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The Democratic European Idea in Central Europe, 1849–1945

(Federalism contra nationalism)

The identification with Europe or, in the lack of a united continent, with the idea of a European unity, has a long history. However, these feelings of a cultural unity always confronted to the double-faced aspect of European political culture. European traditions are violent, destructive, expansive, as well as uniting and peace loving. The warrior directions resulted in disunity and destructions, the peace tradition produced ideas and institutions for a democratic federate organization of society. This contradiction between, on the one hand, wars, power policy, expansion, and, on the other hand, peace organization, constitutional law, international law and human rights, was always present in European culture. Each individual always confronted to a conscious choice. Some became supporters of a power policy and war, whereas others became the champions of freedom, peace, and lawful democratic states and federalism.[1] This essay tries to trace the importance of the idea of democratic European unity in the emergence of the idea and institutions of a democratic federal constitutional state, of international law and of human rights in Central Europe.

The influence of the idea of a democratic nation state in multinational Central-Europe

Central-Europe developed similarly to the West until the end of the 15th century. There were many parallels in the feudal developments between the two parts of Europe. It is only after the great geographical discoveries and the beginning of the colonization that Central-Europe began to be different. In spite of that fact, the Western social organization continued to serve as a model for the Central Europeans.[2]

The Western forms of social organization and cultural traditions have their counterparts everywhere in Central Europe. However, these Western forms were often deformed. To take the example of Hungary, the "Golden Bull" of Hungary in 1222 had similar principles like

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[1] *See J. ter Meulen – J. Huizinga – G. Berlage,* Bibliography of the Peace Movement Before 1899. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1936.

[2] About the comparison of the historical development of the Western and Central European states: *J. Szücs,* Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról. Magvetö, Budapest 1983; *Domokos Kosáry,* Újjáépítés és Polgárosodás 1711-1867. Magyarok Európában, vol. 3. Háttér Lap-és Könyvkiadó, Budapest 1990; *I. Bibó,* A kelet-európai kisállamok nyomorúsága. In Bibó István Összegyüjtött Munkái, vol. 1. Európai Protestáns Magyar Szabadegyetem, Bern 1981, pp. 202-252.

the Magna Carta of King John in 1215.[3] At the same time there was, for example, a big difference between the Western type vassal system and its Hungarian equivalent, referred to as the "familiar system". Indeed, the familiar system was not based on legal agreements; it had a more servile character. Cities were less developed. The impoverished nobility ("gentry") could maintain its privileges. There were differences in the functioning of the parliamentary systems, too. However, the two most important differences were as follows: on the one hand, the representation of the nation remained the privilege of the nobility who therefore embodied the sovereignty by themselves and, on the other hand, serfdom survived in the form of the institution of "second" serfdom (i.e., serfdom in the 16th–18th centuries). Consequently, the whole of Central Europe preserved feudal vestiges and the capitalist forms remained underdeveloped. To take again the example of Hungary, its social development was still on the level of the Western middle ages at the beginning of the modern period. Eastern elements were present in the Hungarian society, which permanently deformed the Western elements taken over in the Middle Ages.

The Habsburg Monarchy could not play the same uniting role that was played by the centralized Western nation states. Central-Europe could not develop a so-called Danubian state, unifying the many different peoples living on the territory of the Habsburg Empire. The "most European" events in this area were the revolutions of 1848–49.[4] However, the attempt to implement democratic reforms was only a partial success. Feudalism was not eliminated and the nobility could save its status and power. Although the civil society was more developed in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy than in the Hungarian Kingdom, numerous feudal vestiges burdened the development of capitalism and a civil constitutional state in the Habsburg Empire until the Second World War.

The idea of European unity had an important role in Central Europe, too. The Central European states, like the old Bohemian Kingdom, the Hungarian Kingdom, Poland, or the Austrian hereditary provinces were all Christian. Consequently, they all accepted and defended the principles of a Christian state organization. The region played a very important role in the defense of Western Europe, as shown by the stereotypical slogan of the "bulwark of Christianity".

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[3] *E. Hantos,* The Magna Carta of the English and of the Hungarian Constitution (A comparative view of the law and institutions of the early middle ages). Kegan, Trench, Trübner & Co. LTD., Dryden House, London 1904.

[4] *I. Deák,* The Lawful Revolution. Guilford, Columbia University Press, New York 1979; *I. Deák,* The Revolution and the War of Independence, 1848-49. In History of Hungary, *eds. P. Sugár – P. Hanák – T. Frank,* Bloomington University Press, Bloomington 1990.

