

**THE WHITE INTERNATIONAL:  
ANATOMY OF A TRANSNATIONAL RADICAL  
REVISIONIST PLOT IN CENTRAL EUROPE  
AFTER WORLD WAR I**

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Abstract

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Keywords: Bauer, Gömbös, Horthy, Ludendorff, *Orgesch*, paramilitary, Prónay, revision, Versailles, von Kahr

The denial of defeat, the harsh Versailles Treaty and unsuccessful attempts by paramilitary units to recover losses in the Baltic produced in post-war Germany an anti-Bolshevik, anti-Entente, radical right-wing cabal of officers with General Ludendorff and Colonel Bauer at its core. Mistakenly citing a lack of breadth as one of the reasons for the failure of their amateurishly executed Hohenzollern restoration and Kapp Putsch schemes, Bauer and co-conspirator Ignatius Trebitsch-Lincoln devised the highly ambitious White International plot. It sought to form a transnational league of Bavaria, Austria and Hungary to force the annulment of the Paris Treaties by the coordinated use of paramilitary units from the war vanquished nations. It set as its goals the destruction of Bolshevism in all its guises throughout Europe, the restoration of the monarchy in Russia, the systematic elimination of all Entente-sponsored Successor States and the declaration of war on the Entente.

Archival documents, memoirs and other sources expose the underlying flaw in the plot: individual national priorities would always override transnational cooperation. Bavaria and Hungary were already seeking treaty revision through a rapprochement with the Entente; White Russian forces had turned from German support in favour of the French; and finally—as pointed out by their own leaders—the member states' paramilitary units were either untested or wholly ineffective, and thus would be no match for the national armies of the Successor States and the Entente.

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## Abbreviations

- BaK. . . . . Bundesarchiv Koblenz (German Federal Archives, Coblenz).
- BaMaF . . . . . Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg (German Military Archives, Freiburg).
- BHStA. . . . . Bayerische Hauptstaatsarchiv (Bavarian State Archives, Munich).
- MOL . . . . . Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian State Archives, Budapest).
- SHD . . . . . Service Historique de la Défense, Archives militaires françaises (French Military Archives, Ministry of Defence, Château de Vincennes).
- StAM. . . . . Staatsarchiv München (Municipal Archives, Munich).

## Introduction

The map of Europe was drastically changed. Czechoslovakia no longer existed; Russia and Germany again shared a border where Poland had once been; the Baltic Successor States were under German control; Austria was made a province of the Greater German Reich, bordering Hungary in a Danubian Federation; the demilitarized Rhineland was occupied anew by Germany; and France and England had been neutralized. A single *Führer* ruled Germany and the Versailles Treaty was a dead letter. This was not 1940, however, but 1920 and the circumstances described above were merely the envisioned outcome of a secret grand plan conceived in the small Bavarian city of Rosenheim to return to pre-World War I borders and nullify the Paris Peace Treaties by force of arms.

On May 15, 1920, some eight weeks after the failed Kapp Putsch, Colonel Maximilian Bauer,<sup>1</sup> as personal envoy of General Erich Ludendorff, stepped off the steamer from Vienna on to the quay in Budapest. The purpose of his visit was to invite the Hungarian Head of State and Regent, Admiral Miklós Horthy, to join in the establishment of a Budapest-based, multinational, counter-revolutionary organization—a ‘White International’ that would implement and direct the plan drawn up in Rosenheim.

The Rosenheim plan called for *Freikorps* (Volunteer Corps) units led by German officers to come into Hungary disguised as settlers, be secretly armed and trained, and mount an attack on Austria to destroy the social-democratic Renner government in ‘red Vienna’. This completed, Austrian, Bavarian and Hungarian paramilitary forces would then invade Czechoslovakia. Meanwhile, *Freikorps* units from northern Germany would topple the Weimar Republic and set General Ludendorff

up as military dictator of a new provisional government in Berlin. Next, émigré White Russian officers in Germany and northern German *Freikorps* units would launch counter-revolutionary forces, made up of Russian prisoners of war still interned in Germany, on Bolshevik Russia. Poland would disappear and the tsarist regime would be restored. The Entente-sponsored Successor States would then be divided between the participating states of the White International. The last phase of the plan was to wage war on the Entente with the troops of a newly established Confederation of Greater Germany, Russia and Hungary. The entire endeavour was to be financed by a combination of German industrialists, Hungarian state funds and 2 million counterfeit Russian Duma roubles printed for that purpose.

Two weeks after Colonel Bauer's audience with the Regent, Admiral Horthy, the latter informed General Ludendorff's envoy that he was 'in agreement with each and every point [of the plan] and that work could now be taken up'.<sup>2</sup> Thus Horthy's name was added to a growing if tentative list of powerful people which included, besides General Ludendorff, representatives of the vast White Russian émigré community in Germany, the Minister-President of Bavaria, Gustav von Kahr, and official and semi-official leaders in Austria and Italy.

This dissertation contends that the political aims of the Rosenheim plan, which called for the establishment of a White International,<sup>3</sup> render this little-known plot the most ambitious of all interwar revisionist endeavours. It also argues that the very internationalist pretension of the plot was its fatal flaw. The principal participants envisaged in the Rosenheim plan were from among the states vanquished in World War I, either at the hands of the Entente forces or by social revolution. Thus they all shared an extreme rightist, generally anti-Bolshevik and anti-Entente orientation. While this

served as sufficient grounds for interest in cooperation, each partner had their own agenda specific to their national—as opposed to international—concerns.

Each had territorial demands. Germany proper sought to deprive the new Bolshevik Russia of the *Baltikum*, incorporating the Baltic lands into East Prussia. Both Germany and Austria were intent on an *Anschluß*, a joining of the two states—interestingly, this was a condition that had not existed since 1866 and then under quite different circumstances. Apart from pan-German hopes, there were competing Bavarian particularist aspirations, which ranged from absorbing the Austrian Alpine provinces south of the border to form a Greater Bavaria, to the creation of a Catholic Bavarian-Austrian union, independent of the rest of Germany. Hungarian territorial concerns centred round a complete revision of the Trianon Treaty, which had reduced the Magyar state to a fraction of its former self. Relations with the Entente and with the Entente-sponsored Successor States aside, Hungary contested the loss of the western Hungarian province of Burgenland awarded to Austria according to the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye. For the émigré Russian community and White Russian officers, hope was simply defined as the destruction of the Bolshevik regime in Moscow. Complications set in, however, with regard to the future of the Ukraine and the Baltic Successor States. These were compounded by an internecine struggle over official recognition of exactly who represented the old regime in the émigré community.

Clearly, the only common thread shared by all members of the would-be White International was frustration and discontent that they blamed on the Entente. Beyond that, each grasped at every diplomatic opportunity—in most cases secretly and with the involvement of the Entente Powers—which might serve their national interests, while feigning commitment to the multinational scheme outlined in the Rosenheim plan. At no time did the broad aims of the White International replace national priorities.

The grandiose plan dates back to the turbulent months following the German Armistice of 1918. Within this context the German radical right and the military were unable psychologically to accept defeat. As a result they consciously tried to disassociate themselves from the Ebert government—which the *Reichswehr* (German Army) conveniently blamed for the defeat—and to pursue a stridently aggressive foreign policy on their own. This was manifested in the Baltic Campaign and the failed Kapp Putsch, both of which contained a number of elements that would later be echoed in the Rosenheim plan.

With the tacit blessing of the Entente, German *Freikorps* units moved into the Baltic region in the spring of 1919, ostensibly to protect the newly created, Entente-sponsored Baltic Successor States from the Bolshevik steamroller. Their real mission was the fulfilment of pre-war foreign policy. The venture failed for several important reasons but the significance for this study lies in two specific areas. One was that the Entente Powers soon grasped the reality that the undisciplined nature of the German *Freikorps* units was perhaps more of a threat to the infant Baltic Successor States than were the Bolsheviks. The resulting demand by the Entente for the withdrawal of all German forces in the Baltic was, however, interpreted by the *Freikorpskämpfer* (Volunteer Corps soldier's) as just another stab in the back from the hated 'socialist regime' in Berlin, which was at that very moment about to sign the Versailles Treaty. The unhappy circumstances of these simultaneous events caused an unbridgeable chasm to form between the young Weimar Republic and the ultra-right.

The second telling significance lies in the response of General Rüdiger von der Goltz, Supreme Commander of all German Forces in the Baltic, to Ebert's orders to withdraw. After a long delay he simply placed his troops under the White Russian flag of émigré Prince Bermond-Avalov in thinly veiled defiance of Berlin's authority.

Besides a glaring display of a 'loose cannon' attitude against Weimar Republic authority by a number of high military commanders, such German-White Russian cooperation would feature prominently in the international aspect of the Rosenheim plan. Though ultimately a failure, the partnership between von der Goltz and Bermond-Avalov produced another element that would be echoed later: short of funds during the last death throes of their unsuccessful campaign in November 1919, they just printed their own currency. This remedy to financial need would subsequently be resurrected on a massive scale in the Rosenheim plan.

The Baltic Campaign also serves to introduce White Russian General Vasili Vasilievich Biskupsky, a monarchist and political schemer who would represent the Russian émigré factor in the German-Hungarian-Russian combination of the White International. General Biskupsky was very much involved in the dark, often sinister political world of the Russian émigré community and cultivated links with some of the more nefarious individuals of the time. Throughout, Biskupsky kept in close contact with the German extreme right via his involvement with the Berlin-based, right-wing political organization the National Union (*Nationale Vereinigung* or *NV*).

The *NV*, founded by *Freikorps* leader Major Waldemar Pabst, was hardly ambiguous in its proclaimed mission. It was an organization of like-minded officers, politicians and financially important people from the extreme right whose sole goal was the removal of the Weimar Republic and the formation of a military provisional government in its place. Most *NV* members tended to gravitate towards the so-called Ludendorff circle led by Ludendorff's political adviser and closest confidant during and after the war, Colonel Maximilian Hermann Bauer, who was to be the real author of the Rosenheim plan and the guiding force behind the establishment of the White International. General Ludendorff himself would remain as a kind of *éminence grise*.

Associated with the circle were Colonel Bauer's closest collaborator and political schemer Hungarian-born Ignatius Trebitsch-Lincoln and *Freikorps* commander Major Franz von Stephani. Also to be found, at least closely affiliated with the *NV*, were industrialists, journalists, holders of senior government positions, high-ranking monarchists of the Russian émigré colony and several émigré Baltic Germans. The latter represented the most radical wing of the German nationalist movement. Cooperation between Baltic Germans, Russian monarchists and the German extreme right endured from the founding of the *NV*, throughout the development of the White International and, indeed, beyond into the Nazi period.

One of the great talents of the Ludendorff circle leader, Colonel Bauer, was his ability to identify mutual frustrations and interests between very diverse groups and use them to his advantage. He observed that disdain for the Weimar Republic was shared by the German left, who saw in the *Republik* a watered-down, revisionist programme too attached to bourgeois ideology. He also realized that any revitalization of Germany would be impossible without the support of the working class. He thus reached over the ideological chasm to certain representatives from the German left, as well as Bolshevik representatives then in Berlin, in the hope of some kind of collaborative effort shortly before and during the Kapp fiasco. This formula that some would refer to as 'national Bolshevism', that is an ultra-nationalist state ruled along the lines of the Leninist socialist model of complete control within the upper echelons of power, came to naught—especially after the Kapp Putsch experience. Nevertheless, the idea of actually working with the left in the good fight to destroy the lukewarm social-democratic governments of Ebert in Germany and Renner in Austria would reappear in some of the more imaginative innovations of the Rosenheim plan.

By January 1920, there were lessons learned which were significant to the development of the White International. Firstly, the Baltic experience taught the official government in Berlin that if the *Freikorps* was a force that could be used outside Germany against the wishes of the Weimar government, it could be used within Germany's borders in the same way. Secondly, it was not lost on President Ebert that the growing ties between the German extreme right and émigré Russian notables indicated a potential danger for the state posed by the 150,000 Russian internees left over from the war still in and around Berlin. Thirdly, the most valuable lesson learned by the German right wing was that they could not look to the Weimar Republic to fulfil their nationalist dreams because, in their eyes, Berlin was simply a puppet of the Entente, a fact supposedly confirmed by the signing of the Versailles Treaty and the Baltic fiasco. The conclusion was that in order to save Germany, the Weimar government must be removed.

The framework of a plan to that end was well under way within the *NV* during the closing months of 1919 and tentatively slated to take place sometime in the autumn of 1920. However, the Entente decision that irregular paramilitary units be included in the 100,000-troop limit specified in the Versailles Treaty forced the issue to come to the fore. Rather than acquiesce in Berlin's order to dissolve the irregulars, the more militant elements of the *NV* decided to use them in the ill-fated bid to topple the republican government in March 1920. Directly prior to the Kapp Putsch attempt, one sees certain figures rise to the top such as Trebitsch-Lincoln, Colonel Bauer's closest collaborator who would make important early contacts within his native Hungary, and Major Franz von Stephani, *Freikorps* chieftain and future liaison officer for the White International between the Bavarian extreme right and their Prussian counterparts. Another

noteworthy feature of the Rosenheim plan originally found in the Kapp Putsch was the use of *Freikorps* units as the preferred instrument of political change.

The Kapp Putsch disaster of mid-March 1920 served as the ultimate example of how *not* to orchestrate a coup d'état. Such lessons were all to appear in the next phase of the conspirators' ceaseless endeavours at counter-revolution: the Rosenheim plan. One lesson was that the decisive strike could not come from the Prussians, whom Bauer now blamed as being tainted by 'Jewish socialism and bourgeois values'. The *Reichswehr* too had proven their unreliability in Defence Minister General Noske's refusal to support the *Freikorps* units with regular troops. Bauer was also convinced that it had been a mistake to attempt to set up a civilian government that did not have the courage to trust in the *Freikorps* component that had marched on Berlin to do the job. In fact, Bauer was now certain that the enterprise had failed not because it was too radical but because it was not radical enough; and his next plan would reflect this judgement. It was for this reason that the Ludendorff circle, especially the group around Colonel Bauer, sought and was granted exile in the rightist-friendly atmosphere of Bavaria after the failure of the Kapp Putsch; and it was here that the Rosenheim plan was conceived.

