but Prussia's intervention prevented the annexation from taking place and, through the intervention of the other great powers, the independence of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein was guaranteed in the **London Protocol of 1852**. The issue of the Danish duchies initially united Austro–Prussian interests, and the two powers

launched a joint war against Denmark. By the autumn of 1864, the cabinet in Copenhagen had resigned itself to losing the duchies, and the **Treaty of Vienna** was signed on 30 October. At the same time, the Allies agreed that Prussia would be enriched by the Duchy of Schleswig, and Austria by the Duchy of Holstein. In the **Convention of Gastein of 14 August 1865**, the parties confirmed the territorial provisions of the Congress of Vienna, allowed the duchies to join the German customs union and granted Prussia special rights in the use of the port of Kiel.<sup>42</sup> The latter two points clearly indicated that Berlin was dictating the terms between the two German states, while Austrian diplomacy was a futile attempt to assert its interests. Tensions between Vienna and Berlin were undoubtedly rising, and a war confrontation was imminent. Prussian foreign policy under **Otto von Bismarck (foreign minister from 1862 to 1890, chancellor from 1871)** sought to assert itself among the great European powers. In 1863, the **Alvensleben Convention** was concluded, in which Prussia approved **Russia's** military action to suppress the Polish uprising and provided support in the border regions.<sup>43</sup> This placed its eastern neighbour in a position of obligation; (Bismarck deliberately exploited the isolation of the St. Petersburg cabinet after the Crimean War and thus laid the foundations for Prussian/German–Russian cooperation<sup>44</sup>). In 1865, in **Biarritz**, he reached an agreement with **France**, which distanced itself from a future Franco–Austrian alliance<sup>45</sup>; and in April 1866, he **concluded a military cooperation treaty with the Kingdom of Italy** against the Austrians, in which Bismarck held out the prospect of Italy's seizure of Venice.<sup>46</sup> War finally broke out in June 1866 with a Prussian declaration of war. The **Battle of Königgrätz** (3 July 1866) brought Austria a swift and decisive defeat, which not only marked their loss in the war, but also determined the outcome of the German unity contest, ensuring that German unity would take shape without Austria. The Peace of Prague, signed in August 1866, declared **the end of the German Confederation**. Austria was excluded from the process of German unification, lost Venice and the territories under its jurisdiction within the German Confederation, and paid 20 million forints in reparations to Prussia.<sup>47</sup> Bismarck's assessment of the situation in Prussian–Austrian relations proved correct. The chancellor believed that the pre-1866 situation could not be maintained, and that Prussia and Austria would either find common ground on the question of German unity or accept a final break. Prussian economic and political interests pushed Bismarck's foreign policy in the latter direction, and the Berlin government embarked on the path of completing the German unification process. At the same time, there were two important stages in the integration process: the formation of the **North German Confederation**, an association of 21 German states that joined Prussia in 1867, and the **Franco–Prussian War** of 1870–1871.



The **succession to the Spanish throne** had already been the subject of international controversy, notably during the War of the Spanish Succession in the early eighteenth century. In fact, the fundamental situation remained largely unchanged. France still aimed to avoid being trapped in a geopolitical pincer, with Prussia now replacing the Habsburg Empire as the focus of French concern. The Spanish throne became vacant in 1868 when, for domestic political reasons, **Queen Isabella II of Spain (1833–1868)** was dethroned and the reigning military leadership looked for a new monarch. Due to his family ties, the throne was offered to **Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern**, a distant relative of King William I of Prussia. Although the Berlin government did not initially attach much importance to the matter, **French domestic politics were also upset**. It was then that Bismarck saw an opportunity. King William I was willing to make a statement to calm French sentiment, assuring that he would not support Leopold's accession to the throne. However, he could not and would not accede to the French demand that the Prussian monarch should promise that Hohenzollern would never ascend to the throne of Spain. Nevertheless, in his famous **Ems Telegram**, dated **13 July 1870**, **King William I (1861–1888)** assured the Paris cabinet in a friendly tone that, in order to preserve peace with France, the Hohenzollern candidate would withdraw, leaving Spain once again free to choose its monarch. The Ems Telegram caused a great stir in France, as **Bismarck reworded** the document at certain points, leaving its content unchanged but making it provocative in style. The Chancellor's action had a compelling reason: the beginning of the Hohenzollern affair was about to become the **casus belli** of the conflict with France.<sup>48</sup> This dubious diplomatic move soon fulfilled the hopes pinned on it, and **France sent a declaration of war to Prussia** on 19 July.

The war did not start on even terms. France was not militarily prepared for a war against Prussia, and it lacked international support. Russia had long since withdrawn from Napoleon III's side because of French support for the Polish uprising of 1863. Britain had no desire to interfere in the affairs of Paris and Berlin, and Austria was busy reorganising its own state and recovering from the losses of the previous decade. Although the idea of an anti-Prussian Franco–Austrian alliance had indeed been raised at the common council of ministers meeting on 18 July 1870, Foreign Minister Friedrich Beust was realistic about the uncertain outcome of the Franco–Prussian War and did not want to put the Austro–Hungarian Empire in a precarious international position.<sup>49</sup> The French government therefore went to war alone, except for the support they received through the creation of a pro-French neutral league in the summer of 1870, which Vienna had also joined<sup>50</sup>, and was soon forced into a defensive position. At the end of August 1870, Prussian forces won in the Metz region, and on 2 September the **battle of**

**Sedan** decided the outcome of the war. The defeat at Sedan was not merely a military loss – it marked the **fall of the French Empire**<sup>51</sup>. On 4 September 1870, it ceased to exist, leading to a revolution in Paris. Napoleon III, instead of restoring the French gloire, became associated with failure during one of the most difficult periods of French history. Bismarck was pleased with the way things were going, as the last obstacle to a strong and united Germany had been removed. **On 18 January 1871, the German Empire was proclaimed** in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles, and peace negotiations began with the newly formed French provisional government. However, the peace negotiations were delayed due to the precarious internal political situation in France. The new government, led by **Adolphe Thiers**, tried to consolidate the situation after the collapse of the empire, while facing the problem of foreseeable territorial losses and national resistance. Since the siege, Paris had been defended by an independently organised and armed National Guard, who refused to surrender the city or lay down their arms even when peace negotiations were under way. To make matters worse, in March 1871, a popular uprising broke out in the capital and the National Guard set up the Paris Commune, which significantly delayed the process of reconciliation with Berlin. Thiers' government succeeded, with great effort, in bringing order to Paris, and the Commune's power was dismantled during the struggles of 21–28 May 1871, after which the consolidation of the **Third Republic** could begin.<sup>52</sup>

One of the most important goals of the Berlin government in establishing the peace terms was the acquisition of **Alsace-Lorraine**, which, in addition to being a highly developed and important industrial region, also had a German-speaking population. Furthermore, Germany forced France to sign an advantageous economic treaty, guaranteeing the principle of the most favourable tariffs and made the defeated state pay an additional five billion francs in reparations.<sup>53</sup> The **Treaty of Frankfurt** of 10 May 1871 elevated a **unified Germany** to the status of Europe's leading great power.

### *The Emergence of Alliance Systems*

After 1870, the European great power system was defined by alliance systems. A unified German Empire was created, which dominated continental diplomacy and sought to ensure its own geopolitical defence from all sides. Bismarck achieved this with a particular foreign policy, known as **Realpolitik**. The essence of this policy was for the German government to align itself with strong allies in all key regions, whenever possible, and with countries committed to supporting Germany. For example, resolving relations with Austria and ending the foreign policy

isolation of the Russian Empire were crucial issues. At the core of Bismarck's alliance system was the **League of the Three Emperors**, established in 1873, in which the German chancellor succeeded in reviving the great power cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe that had broken down after the Crimean War. This time, however, the power and leadership of the alliance was concentrated in Berlin. The partnership of **William I, Franz Joseph and Tsar Alexander II** lasted throughout the 1870s, although maintaining the coalition proved difficult due to cool relations between Austria and Russia, a situation influenced by the Rus-sophobe political thinking of the **Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Count Gyula AndrÁssy**. The cohesive force for both Vienna and St. Petersburg was the need to maintain good relations with Berlin. Russia attached particular importance to the German friendship, as Bismarck was willing to make concessions on certain issues, such as the stationing of the Black Sea Fleet. The Treaty of London of 1871, initiated by **Alexander Mikhaylovich Gorchakov** with the Chancellor's approval, focused on the **renegotiation of the 1856 restrictions on the Black Sea**, and Russia was again granted the right to maintain its navy there. From then on, St. Petersburg diplomacy hoped that German-Russian cooperation would eventually allow the Black Sea navy to gain the right of passage through the straits. The alliance of the three emperors was renewed in 1882 and again in 1884, but had become increasingly formal, and was dissolved shortly afterwards.<sup>54</sup>

The source of the problems was the Balkan question, which burst back into the public consciousness with the crises in **Herzegovina, Bosnia and Bulgaria in 1875-1878**. Some Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire had already embarked on the path to national independence prior to these conflicts. The Principality of Serbia was gradually transitioning from autonomous status towards independence; the **Danubian Principalities**, led by Alexandru Ioan Cuza, entered a **personal union** in 1859 and united in 1861; and the independent Kingdom of Greece sought to extend its borders with new territories. The uprising of 1875 broke out in the province of Herzegovina, where high taxes, difficult living conditions and poor harvests led to anti-Ottoman sentiments. Signs of discontent also surfaced in other areas, and the movement against the Sultan's rule spread to Bosnia and Bulgaria in 1876. The **Porte** sought to resolve the situation in the traditional way, by taking **armed action** to restore the status quo, while reforms to ease socio-economic tensions and restructure the empire were increasingly delayed. The Bosnian-Bulgarian crisis not only highlighted internal problems, but also confronted the Porte with the threat posed by the independent Balkan nation-states. Taking advantage of armed resistance in the western and eastern provinces, Serbia aimed to launch a war against the central government while also encouraging Russia to join the conflict. While considering the opportunity,

the cabinet in St. Petersburg refrained from making irresponsible promises and reckless diplomatic moves that could potentially foil their own plans. As a result, the Tsarist court did not associate with Serbia in 1876, and the scope of Russian foreign policy was defined by the alliance of the three emperors.

Foreign Minister Aleksandr Gorchakov was in constant consultation with both Vienna and Berlin on how to deal with the crisis, with the aim of resolving the situation through negotiation and diplomacy. To this end, **Gorchakov proposed an autonomous status within the Ottoman Empire for the pacification of the insurgent provinces.**<sup>55</sup> The Russian proposal was not unprecedented, as this formula had worked for decades in the case of Serbia, but the Austro-Hungarian position was that it would also bring too much change in Balkan relations, and was incompatible with Gyula Andrásy's **policy of defending the status quo.**<sup>56</sup> Though disagreements persisted, representatives of the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia issued a joint **memorandum** in May 1876 **proposing a truce and reforms** for Constantinople, with the aim of promoting peace between the Porte and the rebels.<sup>57</sup> However, diplomatic intercession remained weak and failed to prevent the conflict from escalating, with Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli vetoing Britain's accession to the memorandum and assuring the Porte of his full support. Unified action by the great powers could not be expected in the Bosnian–Bulgarian crisis.<sup>58</sup> The situation was further aggravated when, in July of the same year, Serbia and Montenegro went to war against the Turks. Russia was very careful to avoid confrontation with Austria-Hungary and focused on maintaining its ability to act in this situation. In order for the two to work in parallel, an agreement had to be reached with the Monarchy. Andrásy and Gorchakov therefore clarified the issues that had created uncertainty in July 1876. In the **Reichstadt Agreement**, it was stipulated that in the event of a Porte victory in the Balkan War, the integrity of the Ottoman Empire would not be damaged or altered in any way. However, if Serbia emerged victorious, the contracting parties would partition of the territories of the Ottoman Empire, while still maintaining proportionality and avoiding the formation of an overly powerful southern Slav state.<sup>59</sup> This was a matter of particular concern for the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the course of the negotiations. In his Balkan policy, the common foreign minister, Gyula Andrásy, aimed to maintain the existing relations (i.e. the status quo), which inherently precluded any major territorial expansion of the states in the region.<sup>60</sup> A large South Slav state would upset the balance of power on the peninsula, and if it were to be led by Serbia, it would hinder the fulfilment of the Monarchy's Balkan ambitions. After German unification, Austria's geopolitical manoeuvrability was reduced to the Balkans, and the Western Balkans in particular, but the Adriatic region offered them new long-term economic prospects. As Serbia

also claimed these territories on a national basis, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later Albania, was a fundamental point of conflict in the relationship between the two states. Thus, the Reichstadt Agreement primarily excluded the strengthening of Serbia, but it also applied to any other Balkan state that might exploit the international and geopolitical situation to assume a leading role in the Balkans. In the meantime, **Serbia** realised that it could not succeed without the support of major external power. They had been consistently outnumbered in battles with the Turks, and therefore agreed to an **armistice** in October 1876.<sup>61</sup>

However, a Russo–Turkish war was imminent, which gave much more weight to the events leading up to it. Major changes had taken place within the government of Constantinople in 1876, with Sultan Abdülaziz (1861–1876) being removed from power in a **palace revolution** in May, and his successor, Murad V (1876) replacing him. Murad V was unable to govern effectively, and in the autumn of 1876 **Abdülhamid II (1876–1909)** came to power. The new sultan was firm in his handling of foreign and domestic affairs. In the armistice talks with Serbia, he imposed such strict conditions for a cessation of fighting that Russian diplomacy had to intervene and exert great pressure to prevent Serbia from maintaining the Turkish occupation, which had already created a lack of sympathy in St. Petersburg for the new sultan's leadership. This was compounded by the attitude of the Constantinople cabinet towards the great powers a few months later. **In December 1876, an international conference was meeting** in the Ottoman capital to discuss the resolution of the Balkan crisis and the necessary reforms, when the news arrived suddenly that Abdul Hamid II had given the empire a **constitution** and that the Porte had no need for international consultation on its internal affairs. If the Turkish government excluded **great power mediation** and control from **Balkan affairs**, Russia would treat it as a *casus belli*, and in early 1877, talks were initiated between the allies of the three emperors on the possible launch of a Russo–Turkish war. In the **Budapest Convention of 15 January 1877**, the Austro-Hungarian Empire guaranteed its Russian partner neutrality in exchange for the right to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. Germany did not stand in St. Petersburg's way on the question of war, and on 24 April 1877 **Russia declared war** on the Porte.<sup>62</sup>

The war in the Balkans and the Caucasus ended with the victory of the Russian forces in January 1878, and the terms of peace were sanctioned on 3 March. The **Treaty of San Stefano** was a success of Gorchakov's foreign policy, with the Porte formally recognising the independence of Serbia, Romania, Montenegro and the creation of Bulgaria. Admittedly, the latter was not yet fully independent, as it remained an autonomous state within the Ottoman Empire, but this did not affect the fact that a new nation-state had been created in the Balkans with Russian

support, which included a significant part of Thrace and Macedonia. In terms of its territorial extent, Bulgaria had the potential to become the leading state of the peninsula. This was the point where the cooperation between Russia and its allies – Germany and Austria-Hungary – faltered. The Vienna government could not ignore the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano and called for its revision. Andrassy argued that the peace violated the Reichstadt Agreement in the sense that the state of **Greater Bulgaria** embodied the future image of a southern Slav state that could upset the Balkan balance, something they had jointly opposed in 1876. With Britain's support, the Viennese government succeeded in getting Bismarck to call an international **congress in Berlin in June 1878**. The London cabinet supported the Monarchy because Russia's expansion in the Balkans was seen as an insult to Britain from various perspectives. At the same time, the German chancellor wanted to maintain their strong alliance. Andrassy and **Benjamin Disraeli** would not concede to a revision of the peace points, and Gorchakov expected Bismarck to resist international pressure, since a forced revision of a peace treaty that was legally valid internationally would have been an unprecedented course of action against Russia. However, in the face of the British–Austrian-Hungarian lobby, the German side did not want to serve Russian interests, leading to the eventual revision of the Russo–Turkish peace at the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

After the revision, the European powers recognised the **independence of Serbia, Romania, and Montenegro**, as well as the creation of the Bulgarian state within the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, **Bulgaria's borders** were much **smaller**, and its territory was reduced by almost 60% compared to the Treaty of San Stefano. Western Thrace and Macedonia, which remained under Ottoman rule, were separated from it. In compensation, Russia was given the southern part of Bessarabia by Romania (with Bucharest being compensated by Dobruja) and the congress approved the expansion of the Tsarist court in Asia (the acquisitions of Kars, Batum and Ardahan). Great Britain was granted the right to occupy Cyprus and the Austro-Hungarian Empire the provinces of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and the Sanjak of Novi Pazar (**occupation**), but without the possibility of annexation.<sup>63</sup> Russia blamed its allies for the failure, and the bond of the alliance of the three emperors was loosened. It was not by chance that Bismarck started to strengthen the individual cooperation framework after 1878. On 7 October 1879, the **Dual Alliance** between the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire was established, and at the same time negotiations were opened with Russia to renew the former coalition. Bismarck's balancing policy was able to strengthen the Berlin–Vienna–St. Petersburg axis twice more, but ultimately only delayed its break-up temporarily. In 1882, he formed the **Triple Alliance** with Germany and the Monarchy and Italy, and united the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Italy and



Great Britain in a joint coalition along the Italian–Austrian–Hungarian line to secure the status quo in the Mediterranean. As the relationship between Austria–Hungary and Russia had permanently deteriorated during the new Bulgarian crisis of 1885, Bismarck also felt the need to stabilise the Berlin–St. Petersburg line. This goal was served by the **1887 Reinsurance Treaty**, which guaranteed Russian neutrality in a Franco–German war, while the Tsarist cabinet could count on Bismarck’s support in the matter of the Principality of Bulgaria and the use of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.<sup>64</sup> This completed the Bismarckian realpolitik system, whose main vision was the **complete isolation of France**.

In the Balkan Peninsula, Vienna’s strategy was to build close economic ties with the newly independent regional nation-states, while preventing the large-scale territorial expansion of the Principality of Serbia. Their goal was to avoid the emergence of a large southern Slav state with direct access to the Adriatic Sea. One of the fears within Viennese political circles was that Serbia would assume the role of Piedmont of the peninsula, giving rise to an economically strong and viable southern Slavic state, which, as a natural geopolitical rival, could cut off the direct routes to Thessaloniki and prevent Austria–Hungary from reaching its other important objective, the Strait of Otranto, via the Albanian coast.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the attitude of the Viennese leadership towards Belgrade in the 1880s was cautious and restrained rather than hostile. In fact, following the resolution of the Bosnian–Bulgarian crisis in 1878, the two countries solidified their cooperation through the treaties of 1881 and 1882, leading to the formal recognition of the Kingdom of Serbia by the Monarchy.<sup>66</sup> However, Serbia’s patronage did not guarantee that Belgrade’s plans would not eventually take shape. The possibility of Serbia acquiring Albania, and particularly the Kosovo vilayet, rather than just focusing on Bosnia and Herzegovina, would be a significant advancement for the southern Slav state and had to be taken into account.

Meanwhile, the common foreign ministry under Gustav Kálnoky had to focus on the fact that in the early 1880s, alongside Serbia, Bulgaria and Russia, a new power emerged on the peninsula, more specifically in the Western Balkans region, Italy. Rome was keen to take Italian foreign policy to a new level, essentially to defend itself, to seek alliances with Germany, and to develop its spheres of influence, while at the same time keeping an eye on events in the neighbouring region and, of course, on Austro–Hungarian ambitions. The focus of Italian foreign policy was the Balkans and the Mediterranean. Due to its regional ambitions, the Kingdom of Italy had two major rivals in the 1880s: France and the Austro–Hungarian Empire. As a young nation-state, the Kingdom of Italy was concerned about the defence of its territory and the realisation of its foreign policy intentions.<sup>67</sup> It was precisely the guarantee of its own security and, of course, its

anti-French intentions that motivated the Italian government to forge closer links with Berlin within the framework of the Triple Alliance of 1882. The inevitable result was cooperation with the Monarchy, since Italy had originally intended to enter into a partnership only with Berlin, in opposition to its two rivals, France and Austria-Hungary. However, the Bismarckian policy did not accommodate the Vienna–Rome split, as the Chancellor considered an alliance with the Monarchy more valuable at the time. It therefore had to be accepted that a German–Italian coalition was not possible on its own, but only along the Berlin–Rome–Vienna axis.<sup>68</sup> This constellation was complemented by the alliance of a major maritime power with a strong navy in the Mediterranean and Adriatic, which pushed Italian diplomacy towards Britain. As a result of these developments, as well as Bismarck's realpolitik background, the Mediterranean Agreements were concluded in 1887.

The aforementioned **second Bulgarian Crisis of 1885–1887** reshaped relations in the Balkans. The Bulgarian Prince Alexander of Battenberg broke with the Russian party, aiming to pursue an independent policy and regain the territories of **Eastern Rumelia** that had been annexed from Bulgaria in 1878. The loss of Bulgarian interests was a great disadvantage for St. Petersburg, as the Monarchy systematically built up its economic and political relations in the region. It signed cooperation treaties with Serbia in 1881 and 1882, with Romania in 1883 and, after Stefan Stambolov came to power, Bulgaria also began to lean in favour of the Monarchy.<sup>69</sup> Russia's policy shifted towards the Far East after the disputes it had endured, but its **priority for the Balkans** never really ceased, its attitude being mainly transformed in the way it handled crises. An example of this was the **Austro-Hungarian–Russian reconciliation in 1897**, which brought about a mutual agreement on the general management of the peninsula's affairs and temporarily eased the rivalry between the Monarchy and Russia.<sup>70</sup> The principles laid down in the St. Petersburg Agreement were later used as a point of reference when the Macedonian national movement launched an armed uprising against Ottoman rule in 1903. The **Mürzsteg Agreement**, drawn up by Britain, Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia, reiterated the principle of maintaining the status quo in the Balkans declared in St. Petersburg in 1897, except that it sought to resolve the Macedonian question by developing a comprehensive **reform programme** to be implemented by the Porte.<sup>71</sup>

The last act of cooperation between the Monarchy and Russia was the meeting in Buchlau between Russian Foreign Minister **Alexander Petrovich Izvolsky** and the common Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister **Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal**. Both rival powers had reached the stage where they wanted to move their Balkan ambitions into the implementation phase. Between 1897 and 1908, the region had been "*frozen*", but now it was possible for both Austria-Hungary and Russia to

achieve their goals. However, in order to make this happen, each country's contribution was essential. The agreement entailed that Russia would support the Monarchy's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina after prior consultation. In return, the Vienna government would provide its support to St. Petersburg in its negotiations with other European powers regarding the use of the straits. This way, both states would get what they want and avoid confrontation. What could have been an idyllic scenario turned out differently. In 1908, Turkish domestic politics took an unexpected turn with the triumph of the Young Turk Revolution. The new government, intent on preserving the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, shaped its foreign policy with a firm hand, refusing to recognise the Monarchy's right to occupy **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, and proposed reforms in the Balkan provinces. The Viennese leadership had no time to hesitate, fearing that it would lose the chance to take over the Western Balkans for good. The **annexation** was officially announced on **6 October 1908**, and Bulgaria had declared its independence the day before.<sup>72</sup> Both moves meant the annulment of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin.<sup>73</sup> The news came as a surprise to the Russian foreign leadership. When Izvolsky held talks in Paris and London during the same weeks, they received no response from their pseudo-allies regarding the Straits. The Austro-Hungarian–Russian alliance had broken up, and the St. Petersburg leadership was once again disappointed in the promises of its coalition partner.

### *The French Thread and the Formation of the Entente*

The watchword of French diplomacy after 1870 was clearly *revanche*. In order to regain the territories lost in 1870 and restore the national pride and great power prestige that Germany had deprived it of, the French government faced a difficult challenge. Not only did they need to recover from a major defeat in war, but they also had to contend with international isolation. As outlined in the previous section, Bismarck's realpolitik had limited the scope for great power cooperation, with all major partnerships originating in Berlin and operating under German leadership. France was simply left without an ally. A turning point came in the 1890s, when French capital investment met the modernisation aspirations of the Russian state and industry, and a mutually beneficial cooperation between the French Republic and the Russian Empire was established, facilitated by significant French investments. French economic expansion was already evident in the 1870s and 1880s, and this was matched over time by political interest. Like France, Russia lacked reliable allies, and the Russian government was particular about choosing

methods to finance the internal development of the empire and its infrastructural progress. The interest of French companies, investors and credit institutions in the Russian market thus created a win-win situation. On the other hand, both the St. Petersburg cabinet and the Paris government were open to the possibility of establishing the conditions for longer-term cooperation. French diplomacy was unable to reach an agreement with the British government, which was at the time bound by several treaties with the German alliance: the **Mediterranean Agreements of 1887** and the **Helgoland–Zanzibar Treaty** of 1890. In addition, there was tension between the two Western European powers over colonial issues, so Franco–British cooperation was on hold for the time being. The situation was different with Russia, however, and the Russian and French sides had already begun substantive negotiations in 1891, which produced their first result in the form of a **Franco–Russian consultative agreement**. This did not yet impose any major obligations on either party, but merely stipulated that if one of the states in question was threatened with attack, the Russian and French partners would consult each other on the options. The next stage in their cooperation was the military agreement, which had been strongly advocated by Paris. The details of this agreement were discussed for some time, and finally reached by 1893, resulting in the **Franco–Russian Military Convention**.<sup>74</sup> With this step, France and Russia felt secure against Germany.

As the French alliance deal ended, **Russia** gained new momentum in the **Far East**. For St. Petersburg, it was important to establish good relations with China and to penetrate the Chinese market, and Beijing was ready to welcome this. In 1896, an agreement was reached on the establishment of the **Russo–Chinese Bank**, Russian state loans to China and the Manchurian Railway project were among the long-term goals. But excessive economic influence and claims on **Manchuria** made Russia a potential war target in Japan's eyes. The island nation's plans in the region were at least as serious as those of its Russian rival, as foreshadowed by its intervention in South Korea in 1894. In the **Sino–Japanese War**, which broke out as a result of the aggression, the Tokyo leadership clearly wanted to demonstrate its leading position in the region, which it established in the **Treaty of Shimonoseki** signed in 1895. China recognised Japan's sovereignty over the Korean peninsula and, in return, received the economically and strategically extremely valuable port of Port Arthur, together with several territories.<sup>75</sup> Once Russia entered the region, it was only a matter of time before a conflict between the two countries erupted, which took place in February 1904. Russia started the war at a significant disadvantage, unprepared for Japan's winter raids and facing problems with troop movements and lack of infrastructure for transportation. The decisive battle was fought on 27 May 1905 at **Tsushima**, where the Japanese

won an overwhelming victory. The crushing defeat, as in the Crimean War, brought to the surface serious social tensions and discontent (a revolution broke out in Russia in October 1905), and the abandonment of Manchuria forced the Tsarist leadership to rethink its foreign policy. The idea of a reconciliation with Great Britain resurfaced.

However, to understand the Anglo–Russian rapprochement, we need to look at colonial affairs. In the 1870s, the European powers’ rekindled their desire to colonise as they competed to exploit opportunities on the African continent. France had traditionally held a strong position in the North African region. This influence began with the conquest of Algeria in 1830. It provided financial and political support to Egypt, leading to the construction of the **Suez Canal in 1869**, boosting long-distance trade. Finally, in 1883, France established a **protectorate in Tunis**. Although Britain was mainly interested in southern Africa, **Egypt** was also an attractive destination, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal, and in 1876 the British government bought the majority of shares in the company and began to build up political links with Cairo. By 1882, the local leadership, with British assistance, had defeated the uprising of Urabi Pasha and was heading for Sudan. The British objective was to drive the French out of Egypt, thereby securing a monopoly on controlling the route to India via the Mediterranean (Cyprus–Suez Canal–Aden). On the other hand, they wanted to link South Africa to their northern holdings by building the Cape to Cairo Railway. The open confrontation of British and French interests reached its climax at **Fashoda** in September 1898.<sup>76</sup> The British and French forces commanded there – Horatio Kitchener and Jean-Baptiste Marchand – were practically facing each other down, but there was no substantial shift in positions. The French Foreign Office tried to involve its Russian ally in colonial affairs, but the latter showed little inclination to help, and Paris gave in to British pressure. In 1899, France gave up its conquest of the Nile, but was compensated in the Lake Chad region, bringing them closer to a real alliance with Britain. There were still some questionable elements in colonial affairs, but most of these were resolved by 1904. Morocco was now the subject of new negotiations, as France wanted to complete its colonial system in North Africa by acquiring this territory. The offer was that in exchange for **Morocco**, Paris would cede **Egypt**. London finally agreed to the compromise, which took the form of the **Entente Cordiale of 1904**. However, the final agreement also included the issue of possession of Siam, on which the contracting parties were divided.<sup>77</sup>

The rapprochement between France and Britain mobilised German foreign policy. William II’s concept of world politics was to give Germany primacy not only in European affairs but in all areas, and he sought to weaken the emerging French alliance by intervening in colonial affairs, provoking the **First Moroccan**

**Crisis.** On 31 March 1905, **William II arrived in Tangier** on board a German cruiser and made a speech in which he stressed that Germany would stand up for **Moroccan independence** and would endeavour to prevent the country's subordination to France and its economic vulnerability. The German Emperor's action became a serious diplomatic affair which upset French domestic and foreign policy to such an extent that the Foreign Minister Théophile Declassé, famous for his anti-German stance, was forced to resign. In the meantime, German diplomacy sought to deprive France of its ally in Eastern Europe. This was partly the purpose of the **meeting between Emperor William II (1888–1918) and Tsar Nicholas II (1894–1917) in Björkö** on 23–24 July 1905, where the Russian monarch signed a mutual defence accord with his cousin without consulting anyone in St. Petersburg government circles. The treaty provided mutual assistance to the other side in the event of war with any European state.<sup>78</sup> This agreement had the potential to jeopardise Franco–Russian relations, leading Foreign Minister Vladimir Nikolayevich Lamsdorf to cancel the German–Russian agreement. However, the **Algeiras Conference** on the Moroccan crisis, which **declared Morocco's independence**, did not bring the expected results for Berlin, and France emerged from the first conflict stronger.<sup>79</sup> For Paris, the lesson was that it had to tighten its alliance system and unite its existing partnerships against German ambitions. This led to the creation of the **Anglo–Russian Entente** in 1907, a consensus between British and Russian diplomacy.<sup>80</sup> The treaty was formally intended to settle colonial issues, as had been the case with the Franco–British reconciliation, where **Afghanistan and Persia were divided into spheres of interest**. However, it was much more than a simple agreement – it completed the Franco–British–Russian coalition, which would remain united until the autumn of 1917.