This cliché also expressed the feeling of responsibility for the European culture and, as such, it belonged to the common tradition of the European countries. This expression was also used by the Western Europeans when speaking about the states on the borders of the "eternal enemy of Christianity". Sully, for example, proposed in his famous project to strengthen the Hungarian Kingdom as the "bulwark of Christianity". He wanted to create a strong Hungarian state on the borderlines of Christian culture.[5] A European defensive union against the Ottoman Empire was also in the interest of the Central European states. The example of the project of George Podiebrad on a European union proves it well.

In spite of all the differences, Central-European political thinkers and intellectuals were well embedded in the Western culture and political thinking.[6] The works of the famous Western scholars and of the most important Western intellectual movements were all well known in Central Europe. The influence of Erasmus, Grotius, Montesquieu, Vattel, Kant, and Tocqueville were perhaps the most significant.

One of the most important periods in Central Europe, from the point of view of state organization, was the 19th century until the First World War. Reform politicians tried then to implement the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen within the Habsburg Empire. While working on these changes, they proposed very interesting projects on the democratic reconstruction of the multinational Habsburg Empire and on the protection of human rights. For Central European thinkers the Western state models and the Western ideas on a European federation/confederation served as examples. The Swiss, the American, and the English models were highly respected. Nevertheless, in the first half of the 19th century, it was the French Revolution that had the most profound influence. When, for example, the Hungarian reform nobility started the reform period, their goal was to implement the principles of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. However, the reformers were soon confronted to the problem of modernizing a society that was very different from the French one. The Hapsburg Empire, and its Hungarian part, was a multinational, disunited society full of feudal vestiges. The first conflict with the French ideas was the interpretation of the term "nation".

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[5] *Sully, [Maximilien de Béthune, Duc de Sully],* Mémoires des Sages et Royales Oeconomies d'Etat. vol. 2. Paris 1837, pp. 418-441.
[6] *D. Kosáry,* Müvelödés a XVIII. századi Magyarországon. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest 1980; *É. H. Balázs,* Hungary and the Habsburgs 1765-1800. Central European University Press, Budapest 1997.

They did not know how to define and shape the national parts of the reconstructed empire. A struggle developed between the proponents of a historical political concept for a nation and the defenders of the concept of a cultural linguistic (ethnic) nation. This struggle was also influenced by the German Romantic Movement and of Herder's thoughts on a cultural nation. This antagonism appeared in the phenomenon of "language fights".[7] These language fights showed that something was wrong in the way of thinking and in the policy of the reform nobility. It was anachronistic because language had no social organizational or political aspect. People could not have political rights based on a language. Instead, political rights should belong to the citizens as members of the state, independently of language and of culture. The phenomenon of cultural nationalism, representing a linguistic conception within the political state organization, challenged the Western concept of a legal, political nation state. People began to believe that every language group had to have its own state: so, the nations began to create states. When people forgot that a democratic federate state could be composed of many small nations, political nationalism could win. Thus, cultural nationalism developed gradually into a form of political nationalism. This, together with the survival of the feudal vestiges, became the obstacle of the consistent applications of the democratic reforms of 1848. The well-known tautology could develop: in Central Europe, there is no democracy because there is nationalism; and in Central Europe, there is nationalism because there is no democracy.

Democratic reforms and federalism in Central Europe

Pro-Western thinkers in Central-Europe were in favor of a system of democratic nation states in the first half of the 19th century. After the revolutions of 1848–49, they realized the necessity to find a democratic solution for the national and linguistic minority problems in multinational states. Democratic reformers usually rejected the racial, ethnic national conception that appeared at the end of the 19th century. However, their opinions still differed on the meaning of the terms nation, nation states, and federation.[8] One group of thinkers favored a democratic reform policy based on

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[7] About the history of the Hungarian nationality question see *G. G. Kemény,* A magyar nemzetiségi kérdés története (A nemzetiségi kérdés a törvények és tervezetek tükrében). Gergely R. T., Budapest 1947.
[8] *I. Borsody,* The Tragedy of Central Europe. Yale Russian and East European Publications, 2., New Haven 1980; *I. Borsody,* The New Central Europe. Columbia University, New York 1993.