Colonel Bauer, Trebitsch-Lincoln and Major von Stephani resettled south of Munich in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and wasted no time in formulating a new plan, more ambitious than anything heretofore. It called for the creation of an international 'white alliance' of all vanquished nations, whose goal would be the destruction of all so-called socialist regimes and the annulment of the treaties of Paris by force of arms, as mentioned above. The plot devised in Rosenheim, where General Ludendorff had taken up residence, was approved by the general and then presented to the new Bavarian Minister-President, Gustav von Kahr, and his government dominated by the *Bayerische*

*Volkspartei* (*BVP*; Bavarian People's Party), which had replaced that of moderate socialist Johannes Hoffmann in the wake of the Kapp fiasco.

The Bavarian leadership was amenable to the Rosenheim plan in principle, but it had its own political interests and diplomatic aims to consider. Bavaria was attempting to regain the special status it had enjoyed during the *Kaiserreich* (Empire) and had recently lost in the new Weimar Constitution. Munich's approach in its independent foreign policy was thus particularist, and in some circles even separatist, as well as being Francophile and patently anti-Prussian. Bavaria played the anti-Prussian card to ingratiate itself with the French who, in the opinion of *BVP* leader Georg Heim, would rather see a weak confederation of Germany than a strong, Berlin-based federation. The key issues regarding Bavaria's negotiations with France were the pending disarmament order and the proposed *Anschluß* between the two Catholic states of Bavaria and Austria, leaving Prussia and the rest of Germany out of the equation entirely.

The Bavarian overtures to France serve as the first example of one of the problems which would plague the plotters: the practice of White International partners negotiating with outside powers not included within their ranks. But, for the time being, it was more important for the Bauer group to turn a blind eye to the particularist tendencies of their hosts for the sake of gaining their support for the Rosenheim plan.

Federalist tendencies aside, Bavaria had one year earlier witnessed the brutal put-down of the Munich Soviet in the latter's bid for power after the chaos following the assassination of socialist Kurt Eisner. The resulting *Ordnungsstaat* (conservative state of law and order) of Bavaria hoped to present itself as a bulwark against the spread of Communism that was a genuine concern in the spring of 1920. Béla Kun had established a Communist regime in Hungary and it was feared the 'red' Renner government in Vienna would be the next to go. In this light the von Kahr government

was Colonel Bauer's most promising initial ally in organizing collective, counter-revolutionary action.

Minister-President von Kahr supported the continued building of his own, enormous Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr* (Citizens' Guard) under the leadership of organizer Georg Escherich. The *Einwohnerwehr* was mostly comprised of Bavarian village and small-town paramilitary groups of scant military bearing who had had little to do with the smashing of the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic. This had been chiefly undertaken by hardened, non-Bavarian *Freikorps* units rushing into Bavaria fresh from quelling leftist uprisings in the Ruhr and elsewhere after the Kapp-inspired general strike. The *Einwohnerwehr* was to form the core of a Munich-based organization that would serve as the successor to the now defunct *NV*. In May 1920, representatives from over sixty *Freikorps* units from across the *Reich* attended a secret meeting in the eastern Bavarian city of Regensburg presided over by *BVP* founder Georg Heim. It was agreed there that all paramilitary groups in Germany would recognize *Organisation Escherich* (*Orgesch*) as the supreme body responsible for counter-revolutionary action. It was decided too that Escherich would work closely with Colonel Bauer and the Ludendorff group through liaison officer Major von Stephani as outlined in the Rosenheim plan.

Meanwhile, Colonel Bauer and Trebitsch-Lincoln met with leading members of the large Russian émigré colony in Munich. There were old friends—General Biskupsky among them—who had been involved in the Kapp venture and had fled to Munich as well. Also in the Bavarian capital were the equally radical Baltic Germans (many coming in the wake of the Bermond-Avalov defeats) who, like the Russians and the Ludendorff group, had been driven from their homes. For this reason, Bauer and his group would find the strongest support for the Rosenheim plan from these two émigré

colonies though, in reality, neither of them would be in any position to bring about the plan's fulfilment.

The Regensburg Meeting of May 1920 and the creation of *Orgesch*, coupled with the enthusiasm of certain émigré Russians and Baltic Germans, marked the first milestones in the realization of the Rosenheim plan. Relations between the Bavarian right and the Ludendorff group were not closely defined at this point. There remained areas of disagreement that would surface later. For the time being, however, Colonel Bauer, Trebitsch-Lincoln and their co-conspirators were ready to move on to the next phase in the establishment of the White International. Securing travel passes in false names provided them by both the Munich Police Chief and the Hungarian Consulate, Colonel Bauer, his private secretary and Trebitsch-Lincoln passed over the border into Austria and then on to Budapest to set up their central base of operations with the help of Admiral Horthy, or so they hoped.

There are two important factors relating to Hungary in May 1920. The Regency of Admiral Miklós Horthy had just been established in March, some months after Romanian forces had put an end to the Soviet experiment led by Béla Kun. Horthy had been heavily reliant on radical paramilitary leaders in positioning himself as national leader. Now installed as Regent, he was surrounded by a kind of advisory camarilla of the more radical of these individuals.

The second factor regarding Hungary was the imminent signing of the Trianon Treaty, which would reduce the territory of Hungary to a fraction of its pre-war size. Colonel Bauer and his entourage were welcomed with enthusiasm because they represented the possibility, however remote, of a treaty revision either through a 'Rosenheim' fait accompli or the formation of an anti-Communist league to save Western Europe from Bolshevism. Seemingly convinced by Bauer that the foundation

of a White International would be a means to re-establish Hungary's pre-war borders, Horthy gave the Rosenheim plan his full support. What Horthy, especially his legitimist-oriented Foreign Ministry, did not tell Bauer was that negotiations with France had been in progress since January 1920 concerning economic concessions in exchange for French support for territorial revisions of the soon-to-be-signed Treaty of Trianon. Thus during the summer of 1920, the Hungarians played a double game of going through the motions of support for Bauer's White International scheme while being equally active in talks with the sworn enemies of Ludendorff's emissaries. Such Byzantine intrigue also extended to those ultra-radical elements in Budapest that genuinely supported Bauer and his plan, but were opposed by the professional diplomatic corps surrounding Prime Minister Teleki and others in the Foreign Ministry. It would not be until the end of the summer when this duplicity was discovered; by that time it was too late. Bauer and his supporters had simply been outmanoeuvred.

Such was also the case with the Austrians. The initial goal of the plan was the removal of the 'socialist' Renner government in Vienna by coordinated military incursions of Hungarian troops and Bavarian *Freikorps* units who had recently been placed under the overall command of Georg Escherich at the Regensburg Meeting. The Austrian extreme right was willing to allow this, as long as it seemed necessary. By August, however, strong indications that the Renner government would lose its parliamentary majority in favour of a conservative coalition at the polls prompted the Austrian right to rethink their collaboration with the Bavarian *Orgesch*, and they decided to withdraw from the whole affair. Constitutional processes had thus made moot one of the chief reasons for the very existence of the White International.

The Russian connection unravelled in a similar fashion. It lasted only until General Biskupsky was summarily rebuffed by White Russian General Wrangel, then

fighting in southern Russia. After receiving promises of support from France, General Wrangel refused to recognize the authority of the Budapest Russian Committee of the White International. Hungarian financial support for the Russian Committee was likewise soon withdrawn.

During the summer of 1920 the Bauer group had managed to assemble a rather impressive international team while in Budapest. By the end of August, however, Colonel Bauer's beautiful illusion had been tragically destroyed by fact. Each member state saw the plan only in the light of how it might serve their respective goals. Separatist and particularist inclinations in Bavaria, parliamentary processes in Austria, changing fortunes of war in Eastern Europe, adept diplomatic manoeuvring in Hungary and the declared refusal of Italy to have anything to do with it—all rendered the plan stillborn.

The critical moment in the demise of the White International plot came when, fearing for his life at the hands of his fellow anti-Semitic conspirators, Colonel Bauer's most trusted confidant showed up in mid-September at the French Legation in Vienna with a suitcase packed with damaging secret White International documents. His treachery was not what brought down the White International. That had already taken place. But it does serve as a fitting conclusion to a scheme that surely deserved to end.

There were many reasons behind the failure to establish an effective White International in 1920. Firstly, national ambitions took precedence over international concerns. Individual participants sought practical solutions for themselves, not illusory international panaceas. Secondly, planning—let alone execution—could not keep pace with the ever-changing political situations between and inside nations. This caused parts of the plan to become suddenly irrelevant. Thirdly, the lack of cohesion, the internecine strife and the outright betrayal within—even among the core initiators of the Rosenheim

plan—weakened the centre. Fourthly, none of the participants wanted to change Europe; rather, they wanted to change it back to a time that was irretrievable. One detects here the last vestiges of those who had not yet learned that the world had changed forever in 1914.

This thesis is presented in three parts. Part I discusses the period from the collapse of Imperial Germany in November 1918 to the end of the Kapp Putsch in March 1920. Part II covers the time from mid-March to early May at the beginning of the Bavarian exile. It discusses the development of the White International plot and the context of political isolation the authors found themselves in at that time. This part focuses on the task of convincing the Bavarian right to support the radical Bauer plan despite an agenda that, to a large degree, did not include the Kappists. Part III deals with the Hungarian phase when Bauer, Trebitsch and Stephani travelled to Budapest to invite the Horthy regime to participate. It accounts for the general failure of the plan before it was ever initiated.

This thesis aims to demonstrate the originality and scope of the audacious plot. In addition, it is shown that key elements within the White International plot—transnational military cooperation, the use of paramilitary formations as first-line offensive units against the Entente-sponsored Successor States, the removal by force of social-democratic ‘red’ governments including the Weimar Republic—were continuations of ideas and activities already employed during the Baltic Campaign in the first year after the Armistice.

It is also argued here that while the creation of a White International as a focal organization to coordinate actions against left-wing activity within Central Europe had its merits in reason, the ultimate goals of the plot as envisioned by its creators to

militarily destroy the Successor States, abrogate the Paris Treaties, re-establish tsarist Russia, renew hostilities against the Entente and essentially return to the borders of 1914 had absolutely no chance of success. Explanations for this include an altogether misplaced faith in the military capabilities of paramilitary units, the planners' inability to understand that the participating nations would invariably place national agendas before international considerations, the failure to consider the ever-shifting dynamics of the general international landscape and, finally, the rank dilettantism of the key planners themselves.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Colonel Max Bauer (1875-1929), besides being an expert in field artillery during the war, served as Chief of Section I of the German General Staff and as a close political adviser to General Erich Ludendorff. Colonel Bauer had long been involved in intrigue and was instrumental in plotting the dismissal of pro-armistice Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg in 1917.

<sup>2</sup> Miklós Szinai and László Szűcs (eds.), *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy*, (Budapest: University Printing House, 1965), 26.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'White International' was not coined by the plotters as an official term but here taken from a chapter title in Bernard Wasserstein's biography, *The Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), on one of the original authors of the plot. Variations of the term in several German sources, including those produced by Trebitsch, range from *Weißer Allianz* through *Ludendorff-Bauer Plan to Verschwörung* (Conspiracy). It is safe to assume that the term was meant as an answer to the 'Red International' of the post-war period. The term 'white' is consistent with the so-called Hungarian White Terror meted out against the remnants of the recently fallen Communist regime of Béla Kun, the participants of which were precisely those figures that would work directly with the Bauer circle in setting up the White International. As to why 'white', it is this author's speculation that the colour may recall Charles X of France who, before and during his reign (1825-30), supported the excesses of the reactionary, noble 'Ultras' that, under the white flag of the House of Bourbon, terrorized the French countryside, targeting those who had anything to do with the French Revolution.

## Part I

### Preconditions for the Development of the White International Plot

#### Chapter 1

##### The Military Component: The *Freikorps* as *Reichswehr* Surrogate

###### A. Revolution and the *Reichswehr*

One of the most amazing aspects of the plot conceived in Rosenheim to create a White International is that there is absolutely no mention of the role of the prospective participants' national armies—because they had none. The simultaneous attacks scheduled to take place throughout Central Europe were to be carried out by paramilitary units. This means that what was essentially to be a rekindling of the Great War would pit untrained and undisciplined mercenaries and local militias against the combined national armies of the Entente and the Successor States. To understand how Colonel Bauer and his co-conspirators arrived at such a seemingly preposterous idea, it is necessary to understand the relative positions of the *Reichswehr* and its surrogate force the *Freikorps*, and their respective relations with the early Weimar Republic.

On December 24 the response by the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (*USPD*)<sup>1</sup> to *Reichskanzler* Friedrich Ebert's<sup>2</sup> perceived betrayal of the 1918 German Revolution prompted Berlin's violent Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet to occupy the Imperial Palace and surround the Chancellery. The *Reichswehr* responded swiftly to Ebert's call for help, seeing an opportunity to settle the question as to who would hold the keys to power in Republican Germany. A large crowd made up of workers and those generally sympathetic to the German Soviets had gathered around the palace. The

frustrated and confused regular troops, confronted with the hostile mob, refused to fire and some even joined in with the rebels. Thus the lack of anti-leftist élan of the German regular army was exposed and the first and only real attempt by Supreme Army Command (the *Oberste Heeresleitung* or *OHL*) to crush the revolution had failed. This is not to say that the *OHL* had abdicated its power—far from it. For the moment, however, it could not risk such direct action as had led to the Christmas Eve debacle of 1918. A military surrogate was needed.

#### B. Development of the *Freikorps*

Two things became evident to Ebert and the *OHL*. Firstly, the restless, leftist rabble of the streets must be neutralized and, secondly, the regular army was, at the moment, not up to the task largely due to the presence of leftist sympathizers within its ranks. It was at this time that Major Kurt von Schleicher<sup>3</sup> made the suggestion of organizing volunteer corps recruited from the army and, as much as possible, led by their former company grade officers. Officially, the *OHL* would be out of the scheme but would unofficially arm and train the units. The Chief of the General Staff, General Groener,<sup>4</sup> supported the idea and the *OHL* agreed to the formation of volunteer corps.<sup>5</sup> Thus the first stage of the revolution that witnessed the ascendancy of the Spartacist movement passed into the second stage that saw the rise of the *Freikorps* that would, however, remain long after the last vestiges of the Spartacists had disappeared.