### *The Road to World War*

By 1907, the great power blocs and alliance systems had become clearer. Germany formed the Axis powers with the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Italy and Romania, while France, Britain and Russia formed the coalition of the Allied Powers. The existence of these alliances was significant, but their activation in the response to particular international events or diplomatic disagreements was far from predetermined. In European relations after 1907, one of the key conflicts was the **dispute between the Austro–Hungarian Empire and Serbia**. It has already been pointed out that there had been good relations between the two states from the early 1880s until 1903, mainly through mutual economic cooperation. The traditional opponent of the Obrenović dynasty in Serbian domestic politics was the



**Karadjordjević** family. Their political skirmishes, as well as the interplay of political circles dissatisfied with the reign of King Alexander I (1889–1903), led to a **coup d'état in 1903**. The assassination of the royal couple and their trusted advisers caused consternation throughout Europe, and the Monarchy was no exception. In Vienna, the events in Belgrade caused concern, as the fall of the Obrenović dynasty brought the openly pro-Russian **Peter Karadjordjević** (1903–1921) to power, who then changed the foreign policy of the Balkan country. After 1903, there were clear signs of rapprochement with St. Petersburg and a move away from Vienna. Serbia strengthened its **diplomatic relations** with Russia, and negotiations began on the joint construction of the **Sanjak Railway**. At the same time, Serbia also fostered relations with France, and explored the possibility of establishing a **Serbian–Bulgarian trade partnership**, which would eventually be expanded into a customs union. In response, the Monarchy imposed tariff restrictions on imports of Serbian livestock into its territory, leading to what became known as the **Pig War** (1906–1911).<sup>81</sup> In addition, **the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina** deepened the confrontation between Vienna and Belgrade. While the annexation of this territory to the Monarchy has already been discussed, it is now necessary to examine the Serbian reaction to the annexation in October 1908. The annexation of the Western Balkans had been on Serbia's agenda for decades, although during the period of cooperation with the Monarchy this ambition was waning and Belgrade had temporarily resigned itself to the occupation. However, the full annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its acceptance would have created a situation in which Serbia would have irrevocably and irreversibly renounced its claim to the territory. Thus, when the **annexation** stirred up European diplomacy, the Serbian foreign leadership sought to take advantage of Russia's activity in the matter. Russian Foreign Minister Izvolsky called for an international conference to discuss the annexation, a proposal supported by Britain but firmly rejected by the Monarchy because it would have meant uncertainty. In any case, common Foreign Minister Aehrenthal did not want to give the impression that Austria-Hungary was ceding the decision to the great powers. Germany stood by its ally, and the conference proposal fell through after lengthy negotiations. St. Petersburg experienced the annexation crisis as its own failure, particularly because of the Buchlau Agreement. Serbia was willing to go to war, provided that its Russian partner guaranteed its support. But Russia considered war too risky, as it could not mobilise its allies in the Balkans and had not yet recovered from the 1905 defeat by Japan.<sup>82</sup>

In the years after the annexation crisis, the instability of the alliance systems began to surface. Members of the German and French coalitions were also becoming aware of alternative possibilities for cooperation. **The rapprochement between Germany and Russia** in 1910 is a typical example. After the failure in the Balkans,

St. Petersburg welcomed Berlin's proposal to settle the issue of Persian spheres of influence and railway concessions. Germany gave up its further building concessions in Persia for Russian interests in exchange for its negotiating partner's approval of the **Berlin–Baghdad Railway**. As the deal was clearly advantageous to both parties, it was formally enforced. The **Potsdam Agreement** brought Germany one step closer to becoming a major power in Eastern Europe.<sup>83</sup> Having established a good relationship, Berlin wanted to take German–Russian cooperation to a new level, but Foreign Minister Sergey Dmitriyevich Sazonov proved cautious and refused to sign a treaty that could directly affect the existing Franco–British–Russian alliance, and German enthusiasm for the creation of a Russian coalition waned.

Shortly afterwards, the **Second Moroccan Crisis** took place in 1911. The basic conflict was essentially the same as in 1905, with Germany seeking to obstruct French colonisation of Morocco and using all available means to provoke a conflict with Paris, ostensibly to defend Morocco's independence, as well as to claim **compensation** (in the **Congo region**). In April 1911, the German cruiser Panther appeared in the **port of Agadir**, causing great alarm in British and French circles.<sup>84</sup> Germany, however, did not expect the military action to have a negative outcome, and only realised this when the otherwise extremely calm and prudent London government made it clear that it was prepared to go beyond diplomacy to resolve the crisis if necessary. From that point on, Berlin no longer had to think about how much colonial territory it was wresting from France, but whether it would take up the possibility of a Franco–British–German war. German diplomacy retreated, withdrawing its warships from Moroccan harbours and reluctantly accepting a compensatory offer from the French, who were willing to cede territory in northern Congo. Finally, in the **Morocco–Congo Treaty** signed on 4 November 1911, Germany recognised France's sovereignty over Morocco.<sup>85</sup>

The year 1911 also brought difficulties for the Ottoman Empire. Italy, which did not want to miss out on the colonial acquisition of North Africa, decided to turn its expansionist policy against the Porte and demanded the surrender of Tripoli from the Sultan. The Italian 'offer' was rejected by the Ottoman government and the **Italo–Turkish war** broke out in the autumn of 1911. Italy's ambitions for great politics were soon dashed when the occupying forces were confronted with resistance from the local Arab population. In the face of united Turkish–Arab action, Italy had to settle into a difficult struggle. However, military fortune was on Rome's side as the Porte faced another Balkan crisis in October 1912. On 13 March 1912, the two leading southern Slav states of the peninsula entered an alliance. In May, **Greece** and then **Montenegro** joined the forming coalition of **Serbia and Bulgaria**, creating the **First Balkan Alliance**. The aim of the First

Balkan War, which began with a declaration of war by Montenegro, was to put an end to Ottoman rule in the Balkans. The Porte was forced into a **two-front war**, and Italy was able to turn the tide in North Africa, with the **Constantinople government** concluding a peace treaty in Lausanne in October 1912 and **ceding Tripoli, the Cyrenaica region and the Dodecanese islands** to its adversary.<sup>86</sup>

The Porte then focused all its efforts on holding the Balkans, but they were not sufficient to secure victory. The First Balkan War ended with the **Treaty of London on 30 May 1913**, with the Ottoman Empire losing its remaining Balkan territories: Albania, Macedonia and Thrace. Soon, however, another war broke out, this time between the members of the anti-Turkish alliance. The territorial division clashed with the interests of the nation-state. The Monarchy, anxious to prevent Serbia from reaching the Adriatic, supported the creation of an **independent Albania**. The plan was successful, and Albania was established in 1913 under the auspices of the European powers, as provided for in the Treaty of London. This led to a major dispute with Serbia, which sought access to the Western Balkan coast. The fact that it was unable to impose its will gave rise to new demands. Instead of Albanian territory, Serbia wanted to extend his borders southwards into Macedonia, a large part of which was already in the possession of Bulgaria. Greece was also interested in Macedonia, and the two Balkan states formed a joint **anti-Bulgarian coalition** in the summer of 1913. Romania and the Porte also joined the initiative, putting Bulgaria in the extremely difficult position of facing territorial claims from all its neighbours. The alliance system of the **Second Balkan War** took shape, with Bulgaria as the new target. The Eastern Balkan state was attacked from four directions, with capitulation expected within weeks. The war, which began in June 1913, was brought to a close by the **Treaty of Bucharest of 10 August 1913**. Romania gained South Dobruja, Turkey gained Adrianople, Greece annexed South Macedonia, Western Thrace and the port of Thessaloniki, and Serbia extended its borders to the Vardar River valley and took over part of the Sanjak. With the Balkan wars, the Ottoman **Porte's power in Europe was essentially extinguished**, and the major territorial losses and failures in North Africa presented a picture of a shrinking and increasingly powerless Ottoman Empire.<sup>87</sup>

The triumph of the Balkan nation-states and the shift in the balance of power on the peninsula opened up new horizons for European diplomacy. It drew the attention of the great powers to the region, which remained a source of tension after the expulsion of the Turks. Behind the peace between the Balkan nation-states, decades of conflicting interests persisted, preventing either side from fully realising what it perceived as its national and historical borders. The spark in the powder keg was not so much the territorial and political disputes of the pen-

insula's nation-states, but the conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. In the settlement of the Balkan wars, the Monarchy continued to insist on its position that a unified, large southern Slav state should be prevented from emerging in the Balkans. Vienna and Belgrade were able to keep the Austro-Hungarian–Serbian relationship, which had become strained after 1903, within the diplomatic sphere until 1914. What brought about a change in this crisis management method was that by 1914 the established alliance systems had been strengthened and were no longer only active in distant colonial affairs, but also in the Balkans. The conflict between the Monarchy and Serbia, which was raised to a new level by the assassination of archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, went beyond the conflict between the two states and exposed the antagonisms between the power blocs behind them. As a result, a fundamentally regional crisis escalated into a world war.

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5.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

## The Place, Role and Significance of the Great War in the History of International Relations

*(Róbert Barta)*

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, two military blocs of roughly equal forces faced off in Europe. On one side, the French–British–Russian **Triple Entente**, and on the other the **Triple Alliance** of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. The member states of the opposing camps were linked by treaties of neutrality and mutual assistance. This obliged the other signatories to neutrality in the event of offensive war on one side, and to military assistance in the event of a defensive war on the other.<sup>1</sup> This complex system of treaty obligations was the reason why the bilateral conflict of the Monarchy and Serbia escalated into a continental war in only a matter of weeks in 1914.

Ten exchanges of declarations of war happened between 28 July and 27 August 1914, and as consequence, the Entente Powers and all their allies at that time entered war with the Central Powers (Italy and Romania initially sat tight and only in 1915 and 1916 did they commit themselves to the Entente.) All belligerents expected a short, speedy war and, naturally, a victory. The Germans' main objective, according to the old **Schlieffen plan**, was to bring the French – via Belgium – to their knees within two months, something which would then be followed by a march against the Russians. The saying of Emperor William II – “*Paris for lunch, dinner in St. Petersburg*” – reflected Berlin's belief in a quick victory. The main aim of Austria-Hungary was to bring Serbia to its knees. This was primarily to prevent the small southern Slav state, with Russian support, from further rousing the support of other Slav nationalities in the empire. The French went to war primarily to gain the Rhineland and Alsace-Lorraine, as well as to restrain German ambitions for power, while the British fought to maintain the continental balance and to assert the right of small nations (such as the Belgians) for self-determination. Traditionally, the guiding principle of the Tsarist empire's policy was that internal tensions could be resolved by military success, and that the main guarantee of Russian influence in Europe was to gain as much territory as possible, or at least to bring it under Russian military control.

### *The Great War as a World War*

The term “*world war*” is justified by both the geographical scope of the conflict and the large number of actors involved. The Turkish Empire (November 1914)

and Bulgaria (October 1915) joined the **Central Powers** (Austro-Hungarian Empire and German Empire) who started the war, thus opening wide fronts in the Balkans, Asia Minor, Palestine and the Middle East. The **Entente** did not only grow with the addition of European countries. The entry of Japan and the United States (August 1914, April 1917) into the war widened the Entente, which had already been extended to include Italy and Romania (May 1915, August 1916), to other continents. Although the withdrawal of Russia in March 1918 and Romania in May 1918 temporarily strengthened the Germans' position (the Eastern Front was brought to a close), the French could successfully counter German offensives on the Western Front with the help of the British and the Americans. Even in Africa, fighting broke out in German East Africa and lasted until 1918, while fighting was also widespread on the world's oceans. This was the first war in which the belligerents had full recourse to the help of their homefronts. Instead of conscripted men, millions of women and children and elderly people worked in war munitions factories and agriculture; the food rationing system and prisoners of war arriving in the hinterland made the reality of war tangible for everyone. The German gas attack at Ypres (1915), the Zeppelin airship invasion of England (also 1915), the introduction of repeating arms and high-capacity artillery, the use of tanks (especially from 1917), the increased role of the air force (for reconnaissance and bombing) showed that the opposing sides did not hesitate to use all the inventions arising since the industrial revolution, developed for war purposes, to win the war. The fusion of traditional military tactics (open attacks, infantry charges, hand-to-hand combat, etc.) and the use of modern equipment resulted in a staggering degree of bloodshed.

These losses were suffered by armies of hitherto unknown size. In the event of full mobilization, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy could deploy 3,5 million troops, and Germany 4,5 million, with formidable military technology. The French were capable of more than 4 million troops but had no real offensive artillery. Perhaps their only effective weapon was a quick-firing field gun, but their air force and navy were inferior to those of the Germans. The British had an army of less than a million men until the time general conscription came into force (1916), but the 757 independent units of the Imperial Navy gave them an unsurpassable advantage at sea. The Russian Empire could provide the largest number of conscripted troops (6,5 million at full mobilisation), but with poor equipment, leadership and a weak fleet. The 200,000 mobilized Belgian troops and quarter of a million Serbs were almost dwarfed by the 850,000 Italian troops which could be mobilized (from 1915).<sup>2</sup>

As an ideological preparation for war and to maintain enthusiasm for the war in the hinterland, the political and military elites of the belligerent countries iden-

tified military and geopolitical objectives with national interests. An excellent tool for this was **chauvinism**, the collective hatred against other nations, which determined the values of generations through the educational systems and official propaganda. Wars were portrayed as recurring events, and war was proclaimed as a traditional means of resolving international conflicts which could not be avoided but could be prepared for. The reasons and objectives for going to war varied from country to country, but in all cases, they were specific and were communicated to the population with the greatest intensity.

According to the German propaganda machine, Germany was destined to be ruler of Europe and to build a colonial empire since it had all the internal and external resources to do so. However, Germany was being strangled by a ring of hostile powers which had to be broken up, firstly by taking Belgium. This message not only fuelled anti-French German nationalism and chauvinism, but also proclaimed a message of the distinctiveness and superiority of German industry, German workers and soldiers. From the French side, the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine was identified with the restoration of "*national honour*", adding that, on the basis of the French Revolution's idea of freedom and equality, the only authentic representative of European culture could be the French nation. The Germans were derisively called "*boche*" and barbaric Huns who, using their military and economic power, wanted to overrun the small peoples of Western Europe and the highly civilised French. The leaders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire not only emphasised the historical virtues of the Austrian and Hungarian nations, their state-building and state-preserving capacity, but combined this with the pan-Slavic and Russian threat. Thus, the Danubian Monarchy was seen not simply as a bastion of Western Christianity and civilisation, but also as a starting point for the "*control*" of the Balkan peoples. To this end, the Monarchy's elite also used Croatian nationalism to counterbalance the Serbs. Russia acted as the spreader of Eastern Christianity to Siberia and Asia, and as the defender of the smaller Slavic peoples of the Balkans – a messianic sense of mission combined with military power that also affected the wider Russian population. The Tsarist war propaganda was facilitated by the fact that the largely illiterate Russian peasantry was successfully influenced by their priests with the slogans of Church and defence of the homeland. Much of the British public had always identified the defence of the British people with the defence of the empire, and the British consciousness of racial superiority was a source of empire-building while driving the spread of Christianity and civilisation. German expansion throughout Europe and the colonies threatened to create a rival empire, and war was seen as an appropriate means of countering it.



The success of official war propaganda was enhanced everywhere by the fact that the populations of the countries entering the war wanted one big confrontation, a quick war, and therefore the man on the street identified with the government's enthusiasm for war. The support for a war ideology and propaganda based on chauvinism and **nationalism** was so strong that it could not even be countered by the European social democratic and other left-wing political forces that promoted an anti-war agenda.<sup>3</sup>

### *Focal Points of War Diplomacy*

By the end of 1916, the heavy casualties of the constant trench warfare on all land-based theatres of the war, the military balance on the fronts and the rapid decline in the bearing capacity of the homefronts had set in motion forces that sought a peace agreement. Curiously enough, the peace initiative was launched by the then neutral United States of America, with Democratic President **Woodrow Wilson**, re-elected in November 1916, sending a note to all the belligerent countries at the end of the year asking them to indicate the terms on which they were willing to negotiate peace. However, the Central Powers refused to accept American mediation and the Entente's territorial claims ruled out the possibility of an agreement. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that in 1917 the Entente's leadership had not yet considered the idea of partitioning the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Despite this, the situation of the dualist monarchy was the gravest, alongside that of Russia, and this triggered its new ruler's peace efforts after the death of **Franz Joseph**.

As a first step, **Charles IV** replaced some pro-German military and political leaders with his own confidants and at the joint council of ministers held on 12 January 1917, the maximum and minimum programme of the Monarchy was already formulated on the basis of which negotiations could begin. According to it, the maximum goal could be the annexation of the former Russian-dominated Congress Poland and Montenegro, some minor southern border adjustments, and the support of a pro-Monarchy Serb dynasty in Belgrade. Under unfavourable circumstances, the minimum programme was based on securing the full territorial integrity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and seeing a change of Serbia's ruling dynasty. Vienna contacted the British government with Swiss, Danish and Norwegian mediation in utmost secrecy, but without German approval the whole operation was unrealistic. Between Vienna and Paris, the emperor's brothers-in-law, Prince Sixtus and Prince Xavier, mediated, both of whom served in the Bel-

gian army in Flanders. At the end of March 1917, the two princes were secretly summoned to Vienna, and the emperor handed a four-page handwritten letter to his brother-in-law,<sup>4</sup> addressed to Sixtus, with a verbal request that he pass it on to President Poincaré of the French Republic. The letter contained the Monarchy's peace terms, starting from the guarantee of full territorial integrity, and promised in return the recognition of an independent Serbia with access to the sea. It acknowledged the legitimacy of the French war aims for Alsace-Lorraine, a clever argument but an ineffective one since the territory's status depended primarily on the outcome of the Franco–German struggle. Although French government circles initially welcomed the Monarchy's secret peace offer, they could not accept it. They could not guarantee the territorial integrity of the Monarchy as this conflicted with the territorial promises made and guaranteed in secret treaties with the Italians, Serbs and Romanians.

The German secret service knew about the whole operation, but the diplomatic action, known as the **Sixtus Letters**, was not considered dangerous by the Germans despite the fact that Charles IV repeated his peace proposals of March 1917 during the following summer. The German political and military leadership did not intend to make peace. This was clearly demonstrated by the announcement of **unrestricted submarine warfare** at the beginning of the year which, together with the first Russian revolution at the end of February 1917, radically changed the course of the war. Unrestricted submarine warfare severely damaged the freedom of maritime transport and necessitated the armed defence of commercial shipping. This particularly involved the United States which, although it was interested in a compromise to end the war, had shipped some 7 billion dollars worth of goods to members of the Entente alliance during the years of neutrality. This made the United States the world's largest creditor. However, the weakening of Russia and the hostile determination of the German leadership made it doubtful whether the war could be brought to a rapid and mutual conclusion, and this threatened the repayment of American loans. Accordingly, the announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare was likely to provide an appropriate justification for the already maturing US involvement in the war.

A further cause was provided by the so-called **Zimmermann Telegram**.<sup>5</sup> In January 1917, the Foreign Minister of the German Reich sent a ciphered telegram to the German ambassador in Mexico, stating that Mexico's alliance against the United States needed to be acquired. Washington's neighbour to the south ought to be forced to attack and regain its northern territories lost in the nineteenth century. The Mexicans could count on German help in the war and possibly Japan could also be involved against the US. British military intelligence, however, deciphered the telegram and delivered it to the US President. Wilson, invoking the

**Monroe Doctrine** (*“America for the Americans”*), and due to the news of a series of sinkings of American transport ships – four large American transport ships had been sunk in March 1917 – declared a state of war with Germany on **6 April 1917**. This move of the US set off a chain reaction and within two months 13 Central and South American countries, as well as Liberia, Siam and China, joined the US side. The new belligerents did not formally ally themselves with the Entente countries, but accompanied them, and from then on, the Entente was officially known as the **Allied and Associated Powers**.

Almost in parallel with this series of diplomatic events, strikes and mass demonstrations began at the Putilov arms and ammunition factory in St Petersburg at the end of February 1917, triggered by disillusionment and misery over the war losses. Although this revolutionary movement overthrew the tsarist absolutist regime, the political forces that came to power, especially the moderate the **Kadet Party (Constitutional Democratic Party)**, which advocated moderate reforms, continued the war with the lead of the Provisional Government. The Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government and the leader of the Kadet Party, Pavel Milyukov, tried to convince the Entente allies of the unchanged Russian war aims by means of a declaration and then a note. After the reorganisation of the government, the Minister of War, Alexander Fyodorovich Kerensky who took office in May, began to prepare for a major Russian summer campaign, mainly to reassure the Western Allies. However, two factors showed clearly that the stability of the Eastern Front and the endurance of Russian troops could hardly be counted on. On the one hand, Russian domestic politics in the post-revolutionary period had developed a so-called **dual power phenomenon** because the mass and spontaneous formation of workers’ and soldiers’ councils (Soviets) had been replaced by the Provisional Government (Mensheviks, **Bolsheviks**, Esers). This made the efficiency and credibility of the government dubious. On the other hand, **fraternisation** on the Eastern Front was widespread, becoming the most characteristic phenomenon of trench warfare in the First World War. Although there were sporadic examples on the Western front (at the height of 1914 or later at Easter), such activity was strictly forbidden and punished in all the regiments. Nonetheless, it could not be prevented. On the Eastern Front, after the first such example of fraternisation and spontaneous armistice (Easter 1915), the process became widespread by the end of 1916 and the first half of 1917. On 15 April 1917, Easter, Russian soldiers initiated such actions *en masse* along the entire front line of the Eastern Front, followed by brief discussions and gift exchanges. The phenomenon showed that the decline in morale and the increase in desperation and desire for peace was most intense among Russian companies and on the Eastern Front.

Similar to previous war years, the opposing sides continued to prepare for a decisive military victory. In the autumn of 1917, plans to do so depended largely on developments in the Russian situation. The news of the **Bolshevik military takeover** of St Petersburg on 7 November 1917 was spread around the world the very next day, with the new government immediately calling on the belligerents to conclude a general armistice and initiate peace negotiations. Although a new Russian revolution was expected, and the Bolshevik politicians who sparked it, led by Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (known as **Lenin**), had arrived in a troubled Russia with the permission of the German military leadership, the Soviet Communists' peace initiative reshuffled the balance of power in the war with unexpected speed. For the German military and political leadership, the termination of the Eastern Front was extremely important to liberate the German divisions, because the end of the two-front war might have resulted in German superiority on the Western Front. Therefore, the Germans welcomed the Soviets' call for armistice, knowing the dangers of the spread of communism in Europe and the ideas of Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders to turn the world war into a world revolution. Yet they were well aware of the opportunities presented by the desperate situation of the new Bolshevik regime, namely that Lenin was likely to come to the negotiating table under any circumstances to consolidate his power.

By the end of November 1917, partial armistice agreements had been reached at several points along the Eastern Front, mainly on the initiative of the Russian commanders. This was the case with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Austro-Hungarian armies and the Russian units opposing them. In the meantime, the new commander-in-chief, People's Commissar for Military Affairs Nikolai Krylenko, officially notified the German High Command of the armistice initiative on 26 November. Following the favourable German response, the German Eastern Front headquarters at the city of Brest-Litovsk was designated as the venue for negotiations. In parallel with the Soviet government's initiative, the second meeting of the Entente's Supreme War Council was held in Paris and was attended by the United States representative, President Wilson's confidant, Colonel Edward House. At the meeting, the Allies adopted the position of the newly appointed French Prime Minister and Minister of War, **Georges Clemenceau**, that the Soviet government should not be recognized and that the war on the Eastern Front must continue. The decision had no particular consequences since, by then, fighting had virtually ceased on the Eastern Front, and the Soviet government sent a peace delegation to Brest-Litovsk in early December.

During the **Brest-Litovsk peace talks**, it became clear that the German side was seeking the greatest territorial gains in exchange for an armistice and swift peace. The Soviet delegation regarded the negotiations as the first stage of a gen-

eral peace settlement on a democratic basis, without annexation, and opposed the transfer of German divisions to the West, something which, in their view, would have meant the continuation of a pointless imperialist war. After the first round of negotiations, all that was achieved was a short-term armistice from 7 December 1917 to 14 January 1918 for the whole of the Eastern Front and the Russo–Turkish front in Asia. On the Romanian front, which formed the southern part of the Eastern Front, an armistice was concluded on 9 December in Focșani, but the Russian and Romanian forces stationed there did not recognise the authority of the Soviet government and, with Romanian support, occupied Bessarabia. The armistice was not recognised by the French and British governments either for tactical reasons since a Russia at war would still have kept German forces tied down, at least until the arrival of the American army. Ideological considerations also played a role in the decision: anti-revolution and anti-Bolshevism were combined with the slogan, “*Russia is a traitor to the Entente alliance*”. Paris and London expected the swift fall of the Soviet government and established contacts with all anti-Bolshevik military and political forces. At the end of December 1917, a British–French agreement was reached whereby the British would organise and support counter-revolutionary groups in the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions and the Caucasus, while the French would organise and support counter-revolutionary groups in the south of Russia. A similar role was envisaged for Japan and the United States in the Far East. In these areas, Entente military missions were sent to establish links with Polish and Czechoslovak legions organised in the prison camps of the Eastern Front. This active involvement laid the foundations for future intervention against Soviet Russia, but more importantly it was meant to keep German troops tied up on the Eastern Front.

French Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon diplomatically rejected Soviet peace plans in a speech on 27 December 1917, as did British Prime Minister **David Lloyd George** who justified the British abstention by invoking German policy in a speech to trade union leaders on 5 January 1918. However, for the United States, Wilson and his advisers saw the opportunity to come up with an American settlement plan. In his message to Congress on 8 January, the President set out his programme which became known as **The Fourteen Points of Wilson**, and which laid out to a large extent the principles of the post-war peace around Paris. The programme, based on the principles of national self-determination and liberal political ideals and free trade, was intended not only as an American proposal for a new European order, but also as an alternative to the Soviet peace ideas advanced at Brest-Litovsk. On the other hand, the programme also laid the foundations for the continuation of the war since, in December, the US declared war on the Monarchy, stood up for the Italians who were completely demoralised by the

defeat at Caporetto, and encouraged the Soviet government to continue fighting the Germans.

On 9 January 1918, the Brest-Litovsk talks resumed, with the Soviet delegation led by Lev Davidovich Bronstein (known as **Trotsky** in the movement), People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. Within a few days, it became clear that the Soviets were still adhering to the principles of the general peace agreement that they had declared, and the Central Powers, citing the absence of the Entente allies, wanted to end the negotiations with a special peace agreement. It became clear that Poland, the Baltic States and Russia's coast, as well as the western part of Belarus and Ukraine, would be included in the zone of occupation of the Central Powers according to the German concept. After lengthy discussions within the Bolshevik Party leadership, the Soviet delegation accepted the peace terms under the looming pressure of a renewed advance of the German army. The **Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty** was signed on 3 March 1918. In accordance with the agreement, the Germans ceased their military activity, although they continued their advance in Ukraine throughout March. Based on the agreement, also known as the "*peace for bread*", German troops occupied western Ukraine and western Belarus until the end of the harvest in the summer of 1918 to compensate for food shortages on the German homefront with commandeered grain. The Soviet Bolshevik government withdrew from the war and bought time to consolidate its power, albeit at the heavy cost of enormous territorial sacrifices.

At the end of February 1918, in connection with the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, separate negotiations were started between the Central Powers and the Romanian government in Buftea, near Bucharest. In accordance with the peace treaty signed on 7 May, Romania withdrew from the war and disarmed its forces facing the German and Austro-Hungarian armies on the Eastern Front. Minor border adjustments were made on the Carpathian line and in Dobruja in favour of the Monarchy and Bulgaria. However, the Romanian army stationed in Bessarabia, which was intended to be used against the Russian Bolsheviks, was left under the control of Bucharest. Romania was obliged to pay heavy war reparations; its surplus food was confiscated by the Central Powers and oil extraction was entrusted to German companies. Romania also had to provide free passage for troops of the Central Powers in case of a future attack by the Russians.<sup>6</sup>

A unique peace treaty was signed between newly independent Finland and Germany. The former Grand Duchy of Finland, which had seceded from the Russian Empire and declared its independence on 6 December 1917, was recognised within a month by the Scandinavian states and France, but Berlin wanted to include the new state in its sphere of interest, primarily for economic and military-strategic reasons. On 7 March 1918, a peace treaty was signed in the



German capital, and some troops arrived in April to help the Finnish nationalist forces, led by **General Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim**, which were fighting the Bolsheviks. It was then that German–Finnish economic and military cooperation was established, only to be renewed during the Second World War. With the peace treaties concluded in the first half of 1918 (Russian, Romanian, Finnish), Germany and the Central Powers' positions in the East were considerably strengthened, and the economies of the occupied and allied states were put into the service of German military production. In addition, the Germans supported the White Guards fighting the Bolsheviks in southern Russia and demanded the surrender of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea. The fleet stationed at Novorossiysk could not be defended by the Bolsheviks and was sunk on 18 June 1918. Despite all this and the temporary successes of the Central Powers in the East, everyone was aware that the final outcome of the war depended on the outcome of battle on the Western Front.

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<sup>1</sup> In details about the history of diplomacy in the nineteenth century: Schroeder, Paul: *The Transformation of European Politics 1763–1848*. Oxford 1996.; Taylor, A. J. P.: *Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918*. Oxford 1954.

<sup>2</sup> A Nagy Háború írásban és képbén. Északon és délen. (The Great War in Writing and in Pictures. North and South). I. Ed. Lándor, Tivadar. Budapest 1915. 19–23.

<sup>3</sup> Barta, Róbert: Az első és második világháború képes története. (The History of the First and the Second World War in Pictures). Debrecen 2010. 167–168.

<sup>4</sup> The letter of Charles IV to his brother-in-law Prince Sixtus of Parma. In: Fejtő, François: *Requiem pour un empire défunt. Histoire de la destruction de l'Autriche-Hongrie*. Paris 1988. 407–418.

<sup>5</sup> [The Zimmermann Telegram \(19 January 1917\). In: General Records of The Departments of State, Washington, USA. Record Group 59.](#) (Downloaded: 23 October 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Peace Treaty of Bucharest (Bucharest, 7 May 1918) In: *Revue générale de droit international public*. I. [s. l.] 1919. Documents. 92.

## The Paris Peace Treaties, the League of Nations and “The Balance of Powerlessness”

*(Róbert Barta)*

By the summer of 1918, it had become clear that the Entente had larger military reserves, and therefore, its victory was only a matter of time. The large Entente forces on the Western Front, the relatively uninterrupted naval supply lines and the participation of the United States of America gave the Entente leaders the opportunity to pursue more distant – post-war – objectives. The partition of Turkey had already been agreed on in secret (the Sykes–Picot Agreement), and by the summer of 1918, the Entente intervention against Soviet–Russia and the partition of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had also been agreed on. On 8 April 1918, the Monarchy’s emigrant and nationalist leaders signed a treaty on the Congress opened in Rome on 4 April 1918, declaring that they no longer wished to continue living within the Monarchy and demanded independent statehood.