the given historical status quo. Another group preferred the division of Central Europe along the lines of a linguistic conception of nation in the framework of a federal state. There were also thinkers who opted for the so-called independent unitary nation states, which was rejected by others because they thought that the only valid state organization principle could be federalism in multinational territories with a mixed population. The presence of all these thoughts produced certain confusion. The result was a confused state of mind and confused psychological reactions in social thinking and acting. This, in turn, also reinforced the emergence of nationalism. Two centuries were spent, both in Western and in Central Europe, on discussions and political fights around these issues. This period resulted in two, clearly oppositional groups: the nationalists and the federalists. The nationalists concentrated on their own states for self-determination whereas the federalists regarded self-determination as a mixture of two concurrent processes: an internal and an external one. In what follows, those Central European thinkers will be considered who tried to fight nationalism and who were able to propose new ideas for a democratic federal multinational state organization. The most important are Eötvös, Palacky, Naumann, Jászi, Renner, and R. Coudenhove-Kalergi. Their contributions to the development of the democratic federal European idea and of human rights are indeed very important.

The Hungarian József Eötvös was deeply shocked after the bloody nationality conflict of Hungary in 1848–49. He made very serious attempts to understand the reasons and to find solutions to the problems. He began to study the influence of the dominant European ideas of the 19th century "freedom, equality, fraternity" on the state organization.[9] Eötvös believed that if each citizen of the Hungarian Kingdom had equal political and human rights, and duties within a representative parliamentary system then, eventually, the nationality (minority) claims would become automatically solved. Consequently, it would be necessary to implement all the democratic reforms proclaimed during the uprising in 1848. The aim of these reforms was to harmonize the principles of the Hungarian state organization with the principles of the Declaration of the Right of Man and of the Citizen of 1789. After the lost battle of 1849, Eötvös, like Tocqueville earlier, consistently rejected to copy the example of the French unitary and centralized nation state. He thought that the French revolutionaries, in the name of popular sovereignty, created the absolute rule of the sovereign French people.

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[9] *J. Eötvös,* Der Einfluss der herrschenden Ideen des 19. Jahrhunderts auf den Staat. Wien 1851.

After 1849, the goal of Eötvös was to understand the reasons for the emergence of the national and linguistic minority question and to find a democratic solution to the problem.[10] He began to study the history of the organization of states. He found parallels between the general problem of religious minority groups and of national minority groups. He searched through the history of religious movements, because he considered the national and linguistic minority problem to be, similarly to religion, primarily a social issue. Comparing religious autonomy and religious freedom, he emphasized that religious autonomy could not solve the problem of minority religious groups. Instead, the real solution was the separation of state and religion. Once this is done, the political organizations of the citizens would become independent from the religious ones. Eötvös' most important idea was to draw on this conclusion, and to propose a separation between the civil, political and the linguistic/cultural functions of the state. He proposed the idea of personal federalism based on the personal principle.[11] The essence of his ideas was that the political and human rights should belong to individuals. In a democratic, multinational state with a mixed population, everybody should be given equal political rights and duties on a personal basis, and regard nationality, as well as religion, as personal human rights. Eötvös rejected the idea of the emancipation of national and linguistic minority territorial groups, because he rejected the idea of assigning political and human rights to groups instead of individuals.[12] In his opinion, giving political rights to religious, national or linguistic minority groups made a free association policy among people impossible.

In reconstructing the Habsburg Monarchy Eötvös was in favor of the historical status quo. In other words, he wanted to accomplish the democratic reforms within the framework of the historical states.[13] He proposed decentralizing the Empire and fragmenting its territory into provinces in their historical frameworks, providing self-government to the different provinces. This meant decentralization as well as a federative reconstruction. He also favored the sovereignty of the historical member states as far as their internal affairs were concerned, although he wanted to subordinate common affairs to confederal institutions. Eötvös was convinced that only democratic federalism could protect minority rights in multinational territories. It must be noted,

[10] *J. Eötvös,* A nemzetiségi kérdés. In Báró Eötvös József Összes Munkái. vol. 16., Révai Testvérek, Budapest 1902-1903.
[11] Ibid., pp. 92-93.
[12] *J. Eötvös,* Über die Gleichberechtigung der Nationalitäten in Oesterreich. Ráth, Pest 1871, p. 94.
[13] *J. Eötvös,* Die Garantie der Macht und Einheit der Österreichs. Leipzig 1859, p. 81, 212.