In January 1919 Ebert, and Defence Minister Gustav Noske of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (*SPD*),<sup>6</sup> accepted an invitation to travel to Camp Zossen to review General Ludwig von Maercker's<sup>7</sup> newly organized 'Volunteer Rifles'. They

were very impressed.<sup>8</sup> It was at this point that the decision was made—with Ebert in full agreement—that von Maercker’s *Freikorps* was to be the model for the creation of as many such units as were necessary to defend the new republic. In so doing, Noske had unwittingly delivered the government into the hands of armed mercenaries for whom the fight against Bolshevism was simply a prelude to fighting against revolutionaries of any stripe that, in the eyes of the *Freikorps*, included the Weimar Republic itself. More significantly for this work, the sole German contingent forces to be employed in Bauer’s White International came into being.

For this study, three areas of concern warrant a closer focus regarding the *Freikorps* phenomenon: the mentality and motives of the typical *Freikorpskämpfer*, his attitudes towards the older, conservative right and, finally, his military effectiveness and its application to a general European war that would most certainly result were Bauer’s plan put in motion.

One of the most apt statements concerning the first years following World War I is: ‘we may not have had a revolution in Germany—but we are certainly having a counter-revolution.’<sup>9</sup> The author was referring specifically to the emptying of the universities during the early spring of 1919 as thousands of students, heeding the call to protect the Fatherland from the ‘Bolshevik Russian horde’ in the Baltic—and basically seeking adventure—poured into the rapidly forming *Freikorps* units throughout Germany. The remark is also applicable to the tens of thousands of young men—mostly late of the front-line trenches—that merged into a myriad of units ranging from the highly disciplined to the unruly freebooters more akin to mercenaries. The second group was the rule, not the exception. One historian describes the *Freikorps* in general as made up of ‘semi-anarchic gangs of free-booters, mainly ex-servicemen, fiercely hostile to the left, and a law unto themselves’.<sup>10</sup>

A look into the motives and psychological make-up of these individuals reveals a mindset of discontentment with, and even repugnance for, the Weimar Republic that was shared by the core of the radical right leaders. This is especially the case with the Ludendorff circle and its future leading spirit, Colonel Max Bauer.

The typical post-war *Freikorpskämpfer* belonged to a generation that was steeped in the various pre-war youth movements, all of which shared a kind of *völkisch* preoccupation with revolt against the urban liberal, bourgeois society that had arisen as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. The youth movement phenomenon was seen as a last chance for a ‘moral “*rejuvenescence*” of the German people and the return of the German soul to its best traditions’.<sup>11</sup> At the time of the Armistice, these same individuals made up a flood of young, arrogant and capable officers who would find an outlet for their talents in the new *Freikorps* units.<sup>12</sup> Equally, many were young officer cadets and students who had no experience at all and longed to fulfil their fantasies of heroic struggle. The *Freikorps* offered them the opportunity for involvement in a masculine world of ultra-violence in which brutality was not only acceptable but also desired.<sup>13</sup>

And what of the particular mindset of the returning front-line fighter that so pitted him against the Republic? The first consideration is traceable to the war years. Front-line soldiers learned to distrust and despise the ‘home front’. The difference between the ‘front’ and the ‘home front’ was as the chasm between ‘actions’ and ‘words’.<sup>14</sup> When defeat came, it was inevitable that blame would be put on those at home. Such feelings were, of course, encouraged by the successful use of propaganda by the *OHL* that spoke incessantly of the ‘November Criminals’ and the ‘stab-in-the-back legend’ (*Dolchstoßlegende*). According to this legend, the civilian government—which was in fact created by the high command to carry the load of responsibility for

the defeat—had betrayed the nation and the undefeated *Reichswehr* by seeking an armistice with the Entente. The latter provided the *Freikorpskämpfer* with all the reason he needed to fight towards the destruction of Weimar for, in his eyes, the army had not been overcome by the Entente, but by the new, civilian German government.

These volunteer units were usually led by the very same young company and field grade officers that had seen the horrors of trench warfare first-hand alongside their men. They tended to be middle-class, former non-commissioned officers who had risen to their rank through battlefield promotions. As such, they tended to disdain the old-guard officers of the privileged class. The *Freikorpskämpfer* were thus fiercely loyal to their commanders so long as they could provide them with money and a good fight, for fighting was their stock-in-trade.<sup>15</sup>

By the early summer of 1919 tens of thousands of veterans and non-veterans (of the latter group mostly students) had joined the volunteer formations. The exact number is difficult to tell. The understandably alarmed *USPD* leader Hugo Haase reported to the *Reichstag* in July 1919 that there were over a million men in the *Freikorps*.<sup>16</sup> Noske himself set the figure at about 400,000. It must also be remembered that counter-revolutionary forces were not confined to the *Freikorps*. There were neighbourhood citizens' militias, student fraternities and middle-class centres of reaction whose anti-republican proclivities were linked officially and unofficially to conservative anti-government peasant and landowner associations.<sup>17</sup>

And to what degree was the new radical right embodied in the *Freikorps* still bound to the old conservatives? Could the proponents of nationalist counter-revolution be effective with one part looking to the future while the other looked to the past?

As mentioned, the typical *Freikorpskämpfer* was drawn from the young, recently returned, front-line men and officers who either could not or would not adapt to

the humdrum, bourgeois civilian life they so detested while in the trenches. An important aspect of this ‘new warrior’ imbued with a sort of resentful nationalism was that he began to detach himself from the traditional, conservative right during the early *Freikorps* period of 1919 and would continue to go his own way—especially after the signing of the Versailles Treaty.<sup>18</sup> The front-line fighter turned *Freikorpskämpfer* held a general disdain for the bourgeois establishment of his elders even before 1914. It follows that such resentment would only be hardened by the horrors of the war experience. The old-school conservatives—especially of the type that gravitated towards the conservative German National People’s Party (*DNVP*)<sup>19</sup>—were seen as being stuck in the past and harbouring unrealistic dreams of a restoration of the monarchy and a return to the halcyon days before the war. Thus the *Freikorps* had little use for the older, conservative right and none at all for the hated Weimar system they felt had to be smashed to ‘make room for something that was new but as yet unspecified, something fundamentally different from what had gone before, a form of “socialism” that would somehow also be “national” with a strong state and a martial ruling ethic’.<sup>20</sup>

Such sentiments were mirrored in White International creator Colonel Bauer’s many tracts that embraced Oswald Spengler’s *Prussian Socialism*, rejecting the ‘false socialism’ of the *SPD* and the Weimar Republic. Bauer also depicted the Republic as a ‘women’s state’, bemoaning the lack of the ‘soldierly virtue and ethic of duty’ necessary in defence of the nation. As with the *Freikorps* and their leaders, he made no distinction between the *SPD* and the Spartacist movement, stressing that there was no ‘going back to the old days’ which he portrayed as having already lost their way before 1914. For Bauer, mankind ‘stands for a great new revolution’ to ‘correct the path forward’.<sup>21</sup>

He was quite mistaken, however, to invest the *Freikorpskämpfer* with any sort of goal-oriented political awareness. They were anxious to fight the ‘reds’ at home that, they were told, had stolen the sure victory from the *Reichswehr* by demanding an armistice; and just as anxious to fight the Russians in the East lest Germany be overrun by the Bolshevik horde. But none of this had anything to do with any ideology on their part.<sup>22</sup>

The ferocity and wild abandon of the *Freikorpskämpfer* is legendary. He was ‘a new type of warrior, born out of Central Europe’s “culture of defeat” and unrestrained by conventional military discipline and moral reservations’.<sup>23</sup> An instructive example is offered by *Freikorps-Potsdam* leader Major Franz von Stephani<sup>24</sup> who describes the retaking of the Spartacist-occupied building that housed the offices of the *SPD* organ *Vorwärts* in Berlin. Through the use of overwhelming force that included machine guns, artillery and flame-throwers, Stephani’s forces easily ‘routed the 350 defenders who, armed only with rifles, surrendered. They were then lined up and summarily shot one by one by the *Freikorpskämpfer* according to [my] orders.’<sup>25</sup> This example of wanton brutality is significant to this work because it was committed by one of the three originators of the White International plot. This same Major Stephani would serve as the liaison officer between the Ludendorff circle, the Bavarian *Freikorps* forces and the Horthy regime during the summer of 1920.

The old nationalist groups so vociferous before and during the war were only now asking the question, ‘What way forward?’ Chief amongst such groups were the pan-Germans. For this study, it is important to look closer into the stridently nationalist *Weltanschauung* (world view) of this group because it was from the platform of the pan-Germans that the Ludendorff circle would find its own direction.

## Chapter 2

### Pan-Germans, the Bamberg Declaration and Post-war Nationalist Foreign Policy

To answer the question, ‘What way forward?’ a meeting of loosely knit pan-German organizations<sup>26</sup> was called in the north-eastern Bavarian city of Bamberg on February 16, 1919, just as the various *Freikorps* units were rooting out ‘Bolshevik elements’ throughout Germany. The result of the meeting produced the so-called Bamberg Declaration<sup>27</sup> that clearly illustrated the basic tenets of a radical right-wing foreign policy.

The first order of business was the adoption of a policy addressing the question of German territory in the new state of affairs. The decision was to hold fast to the pre-war idea that ‘The portion of the Earth’s surface which today is under German control is not sufficient for the German *Volk*.’<sup>28</sup> The ‘forced surrender’ of Alsace-Lorraine, North Schleswig and West Prussia was to be counterbalanced by the uniting of the various Central European areas where Germans lived. These were to include ‘all of German-Austria as well as the ethnic German province of Burgenland in western Hungary<sup>29</sup> and the ancient German colonial areas of the Baltic lands’.<sup>30</sup> To this end, according to the Bamberg Declaration, there must be a re-establishment of the economic alliance with these areas and a reactivation of the national spirit to hinder the further ‘tainting’ of the German *Volk* by migrating non-Germans. In fact, the *Auslandsdeutschen* (Germans in foreign lands)—and more specifically the Baltic Germans—were seen as ‘The best source for the revitalization of German influence, German economy and culture’.<sup>31</sup> The

Declaration further called for the rebuilding of the German fleet and land forces to pre-war levels, which would not only foster a renewed pride in *Deutschtum* (German-ness) but also create much-needed employment. Above all, Germans everywhere must have the will to ‘extinguish the taste of defeat, and through economic and military cohesiveness effect the rebirth of German power’.<sup>32</sup>

The Bamberg Declaration clearly shows that the negative conclusion of the war was viewed by many as merely a postponement of great-power ambitions—not a surrender—and the Weimar Republic itself as a temporary necessity to be removed when the time was right.

The ends were certainly pre-war but not the means. The fulfilment of this foreign policy could not be accomplished through the continued policies of the old *Kaiserreich* that had for the past twenty years, ‘with weak hearts and failing eyes, lived off the fat of Bismarck’s ideas’.<sup>33</sup> Thus the post-war right saw neither the new Weimar Republic nor even any kind of re-establishment of the old order as a suitable vehicle for the realization of their nationalist dreams. Again, one observes the desire for something new but as yet undefined.<sup>34</sup>

The goals expressed in Bamberg in early 1919 guided efforts in the failed Baltic Campaign during that summer and autumn. These failures were never perceived as being due to the unobtainable nature of such goals and were simply carried over by Colonel Bauer to the Kapp Putsch fiasco and, failing there as well, they re-emerged in the designs of the White International plot. The latter was the by-product not of what was learned from previous failures, but of what was not learned.

## Chapter 3

### The 1919 Baltic Campaign as Prologue to the White International Plot

Many of the components of the Baltic Campaign of 1919 would be found in the White International plot and shall be addressed in the order in which they arose. Firstly, while the German units engaged the Bolshevik forces loosely referred to as the 'Red Army', they did so not for the protection of the Entente-sponsored, nascent Baltic republics but, in fact, to deny the republics their independence and bring them under German control, consistent with the ultra-nationalist foreign policies of the pan-Germans. The control of the Baltic was one of the stated aims of the later White International plot. Secondly, German and White Russian troops, and their leaders on the ground, were almost exclusively paramilitary in nature with the *Reichswehr* remaining cautiously aloof. Thirdly, the Baltic Campaign became a matter of German-White Russian transnational military cooperation, drawing on forces from German *Freikorps* units and tsarist Russian prisoners of war held in Germany. This first real 'international' effort laid a foundation upon which an ultra-conservative, or 'white' international, revisionist force could subsequently be built using the same troop sources. Fourthly, while the Baltic Campaign was initially supported by Berlin and the Entente as a single measure against the spread of Bolshevism in the region, it soon revealed its duplicitous nature as a German-White Russian prerequisite for establishing a viable force strong enough not only to topple the still-shaky Bolshevik administration in Moscow, but also to use the Baltic as a base from which to launch an attack on the 'socialist regime' in Berlin.

### A. Extreme Rightist Foreign Policy and the Role of the *Freikorps*

During World War I, centuries-old Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian nationalist aspirations of autonomy within the Russian Empire were revived by the German advance deep within the Baltic region as early as 1915 on the one hand, and were changed to a desire for complete independence by the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917 on the other. With the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk<sup>35</sup> in March 1918 granting the Baltic lands to Germany, such dreams of autonomy if nothing else—albeit under a German sphere of influence—seemed within reach. Germany, while disguising annexationist aims in national self-determination language, had its own agenda for controlling the Baltic States based on the large German-speaking populations there and the desire to deprive the Bolsheviks of their control of the buffer border states that had existed under the Tsar.<sup>36</sup> In any case, there was little thought for the Baltic peoples themselves.<sup>37</sup> Germany's hopes were dashed—at least temporarily—with the 1918 collapse of the Western Front and the stipulation within the resulting Armistice of the abrogation of the earlier German-Russian Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Ironically, the same Armistice also stated that until the Entente decided otherwise, German troops then in the east in great numbers, especially in Latvia, were to remain in position—and they were still there in the early spring of 1919.<sup>38</sup>

To the government in Berlin—as in other European capitals—the danger of a Bolshevik 'Red Terror' was very real indeed. Early in 1919 soviet republics were declared in Bavaria, following the assassination of *USPD* leader Kurt Eisner,<sup>39</sup> and in Hungary at precisely the same time that Russia's Red Army was making its bid in the Baltic. It is thus not surprising that initially German military action in the Baltic came

with the implied blessing of the Entente, who wished to see the Entente-friendly Ulmanis<sup>40</sup> government of the Republic of Latvia, as well as the administrations of Lithuania and Estonia, succeed without unpopular, direct Entente involvement.

