

The Home Front in Hungary

On June 28, 1914, Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Austro-Hungarian heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, Sophia, while they were on a ceremonial visit to the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo. The nineteen-year-old Bosnian Serb youth was a member of a group of conspirators whose weapons were supplied by officials of the Serb state who were also members of the nationalist Black Hand (otherwise called Union or Death) organization. A month later Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, but within days the local war developed into a World War due to the bipolar nature of the alliance system. Though the belligerents expected the war to end by winter, it lasted for four years. The conflict evolved into total war where the successful mobilization of the home front was crucial for sustaining the fighting at the war front.¹ The history of the Hungarian war effort indicates that although prewar military problems came into sharper focus, the home front was able to hold; it collapsed into revolution only following military defeat at the war front.

At the time of the double murder, the royal victim did not have a reputation as a friend of the Hungarians. He believed that the *Ausgleich* was a mistake and charged that the goal of the Hungarians was to achieve sovereignty. He blamed the Hungarians for embracing the revolutionary spirit of Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the 1848–49 Revolution and War of Hungarian Independence. The heir to the throne saw them as the gravediggers of the Habsburg Monarchy and blamed them for the alleged influence of the Freemasons and Jewish elements.²

Hungarian reaction among the intellectuals was epitomized by the art historian and publicist Marcel Benedek, whose diary entry stated that “the heir and his wife were murdered in Sarajevo. We are sorry for their orphaned children, but otherwise let’s confess, we must feel at ease at the thought that Franz Ferdinand, who wanted to violate the Hungarian constitution and wanted to give us a role in a God knows what kind of Austro-Slav, Hungarian trialism, is not our king.”³ While there was little grief among the establishment, during the July Crisis, which preceded the outbreak of the war, the streets already experienced a psychological mobilization for war calling for the punishment of Serbia. The Serbs for a change became more hated than were the Romanians.

1 Ágnes Pogány, “A nagy háború hosszú árnyéka: Az I. világháború gazdasági következményei,” in *Az első világháború következményei Magyarországon*, ed. Béla Tomka (Budapest: Országgyűlés Hivatala, 2015), 260–261.

2 Edward Crankshaw, *The Fall of the House of Habsburg* (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), 348–349, 351, 357. Győző Bruckner, *Ferenc Ferdinánd trónörökös magyarországi tervei* (Miskolc: Magyar Jövő Nyomda, 1929), 13–16, 56–57, 63, http://mtdaportal.extra.hu/books/bruckner_gyozo_ferenc_ferdinand_magyarorszagra_vonatkozó_politikai_tervei.pdf (accessed 04/09/2017).

3 Lajos Sipos, “‘Sodrában a szörnyű malomnak...’: Magyar költők és írók az I. világháború idején,” *Irodalmi Magazin* 2.2 (2014): 5.

The Hungarian mass circulation newspapers called for the war against Serbia; only the socialist *Népszava* voiced antiwar sentiments.⁴

The declaration of war on Serbia was received with unbounded enthusiasm by the crowds in the capital city of Budapest and in other towns.⁵ Although some scholars have recently claimed that the mass enthusiasm for the war is a myth,⁶ the examined literature about Hungary reinforces the old interpretation, at least for the urban areas.⁷ A contemporary witness, who in World War II was head of military intelligence recalled: "In Debrecen, one of the most Hungarian and revolutionary of the cities, night and day the people crowded the street. They cheered the war. They sang the stupidest song: 'Just wait you dog Serbia, you will never get Bosnia!' All the gypsy bands were playing on Market Street [...]. The girls were wearing hussar shakos, and they urged on some soap-box orator. The picture is unforgettable."⁸ The song became the most popular song of the moment, emotionally mobilizing the crowds for war. The actual words differed somewhat from place to place; they were less sanguine on the countryside than in the cities.⁹

On July 24, in preparation for the war, a Military Supervisory Committee was set up which was to make preparations for prepublication censorship. The legal justification was based on the government activated 1912 War Services Law, Act LXIII enacted during the Balkan crisis, which gave the green light to exceptional decrees in case of war. With the outbreak of the war censorship was put into practice.¹⁰ Consequently, newspaper reports often appeared with blank columns. Following the spirit of Act LXIII, on July 25 all political meetings, including demonstrations, were also prohibited. Strikes and job actions were also outlawed.¹¹ Partial mobilization began the next day.