however, that as a politician he made some compromises when he accepted the dualist system of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Kossuth, one of the most important leaders of the Hungarian democratic reform policy, after 1849 also took the status of the religious communities as an inspiration to solve the national and linguistic minority problems, similarly to Eötvös.[14] He also emphasized the necessity to complete the democratic reforms of 1848. Just like Eötvös, he rejected the example of the unitary, centralized French nation state. His dream was the creation of a Danubian Confederation, uniting the many small nations along the Danube.[15]

Another example is the work of Friedrich Naumann, entitled "Central Europe", which was also in the line of the various reconstruction projects based on historical status quo.[16] Naumann was in favor of decentralization, of a local autonomy system, of equal political and human rights, and of equal duties for everybody.[17] He emphasized that the political organization had to be based on common, shared principles. Culture, language, and religion had to be separated from the political organizational sphere of the state, because they belonged to an autonomous and personal sphere.

The representatives of the cultural (linguistic) direction thought that for federalism to succeed it was necessary to create a balance by forming linguistic national states. Thus, they rejected the status quo and they wanted to create instead linguistic nation states as constituting members of a Central European federation. In so doing, however, they wanted to avoid any kind of forceful association policy. They were no less in favor of democratic states than the supporters of a status quo were; they all supported the ideas of federalism, of decentralization, and of equal personal human and political rights for everyone. However, their ideal was a federation of linguistic (ethnic) nation states. The most important representative of this direction was the Czech Palacky. Palacky proposed to create a federation of the eight autonomous cultural national groups of the Hapsburg Empire. In his view, the Austrian federation should be composed of German-Austria, Czechs-Austria, Polish-Austria, Ruthenian-Austria, South-Slav-Austria (Illyria),

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[14] *L. Kossuth,* Le projet de Kossuth concernant la question des nationalités, 1851. In Études d'Histoire Comparée, Nouvelle Série, vol. 1., 1943.
[15] *L. Kossuth,* A Dunai Szövetség terve (Plan on Danubian Confederation). In *Pajkossy Gábor,* Kossuth Lajos. Új Mandátum, Budapest 1998, pp. 129-132.
[16] *F. Naumann,* Central Europe. P. S. King, London 1916.
[17] Ibid, p. 255.

Romanian-Austria, Hungarian-Austria, and Italian-Austria.[18] Palacky had a great influence on Masaryk, who later became the leading politician behind the creation of an independent, democratic Czech nation state. Palacky had long discussions with Eötvös.[19] Their discussion reveals the most important difference between the two, which concerned the very definition of a nation state. Palacky also called the attention of his contemporaries on the dangers of a dualist solution (Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy) because, in his view, it would strengthen Pan Slavism and the nationalist forces.[20]

The work of the famous Austrian social democrats for the promotion of democracy and of human rights is quite well known.[21] Bauer developed the principles of a democratic socialist state.[22] His colleague Karl Renner is regarded as one of the most important thinkers who elaborated on the ideas of a democratic federalist European integration policy. Renner favored the personal principle and a multidimensional state organization; this meant the division of administrative, political, cultural, and economic organization of the state on basis of the personal autonomy principle.[23] He used a comparison from biology: just as the secret of the health of the whole organism was a healthy cell, the smallest organizing unit of the state, which is the local self-government (Kreis), had to be equally healthy, i.e., democratically organized.[24] He was in favor of a federal Austria in the form of a "Statenstaat" and, as a directing principle to define the member nations of an Austrian Federation, he proposed to re-enforce the linguistic, cultural principle. In his view, the federation should be composed of eight national member states[25] with an internal structure inspired by the Swiss and the American Constitutions. He aimed at the reconstruction of Austria, which could also be used as an example for a future European union.[26] He proposed to federalize Hungary, too. Renner strongly criticized and consciously rejected the idea of independent,

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[18] *F. Palacky,* Über Centralization und nationale Gleichberechtigung in Österreich. In *F. Palacky,* Oesterreichs Staatsidee. Geyer, Wien 1974.
[19] Ibid, p. 37.
[20] *R. Wierer,* Der Föderalismus im Donauraum. Hermann Boelaus Nachf., Graz-Köln 1960, pp. 77-78.
[21] *C. A. Macartney,* The Social Revolution in Austria. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1926; *M. R. Krätke,* Die Mühen des Dritten Wegs. In Zeitschrift für Sozialistische Politik und Wirtschaft, 98, 1997; *H. Mommsen,* Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage im Habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat. Europa Verlag, Wien 1963.
[22] *O. Bauer,* Der Weg zum Sozialismus. Wien 1919.
[23] *R. A. Kann,* Renners Beitrag zur Lösung nationaler Konflikte im Lichte nationaler Probleme der Gegenwart. Wien 1973.
[24] *K. Renner,* Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht der Nationen. F. Deuticke, Leipzig-Wien 1918, p. 236.
[25] Ibid, p. 146.
[26] Ibid, p. 94.