For the pan-Germans, the *Reichswehr* and its surrogate *Freikorps* formations, however, involvement in the Baltic meant something quite different. While the German civilian government back in Berlin struggled with peacetime readjustment and the issue of the coming Paris Treaties, the *Reichswehr* exercised its free hand in foreign policy at the front.<sup>41</sup> The Baltic Campaign offered the opportunity to begin to redeem lost wartime annexationist dreams and to fulfil a post-war expansionist agenda as articulated in the Bamberg Declaration. The universally feared advancement of the Red Army westwards merely provided the excuse for a massive German paramilitary build-up in the east; a force that could conceivably march on Berlin itself. In point of fact, the actual suggestion to use German forces came from the Ebert-appointed General Plenipotentiary for the Baltic region, the ultra-nationalist August Winnig,<sup>42</sup> who quickly saw how he could both soothe British anxieties without their direct intervention and open the door to an active German military presence in the region as a base from which to smash the Weimar government.<sup>43</sup> This *SPD* ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing’ was later dismissed from the party for his involvement in the Kapp Putsch.

Command of all *Freikorps* units in the area fell to Baltic German General Count Rüdiger von der Goltz<sup>44</sup> who set up his base of operations in Mitau outside Riga, the former wartime headquarters of German Supreme Command East VIII. Long-time pan-Germanist and co-founder with Wolfgang Kapp<sup>45</sup> of the now-outlawed 1917 German Fatherland Party (*Deutsche Vaterlandspartei*),<sup>46</sup> General von der Goltz had already made a name for himself as an anti-Bolshevik fighter, having driven out factions of the Red Army from Finland in the spring of 1918. He viewed the Baltic as simply the next

battlefield against a 'Bolshevik plague, an Asiatic bondage . . . that must be eradicated to prevent the downfall of the West'.<sup>47</sup> In such language one detects a very strong echo of Bauer. Both men agreed with Oswald Spengler's thesis of the great threat Bolshevism represented to the survival of Western Europe, as will be seen in the treatment of Bauer's political and philosophical ideas below.

More importantly, General von der Goltz regarded control of the Baltic States as an opportunity to preserve Germany's bridges to a future Bolshevik-free Russia. 'Russia and Germany together, both anti-Bolshevik and anti-Entente . . . will offer the Western Powers a different set of circumstances and [will] thus free us from Versailles.'<sup>48</sup> These are also among Bauer's stated goals in his reasons for establishing a White International.<sup>49</sup>

General von der Goltz contested two elements in the Baltic. One was, of course, the generally disorganized Red Army that provided him with the excuse, vis-à-vis the Entente, for a concentration of German military power in the area. The other was the nascent native governments themselves that von der Goltz would have the world believe he was protecting. If Germany could deny the Bolsheviks the small Baltic Successor States now establishing precarious governments on their own, the way would be open for Germany to take them, or retake them, for itself.

The Baltic Campaign was a strictly paramilitary venture. General von der Goltz arranged for the transport of several *Freikorps* units from Germany and for the recruitment amongst resident Baltic Germans to join those already in existence. He called upon Baltic German Major Alfred Fletcher to command the Latvian Army. Major Fletcher, along with his Chief of Staff Captain Waldemar Pabst,<sup>50</sup> promptly dismissed the native elements of the official Latvian Army to the point that it was composed of 80% German and White Russian troops, and an all-German officer corps.<sup>51</sup> Other forces

included the relatively well-disciplined *Freikorps* Iron Division under the command of the legendary Major Josef Bischoff and many smaller, less disciplined *Freikorps* units recruited from the *Reich*.

Early *Freikorps* successes against the poorly organized Red Army led von der Goltz to make his next move to eradicate the native Latvian government itself. He engineered a coup in April 1919 using the German-dominated ‘Latvian Army’ whereby Entente-friendly President Kārlis Ulmanis was arrested and the Baltic, German-friendly quisling Pastor Andreas Needra was installed as the new leader of Latvia. General von der Goltz of course denied any participation.<sup>52</sup> A shocked Entente ordered Berlin to immediately withdraw all German forces but settled for the promise from von der Goltz that he would make no more attacks.<sup>53</sup> The wily general then simply had his puppet, Needra, call for an attack on Riga using the so-called Latvian Army, with the *Freikorps* units ostensibly following in support. The ensuing fall of Riga in May 1919 was accomplished but only with the help of Latvian anti-Bolshevik forces within the city.

Soon the citizens of Riga learned that idle *Freikorpskämpfer* make very poor liberators. They often found themselves at the mercy of their deliverers whose unbounded ill behaviour resulted in excesses—even atrocities in a German-instituted ‘White Terror’.<sup>54</sup> In fact, the main contingent of the Red Army had vacated the Baltic altogether after the fall of Riga, leaving only ragtag remnants as a rear guard—but the Germans remained. It was not long until enraged Latvians and Estonians formed their own armies supplied with British arms and advisers to protect themselves from their purported liberators.<sup>55</sup> These native armies soon proved their worth and exposed *Freikorps* deficiencies when von der Goltz ordered the Estonian ports cleared in preparation for a march on St Petersburg (the former tsarist capital). His *Freikorps* formations were twice routed at the Battle of Cēsis in June by the new native Latvian-

Estonian Army that essentially halted von der Goltz's advance.<sup>56</sup> There were more examples of *Freikorps* failures as the summer wore on. In truth, Riga stood as the sole *Freikorps* victory of any consequence, and that was soon lost due to Entente demands that German *Freikorps* units withdraw.

#### B. A 'White' International Army: Russian-German Cooperation in the Baltic

The news of *Freikorps* atrocities in the area prompted the Council of Principal Allies and Associated Powers in Paris to come to the conclusion that the problems in the Baltic might stem from the Germans and not the Bolsheviks. From early July to early August the Council repeatedly ordered through the leader of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission in the Baltic States, British General H. P. Gough, the cessation of all hostilities, a withdrawal from Riga and a reduction in German troops (namely the *Freikorps*) to one-half of their present size. President Ulmanis was to be restored as the de facto leader of the Republic of Latvia, and the 'Latvian Army' was to be purged of its German elements—in other words, its entire officer corps.<sup>57</sup> On July 24 came the final blow: all German forces were to be evacuated from the Baltic as soon as possible.<sup>58</sup> General von der Goltz meant to defy the order.

From the very outset, von der Goltz had favoured an eastern policy of German-White Russian collaboration. He was certain an *Ostpolitik* of this nature would lead to an alliance between a revitalized nationalist Germany and a restored Russian monarchy to counter the 'English World Empire' and what he and others, including Colonel Bauer, saw as Whitehall's desire to put the Baltic under British colonial economic sway.<sup>59</sup> For this reason, von der Goltz made certain that agencies recruiting

*Freikorpkämpfer* stressed the availability of land for the German *Freikorps* volunteers to settle once the Bolshevik forces were eradicated.<sup>60</sup> In other words, the Baltic was a Russo-German matter, and none of the Entente's business.

Throughout the spring skirmishes, von der Goltz had regularly used troops recruited from the vast supply of Russian internees around Berlin provided him through the good offices of émigré tsarist Lieutenants Sergei Taboritsky and Piotr Shabelsky-Bork.<sup>61</sup> In fact, Major Fletcher's 'Latvian Army' (80% German) included an all-Russian infantry and cavalry detachment of 600 men under the command of Russian émigré Prince Anatol Levin.<sup>62</sup>

The idea of using interned tsarist troops against the Bolsheviks was something Ludendorff had considered even before the end of the war. In September 1918 the German-friendly hetman (Cossack military commander) of the then still-free Ukraine, Pavel Skoropadsky, met with General Ludendorff at Spa where the latter suggested a coordinated effort between General Wrangel<sup>63</sup> and his Southern Army, Krasnov's Don Cossacks and the hetman's Ukrainian Volunteer Army against the Bolsheviks. Further, Ludendorff promised to release Russian prisoners of war to augment the Ukrainian and Southern Armies who would together attack the Bolsheviks from the south as German forces attacked from the west.<sup>64</sup> The plan was abandoned, however, amidst the chaos surrounding the collapse of the Central Powers in the Balkans and on the Western Front, but came to light again during the Baltic Campaign of 1919 and in virtually the same form in Ludendorff and Bauer's White International plot of 1920.

Concerning the Baltic Campaign of 1919, Major Fletcher regularly kept his friend and colleague Wolfgang Kapp apprised of the military situation in the Baltic, emphasizing that units were made up almost entirely of former Russian (tsarist) officers whom he proudly referred to as his 'White Guard'.<sup>65</sup> German-Russian military

cooperation greatly increased, however, after the aforementioned Entente order for all German forces to withdraw.

Throughout the summer of 1919, General von der Goltz simply ignored the evacuation orders from Berlin but knew he could not do so indefinitely. In late summer he hit upon a desperate plan: in the same way that he had sent the German-White Russian dominated 'Latvian Army' into Riga through his puppet Latvian leader Pastor Needra, he could contrive to place his *Freikorps* commands under the tsarist flag of White Russian forces also fighting in the area. General von der Goltz then travelled to Berlin and secured tacit acknowledgement from President Ebert, Defence Minister Noske and Foreign Minister Müller that, legally, the German government would have no jurisdiction over the general serving under a private White Russian army.<sup>66</sup>

Meanwhile, largely due to the Weimar Republic's acceptance of the Versailles Treaty—which was advised by *Reichswehr* Supreme Command—*Freikorps* commanders were severing ties with their government. On August 24, two months after the evacuation order was given, the first of the troop transports was scheduled to depart from Jelgava Railway Station near Riga loaded with *Freikorps* units destined for the *Reich* and for demobilization as decreed by the Entente and Berlin. Upon von der Goltz's signal from Berlin, Major Bischoff, in a blatant act of mutiny, ordered his *Freikorps* Iron Division not to board the trains.<sup>67</sup> Within days, news of the defiance from Berlin spread throughout the many *Freikorps* volunteer formations, which subsequently organized themselves into the so-called German Legion of approximately 14,000 troops that promptly put itself at General von der Goltz's disposal. Well equipped with 63 planes, six cavalry units, 56 field pieces, an armoured section, a field hospital and 156 machine guns, von der Goltz now had a new army out of the reach of

both Berlin and the Entente.<sup>68</sup> All that was needed was an Imperial Russian flag under which he would place his new German Legion. He did not have long to wait.

In the late summer of 1919 three White Russian detachments were already fighting in the area. Unfortunately, General von der Goltz's plan to fight under the flag of Imperial Russia was solely accepted by the one Russian commander whose lack of military acumen was matched only by his dubious pedigree.<sup>69</sup>

Colonel Prince Pavel Bermond-Avalov<sup>70</sup> had served undistinguished in the Imperial Russian Army before the Bolshevik Revolution. He fled early in 1918 to German-controlled Kiev where he recruited for the German-sponsored Southern Army fighting the Bolsheviks north of the Ukraine. After the Armistice in the West, Bermond-Avalov made his way to the large Russian internment station at Camp Salzwedel between Berlin and Hamburg where he organized a volunteer force of some 3,500 Russian prisoners of war that the *Reichswehr* agreed to send to the Baltic with him in command.<sup>71</sup>

In the spring of 1919, Bermond-Avalov's apparent organizational skills came to the attention of General Max Hoffmann,<sup>72</sup> fellow conspirator of General Ludendorff and Wolfgang Kapp, who generally regarded White Russian officers evacuated from the Ukraine as reliably anti-Bolshevik, anti-Entente and pro-German. They felt that Bermond-Avalov could be of use as a counterbalance to White Russian General Nikolai Yudenich,<sup>73</sup> whose army in Estonia the German generals believed was too much under the control of the British. In March 1919 just before the fall of Riga, Defence Minister Gustav Noske gave final approval of the scheme and Bermond-Avalov's 3,500-strong 'White Army of the West' set off in May, arriving in the Baltic by the middle of June 1919, days before the signing of the Versailles Treaty.<sup>74</sup> Bermond-Avalov offered his services to General Yudenich, but was coldly rebuffed,

and so turned to the Germans at Jelgava just as General von der Goltz was looking for a non-German flag under which to place his *Freikorps*.<sup>75</sup> Between the 3,500 Russian ex-internees and the various renegade units of the German Legion—which removed their old insignias and replaced them with the Russian cockade of the White Army of the West—von der Goltz and Bermond-Avalov could claim an army of some 55,000, of whom 40,000 were German volunteers.<sup>76</sup> The respective autobiographies of von der Goltz and Bermond-Avalov indicate a close comradeship between the Russian and German troops, and the latter author speaks highly of the German willingness to rebuild Russia and, in the same breath, condemns the duplicity of the Entente motives, especially those of England.<sup>77</sup> It was thus a marriage of convenience that allowed both General Prince Pavel Bermond-Avalov<sup>78</sup> and General von der Goltz to stumble from one defeat to the next until November 1919 when the Baltic venture finally came to a close.

Thus by September 1919 there existed in the Baltic an international German-Russian army battling ‘Bolshevik elements’ if not the official Red Army, completely out of Entente and Weimar control, and supported by General Ludendorff and his circle of Colonel Bauer, General Hoffmann, Wolfgang Kapp and others. This would be exactly what was called for in the White International plot.

Besides the establishment of a truly international force, a further development came into play that sharpened the focus of the German-White Russian cooperation that extended into the post-Kapp Putsch era and beyond. A certain Baron A. V. Belgard, a right-wing Baltic landowner from Latvia and leader of the Baltic German faction in Berlin,<sup>79</sup> was so against von der Goltz working with the generally distrusted Bermond-Avalov that he travelled to the general’s base of operations outside Riga to convince him of his folly. Though the talks came to nothing, the meeting did have its

significance: Belgard was accompanied by another Russian émigré candidate vying for military control over Russian troops in the Baltic, General Vasili Vasilievich Biskupsky.<sup>80</sup>

General Biskupsky is important in that he essentially replaced Bermond-Avalov as the White Russian representative to the Ludendorff-Bauer circle and eventually become the representative of the Russian Committee of the White International in Budapest during the summer of 1920. It is thus appropriate that his background and activities are discussed.