The decision to partition the Monarchy, taken by the French and British governments in the summer of 1918, was motivated by several considerations. On one hand, the chain of small states that would be created in the place of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, together with the independent Baltic States and Poland, was considered a suitable line of defence, a “*cordon sanitaire*” against the spread of Soviet Bolshevism in Europe. On the other hand, the small-nation nationalism of the new states was considered sufficiently strong to prevent the revival of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Furthermore, the existence of the new states provided an opportunity to extend French and British great power interests to Central Europe and the Balkans. Accordingly, London and Paris supported the decisions of the Congress of Rome and the nationalist politicians. On 3 June 1918, at the third meeting of the Supreme Military Council held in Versailles, representatives of the French, British, Italian and American governments laid out the establishment of independent Polish, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav states as a war goal. The Czechoslovak National Council (Edvard Beneš and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk) in Paris was considered to be a *de facto* belligerent Czechoslovak government. The continued existence of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was henceforth dependent on the date of the ultimate Entente victory. Due to the extraordinary number of casualties and material losses suffered during the Great War, the members of the victorious alliance – often out of a desire for revenge – wanted to impose their will fully on the defeated Central Powers states. This was not a novelty in European history, but despite the “*winner-takes-all*” principle,

the continental balance was always restored within a short time because it was mutually beneficial to all former belligerents. This was the case with the Treaty of Utrecht which ended the War of the Spanish Succession (1713), or with the Holy Alliance system established in the Treaty of Vienna (1815) which ended the wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era.

There was a chance for a fair peace settlement at the beginning of 1919 to restore one of the basic principles of nineteenth century diplomacy, the principle of compensation. At least, this was indicated by the fact that at the peace conference in Paris – largely as a propaganda ploy for public opinion – the principles laid down in the 14 points of the Declaration of the US President Wilson<sup>1</sup> and its amendments were taken into account in the decision-making process. The American vision of settlement wanted to reshape Europe by the fusion of national self-determination, political-economic sovereignty and liberal trade policy (free trade). However, the principle of national self-determination was easier to define than to put into practice in a workable way. A good example of this is seen in the 10 points about the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: *"The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development."*<sup>2</sup> The sovereign right of peoples and nations to form an independent state in the form that they wished was in fact only interpreted for the victorious great powers and their smaller allies. The Wilsonian programme proposed democratic solutions to contentious issues such as the status of territories with mixed ethnic composition (referendum amongst the affected population), the management of conflicts between newly created states (establishment of the League of Nations), and the guarantee of the rights of national minorities (drafting international treaties).

### *Shortcomings of the Peace Treaties*

The Peace Conference took primarily British interests into account on the question of colonies as it placed League of Nations mandate areas under British (Iraq, Palestine, the Transjordan), French (Syria, Lebanon) and Japanese (formerly German Pacific islands under German rule) guardianship. The whole system had to be supervised by the League of Nations, based in Geneva, which did not have an independent armed force and could only make recommendations to the governments concerned in the event of conflict between member states. Most of the complaints received by the world organization concerned grievances of national minorities – Germans, Hungarians, etc. – because of the new European borders. The League of Nations could impose sanctions on those who violated its prin-

ciples<sup>3</sup>, but it could not enforce compliance. It also initiated the establishment of the Permanent Court of International Justice and helped to consolidate the economies of war-torn countries, most on the brink of bankruptcy after the war (Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary).

The failures of the Peace Treaties of Paris were already evident to contemporaries. A book (*The Economic Consequences of Peace*) by the British peace delegation's economic expert, **John Maynard Keynes**, written in 1919 and translated into many languages such as Hungarian,<sup>4</sup> pointed out that the reparations were excessive, and the victors' decisions were dominated by the desire for revenge and political considerations. Post-war Europe would become economically dysfunctional and it was only a matter of time before the next conflict would lead to a war.

The **small state system** created by the new European borders was beset by internal tensions because the nationalistic feelings of the small nations were directed against each other, so conflict zones quickly developed along the new borders. The ethnic majority of certain areas was not even taken into account in the drawing of borders where it was possible (Sudetenland, the southern part of the historic region of Upper Hungary, the western edge of Transylvania). The spectacularly biased application of the principle of national self-determination only served to strengthen the losers' **desire for revenge**. All this, combined with the sudden vacuum of any great power in Central and Eastern Europe, led to a gradual strengthening of Germany's influence. In connection with the peace treaties, **referendums** in some areas (Eupen-Malmedy, Schleswig-Holstein, Silesia, Klagenfurt and the surrounding area, Sopron and the surrounding area) were rare exceptions, and were able to partly overrule the territorial decisions of the Peace Conference.

In the end, the United States Congress did not ratify the peace treaties because they included the Charter of the League of Nations, and the principles laid down in the Charter were considered by large numbers of US Congressmen to be contrary to the US Constitution. Congress did, however, recognise the Washington Naval Convention of 1921 which governed the balance of power in the world's oceans and the relative strength of fleets; three more conventions were added to it the following year. The Naval Convention set the naval strength of the five victorious world powers: the United States and the British Empire were each allowed to maintain a fleet of 525,000 tons, Japan 315,000 tons, and France and Italy 175,000–175,000 tons. The Four-Power, and then the Nine-Power Treaty, provided for the precise delimitation of the Pacific spheres of interest and the independence of China, while the so-called Treaty of Shandong returned the Shandong Peninsula, with its port of Qingdao, to China.

While the Americans were only involved in the post-war settlement in certain areas, representatives of the Soviet Bolshevik government were not even invited to the peace talks. Thus, the emerging new Eastern superpower, the Soviet Union, was left out of the post-war settlement. This was not simply for ideological reasons, but also because it was a means for the Entente to punish the Russians for having exited the war in 1918. At the time of the peace conference, it was not yet foreseeable that two future great powers that would determine the fate of Europe and the world were temporarily excluded from the continent's affairs. The misguided decisions applied at the Peace Conference certainly contributed to the outbreak of a new war, but the Paris peace treaties were not the sole and decisive cause of the outbreak of the Second World War. Without the events in Europe between 1919 and 1939, the transformation of great power politics, the effects of the Great Depression, along with the spread and rivalry of National Socialist and Soviet Bolshevik ideas, the peace system alone could not have become the cause of another war. The Second World War, which broke out in 1939, was not primarily the result of the measures and agreements reached at the 1919 peace conference, but of the misguided political, diplomatic and military decisions taken or not taken in the two decades that followed.<sup>5</sup>

### *Consolidation Attempts*

The new post-war borders changed the lives of millions of people, and war disillusionment, casualties and economic chaos created a revolutionary situation in almost every country. The general wave of revolution after the First World War can be largely interpreted as an effect of the war, as can the emergence of new, often extremist political forces in different countries. In addition to the political action of the peasantry, far-right ideas, communists and social democrats also sought a share of power. In post-1918 Europe, there was a widespread perception that the traditional political elites had failed, that new ideas and institutions were needed, and participation in politics had become a demand of the masses. At the same time, the attitudes and worldviews of millions of people were radically transformed as the war rapidly and inexorably globalised existing values. Those who served on distant fronts or were taken prisoner of war were not only introduced to new peoples, new countries, new customs, but, on their return home, they were demanding a greater say in the war effort, as well as in shaping their individual and community lives. The world changed in almost every way after 1918, but this change was hardly noticeable in the first decade.

In 1921, as a sign of the turbulent post-war situation, a sharp debate erupted between the French and the British over **reparations** which was eventually settled at 132 billion gold marks, all to be paid by the Germans over 37 years. It was in the same year that Charles IV attempted to return to Hungary (**the King's Coup**), offering the real threat of the Habsburg restoration, and it was no coincidence that the new states surrounding Hungary and Austria, called the **Little Entente**, confirmed their alliance at this time. The alliance, forged through bilateral treaties between Czechoslovakia and Romania, Yugoslavia and Romania, and Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, was formally seen as the main guardian of stability in the Danube Basin and the Balkans. In reality, it was barely able to fulfil this role. The French economic and military presence in the Little Entente states did nothing to offset the economic and diplomatic tensions between them which were only temporarily alleviated by their mutual anti-Hungarian and anti-Austrian position. From 1924 onwards, the economic and political differences in the region became sharply defined, meaning that the losers could only expect support from the Germans and the Italians, while the new "*nation states*" were committed to French foreign policy.

The main problem remained Europe's economic dysfunction. As a characteristic feature of this, the representatives of the German plutocracy sabotaged the implementation of the economic and financial provisions of the peace treaty in every possible way, especially the transport of coal. The American economy was then spectacularly pulled from European affairs, and the French were unable to give any impetus to the reconstruction of the continent because of the war damage. In this situation, the British became active, with the unspoken aim of making London the engine of the European economy by creating a European sterling zone. **An economic conference opened in Genoa on 10 April 1922**, the Soviets being represented alongside the defeated states, with the intention of settling the reparations issue and serving British interests. The only result of the meeting, which ended in spectacular failure, was that the heads of the German and Soviet delegations (**Walther Rathenau and Georgy Vasilyevich Chicherin**) agreed to establish diplomatic relations in **Rapallo**<sup>6</sup> near Genoa, thus laying the foundations of a Soviet–German partnership.

The best indicator of the utter disarray in Europe was the internal conflict in Germany by 1923 which revealed both the failures of the peace system and the resulting tensions in German domestic politics. The new German state created in 1919 (the so-called **Weimar Republic**, named after the location where the constitution was adopted) had neither economic nor foreign policy sovereignty. The most obvious sign of this on the German side was the obligation to make reparations in kind from the **Ruhr region** to the French and, to a lesser extent,



the Belgians. Eventually the French occupied the whole area, an action to which the German workers responded with a strike. The German political forces also supported the policy of "*passive resistance*" announced by the government, but by the summer the state had descended into complete chaos. The secret military organisations, far left, monarchist and far right forces attempted coups. The most serious attempt by the last-mentioned group was the Munich action of the **National Socialist German Workers' Party** (NSDAP in German) led by **Adolf Hitler** (**Beer Hall Putsch – 8 November 1923**). The German state was still strong enough then to repel the attempted takeover. As a temporary reaction to the coup's downfall, the Nazi movement embarked on a meticulous party-building campaign with the aim of constitutionally winning the state by election. Finally, by the end of the year, a settlement had been reached on the Ruhr through British mediation, the German currency was stabilized and the German government under **Gustav Stresemann** (first chancellor, later foreign minister) adopted a policy of compliance, accepting by necessity the temporary French hegemony.

In German historiography, there was a great debate (especially in the 1970s) about which decade of the Weimar Republic and the subsequent Nazi Third Reich period was an integral part of earlier German history (and to what extent), and which could be considered a derailment. There was a general consensus that Germany's acceptance of the new European order in the 1920s was largely out of necessity (it did not yet have the power to change it), but there was also a consensus that Nazi Germany was clearly pursuing a world war agenda and aggressively seeking to restore German great power.

The European economy was finally put back on track with the help of the United States, and this had a beneficial effect on international relations and the domestic politics of the various countries. The **Dawes Plan** (1 September 1924), named after the American financier **Charles Gates Dawes**, further reduced German reparations, provided loans to Berlin and decided to revive the German economy. All the involved players tried to exploit the economic recovery in the field of international diplomacy, and the **Locarno Treaties**<sup>7</sup> (October 1925) were born. In these, Germany recognised its own western borders and committed itself to not attempting any violent changes to the Polish border. In return, the German delegation was allowed to take its place in the League of Nations and actively participate in the general disarmament negotiations. In an improving climate based on reconciliation and a balance of power, the so-called **Kellogg–Briand Pact**<sup>8</sup> (named after the Frenchman **Aristide Briand** and the American **Frank Billings Kellogg**) was signed on the initiative of France and the United States, according to which the signatory states renounced war as a means of resolving international conflicts. The treaty was originally signed by representatives of 15 countries, but

by the end of 1929 this number had risen to 54 (including the Soviet Union). It is important to stress that in the later **Nuremberg trials of 1946** (and other war trials), the violation of the Kellogg–Briand Pact was one of the main charges in the condemnation of the belligerents. Already in the autumn of 1928, it had settled German reparations in a relatively reassuring way (34,5 billion marks to be paid over 59 years) and restored Germany's financial independence. Apart from a few disputes, the Bulgarian, Hungarian and Austrian reparations were also dealt with, and the European economy had already outperformed the volume of the last year of peace (1913). **Aristide Briand's Pan-European Plan** (finalised in 1931) was initially welcomed enthusiastically, imbued with the success of its development by all members of the League of Nations, it being the first integration programme in the field of politics since **Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's** (1920s). However, when Briand suggested political unification was more important than European economic unity, he was met with stiff opposition. The original idea of a customs union included all European states except the Soviet Union, the spectacular omission of which proved to be a tragic mistake.

**The Bolshevik party, which had gained power by force in October 1917**, led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, Lev Davidovich Trotsky and others, was in fact a minority in its own country, contrary to its name. Additionally, they could count on only a fraction of the organised Russian working class (barely 5% of Russian society at the time), nor did they control the whole of the army and navy. Bolshevik political force, almost unknown to the Russian rural population, was therefore in dire need of internal and external legitimacy. Of their **November 1917 decrees** (on land, peace, power), only the withdrawal from the Great War (see the Brest-Litovsk Peace) was actually fully implemented. In addition to the serious territorial concessions made in the peace, a serious conflict developed between Trotsky, who had proclaimed world revolution, and Lenin, who was intent on consolidating Bolshevik power, which foreshadowed factional fighting within the party. Land distribution was also delayed as the Bolsheviks fought the White Guards for their very survival from 1918 until the end of 1920 (**civil war**). The Decree on Power promised universal, equal and secret elections which, by January 1918, brought a shocking result for the Bolshevik Party; they were in a minority at the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets. The fate of the legislature, which was quickly and violently dissolved, showed that Lenin did not want the classic division of powers and its operation. The right of nations to self-determination was an integral part of the Bolshevik programme, and so the constituent peoples (Finns, Baltic peoples, Poles) were being separated one by one from the disintegrating and multi-ethnic Tsarist empire.

In open warfare, the restored Polish state had to defend the Polish–Russian border (**Curzon Line**), proposed by the British, while the majority of the Caucasian peoples (Georgians, Armenians, Azeris) were forced into the new Soviet state (February 1921). It was at this time that Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhughashvili (known as **Stalin**), whom Lenin considered a violent and dangerous actor affecting the future of the party, emerged in the Bolshevik leadership as one of the inept leaders of Soviet forces in the Polish–Russian war and as leader of bloody reprisals against the Caucasian peoples. The Bolsheviks' victory in the civil war (by the end of 1920) was partly due to the successful concentration of the economic, military and power potential (**war communism**), and partly due to talented generals (e.g. Mikhail Nikolayevich Tukhachevsky). The rivalry between the White Guard generals and the gradual termination of intervention (British, French, American, Japanese support for those fighting against Bolshevism) finally dismantled Lenin's opponents. For ideological reasons, Moscow was completely excluded from European and world politics, and did not become a great power until 1935. In the 1920s, after Lenin's death (January 1924), factional fighting within the party resulted in Stalin gradually eliminating his opponents (Trotsky's expulsion and exile after 1927) and building up the new Bolshevik power apparatus which he could control with full authority as General Secretary.

### *The Great Depression and its Consequences*

The crisis of overproduction, known as the **Great Depression**, began with the avalanche-like crash of the New York Stock Exchange on **25 October 1929**. The overproduction of the US economy after the First World War (mainly due to the generalisation of the assembly line system) was well known, but the speed of the unfolding crisis was a surprise to everyone. The 1920s were a golden age for the post-war generation with Republican presidents (**Warren Harding**, **Calvin Coolidge**, **Herbert C. Hoover**) doing nothing to inhibit free enterprise, and assembly lines churning out ever cheaper necessities in large quantities. The era of **big business** gave the appearance of balanced development (**normalcy**), only occasionally disrupted by social tensions. Immigration restriction laws and the rise of the racist Ku Klux Klan did not undermine the broad foundations of the American middle class any more than did the boom in bootlegging and crime that resulted from the introduction of alcohol prohibition. The granting of women's suffrage (1920) was a good indicator of the changing role of women in American society (the number of working women rose from 2 million in 1914 to 10 million in 1930). The doubling of industrial production between 1921 and 1929 was most spectac-

ular in the automobile industry (1913 – 15 million cars, 1929 – 26 million cars).

The sudden stop to the engine of the revved-up economy was motivated primarily by psychological factors; economic agents no longer trusted the real economic indicators behind the securities. The stock market crash's effects quickly spread through the whole of the financial sector, something which meant bank failures. Consequently, investments decreased and thousands of businesses went bankrupt as production was cut back. This resulted in the unemployment of 15 million people which further reduced solvent demand. A spiralling crisis of overproduction was thus set in motion, which only a comprehensive package of economic reforms (**The New Deal**) by Democratic President **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** was able to remedy. Borrowing the term "*New Deal*" from card games, the new programme intervened first and foremost in the financial sector. Large number of the banks were closed, the dollar was drastically devalued, and compulsory gold and silver redemption laws were introduced. The President did all this on his own authority in consultation with a narrow group of experts, often fixing the exchange rate of the US currency on a daily basis, thus putting a stop to speculation. The main purpose of the **Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA)** was to curb production and provide cheap credit to indebted farms. The **National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA)** introduced a code of fair competition to limit it in the market and started large-scale public investment to create jobs. In the Tennessee River Valley alone, more than two dozen hydroelectric power plants and dams were built (**TVA: Tennessee Valley Authority**), while jobs were created elsewhere in canalisation, afforestation and road building. After 1935, in the second phase of the *New Deal*, the relationship between workers and employers was regularised and unemployment, disability, old age and widow's insurance were introduced. As a result, by 1937, the US economy successfully emerged from the Depression, but the presence of the state in the US economy remained, to a greater or lesser extent, until recently. The US crisis management programme was similar to the Keynesian policy of state intervention only in that both emphasised the job-creating and stabilising function of the state. The *New Deal*, however, was a concrete programme of action for the practical ills of the US economy. Since the world economy in 1929 was already largely dependent on the overseas superpower economy, the crisis there quickly spread to Europe, triggering profound changes.

The crisis in the world economy that began in 1929 perhaps hit the British Empire hardest. Victorious at the end of the First World War, the British experienced a series of domestic and foreign policy crises which they were able to manage within the system, but which ultimately transformed the world's leading power. On the domestic front, the wartime Conservative-Liberal coalition (led by David Lloyd George) held out until October 1922, but on the foreign front,

a series of failures followed, the main reason being that the empire was by then visibly losing its status as a great power, the dominance of the seas was slowly slipping into American hands and the City of London banks were themselves shifting from the world's biggest creditors to borrowers. The formation of the **Irish Free State** (1922) was seen by many in London as a sure sign of the empire's demise. Nonetheless, no agreement could be reached with the French on spheres of interest in the Middle East (besides Egypt's place in the British one) and the Indian nationalist movement was a growing concern. Finally, after a brief period of Conservative government, internal, external problems and a sign of new times appeared in the first Labour government in the history of the empire, formed at the end of 1923 under **Ramsay MacDonald**. This led to a change of direction in foreign policy, with London giving its full support to the Dawes Plan, adopting a conciliatory tone in the Ruhr conflict and recognising the Soviet Union. In the wake of fierce Conservative attacks and a well-orchestrated intelligence provocation (the Labour government was linked to the world revolutionary wing of the **Comintern**), the Conservatives were able to celebrate an electoral victory at the end of 1924. The "*quiet period*" of Conservative government began under the Scottish-born **Stanley Baldwin** (1924–1929). By 1925, the pound sterling had been stabilised, but not to the extent seen in the Victorian period. Heavy-handed domestic politics (the fight against the general strike, a strong anti-Bolshevik ideology) were accompanied by a strong foreign policy (the termination of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, the recognition of Iraq, the treaty with the French regarding the Mosul oil field).

The British political sphere was the first to realise the impact of the approaching economic crisis, so a national coalition government (with Labour, Conservative and Liberal support) was formed, led by Labour's MacDonald (1929–1933). After the initial practical and security-enhancing steps (establishment of economic relations with the Soviet Union, the **London Naval Conference 1930**, establishing the ratio of respective fleets: US – 5, British Empire – 5, Japan – 3), the most urgent task was to curb the swelling unemployment. By 1930, the number of unemployed had risen to 2.5 million and economic emergency measures were introduced to deal with the shortfall in public finances. **The pound sterling was taken off the gold standard** (1931), allowing the government to influence exchange rate policy more widely. To further stabilise the currency, state reserves were accumulated and cheap loans were made at low interest rates. The fact that the economic crisis that hit the British Empire did not cause a political explosion was mostly due to the flow of agricultural products from the Empire's various colonies to the mother country almost free of charge. The government was therefore able to provide for millions of unemployed people without any serious difficulty. As a result of the

**Statute of Westminster, 1931**, which guaranteed the autonomy of the imperial dominions (sovereign states with their own parliaments, governments and foreign policies), London ensured the relative tranquillity of the British dominions until 1939. The German threat in the 1930s prompted a programme of rearmament in Britain, but the **Chamberlain government (1937–1940)**, which advocated a **policy of appeasement**, sought to make every concession to the Germans in order to avoid another world war. More important than the **German invasion of the Rhineland in 1936**, the British press readership was more interested in the succession scandal (the heir to the throne, **Edward**, abdicating in favour of his brother George, later **George VI**, because of the former's relationship with an American, Mrs Simpson) and the news of the Berlin Olympics. In the interests of peace at all costs, London stayed out of the **Spanish Civil War**, recognised Italy's conquest of Abyssinia and agreed to the **partition of Czechoslovakia (1938)**. However, this, combined with a lack of military preparedness, left London defenceless and unprepared to face the prospect of German aggression.

France, arguably the biggest winner of the First World War, was only affected by the economic depression in the mid-1930s and to a relatively limited extent. The main reason for this was that French foreign exchange reserves and public savings were high by world standards, a situation that was further bolstered by German reparations. However, the situation of the French economy was aggravated by the fact that the French franc had to be repeatedly devalued because of the burden of war reconstruction (100 billion francs) and debts to the USA (5 billion dollars), all of which led to the indebtedness of the population and the gradual impoverishment of the middle classes. Initially, the French political elite argued that there was no point in worrying about this as the Germans would pay for everything. However, French foreign policy, which had sought to claim and maintain the status of a great power, was only capable of steering the new European order for a certain time. After 1933, the initiative was gradually seized by Nazi Germany, making it clear that French dreams of great power were unfounded. After the war, French political life, based on the traditional division of power between the president of the republic and the government, was dominated by the battle between the proponents of **foreign security (sécurité)** and those of **active great power (gloire, grandeur)**. The balance between the succession of governments (11 existed between 1932 and 1940) and presidents (6) was only illusory, and French domestic politics were in serious turmoil. In addition, a Popular Front government led by **Leon Blum** came to power in 1936, in the spirit of the idea of the **Popular Front** (the idea that all European political forces should unite against fascism), which had been put forward by the **Communist International** in 1935. The constant conflicts between the branches of power and political actors, and



the inertia and powerlessness of foreign policy, left France unable to defend its vital interests as was demonstrated by the German occupation of the Rhine region without a war. The “*collective security*” system failed to isolate Germany, the Locarno Treaties were not extended to the East (especially after the assassination of the French Foreign Minister **Barthou**, who had promoted the idea, in Marseilles in 1934), and the Italian–French relationship was burdened by the dispute over North African spheres of influence at Tunis.

### *Italian Fascism and its Foreign Policy*

In Italy, the most disappointed of the war victors, a radical political response to internal and external problems was born very early. During its brief attempts at democratic government (1919–1922), there was extraordinary political activity among the former front-line soldiers and wounded who, in 1919, joined forces with other extremist forces to form the *fasci di combattimento* (fighting bands) which later united under **Benito Mussolini** to form the National Fascist Party. With the country in turmoil, the traditional Italian political elite decided to put the Mussolini movement in power to crush the factory and land occupation movements in the north and to initiate consolidation. As a result, and after the spectacular show of force in Rome (1922 – **Marcia su Roma**), **King Victor Emmanuel III** entrusted Mussolini with the formation of a government. This was the first time in Europe that a fascist political force had come to power, but it differed from the German version in many respects. Italian Fascism did promote an ideology but it was mostly free of racism and anti-Semitism. This was partly due to Italy’s particular historical development since a civilisation based essentially on merchant and independent city-states did not and could not create an ethnically united Italian nation. On the other hand, the Vatican (**Benedict XV** – 1914–1922, **Pius XI** – 1922–1939, **Pius XII** – 1939–1958) strongly opposed the practical implementation of an ideology based on race theory because a racist, fascist state system requiring total control of society fundamentally threatened the influence of the Catholic Church on Italian society. The **Lateran Treaty** (1929) between the fascist state and the Vatican demonstrated the clear separation of interests in this direction. It should also be emphasised that Pius XI, in a papal encyclical, drew attention to the dangerous effects of fascist and communist ideas on individual liberties (**his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931**). The institutional system of Italian Fascism did not present the image of a total dictatorship since the form of government was a kingdom and the monarch (head of state) was superior in public law to the *duce* (leader, head of government), though the latter

could turn to governing by decree under the Enabling Act. The supreme body of the Italian fascist movement, the **Grand Council of Fascism**, had the power to remove Mussolini, and with the King's consent, this was done in the summer of 1943. The Italian Fascist regime was built up slowly and gradually, going hand in hand with a certain degree of modernisation of the country. From 1926, a **syndicalist corporative system** was established (hierarchy of work and professions), which was **implemented through the so-called Carta del Lavoro (Labour Charter)** that introduced a planned economy.

In its foreign policy, the regime sought to revive the Roman Empire which meant the acquisition of the Adriatic and Mediterranean dominions (**Mare Nostrum**) and the expansion of the Italian colonies in Africa. This did not fundamentally affect German territorial claims, but it required a significant economic and military force that Italy did not possess. Despite that, in the 1920s, Rome pretended to be a great power (especially over the Danube basin and the Balkans), because no other state had the strength to counterbalance it. With the support of the defeated states (Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey) that were demanding treaty revisions, fascist Italy successfully conquered **Abyssinia** (later Ethiopia – 1935–1936). On the other hand, it could only play a secondary role to Germany which was arming itself apace and building up much greater economic potential.

### *The Theory and Practice of National Socialism*

Between 1923 and 1929, **Weimar Germany's policy of compliance** more or less stabilised the country's position in Europe and the economy was on a path of growth. However, domestic political conditions were far from stable. National resentment of the **Versailles Peace**, which was understandable in many respects, was widespread in the political sphere and in German public opinion. Although the German social democrats, the Centre Party and the moderate bourgeois parties were all on the side of the republic, **Hindenburg**, whose monarchist sentiments and sympathies towards the Nazis were well known, was elected Reich President in 1925, remaining in the position until 1934. The electoral system, which brought dozens of parties into parliament, fragmented and divided the centrist political forces and shifted the balance of power towards the poles (Communists and Nazis). The shift in domestic political power, also known as **Weimarization**, was boosted by the conspicuously mild treatment of right-wing radicals who opposed the Weimar Constitution. Following the failed Beer Hall Putsch, **Adolf Hitler** spent only a few months in the Reich prison in Landsberg. After his release, in 1925–1926, he published his magnum opus (*Mein Kampf* – My

**Struggle**), which he intended to be the bible of the Nazi movement and of all Germans. The book, written in bad German and confusedly, was eventually published in millions of copies, dispensed free of charge by the state to German families for christenings and weddings. After 1945, it turned out that, although *Mein Kampf* was on most German bookshelves, barely a tenth of the population had read it. The book outlined the main points of Nazi ideology: **the Völkisch movement, supremacist racial ideas, anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism**. The latter two were specifically mixed with liberalism and anti-democracy. Building on pre-existing **pan-Germanic ideas and German nationalism**, as well as a race theory of non-Germanic origin, Hitler saw the Germanic race as a **superior race** whose main task was to gain dominance over other races. **The main enemy was considered to be the Jews** who were argued to play a destructive (disruptive) role throughout the world. The other non-Germanic peoples were to play a servile role (Latin peoples, Slavs, Hungarians, etc.), and all this was to be achieved by the leadership of a figure who had been empowered by the German people (**Völkisch movement, Führer principle**).

Hitler held that the German people had been insulted in the Treaty of Versailles because the German army laid down their arms on foreign soil and, therefore, had not been defeated. This was an obvious gesture towards the general staff that he wanted to win, but it also provided basis for the so-called **stab-in-the-back myth**, according to which Jews, liberals and communists in the rear had committed a betrayal and started a revolution while the German soldiers were fighting heroically on the front. The annexed, predominantly German-populated territories had to be reclaimed, even by use of force. This meant a full attack on the peace system as the slogan "*all Germans in one Reich*" mobilised millions. Hitler left no doubt that if the Nazis came to power, the foreign and domestic policy programme would be fully implemented. The Nazi party promised a right-wing revolution in the election campaigns and won the sympathy of millions of lower status people, workers and peasants through its paramilitary organisations (**SA – Assault Division**). In reality, the Nazi programme was the dictatorial project of a party that sought sole power, and outwardly it clearly had a war programme aimed at European and, in the longer term, world domination. An election victory was required for the **NSDAP** to rise to power (the main lesson of the failed Beer Hall Putsch) which required meticulous and tenacious party building. The party's success was demonstrated by the fact that, while only 32 representatives had been elected to the 472-seat **Reichstag** in 1924, almost one in five of the country's members were Nazis (107 out of 577 seats) by 1930. The real breakthrough, however, came from the financial support of the German bigwigs, the seriousness of the world crisis (6 million unemployed in January 1932), the weakness of the

Weimar system and the lack of unity among the Nazis' political opponents. As a result, in the second Reichstag elections in 1932, the NSDAP won 196 seats (out of 584) and, together with its minor allies, was able to **nominate Adolf Hitler for the chancellorship** on a legal basis.