territorial unitary nation states as an outdated survivor of an expansionist culture.[27] His goal was to replace the federation of the territorial states by a federation of linguistic, cultural nation states. Just like Eötvös, Renner also proposed to use the principle of personal autonomy in territories of mixed populations.[28] He also used the analogy between the solution of religious and national conflicts. Renner believed that, while the political organization belonged to the administrative sphere of a state, the cultural, religious, and linguistic association policies should be separated from it. In his opinion, a clear distinction had to be established between the state as a territorial conception, and nationality as a conception of individuality, of kinship, of mutual association. This distinction led Renner to the idea of creating a dual basis for the executive: a territorial and a national. The individual citizen would, in all national matters, be subject to his own national association, but in all other respects, he/she would refer to the ordinary civil authorities. This meant that, in a nationally mixed territory, the national status was not to be conferred on the population but, instead, linked to the individuals themselves, regardless of their domicile. People could register in public record books as nationals of their own choice. Nationality would become a personal right belonging to the cultural sphere of the individual.

As a last example, the important works of the Hungarian Oszkár Jászi could be mentioned. His life and work is a good example of how to overcome democratic nationalism and why it is necessary to become a federalist. In the first half of his life, Jászi was a democratic nationalist. He was deeply motivated in trying to understand the development and the way of functioning of the Western nation states.[29] In his whole life, Jászi was in favor of Western type democratic constitutional states. He regarded it as his main task to find a solution to the national and linguistic minority problems in the Danubian region. He was convinced that the solution lay in the consistent implementation of the democratic reforms of 1848. In his view, the elimination of nationalism depended on democracy. Influenced by the history of the Western nation states, he developed his idea on a democratic association policy, which he wanted to use to safeguard a Magyar cultural influence in the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom. Before the Bolshevik revolution he defended the Central European plan of Naumann and was in disagreement with the

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[27] *K. Renner,* Die Nation: Mythos und Wirklichkeit. Europa Verlag, Wien 1964, p. 17; *K. Renner,* Österreichs Erneuerung. vol. 1., Wien 1917, p. 53.
[28] *K. Renner,* Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht, p. 236.
[29] *O. Jászi,* A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés, Grill, Budapest 1912.

Austrian social democrats, Renner and Bauer, who wanted to federalize the Hungarian Kingdom, too. After the First World War, Jászi reconsidered his nationalistic point of view. He became a conscious democratic federalist. He fought for the implementation of a democratic state and for federalism, i.e., for a regional association policy, in Central Europe. He was also advocating the creation of a European United States.[30] He believed that federalism in Central Europe depended on the results of a great democratic reconstruction work of Europe. At the end of his life, he wrote a peace project in the spirit of Kant's Eternal Peace.[31]

The struggle between nationalists and federalists

The political and ideological history of the idea of European unity shows that harmonizing the juridical organizational principles of the nation states, both in their internal and external affairs, became the most significant problem of European society. Finding and fighting for shared principles in state organization became a long process, spread over centuries, due to the differences in the development of the European states. Although there have always been political and cultural interactions among these states, a large scale of varieties remain. There were communities that produced deadlocks and impasses during the democratic modernization of their respective states. Dangerous phenomena like nationalism or racism developed consequently. Furthermore, the expansionist, European national empires of the past spread these phenomena worldwide. This development greatly contributed to the tragedy of the two World Wars.

Both the Western and the Central European progressive political thinkers identified two major reasons for the victory of nationalism. The first was the inconsistent implementation of the democratic reforms within the nation states; the second was the lack of an international supranational coordination and the weaknesses of the international law. In fact, there was no coordination between the internal and external policies of the states. Consequently, the system of civil national states could preserve an expansionist power policy. The conservative

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[30] *O. Jászi,* The United States of Europe. A photocopy of original materials in the Columbia University Libraries. From the private collection of documents of Gy. Litván.