General Biskupsky was a pre-war member of the 'Union of the Russian People', a Russian rightist organization founded to preserve national values, pan-slavism, Orthodoxy and the rule of the elite as a response to the 1905 revolution in St Petersburg. Though never an active member, General Biskupsky also supported the more virulent, anti-Semitic wing of the 'Union', the ultra-conservative 'Black Hundreds', who engaged in terrorist pogroms and the assassination of prominent Jews and socialists. Biskupsky was of the pro-German party who, like many of the Russian patriotic nobility, believed war with Germany to be ill-advised.<sup>81</sup> In fact, many of the Baltic German 'Barons', who as subjects of the Tsar served honourably in the Imperial Russian Army, also supported the Black Hundreds and generally enjoyed a favourable reputation amongst the Russian right.<sup>82</sup>

Like Bermond-Avalov, Biskupsky fled to the Ukraine after the Bolshevik Revolution, serving as commander of the First Cavalry Division of the Ukrainian Volunteer Army and generally cooperating with German occupying forces until the fall of Skoropadsky's hetmanate in November 1918.<sup>83</sup> Also like Bermond-Avalov, General Biskupsky saw himself as a dashing, romantic figure destined by Providence to restore tsarist rule to Mother Russia. He too thought that a restored Russian monarchy was only

possible through the cooperation of Germany. He was given to wild dreams of self-aggrandizement and political intrigue that may have surpassed even those of Bermond-Avalov. Upon his arrival in Berlin early in 1919, Biskupsky strolled into the Foreign Ministry on Wilhelmstraße and announced he would lead an army of Russian-German troops to Moscow (the new Bolshevik capital) and then march on Paris.<sup>84</sup>

While Bermond-Avalov and von der Goltz's White Army of the West was fighting in the Baltic, Biskupsky remained in Berlin where he acted as the former's political adviser and served as President of the Russian National Political Committee attached to the National Union.<sup>85</sup>

## Chapter 4

### The Versailles Treaty as Catalyst: The Ludendorff-Bauer Circle and Counter-revolutionary Planning and Activity

The occasion of the presentation of the Versailles Treaty to the German government marked the coming together of the radical right circle around General Ludendorff, led by the latter's wartime political adviser Colonel Max Bauer,<sup>86</sup> and of their plans to militarily remove the Weimar Republic and establish a military dictatorship under General Ludendorff. The acceptance of the Treaty by Berlin also marked the beginning of tensions between the radical right's demand for immediate action and the *Reichswehr's* unwillingness to participate without adequate planning. The hesitancy of the *Reichswehr* would ultimately cause Bauer to favour the use of *Freikorps* units over the former in his myriad of wild counter-revolutionary plans.

#### A. Disagreement within the *Reichswehr* and the Birth of the Ludendorff-Bauer Circle

The upper echelons of *Reichswehr* Command back in Berlin were not in agreement as to an appropriate response to the severity of the Versailles Treaty. Several highly placed generals within the *OHL* advocated defying the Treaty by holding out in a new state—an *Ostland* to be carved out of East Prussia. General Wilhelm Groener, commander of the *OHL* (and Ludendorff's replacement in November 1918), who had advised Ebert to sign the Treaty, was against outward defiance of the Entente, arguing that further resistance could endanger the unity of the *Reich*.<sup>87</sup> For this he was denounced by the more radical elements within the *Reichswehr* and even branded a traitor by Captain Ehrhardt, leader of the famous *Freikorps* unit, the *Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt*, who would march on Berlin in the Kapp Putsch eight months later.<sup>88</sup>

The call for immediate action was illustrated by Major Fletcher's Chief of Staff, *Freikorps* commander Captain Waldemar Pabst, who led a deputation of fellow officers to Berlin from headquarters south of Riga to invite Defence Minister Gustav Noske to forgo his *SPD* colleagues, establish a dictatorship and abolish the Weimar Constitution. The would-be conspirators then began distributing a pamphlet called *Reflections on Dictatorship* throughout the military stationed around Berlin. One chapter entitled 'Die Person' stressed that Noske was the strong man Germany needed and thus perfectly suited to the task—an odd vote of trust from the radical right for a member of a socialist party. The pamphlet went on to promote a

dictator whose end goal is not to hold power but who will see his task as to save what there is left to save; who must be of a personality to be acceptable to a wide circle of differing groups. Only on such a basis [as dictator] could one, at this most difficult hour, . . . have the freedom of movement to do whatever is necessary. Anyone who searches the land will naturally see that the name of such a personality is: Noske.<sup>89</sup>

Rebuffed by Noske, the incensed Captain Pabst then took it upon himself to establish the National Union (*Nationale Vereinigung* or *NV*), the organization that would serve as a clearing house for all future ultra-nationalist, anti-Weimar activity.

The combination of significant German forces in the east, and Noske's 'betrayal' in the west, prompted the appeal of *Freikorps* leaders Major Josef Bischoff and Pabst to von der Goltz to use the Baltic as a base of operations for the overthrow of the Berlin government. The only objection made by General von der Goltz—and typical of most *Reichswehr* generals—was that such a move was still a bit premature but he was not opposed to making preparations to that end.<sup>90</sup>

The *Freikorps* commanders were not alone in their desire to march on Berlin. Throughout 1919, in collaboration with ex-Chief of Staff of the Eastern Front, General Max Hoffmann, Wolfgang Kapp endeavoured to create dependable military units in Stuttgart, Darmstadt and especially Munich that were to be used, along with von der Goltz's forces from the Baltic, to topple the Weimar government when the auspicious moment arrived.<sup>91</sup> Early in the campaign, Kapp had also established the *Ostpreußischer Heimatbund* (East Prussian Home League) with the outwardly innocuous aims of 'repulsing Bolshevism and strengthening the national idea' as a cover for plans to create an East Prussian vanguard for the move against Berlin.<sup>92</sup>

The signing of the Versailles Treaty was also the event that moved future Kapp Putsch organizer and White International plot creator Colonel Bauer to the forefront of counter-revolutionary activity. For Bauer it was simple: from this point on, his goal was the annulment of the Versailles Treaty and the removal of the Weimar Republic. He judged the treaty to be 'a noose placed round our throats which they hope to pull closed',<sup>93</sup> and a mindless expression of power politics.

Frustrated by the hesitancy of the army and generally reluctant to believe that meticulous preparation was necessary, Bauer put his complete trust—misplaced, as it turned out—in the *Freikorps* units and excluded the *Reichswehr* from his plans before and after the Kapp fiasco. In fact, in the military component of Bauer's plan for the White International, there was no specific role mentioned for the armed forces of any of the countries involved. He spoke only of *Freikorps* units from northern Germany, Bavarian *Einwohnerwehren* (Citizens' Guard units),<sup>94</sup> Austrian *Heimwehren* (Home Guard units) and the notorious Hungarian paramilitary 'detachments'.

Bauer argued in late June 1919 that, on account of the universal disgust within the *Reichswehr* and Germany in general, the time was ripe for a move on Berlin. To that end he contacted General Lüttwitz, then in command of all *Reichswehr* forces around Berlin, who cautioned against such a move due to a lack of preparation. Unable or unwilling to be convinced that the time was not right, Bauer defended his insistence in a memorandum of August 12 wherein he argued that the coming winter would be a disaster as a result of little food and massive unemployment. This, he continued, 'would cause a great shift to the left, to Bolshevism . . . [and] already Spartacists are preparing for a general strike and a "Red Terror"'. He added that 'the . . . remedy is a military removal of the politically disengaged civilian government.'<sup>95</sup> Without any real assessment of the situation, Bauer insisted that Germany must 'at least establish a military dictatorship to take the initiative; [and] at the present, with military support, the action would still be easy'.<sup>96</sup> Nor would Bauer accept the counsel of his wartime friend-in-exile Crown Prince Wilhelm, who warned him against a forced solution because 'a [counter-] revolution would very soon lose support with the majority of the people.'<sup>97</sup>

In early July Bauer took it upon himself to sound out where England might stand were a forced removal of the Weimar government accomplished. In this, one sees the

rank amateurism that would typify Bauer's later endeavours. In a correspondence with British Colonel Ryan, Chief of Staff of the British Military Governor in Cologne, Bauer attempted to convince the former of the advantages of a military takeover of the Berlin government: the fulfilment of the Treaty was only possible with a stronger German government; a full-blown Communist uprising was imminent (this Bauer believed); later a strong democratic government would replace the provisional dictatorship—perhaps a constitutional monarch, but not a Hohenzollern; and, finally, Bauer requested a formal pledge that His Majesty's government would not move to demand the dissolution of the *Freikorps* units.<sup>98</sup> Ryan sent Bauer's message to the British delegation in Paris. Foreign Minister Balfour decided not to honour the message with an answer but did quip, 'I suspect there is a good deal of self-deception and misunderstanding as to the real feelings of the country amongst these military people.'<sup>99</sup> Naïvely, Bauer took the silence as a tacit signal that England would not openly object to a rightist German coup. On another occasion after a communication with Bauer, the Chief of the British Military Mission in Berlin, General Malcolm, characterized the former as a 'hot head without judgement'.<sup>100</sup>

Bauer's blind antipathy to the government and his passionate partisanship against social democracy and Communism—which he saw as one and the same—prevented him from any kind of objective assessment of the political situation. He continued to pursue his demand for the establishment of a military dictatorship from June 1919 to the Kapp Putsch of March 1920 with all the fanatical zeal of someone convinced that the *Reichswehr* and citizens alike longed for deliverance.<sup>101</sup>

One must ask where Ludendorff stood on the issue of an immediate move on Berlin. Early in July Wolfgang Kapp invited Ludendorff and other known counter-revolutionaries to his Berlin home to win them over to the idea of a rightist uprising of

Captain Pabst's own *Freikorps* unit, the *Garde-Kavallerie-Schützendivision*, in the capital. General Ludendorff accepted the idea in principle with two modifications. Control would not rest with Pabst's staff but with the commander of all troops stationed in and around Berlin, General Lüttwitz. He alone could do the necessary networking with the entire northern German *Reichswehr* establishment and with sympathetic civilians. The other stipulation from Ludendorff—a field general who well understood the value of meticulous preparation—was that preparations would take at least two years and nothing was to be attempted before that time.<sup>102</sup> Meanwhile, in an almost identical situation to that in which Bauer and Kapp would find themselves eight months later, Defence Minister Noske threatened to dissolve Captain Pabst's *Freikorps* unit. The prospect of losing the most important instrument in their plans prompted Pabst to try to convince General Lüttwitz that they must move now. Denied, Pabst decided to march on Berlin himself and ordered his troops to prepare on July 19, only to be dissuaded by *Reichswehr* Generals von Lüttwitz and Maecker at the last moment. For his pains, Captain Pabst was discharged from the *Reichswehr*.

#### B. Failure of the Baltic Campaign and Lost Lessons for the Ludendorff-Bauer Circle

In October the White Russian-German volunteer forces of Bermond-Avalov and von der Goltz engaged in a thoroughly botched attempt to retake Riga, now under the control of President Ulmanis and the British-advised Latvian Army since the withdrawal order of early June. The plan had called for a move from a recaptured Riga through the Russian heartland and for nothing less than the removal of the Communist regime in Moscow.<sup>103</sup> Bermond-Avalov expressed his dreams for the future of Russia

in an essay penned in 1921, 'The Legacy of the Revolution and Bolshevism', wherein he appealed for an advance into the interior of Russia where 'the rights of the military commanders are unlimited [in order] to re-establish the mighty, strong organism of a great Russia.'<sup>104</sup>

The failure of this grandiose attempt not only proved the undoing of Generals Bermond-Avalov and von der Goltz, and of the whole Baltic Campaign, but also had ramifications back in Berlin. On the eve of the failed October 7 Riga Offensive, Kapp had called a special meeting attended by Ludendorff, Bauer and Pabst among others and put forward that a coup was to be staged against the Weimar Republic in coordination with the anticipated success of Bermond-Avalov's White Army of the West in Russia. This was to happen on the broad assumption that General Ludendorff would then take up the post of military dictator in the new German government.<sup>105</sup> This last point was identical to the role Ludendorff would assume according to the White International plot conceived only six months later.

Kapp's hopes for a coup against Berlin based on military support from Bermond-Avalov's White Russian-German forces were soon dashed, however, when the latter found themselves up against strong resistance from Ulmanis's Latvian Army, with help from the English fleet who opened fire on Bermond-Avalov's left wing.<sup>106</sup> This served as a clear indication of where the British now stood in the whole Baltic affair, and in the eyes of the German radical right wing it justified their Anglophobic assertion that England desired to establish an economic sphere of influence in the area.

By October, ill-conceived offensives and the rank ineptitude of Bermond-Avalov had caused many financial supporters to change their minds in favour of Admiral Kolchak's forces in Siberia and the White Russian troops of General Denikin and Baltic German General Wrangel in the south. At one point, to bolster his waning

financial base, Bermond-Avalov even tried printing his own currency using the ‘Imperial Russian Estates in the Baltic’, which of course no longer existed, as backing. This failing, he hit upon the idea of using Latvian slave labour in sawmills to produce paper for sale in the West. This too failed.<sup>107</sup>

With the failure to retake Riga, arrangements were made for Bermond-Avalov to cede command to Major General Eberhard who, through agreement with the Latvian government not to intervene, was able to successfully evacuate the White Army of the West back to the *Reich* and to demobilization by late November.

Bermond-Avalov himself was a casualty of the Baltic Campaign. Generals Ludendorff, Hoffmann and (the repentant) von der Goltz then turned their attention to Bermond-Avalov’s rival General Vasili Biskupsky, who was named General Inspector of the Russian Forces Interned in Germany, an essentially meaningless title beyond the Ludendorff circle.