In the year and a half after the appointment of the Nazi leader, the NSDAP implemented a one-party system in political life, formalising the functioning of the legislature and subordinating it to the executive. Instead of a federal state, the German Länder were merged into the Reich, but the name *Das Dritte Reich* (**The Third Reich**) was only used in Nazi propaganda; the official name of Germany was *Deutschland*. By 1936, the entire police force was placed under the Reich's SS (**Protective Echelon**) leader, **Heinrich Himmler**. The SS, previously set up as Adolf Hitler's bodyguard, was gradually replaced by the SA whose leaders (notably **Ernst Röhm**) held Hitler to an obligation to carry out a right-wing revolution. In the summer of 1934, a physical reckoning on the SA leaders (**The Night of the Long Knives**) prevented the SA and the army from merging, thus preserving the army's monopoly on armaments, and made it clear that the Nazi political elite did not intend to radically change property ownership and social relations. The revolution therefore failed. After Hindenburg's death, the Nazi dictatorship was quickly established, political opponents were sent to concentration camps, and the rapid development of the military industry and infrastructure virtually eliminated unemployment by the summer of 1938. The emerging cult of the Führer, nurtured by the propaganda machine under Joseph Goebbels and supported by the political police (**Gestapo**), portrayed the Führer as the saviour of the German people, the nation's day labourer and a statesman with infallible instincts. Adolf Hitler, however, with his remarkable oratorical talent, was a politician with a bleak soul, mediocre and inhibited, but highly adaptable to the situation. More a criminal of great style than a genius statesman, he was accepted and blindly obeyed by millions of Germans because they saw in him and his policies the salvation of the nation. They believed in him because they wanted to believe in him, and the Führer's myth of infallibility was long backed up by foreign policy successes.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Successes of Aggressive German Foreign Policy*

In order to revise the Treaty of Versailles and gain new **Lebensraum** (living space), the first step was to create an autonomy of arms. **Germany withdrew from the League of Nations (October 1933)**, introduced universal conscription (March 1935) and concluded a special agreement with the United Kingdom (**June 1935**

– **Anglo–German Naval Agreement which established a 35:100 ratio between the German and British fleets**). This fitted well with the policy of British appeasement, but also showed the helplessness of the French. The surprise was not really the nature of the German action (as their intention was long known from the Nazi foreign policy programme), but its speed and aggressiveness. The referendum in the Saarland (1935) was presented by German propaganda as a great victory, but it was not yet in conflict with the peace treaty. **The German rearmament (remilitarisation) of the Rhineland**, which had hitherto been an unarmed zone, was, however, an open provocation at the beginning of March 1936. Initial French enthusiasm for war quickly waned after London refused to take part in an armed conflict. The strength and equipment of the French army would still have been sufficient to repel the Germans. This was clearly demonstrated by Hitler's military order that if German troops encountered French resistance on the Rhine, they should withdraw immediately. The missed opportunity to stop an expanding Germany was a grave fault not only of the French government but all democratic governments in Western Europe, and it was based on the misconception that the Germans were content with ethnic revisionism. The invasion of the Rhine, which began as an extremely risky venture, increased Adolf Hitler's prestige to such an extent that he was even trusted by the German army's top brass. The unification of German people into one empire ("*the ethnic card*") was used to justify **the annexation of Austria (Anschluss – 13 March 1938) and the annexation of the Sudetenland to Germany (October 1938)** took place after the failed Nazi takeover of Austria and the assassination of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert **Dolfuss**. The last-mentioned event was the tragic end of the twenty-year truce after the First World War. By the treaty signed at the Munich Agreement (29 September 1938), the representatives of the three former victorious states (Mussolini of Italy, Chamberlain of Britain and Daladier of France) ordered, under pressure from the Germans, the dismemberment of a state (Czechoslovakia) which had been created by their will twenty years prior. In addition, the Soviet Union was not invited to the conference, even though Moscow had, like France, a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance with Prague since 1935. Stalin was badly offended by this, and his already deep mistrust of the Western states was further reinforced. From a military and diplomatic point of view, this was perhaps the last time that a united Czechoslovak–Soviet–French–British front could have forced Berlin to desist. However, as the eastern direction of German conquest seemed acceptable to Paris and London for the security of Western Europe, the Soviet Union was forced to conclude a separate agreement with the Germans to defend its western borders – and of course to take over the Polish, Baltic and Bessarabian territories (**23 August 1939 – Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact**).



Fig. 1. Munich Agreement with Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, Mussolini and Ciano

### *Situation in Central and Eastern Europe*

From an economic point of view, the Germans' economic intrusion into the small states of Central and Eastern Europe was an important component of the war that they were launching. Initially, the states in the region in the shadow of the swastika sought German (and Italian) contacts out of necessity due to the world economic crisis. After 1930, Berlin and Rome became the largest markets for the region's agricultural production, and this laid the foundations for closer ties that followed. The small states, which were moving gradually closer to the **Rome–Berlin axis of October–November 1936** and the **Anti-Comintern Pact** declared at the same time, naturally chose the German–Italian alliance for different reasons. For Hungary, only with such support was there any chance of revision of territorial boundaries, while Bucharest and Belgrade were important primarily for the German economy (because of Romanian oil and wheat, Yugoslav bauxite, copper, and strategic routes in the region). Initial **clearing** and mutually beneficial trade relations (goods for goods with year-end settlements) gradually developed into political dependence on the Germans. A natural consequence of all this was the demise of the Little Entente and the region's drift into war (either in a German alliance or occupation by the Germans).<sup>10</sup>



The “*second revolution*” of the Soviet Union (1929–1933) was carried out in the name of “*socialism in one country*” and to radically transform the country, building up heavy industry and military industry, while electrifying the country. All this came at the expense of agriculture (**collectivisation and sovietisation, dekulakization**). Mass grain exports due to a lack of internal capital resulted in a famine in Ukraine and Belarus with millions of victims. By the mid-1930s, the Soviet state had risen to become one of the world’s leading powers by some indicators. But the price paid for this undoubtedly spectacular development was enormous. Millions of peasants were thrown into gulags, much of the rural population was moved to the cities, the Stalinist terror apparatus and personality cult were built up, economic life was centralised, and the Communist Party was fully integrated into state power. It is questionable whether the process of the peculiar Bolshevik process of modernisation of the Soviet state could have followed a different path, or whether it was deeply rooted in the tsarist legacy of Russian history. The fact is that, until the eve of the Second World War, the Soviet state existed largely isolated from the world, and was thus unaffected by the economic crisis that gradually transformed the balance of power in Europe and the world after 1929.

### *The European Overture of the Second World War*

Contemporaries saw the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), which broke out during the Berlin Olympics, as a military rehearsal for another war. The opponents (monarchists, military officers, clergy, etc.) of the party coalition, which had formed and come to power in the name of the popular front (republicans, socialists, communists, etc.), were supported by the Italian and German states while the republicans received volunteers from Moscow and the international communist movements. The British and French governments, however, were in favour of non-intervention, so the anti-republican forces, led by General Francisco Franco and supported mainly by the German military, gradually gained the upper hand. The German air force, the Luftwaffe, earned a formidable reputation with the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica (**Condor Legion**). In March 1939, Franco’s troops won the final victory by taking Madrid and Valencia. But Spain, sympathetic to the fascist powers, remained neutral during the Second World War, although it did occasionally allow German and Italian warships and submarines to stay in its ports. The German invasion of the Memel territory (East Prussia with Königsberg as its centre – part of the city is now Kaliningrad) (March 1939) was still partly justified on ethnic grounds, but the invasion of

Czechoslovakia (15 March 1939) was unjustifiable. After the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, all the players in the great European power game knew perfectly well that the war was only months away. However, the conflicts leading up to the Second World War were also developing outside Europe.

### *Asia on the Brink of World War*

In 1918, continent-sized **China** joined the war to reclaim territories leased by the Germans and to block Japanese claims. However, no Chinese demands were met during the peace conference, so the traditional anti-communist opposition of the Chinese national movement (**Kuomintang**), led initially by **Sun Yat-sen** and later by **Chiang Kai-shek**, was combined with anti-imperialism and xenophobia. With the peasantry making up 85% of China's population and the communists distributing land in parts of the south under their control, the party leader **Mao Tse-tung** was able to build a mass base by relying on peasant unions. Chiang Kai-shek was unable to destroy the Chinese communist forces in five campaigns between 1934 and 1935; the communists broke out from the southern provinces, marching thousands of kilometres northwards and establishing the party's headquarters in Jinan near the Hoang He River ("*Long March*"). In a civil war situation fraught with the **Kuomintang-communist quarrel**, the Japanese invasion was also unfolding with the aim of gaining control of China's raw material resources.

**Japan ended the war on the side of the Entente in 1918** and became a world power in the Pacific by acquiring the important port on the Yellow Sea (Qingdao), the German leases in China and the mandate of the League of Nations over the Pacific islands north of the equator. It had the third largest naval fleet after the British and American fleets, and in 1927, General **Tanaka** (simultaneously Prime Minister) used this situation to announce Japan's plan for dominating Asia. The plan was based on the idea of **creating an economic super-region**, one justified by large-scale population growth, shortages of raw materials, the depreciation of the yen and restrictions on Japanese exports abroad. The domestic political weight of the army and navy, together with **nationalism and the Shinto religion**, instilled in the Japanese population a sense of total devotion and a blind sense of mission. **Manchuria**, rich in black coal, iron ore and manganese ore, was conquered as early as 1931, and a few years later a pro-Japanese puppet state was formed under the last Chinese emperor, **Puyi (Manchukuo)**. After such acts of aggression, Japan left the League of Nations and sought to expand its war against China. In the early years of the **Sino-Japanese War between 1937 and 1945**, Japanese successes

made the east coast of China, the south China region, including the archipelago, and the northern Australian territories the economic interests of Japan. Japan, proclaiming the creation of an Asian living space, became a natural ally of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, and a dangerous adversary of the British and Americans who were so keen on their maritime power. Japan's military and political leadership clearly understood that **the only way to defeat the United States was for Japan to control the economic resources of the region**. However, this required a quick-win naval operation, preferably away from the island nation. On the eve of the outbreak of war in Europe, Japan was ready to take armed action.

### *The Causes of the Second World War*

The twenty years of peace that followed 1918 were in fact a temporary truce, interspersed with several real armed conflicts. The reasons for the outbreak of the Second World War were partly rooted in the poorly implemented peace system emerging from the Paris Peace Conference. The German and Italian desires for revenge, together with national resentment and severe reparations, were as much a part of international life as the power vacuum created by the small states in Central and Eastern Europe. Although the United States of America was actively involved in the reconstruction of the world economy, it was paradoxically the effects of the world crisis that brought Adolf Hitler's party to power in Germany. The British and French, who stood idly by while Germany's aggressive foreign policy was being pursued, were as responsible for the outbreak of war as the National Socialist ideology which in practice proclaimed European and world domination. The isolation of the Soviet Union and its subsequent exclusion from international life was a grave mistake, even if we know that after 1935 the old reflexes of the Tsarist policy of conquest in foreign policy were revived in Moscow. Ultimately, the war became inevitable because Germany, controlled by the National Socialists, saw no other way, nor did it want to see any other way, to remedy its perceived and real grievances and to realise its ambitions as a great power.

Winston Churchill, in his memoirs of war<sup>1</sup>, published in six volumes between 1948 and 1954, argued that in the history of wars, the outbreak of the Second World War would have been the easiest to avoid. But in fact, taking into account all the reasons, causes, motives and conflicts leading to a new war, this statement is difficult to accept. First and foremost, the **National Socialist Party, which came to power in Germany in January 1933, theoretically and practically propagated war in its program**. The realisation of the *Lebensraum* (living space) in the East went beyond the ambitions of the German Kaiser in 1914 and

meant much more than the denial of the Versailles peace. It was nothing less than a plan for a European empire, ruled by Nazi Germany, to be realised through war. This was supported by economic needs (Germany was overpopulated and required land, raw materials and arable land), ideological drives (the German race was superior, the future of the German people depended on the fight against Soviet communism and European Jewry); and ethnic factors (the reclamation of German-majority territories annexed under the Treaty of Versailles). This programme suited millions of Germans whose national pride had been wounded and who were largely impoverished and unemployed as a result of the world economic crisis; their vision of a strong and self-reliant Germany was linked to the Nazi regime. In the summer of 1932, unemployment affected almost 1/3 of the German working-age population (more than six million), falling to 8% within four years, and by 1938 there was a labour shortage. This result was largely due to the Nazis' closed economy policy (import ban on foreign products, price freeze, state cartels) and the development of the military industry. Thanks to almost unlimited and continuous state orders, the German war industry not only absorbed the masses of unemployed, but also boosted the development of motorisation and infrastructure (automobiles, roads). By 1938, German industrial production was 50% above the 1926 level, with German factories producing half a million cars per year. Progress was particularly impressive in the production of tanks, guns and combat aircraft with new types developed there giving the German armed forces a significant technical and technological edge until 1943.

**The weakness, inertia and misguided foreign policies of the Western European democracies contributed greatly to the inevitability of another war.** From 1936 onwards in Britain, the **appeasement policy** became the official foreign policy, which was prepared to make the most far-reaching concessions to Nazi Germany to avoid war. This proved to be a very misguided policy in later years, but during **Neville Chamberlain's premiership (1937–1940)** it expressed both the anti-war sentiments of the British public and the backwardness and unpreparedness of the British war industry. Moreover, London did not try to overthrow the Nazi regime from outside – it had come to power through an election victory – and the British political elite hoped that the Nazi aggression would be content with the conquest of East. Accordingly, the French did not receive actual British support which became evident during the **German occupation of the Rhineland**, an action that was recognised as a more or less legitimate German move from the British point of view. **The Anglo–German naval agreement, the acceptance of the Anschluss and the Munich Agreement** were also **logically integrated into the policy of appeasement**, something which entailed the rejection of a closer political and military alliance with the Soviet Union.

The leaders of France continued to pursue the dreams of the Great War's victors, and accordingly the technical modernisation of the French army, which was larger in numbers than the German one, was hindered by a large part of the general staff being of the First World War generation. Few of them recognised the importance of modern weaponry and mechanisation, underestimating the German threat. The warning of **Charles De Gaulle**, a young general officer who had emerged during the **Polish–Soviet war** in 1920, that the coming war would be decided by tanks and air power fell on mostly deaf ears. The French trusted almost blindly in the **Maginot Line**, the largest fortification system in Europe at the time, stretching from the Swiss border to the Belgian border at the Ardennes, construction of which began in 1929 at a cost of around half a billion dollars. With a six-storey underground fortification system and state-of-the-art technical equipment, the defensive line could accommodate an entire French army, but it did not extend as far as the English Channel. The French command did not consider the forests of the Ardennes suitable for a German tank attack, although many pre-war German exercises had proved the opposite. As the Franco–Belgian border was almost completely unprotected (in the autumn of 1939 there were only four British expeditionary divisions on French soil), such a bypass of the Maginot Line through neutral Belgium would put France in a hopeless military situation.

**Pre-war German expansion was accelerated by the fact that after 1933 neither the United States nor the Soviet Union took an active part in European power politics.** After Asia and South America, which were seen as more important spheres of interest, US foreign policy in the wake of the Great Depression followed an isolationist course towards Europe, and Washington's armaments programmes were restrained and largely focused on developing the navy. Nevertheless, the view that the absence of the USA indirectly helped the outbreak of the Second World War – as the Germans were not counterbalanced and the European democracies did not receive effective support – is wrong. While it is undoubtedly true that it was only with American support that the European (including German) economy was revived in the 1920s, there is little evidence of American involvement in the rise to power, consolidation and aggressive policies of the Nazi regime after the Great Depression. It should also be stressed that, owing to the large and influential Jewish population in America, the Washington administration maintained the greatest distance from the Nazi regime which was racist and anti-Semitic in its essence.

In 1935, the Soviet Union, which became active in foreign policy with the announcement of the People's Front policy, began to pursue a policy towards Europe that considered both security aspects and a country's economic and

military capabilities. Moscow encouraged European anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist political parties, which had formed a popular front, for tactical reasons only while supporting the Republican forces of the Spanish Civil War financially and militarily. Stalin, who almost single-handedly controlled Soviet foreign policy, realised that these political forces were incapable of counteracting Italian and German successes, and that Soviet interests had to be pursued through a great-power agreement. At the same time, it became clear by 1938 that the British and the French did not want an alliance with the Soviets against Nazi Germany, still hoping that the Germans would be content with the takeover of Central and Eastern European territories (including Soviet ones). A clear proof of this was the Munich Conference to which the Soviet Union was not invited even though it concluded a treaty of mutual friendship and assistance with Czechoslovakia and France. Stalin was right to feel that the West had betrayed the Soviets and that Moscow was intentionally left out of any European affairs. The Munich Pact missed the last realistic opportunity to contain Germany since a simultaneous Franco–Czechoslovak–Soviet offensive from three directions could not have been stopped by the German army in 1938. It is also true that the 1939 Soviet–German Non-Aggression Treaty (commonly known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact) was indeed concluded in Munich when the Soviet Union, disappointed and distrustful of the Western powers, decided to conclude a separate German–Soviet security pact. The Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact<sup>12</sup> was not simply a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance, but also a division of interests under a secret clause that the Soviet Union denied until the 1980s. It gave Moscow a free hand in the Baltic region (with the exception of Lithuania) and allowed it to take over Bessarabia from Romania and about 1/3 of Poland up to the Vistula–Narew–San river line. Germany would occupy most of Poland and make advantageous trade and military agreements with the Soviets in exchange for peace.

Although the Soviet–German non-aggression pact was perceived by the European left-wing parties, the anti-fascist forces, as a betrayal by Moscow, the Soviets had in fact concluded a great power act in the belief that they had averted the German military threat. In fact, even Stalin, so realistic in foreign policy, failed to see the true nature of the Nazi system under Adolf Hitler which did not hesitate to break any international treaties to achieve its war goals. Nevertheless, the Soviet–German trade and military agreement remained until the summer of 1941. In the autumn of 1940, joint military exercises were held near Brest-Litovsk. There were regular exchanges of German and Soviet officers (at the German sniper school in Zossen or the Soviet armoured academy in Kazan) and the two sides occasionally exchanged military technology. It is confirmed by Soviet military archives discovered in the 1990s, and pertaining to Soviet military preparations



on the western borders of the country between 1939 and 1941, that the pre-existing view that the Soviet Union was preparing for a pre-emptive war against Germany and Europe is accurate; this was only preceded by a German attack. Indeed, material that has been recovered shows that the Red Army did not build deep defensive lines on the western borders of the country, that troop concentrations indicated offensive plans (mainly in the area of the Romanian border and the Baltic States), and that the location and construction of airfields also showed offensive intent. Two facts, however, are difficult to refute and rule out Moscow's preparations for any world war. On the one hand, **the Soviet military movements of the time coincided exactly with the military deployment against the territories allocated to Moscow in the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, and on the other hand, the Soviet Union was simply not at the requisite economic and military level of development to undertake a large-scale war.** The purges of Soviet officers between 1936 and 1938 resulted in the execution of 3 marshals, 13 army generals and 62 corps commanders. In total, some 40,000 officers were killed. In almost all cases, the accusations were espionage and treason in favour of the Germans. The uneven development of the war economy, the stagnation of agricultural production and supply difficulties precluded the launching and successful fighting of a major war. Stalin and the Soviet leadership had precise information about all this, and delaying the expected German attack was of paramount importance to them, so they adhered to the terms of the Soviet–German non-aggression pact up to the last minute.

**Fascist Italy led by Benito Mussolini** played a major role in the outbreak and geographical expansion of the Second World War as it sought to renew the Roman Empire by conquering the Mediterranean basin and African territories. Since this plan did not clash with German expansionist ambitions, the relationship of the two countries, despite the inequality of power, matured into an alliance by November 1936 (**Rome–Berlin Axis**). Italy later joined the anti-Soviet **Anti-Comintern Pact** (January 1937) and was a member, alongside the Germans and the Japanese, of the **Tripartite Pact** (1940) that was formed to redivide Europe and East Asia. The aggressive expansionist policy of the Italian fascist regime was clearly demonstrated by the war against Ethiopia (Abyssinia) in 1935–1936. In October 1935, two Italian armies launched an attack from Italian Somalia and Eritrea against the East African country which had independent statehood and membership in the League of Nations. As a result of the six-month campaign, Italian troops overran Ethiopia and forced the Ethiopian Emperor, **Haile Selassie**, into exile in London. The technical superiority of the Italian troops, under the command of Generals De Bono and then Pietro Badoglio, was undisputed, but the campaign was stalled and protracted, something which illustrated the vul-

nerability of the Italian forces. After the Ethiopian surrender, **King Victor Emmanuel III** of Italy took the title of Emperor of Abyssinia, and although the **League of Nations** condemned Italian aggression and declared an economic boycott of Rome, the measures were ineffective. Germany and its smaller allies (including Hungary) openly supported the Italian action, and the League of Nations was a spectacular failure, unable to prevent armed conflict between two of its member states. Three years later, **in April 1939, Italian troops invaded Albania** to set up an attack on Greece. In this case, they had to reckon with Albanian as well as Greek partisan movements which forced Mussolini to seek German military assistance. It became clear that Italian expansion was severely limited by the country's economic and military capacities. Despite its limited military potential, Italy remained a stable ally of the Third Reich until the summer of 1943.

Based on the **Tanaka Memorial**, the Japanese equivalent of the policy of **German Lebensraum**, Tokyo invaded the whole of northern and central China, along with **Manchuria**, by the end of 1938 to claim the raw materials and markets. In this respect, the Second World War started in Asia in September 1931 with the Japanese attack on Manchuria and continued until August 1945; constant fighting took place in China during those years. The Japanese political and military leadership (**premiership of Prince Konoe Fumimaro 1937–1939, 1940–1941**) realised that the program of Asian expansion would eventually harm American interests. Moreover, the Asian country had a close alliance with the Germans and Italians under the Anti-Comintern Pact and the Tripartite Pact. The Japanese government, imbued with a strong sense of nationalism, racial superiority and militarism, saw armed conflict with the United States as inevitable, and such an outcome was within sight by the summer of 1940, following the Japanese occupation of northern Indochina. **Japanese military strategy envisaged a protracted, costly naval war against the Americans far from the mainland in the Pacific archipelago.** Realistically, this could not be won by the Japanese, but a strategic stalemate could be reached, leading to a US-Japanese partition of the Pacific. Accordingly, the Asian island nation prepared for a naval attack against the Americans in 1941.

After the annexation of Austria and the capture of the Sudetenland, there was little chance of stopping German aggression. Moreover, until the spring of 1939, **the Nazi leadership effectively used the so-called ethnic card, since all the territorial gains so far (Saarland, Rhineland, Sudetenland, Austria) could be justified by the fact that German majority or German-speaking areas were joining the fatherland.** Adolf Hitler declared after each territorial repossession that this was the last of the German demands and that only legitimate German demands were being pursued by these acts. While it was still possible to rely on

ethnic arguments for the reconquest of the Memel region, wedged between East Prussia and Lithuania (March 1939), and the claim for the creation of a Polish corridor (which would link German territories with Danzig, East Prussia and the Memel region), it was no longer possible to rely on ethnic arguments for the occupation of Bohemia. German troops entered the Czech capital on 15 March 1939, and thus the **Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia** was formed as a domain of the Third Reich. Such **open aggression**, which could not be supported by any ethnic argument, made it clear that war was only months away at most and that the next victim would be Poland which had a large German-speaking population in its western territories. During the six months of peace that remained in Europe, all would-be belligerents tried to secure themselves and their smaller allies with treaties. Thus, Poland and Greece received British and French guarantees of military aid, but a British–French–Soviet agreement was blocked by the delaying tactics of London and Paris. With the Soviet alliance gained through the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, Germany avoided the threat of a two-front war, allowing the Nazi leadership and the German war machine to prepare for the Polish campaign unhindered.

When considering the causes of the Second World War, the question of the extent to which this conflict can be considered ideological or whether it was merely motivated by traditional war aims and motives (raw materials, territory, spoils of war, cheap labour) arises inevitably. The undoubted fact is that **the Nazi political elite did not merely propagate the extermination of European Bolshevism and Jewry in propaganda or ideology but committed genocide in the form of concentration camps and the Holocaust**. The Nazi leadership ensured the continued operation of the concentration camps even if that meant withdrawing rail transport capacity, troops and material forces from the fronts. All this shows that ideological motivations played a major role in the outbreak of the Second World War and throughout the war years, even though Germany's ultimate goal was European domination. **The Allied powers that aligned against Germany portrayed their struggle as one of freedom versus tyranny**. For the Americans and the British, it was seen as a crusade against evil while the Soviets combined it with the defence of the homeland and the struggle between communism and fascism.

Even before the European rearmament, the training and reorganisation of the German army had already begun in the 1920s. The army staff having been retained after the First World War, the organisational work led by General Hans von Seeckt made dynamic progress, especially with the introduction of conscription in 1935. In the autumn of 1933, Germany's delegation withdrew from the League of Nations because of its refusal of the to grant Germans equal rights on armaments, and the three main forces of the Wehrmacht (Land Army – das Heer, Navy – die

Kriegsmarine, Air Force – der Luftwaffe) subsequently continued to develop. The ten divisions authorised by the Treaty of Versailles swelled to 53 by the mid-1930s, and by 1939 there were 136 divisions in operational service. By 1939, the technical equipment of the German army surpassed that of any European counterpart, particularly in the field of armoured vehicles and combat aircraft. Three armoured divisions had already been set up in 1935 and, following Hitler's support for the concept of a new mechanised warfare based on Blitzkrieg, the armoured corps and its officers enjoyed an ongoing privileged position. A similar process took place in the case of the Air Force, which was formally established in 1935 and headed by Hermann Göring, a World War I fighter pilot – Hitler's favourite and confidant. The German military aircraft industry, with a strong industrial and research base, was able to increase production capacity steadily until 1944 and this played a major role both in the initial German successes in the war and in prolonging the war. The so-called Plan Z was created in 1938 to develop the navy, with the aim of building a huge German fleet primarily for the Atlantic theatre of operations, but the rapid outbreak of war cut this programme in half. Thus, by 1939, the German navy, under Admiral Erich Raeder, did not outnumber the British but still had two battlecruisers, smaller battleships, heavy and light cruisers, destroyers and 57 submarines.

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<sup>1</sup> [The Fourteen Points of President Wilson \(Washington, 8 January 1918\)](#). (Downloaded: 10 October 2023).

<sup>2</sup> [The Fourteen Points of President Wilson \(Washington, 8 January 1918\)](#). (Downloaded: 10 October 2023).

<sup>3</sup> On the failures and dysfunctions of the League of Nations, see Balogh, Arthur: A nemzetek szövetsége húszévi működésének mérlege. (Twenty Years of the League of Nations). Erdélyi Tudományos Füzetek (Transylvanian Scientific Papers) 119. (1940) 3–15.

<sup>4</sup> Keynes, John Maynard: *The Economic Consequences of Peace*. New York 1920. 226–298.

<sup>5</sup> For a multi-faceted and modern take on the Paris Peace Treaties, see Macmillan, Margaret: *Peacemakers. The Paris Peace Conference of 1919*. London 2001.

<sup>6</sup> [The Treaty of Rapallo \(16 April 1922\)](#). (Downloaded: 10 October 2023).

<sup>7</sup> [The Locarno Pact \(16 October 1925\)](#). Downloaded: 10 October 2023).

<sup>8</sup> [Briand-Kellog Pact \(27 August 1928\)](#). Downloaded: 10 October 2023).

<sup>9</sup> The Nazi Party's war programme and its implementation, which came to power in Germany in January 1933, was more the cause of the Second World War than the peace settlement that ended the Great War. In this respect: Kershaw, Ian: *Hitler. 1889–1936*. Hubris. New York 1999. XIX–XXX.; 527–591.

<sup>10</sup> Ránki, György: *Economy and Foreign Policy: The Struggle of the Great Powers for Hegemony in the Danube Valley, 1919–1939*. Boulder (CO) 1983.

<sup>11</sup> Churchill, W. S.: *The Second World War*. Vol. I–VI. Boston 1948–1953.

<sup>12</sup> [Treaty of Nonaggression Between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics \(23 August 1939\)](#). (Downloaded: 10 October 2023).

## International Cooperation and Conflicts during the Second World War (*Róbert Barta*)

### *Axis Successes in the First Years of the War*

By the autumn of 1939, the German war machine was unrivalled by many indicators which created a good chance for a successful mechanized Blitzkrieg. In the cooperation of military branches, the expertise of the officer corps, the training of troops, technical conditions and motorization, the *Wehrmacht* had a considerable advantage over all other armies. In order to improve the efficiency of the supreme command of the armed forces and ensure Hitler's military power, the **OKW (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht)** was established in 1938 as the supreme command of the German armed forces, headed by the Führer with **Wilhelm Keitel** as Chief of the General Staff and General **Alfred Jodl** as Chief of the Operations Staff. The plan for Blitzkrieg against Poland in the east (**Fall Weiss, the so-called Plan White**) was based on the assumption that Germany would not have to fight on two fronts during the rapid Polish campaign, and that the British and French would not launch an attack in the west. At the beginning of September 1939, even the Nazi political and military leaders who had launched the aggression had no idea that the Polish campaign, which would indeed be a Blitzkrieg, would become a **total war that would last six years**, surpassing in every way the suffering of the First World War and claiming the lives of some **60 million** people.<sup>1</sup>

On **1 September 1939**, the German army launched an undeclared war against Poland. The German land and air forces overwhelmed the Polish resistance in three weeks. The secret of German military success lay in the innovative use of tactics and strategy. German forces, which were on combat alert by the summer of 1939, had virtually no weaknesses, and the high level of mechanisation and training of their troops, combined with the skill of the officers, created a highly effective war machine. Precise planning and exemplary organisation of supplies were combined with a new strategy. The rapid advance of the German tank divisions was supported by air power and the resulting gaps were widened by infantry. Against all this, the Polish army, which was predominantly based on cavalry, was unable to defend itself.



In accordance with the secret clause of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), the Red Army launched an attack from the east on 17 September and attacked the Belarusian and Ukrainian fronts (the front in Soviet military terminology meant army groups), soon occupying the whole of eastern Poland. The fate of the Poles was sealed, Warsaw capitulating on 27 September. The Polish offensive, which officially ended on 6 October, saw 1,5 million German soldiers and 2,000 tanks facing a Polish force of one million. The Poles paid dearly for the rapid success of the German Blitzkrieg with 70,000 dead, ten times as many prisoners, 133,000 wounded and hundreds of thousands of their soldiers displaced (to Lithuania, Hungary and Romania). Besides the relatively low German losses (13,000 dead, 30,000 wounded), there are no data on Polish losses inflicted by the Soviets (**in 1940, Soviet internal security forces killed more than 4,000 Polish prisoner of war officers in the Katyn Forest area**). At the same time as the Polish campaign unfolded, there was no combat activity in the West, although there were declarations of war. Throughout the period known as the “Phoney War” (*drôle de guerre* in French – from early September 1939 to early May 1940), London and Paris hoped that Berlin would not open another front because of German operations in the east. But this period of Phoney War meant relative calm only in the West. In the autumn of 1939, the unresolved Finnish-Russian conflict in the East created a new war situation.