[31] *O. Jászi,* World Organization for Durable Peace. From Bryson, L. ed. Foundation of World Organization, Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life, New York 1952. In *O. Jászi,* Homage to Danubia. *ed. Gy. Litván,* Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., Boston 1995.

and autocratic tendencies, as well as the mentality of the old Europe, could survive. In other words, the autocratic nation states could maintain the principles of the old monarchic feudal diplomacy. The new expansionist wave at the end of the 19th century only deepened the division and power struggle among the European nation states, which culminated in the First World War.

After the First World War, the ancient methods of diplomacy still prevailed. Punishment, humiliation, ruining and ruination still dominated the peace negotiations. In these circumstances, the idea of a democratic federal European United States became a utopia. The initiative of Wilson to establish new democratic principles for international diplomacy had no chance to become reality in the lack of democratic states. Nevertheless, his ideas were embedded in the logic of the European and the American democratic state development. What he told his contemporaries was that the principles of a democratic state organization, as laid down in the American constitution and in the Declaration of the Right of Man and of the Citizen, demanded a complete renewal of the old diplomatic principles. In his opinion, these new diplomatic principles should include popular sovereignty and national self-determination, under the coordination of an international organization and of international law. These principles were the products of the European and American democratic ideas and social organization practices. However, these political ideas were not in synchrony with reality when the fundaments of a new Europe and of a new international community were laid down in Wilson's 14 points[32] and in the Covenant of the League of Nations.[33] European politicians were unable to create a European United States, as a regional association (democratic federation) inside the League of Nations, and as a guardant of peace.

After the collapse of the Wilsonian diplomacy[34], the Pan European Movement continued the democratic traditions of the idea of European unity. By creating a democratic European constitutional federation, it wanted to precede nationalism and the rivalry among the newly created independent small national states in Eastern Europe. It aimed also to strengthen Europe against Russia and the United States of America. It fought for federalism, for democratic constitutional states and for the protection of human rights based on the historical status quo.

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[32] Die Vierzehn Punkte Wilsons. Auszug aus Wilsons Ansprache an den Kongress der Vereinigten Staaten vom 8. 1. 1918. In *H. J. Schlochauer,* Die Idee des ewigen Friedens. Bonn 1953, pp. 150-153.
[33] The Covenant of the League of Nations 28. 6. 1919. In *Schlochauer,* Die Idee, pp. 156-177.
[34] *D. Heater,* National Self-Determination. Woodrow Wilson and his Legacy. St. Martin's Press Inc., New York 1994.

The Pan European Movement[35] wanted to achieve an internal and an external harmonization of the democratic federal juridical state organizational principles; its members viewed this as the main weapon against nationalism. The movement consistently fought every tendency that would represent expansionist goals or an unlimited concentration of power. In so doing, the Pan European Movement became the most important democratic oppositional force against the Fascist, National Socialist or Stalinist totalitarian states and against their images on a European federation. Coudenhove-Kalergi opposed the totalitarian dictatorships of his age in the name of the Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen of 1789.[36]

It is not by coincidence that Vienna became the center of the democratic Pan European Movement. Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, the leader of the movement, was a real European gentleman with German, Greek, and Japanese origins. He grew up in the Czech province of the Habsburg Monarchy. He was under the influence of the Central European federalists tradition, described in the preceding section, as well as the political philosophy of Western Europe.[37] Coudenhove-Kalergi was in favor of a democratic constitutional state, of human rights, and of a European federalism. He had a deep belief in the existence of a European nation.[38] He thought that European unity would have to be established by creating a European constitutional federation. In his view, the most important goal was to create a European identity without which no voluntary integration was possible. It is vital that people could identify themselves with the European culture.[39]

In his essays, Coudenhove-Kalergi tried to identify all events and ideas of the past, which pointed toward a peaceful co-operation. While doing so, he created a synthesis of the progressive Western and Central European ideas. He adopted the ideas of the American Constitution of 1787, of the Declaration of he Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789, and of the principles of the Charter of the League of Nations. He thought that these documents, as logical products of the European historical development, represented the common principles of a democratic European political