By the year’s end the Baltic Campaign was finished. The Entente had withdrawn their support for White Russian forces, lifted their blockade of Bolshevik Russian ports and, acquiescing that the Bolsheviks were there to stay, instead embraced the Anglo-French idea of a *cordon sanitaire* in Eastern Europe, both to contain Russia and to prevent Germany from further, unproductive meddling in the former’s affairs.<sup>108</sup> Some 5,000 Russian troops returned to West Prussia—mostly in and around Berlin. Some *Freikorps* commanders did disband as ordered but many did not. Many followed their leaders to Upper Silesia to work in the coalmines or laboured on the large estates owned by sympathetic landowners, but remained within their respective formations as undercover reserves awaiting the next call to act. Here many joined the well-established *Freikorps* units under General Löwenfeld and Captain Ehrhardt who would both play prominent roles in Wolfgang Kapp’s long-awaited Putsch some months later. It was

such sequestered *Freikorps* units as these and the re-interned Russians that Bauer would see as his ever-ready military force to be used in the various campaigns envisioned in the White International.

In sum, the Bolsheviks were never really organized enough to continue to deny the Baltic States their independence; the Germans had no intention of supporting Baltic national aspirations (being in it for themselves) and, once that became clear to the Entente, were officially withdrawn; and, finally, the White Russians were too inept on their own either to prevent Baltic independence or to defeat the poorly organized ‘reds’ who simply withdrew into Russia.

The lack of success in the Baltic did not cool the enthusiasm of the radical right, who saw every setback as a mere prelude to the next endeavour. There was no more a sense of defeat concerning the Baltic Campaign than there was concerning the war itself; only a deep sense of betrayal emanating from Berlin. General Turner of the Allied Commission to oversee the German withdrawal from the Baltic correctly defined the attitude of the *Freikorps* and their leaders in his report:

East Prussia does not realize that Germany has lost the War. The German Military Party is all-powerful and Militarism in all forms is rampant . . . I have little doubt of a plot to overthrow the Government at the opportune moment, or of the power of the Military to do so. They are simply waiting for the time when the Peace shall have been ratified and the whole onus of it can be thrown on the present Government. Propaganda encouraging Militarism is being disseminated everywhere.<sup>109</sup>

The radical right activities back in Berlin were no more dampened by the Baltic fiasco. There was an almost seamless shift between the closure of the German-Russian campaign in the East and the laying of plans for the next counter-revolutionary action. Planning took place at the *NV* headquarters under the patronage of General Ludendorff but the guiding spirit and by far the greatest advocate for action was Colonel Bauer. Because the remainder of this work deals with Colonel Bauer in greater detail, it is

necessary to delve into his psyche and political development as a counter-revolutionary activist to better comprehend the motives and decisions behind the radical course of action undertaken by him.

## Chapter 5

### The Political Mind of Colonel Max Bauer

To understand the origins of the White International plot, one must understand the mind of its creator. This chapter considers two aspects of Bauer's political interpretation of the world around him. Firstly, his perception of the value of democratic socialism in general, and that of the Weimar Republic in particular, showed a fundamental belief on his part in the total folly of the existing socio-political form.

The second consideration has to do with his ideas of where Germany fitted within the international sphere, especially in relation to the Entente. This is important because Bauer would not only crusade against the 'unnatural' social democracy in Berlin but, during the pre-Kapp period, he would also feel compelled to battle against the Entente for the political and economic well-being of Germany. In both cases Bauer attempted to square the world of realities with his arsenal of theoretical models.

#### A. 'Prussian Socialism' and the Domestic Front

Compared to his fellow Prussian officers, Colonel Bauer was a well-read individual as well as a prolific writer of essays and tracts both during and after the war.

This allows the researcher fairly thorough access into the complexities of Bauer's much-disciplined mind, which was often ruled by doctrines and theories with little regard to rational implementation of actions to bring about what he saw as necessary for the good of Germany. Accordingly, Colonel Bauer was unwavering in his goal to revive Germany's world-power status but amazingly flexible in his means to achieve it. This emphasis of ends over means was what allowed Bauer to give little thought to the 'workability' of his plans.

Colonel Bauer clearly and consistently showed a tendency towards the Kantian notion of devotion to duty, in which the state should be the very embodiment of the idea of morality. He was dedicated to the school of fellow Prussian philosophers and was particularly drawn to Oswald Spengler, referring often to his 1919 work *Preußendum und Sozialismus* that railed against what the author called 'false socialism': the illegitimate child born of Communism, and its contradiction of so-called social democracy. Bauer held fast to Spengler's judgement that there was only one authentic kind of socialism and that was German, or more specifically Prussian, socialism based on duty to the state.<sup>110</sup>

Bauer viewed the socialists' claim to democracy as purely utopian and even dangerous because the will of the majority would overwhelmingly belong to the incompetent masses incapable of reasonable judgement. For them, in the judgement of Bauer, were 'never the noblest and best [but] windbags, fools and criminals who are never timid to proclaim their rights; rights that suit their egotistical natural instincts'.<sup>111</sup>

Evidence of Colonel Bauer's political development emerged during the last year of the war. As a result of a weakening of the ruling aristocratic elite, the political right became increasingly radicalized. This was especially so amongst those from the middle class, such as Ludendorff and Bauer. The more secure Bauer's position as Ludendorff's

right-hand man grew and the more precarious Germany's position got, the more convinced Bauer was of the need for draconian measures.<sup>112</sup> In a memorandum prepared by Bauer for the emperor on the domestic state of Germany, his political assessments appear crude, ill-considered and often contradictory.<sup>113</sup> This tendency was to become even more evident in his writings after Germany's defeat.

Bauer interpreted the Great War as having been a struggle between differing world views (*Weltanschauungen*). The views held by Germany, he believed, were those founded on the spiritual morality—a term he uses incessantly—gifted the *Reich* by the ruling House of Hohenzollern, especially Frederick Wilhelm I and Frederick the Great, and guided by the great philosophers including Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel—Prussians all. In Bauer's 'Sparta of the North' the soldier, as the paragon of absolute duty and of willingness to live and die for the state, may well claim for himself the first and highest level of society. Bauer maintained that the soldier's 'absoluteness of *völkisch* feeling [prevailed in Germany] until it became poisoned by capitalism and democracy'.<sup>114</sup> He saw in the *Freikorps* the rebirth of such qualities. This is, of course, a perception based on self-delusion for there is little to indicate that the nihilistic *Freikorpskämpfer* were so imbued with anything approaching politically or philosophically *völkisch* qualities.

For this study, it is appropriate to see what type of *Weltanschauung* Bauer assigned to the Entente and especially England, given that the German right as well as the émigré Russian monarchists suspected English colonial designs in both the Baltic region and Russia proper.<sup>115</sup> In counterpoint to what Bauer considered as the German *Weltanschauung* sat the *Weltanschauung* of 'materialism', in which individual effort and labour stood 'not for duty as an end in itself but merely as a medium for [financial] success'.<sup>116</sup> Capitalist materialism, according to Bauer, was the overriding principle of

English thinking and national policy, and the realization of this principle was evident in the imperialistic expansion of England, as well as its struggle against Germany in 1914-1918. For Bauer, the Great War was simply a reckoning between those driven by a *völkisch* duty to the state—such as resided deep within the German psyche—and those of the Entente that lay ‘in the service of world capitalism’.<sup>117</sup> Bauer bemoaned that the English-spawned materialist spirit had gradually spread through Germany as well: ‘Here too [one sees] unprincipled money markets and black-marketeering; a consequence of the English spirit on the Continent.’<sup>118</sup>

‘Materialism’, wrote Bauer in 1921, ‘rules the times unrestrained. It destroys idealism, that is to say, the spirit of duty, manly pride, self-discipline, morality and fear of God. Capitalism, pseudo-democracy, pseudo-socialism, parliamentarianism, atheism, feminism and . . . the absurd quest for general equality are all the hallmarks of materialism.’<sup>119</sup> Bauer considered parliaments and democracy, liberalism, socialism, capitalism and materialism as synonyms, or as differing aspects of the same phenomenon.

This begs the question as to which political system Bauer stood most strongly against: the Bolshevism of the left or the bourgeois liberalism of the Entente. It is thus difficult to determine which of these he assigned to the hated Weimar Republic because, in the minds of the radical right, the Republic was both. This was also reflected in the stated goals of the White International that sought to battle against the ‘red scourge’ throughout Central Europe and against the Entente. The position of the Entente in Bauer’s cast of enemies may well be expressed in the following way. The threat of Bolshevism was certainly of great concern to victor and vanquished alike, and rightly so, but in mid-1919 it was still seen as a temporary phenomenon. The threat from the Entente was a different matter altogether. The Paris Conference had redrawn the borders

of Europe, forcing Germany to accept blame for the war so as to justify the harsh punishment of keeping it economically and militarily weak—and the Entente meant to permanently fix their decisions through the internationally sanctioned Paris treaties. Little wonder Bauer saw the Entente as the chief obstacle to resurgent German power.

On matters pertaining to international Jewry, what seems rather automatic, according to the formula thus far exhibited by Bauer, is in fact a bit more complicated. To be ‘international’, formulated Bauer, ‘means for us [Germans] slave-mindedness and Jewishness’.<sup>120</sup> In the Jews Bauer saw not only the curse of the internationalists but also the embodiment of capitalism. He constantly referred to ‘Jewish banks’ and the ‘slavery of usurious Jewish capital’.<sup>121</sup> Jews, alleged Bauer, were the ‘main support of materialism’.<sup>122</sup>

Despite such incendiary comments about Jews, Bauer was not given to rabid anti-Semitism without exception. For all his hostility and hate speech, he formed and maintained close friendships with Jews. This was best evidenced by Bauer’s association with trusted co-conspirator Ignatius Trebitsch-Lincoln, a Hungarian-born Jew, who played a leading role in the Hohenzollern restoration plot, the Kapp Putsch and the White International plot.

Bauer’s view on the exalted position of the soldier is addressed above; but what of the role of the military within the structure of government? In a memorandum penned in 1916, Bauer’s perceived role of the *Reichswehr* within the state applied just as clearly to the first years after the defeat. During the war, Bauer called for the immediate establishment of a military dictatorship under General Ludendorff in which the Kaiser, due to his feeble indecisiveness, would be excluded from power. Hindenburg and Ludendorff demurred—at least at the time—preferring the more oblique approach of allowing a chancellor and civil government to take the blame for unpopular measures

taken by the military, leaving the *Reichswehr* untouched by public opinion.<sup>123</sup> In defeat, this doctrine of insulation served the army well. The most obvious examples were the stab-in-the-back myth, the creation of the *Freikorps* surrogate and the refusal of the *OHL* to be involved, one way or the other, in the Kapp Putsch. Bauer, however, had neither the subtlety nor the patience for such indirect domination and preferred the ‘strong man of action’—the *Führerprinzip* approach. This was observable in Bauer’s rash desire to march on Berlin in the summer of 1919; in the Kapp Putsch that featured Kapp as a mere figurehead for General Lüttwitz’s rule; and in Bauer’s plans for the White International to establish General Ludendorff as military dictator of Germany.

This is consistent with what Bauer held for the future: he deemed the re-establishment of pre-war political and social institutions to be the product of short-sighted and reactionary minds. Bauer looked on the Great War not only as a political and military misadventure, but also as an opportunity for a kind of national revolution whereby ‘holy fires are necessary to eliminate the many embers and foreign bodies that have collected within the officer corps’.<sup>124</sup> In another work he wrote of the ‘coming blessed difficult emergency [that will] purify the people’.<sup>125</sup> In the defeat of Germany Bauer thus finds meaning, as certain elements within military circles would be driven to a necessary impulse to national purification and rejuvenation.<sup>126</sup> The war had to be lost in order for the nation to win.

Colonel Bauer drew readily from a plethora of eccentric ideas and applied them to all that he saw as wrong in his world. The result was a curiously eclectic, rather amateurish pattern made up of a mixture of lofty ideas of morality coupled with shallow, narrow prejudice. Bauer’s convictions were steeped in extreme nationalism that led to fantastic speculation and false conclusions. This often incomprehensible and even conflicting collection of thoughts emerged in almost all of Bauer’s many tracts. He

was anti-Semitic yet his closest collaborator was Jewish; he was anti-Bolshevik yet reached across the chasm to the German Communists and even the Bolshevik Russians in his battle against the Weimar Republic and the Entente; and his extreme nationalist agenda he regarded as achievable only through 'white' international cooperation. Though his means were in constant flux, he held tight to his ends. This is especially evident in his 1925 work *Das Land der roten Zaren* that reveals a more or less unrepentant Bauer who remained steadfast in his ideas even after his long succession of failures, such as engineering a Hohenzollern restoration, plotting the Kapp Putsch and establishing a White International.

Colonel Max Bauer's movement from socio-political thought to counter-revolutionary action did not take place immediately. During the waning days of November 1918, Bauer still held hopes of continuing a military career and requested reassignment to General Headquarters at Wilhelmshöhe near Kassel. General Groener, Ludendorff's replacement as Chief of Supreme Command and the second-highest-ranking officer in Germany, thought better of it and informed Bauer that 'due to extraordinary reasons, at this time the transfer [to Kassel] is not to be undertaken.'<sup>127</sup> Despite the polite nature of the rebuff, Colonel Bauer knew well that this clear refusal marked the end of his long military career. In a letter to Ludendorff in Swedish exile, Bauer stated that he understood that to General Groener he (Bauer) was a 'red flag' and thus had no place in the new order.<sup>128</sup>

It is difficult to say exactly when Colonel Bauer turned the corner from being willing to serve the new government to showing active opposition to it. Hints at his new direction are found in a further letter to Ludendorff in Sweden. In it Bauer wrote that Germany now 'mangles itself, insanely governed while our enemies mock us and trample even our honour underfoot', an obvious reference to the Treaty of Versailles

presented to the Ebert government. On the topic of Ludendorff's return to Germany, Bauer added in the same letter that the time was not yet right but 'hopefully [your] return will be necessary . . . then the tissue of lies will be torn asunder and . . . the struggle will go on.'<sup>129</sup> The nature of 'the struggle' is not explained but Bauer was resolved to lead it.