4 Lajos Varga, *Háború, forradalom, szociáldemokrácia Magyarországon: 1914. július–1919. március* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2010), 18.

5 Alice Freifeld, *Nationalism and the Crowd in Liberal Hungary, 1848–1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 306; Dániel Szabó, "A Magyar háborús lelkesedés az első világháború kitörésekor," in 1918, *korszakvég-korszakkezdő*, ed. Cornel Grad and Viorel Ciubota (Zalau: Lekton, 1998), 75–78.

6 "Pörölycsapás a szívre és észre: A történészek kétségbe vonják a néptömegek 1914. őszi háborús lelkesedésének legendáját," in *Az első világháború: A 20. század őskatasztrófiája*, ed. Stephan Burgdorff and Klaus Wiegrefe (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2010), 53; Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went into War in 1914* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 553; Tibor Hajdú and Ferenc Pollmann, *A régi Magyarország utolsó háborúja 1914–1918* (Budapest: Osiris, 2014), 69–70.

7 Two French historians who also question the old interpretation suggest that popular enthusiasm was limited to the capitals and large cities. See Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18, retrouver la Guerre* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 133.

8 Gyula Kádár, *A Ludovikától Sopronkőhidáig* (Budapest: Magvető, 1978), 39.

9 Dániel Szabó, "Katonadalok és az első világháború," *Aetas* 22.1 (2007), 48. <http://epa.oszk.hu/00800/00861/00036/pdf/044-062.pdf> (accessed 04/09/2017).

10 András Gerő, *Merénylétől hadüzenetig: A béke utolsó hónapja a Monarchia Magyarországon (1914. június 28–1914. július 28)* (Budapest: Habsburg Történeti Intézet, 2014), 9.

11 Varga, 20.

The outbreak of the war seemed to bring radical changes in the political picture. In the long turbulent Hungarian Parliament a truce was launched among the major political parties, particularly Prime Minister István Tisza's Party of Work and the opposition Independents. The largest political party, the Social Democratic Party, which due to the restrictive election laws was not in Parliament, also went on to support the war, much like its Western sister parties. Nationalism thus carried the day over working-class internationalism.

For the Hungarians, living in a multinational state, where the Hungarians represented a bare majority, the war was seen as a conflict for national survival. The expected victory was seen preserving Hungarian territorial integrity and Hungarian supremacy.¹² The editor-in-chief of the liberal journal *Nyugat* (West), Hugó Ignóty, epitomized this outlook. Reacting to the war against Serbia, in his lead article of August 1, 1914, entitled "War" (Háború), Ignóty projected what he identified as the "Russian enticement," the image of a "Little-Hungary" shorn of its lands populated by the nationalities on the country's periphery. Asking the question as to whether or not he wanted to live in such a country his response was: only if Little Hungary were located where Switzerland, Belgium, or Luxembourg were. "But," he continued, "to live in the midst of Illiria, Serbia, Romania, and, my apologies, Poland, [...] this perspective makes light of the heaviest risk, that perhaps it could turn out badly [...]. It is in the personal interest of every Hungarian that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy survive so that they could live in peace. And by now this cannot happen without a war. [...] Who is so stupid or vile that he does not see the Serb or Romanian or any one else as a human being, or does not respect his dreams, his self-interest or begrudge him whatever happiness? But we cannot take our benevolence so far that we commit suicide."¹³

This perception led to a situation in Hungary wherein the Habsburg monarch, Franz Joseph, came to be recognized as a truly Hungarian king among the populace for the first time since his coronation in 1867.¹⁴ Ignóty in another essay declared: "It is no exaggeration to state that Hungary has not had a national king like Franz Joseph since King Mathias [Corvinus]."¹⁵

Between August 1 and 4, the local war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia turned into a world war due to the peculiarities of the bipolar alliance system. The bubble of