According to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, **Finland** was to be a Soviet interest along with most of the Baltic States. Accordingly, the Soviets made unfulfillable territorial demands on the Finns. Not only strategic but also economic considerations played a role in this because the occupation of the Finnish wheat fields in South Karelia, which would be a vital source of food for Leningrad, a city of several million people, seemed an obvious goal. The Soviet invasion of one million troops, which began on 26 November 1939 on spurious grounds, was able to be held off by nine Finnish divisions (200,000 troops in total) led by **Carl Gustav Emil von Mannerheim**. Initially successful, the Finns, with their greater local knowledge and accustomed to winter warfare, inflicted heavy losses on the Soviets who had a largely untrained and incompetent officer corps. In the Red Army officer corps, as was mentioned above, the policy of mass purges ordered by Stalin in 1937 (three purges in three years with more than 40,000 Soviet officers executed on trumped-up charges) had now revealed its cost. However, the balance of power was uneven and the Finns, under strong German pressure, agreed to an armistice and peace in March 1940, giving in to Soviet territorial claims. Although only in a token way, Hungarian volunteers took part on the side of the Finns. **The price of Soviet victory was 200,000 soldiers killed (compared to Finnish losses of 24,000) which made it clear to Stalin that the Soviet forces**

were **disorganised and poorly equipped**. This was greeted with great joy by German military intelligence since the assumption in Berlin was that an attack on the Soviet Union would not be a problem from a military point of view had turned out to be accurate.

In early 1940, Berlin's attention turned to **Norway**. By occupying the country, they wanted to weaken British positions and secure the long-term supply of Swedish iron ore which was vital to the German war industry. In addition, the Führer was convinced that the Norwegian fascist movement led by **Vidkun Quisling** was strong enough to create and operate a Norwegian fascist puppet state. On 9 April 1940, after an unsuccessful British attempt, the Germans launched the Norwegian campaign in parallel with an invasion of Denmark. Norway lasted a surprisingly long time, the fighting persisting until 9 June, and when it was over, a Norwegian fascists government was formed in accordance with German plans.

Perhaps the most important consequence of the British failure in Norway was that **Neville Chamberlain** was replaced as Prime Minister by the implacably anti-Nazi **Winston Churchill**, a politician who was known to be a proponent of armed action against the Germans. On the German side, Hitler's foreign policy concept elucidated in *Mein Kampf* did not see the British as the number one enemy and did not even mention an invasion of the British Isles. Churchill, however, knew full well that Germany was the primary enemy of the British Empire and that a confrontation was inevitable.

After the invasion of Denmark and Norway, the land army of the Third Reich, the armoured troops of the Wehrmacht and the effective support of the *Luftwaffe* crossed Dutch, Belgian and Luxembourgian borders on 10 May 1940. Then, as a result of **Operation Sickle Cut** bypassing the Maginot Line just over a month and a half later, the French surrendered to the Germans. Stalin sent a telegram to his ally Adolf Hitler to congratulate him on the successful Western campaign. The democracies of Western Europe failed spectacularly in the face of German arms, failing to impel Hitler's war machine to turn first against the Soviet Union. For the first time in the history of modern warfare, the Germans used **paratrooper commando action** to capture Fort Eben Emael in Belgium on 11 May 1940. The *Luftwaffe* launched a devastating air strike on Rotterdam, killing 30,000 citizens, on 14 May 1940. The Netherlands then laid down its arms. The *Wehrmacht's* attacking wedges had already reached the English Channel on 20 May, but Hitler halted his tanks three days later, giving the British and French the opportunity to evacuate the Dunkirk bridgehead. By the summer of 1940, all of Western Europe had fallen into German hands, with the north and centre of France occupied up to the Bordeaux-Tours-Le Creusot line. South of that, a puppet state (**État Français**) was created with Vichy as its centre and placed under Marshal

**Pétain** (though this area also came under direct German military occupation on 11 November 1942).

As a result of military successes in Western Europe, the domestic political position of Reich Chancellor and Führer Adolf Hitler was now so solidified that neither the military leaders nor the Nazi elite could question his ability as a commander and statesman. By the summer of 1940, the Third Reich and its leader were at the zenith of their power with only the British Isles standing in defiance of the German war machine. Operation Sea Lion (Seelöwe) was intended to conquer Britain in the summer of 1940 and air power was to play a decisive role. However, the German air force was not sufficiently prepared for this confrontation. The main problem was that the range, load capacity and fuel reserves of German aircraft allowed only a relatively short stay in enemy airspace.

Although the general staff of the British Air Force (**Royal Air Force – RAF**) had been preparing for war with the Germans since 1937, there was a lack of pilots and experience in the air force. Admittedly, the *Supermarine Spitfire* and the *Hawker Hurricane* were the most modern fighters of the time with more than 400 produced in a month by the end of 1940, but the *German Messerschmitt Bf 109s* and *Stukas (Junkers Ju 87)*, together with their pilots, had gained a great deal of combat experience in the Spanish Civil War. The Germans supplemented these two successful types from the summer of 1939 with the *Focke-Wulf (FW 190)* which proved a worthy opponent to the *Spitfires* during the Battle of Britain. By the summer of 1940, the British were already using radar surveillance on a large scale with the range of the high-altitude (4600 m) British radars extending to German airfields in northwest France.

One of the biggest clashes of the air war, which **began in July 1940**, took place between 13 and 15 August when the German Air Force launched a full-scale attack on the RAF using all available means (**the operation was called Adlertag – Eagle Day**). Over two days, five major engagements took place on an air front stretching 800 km in length with little German success and heavy losses (the Germans lost 45 aircraft to only 13 for the British). To break the morale of the British population, and due to the lack of success in daylight raids, Hitler ordered night terror bombing of British cities from mid-September. In a month and a half, the Germans dropped 35,000 tons of bombs while losing 650 aircraft. The main target was, of course, London which was attacked 19 times between September 1940 and May 1941 with one in three bombs landing there. Apart from railway junctions, docks, munitions factories, ports and government buildings, the greatest destruction was in residential areas near strategic targets, but this only served to increase the anger and desperation of the population. After the British lost 915 aircraft between July and October, the German air force losing almost twice

as many (1,733), the *Luftwaffe* leadership halted the offensive which had seen a large-scale but unsuccessful German attack on London on 15 September 1940. Operation Lion Seal was postponed indefinitely. The Germans' first strategic air campaign had failed, and their forces were now being reserved for the offensive against the Soviet Union. In the spring of 1941, Adolf Hitler ordered a complete halt to the bombing of British territory.

At the beginning of the Battle of Britain, Italian forces, allied with the Germans, went into action and, in July 1940, they captured **Sudan, Kenya and British Somalia** from the British before being stopped in **Libya**. The Italians were only able to hold these territories for six months, and it was a sign of British persistence that the British navy attacked the pro-German but neutral French government's fleet (in the port of **Oran** in North Africa in early July 1940). In North Africa, the British were in a favourable position but this was changed by the German offensive in the Balkans in the spring of 1941. The German plan for the invasion of the Soviet Union (**Operation Barbarossa**) had been signed by Hitler in December 1940 and included a plan to attack in early spring after the snow had melted. The planned timing was completely overturned by events in the Balkans.

The Germans initially sought to transform the Balkans into a peaceful, diplomatically annexed region, and for a time this policy was successful. By March 1941, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary were part of the Tripartite Pact. However, **Mussolini's attack on Greece on 28 October 1940** created a completely new situation. Such was the widespread resistance to the Italian troops advancing from Albania that, by early March 1941, the Greek fighters had not only driven the Italians out but had also taken southern Albania. Britain – the first to violate Greece's neutrality – had already been involved in the war alongside the Greeks from early November 1940, something which infuriated Hitler to no end. The final push came with Bulgaria when the Soviet foreign minister, Molotov, told the Nazi leader that Moscow had a claim to Bulgaria – mainly its Black Sea ports. This was a major motivation for Hitler to attack the Soviet Union and mop up the Balkans before doing so. Yugoslavia did join the Tripartite Pact on 25 March 1941, but two days later in **Belgrade**, Serb nationalist (Chetnik) officers, backed by British intelligence, **overthrew the pro-German Cvetković government** in a military coup. Berlin's response was a swift military strike. After the suicide of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Pál Teleki, Hungary also took part actively in the operations against Yugoslavia. A few days after the German attack, Croatia seceded from the southern Slavic kingdom as an independent, pro-German state. Less than two weeks after the start of the campaign, Belgrade capitulated and German troops continued to push against Greece. The Greek army

defended the **Metaxas Line** between Bulgaria and Thrace for a time – Thrace was promised to the Bulgarians by the Germans – but then the Wehrmacht attacked from Yugoslavia. The Greeks were therefore not defending at the appropriate place, and Athens fell to the Germans by the end of April. The British evacuated the Peloponnese at great cost and withdrew to Crete. During **Operation Mercury**, German paratrooper commandos captured the northern part of the island as the British fled to Egypt. This gave the Germans a significant strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean. The rapidly developing Yugoslav partisan movement, however, tied up considerable forces with some 200,000 German troops having to be kept in the country at all times.

In the summer of 1940, Germany's distant ally Japan also became active. The counterattacks of the prominent Soviet general **Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov** prevented the Japanese from capturing Mongolia in 1939, but by the following year they had completely isolated **Chiang Kai-shek's** China. All these moves caused concern in London and Washington, but strangely enough, the Americans were even more dynamic than the Japanese in the region. The Naval Act, passed by the US Congress at the time, required the creation in four years of a fleet larger than the combined fleet of the two maritime powers that trailed the US. The Japan-US fleet ratio of 7:10 in 1940 was thus reduced to 3:10 in a short time. Tokyo was acutely aware of the threat posed by American intentions and knew that only a naval war with a quick victory could secure Japanese hegemony in the region. By the summer of 1941, a joint Japanese–French Indochina protectorate had been established, resulting directly in a full-scale US embargo (banning all trade with Japan) joined by the British and Dutch. With Japan dependent on the Americans for 80% of its oil imports, the island nation had no choice but war or surrender. All this was made clear by the Americans when they demanded the lifting of the embargo and the surrender of all the territories occupied by Japan since 1931. By September 1941, Tokyo had already weighed up the situation and decided to go to war.

### *1941 – The Eastern Front and Pearl Harbour*

In the first phase of the German Blitzkrieg plan against the Soviet Union, the two major sectors (Army Group North and Army Group Central) and three time phases were drawn up; the northern group to proceed into the north to occupy the Baltic and encircle Leningrad, the middle to turn northwards and occupy Belarus, and the southern to advance from Romania to the Dnieper and occupy Ukraine. The instructions were to destroy the Soviet forces at this stage and pre-

vent their retreat. The speed of the advance of the forces that went on the offensive on 22 June 1941 surprised even the German general staff. The Soviets' western defences completely collapsed, and the *Luftwaffe* destroyed most of their air force on the airfields. The political leadership in Moscow was in confusion and Stalin issued orders only days after the attack. The German conquerors were greeted as liberators in parts of the Baltic States, Belarus and Ukraine, something which illustrated the public's hatred of the Stalinist regime. In the second phase of the campaign, the main objective of the Northern and Central Army Groups was to attack Moscow while in the south they were to capture the Donetsk Basin and penetrate the Caucasus. The establishment of German air superiority did not, however, trigger the collapse of Russian resistance. Under Stalin's orders, there was nowhere to retreat, so there were huge Soviet losses in encirclements and in the **pocket battles**. The 2nd and 3rd German Panzer Groups, led by **Heinz Guderian**, took 280,000 Soviet prisoners in the capture of Minsk alone. At the Pripjat Marshes in Belarus, the advance of the German 5th Army was slowed down, mainly due to difficult terrain and the 500–600 km of supply routes that had to be secured by them. The advance was also hampered by the broad-gauge Soviet railway network and attacks from the emerging **partisan movement**. Losses on the German side were mounting. By mid-July, only 3.6% of the attacking forces had been killed – 92 thousand casualties – but, by the end of September, this proportion had risen to 16.2% (551,000). By comparison, in the major battles in the south in August and September (north of Odessa at Uman and Kiev), nearly a million Soviet soldiers were killed or captured.

Despite the difficulties and losses, all the signs indicated that the German army would reach its goal of capturing Moscow before the onset of winter and forcing the Soviet Union to surrender. The Northern Army Group surrounded Leningrad, but the German-allied Finnish troops were unable to completely enclose the area around Lake Ladoga. The German command opted for a tactic of causing total starvation and the **siege of Leningrad** began. In this respect, it should be stressed that the civilian losses in the city were partly due to the Soviet military and political leadership's failure to open food stores to the population on many occasions. From the beginning of September, Hitler had directed all forces that could be mobilised against Moscow (**Operation Typhoon**), and this threat was taken seriously by Stalin who appointed **Zhukov** commander-in-chief of the Western Front defending the capital.

By October, in the third phase of the German offensive, the armoured units had approached the Moscow area. However, rainy weather and cold set in very early, and the autumn months, which the Russians called the "*roadless season*", caused unexpected difficulties. Despite this, panic broke out in Moscow



in mid-October and the government was evacuated to the town of Kuybyshev. Much of the population fled eastwards, there was disorder in the capital and more and more people accepted the idea of surrender. By the end of November, the Germans had surrounded two-thirds of Moscow and the situation became critical. However, Stalin, through his intelligence channels, was reassured that Siberia was not under threat of Japanese attack, and he was able to hold the capital by redeploying two divisions from the Mongolian border. The decisive German offensive launched on **6 December 1941** was therefore finally stalled, the Nazi war machine suffering its first major defeat, albeit a tactical one. By then, the German General Staff had already accepted that the Soviet Union could not be defeated in 1941. Therefore, the Germans redeployed their forces and planned a major offensive to the south for the following year with the ultimate aim of seizing the southern industrial regions and Caucasus oil fields.

On 7 December 1941, the day after the great German attack on Moscow, the Japanese navy and air force, led by Admiral **Nagumo**, struck a powerful blow to the US Pacific Fleet base at **Pearl Harbour**. The first strike force, consisting of 460 fighter planes and 6 aircraft carriers, sank or damaged a total of 18 US ships (8 of which were battleships) in two waves. The unannounced attack, which US military intelligence had probable knowledge of but without the precise time and place, caused a huge outcry among the American public. As the only acceptable response, President **Roosevelt declared war on Japan and later on its allies**. This brought a belligerent with such industrial capacity into the war that turned the tide in favour of the anti-German and anti-Japanese alliance. In the first stage, however, the Japanese seemed unstoppable. By the end of December, they had established naval and air superiority throughout Southeast Asia. The invasion of **Singapore** (15 February 1942) was the greatest defeat of the British Empire thus far (130,000 British troops were taken prisoner). Three months later, the Japanese flag was flying in the Philippines, but their momentum was halted in a naval battle off the **Midway Islands**. The three aircraft carriers of the Japanese fleet were rendered useless by the US Air Force's bombing, and the US fleet took the initiative in the region.

### *The Atlantic Charter*

After lengthy preparatory talks, US President **Roosevelt** and British Prime Minister **Churchill** met on 9 August 1941 in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, off the coast of Canada, where they spent a week of talks on board the US cruiser *Augusta* and the British battleship *Prince of Wales*. Originally, the British had come for

specific American aid, particularly for the fighting in North Africa, but the US President and his advisers instead wanted to declare their support for the British in the form of a general declaration of principle, ultimately reiterating President Wilson's 14 points of 1918, the American understanding of national self-determination. The eight points of the **Atlantic Charter**<sup>2</sup>, signed and published on 14 August 1941, were in fact intended to enable the countries that joined to form a united front against fascism. Three of the eight points were about achieving free trade, freedom of navigation and economic cooperation based on the principle of national self-determination (point 3). However, this required renouncing territorial conquest (points 1 and 2), crushing Nazi tyranny (point 6) and achieving total disarmament by renouncing violence. The Atlantic Charter, a modernised and updated version of **Wilsonianism**, provoked a serious debate between the British and American delegations. The third point of the declaration interpreted the principle of **national self-determination** not only for the peoples and countries under occupation, but also – specifically as a wish of the Americans – for the peoples of the colonial empires. This met with fierce opposition from the British side but the wording was not changed, a clear indication of the weak negotiating position of the British and the extent to which London was dependent on US military supplies. The significance of the charter of common principles of the Anglo-Saxon powers was that it laid the foundations for the formation and operation of an anti-fascist coalition, especially after the Soviet government signed on to the document in late September, following the German invasion. At the same time, the governments in exile of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Yugoslavia, the Netherlands, Poland, Luxembourg, Norway and Free France under De Gaulle announced their accession. As a major consequence of the Atlantic Charter, the US President declared the defence of the Soviet Union as being vital to the United States and included the Soviets in the *lend-lease* shipments. Accordingly, Washington had already committed itself in November to supplying 1 billion dollars worth of arms and raw materials, supplemented by an Anglo-Soviet agreement. This was extremely important to the Soviet political and military leadership because the strength and scale of the German attack on the Soviet Union was unprecedented and clearly threatened its very existence.

### *The Casablanca Conference*

**The North African theatre of war** became an **important strategic area** due to the continuous failure of Italians and the German advance in the Balkans. The Germans' long-term war aims were to gain access to the Baku and Middle Eastern oil

fields from the south. This explains why Hitler assigned one of his most skilled generals, Erwin Rommel, to the region at the head of a desert army. In a battle that saw varying degrees of success, German units pushed as far as the Egyptian border at **El-Alamein** where they were forced to halt by British, Australian and New Zealander forces (30 June 1942). Britain's General Montgomery, a worthy opponent of Rommel in desert warfare, finally drove the Germans out by early 1943 with the help of American troops (led by General **Dwight D. Eisenhower**, later President) who landed in North Africa as part of Operation Torchlight.

The turn of the years 1942–1943 brought a decisive turn on the Eastern front. The main objective of the German offensive in the south, launched in the summer of 1942, was to capture **Stalingrad** (formerly Caricin) on the Volga to bring an important shipping route under German control. In the bloodiest battle in the entire Second World War (**23 August 1942 to 2 February 1943**), Red Army troops surrounded and forced the surrender of General **von Paulus's** 6th German Army. The Battle of Stalingrad brought to light all the horrors of modern urban warfare with German and Soviet casualties totalling over a million. Hitler refused to allow Paulus to withdraw, making the same grave mistake that Stalin did in the summer of 1941. Marshal Zhukov, who became an almost mythical hero for Soviet soldiers, played a major role in the strategic victory of the Soviet forces. After the German defeat in the summer of 1943, the Wehrmacht forces also suffered a technical and technological failure when 900,000 troops were deployed in the German offensive to eliminate the Soviet outpost between Oryol and Kharkov (**Operation Citadel**), supported by 2,700 tanks and assault guns along with 1,800 aircraft. In the clash, known to military history as the **Battle of Kursk**, German Panther tanks were ultimately defeated by Soviet T34s. The booming Soviet war industry and American aid, together with the stabilisation of the Red Army's fighting discipline and leadership, brought about desired results. By the spring of 1944, the Red Army had reached and crossed the Soviet Union's 1941 western border, the objective by then being the capture of Berlin.

On **14 January 1943**, at the suggestion of the United States, and to coordinate strategic plans for the coming year, secret talks, lasting two weeks, began in the Moroccan port city of **Casablanca** between delegations led by US President F. D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister W. Churchill.<sup>3</sup> The central issue was the opening of a **second frontline**, all the more urgent because Stalin was constantly pressing for the Eastern Front to be relieved. The continued postponement of the opening of the Western European front only increased the suspicion and mistrust of the Soviet leadership. The weight of the matter was increased by the fact that it was obvious to the Anglo-Saxon Allies that they could defeat the Axis powers only with the active cooperation of the Soviet Union. As a further development to

**Operation Torch**, a plan for an invasion of Sicily during the summer was agreed upon relatively quickly, the operation being codenamed **Husky**. The invasion of France was postponed until the spring of 1944 mainly because of transport and technical difficulties along with differences between the US and the UK over the exact location and the military leaders who would lead the invasion. In order to secure the convoys of ships, priority was given to the fight against German submarines, something which produced spectacular results within a few months. On 24 May 1943, German General **Karl Dönitz**, Commander of the Navy, ordered a halt to German submarine attacks in Atlantic waters since the Germans had lost 30 submarines in the first three weeks of May. In Casablanca, the Allied air forces coordinated their combat activities, with the US Air Force carrying out daytime **targeted bombing** and the British the night-time **carpet bombing**. German fighter bases and factories were at the top of the target lists, and from 10 June onwards, German industrial cities (Bochum, Mühlheim, Oberhausen, Cologne) were the target of continuous air raids. The new strategy was first used against **Düsseldorf**. On the night of 11–12 June 1943, 693 British bombers dropped 2,000 tons of bombs on the city. At the suggestion of the US President, negotiations adopted the formula of “*unconditional surrender*” whereby surrender without preconditions was to be forced on the Germans, Italians and Japanese; an armistice would be unacceptable even if these regimes collapsed during the war and their political leaders were assassinated or otherwise removed. The acceptance of the formula was mainly a gesture to Stalin who they tried to reassure because of the postponement of the second front. In fact, it was in the interests of all three great powers to continue the fight to unconditional surrender since, in the event of victory, the fate of the Axis countries would be entirely in their hands. This was accepted by the Soviet leadership, although Stalin, who had been invited to the conference, did not attend due to the Battle of Stalingrad.

In order to clarify and expand on the decisions taken at the Casablanca Conference, the British Prime Minister again conducted talks with the American allies in Washington from 12 to 25 May 1943. The conference, **codenamed Trident**, clarified the schedule for the invasions of Sicily and southern Italy. To boost the fight against German submarines, they decided to invade the Azores where the otherwise neutral Portuguese government had set up bases for the Allies. The date for the invasion of France was set for 1 May 1944 and closer cooperation in the war against Japan was decided. Churchill also outlined the British vision of a post-war world order – a new global organisation under the control of the US, Britain, the Soviet Union and China with international forces being deployed to secure peace. At a joint press conference after the talks, they called on Italy to

withdraw from the war and replace its fascist leaders, but also stressed that this was ultimately an internal Italian matter in which the Allies did not wish to intervene.

### *Tehran*

By the autumn of 1943, the situation on the fronts allowed the Allies to link their policies at the highest level, especially after the British and Americans had involved the Soviet Union in signing the Italian armistice, thus gaining Stalin's trust. They accepted the Soviet leader's proposal that the foreign ministers of the three great powers should meet in Moscow before the top-level meeting to clarify specific issues. All three governments were thoroughly prepared for the **Moscow meeting of foreign ministers which took place between 19 and 30 October 1943**. At their meeting, Soviet Foreign Minister **Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov**, British Foreign Minister **Anthony Eden** and US Foreign Minister **Cordell Hull** reached an agreement in principle on the post-war settlement along with issues of bringing the war against the Axis powers to a speedy conclusion. The central issue of the meeting was the Allied invasion of France, the Soviet side in particular urging its early launch and the involvement of Turkey in the Allied effort. The only agreement on the future of Germany was that Berlin should give up all the territory it had acquired after 1937, including the Polish territories that formerly belonged to Prussia. In effect, this meant "*pushing Poland westwards*" to the Oder and Neisse rivers, a move supported by the Soviets. While the independence of Austria was voiced in a joint declaration, the future structure of Germany was the subject of debate with the British proposing the political partition of German territory (into a northern and a southern confederation, the latter comprising Bavaria, Austria and Hungary) and the Americans seeing the dismemberment of Germany as secondary to disarmament, reparations and political control. On the Soviet side, the recognition of pre-1941 borders was considered the most important issue; the Soviet-Polish border proposed by the **British Curzon Line of 1920** was considered unacceptable but no concrete terms were formulated for the future organisation of Germany. On behalf of the 32 Allied nations, the negotiators declared that **war criminals would be prosecuted** in the countries where their crimes were committed while Nazi political and military leaders would be tried in Allied courts. It was also agreed verbally between the Foreign Ministers that, in the event of the defeat of the Axis powers, the Allied forces deployed in the various countries would be responsible for maintaining order and starting democratic reconstruction. In this way, indirectly but nevertheless,

it was agreed that the future of the countries occupied by the Allies would be determined by the great power that would take its troops there. Finally, the first summit of the three heads of government was agreed to be held in **Tehran**, the capital of Iran which was under joint Soviet-British occupation for security reasons.

On his way to Tehran, the British Prime Minister stopped for a few days in Cairo, where he discussed the common Western position and the role of China in the war against the Japanese with President Roosevelt. General Chiang Kai-shek, who represented China, also attended the **Cairo Conference which took place from 22 to 27 November 1943**; as such, the discussions largely focused on Far Eastern affairs. The Anglo-Saxon Allies were trying to persuade the Chinese to make a greater war effort which was no easy task as the Americans believed that the Chinese general was using the military aid that they were sending for his own purposes. In the end, China was given guarantees to return the Chinese territories occupied by the Japanese, but it was also decided that Tokyo would have to give up all its Pacific possessions occupied after 1914 and ensure Korean independence. The delegation, led by the British and American prime ministers, left for **Tehran** on 27 November. There, the **first joint conference of the three powers** was opened in a ceremony the following day.<sup>4</sup>

On the first day of the meeting, President Roosevelt made a lengthy speech, reviewing the situation in the Pacific theatre of operations and confirming that the timing of the invasion of France (**Operation Overlord**) was to be May 1944. In his reply, Stalin referred to the situation in the Pacific theatre and the Italian front, considering them to be of secondary importance to the huge confrontations on the Eastern Front which he reviewed in detail while stressing the importance of opening the second front. He also promised, to the great satisfaction of the Americans, that after the end of the war in Europe, the Red Army would come to the aid of the Allies in the campaign against Japan.

In his speech, Churchill outlined an alternative proposal for an offensive from Italy with the support of the Yugoslav partisan movement led by **Josip Broz Tito** and the involvement of Turkey to open a major front in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. Churchill called the Balkans and Italy the *“soft belly”* of Europe with easy access to Austria and southern Germany, a situation that offered the possibility of shortening the European war. Of course, British great power and strategic considerations played a primary role in this idea which aimed at activating the 20–25 British divisions stationed in the region in such a way as to provide London the strategic initiative. The British intention to bring the South-Eastern European region into the sphere of Western interest was also obvious, yet the British proposal was vetoed not primarily by the Soviets but by the



Americans. It quickly became clear that the only acceptable option from the US side was an invasion of France, and this coincided with Soviet interests because Stalin saw a good opportunity to take over Central and South-Eastern Europe. Thus, Soviet and American interests were fundamentally aligned in Tehran, a fact which greatly disturbed Churchill who then, for the first time, really perceived that his negotiating partners no longer regarded the British Empire as a first-rate great power. On the second day of the **Tehran meeting, known as Eureka**, the military experts met and the timetable for Operation Overlord was finally clarified along with the fact that the landing would be supported by a small landing operation in southern France rather than the Balkans. On Stalin's instructions, the Soviet delegation committed itself to launching a Red Army summer offensive after the Anglo-American landings, a scenario which would prevent the re-deployment of German divisions from the east. A more serious dispute arose between the Polish government in London about future Polish borders because, on the one hand, the Soviets did not recognise the legitimacy of the government and, on the other hand, they insisted on all Ukrainian and Belarusian territory. According to Stalin, the 1939 Polish-Soviet border was the same as the so-called *Curzon Line* of 1920, but the British and the Polish exiles denied this.

Finally, as a temporary solution, the parties agreed to expand the territory of the future Polish state westwards and to transfer the northern part of East Prussia (the Memel region) and the ice-free port of Königsberg to the Soviet Union. On the Soviet side, an offer was also made to the Finns that unconditional capitulation – which all three sides insisted on in the case of Germany and Japan – could be substituted with a peace treaty if the Finns would turn on the Germans, pay war reparations and accept the 1940 borders. The last item on the conference **agenda was the post-war fate of Germany** with the first proposal coming from the US side. According to Roosevelt, the German threat must be eliminated once and for all and the country ought to be divided into five parts, ending German superpower status. According to the American vision, north-western Germany (with Hanover) and Saxony, the south-western Rhineland, Bavaria, Baden and Württemberg would form the five independent states while Hamburg, the Kiel Canal, the Ruhr and the Saar would be brought under international control. There were no objections in principle to the plan from either the Soviet or British side but Churchill saw the containment of Prussia as a means of curbing German militarism. He envisioned a loose confederation of the other German territories which Stalin rejected in the strongest terms as he also did in regard to the plan for a Bavarian-Austrian-Hungarian confederation. No final decision was taken, but the American proposal was suggested as a basis for negotiation to the European Advisory Commission to be set up in London. Thus, in effect, the German

question was postponed and made dependent on the final outcome of the war regarding the way in which the zones of occupation were to be organised. All three statesmen agreed, however, that German remilitarisation was a threat which the Allied powers must prevent within the framework of a new world organisation.

### *Yalta*

As a prelude to the **Yalta Conference**, the leaders of the anti-fascist alliance had already discussed some of the concrete issues of the post-war settlement in the autumn of 1944. At the **Quebec meeting of Roosevelt and Churchill**, the main issue was the invasion of Germany. The creation of American, Soviet and British occupation zones was accepted by all but the details were already being debated. The British claimed all the German ports, including the whole of the Ruhr, because they feared that after the war, the Americans would quickly leave Europe because of the possible predominance of isolationist policies, leaving them alone in the western occupation zones. The Allies also wanted to place Berlin under joint control, but the British finally made concessions on the ports, promising Bremen and Bremerhaven to the Americans. On the American side, the most moderate idea was German demilitarisation and strict control of the country, but a more radical plan was also on the table. The idea put forward by **Henry Morgenthau** was to turn Germany into an agricultural state (**the potato plan**) with international control of industrial areas and partition of the country. The British were the most vulnerable party in the planning process as their role in the operations was subordinate to that of the Americans, and the Italian campaign had stalled outside Bologna by the end of the year. Instead of the British incursions into the Balkans and south-eastern Europe, the Red Army troops appeared in the region.

To maintain the British initiative and strengthen their role as a great power, Prime Minister Churchill, accompanied by his Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, arrived in Moscow on 9 October 1944 where he met Stalin and Molotov on the same day. This was the so-called "*percentage agreement*" meeting where the Western and Soviet spheres of interest were formally divided in the case of the Central and South-Eastern European countries, but no progress was made on Polish matters with the Polish head of government in exile, Stanisław Mikołajczyk, who arrived in Moscow on 12 October, refusing to accept the Curzon Line as the Soviet–Polish border. The percentage agreement was based on 90% British influence in Greece, 90% Soviet influence in Romania, and 50–50% in Yugoslavia and Hungary, the latter being adjusted to 80–20% in favour of the Soviets. Some of

the historical literature on the subject interprets the percentage agreement as a clear division of the region into spheres of interest, but this does not correspond to reality since the weight of the British was not comparable to that of the Soviets and the Americans, and the spheres of influence were determined largely by which great power's forces entered the territory. The practical implementation of the percentage agreement was impossible as nobody knew how to apply the percentages to the domestic politics of a given country. The agreement was no more than a British attempt to maintain the role of a great power to which the Soviets were partners, knowing full well that real spheres of interest were to be decided by military events. Perhaps the only success of British diplomacy was the recognition of De Gaulle's French movement as the official leadership of the country, giving France a zone of occupation in Germany which could strengthen London's position in the event of a post-war American withdrawal.