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[35] About the programme of the Pan European Movement, see *R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi,* Paneuropa. Paneuropa-Verlag, Wien-Leipzig 1926.
[36] *R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi,* Totaler Staat – Totaler Mensch. Paneuropa-Verlag A. G. Glarus, Wien 1937; *R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi,* Stalin and Company. Paneuropa-Verlag, Leipzig-Wien 1931.
[37] *R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi,* Eine Idee erobert Europa. Meine Lebenserinnerungen. Verlag Kurt Desch, Wien-München-Basel 1958.
[38] *R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi,* Europe must unite. Paneuropa Editions Ltd., Glarus (Switzerland) 1939.
[39] *R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi,* Europa erwacht! Paneuropa Verlag, Zürich-Wien-Leipzig 1934.

identity. By defining himself as European, Coudenhove-Kalergi wanted to revitalize the "futureless and depressed masses", as described by his colleague, Ortega y Gasset[40], and to move them toward a democratic European identity. His goal was to motivate people to fight, in the name of the democratic European idea and human rights, Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin. The Pan European Movement also fought for a European federation, which it regarded as the only guarantee for peace, democracy and human rights in Europe. Inheriting the thoughts of the great supporters of a European unity, Coudenhove-Kalergi believed that democracy and peace in Europe depended on the victory of the federalists over the nationalists.

Solving the national and linguistic minority issue was his most important challenge; his approach was similar to the ideas of the democratic federalists of the Habsburg Monarchy, as described in the preceding section. He emphasized the role of human rights, of democracy, and of federalism in solving these problems. As for the federal structure of Europe–influenced by the ideas of Renner on a multistructural state–he proposed a European Parliament composed of a House of Peoples and of a House of States. He was in favor of a European constitution.[41] He emphasized the necessity to develop and implement shared democratic external and internal organization principles for every nation state in Europe in harmony with the international law, as the most important basis for the emergence of a democratic European identity. The members of the Pan European Movement fought their fight in the name of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, 1789 against the authoritarian, nationalist and communist falsifications of the essence of democratic, federative constitutional state. Coudenhove-Kalergi, and his intellectual and political movement, had a great influence on Briand and on Churchill, too. Important European democratic thinkers and intellectuals–among them Thomas Mann, Ortega y Gasset, Madariaga, Adenauer, Renner, Auer Pál and Hantos Elemér–belonged to the movement. The Pan European Movement played a very important role in the establishment of the Council of Europe, and in the emergence of the constitutional federalist, and the functionalist economic integration policy in Western Europe.

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[40] *J. Ortega y Gasset,* Der Aufstand der Massen. Rowohlt, Reinbeck bei Hamburg 1984, pp. 93-138.
[41] Entwurf einer europäischen Bundesverfassung, 1951. In *R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi,* Die europäische Nation. Deutshe Verlag-Anstalt, Stuttgart 1953, pp. 161-164.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Central-European democratic thinkers were always interested in Western democratic state organizational principles. After the bloody nationality conflicts in 1849 they elaborated various solutions to the problem of national minorities and to fight nationalism.[42] They emphasized that in multinational states only federalism based on the personal principle and the autonomy principle could work democratically. As an example, the Nationality Law of 1868 in the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy was one of the most important legal achievements in this area.[43] Eötvös outlined the framework of this law; the fundamental idea was that linguistic and cultural nationality was a personal human right. In fact, Eötvös proposed an enlargement of the human rights with minority rights. The Hungarian Nationality Law of 1868 was the first comprehensive law on national and linguistic minority rights in Europe. It was highly appreciated in Western Europe, too.[44]

The most important contributions of the Central-European political discussions on the democratic European idea were in the area of democratic, federal multinational bottom up state organization and of human rights. Central European legal thinkers discovered the multidimensional personal federalist state organization based on the personal principle and the principle of autonomy. They proposed also ideas on legal harmonization between the autonomous parts and the federal union. Unfortunately, the political circumstances were not democratic enough at that time. Consequently, the specific proposals seemed idealistic and utopian. However, they offered an alternative for the future, as proven by the current process of European integration.

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[42] *É. Bóka,* From National Toleration to National Liberation (Three Initiators of Cooperation in Central Europe). In East European Politics and Societies, 13, 1999/3, pp. 435-473.

[43] Az 1868. évi XLIV-ik magyar törvény a nemzetiségi egyenjogúság tárgyában. The text of the Nationality Law was published in *Gábor G. Kemény,* A magyar nemzetiségi kérdés története. Gergely, Budapest 1947, pp. 107-109; For the English text see *R. W. Seton-Watson,* The Racial Problems in Hungary, Constable & Co. Ltd., London 1908, pp. 429-433.

[44] *É. Bóka,* From National Toleration to National Liberation, pp. 435-473.