12 Gerő, *Merénylettől hadüzenetig*, 20.

13 Ignóty, "Háború," *Nyugat* 7.15 (Aug 1, 1915): 129.

14 András Gerő, *Ferenc József* (Budapest: Pannonica, 1999), 255–256.

15 Quoted in Ivan Sanders, "Hungarian Writers and Literature in World War I," in *East Central European Society in World War I*, ed. Béla K. Király and Nándor Dreisziger (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs, 1985), 147. For an overview of the impact of war on writers, see Joseph Held, "Culture in Hungary during World War I," in *European Culture in the Great War. The Arts, Entertainment, and Propaganda, 1914–1918*, ed. Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 176–192; Dániel Szabó, "Magyarország nem volt, hanem lesz: Háborús lelkesedés a populáris színelőadások tükrében," in *A pesti polgár: Tanulmányok Vörös Károly emlékére*, ed. Gábor Gyáni and Gábor Pajkossy (Debrecen: Csonkai, 1999), 185–194.

the “short war illusion,” shared by all belligerents, burst by December 1914. The assumption that the troops had to return victorious by Christmas – as after that date the huge national armies would run out of logistical supplies – was shared by all war planners. This problem, however, was overcome by the mobilization of the civilian population for the production of military supplies through the coordination of industry and agriculture. Hence the continuation of warfare was made possible. The development of this type of command economy came to be known as war socialism and it became an aspect of the concept of total war.¹⁶

The degree of mobilization and regimentation of the civilians for the war effort was unparalleled until that date. The practice gave birth to the “home front,” which not only denoted the application of authoritarian measures to civilians, but also connoted the need to create the kind of social cohesion that existed in the trenches. Governments employed social, political, and economic measures and propaganda to that end.

Increased governmental power in Hungary was assured by the War Services Law of 1912. This law stipulated that in the event of war emergency power was to remain in the hands of the civilian government; even military requisitions were to be implemented by civilian authorities. The Hungarian home front system, therefore, tended to be closer to the type Britain had, rather than the one Germany or Austria shared, where there was an ascendancy of the military over the civilian administration.¹⁷

The first major intervention in Hungary’s laissez-faire economy, introduced on August 12, 1914, prefigured of things to come. It was a two-month moratorium on loans and debts. It was intended to prevent a run on the banks by worried depositors. The life of the moratorium was extended in one form or another for a year. The policy backfired as it halted orders, created hardship for companies producing for the civilian market and led to lay-offs. It became difficult for small firms to borrow money and even state owned companies halted investments.¹⁸

Late in December and early January the government placed defense-related industries under military discipline and workers under fifty were drafted into militia labor battalions, which were then placed in designated factories where civilian management remained in place. Other government acts also drafted some women and men over fifty, but they were not put under martial law.¹⁹ Act XIII of 1915 stated that both males and females alike could be required to do public work, and in order to fill jobs in the absence of the mobilized workers who were sent to the front, adolescents over thirteen years of

16 Peter Pastor, “The Home Front in Hungary, 1914–1918,” in *East Central European Society in World War I*, ed. Király and Dreisziger. According to François Furet, the term total war was first used by Ernst Jünger in 1930. See François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 506n28.

17 József Galántai, “A háborús állam: A ‘kivételes hatalom’ kodifikálása és alkalmazása 1914–1916-ban,” in *A magyarországi polgári államrendszerek (Tanulmánykötet)*, ed. Ferenc Pölöskei and György Ránki (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1981), 199–200.