Before the meeting at Yalta, the American delegation, led by the now seriously ill US President Roosevelt who had been elected for his fourth term, held a brief meeting in Malta with the British delegation led by Churchill; the main topic was the military coordination of the planned crossing of the Rhine. Following it, the two delegations left by plane at dawn on 3 February 1945 for **Yalta** in Crimea where the second meeting of the heads of government of the Allied powers, **code-named Argonaut**, began the next day.<sup>5</sup> The first day was devoted to a review of the military situation, a decision to speed up and closely coordinate operations in Germany, and a discussion of Germany's post-war fate. In principle, all three parties accepted the future division of Germany, but no decision was taken on how to achieve it. Stalin, however, accepted the British proposal for a French zone of occupation, provided that it was carved out of the Western zone of occupation. After a minor discussion on the amount and form of German reparations, it was agreed that they should be set provisionally at 20 billion dollars, half of which would go to the Soviet Union. On 6 February, the formation of a new world organisation was on the agenda. Negotiations on this issue were greatly facilitated by the fact that the structure and principles of the organisation had already been discussed in August of the previous year in **Dumbarton Oaks**, a suburb of Washington, with the involvement of China. To avoid another League of Nations becoming inoperable, the **Security Council** was made the most important institution of the new world organisation, with the three great powers plus China and, later, France as permanent members. The permanent members were given veto powers, and the Security Council was empowered to send armed forces into conflict zones. There was serious friction between Churchill and Roosevelt over the aims and tasks of the new world organisation because the US president, based on the deep-rooted opposition to American colonialism (**anti-colonialism**), saw

the most important task of the world organisation – in addition to maintaining and preserving world peace – as ensuring national self-determination and the sovereign development of peoples. The British Prime Minister interpreted this as meaning that the Americans saw the dismemberment of the British Empire as the main task of the world organisation. Stalin, who followed the debate with no little pleasure as an outside observer, drew the classic Bolshevik conclusion that the imperialist powers were once again fighting amongst themselves. In the end, all three parties agreed to the creation of the **United Nations** in San Francisco at the end of April.

Later in the negotiations, Stalin confirmed that after the European operations, the Soviets would immediately join the war against Japan as he had promised earlier, but he also announced the price of doing so. The Soviet Union would have to reclaim the Kuril Islands and southern Sakhalin, as well as Port Arthur or Dairen, even via a lease, but a Pacific port would be essential. The Americans accepted the Soviet demands and made promises that the Chinese would be able to do likewise. In response, Stalin offered air bases for US bombing raids against Japan. It was clear from all this that the Americans and the Soviets were really the only two of the three negotiating parties left to decide the important issues, and the Yalta Conference gave birth to the two superpowers that would decide the fate of the world for more than forty years to come. In the joint declaration of the meeting, entitled the **Declaration on a Liberated Europe**, there was no longer any sign of disagreement; all three powers accepted a peaceful and democratic post-war order based on the self-determination of nations in the countries under their military control. They agreed on the principles of democratic development but carefully avoided defining them. In practice, the **Allied Control Commissions (ACC)**, which were to be set up in occupied or liberated countries, were charged with supervising and assisting democratic reconstruction, but they mostly (especially in the Soviet zones) represented the interests of the great powers as expressed by the forces stationed there. The declaration made specific reference to Germany and Poland. In the case of the former, the intention to hold Nazi war criminals accountable and punish them was reaffirmed, stressing the need to distinguish the German people from their war-crimes leaders. At the same time, the declaration contradicted itself by indirectly assigning responsibility to the German people as a whole by referring to the heavy losses of the war, thus establishing the completely false principle of collective guilt. In the case of Poland, the Allies affirmed that they envisaged the future of that long-suffering country as a full democracy but this meant one thing to Stalin and another to the Western statesmen. The greatest flaw of the declaration and the whole Yalta Conference was that it did not specify the nature and precise forms of the democratic system

to be established in the countries occupied or liberated by the Allies. Therefore, in the areas controlled by the Red Army, the concept of democratic development meant the introduction of the Soviet model while in the Western zones it meant the adoption of the American-British political, economic and social system.



Fig. 1. Conference of Yalta, February 1945

An often quoted and well-known concept is the so-called **Yalta world order**, developed at the Yalta Conference which ended on 11 February 1945, which holds that the leaders of the United States of America and the Soviet Union secretly agreed on the division of post-war Europe and, more broadly, the whole world, along with the demarcation of spheres of interest, and this agreement lasted until 1991, the year of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.<sup>6</sup> All that can be stated with absolute certainty is that the Americans undoubtedly needed Soviet military assistance to bring the war against the Japanese to a swift conclusion and that this outcome established US hegemony in the Pacific.

From the American side, therefore, it was presumably not too great a price to pay to accept the entry of half of Europe into a Soviet zone, but no official, written, documented evidence of any secret agreement to this effect has been found

to date. Rather, scholars and literature on the subject emphasise that the military events of the last phase of the war, the victories of the advancing Allied armies, determined the zones of influence, and the results achieved on the battlefield and over the course of operations were confirmed by diplomacy and high politics.

The Red Army troops began their siege of the German Reich's capital on 16 April 1945, and Zhukov was given until 1 May 1945 to occupy Berlin. Finally, after a day's delay and at the cost of 300,000 Soviet soldiers' lives, the red flag was raised over the ruins of the **Reichstag** building. Berlin was almost completely destroyed, largely due to a last order of **Hitler**, who **committed suicide on 30 April 1945**, to destroy everything before the Soviets invaded. Two days earlier, Mussolini and 12 members of his government had been arrested and shot dead by Italian partisans on the Swiss border. The conditions in the German capital were indescribable, made worse by the fact that the Soviet high command had allowed the soldiers a few days to freely loot after the fighting was over. The question of whether the Western Allies had wittingly given up Berlin to the Soviets has been a matter of long debate. All sources suggest that it was not the case; the timing of the Red Army's operations and, to a great extent, Marshal Zhukov's talent as a commander allowed Stalin's troops to reach the German capital first.

### *Potsdam*

On 9 May 1945, the representatives of Germany signed the documents of the unconditional surrender and thus the European war officially ended. However, **the conference in Potsdam (17 July – 2 August 1945)**<sup>7</sup>, **codenamed the Terminal**, already reflected the ripening tension between the victors. Stalin wanted to fully exploit the European territories he had gained, and needed raw materials, manpower and means of transport. The Soviet demand was partly justified because German troops had completely looted the Soviet territories that they had occupied in four years. Due to the defeat of the British Conservatives, Labour prime minister, **Clement C. Attlee**, replaced Churchill when he left the conference. Attlee tried to put British interests first but even in German affairs this did not succeed. In Potsdam, the new US President **Harry S. Truman** announced that the United States had nuclear weapons and would use them to overcome Japanese resistance as soon as possible. Accordingly, on 6 August 1945, two bombs equivalent to 30,000 tonnes each of conventional explosives (trotyl) were dropped on **Hiroshima**, located on the main Japanese island of Honshu, and three days later on **Nagasaki**, located on the southern island of Kyushu. The attack, which resulted in a total of 400,000 to 450,000 civilian casualties,



shocked the Japanese population and contributed greatly to the surrender of the island nation on 2 September 1945. The Soviet Union provided effective assistance in the defeat of Japan, particularly in **Manchuria**. For decades, post-war Soviet propaganda claimed that the real message of the US nuclear weapon was a threat to Moscow. The US military leadership was aware of the power of the bombs because **J. Robert Oppenheimer**, the head of the US nuclear programme, had drawn attention to their dangers in an open letter. To avoid further US military casualties, and faced with fanatical Japanese opposition, the decision to use nuclear weapons was taken. The decision to hold war criminals accountable was also taken at Potsdam, drawing particular focus to the atrocities committed against civilians during the war.

### *Balance Sheet of the Second World War*

Nazi propaganda, based on National Socialist ideals, always presented the German aggression as an ideological war portrayed as a crusade against European Jewry and Bolshevism. After the **Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935** and the violent physical crackdown on Jews (**Kristallnacht – Night of Broken Glass – November 1938**), German Jews left their homeland *en masse*. With the German conquest, millions of European Jews were brought under Nazi rule and at the end of 1941, Adolf Hitler and the general staff of the SS decided to exterminate them throughout Europe after looting the Jewish population. This was the so-called *Endlösung* (Final Solution), and to achieve it, extermination camps were set up, most of them on Polish territory. Of these, **Auschwitz** in Upper Silesia functioned as a veritable death factory, gassing and burning more than two million European Jews and hundreds of thousands of Roma. The total number of Jews murdered by Germans in Central and Eastern Europe between 1939 and 1945 was six million. In addition, three million non-Jewish Polish civilians and four million Soviet prisoners of war were killed, most of whom simply starved to death in the camps without adequate food. The mass extermination of European Jewry (**Holocaust – burnt sacrifice**) was an industrial genocide on a scale unprecedented in human history. **Numerous forms of resistance developed** among the populations of the countries occupied by the Germans, mainly as a response to terrorist measures. A partisan movement, organised into entire armies, was active in Yugoslavia (initially led by the Serbian nationalist and later communist, Josip Broz Tito), Greece, Poland, France and many parts of the Soviet Union. The German invaders used the most brutal means possible against the partisans but it should also be stressed that in many cases the partisans also terrorised civilians who refused to cooperate with

them. Hundreds of thousands of European citizens worked as slave labourers for the German war industry which exploited the resources of the occupied territories to the limit.

In the summer of 1945, besides the exhilaration of victory in the Allied Powers, the mood of the European and American public was strongly influenced by the **desire for revenge**. Millions demanded the punishment of war criminals, and the victors were bound by their earlier promises. It was in these circumstances that the trial of 22 of the main criminals of defeated Germany took place in Nuremberg, lasting a year from November 1945. Soviet, American, British and French prosecutors charged Nazi political and military leaders with crimes against peace, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The **Nuremberg trials** were followed by 12 more trials, also held in Nuremberg, which lasted up to April 1949. In Tokyo, Japanese war criminals were tried before the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, and dozens of trials by **popular tribunals** were held in many European countries. The Nuremberg trials were show trials in nature even though the members of the Nazi elite were, of course, to be punished. As to the charges of **planning and instigating a war of aggression** and of launching it without a declaration of war, this could also apply to the British and the Soviets. It is sufficient to refer only to the fact that the neutrality of Norway and Greece was first violated by the British, without mentioning the Soviet war against Finland. **Terror bombings against civilians** applied to the British and Americans as much as to the Soviets or the Germans. Most of the German officers on trial defended themselves by claiming that they were acting on orders but the man who issued those orders, Adolf Hitler, could no longer be tried. In his memoirs, US Attorney General Robert Jackson admitted afterwards that the German defendants could have been tried under laws and charges that were in force during the era of Nazi Germany. However, since most of the charges were drawn up immediately before the Nuremberg trial, the defendants and some of the German people were justified in feeling that political will motivated the trial. In the end, the verdicts resulted in 9 of the 22 people on trial being sentenced to death, several to long prison sentences and others were acquitted.

It is impossible to estimate the **exact number of casualties in the Second World War**, but of all the wars fought so far, it claimed the most victims. Military casualties accounted for only part of the **50 to 60 million total** (a total of 11 million soldiers died and 25 million were wounded) with the rest being among civilians. That includes the yet unknown losses among the Chinese population (certainly more than a million) who died as a result of Japanese invasion which began in 1931. Warsaw was destroyed by the Germans three times (at the end of September 1939, in 1943 during the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

and in August 1944 when the Soviet army stationed outside the Polish capital failed to provide effective support to the Polish resistance against the Germans). In the Soviet Union, one in two families mourned someone at the end of the war (over 20 million dead in total), and Poland lost 18% of its pre-war population with 6 million dead. In addition to the six million German soldiers who died, the Allied bombing and the advance of the Red Army caused the deaths of 2,6 million German citizens. The fate of the prisoners of war was tragic. Of the 5 million Russians taken prisoner by the Germans, at least four million died mainly in German camps (about 3 million), and after 1945, one million German and other nationalities were taken as prisoners to Soviet labour camps (including Hungarian prisoners of war and civilians who were rounded up). In August and September 1945, the Red Army captured more than one million Japanese soldiers, most of whom disappeared forever. Terror bombings of cities in Germany and Japan killed half a million people, and the Nazi persecution of Jews killed six million.

In addition to the enormous losses, the end of the war was accompanied by **large-scale population movements** in Europe. This partly meant the **return of the civilian population who had fled** and partly **relocations**. Almost the entire German population of Eastern and Central Europe had to be resettled in Germany, something decided at the Potsdam Conference, which meant the forcible relocation of more than 3 million Germans. A large part of the Hungarians in the Highlands, who were declared fascists on the basis of **collective guilt**, had to leave their homeland just like the Sudeten Germans or the ethnic Germans in the west of Poland. This process resulted in countless personal family tragedies, mainly among those who were innocent bystanders or victims of the war. In the summer of 1945, the general desire for peace and joy was accompanied in almost every country by a desire for vengeance, fuelled by perceived or real victories which the prosecution of war criminals could only partly fulfil. The Yugoslav partisan army led by Tito massacred thousands of Hungarians and Germans in the south on charges of collaboration with the Germans, but the same fate was met by Ukrainian, Belarusian and Baltic volunteers who fought alongside the Germans in the Soviet Union. In Hungary, occupied by the Red Army, and in other countries, Soviet soldiers kept the population in a state of constant insecurity through robbery, looting and mass violence against women.

Eastern and Central Europe was controlled by the Soviet Union which, by the summer of 1945, had become the world's largest military power with 12 million troops. Western Europe depended on American forces for its independent existence. The future of the European continent was thus determined by centres of power whose spheres of interest had traditionally long been outside Europe. The great power positions of the United States of America and the Soviet Union could

not be disturbed, and it was to be expected that the two great victors would soon establish their spheres of interest in Europe. The most important consequence of the Second World War was that two essentially non-European powers decided the fate of the continent and the world. Ostensibly, both sides agreed on the basic principles of securing the fate of the different nations on democratic foundations and through peaceful means. However, the differences in the organisation, structure, operation and objectives of the **Pax Americana** (US-controlled states) and the **Pax Sovietica** (Soviet Union-influenced states) were so profound that it was only a matter of time before the former allies came face to face.

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<sup>1</sup> Barta, Róbert: *Az első es második világháború képes története.* (The History of the First and the Second World War in Pictures). Debrecen 2010. 233–443.

<sup>2</sup> [The Atlantic Charter \(14 August 1941\)](#). (Downloaded: 22 October 2023).

<sup>3</sup> The Casablanca Conference (14-24 January 1943). In: *A Decade of American Foreign Policy*. 9–10.

<sup>4</sup> The Tehran Conference (28 November – 1 December 1943). In: *A Decade of American Foreign Policy*. 21–22.

<sup>5</sup> The Yalta Conference (4-11 February 1945). In: *A Decade of American Foreign Policy*. 23–28.

<sup>6</sup> The aftermath of the Yalta agreement and its impact on the countries of Eastern Europe: Fehér, Ferenc – Heller, Ágnes: *Jalta után. Kelet-Európa hosszú forradalma Jalta ellen.* (After Yalta. Eastern Europe's Long Revolution Against Yalta). Budapest 1990.

<sup>7</sup> The Potsdam Conference (17 July – 2 August 1945). In: *A Decade of American Foreign Policy*. 28–40.

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## The Cold War's Forms of Opposition

(*Róbert Barta*)

The definition of the historical period known as the **Cold War**, its causes, chronology of events, phasing, characterisation and historical judgement are still matters of debate in the historiography. For a long time, the debate was based on an assumption that history after 1945 could only be examined from a single perspective without knowledge of the important sources. The reason for this was essentially great power politics – the Cold War could be interpreted either according to Soviet or American interests. But now that the period of history has come to an end with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the archival material of the various countries is becoming increasingly accessible, the complex issues of the Cold War can be seen in a clearer light. There is a broad consensus that the Cold War should be understood as a **great power (superpower) confrontation** between the United States of America and the Soviet Union which had its roots in the years of the World Wars, was fully fledged after 1945, but did not involve a real military confrontation quite unlike the two World Wars. The character of opposition was multi-layered and took different forms in different periods. Economic competition, the acquisition and expansion of spheres of interest, arms races and scientific-technological rivalry, support for smaller allies, direct or indirect participation in local wars and ideological confrontation were all “*theatres of war*” in the Cold War. Although US and Soviet soldiers did not directly engage in operations against each other, the confrontation extended to all other areas. Moscow and Washington used outer space for such purposes, as well as science, culture and the arts, modern mass communications and propaganda – along with the secret service wars, the world of spies, which until recently remained in deep obscurity.

Opinions now differ on the causes of the Cold War confrontation. Some argue that aggressive Soviet foreign policy during and after the war and Stalin personally were responsible for everything and that the West only responded adequately to Soviet challenges. For decades, of course, Soviet historiography emphasised the responsibility of the Americans and their allies who wanted to smash the Soviet bloc for their own ambition of world domination. A third historical approach (the so-called post-revisionist Cold War school of history), which has been in existence since the mid-1980s, holds that differences in the internal structure and functioning of the two superpowers, as well as the mutual distrust that developed, made each side responsible for the confrontation. This more nuanced

approach sees events not in the context of challenge-response but in terms of superpower objectives.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Classic Phase of the Cold War*

The common starting point for the schools of history that interpret the Cold War is that the relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States between 1941 and 1945 was harmonious because US military supplies were needed by Moscow, the defeat of Nazi Germany became a mutual aim, and spheres of interest did not clash. The Yalta Conference was the culmination of this cooperation. In the summer of 1944, secret Anglo–American–German armistice talks were held in Italy which the Western Allies did not officially inform Stalin about; he learned of them through secret channels. This was in sharp contradiction to the Tehran decisions to negotiate with the Germans only together and only with a precondition of unconditional surrender. The discovery dangerously increased the already existing Soviets' mistrust of their Western allies. However, the **Allied Control Commissions (ACC)** set up in Allied-occupied countries of Poland and Austria (where there was a Soviet occupation) were not open to Western interference. This was a serious violation of the Yalta resolutions on the part of the Soviets because with the ACC under their control, instead of initiating democratic development, they blatantly interfered in the internal politics of the countries occupied by the Red Army and supported communist parties everywhere. Although there was a formal agreement between Churchill and Stalin at the end of 1944 on respective spheres of interest in Central and Eastern Europe, the real balance of power was in fact determined by the Soviet military presence. The Soviet deportations of Germans from Central and Eastern Europe were accompanied by such severe reprisals (millions of Germans were killed) that the Americans, citing a lack of rail capacity, put the brakes on deportations wherever possible. These episodes were compounded by the mass-scale violence and looting of the civilian population by the occupying Soviet troops.

Since the Red Army units, contrary to the previous agreement, had not left Persia even by 1946, the Americans and the British decided to build up Western positions in Turkey and Greece as a counterbalance. American arms flowed to the Turkish army and the British intervened in the **Greek Civil War** on the side of the non-communist partisan movement. Although only with American help, the communists were driven out of Greece by 1949 and Athens became an important Aegean ally of the Western world. At the beginning of 1946, relations between the two former allies had deteriorated to the point where an open break was all



that was needed to issue in a new war. It was in such a situation that **Winston Churchill's famous speech at Fulton University in the United States (5 March 1946)** was delivered, one which was immediately portrayed by the Soviet press as the opening of the Cold War. In fact, the British statesman was merely assessing the situation in Europe when he spoke of the emergence of an *"Iron Curtain"* stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic, behind which the Soviets were gradually building their own empire without any input from the West. *"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow."*<sup>22</sup> Churchill saw this as tragic since it meant that Europe was once again divided after the defeat of the Nazis. He called for the Western nations to unite against Soviet expansionism which was not a new element departing from his earlier speeches. Nor was this the first time the term *"Iron Curtain"* was used; it had already appeared in the writings of Russian émigrés in 1918 and later in Nazi propaganda. US foreign policy, independent of Churchill's speech, was already advocating **containment**, and a decisive role in this was played by **George Frost Kennan**, a diplomat at the US Embassy in Moscow, who analysed the aims of Soviet foreign policy in his **Long Telegram** sent in early 1946. Kennan noted, among other things, that Stalinist foreign policy was essentially no different from the old tsarist ideals of conquest. The Stalinist logic of creating as large a Soviet sphere of influence in Europe as possible reduced the security risks on the western borders of the Soviet Union itself since countries under Moscow's close control could not pose a threat. Ultimately, therefore, total Soviet domination of Europe was the only true security guarantee.

The Americans responded effectively to the Soviet challenge. On **5 June 1947**, in a speech at Harvard University, US Secretary of State **George C. Marshall** announced substantial US economic aid to European states willing to cooperate economically and politically with the United States (**Marshall Plan**): *"Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist. [...] Any government that is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full co-operation I am sure, on the part of the United States Government."*<sup>23</sup> Together with the policy of containment, this formed the so-called **Truman Doctrine** which set the course of American foreign policy for many years. Marshall Aid,

which was disbursed between 1948 and 1951, was structural aid, i.e. it was not largely a cash donation but a supply of food, fuel, machinery, vehicles, other raw materials and semi-finished goods. In total, 18 countries benefited from 10 billion dollars in aid, the largest recipients being Britain, France and West Germany. The programme was not extended to the Soviet Union but was to be extended to Central European states – although the Czechoslovak and Hungarian requests were blocked by Moscow's veto. The Soviets saw the aid as a form of conquest by American imperialism, viewing the whole thing as an economic partition of Europe. However, more recent research has shown that Marshall Aid served a different purpose; it contributed to the reconstruction of the Western European (including West German) economy and thus artificially created an outlet for the US economy. The Cold War confrontation caused Marshall Aid to be substantially overrated and embedded in an international political framework.

The Soviet Union's response was to strengthen the bloc of Eastern and Central European countries that it dominated. **At the end of September 1947, the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties, Cominform**, was established at the resort of *Szklarska Poręba* in western Poland. At the meeting there, the head of the Soviet delegation, **Andrey Alexandrovich Zhdanov**, formulated the **theory of the so-called two camps** and the thesis of the inevitability of the Third World War in his speech. According to Zhdanov – and this was obviously Stalin's position – the peoples of the world must decide which path to take, and this can only be achieved if one side prevails in a further war. To this end, it was necessary to prepare for a confrontation with the Americans and their allies, and to enter into a close alliance with the Soviet Union. By the end of 1947, therefore, the two great powers, empires which operated according to completely different internal logics, had become active in all areas and had embarked on a path of open confrontation.

After Germany's surrender, the Allied powers, occupying the country in four zones, still had no unified vision of Germany's future. On the Soviet side, a unified, neutral, but pro-Moscow German state was envisaged. However, after the economic unification of the American and British occupation zones (**Bizonia, January 1947**) and the announcement of Marshall Plan, it became clear that the Americans were not prepared to give up their interests. By this time, a multi-party system was in place in the western territories and the industrial capacity of the Rhine and Ruhr areas was beginning to recover. In June 1948, a **monetary reform** was implemented in the western zones (one West German mark for every ten Reich marks) and the Soviets responded by imposing a **land blockade** around Berlin. The US and British air forces then airlifted supplies to the western sectors of Berlin (**Berlin Airlift**), a year-long operation that required a high degree of

organisation and precision. The efficiency of the airlift, which operated hundreds of flights a day, shocked Stalin and made it clear that the division of Germany and Berlin was inevitable. Accordingly, in 1949, the **Federal Republic of Germany** (under the Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer), a Western interest, and the **German Democratic Republic** (under the German Communist Party led by General Secretary Walter Ulbricht), based on the Soviet military presence, were created. The divided German people, Berlin and the **Berlin Wall**, which was built in a single day (13 August 1961), became symbols of Cold War confrontation.

The Soviet leadership was initially as uncertain about the fate of the states of Eastern and Central Europe as it was about German affairs. There was no doubt that the three Baltic states would become part of the Soviet Union and that for strategic and historical reasons Poland, Bulgaria and Romania should be linked to Moscow by the closest ties. However, the situation was less clear-cut in the case of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, all the more so because there were no Soviet forces stationed in Yugoslavia (the partisan movement led by Tito had driven the Germans out largely on its own). Austria was under Soviet occupation (along with Hungary and Czechoslovakia) but in these areas there was either no communist party or only a minor political force. The **adoption of a Soviet-style system** could therefore only be accomplished **gradually** and took place in the countries of the region at different times and in different ways.

**However, the basic formula was the same in all cases;** initially, the communist parties united the national resistance groups against fascism into a broad coalition, a popular front, with the full support of the Red Army and the local ACC. Building on this, in the so-called Provisional Governments, communist exiles from Moscow were given a key role everywhere (taking control of the communist parties in the region). In the third step, civilian-led coalition governments were established, mostly through free elections, in which key economic and domestic positions were taken by communist politicians. The civil parties and their politicians were then terrorized, slandered and exhibited in show trials that were used to overthrow this parliamentary majority and set up communist-led, left-wing pseudo-coalitions which held control and rigged elections everywhere. At the same time, the persecution of the churches and the purge within the communist parties were aimed at the “*deviant*” politicians not supported by Moscow. Finally, the whole of economic life (planned economy, centralised management), the structure of the state (state party), the functioning of society and ideology were adapted to the Soviet model. This process took place first in Albania and Bulgaria (1946), then in Romania and Poland (1947), and finally in Czechoslovakia (1948), Hungary and the GDR (1949).<sup>4</sup>

An exception was Yugoslavia where a one-party communist system was established under Tito independently of Moscow, resulting in the complete isolation of Belgrade (1948–1956). A completely different path was followed after the civil war victory of Communist China under Mao Tse-tung in 1949; there, an Asian style of despotism was combined with Chinese communist ideology. In the Central and Eastern European states, which were divided into Soviet zones, Moscow's will was secured primarily by the Soviet military stationed in them and by loyal Communist Party leaders. That role was played by **Enver Hoxha** in Albania, **Georgi Mikhailovich Dimitrov** in Bulgaria, **Gheorghe Gheorgiu-Dej** in Romania, **Władysław Gomułka** in Poland, **Klement Gottwald** in Czechoslovakia, **Mátyás Rákosi** in Hungary and **Walter Ulbricht** in the GDR. The communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, which were created at an accelerated pace after the formation of the Cominform, were also integrated into the **economic** (1949 – **Council for Mutual Economic Assistance – Comecon**) and **military** (1955 – **Warsaw Pact**) organisations of the Soviet bloc. The only means the Soviets conceived for dealing with conflicts within the countries of the region was armed intervention. The **workers' uprising in Berlin in 1953** was put down by Soviet tanks as were the **Hungarian revolution of 1956** and the **Prague demonstrations of 1968**. Because of the division and stability of European interests, the Western alliance system, led by the United States of America, expressed only formal solidarity with the anti-Soviet movements in the region. The existence of the Soviet zone in Central and Eastern Europe depended on the internal relations and external position of the imperial centre. Ultimately the existence of the Soviet Union was closely intertwined with the fate of the territories it ruled.

Although the **Soviet Union** emerged from the Second World War as a victorious and pre-eminent military power, its economy was in ruins and its loss of life was enormous. Nonetheless, the regime exploited the propaganda potential of victory to the full, culminating in a gigantic celebration of Stalin's 70th birthday (December 1949). Despite the economic pillaging of Central and Eastern Europe, and the enslavement of millions of people in Soviet labour camps, the country's economy did not recover from the war until the early 1960s. **More than twenty million prisoners of war worked in 45 major prison camps** to achieve the goals of the Fourth and Fifth Five-Year Plans (1946–1955). During this period, the large power stations on the Volga and Dnieper rivers were built mainly to supply energy for armament programmes. By this time, the Soviet Union, with its nuclear weapons (1949) and hydrogen weapons (1953), took an active role in world politics, and the internal stability of the system was firmly established until Stalin's death in early March 1953. In many respects, the decades after the Soviet dictator's death can justifiably be called the period of post-Stalinism,

as the succession of party chiefs (Nikita Sergeyeovich Khrushchev, Leonid Ilich Brezhnev, Yury Vladimirovich Andropov, Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko, Mikhail Sergeyeovich Gorbachev) and the changes of emphasis in Soviet foreign policy in the context of the Cold War did not affect the essential character of the system. **The Soviet system, based on a one-party dictatorship, ruled by the army and the secret police (NKVD, then KGB), and based on a centralised and command-and-control economy that made it increasingly difficult to cope with the arms race, reached the brink of economic collapse by the mid-1980s.**

After Stalin's death, the new leadership seemed to break with the past. In February 1956, Nikita Sergeyeovich Khrushchev exposed Stalin's crimes during a speech to the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in front of delegates who had themselves been active participants in the lawlessness. A new direction in foreign policy was taken by the so-called **Brezhnev Doctrine**, announced after 1964, which was based on the avoidance of a third world war and the proclamation of peaceful coexistence. But here, too, the boundaries were clear; nowhere within the Soviet bloc could the one-party system be abandoned, nor could the federal system be left in place. The military suppression of the Czechoslovak reform movement of 1968 which proclaimed "*socialism with a human face*" illustrated the narrow margins of manoeuvring laid down in the Brezhnev Doctrine. The Western world accepted the realities, reflected in the change in West German foreign policy (**Ostpolitik**) from 1969 to 1980, mainly under the Social Democrat **Willy Brandt**. This meant official West German recognition of the countries of the Soviet bloc which helped to boost trade relations. As a culmination of the policy of détente, in the summer of 1975 in Helsinki, the leaders of 33 European countries, alongside the United States and Canada, signed the Treaty on Security and Cooperation in Europe (**Helsinki Final Act**), guaranteeing the inviolability of European borders and renouncing the use of force: "*The participating States will refrain in their mutual relations, as well as in their international relations in general, from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State [...]. The participating States regard as inviolable all one another's frontiers as well as the frontiers of all States in Europe and therefore they will refrain now and in the future from assaulting these frontiers. [...] The participating States will respect the territorial integrity of each of the participating States.*"<sup>5</sup>

However, the millions of people living in the world of "*actually existing socialism*" lived their daily lives in a type of dictatorship, fundamentally created by Stalin, with minor and major modifications, until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. These decades profoundly transformed the social structure, ideology and public thinking of the countries of the Soviet bloc, as well as science and the arts.