#### B. Bauer and National Bolshevism: Political Reorientation or Tactical Strategy?

The political development of Colonel Bauer would not be complete without scrutinizing his alleged national-Bolshevik proclivities.<sup>130</sup> Bauer's fanciful idea of working with the radical left was based on three assumptions: firstly, the radical right and left shared an antipathy to the liberal, bourgeois Weimar Republic which they saw as a mere puppet of the equally despised Entente; secondly, both the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and Germany's defeat diplomatically isolated the two nations in the world community; and thirdly, by late 1919 Bauer was becoming increasingly convinced that, given the failures of German-White Russian collaboration in the Ukraine in 1918 and the Baltic in late 1919, the widely held belief that Bolshevik Russia was merely a temporary political experiment had no substance. As for Russia's side, as early as 1919 Karl Radek, Lenin's contact man to the German Communist Party, had expressed doubts that a revolution in Germany was possible given the basically stronger position of the middle class compared to that of pre-revolutionary Russia. He thus sought a modus vivendi whereby Germany and Russia could work together as a way out of their international isolation.<sup>131</sup> For that reason Radek was amenable to Bauer's desire to meet in mid-December. An old friend of Ludendorff's from his cadet days, Baron von Reibnitz, who also viewed such a union as

advantageous to both countries, thus arranged a meeting. Bauer's idea of a new orientation of the *Reich* based on cooperation between the leftist working class and the German officer corps in a 'Battle against the Entente' was presented to Radek, who promised only to take the matter up with Moscow.<sup>132</sup> Other than the pledge given by Victor Kopp, leader of the Russian Trade Commission in Berlin involved in negotiations for the repatriation of Russian prisoners of war, not to intervene in the event of a Putsch attempt from the right, there was really nothing to show for Bauer's efforts.<sup>133</sup>

In any case, Radek did not trust Bauer, and with good reason. Even before the Bauer-Radek meeting, plans had been discussed within the Bauer circle of the *NV* for a German-Bolshevik Russian military move to destroy Poland and re-establish the old German-Russian borders of 1914. This was to be followed by a joint action against the Entente in the Rhineland.<sup>134</sup>

It is here that the typically duplicitous character of Bauer's scheming comes to light. Were the joint German-Bolshevik Russian plan actually enacted, General Biskupsky and his access to White Russian forces would be cast in the role of a hedge against any Bolshevik breach of promise. Formal agreements were signed between the Ludendorff-Bauer group and the Russian monarchists to the effect that, should the Red Army attempt to activate the German left to a Communist revolution, German troops would abandon their erstwhile Bolshevik allies and join with the Russian White Army under Biskupsky to smash them.<sup>135</sup>

In any event, the Bolsheviks would have nothing to do with Bauer and his feigned rapprochement and, except for a brief moment on March 17 when Bauer desperately and unsuccessfully approached the German left in a bid to save the Kapp Putsch, the idea of a right-left collaboration against the Entente was dropped.

The significance of Bauer's flirtation with national Bolshevism is twofold. In the first instance, it is difficult to ascertain whether Bauer was indeed reorienting towards an agenda of working with the Bolsheviks or merely trying a new, typically convoluted tactic of using the Red Army to achieve his anti-Entente goals only then, with the help of the White Russians, to destroy the Red Army and march on Moscow. There is support for the latter theory. A July 1920 memorandum produced by General Biskupsky while in Budapest is strikingly similar to those found in Trebitsch's autobiography of 1931. In it Biskupsky advocated a German right-Bolshevik Russian joint effort to destroy Poland and the re-establishment of the 1914 borders. This was to be followed by a general insurrection within the Red Army led by former tsarist generals.<sup>136</sup> Another factor supporting the idea that Bauer had no real desire to do a complete turnabout and work with the Bolsheviks was the very fantastic nature of the plan itself. It was archetypically Baueresque in its scope and expectations of any sort of success. It was, of course, at root an early variant of the White International plot in that it sought to re-establish pre-war borders and let loose an attack on the Entente in the West.

The second significance is that influential Bavarian right-wing leaders equated national Bolshevism with National Socialism and wanted nothing to do with either. This would make Bauer's task of selling his idea of a White International to the Bavarians more difficult than it might otherwise have been.

## Chapter 6

### The National Union, October 1919 to March 1920

The pan-German Bamberg Declaration of February 1919 provided a forum from which to espouse ‘a new way forward’. Beyond that, the meeting in Bamberg did little in the way of organizing a central base concerned with coordinating the actual work necessary for the fulfilment of the rightists’ nationalist agenda. This fell to the National Union (*Nationale Vereinigung* or *NV*)—a kind of right-wing political club through which the Ludendorff-Bauer circle’s anti-Weimar ideas of every stripe could be discussed and actions could be planned.

A discussion of the *NV* serves to identify key figures and trends that played an active role in the development of the White International. It also illustrates the nature of the relationship between the radical right around Ludendorff and Bauer and various other nationalist forces, namely the more conservative right and the *Reichswehr*. It presents Colonel Bauer as the leading figure behind the radical right faction within the *NV* and his penchant for advocating direct action with little regard for what was achievable and what was not.

#### A. Origins and Diverse Character

The official beginnings of the *NV* are roughly traceable to the White Russian-German failure of the Riga Offensive in October 1919. After all, the move on Riga was only the first step to an attack on Bolshevik Russia proper that, in turn, was to signal a march on Berlin.

As early as April 1919 like-minded counter-revolutionaries had taken to regularly meeting at General Ludendorff's residence on Viktoriastraße in Berlin. Included were Navy Captain-Lieutenant Hermann Ehrhardt who commanded the famous *Freikorps Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt* stationed one night's march from Berlin; Major Franz von Stephani, a leading figure of the rightist organization the *Verband der nationalgesinnter Soldaten* (Association of Nationalist-minded Soldiers) boasting 3,000 members in Berlin alone; and Wolfgang Kapp.<sup>137</sup> Also present was Captain Waldemar Pabst, Latvian Army commander Major Fletcher's aide-de-camp during the Baltic Campaign.

With the Versailles Treaty in June, the creation of a more official organization was deemed urgent. In early July 1919, immediately following the signing, Captain Pabst—having been curtly rebuffed for his invitation that Defence Minister Gustav Noske assume the dictatorship of the *Reich*—took over the Berlin-based *Nationale Vereinigung* set up by *Deutsche Vaterlandspartei* founders Wolfgang Kapp and Admiral Tirpitz in 1917<sup>138</sup> and breathed a decidedly new radical life into the rather ineffective erstwhile organization. It was not until Ludendorff lent his patronage to the *NV* after the failure of the Riga Offensive in October, however, that it became the generally recognized Berlin rightist nerve centre.

Though Bauer was certainly the most active of the radical wing of the nationalist right, he really only represented a lively minority of the overall membership. The *NV* was not a single mass organization bent on the destruction of the Weimar Republic but a collection of numerous associations (*Verbände*) that to various degrees stood in opposition to the government.<sup>139</sup> In the same building were housed several agencies sponsored by the nationalist German National People's Party (*DNVP*), such as the editorial offices of the journal *Eisener Blätter* edited by party representative and priest

Dr D. Traub, the Berlin offices of the Agricultural Association (*Landesverband*), the Office of German Nationalist Civil Servants and the Welfare Station for Discharged Career Soldiers.<sup>140</sup> While all groups may have opposed the government, there was little consensus as to what to do about it. For the moment, it was more important for Ludendorff to maintain a broad network of like-minded agencies than to require an all-out commitment to insurrection. In this way he felt the citizenry could be gradually and systematically prepared for an armed counter-revolution.<sup>141</sup>

A special concern of the *NV* was to infiltrate the *Reichswehr*, so members were very much engaged in the dissemination of propaganda through speeches and articles. The majority of activity by former army officers within the *NV* was directed at warding off an anticipated coup attempt by the Communists. For the smaller, more radical Ludendorff circle—especially Wolfgang Kapp, Waldemar Pabst, Franz von Stephani and Colonel Bauer—an uprising of the left really played no role as a prerequisite for a right-wing military coup.<sup>142</sup>

The task of bringing the army over to the idea of supporting a pre-emptive coup fell to Captain Pabst who, with the help of Dr Grabowski who headed up the Propaganda Department of the former's *Freikorps Garde-Kavallerie-Schützendivision*, flooded the *Reichswehr* with articles and tracts disparaging the government. In one particular brochure, Pabst maintained that President Ebert and the *SPD* took their lead from the very left-wing *USPD* and the Bolsheviks, and that serving officers need not be concerned with their oaths of loyalty due to the government's impending dismissal of them.<sup>143</sup> General Ludendorff himself emerged from the wings to malign the government in the conservative, right-wing newspaper *Neue Preußische Kreuzzeitung*, claiming it was guilty of inadequately supplying troops with necessities such as warm clothing and proper food.<sup>144</sup>

Attention was also given to the more eager—if less able—numerous *Freikorps* forces still under arms. These included principally the formations late of the Baltic Campaign currently sequestered in work communities (*Arbeitsgemeinschaften*) on the great estates throughout East Prussia and, of course, the large and well-equipped *Freikorps Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt* housed at Döberitz Barracks only twelve hours march from the centre of Berlin. The latter and other units were under threat of dissolution when the Versailles Treaty took effect on January 1, 1920.

Defence Minister Gustav Noske was kept apprised of *NV* activities through the Prussian State Ministry and the Berlin Police, and was told that despite its well-known ‘secret’ agenda, the *NV* was basically a ‘harmless organization’.<sup>145</sup> This was undoubtedly due to the comparatively unthreatening agenda of the greater part of the *NV* that purportedly would not act unless a leftist attempt on the government was to take place.

Bavaria, Bauer’s post-Kapp centre of counter-revolutionary activity, had been successfully alerted to military preparations for a coup. The recent experience with the *USPD* Kurt Eisner regime, followed by the proclamation of a Bavarian Soviet Republic the previous spring, made for a heightened sense of a possible leftist threat. Pabst kept in close contact with *Freikorps* commander Captain Ernst Röhm, who was influential in *Reichswehr* Command in Munich, and with Georg Escherich, founder and leader of the enormous Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr*<sup>146</sup> that would play a major role in the design of the White International plot.

## B. The National Union and the Russian Monarchists

General Biskupsky had emerged from the Baltic experience stronger due to the withdrawal of support from the German right for the untrustworthy and now disgraced Bermond-Avalov. The sources are vague as to exactly when Biskupsky became tied to the pro-Putsch Ludendorff circle. Still, it is certain that he was acquainted with the circle's members, because of the mutual perception that the futures of Russia and Germany were linked with the destruction of the Bolsheviks and the Weimar Republic respectively. It is known that during the early months of 1919 General Biskupsky took part in the establishment of the so-called White Ruthenian government-in-exile housed on Wilhelmstraße that attracted certain highly placed émigré tsarist politicians and officers.<sup>147</sup>

The extent of Biskupsky's participation in the *NV* aside, there were contrary judgements within the organization as to his character. Though some saw him as a braggart and unreliable adventurer of dubious origins,<sup>148</sup> others viewed him as a capable and honourable patriot. In any case, Biskupsky left a very positive impression on Bauer who characterized him as possessing a 'clear and sober head with great political gifts' and as being a 'man with the energy and courage of a tiger'.<sup>149</sup> Bruno Miller, who held the office of Foreign Minister of the White Ruthenian government-in-exile, acted as Biskupsky's political adviser. The reason behind the association of the Ludendorff-Bauer circle with the two Russian émigrés was clearly spelled out in an undated memorandum by Bauer probably written during the summer of 1920 wherein he stated that, 'without a future [non-Bolshevik] middle class in Russia, the resurrection of Germany free of parliaments, social democracy and Communism is impossible.'<sup>150</sup> In a memorandum by Biskupsky from roughly the same time, the latter asserted that as early

as 1917 ‘clear-sighted’ Russian monarchists came to realize that further war would lead to the fall of the Romanov and Hohenzollern dynasties.<sup>151</sup> While it is true that such predictions were made after the fact, they do speak of a certain sentiment that the futures of both countries were inextricably tied one with the other.

Biskupsky’s influence among the Russian colony of émigrés and ex-prisoners of war in Berlin was not as much as he pretended.<sup>152</sup> He was, however, active as an intermediary between Krupp Industries and Admiral Kolchak’s representatives in Berlin and, as such, in close contact with the darker figures involved in unofficial German foreign policy. His penchant for grandiose plans is of particular significance for this study since he would attract—and be attracted to—the growing Ludendorff-Bauer circle.<sup>153</sup>

The union between the White Russian émigré and the Ludendorff circle was also a matter of financial exigency. To have within Berlin both a functioning Russian government-in-exile and undetermined thousands of loyal tsarist troops hidden away in the surrounding areas was something the *NV* deemed worthy of support. Accordingly, it supplied the White Ruthenian government with a monthly stipend of 50,000 marks to be used for the establishment of an efficient, reliable emigrant organization and intelligence service.<sup>154</sup> There were also plans to counterfeit 2 million Russian Duma roubles through the efforts of a sympathetic publishing house in Berlin owned by a certain Heinrich Bauer (no relation).<sup>155</sup> This sum was to be divided among the Russian monarchists and the *NV*, and to be used to help finance the Russian counter-revolution. According to a later report from Trebitsch, the manufacture of the plates for the pressing of the banknotes was financed by ‘esteemed German persons’.<sup>156</sup> This counterfeiting scheme would carry over in its exact form into Bauer’s White International plot, with the exception that the banknotes were to be pressed in Budapest instead of Berlin.

### C. Emergence of Trebitsch-Lincoln and the Bauer-Trebitsch Conspiratorial Team

The most important event that took place through the *NV* was the meeting of Colonel Bauer and Hungarian-born Ignatius Trebitsch-Lincoln. Trebitsch was co-architect of the Hohenzollern restoration plot and the White International plot. He also played a significant role in the Kapp Putsch and would remain Bauer's closest co-conspirator from late September 1919 until early autumn 1920 when he betrayed the plot to the Austrian and Czechoslovak authorities.