18 Varga, 22–23.

19 Galántai, 201–202.

age were permitted to work.²⁰ Within a year about 600,000 males and 145,000 females were employed in the war-related industries. Women were mostly employed in food processing, textile, and service industries.²¹ Most women entered the labor market out of economic necessity caused by the absence of the traditional male wage earner doing front-line service. Since the wages of the female workers were traditionally lower, their increased employment led to the decline of wages paid to men, though never to the level of female wage earners. In fact, during the war, only teamsters earned less than women.²²

Female labor also increased in agriculture. Agrarian labor laws issued at the beginning of the war denied financial support to able-bodied members of soldiers' families. This law forced not only women, but children and the elderly to perform agricultural labor. Despite the involuntary mobilization of villagers, labor shortages persisted. There were attempts to solve the problem by giving leaves at planting and harvest time to those peasants in uniform who were performing rear-area duties. Military labor battalions and some 300,000-400,000 Russian and Serb POWs were assigned to do agricultural work.²³

By the end of 1914 it became evident that the grain and flour supplies will not be sufficient to provide for both the home and war fronts. A projection indicated two million quintals short fall in the grain supplies.²⁴ As the war progressed flour coupons were issued in Budapest in April 1915 and bread coupons followed in January 1916. Coupons were also issued for other food stuff in short supply. As shortages increased, the rations were reduced by the authorities.²⁵

The flow of production was assured by centralized government-controlled monopolies. In mid-1915 the War Produce Corporation was set up. Financed by state and bank investments, the firm had a monopoly on the acquisition and sale of grain. Other monopolies that were established included the so-called centers for metals, textiles, sugar, etc. By the end of the war there were 291 such centers. A number of committees made up of government officials and trade specialists were also involved in the coordination of production and distribution.²⁶

20 Varga, 28.

21 Varga, 24-25.

22 Irén Nevelő, *A háború és a magyarországi munkásság 1914-1917* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1980).

23 Béla Katona, *Magyarország közgazdasága: pénzügyi és közgazdasági évkönyv 1915. évről* (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1916), 367-71; Peter Hidas, "The Dance of Death World War I and the Hungarian Peasants," in *The Modernization of Agriculture: Rural Transformation in Hungary, 1848-1975*, ed. Joseph Held (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1980), 176; Dezső Pap, *A magyar szociálpolitika a világháborúban* (Budapest: Grill, 1934), 233-234; Hajdú and Pollmann, 203.

24 Anikó S. Nagy and József Spekál, *Gulyáságyú és rohamsisak: A Nagy Háború gyomornézetből* (Budapest: Magyar Kereskedelmi és Vendéglátóipari Múzeum, 2016), 93.

25 S. Nagy and Spekál, 139-141; Hajdú and Pollmann, 114 and 205; Károly Vörös, *Budapest története* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978), 744.

26 Emma Iványi, *Minisztertanácsai jegyzőkönyvek az első világháború korából* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1960), 340-341; József Sztérenyi and Jenő Ladányi, *A magyar ipar a világháborúban* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1933), 148-151.

A command economy geared to fighting the war led to serious shortages in consumer products. A price freeze failed to slow down the inflation caused by shortages. The slow rise of inflation during the first eighteen months of the war gave way to galloping inflation as there was also an attempt to finance the war by printing more money.²⁷

Economic hardship led to social tensions. Wildcat strikes by 1916 appeared frequently and continued into 1917 and 1918. The government responded to unrest by setting up grievance committees, which were to arbitrate between workers and management. Most of the decisions favored the workers,²⁸ indicating the seriousness of the plight of the workers, as well as the government's concern about the decline of morale on the home front as a result.

Another problem that contributed to the decline of morale at the home front was the shortage of coal. By 1917 this resulted in industrial slowdowns and in some factories a complete halt to production. Responding to the problem, the government prohibited the temporary lay-off of workers from the idled factories and, on the initiative of the Ministry of National Defense, offered "coal aid" to those workers who were laid off on account of the shortage. This unemployment benefit amounted to 75 percent of the worker's wage. Half of the sum was paid by the treasury, half by the employer.²⁹ For the first time, therefore, the state paid unemployment benefits instead of it being paid by private insurance. The war, therefore, was responsible for the start of the welfare state. The diminution of laissez-faire economics was also demonstrated through rent control and a rent moratorium for the dependents of the conscripted soldier.³⁰

Social tension also existed in the countryside as the price ceilings for agrarian produce and rising prices for industrial products created hardship. The peasant's response was withholding and hoarding for the black market. The government responded by forced requisitioning which did not solve the problem. Agrarian violence, however, did not develop as a peasant response.³¹