A peculiar form of Soviet-style regime was implemented in China where **Mao Tse-tung** pursued an initially close cooperation with Moscow (1949–1962). However, Communist China soon wanted to act as a leader of Third World nations and a great power in Asia, and this led to a break with Moscow. The conquest of Tibet (1950), the ongoing conflicts with Taiwan and India, and active involvement in the Korean and Vietnam wars were the hallmarks of China's expansionist foreign policy. All this required a high concentration of internal resources which was achieved in the economy through the so-called **people's communes**. The idea of the "*Great Leap Forward*", which envisaged a rapid increase in production (especially steel), was pursued with the involvement of the whole of Chinese society. This meant the forced relocation of millions of Chinese citizens, terror by the military and political police and ultimately economic collapse. In a similar swift and radical move, purges were launched from 1966 onwards in the party and the army, and at all levels of the state bureaucracy. Known as the "*Cultural Revolution*", the process lasted ten years and was only ended with the death of Mao Tse-tung. By the 1970s, China, which had become a nuclear power, gradually normalised its relations with the United States and, under the leadership of **Deng Xiaoping**, the Communist Party launched a series of economic reform measures. Although the regime remained a one-party dictatorship, by the late 1980s the Chinese economy had become the fastest growing market in the world, attracting huge capital investment because of cheap labour. Yet, the Chinese communist leadership did not allow the political structure to be transformed as was evidenced by the **bloody suppression of student protests in Beijing's Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tiananmen) Square in 1989**. The uniqueness of the Chinese communist establishment lies in the fact that a monolithic political structure resting upon a prosperous economy, which was in fact capitalist-based, could be viable.<sup>6</sup>

### *Local Conflicts and the Arms Race*

In the history of the Cold War, the first of the local (colonial or ex-colonial) conflicts<sup>7</sup> that triggered a real war took place on the Korean peninsula. In fact, the **Korean War (1950–1953)** was not planned by any of the major powers, and Soviet involvement was limited throughout it. In the summer of 1945, the Korean peninsula was divided into two occupation zones by the Americans and the Soviets who had defeated the Japanese. In the north, a communist state was established under **Kim Il Sung**, based on the communist partisan movement and the People's Front Committees, and it developed close ties with the Soviet Union and China. The pro-Western state in the US military-controlled southern territo-



ry laid claim to the entire peninsula as did North Korea. After the UN sided with South Korea in the dispute and ordered the withdrawal of Soviet and US troops, North Korea launched an attack on its southern neighbour. The North made a rapid advance as far as the southern coast of the peninsula from which only an army comprised of 15 countries under US leadership (commanded by **General Douglas MacArthur**) was able to repel them. By November 1950, the troops fighting under the auspices of the United Nations had reached the northern Yalu River which marks the Korean–Chinese border. Beijing interpreted this as an American attack on China and sent 200,000 troops to help the North Korean communists. A stalemate ensued which ended in 1953 with a **truce** in the border town of **Panmunjom**. Again, the border between the two countries was drawn approximately at the 38° parallel, but to this day no peace treaty has been signed between the two countries. The United States always stood firmly on the side of the southern state, in the spirit of the policy of containment, but did not want to use nuclear or hydrogen weapons in the war. Stalin had a profound contempt for all communist movements other than the Soviet communists, and he did not consider the Soviet presence in the Third World to be a very important issue. The Soviet arsenal was still mostly based on World War II-era equipment although new MIG jet fighters had already been deployed in North Korea. The Korean conflict – which caused a wartime economic boom in the West and within the Soviet bloc – was perhaps most important for the Chinese. More recent research makes it clear that Beijing expected the conflict to escalate and a world war to break out.

The most serious conflict episode of the Cold War was the **Cuban Missile Crisis**. Relations between Cuba and the US were never smooth with the island being considered important by the Americans for its sugar cane, rum and tobacco, and also as a holiday paradise. In early 1959, **an armed uprising led by Fidel Castro** ended what was clearly a colonial dependency on the US in economic terms. The new regime, which triumphed as a national independence movement, suffered severe economic difficulties as a result of the US blocking the world market for Cuban sugar. The Soviet leadership was acutely aware that it could easily win over the new Cuban regime if it developed a close economic partnership with Havana. From 1960 until the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow was the secure market for Cuban sugar, and in return the Castro regime was transformed into a Soviet-style dictatorship. The background to Soviet expansion in Cuba was the temporary breakdown of US–Soviet relations. At the time, Washington deployed medium-range missiles in Turkish territory which could reach all major cities in the Soviet Union's European territory. On 1 May 1960, Soviet air defences shot down an American U2 spy plane over Sverdlovsk, Siberia with the

pilot, who ejected successfully, being captured by the Soviets. By then, faced with overwhelming US superiority in strategic nuclear weapons, the Soviet leadership decided to deploy missiles in Cuba. The US government officially announced on 22 October 1962 that it had evidence that the Soviet Union had deployed short- and medium-range missiles in Cuba. At the same time, a group of Cuban emigrants from Florida attempted to land in the **Bay of Pigs** area of Cuba as part of a covert operation by the **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**. The operation, like numerous CIA assassination attempts against Castro, ended in complete failure. Democratic President **John Fitzgerald Kennedy**, with the agreement of the majority of the American public, called for the most serious response, including a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union. Since then, the subsequent disclosure of sources relating to the Cuban missile crisis has revealed that the US government was able to identify Soviet missile sites in Cuba on the basis of information provided by a senior Soviet KGB intelligence officer.



Fig. 1. Soviet missiles in Cuba, 1962

Evidence shows that on October 4, 1962, a total of 116 missile warheads, launching equipment and 6 nuclear bombs were unloaded from the Soviet ship *Indigirka* in the Cuban port of Mariel and deployed on Cuban territory. The US Navy and Air Force set up a tight blockade around the island and there were sharp exchanges of notes between Washington and Moscow. There was panic among the American population as Soviet missiles could now reach the major cities on the east coast. The already **strong anti-communist sentiment in American public thinking**, represented in the 1950s by Senator Joseph McCarthy (**McCarthyism**), was at its height. Both camps mobilised their full military might and on 27 October 1962, humanity came to the brink of another world war. On that day, Cuban air defences opened fire on several US aircraft but the Soviet military leadership called off the action. Eventually, the conflict ended with the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles and this failure played a major role in Khrushchev's ouster two years later. Although the direct Soviet military presence in Cuba gradually disappeared, the Havana regime is still based on a Soviet-style communist establishment. The revolution and Cuba's conscious export of the Soviet model to Central and South America also placed the region among the Cold War theatres of war. A good example of this was in **Nicaragua**, but also in **Chile** where the pro-Soviet regime led by **Salvador Allende** (1970–1973) could only be overthrown by military officers (led by General **Augusto Pinochet**) with US help. There is a strong link between the **assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas (22 November 1963)** and the Cuban conflict. One common thread in the various conspiracy theories is that the Cuban underworld in Florida, in league with the American mafia and the military-industrial complex, assassinated the president whose main crime was not having started a war against the Soviets. There is no conclusive evidence to support these views, but there is no doubt that after the Cuban Missile Crisis, the course of the Cold War and the relationship between the two powers changed radically. The policy of containment was gradually replaced by the theory of **mutual and massive retaliation** which saw the balance as based on the accumulation of modern weapons and the realisation that there could be no winner in nuclear war. On this basis, dialogue and cooperation slowly began. In a strange contrast to the basic trend of the Cold War, the world became somewhat safer after the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The success of the United States in Cuba, emerging from the Second World War as a military and economic superpower, only partially masked the fact that the internal relations of the country, stretching the width of a continent, had been radically transformed. The US suffered relatively few casualties in the war (362,000 dead) and was more successful in converting its huge war economy to peaceful production than it had been after the First World War. The period from

1949 onwards, known as the **Fair Deal**, was dedicated to the creation of universal prosperity, and President Kennedy essentially continued this from 1961 onwards with his **New Frontier**. However, the promotion of job creation, social security and equal rights stood in stark contrast to the state's action against unions, granted it was well known that unions and the underworld were to some extent intertwined. It took ten years from 1955 (when full military service for people of colour was allowed) before the **Civil Rights Act (1964), which formally abolished racial discrimination, was passed**. President Kennedy, a Democrat, took office in 1961 and sought to give the country a new impetus not only in this but in all other areas. To increase competitiveness and boost the economy, public investment aid was provided for rocket technology, space research and armaments, helping to boost several backing-industry sectors. Building a sense of social solidarity based on the principles of legality, freedom and equality of rights (**United We Stand**) was initially a resounding success. However, the United States entered the **Vietnam War**, which became a landmark in modern American history, with overconfidence and unpreparedness.

The Vietnamese, sometimes nicknamed the "*Prussians of Asia*", initially had nothing to do with the Americans. During the Middle Ages they were at constant war with the Chinese, and as a French colony during the Second World War, **Indochina** came under Japanese occupation. At the Potsdam Conference, the Allies designated Chinese and British zones of operations in the region and then drew the armistice line at 16° north latitude. This roughly bisected Vietnam in the middle, and north of it, relying on the League for the Independence of Vietnam (**Viet Minh**), Communist Party leader **Ho Chi Minh** proclaimed the **Democratic Republic of Vietnam** in the summer of 1945. The army of the new state grew out of the anti-Japanese communist partisan movement, and its constitution was almost word for word identical to the US Constitution. This caused considerable confusion in Washington where Western allied solidarity demanded French support and the principle of national self-determination demanded recognition of the new state. In the post-war southern zone (centred on Saigon), the initial British invaders were replaced by French expeditionary troops which proclaimed the **Republic of Cochinchina** in 1946, the Foreign Legion occupying the Red River Delta. This marked the beginning of the **First Indochina War (1946–1954)** between the French and the North Vietnamese which ended in the shameful defeat of the French forces (1954 – Battle of Dien Bien Phu). The North Vietnamese troops, with their local knowledge and partisan tactics, had an experienced officer corps and were supported by the Chinese. After the First Indochina War, Laos and Cambodia were established as independent states on the peninsula, and Vietnam was officially divided into two parts along the 16° parallel.

Until 1964, there were ongoing conflicts between pro-Western and communist Vietnam, stemming from the gradual infiltration and operations of Northern troops across the border through Laos (**Ho Chi Minh Trail**). US military advisers were present from the outset alongside the South Vietnamese army and their numbers increased in proportion to the gradual **escalation** of the war. In the summer of 1964, following an alleged provocation in the Gulf of Tonkin in North Vietnam, President Lyndon B. Johnson was given unlimited authority to deploy US troops. Accordingly, the number of troops increased to 160,000 by 1965 and the first major clashes took place that year. The main reason for the initial US military success was technical superiority (use of transport helicopters and mass bombing), but local knowledge and the support of a larger part of the population stood in favour of the North Vietnamese. Their tactics were based on the assumption that the scale of American casualties would, after a while, no longer be acceptable to the American public. This was evident in early 1968 during the North Vietnamese offensive against Saigon (**Tet Offensive**) when both sides suffered heavy losses but it was the US command that was more upset. By this time, violence against civilians and the anti-war movement in the United States (combined with a generational rebellion by the youth in **the hippie movement**) were on the agenda of the opposing sides, leading to questions about the US involvement in the war. Heavy losses and public opposition at home led the Americans to initiate armistice and peace negotiations in May 1968, and to gradually stop bombing North Vietnam's territory. In September of the following year, Republican President **Richard M. Nixon** announced the withdrawal of half a million US troops. By that point, the Vietnam War had spread to Laos and Cambodia (the region had **Vietnamised**) and the great northern offensive of March 1972 was only repulsed by South Vietnam with the help of US bombers. US ground forces, down to 69,000, no longer intervened and were withdrawn completely in January 1973. At the **Paris Conference on Vietnam**, which was then opened up, diplomatic wrangling over the fate of the region continued for two years. In the end, the word of arms prevailed. By the summer of 1975, the army of the North had completely occupied the South's territories and Vietnam was reunified as a communist state. The **Socialist Republic of Vietnam**, as a member of the Comecon and the Warsaw Pact, became the military power of the Soviet bloc in the region, occupying Cambodia from 1979 to 1989.

The Vietnam War cost the US 58,000 dead and some 150 billion dollars in war expenditures. The number of Vietnamese military and civilian casualties was close to three million. The Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc, as well as China, were much more intensively involved in this conflict than in the Korean War. Moscow supported the North with heavy weapons and warplanes, Beijing with



thousands of “volunteers”. The American public was shocked by the defeat in the war and the scale of the military losses. Anti-war and anti-government sentiment grew to such a degree that it even shaped the perceptions of Vietnam veterans. For the most part, they were not received as heroes, and this made their re-integration into American society extremely difficult. As a result, the Vietnam trauma became a long-lasting and integral part of the American public consciousness as is illustrated by the never-ending stream of films, books and memoirs on the subject.

The geographical scope of the Cold War confrontation, the interventions of the great powers in local conflicts and the specificities of the international politics demanded by the new situation after 1945 are also evident in the post-war history of the Middle East. In Egypt, an important part of the British Empire, British troops were stationed until 1952, maintaining control of the Suez Canal. In 1952, an Egyptian army coup overthrew the kingdom and brought to power **Gamal Abdel Nasser** who became known as a driver of Arab nationalism and anti-Jewish sentiment until his death in 1970. His plan to unite the Arab countries (**Pan-Arabism**) could not be implemented because of the lack of support from the great powers and the antagonisms of the states in the region. Until the mid-1960s, Lebanon, “*the Switzerland of the Middle East*”, was a relatively stable and economically prosperous state where, after pan-Arab uprisings, the US military intervention (1958) finally put power in the hands of a Muslim military elite that was able to maintain order for more than a decade.

The **Arab (Palestinian) – Jewish conflict** is a factor linked to all the problems of the region. In 1939, about 12% of Palestine’s territory and 1/3 of its population (540,000 people) were Jewish immigrants. This figure rose sharply after the war, but the British authorities, who were given UN authority to control the territory after 1945, did everything in their power to prevent the influx of Jews. Eventually, a UN special commission recommended the partition of Palestine which in effect meant the creation of a separate Jewish state. In May 1948, after the British withdrawal, the **State of Israel** was established with **David Ben-Gurion** as its first Prime Minister. The creation of the Jewish state was supported by the Soviet Union and its allies who saw it as a major blow to the British colonial empire and ultimately to the imperialists. From the moment of its birth, the Jewish State was involved in wars with its Arab neighbours from which it emerged victorious without exception, largely thanks to American military and financial aid. In the five major wars from 1948 to 1982, Israel occupied Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, as well as the West Bank of the Jordan River. During the wars, Israel, supported by the United States, fought against Egyptian, Syrian, Jordanian and Palestinian forces armed and financed by the



Soviet Union. Since the early 1980s, hundreds of thousands of stateless Palestinians fleeing *en masse* from Jewish-occupied territories have provided a steady basis for popular anti-Jewish uprisings (*intifadas*) as well as the rise of Palestinian terrorism. The **Egyptian–Israeli Peace Treaty** signed at **Camp David in 1979** with US mediation remains the only peace in force in the region to this day.

The oil fields in northern Mesopotamia (Mosul, Kirkuk) brought **Iraq** to the forefront of great power interests early on. After the overthrow of the pro-British Iraqi kingdom in 1958, and as a result of numerous military uprisings, the Iraqi **Ba'ath Party**, combining nationalist and socialist ideology, seized power (from 1968 under **Saddam Hussein**). Already in 1961, Iraq announced its claim to Kuwait which Baghdad had always considered a province and an artificial state created by the British. All this, together with maturing Iraq–Iranian territorial and religious tensions, made the Tigris and Euphrates regions a permanent crisis hotspot by the 1980s. The **war against Iran (1980–1988)**, led by the Islamic fundamentalist leader Ayatollah **Khomeini**, was won by Baghdad, but only at the price of enormous bloodshed and the country's total indebtedness.

**In the last days of October 1956**, as the Hungarian Revolution was unfolding, French and British paratroopers landed in the Suez Canal area to secure the free use of this vital waterway for the West, even at the cost of going to war with Egypt. Moscow has already offered to help Nasser's Egypt if it wanted to retake control of the region. With this and Israeli attacks on the Egyptians, the conflict known as the **Suez Crisis** quickly took on a great power dimension. The sources that have been uncovered now make it clear that the key to resolving the Suez conflict was in the hands of the United States. Washington, with all the weight of a great power, ordered the belligerents to retreat and continued to ensure the free use of the waterway. US foreign policy thus dealt a blow to the British standing in Africa and London's prestige was severely damaged. Forced into an aggressive colonial position, the British had to abandon their African colonies. Ghana (1957) was the first in a series of independence moves, and in the 1960s (after the "*Year of Africa*"), one after another of the British colonies in Africa declared their independence. As members of the Commonwealth, however, they continued to have close ties with London, most notably by looking continually to the former mother country as a mediator in their internal and international disputes. From the Soviet side, the events in the Suez provided a good pretext to divert attention from military action against the Hungarian Revolution, but the source records do not support the theory that there was a US–Soviet deal on the interventions of the great powers in Suez and Hungary.

In **1955**, as a sign of the increased international engagement of independent African and Asian states, 29 states condemned all forms of colonialism, racial dis-

crimination and nuclear armament in a **joint declaration in Bandung**, Indonesia. On this basis, and because of the escalating Cold War tensions, the mostly former colonial countries formally established the **Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1961**. This group of countries, led by Yugoslavia, India, Egypt, Indonesia and Ghana, was a force to be reckoned with on the international stage, even by the superpowers. It was partly in this context that the UN resolution of 14 December 1960 declared colonialism incompatible with fundamental human rights and the Charter of the United Nations, thereby outlawing all forms of colonialism.

One of the main areas of East–West confrontation was the **arms race**. The development of increasingly destructive modern weapons began in the years of the Second World War (1941–1942) at American, Soviet and German research centres. In the United States in June 1942, General Leslie R. Groves directed a programme called the **Manhattan Engineer District (M.E.D.)** which aimed to achieve a US nuclear weapon. A team of scientists led by J. Robert Oppenheimer (Max Born, Leó Szilárd, Ede Teller, Tódor Kármán, etc.) at the Los Alamos experimental facility in New Mexico created three bombs by May 1945, two of which were used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. German nuclear physicists and rocket scientists who had been captured, and who later played a major role in American rocket and space technology research, contributed greatly to the American success. Although the war was raging in their country, the Soviets also began their secret nuclear weapons programme from the summer of 1942 in their laboratories in Kazan, Ufa and Alma-Ata – now Almaty. After 1945, the pre-eminent Soviet atomic scientists (Pyotr Leonidovich Kapitsa, Lev Davidovich Landau, Yakov Ilyich Frenkel and Igor Vasilyevich Kurchatov) were assisted by some six thousand German military-industrial experts who moved to the Soviet Union partly out of compulsion and partly because of the opportunities offered. As a result, the Soviets were able to start up their first nuclear reactor by Christmas 1946 but they would have to wait four years before they could produce an atomic bomb. Eventually, thanks to **industrial espionage** assisted by Klaus Fuchs at Los Alamos, Soviet spy Anatoly Antonovich Yakovlev and some help from the Rosenbergs, **Moscow carried out its first experimental nuclear explosion in the Urals on 29 August 1949**. The first Soviet atomic bomb proved to be six times more powerful than the American bombs used against the Japanese, prompting Washington to react. By the summer of 1948, there were 50 US atomic bombs waiting to be deployed, many of them at air bases in eastern England. By the time of the Berlin workers' uprising (June 1953), there were already 1,000 US atomic bombs in service, and by the time of the Hungarian Revolution (autumn 1956), the US Air Force had 53 bases and 150 airfields in Europe. During this period, some 170 billion dollars were spent on armaments, which was presumably similar to

the amount of money spent by the Soviets. On 1 November 1952, the Americans successfully tested a hydrogen bomb at Enewetak Atoll off the Marshall Islands in the Pacific. The new weapon, developed after research by **Ede Teller (Edward Teller)**, was successfully reproduced by the Soviets within a year. In August 1953, a team of scientists led by **Andrey Dmitriyevich Sakharov** celebrated the successful development of the **Soviet hydrogen bomb** in Kazakhstan. In the years that followed, several successful detonations were carried out by both sides and, by the end of 1955, the mutual nuclear threat was fully in place. This fact largely explained the non-intervention of the Western world during the anti-Soviet uprisings in Eastern Europe.

Once the bombs were mass produced, the main problem was how to deliver them safely. This led to a leap forward in missile technology. The foundations were laid by the Germans who, in the last years of the war, fired **V-rockets** (the name derived from the German *Vergeltung* – Retaliation) developed by **Wernher von Braun** at Peenemünde in the North Sea. By 1955, thanks to a research effort led by a Soviet, **Sergei Pavlovich Korolev**, Moscow had rockets capable of a range between 1000 and 1200 km. Two years later, having travelled a distance of more than 6 000 km, an improved type (multi-stage, intercontinental, ballistic) launched the first artificial object into space and circumnavigated the Earth (**Sputnik**). This shocked the Americans (October 1957 – the “*Sputnik shock*”) as it meant that the United States could be reached by Soviet missiles in 25–30 minutes, thus ending all Washington’s previous military monopolies (atomic bomb, hydrogen bomb, territorial inviolability). The era of the development of the giant rocket and the spy satellite was dawning. Since the 1960s, both the Soviet Union and the United States spent more than 40 billion dollars a year on missiles alone. The situation was eased only after the Cuban Missile Crisis when the **Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (1963)** and the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaties (1968)**, and the launch of **arms limitation negotiations (SALT-I in 1972 and SALT-II in 1979)**, brought about self-imposed limitations and a degree of cooperation between the nuclear powers. Alongside US propaganda slogans of “*flexible response*” and “*realistic deterrence*”, the Soviets also only expressed the possibility of a “*first strike*” in principle. From the late 1970s onwards, both sides switched to completely new weapons systems. **Air forces, intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear submarines and air-to-surface, air-to-air ballistic missiles became the means of mutual deterrence.** Space also became an arena for weaponization, requiring a level of investment that the Soviet Union and its allies could not sustain in the long term.

*European Integration and the Dissolution of the Soviet Bloc*

The major and minor players in the Cold War confrontation were mostly tied into the economic, political and military alliance system under either US or Soviet control. It should be stressed, however, that the integration of the European states that were part of the US alliance system was not hindered by Washington but was supported by it in accordance with its own interests. This was the starting point for the organisation of what is now the European Union, the first stage of which was marked by **Winston Churchill's speech at the University of Zurich (September 1946)** in which he considered Franco–German reconciliation to be the main guarantee of a united Europe while stressing the importance of the Soviet sphere of interest's peoples having a place in the **United States of Europe**. Thanks to the tenacious organisational work of the leading politicians of the nascent European movement (**Robert Schuman** of France, **Paul-Henri Spaak** of Belgium and **Alcide De Gasperi** of Italy), the **Council of Europe** and the **Council of Foreign Ministers** were established in 1949, followed by the **European Commission (1965)** and the ancestor of the current **European Parliament**, the Assembly (first meeting in Strasbourg in September 1952).

The political and institutional integration of Western Europe was closely linked to the military and economic integration of the region. While the **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**, established in 1949, provided a secure American umbrella from a military point of view, the establishment and operation of economic integration was largely the responsibility of the participating countries. The organisations set up to distribute Marshall Plan aid and consolidate **Franco–German economic cooperation (the European Coal and Steel Community or Montanunion – 1950)** laid the foundations for economic integration. As a result, on **25 March 1957**, France, Italy, the FRG and the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) signed treaties in **Rome** that established the **European Economic Community (EEC)** and the **European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)**. Together with other economic organisations set up later, this formed the nucleus of what later became the **European Union** which, by 1995, had expanded to 15 members (aside from the six founding countries: Great Britain, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Finland, Sweden). The so-called first and second Schengen agreements (1985 and 1990) gradually abolished border controls between member states, and the **1993 Schengen Agreement** introduced a new system of border controls while the **Maastricht Treaty**, which came into force on 1 November 1993, formally created the **European Union**. The creation of a single financial area (**the euro**) was a

lengthy process, especially as the EU carried out the **biggest enlargement in its history in 2004**. With 10 new members (the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia), the EU has become a home for some 450 million citizens from the Baltic Sea to the Atlantic. The economic strength of the European Union, which has since grown to 28 members (Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, Croatia in 2013) and a population of around 510 million<sup>8</sup>, is able to compete with the economic powerhouses of North America and Asia, giving some optimism for the future of a united Europe.

The success of European integration was set against the backdrop of the end of the Cold War and the **disintegration of the Soviet bloc**. The process began in **1979** when the Soviet **Red Army invaded Afghanistan**, only to leave a decade later in defeat with 15,000 soldiers dead. The Soviet invasion demanded a strong US response which the Republican president, **Ronald Reagan**, who stayed in power for two presidential terms starting in 1981, did without hesitation. The US leadership, with its strident anti-Soviet ideology (the Soviet Union as the “*evil empire*”), announced space weaponization because they knew the Soviet economy could not finance it. In addition to supporting Afghan guerrillas, the arena of sport, too, became the scene of hostilities during the period known as the “**Little Cold War**” (1979–1989). The Western countries did not participate in the 1980 Moscow Olympics, and in response, athletes from the Soviet bloc (with the exception of Romania) boycotted the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. In a sign that Britain was still a world power, the London government under **Margaret Thatcher** defended the Falkland Islands (April 1982) by defeating an Argentinian invasion.

By the mid-1980s, the Soviet bloc was showing signs of economic crisis. This was largely due to military spending but by this time the failing Soviet-style economies were invariably billions of dollars in debt to Western countries. The socialist economies had exhausted themselves by rejecting, for political and ideological reasons, the private capitalist and market-based economic system. The Comecon artificially cut these countries out of the world economy because they had to produce – in accordance with Soviet interests and on the basis of central decisions – products which were mostly unsaleable on the world market. The apparent maintenance of full employment of the populace was not accompanied by real economic performance because workers in the world of so-called **existing socialism** could not assess the real value of their work and the products they produced. In countries showing signs of a **shortage economy**, the state has tried to maintain social stability through extensive and often free social policy and other subsidies. After the major **Oil Crisis of 1973**, this was only possible with Western aid. From the mid-1980s onwards, most socialist countries saw price

rises, inflation, higher living costs and the introduction of personal income tax. Economic hardship led to a growing proportion of the population feeling that there was little point in continuing to support the system.

Sensing the need for reform, **Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev**, who took over Soviet party leadership in 1985, initiated a profound transformation that eventually shook the Soviet empire to its foundations. Based on the misconception that the socialist-style system could be reformed, he announced a policy of **opening (glasnost)** and **transformation (perestroika)**. In this spirit, Soviet troops were gradually withdrawn from Afghanistan, and the same course was envisaged for Eastern Europe. The new Soviet leadership realised that the country was not capable of stationing a force of such a size abroad. While freedom of expression and the press were gradually allowed, attempts at economic reform stalled. Moreover, the Gorbachev leadership underestimated the role and importance of Russian, Baltic, Ukrainian and other nationalistic sentiments within the Union. Opposition movements in Eastern Europe also sensed the weakening of the imperial centre, but with the exception of the Polish anti-communist trade union movement **Solidarity** (led by the workers' leader **Lech Wałęsa**), no opposition group in the region had a mass base of support.

**The year 1989** marked a radical turning point in post-World War II European and world history. The Gorbachev-led Soviet Union publicly renounced the empire's Eastern European territories when it recognised the right of member states to follow the path of their choice at the Warsaw Pact summit in Bucharest. By then, the Baltic republics of the Soviet Union had already expressed their desire for the restoration of sovereignty and preparations for German reunification had begun with the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. The activities of **Pope John Paul II (Karol Józef Wojtyła)**, who was of Polish origin, also played a significant role in the disintegration of the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe. In early December, US President **George Bush** and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev agreed on the demilitarisation of Eastern Europe, German reunification and a number of disarmament issues on a US warship near Malta. In return for Soviet concessions, the Americans promised Moscow substantial financial aid, but by then both sides knew that the Soviet Union could not be kept surviving for long. That year brought regime change in all the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe except Yugoslavia and Albania. With the exception of Romania, where **Nicolae Ceaușescu** and his regime were overthrown in bloody street fighting at the end of the year, all states had a peaceful, consensual transfer of power. In the case of Czechoslovakia with its "**Velvet Revolution**", and Hungary with its combination of reform and revolution, the so-called "**refolution**", the old ruling elite handed over power unopposed to the civil, liberal or conservative parties that had



emerged from the opposition movements. In return, the new political elite did not eliminate the old regime's supporters and did not put obstacles in the way of their retreat or their involvement in areas outside of politics (mainly the economy). Perhaps the only exception to this was the former GDR where all elements of the East German communist system were radically dismantled after **German reunification in 1990**. In a tragicomic sign of the unviability of the Soviet model, a special coup attempt was staged in Moscow at the end of August 1991 to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev. Sources now reveal that the anti-reform group's action was carried out with the knowledge of the Soviet Party General Secretary who was trying to gain further political capital to stay in power. The result, however, was the **swift dissolution of the Soviet Union (25 December 1991)** and the handing over of power to **Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin** who skilfully combined Russian nationalism with communist ideas. Yeltsin, in office as Russian President until the end of 1999, handed over the country's leadership to his own candidate (**Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin**). While no longer a military superpower by old Soviet standards, Russia remains a significant player in the world economy and in great power politics, maintaining largely stable internal conditions owing to its territorial size and substantial oil revenues.

After the regime changes in Eastern Europe, some of the states in the region opted for Western military and political integration. In **March 1999** the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary became members of **NATO**, and eight of the ten countries that **joined the European Union in 2004** were former members of the Soviet bloc. **NATO**<sup>9</sup> and EU membership were also on the horizon for Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria. Only the **disintegration of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia** in the region **had been violent**, indicating that communist ideology combined with nationalism could lead to civil war. After the death of Yugoslav communist leader Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the Serbian elite, led by party leader **Slobodan Milošević**, gradually took over political and economic positions, marginalising the Croats and Slovenes who were already economically viable in their own right. In **1991**, these two republics declared independence together with Bosnia and Herzegovina, something which led to a civil war in the latter (with Serbs versus Muslims and Croats). After the Yugoslav army, led by Serb officers, had launched a campaign in Croatia and Croatian armed forces had counter-attacked, **the Presidents of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina agreed on a peace treaty to end the war in Bosnia at Dayton Air Force Base in Ohio, USA at the end of November 1995**. The hostilities had been accompanied by brutal actions against the civilian population (**ethnic cleansing**). The previous July, Bosnian Serb troops occupied the UN-protected town of Srebrenica and massacred more than six thousand local Muslim residents. Finally, NATO's aerial war against

Yugoslavia (1999) and international control of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo forced the Serbian war machine to a stop. The lesson of the South Slavic wars was, among other things, that the European Union was not capable of managing armed conflict and that only the US military could contain Belgrade's Greater Serbia ambitions.