Social tensions and declining morale brought to the fore the pre-war issue of electoral reforms. The suffrage question, in effect, caused the collapse of the parliamentary truce. The conflict was in part due to the fact that in Hungary, alone among the belligerents, a national government never materialized.³² On June 21, 1915, the five-year term of Parliament expired, but elections were postponed to six months after the peace treaty was signed. At the same time, however, Parliament was not prorogued; rather, it was to sit and practice politics as usual during the war.³³ Parliamentary debates over suffrage

27 Marc Ferro, *The Great War 1914–1918* (London: Routledge, 1974), 171; János Teleszky, *A magyar állam pénzügyei a háború alatt* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1924), 345–346; Nevelő, 107.

28 Sztérényi and Ladányi, 85.

29 Sztérényi and Ladányi, 72 and 156; Iványi, 359–360.

30 Teleszky, 365.

31 András Siklós, "Adalékok az Osztrák Magyar Monarchia belső helyzetéhez, 1918 tavaszán és nyarán," *Történelmi Szemle* 26 (1983): 5; Hidas, 182–183; András Siklós, *A Habsburg-Birodalom felbomlása 1918* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1987), 69–70.

32 Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 2: 127.

33 Pap, 92–94.

were resolved in a compromise law passed on July 19, 1918, which broadened the vote for men from 7.7 percent of the population to 13 percent. This modest reform failed to satisfy the opposition parties in Parliament, or the Socialists outside of it.³⁴

The prewar tensions with the nationalities were exacerbated by the conflict with Hungary's neighbors. At the outbreak of the war, in order to win over the nationalities, amnesty was proclaimed to political prisoners. State schools were instructed to teach non-Hungarians not only in Hungarian, but also in the mother tongue. National colors were allowed to be displayed along with the Hungarian colors, as long as these were not the same as the enemy's. Prime Minister Tisza offered the leaders of the Romanian minority educational reforms, concessions on language use, and the formation of electoral districts favoring the Romanian population, but these offers were not seen by the nationality leaders as going far enough.³⁵ The ethnic Romanians in Transylvania began to look toward the Romanian kingdom for liberation by force of arms. A solution to appease the irredentists and Romania would have required some territorial concessions, but Tisza refused to support such a deal, fearing that it would lead to Romanian claims for the whole of Transylvania.³⁶

By the second half of 1915 the Romanian ethnic press was vigorously prosecuted.³⁷ In the summer of 1916, Romania attacked Hungary and briefly invaded Transylvania. The sympathetic reception of enemy troops by the indigenous Romanian population led to the further hardening of Hungarian attitudes. Local Romanians outside of the war zone also came to be seen as "internal enemies."³⁸ Consequently, two to three thousand pro-Rogat intellectuals were interned in the western Hungarian city of Sopron.³⁹ In 1917, Minister of Education Albert Apponyi had the Romanian teacher colleges closed, indicating a return to a policy of forced assimilation.⁴⁰

The appeal of the Entente to the national minorities to undermine the home front in 1917–1918 also contributed to seeing the nationalities as a potential fifth column. The government's insensitivity in the handling of the nationalities question under the stress

34 Varga, 236–237.

35 Peter Pastor, "The Transylvanian Question in War and Revolution," in *Transylvania, the Roots of Ethnic Conflict*, ed. John F. Cadzow, Andrew Ludanyi and Louis F. Elteto (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1983), 156.

36 Gabor Vermes, *István Tisza: The Liberal Vision and Conservative Statecraft of a Magyar Nationalist* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1985), 309–314; Leo Valiani, "Italian–Austro-Hungarian Negotiations 1914–1915," in Walter Laqueur and George L. Mosse, ed., *1914: The Coming of the First World War* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 113.

37 Tibor Zsuppán, "The Hungarian Political Scene, 1908–1918," in *The Last Years of Austria-Hungary*, ed. Mark Cornwall (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990), 71.

38 Robert Nemes, "Refugees and Antisemitism in Hungary during The First World War," in *Sites of European Antisemitism in the Age of Mass Politics, 1980–1918*, ed. Robert Nemes and Daniel Unowsky (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2014), 249.