By the 1990s, the United States remained the only major military power in the world capable of intervening in any conflict within 24 hours, regardless of its geographical location.<sup>10</sup> However, the role of “*global policeman*” became most significant in the Persian (Arab) Gulf region, a vital interest for Washington, when Iraq invaded oil-rich Kuwait in the summer of 1990. In the operations known as “*Desert Shield*” (the defence of Saudi Arabia) and “*Desert Storm*” (the liberation of Kuwait and defeat of Iraq in January–February 1991), an international military coalition led by the United States of America, equipped with the most up-to-date technology, defeated the Iraqi army and liberated Kuwait in a matter of weeks. **Saddam Hussein** and his regime, which had been left in power for strategic reasons at the time, were finally overthrown in the **Second Gulf War which began in the first half of 2003**. In the 1990s, the great powers and the international community had been more or less successful in dealing with local, regional and traditional conflicts, but the threat of international terrorism required a new response. **On 11 September 2001**, agents of the international terrorist organisation **Al-Qaeda (the Base)** used hijacked US airliners to destroy the twin towers of the **World Trade Center** in New York while simultaneously attacking the Pentagon, the US Department of Defense. In response, the global fight against **international terrorism**, led by the United States, was launched and it continues today. After the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet bloc, the short twentieth century ended in 1991. However threatening the new conflicts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century may come to be, it is nevertheless a legitimate hope that the “*century of wars*” will be followed by more of a “*century of peace*”.

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<sup>1</sup> The seminal work of the now more widely accepted post-revisionist movement: Gaddis, John Lewis: *We Now Know. Rethinking Cold War History*. New York 1997.

<sup>2</sup> [Iron Curtain Speech \(5 March 1946\)](#). [The National Archives](#). (Downloaded: 10 October 2023).

<sup>3</sup> [The “Marshall Plan” speech at Harvard University \(5 June 1947\)](#). (Downloaded: 10 October 2023).

<sup>4</sup> On the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe, see Applebaum, Anne: *Iron Curtain. The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944–1956*. New York – London – Toronto 2012.

<sup>5</sup> [Helsinki Final Act](#). (Downloaded: 23 October 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Read more about China's modern development and its role in international relations: Kissinger, Henry: *On China*. New York 2011.

<sup>7</sup> For more on international conflicts after 1945, see: Fischer, Ferenc: *A megosztott világ. A Kélet-Nyugat, Észak-Dél nemzetközi kapcsolatok fő vonásai (1945–1989)*. (*A Divided World. The Main Features of East-West, North-South International Relations (1945–1989)*). Budapest 1992. 113–337.

<sup>8</sup> [More about the European Union](#) (Downloaded: 10 October 2023).

<sup>9</sup> NATO, currently made up of 32 member states, is the world's most powerful military organisation. [In details](#) (Downloaded: 22 March 2024).

<sup>10</sup> On US global engagement after 1945, see: Kissinger, Henry: *World Order*. New York 2014. 276–329.



6.

MAPS



# EUROPE

AT THE END OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

- |   |                   |   |                    |
|---|-------------------|---|--------------------|
| A | P. of Prussia     | K | Savoy              |
| B | E. of Brandenburg | L | Republic of Venice |
| C | E. of Saxony      | M | Montenegro         |
| D | D. of Silesia     | N | P. of Transylvania |
| E | K. of Bohemia     | O | P. of Wallachia    |
| F | M. of Moravia     | P | P. of Moldavia     |
| G | D. of Bavaria     | Q | Budjak             |
| H | Switzerland       | R | Yedisan            |
| J | F.C. of Burgundy  | S | Crimean Khanate    |

*D. = Duchy, E. = Electorate, F.C. = Free County, K. = Kingdom, M. = Margraviate, P. = Principality*

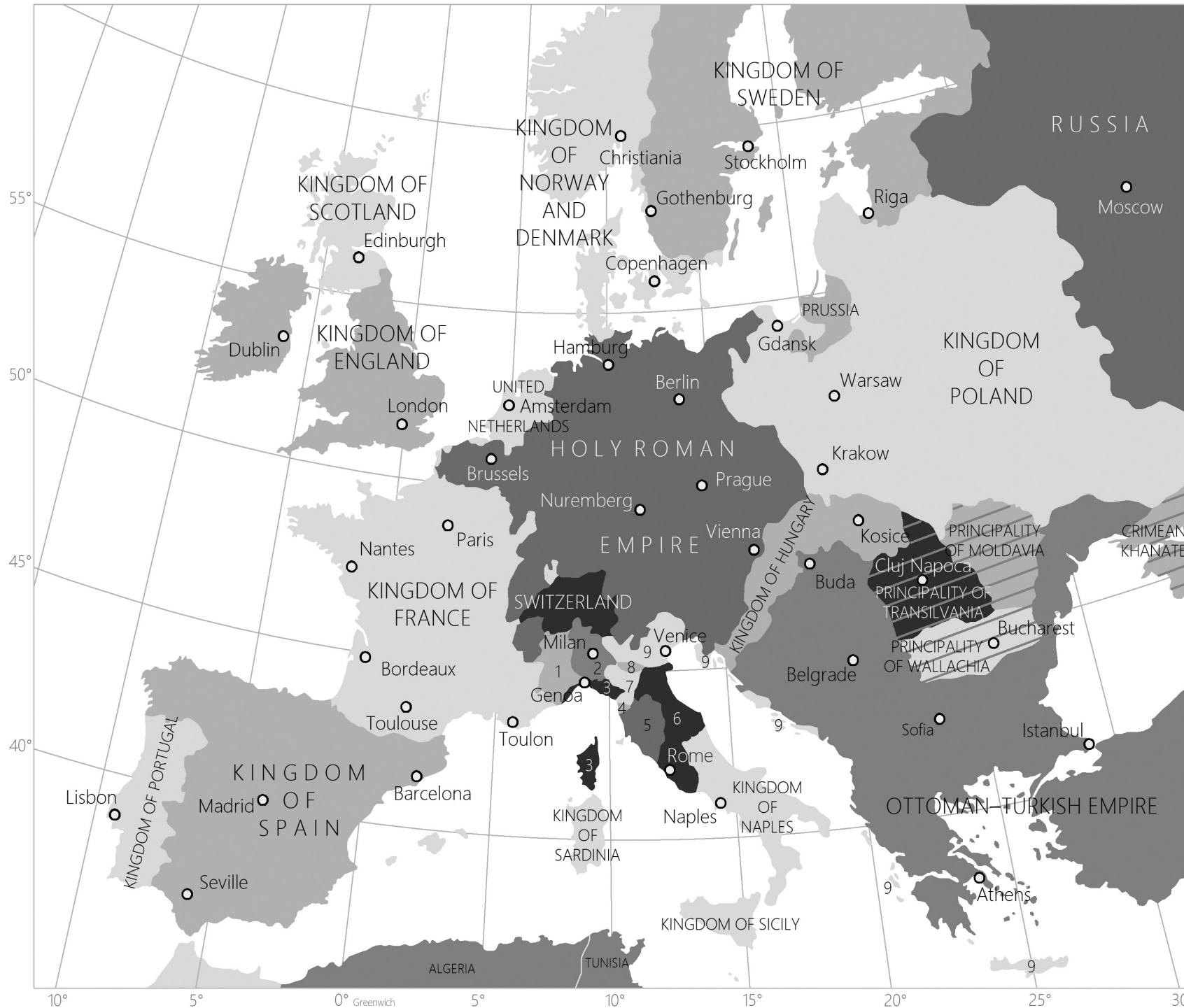
- |   |              |   |          |
|---|--------------|---|----------|
| 1 | Turin        | 5 | Parma    |
| 2 | Milan        | 6 | Bologna  |
| 3 | Pavia (1525) | 7 | Florence |
| 4 | Verona       |   |          |

- The territories ruled by the Austrian Habsburgs before 1526
- The growth of the territories ruled by the Austrian Habsburgs after 1526
- The territories ruled by the Spanish Habsburgs
- Territory of the Kingdom of Poland
- Territory of the Ottoman-Turkish Empire
- A relationship dependent on the Ottoman-Turkish Empire
- The border of the Holy Roman Empire
- The border of the territory of the Teutonic Order before 1561

0 200 400 600 km

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# EUROPE

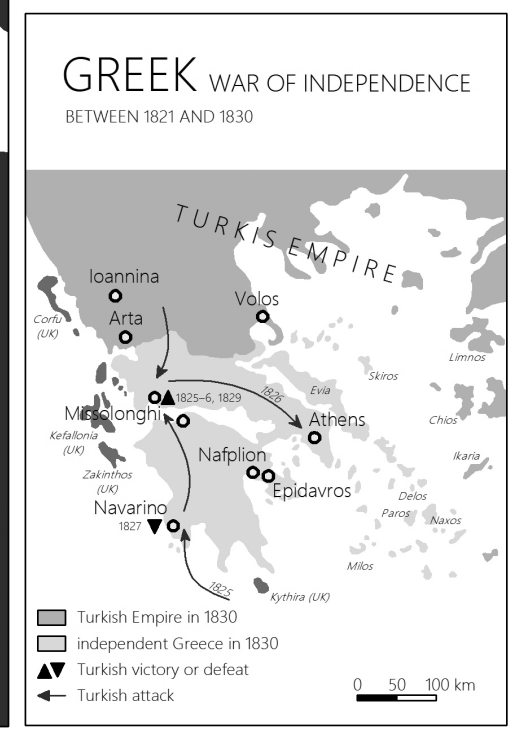
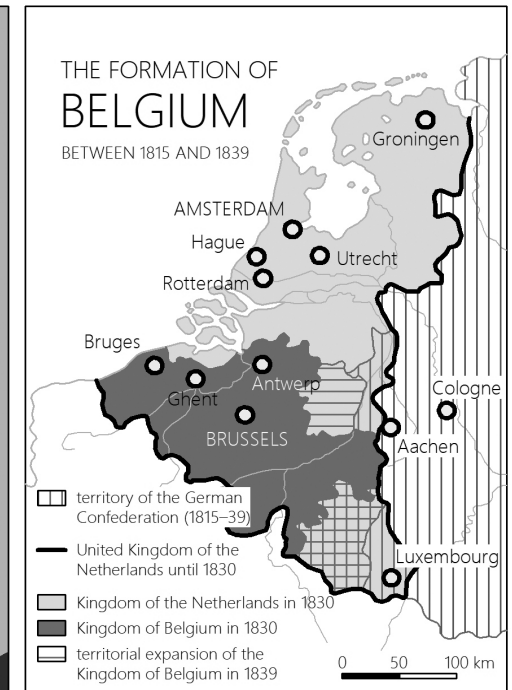
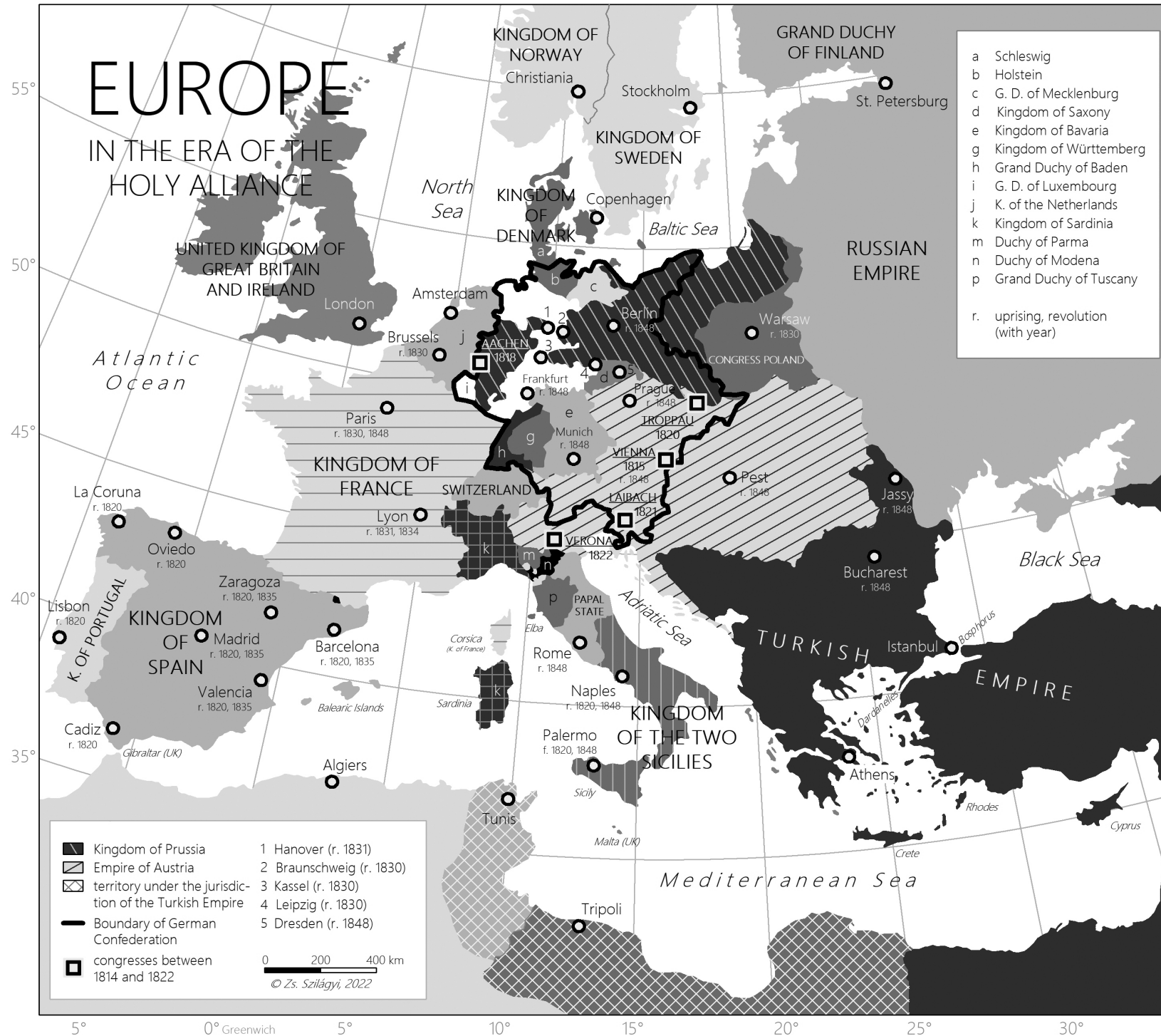
## AFTER THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA

- 1 Principality of Piedmont
- 2 Milan
- 3 Republic of Genoa
- 4 Lucca
- 5 Grand Duchy of Tuscany
- 6 Papal State
- 7 Duchy of Parma
- 8 Duchy of Mantua
- 9 Republic of Venice

 a relationship dependent on the Ottoman-Turkish Empire

0 200 400 600 km

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# EUROPE

## THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN

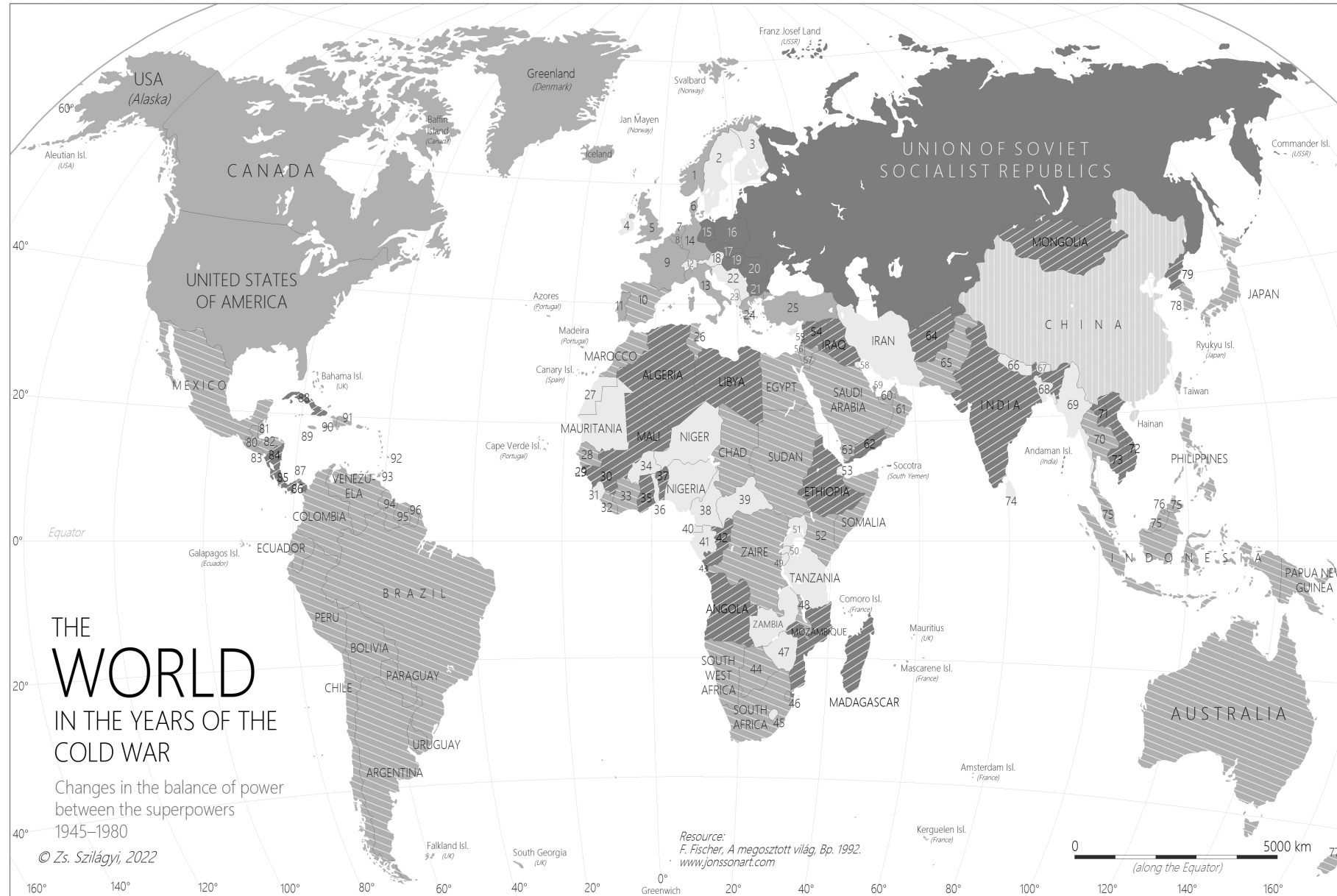
- |   |               |   |            |
|---|---------------|---|------------|
| a | Netherlands   | f | Andorra    |
| b | Belgium       | g | Monaco     |
| c | Luxembourg    | h | San Marino |
| d | Switzerland   | i | Montenegro |
| e | Liechtenstein |   |            |

- German Empire
- Austro-Hungarian Monarchy



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- EUROPE**
- 1 Norway
  - 2 Sweden
  - 3 Finland
  - 4 Ireland
  - 5 United Kingdom
  - 6 Denmark
  - 7 Netherlands
  - 8 Belgium
  - 9 France
  - 10 Spain
  - 11 Portugal
  - 12 Switzerland
  - 13 Italy
  - 14 FRG (West Germany)
  - 15 GDR (East Germany)
  - 16 Poland
  - 17 Czechoslovakia
  - 18 Austria
  - 19 Hungary
  - 20 Romania
  - 21 Bulgaria
  - 22 Yugoslavia
  - 23 Albania
  - 24 Greece
  - 25 Turkey
- AFRICA**
- 26 Tunisia
  - 27 Western Sahara
  - 28 Senegal
  - 29 P.R.R. of Guinea
  - 30 Guinea
  - 31 Sierra Leone
  - 32 Liberia
  - 33 Ivory Coast
  - 34 Upper Volta
  - 35 Ghana
  - 36 Togo
  - 37 Benin
  - 38 Cameroon
  - 39 Central African Rep.
  - 40 Equatorial Guinea
  - 41 Gabon
  - 42 Congo
  - 43 Angola
  - 44 Botswana
  - 45 Lesotho
  - 46 Swaziland
  - 47 Zimbabwe
  - 48 Malawi
  - 49 Burundi
  - 50 Rwanda
  - 51 Uganda
  - 52 Kenya
  - 53 Djibouti
- MIDDLE EAST**
- 54 Syria
  - 55 Lebanon
  - 56 Israel
  - 57 Jordan
  - 58 Kuwait
  - 59 Qatar
  - 60 United Arab Emirates
  - 61 Oman
  - 62 South Yemen (PDRY)
  - 63 North Yemen (YAR)
- FAR EAST**
- 64 Afghanistan
  - 65 Pakistan
  - 66 Nepal
  - 67 Bhutan
  - 68 Bangladesh
  - 69 Burma
  - 70 Thailand
  - 71 Laos
  - 72 Vietnam
  - 73 Cambodia
  - 74 Sri Lanka
  - 75 Malaysia
  - 76 Brunei
  - 77 New Zealand
  - 78 South Korea
  - 79 North Korea
- MIDDLE AND SOUTH AMERICA**
- 80 Guatemala
  - 81 Belize
  - 82 Honduras
  - 83 El Salvador
  - 84 Nicaragua
  - 85 Costa Rica
  - 86 Panama
  - 87 Panama Canal (USA)
  - 88 Cuba
  - 89 Jamaica
  - 90 Haiti
  - 91 Dominican Republic
  - 92 Barbados
  - 93 Trinidad and Tobago
  - 94 Guyana
  - 95 Suriname
  - 96 French Guiana

# THE WORLD IN THE YEARS OF THE COLD WAR

Changes in the balance of power between the superpowers 1945–1980

© Zs. Szilágyi, 2022

Resource: F. Fischer, A megosztott világ, Bp. 1992. www.jonssonart.com



<b>THE UNITED STATES</b> (superpower)	↔	<b>THE SOVIET UNION</b> (superpower)	<b>CONFLICTS</b>	Afghanistan (1979–89)	Greece (1945–49)	Jordan (1958)	Syria–Lebanon (1958)	<b>NON-ALIGNED</b>
■ Signatories of the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO, 1949) ▨ Other allies of the USA	■ Signatories of the Warsaw Pact (WTO, 1955) ▨ Other allies of the USSR	■ Afghanistan (1979–89) ■ Angola (1976) ■ Berlin (1946–49, 1953, 1958–62) ■ Czechoslovakia (1948, 1968) ■ Horn of Africa (1978) ■ Finland (1948)		■ Greece (1945–49) ■ Sino–Indian War (1962) ■ Indochina (1946–54, 1960–75) ■ Iraq (1958, 1980) ■ Iran (1945–46, 1951–53, 1980) ■ Israel (1967–73)	■ Jordan (1958) ■ Yugoslavia (1948) ■ Congo (1960–64) ■ Korea (1950–53) ■ Cuba (1961–62) ■ Poland (1956, 1980)	■ Syria–Lebanon (1958) ■ USSR–China border (1969) ■ Suez (1956) ■ Tibet (1959) ■ Turkish (1945–57)	■ China ■ Neutral countries	



7.

## LIST OF IMAGES AND CAPTIONS

*(Katalin Schrek – Ádám Novák)*



## Chapter: Byzantine Diplomacy

Fig. 1. Arab ambassadors to the the Byzantine court of Leo VI at Constantinople are shown the liturgical vessels of Hagia Sophia. Ioannes Scylitzes/John of Skylitzes, Synopsis Historiarum, 12th c.

Author and/or description	Ioannes Scylitzes/John of Skylitzes, Synopsis Historiarum, – 12th c., Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Graecus cod. Vitr. 26-2, f. 244v.
Online source	<a href="#">Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Biblioteca Digital Hispánica, MS Graecus cod. Vitr. 26-2, f. 114v.</a>
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Fig. 2. Emperor Michael III receives a message. Ioannes Scylitzes/John of Skylitzes, Synopsis Historiarum, – 12th c.

Author and/or description	Ioannes Scylitzes/John of Skylitzes, Synopsis Historiarum, – 12th c., Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Graecus cod. Vitr. 26-2, f. 78r.
Online source	<a href="#">Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, Biblioteca Digital Hispánica, MS Graecus cod. Vitr. 26-2, f. 78r.</a>
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Fig. 3. Mosaic panel of Emperor John II Komnenos and Empress Irene/Piroska, Hagia Sophia, Constantinople/Istanbul

Author and/or description	Mosaic panel of Emperor John II Komnenos and Empress Irene/Piroska – Hagia Sophia, Constantinople/Istanbul
©	Marianne Sághy

Fig. 4. Monastery of Christ Pantokrator (Zeyrek Camii), Constantinople/Istanbul, founded by Empress Irene/Piroska of the House of Árpád, seen from the east

Author and/or description	Monastery of Christ Pantokrator (Zeyrek Camii), Constantinople/Istanbul, founded by Empress Irene/Piroska of the House of Árpád, seen from the east, 2005
©	Robert G. Ousterhout

## Chapter: Empire and Papacy

Fig. 1. Frederick II and his Falcon



Author and/or description	De arte venandi cum avibus (The Art of Hunting with Birds). From a manuscript in Biblioteca Vaticana, Pal. lat 1071, fol. 1), late 13th century
Online source	<a href="#">By Unknown author</a> <a href="#">Public Domain</a>
	Public Domain

Fig. 2. The Excommunication of Frederick II by Pope Gregory IX

Author and/or description	Giorgio Vasari, fresco Anagni Cathedral Scomunica di Federico II da parte di Gregorio IX, 1572–73.
Online source	<a href="#">Wikimedia Commons</a>
	CC BY 3.0

## Chapter: The System of Medieval Diplomacy

Fig. 1. The tomb of Saint Elizabeth (daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary, consort of Landgrave Louis IV of Thuringia), St. Elizabeth's Church, Marburg, late 13th c.


Author and/or description	The tomb of Saint Elizabeth (daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary, consort of Landgrave Louis IV of Thuringia), St. Elizabeth's Church, Marburg, late 13th c.
	Attila Bárány

Fig. 2. Corte del Million. The houses of the Polo family in Venice, 13th–14th c.

Author and/or description	Corte del Million. The houses of the Polo family in Venice, 13th–14th c.
©	Attila Bárány

Fig. 3. King Louis I the Great of Hungary on the frontispiece of the Secretum Secretorum (c. 1360). Oxford, Hertford College Library MS D 2. f. 1r.

Author and/or description	King Louis I the Great of Hungary on the frontispiece of the Secretum Secretorum (c. 1360). Oxford, Hertford College Library MS D 2. f. 1r. Courtesy of Principal, Fellows and Scholars of Hertford College, Oxford.
©	Attila Bárány

Fig. 4. King Ferdinand Habsburg and his consort, Anne Jagiellon, St. Michael and St. Gudula Cathedral, Brussels, Blessed Sacrament chapel, 1547


Author and/or description	King Ferdinand Habsburg and his consort, Anne Jagiellon, St. Michael and St. Gudula Cathedral, Brussels, Blessed Sacrament chapel, 1547
©	Attila Bárány

## Chapter: Trade War and Economic Diplomacy in the Middle Ages

Fig. 1. 1493 view of Venice, from Hartmann Schedel's Nuremberg Chronicle

Author and/or description	Hartmann Schedel – Schedelsche Weltchronik or Nuremberg Chronicle, fol. 43v44r.
Online source	By Hartmann Schedel – Schedelsche Weltchronik or Nuremberg Chronicle, <a href="#">Public Domain</a> .
©	Public Domain

Fig. 2. Map of Marienburg (Malbork) Castle

Author and/or description	Olof Hansson Örnehufvud, 1629
Online source	By Olof Hansson Örnehufvud – National Archives of Sweden, <a href="#">Public Domain.</a>
	Public Domain

## Chapter: The Role of Church Forums and Institutions in International Relations in Medieval Europe

Fig. 1. Emperor Sigismund



Author and/or description	Albrecht Dürer – Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg, Gm 168
Online source	Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg Albrecht Dürer – Web Gallery of Art: Image. Info about artwork, <a href="#">Public Domain.</a>
	Public Domain

Fig. 2. Honorius III Approving the Rule of St Dominic in 1216

Author and/or description	Leandro Bassano
Online source	Basilica dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice By Leandro Bassano – Web Gallery of Art: Image. Info about artwork, <a href="#">Public Domain.</a>
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## Chapter: The Persistence of Dynastic Politics During The Wars in Italy

Fig. 1. Sack of Rome (May 6, 1527) after Martin van Heemskerck (1555)

Author and/or description	After Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert – British Museum
Online source	By after Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert – <a href="#">British Museum</a>
	Public Domain

## Chapter: “The Unholy Alliance” – Ottoman Diplomacy and European Politics in the Sixteenth Century

Fig. 1. Battle of Pavia (1525)

Author and/or description	Rupert Heller – Erik Cornelius / Nationalmuseum, NM 272
Online source	By Rupert Heller – Erik Cornelius / Nationalmuseum, <a href="#">Public Domain</a> .
	Public Domain

## Chapter: The Emergence of Raison d'état and its Adoption in the Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century

Fig. 1. Portrait of Richelieu



Author and/or description	Philippe de Champaigne
Online source	By Philippe de Champaigne – Musées de la ville de Strasbourg, <a href="#">Public Domain</a> .
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Fig. 2. Ratification of the Peace of Münster (1648)

Author and/or description	After Gerard ter Borch
Online source	<a href="#">By After Gerard ter Borch – Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Public Domain.</a>
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## Chapter: Challenges to the Balance of Power System

Fig. 1. The Troelfth Cake. Allegory of the 1st Partition of Poland



Author and/or description	Noël Le Mire
Online source	<a href="#">By Noël Le Mire – Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, nr inw. 64483, Public Domain.</a>
	Public Domain

Fig. 2. The Balance of Power

Author and/or description	Charles Williams
Online source	By Charles Williams – Yale Center for British Art, B1981.25.1223. <a href="#">Public Domain.</a>
	Public Domain



## Chapter: The Congress of Vienna and the Maintenance of European Order until 1914

Fig. 1. Congress of Vienna – Le gâteau des rois



Author and/or description	Le gâteau des rois, tiré au Congrès de Vienne en 1815. French political cartoon; References: De Vinck, No. 9521.
Online source	Digital Bodleian. This file comes from the Bodleian Libraries, a group of research libraries in Oxford University. This tag does not indicate the copyright status of the attached work. A normal copyright tag is still required. See Commons: Licensing., <a href="#">Public Domain.</a>
	Public Domain

Fig. 2. Conference of Paris, 1856 – Le congrès de Paris, 25 février au 30 mars 1856. Fin de la guerre de Crimée

Author and/or description	Edouard Louis Dubufe
Online source	Edouard Dubufe – Musée de l’Histoire de France Collections du château de Versailles, 000PE005194. <a href="#">Public Domain.</a>
	Public Domain


## Chapter: The Paris Peace Treaties, the League of Nations and “The Balance of Powerlessness”

Fig. 1. Munich Agreement with Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler, Mussolini and Ciano

Author and/or description	Unkown
Online source	<a href="#">Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-R69173</a> / CC-BY-SA 3.0, CC BY-SA 3.0 de.
	CC BY-SA 3.0 de


## Chapter: International Cooperation and Conflicts during the Second World War

Fig. 1. Conference of Yalta, 1945 February

Author and/or description	United Kingdom Government
Online source	UK National Archives, <a href="#">Public Domain</a> .
	Public Domain

## Chapter: The Cold War's Forms of Opposition

Fig. 1. Soviet missiles in Cuba, 1962

Author and/or description	U.S. aerial reconnaissance photograph
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8.

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