39 Mark Cornwall, "The Dissolution of Austria-Hungary," in *The Last Years of Austria-Hungary*, ed. Mark Cornwall (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990), 134; and Tibor Hajdú, *Az 1918-as magyarországi polgári demokratikus forradalom* (Budapest: Kossuth, 1968), 13.

40 Cornwall, 134.

of war acted as a catalyst and contributed the secession of the minorities from Hungary when the Dual Monarchy collapsed at the end of October 1918.⁴¹

The social tensions as the war progressed also had an impact on the Jewish religious minority as prewar anti-Semitism flared anew. By 1910, the mostly Hungarian speaking Jewry formed 5 percent of the total population of the kingdom of 18,264,533. This also means that their number represented 10 percent of all Hungarians (9,944,627). When the war broke out in 1914, most of the Jewish population was supporting the war enthusiastically, seeing in the expected defeat of tsarist Russia the end of official anti-Semitism there and the liberation of their coreligionists from tsarist oppression.⁴² The assimilated Hungarian Jews also expected that their support of the war effort would accelerate their march to complete acceptance.⁴³ The popular plays written and staged in response to the war in August and September seemed to reflect these hopes. Jews, in contrast to previously existing prejudices, were depicted as being as patriotic as others were. In one play a Jewish son of a banker volunteers to the hussars and at the end becomes a lieutenant. In another, the Jewish grocery store owner, by volunteering to military service, is accepted by the gentlemen of the gentry as their equal.⁴⁴

In real life not only grocers, but as noted by István Deák in his monograph, "Jewish writers, and journalists did signal service as war propagandists, and thousands of Jewish reserve officers willingly assumed command of their troops. Never again would Jews be allowed to play such a dignified role in the history of German-Austrians, Magyars and Slavs."⁴⁵ The specter of defeat reflected in the lack of breakthrough at the war front and the deprivations and hardship experienced at the home front was leading people to search for scapegoats in the Jews as anti-Semitism flared anew.

By 1916 scapegoating anti-Semitic talk and writing in certain papers was a daily occurrence and even filtered into parliamentary speeches.⁴⁶ In the Jewish weekly *Egyenlőség* it was reported that twenty-three dailies and ten weeklies incited hatred

41 Cornwall, 140.

42 Péter Bihari, *Lövészárkok a hátszágban: Középosztály, zsidókérdés, antiszemitizmus az első világháború Magyarországon* (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2008), 187.

43 István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 195.

44 Szabó, "Magyarország nem volt, hanem lesz," 191; and András Gerő, "Nemzeti delírium: Háborús propaganda a színházban," *Élet és Irodalom*, July 25, 2014.

45 Deák, 195.

46 Zoltán Paksy, "A zsidóság bűnbakká válása és az antiszemita hisztéria kezdete Magyarországon az első világháború végén," in *Bűnbak minden időben: Bűnbakok a magyar és egyetemes történelemben*, ed. György Gyarmati et al. (Budapest: Kronosz Kiadó, 2013), 287–288; Gábor Kádár and Zoltán Vági, "Hosszú évszázad: Antiszemita erőszak Magyarországon 1848–1956," in *A holokausz Magyarországon hetven év múltán: Történelem és emlékezet*, ed. Randolph L. Braham and András Kovács (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő Könyvkiadó, 2015), 89.

through the airing of the so-called "Jewish question."⁴⁷ The general theme was the contrast between the capitalist profiteer at the home front who made a fortune out of war materiel deliveries and the majority of the exploited at home and the bleeding soldier on the war front sacrificing life and limb. The capitalist minority was identified with the Jews and the majority was the increasingly impoverished Christian society.⁴⁸

Another venue of anti-Semitic attack was directed against the so-called eastern Jews, or Galician Jews. The migration of Galician Jews peaked in the 1850s but the anti-Semitic stereotypes survived their assimilation. They were depicted as peddlers, speculators, business cheats.⁴⁹ The successful Russian campaign in the fall of 1914 in Galicia and the Subcarpathian area started the influx of Jewish refugees from there. Their number was estimated to be about 8,000 in October. In 1917, in response to a member of parliament's charge that there were 300,000 so-called "Galician" refugees who created all kinds of problems in the population, the Minister of Interior Gábor Ugron reported the arrival of only 25,000 refugees, of which 16,000 remained in Hungary. Most of the refugees found shelter in the Jewish district in Budapest,⁵⁰ but a small number found asylum in other Hungarian cities. One such city was Nagyvárad (Oradea) a city in the Partium, close to Transylvania. There in mid 1918, the local city fathers complained that Nagyvárad had too many "Galicians" taking housing away from Hungarians. As it turned out the police found that originally there were only fifty-three families, of whom seventeen had already left.⁵¹ Clearly the focus on the Galician problem was another signpost for the growth of wartime anti-Semitism on the home front.

Zoltán Patai, the editor of a Jewish journal aptly noted: "When the Jew haters speak or write about Galicians, they do not mean the few hundred stranded 'Galician' refugees, but in fact the children and grandchildren of yesterday's 'Galicians,' that is the entire Hungarian Jewry."⁵²

On September 29, 1918, an exhausted Germany and Austria-Hungary agreed to appeal to Washington to initiate armistice negotiations on the basis of President Wilson's "Fourteen Points." To save his crumbling realm, the Habsburg emperor-king issued his manifesto on August 16, proclaiming the federalization of Austria. This declaration was tantamount to an admission of defeat. The following day the former prime minister, István Tisza, who had given his blessing to the start of the war admitted in Parliament: "We have lost the war." Defeat on the war front led to the collapse of the home front and on October 31, 1918, a revolutionary government was established that aimed to sweep away the remnants of the old regime and establish a world modeled on the Western

47 János Pelle, *A gyűlölet vetése: A zsidó törvények és a magyar közvélemény 1918–1944* (Budapest: Európa, 2001), 18; and Krisztián Ungváry, *A Horthy-rendszer mérége: Diszkrimináció, szociálpolitika és antiszemitizmus Magyarországon* (Pécs: Jelenkor Kiadó, 2012), 70.

48 Bihari, 194.

49 Paksy, 286.

50 Bihari, 152.

51 Nemes, 236.

52 Quoted in Nemes, 252; and Bihari, 153.

experience. Three days later, on November 3, the military representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which had already ceased to exist, signed the armistice in Padua with General Diaz. The human cost for the Hungarian war front was enormous. Of the 3,614,179 men drafted for the conflict 381,000 were killed, 743,000 wounded, 400,000 were missing in action, and 615,000 became POWs.⁵³

The home front survived throughout the war, and only cracked following the collapse of the war front. There was no possibility for the creation of a stab-in-the-back myth as it was done in Germany. The deprivations on the home front during the war, however, created social and economic tensions among the peasants and the workers. The latter were more willing to enter into illegal actions such as strikes and riots. Demands were also made for radical changes in the suffrage law. All these fissures in the home front prepared public opinion to accept a revolutionary change, which by November 16, 1918, dethroned the Habsburgs and created the First Republic in Hungary.

The hardening of the ill-treatment of the nationalities through governmental policy led to the rejection by the nationalities the offer of equality within the revolutionary republic. They opted out and welcomed the chance to join the neighbor states of Hungary. The stress of war caused the resurfacing of virulent anti-Semitism which was rejected by the October revolution but which became the life-blood of the so-called “counterrevolution” and the Horthy regime it spawned by 1920. Finally, the Peace Treaty of Trianon, signed by Hungary on June 4, 1920, created the Little Hungary – one third of its prewar size – that Hungarians had believed they were averting by supporting the conflict both on the home and war fronts. The tragedy of the senseless war had reached its full circle.

53 *Háborúk, válságok, diktatúrák demográfiai hatásai. I. A Nagy Háború* (Budapest: KSH, 2014), 49–50, https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/haboruvalsag/nagy_haboru.pdf (accessed 04/09/2017). In the same work (50) it is estimated that one-third of the missing died in battle, two-thirds became POWs of whom one-sixth died in captivity. Consequently the final estimate for the dead is 661,000.