Trebitsch was born into a middle-class Jewish family in Pécs, Hungary, and as a young man made his way to Hamburg and converted to Christianity. He led a most mercurial existence, living as a Christian missionary in Canada, becoming the director of an oil-drilling supply company in Romania and, in England shortly before the war, serving as Liberal Member of Parliament for Darlington. During the war he was interned by the British government for forgery and was suspected of being a German spy. After his year of high political adventure with Colonel Bauer, Trebitsch relocated to China where he lived out the remainder of his life until 1941 as a Buddhist monk. It is rumoured that he continued his spy activities through Shanghai during the 1930s but this has never been proven.<sup>157</sup> He was a highly intelligent, all-round self-aggrandizing dealer (and, some would say, swindler) in political plots.<sup>158</sup>

After the war Trebitsch was released and deported to Holland. He was not sent to Hungary during the period of the Béla Kun regime due to the unfounded fear of Sir Basil Thompson at the rather over-cautious British Home Office that Trebitsch 'might

easily become a sort of Lenin of Central Europe'.<sup>159</sup> In fact, he was not released from prison until nine days after the Kun regime fell on August 2, 1919.

At the German border Trebitsch procured a temporary passport for the Berlin area and went there along with hundreds of expatriates, civilian internees and German ex-prisoners of war from England.<sup>160</sup> Unable to reach old contacts in the city from his Romanian oil enterprise days, he decided that his new career would be journalism and, after much effort, was able to get a scathing, anti-British article published in one of many small newspapers in Berlin, the ultra right-wing *Deutsche Zeitung* with a readership of only 20,000. Though he made no great impact with the article, he did attract the attention of editor Reinhold Wulle, a violent proponent of right-wing terror, who advocated the setting-up of a *völkisch* dictatorship.<sup>161</sup> Wulle saw in Trebitsch an accomplished journalist with impressive credentials, who had gone from being a member of the House of Commons to being interned as a German spy.<sup>162</sup> Two things were certain: Wulle was duly impressed and Trebitsch was taking his first steps into radical right-wing German politics.

In late September Trebitsch hit upon an idea that would secure for himself a position of high standing in the world of international journalism. He wished to gain an interview with the exiled Emperor Wilhelm II living in Holland on the Amerongen Estate. The chances of success were remote at best but, amazingly, Trebitsch was received by senior members of the royal entourage that had politely denied him his interview. Trebitsch thus did not get the scoop of the century but his attempt did cause a short-lived sensation in the world press. London's *Daily Graphic* ran five dramatic headlines: 'Spy "Envoy" to Ex-Kaiser', 'Lincoln's Special Mission for Pronouncement from the Fallen War Lord', 'Wilhelm Remains Silent', 'Lincoln's Secret' and 'Ex-MP Fails in his Promise to Startle the World'.<sup>163</sup> Trebitsch was actually interviewed himself

by the less sensationalist *New York Tribune*, which reported that he had only ‘chatted’ with the ex-Emperor, but that he had remarked to the American readership that he would devote his whole life to working against England.<sup>164</sup>

Another benefit gained by the episode was the contact formed with a German-American, pro-nationalist Hearst Newspaper correspondent, Karl von Wiegand. For a whole year, the reporter would collaborate with Trebitsch in placing articles on nationalist German affairs in the American press.

Trebitsch met Colonel Bauer through the good offices of Wulle. Bauer had received a letter from Trebitsch in early October 1919 requesting an interview, adding that the interview might last a couple of hours.<sup>165</sup> Sources unfortunately do not reveal the actual content of the meeting that took place a few days later.

On the surface it would appear that Bauer and Trebitsch had little in common, yet they worked very closely as co-conspirators for the next year. Bernard Wasserstein, in his signal work *The Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln* offers a plausible reason:

The explanation [of their friendship] probably lies in the similarity of their characters: they shared a zest for adventure, a love of intrigue, a complete lack of scruples, an irrepressible wanderlust, ruthlessness, self-regard, and utter contempt for conventional moral values. In a sense, Bauer and Trebitsch were made for each other.<sup>166</sup>

There was another similarity they shared: a deep dislike of England. For Trebitsch it was based on pure revenge for two years’ imprisonment. For Bauer it was based on a philosophical bent that regarded England as the harbinger of all things liberal and materialist, and thus in philosophical opposition to the ‘Prussian’ values he held so dear, and on a largely unfounded conviction that England wished to economically colonize Eastern Europe and so deny Germany its deserved right to control the area.

## Chapter 7

### Dress Rehearsal for the White International Plot

The Hohenzollern restoration plot and the Kapp Putsch marked Bauer and Trebitsch's first forays into the world of conspiracy and intrigue—and it showed. The significance for this work is that these plots carried the stamp of amateurism and ineptitude with an emphasis on ends over means, a fatal flaw characteristic of all Bauer's many plots including the White International. Of further note is that in both examples Bauer's bungling incurred the wrath of the more moderate elements within the German rightist camp and even of those within the *NV*. This essentially constituted the end of any chance of future collaboration between the Ludendorff-Bauer group, the rightist parties in the *Reichstag* and, perhaps most significantly, the *Reichswehr*.

#### A. The Bauer-Trebitsch Hohenzollern Restoration Plot

The restoration plot evolved from Trebitsch's second attempt to interview members of the exiled Royal House of Hohenzollern. In a letter to Bauer dated October 6, Trebitsch requested a letter of introduction and mused that it might be possible to visit Crown Prince Wilhelm and have a talk 'on important political questions'.<sup>167</sup>

Colonel Bauer had served with the crown prince and they held a mutual respect for each other.<sup>168</sup> At the end of the war the crown prince shared his father's fate and had since been residing in a modest parsonage on the Island of Wieringen in the Zuider Zee in Holland.

Armed with the letter of introduction requested from Bauer, Trebitsch made his way to the small island. Though he would later claim to have met Crown Prince Wilhelm, there is sufficient evidence that he did not according to a letter written to Bauer a few days later from one of the prince's aides, Freiherr von Hünefeld.

A flurry of missives between Bauer, Trebitsch and the two aides to Crown Prince Wilhelm paint a curious picture of the two conspirators fully prepared to change the course of history seemingly on their own initiative. Excerpts from Hünefeld's personal account reveal a certain reluctance of the two aides to entangle themselves, let alone their master, in Trebitsch's scheme.

Trebitsch, who introduced himself as 'the political writer and industrialist Trebitsch-Lincoln',<sup>169</sup> offered up a brief autobiography of his former position in England, his incarceration and his return to Germany. He then told the two aides that, having thus arrived in Berlin, 'I soon recognized that it would be completely impossible to rebuild Germany with the republican regime.' He went on to discuss his political views—not those of any single organization or group of like-minded individuals—including his opinion that the ex-Kaiser might be replaced by his son as claimant to the German crown. Stating correctly that such a move could not be conducted by force, he explained to his cordial but astonished hosts that he hoped through his own efforts of well-placed propaganda that the US would not be against such a restoration.

Hünefeld continued, 'In order not to compromise himself, His Imperial Highness refused to see Lincoln.'<sup>170</sup> At a chance meeting with Hünefeld the next day, Trebitsch reiterated that suitable propaganda would induce the American government to acquiesce in a Hohenzollern restoration. He further suggested that through his journalistic endeavours he could plant the seed that the ex-Kaiser had gone mad which would facilitate his son's ascension, an idea that the aide found abhorrent.<sup>171</sup>

Shortly after the meeting, Trebitsch sent a long memorandum to the two aides on Wieringen, detailing his plans and announcing that he had been in secret negotiations with the American Legation in The Hague, where he found that officially the US could not openly support a restoration. It would, however, not stand in the way of the establishment of a constitutional monarchy.<sup>172</sup> In fact, Trebitsch did call on the American Legation but for the singularly audacious purpose of providing information concerning secret German monarchist restoration plots in exchange for an American visa. He was denied.<sup>173</sup> He also forewarned the crown prince's staff that within days he would be publishing an article declaring the failing mental health of the ex-Kaiser; and though he cautioned secrecy he disclosed that he wished to establish the monarchy immediately after the first National Assembly elections scheduled to take place in early 1920.<sup>174</sup>

Trebitsch's unsolicited advice and outrageous projects were received with courtesy but were seen for what they were. In a letter to Bauer, Hünefeld asked him to convince Trebitsch to break off his communications with the crown prince's staff at Wieringen, and indicated that Trebitsch was not to be taken seriously.<sup>175</sup> Colonel Bauer, for his part, continued his unshakeable support for Trebitsch despite the opinions expressed.

Undaunted by his failure to get an interview, in early November Trebitsch communicated to Bauer the basic distillation of his plot for the return of the Hohenzollern monarchy. A series of articles was to be published in the foreign press—especially in the US—through Trebitsch's contact with nationalist-friendly correspondent for Hearst, Karl von Wiegand. The plan was to slowly condition international public opinion to the idea of a constitutional monarchy under the crown

prince.<sup>176</sup> What Trebitsch and Bauer did not know was that similar designs were in the works from more moderate monarchists.

During the same month party leaders of the right-of-centre *DNVP* had come up with their own formula for a restoration but, unlike that of Bauer and Trebitsch, it would involve the political apparatus of the state. Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg was approached and accepted an invitation to run for the office of *Reichspräsident* on a *DNVP* ticket in the elections slated for early 1920. Hindenburg, as president, would then select a monarchist chancellor who would, in turn, form a monarchist government and Hindenburg would tacitly serve as Regent for the as yet unnamed Hohenzollern to follow.

Apparently knowledgeable of the *DNVP*'s scheme, but with the *DNVP* ignorant of his own plot, Bauer embarked on a feverish campaign to promote the candidature of the crown prince on his own. With the help of Trebitsch's link with the Hearst correspondent, an interview with Colonel Bauer was arranged concerning German aspirations to restore the monarchy wherein Bauer was introduced as—but never claimed to be—the 'speaker for the German monarchist movement'<sup>177</sup> which, of course, he was not; he was but one of several individuals of a very diffuse movement. In the interview Bauer indicated that no one in Germany entertained the idea of the re-establishment of the monarchy by force and that it would more likely be the result of a plebiscite. As a model for the future monarchy, he cited England. This is interesting given Bauer's disparaging position regarding 'liberal and materialist' England having contaminated the German *völkisch* spirit, and Trebitsch's revengeful anti-British comments in Wulle's *Deutsche Zeitung* only months earlier. As alleged 'speaker for the German monarchist movement', Bauer went on to explain that the present German government maintained a purely 'socialist party regiment' incapable of bringing about

any improvement of intra-German relations.<sup>178</sup> He continued, ‘The idea of a monarchy is gaining credence in Germany. Personal memories unite virtually every family everywhere with the monarchy and . . . Prussia has the Hohenzollerns to thank for its development.’<sup>179</sup> An especially intriguing approach employed was Bauer’s declaration that the contentious nature of the German people needed a point ‘where criticism stops, and that is the monarch, not the president’.<sup>180</sup> This begs the question of whether Bauer felt that the *Reichstag*—or indeed any parliament with its inherent character of criticism and contention—should perhaps be replaced by a monarch. He resumed, ‘The return of the Kaiser is not in question. It is foreseen that in his place Crown Prince Wilhelm would assume the position as throne candidate. He has the hereditary right and possesses all the qualities of a modern Regent. Rumours and stories of him are untrue and [are spread] by the slanderous republican parties.’<sup>181</sup> More than any other statement in the interview, the next might well have been the one that caused the wrath of the conservative monarchists and drove—or at least began to drive—a wedge between the conservative right and the radical right: ‘Until the definitive restoration of the monarchy, von Hindenburg, the future *Reichspräsident*, will serve as “place-holder” of the monarchy.’<sup>182</sup>

The interview was published in the *New York American* on December 7. The result was typical of the many miscalculations the team of Bauer and Trebitsch would make. Their intensive ‘press campaign’ launched on the American public received as good as no notice at all. By 1919 the entire Progressive movement, so favoured by wartime President Wilson and his predecessors, had lost all credibility. Reluctance to get involved in the European War in 1914 had been superseded by a reluctance to get involved in the European Peace. Congress, which was increasingly dominated by the Republican Party, refused to ratify the Covenant of the League of Nations and even the

Versailles Treaty itself.<sup>183</sup> In short, the Americans did not care, but many in Germany did. The interview with Bauer was picked up by the German newspapers that immediately heaped indignant scorn on his thoughtless blunder. The influential *Deutsche Zeitung*, as the first to become aware of the interview, challenged Bauer on his right to pretend to be ‘speaker for the monarchist movement’ (despite the fact that he made no such pretension). The newspaper characterized Bauer’s comments as ‘tactically false and harmful’ and continued:

to be sure, a monarchy is indeed the only possible form of government for Germany and it will come about on its own when the time is right. Any discussion of this subject at the moment is inopportune and just serves as grist to the mill for the parties against Hindenburg and lays obstacles in the way for the candidature of the Field Marshal and does the monarchist movement a great disservice.<sup>184</sup>

The leaders of the monarchist/pro-Hindenburg party within the *DNVP* maintained an embarrassed silence.

The interview was a major faux pas and heavily compromised the monarchists. It was done completely on Bauer’s own initiative without the knowledge of Hindenburg, his supporters or even the crown prince himself.<sup>185</sup> With this, Bauer’s role within the monarchist movement was essentially played out. It is noteworthy that from this point onwards, Bauer would no longer pursue a restoration of any kind and thus moved a step further in the direction of the more extremist right. He was now more than ever in the camp of Navy Captain Ehrhardt, Major Pabst and Wolfgang Kapp as well as the younger *Freikorps* leaders whose vision of Germany’s future had room neither for a king nor for an elitist nobility.<sup>186</sup> The German monarchists of a more conservative stripe began to distance themselves from the Ludendorff-Bauer circle in increasing numbers as the new year began. Further, friendly relations between Bauer and his old wartime friend, the crown prince, were irreconcilably shattered.

## B. The Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch as the Summation of Colonel Bauer's Political Development

The history of the well-documented Kapp Putsch need not be discussed here. Instead, the purpose of this section is to illustrate Bauer's political dilettantism and his inability to function effectively in the world of realities beyond a simple desire to achieve his goals. Moreover, the Kapp Putsch represented the sum product of a year's worth of observation and planning by the Ludendorff-Bauer circle, with Bauer as its leading spirit. Colonel Bauer, Major Pabst, Captain Ehrhardt and others finally had their long-awaited chance to strike at the Weimar Republic; and with exactly the negative outcome predicted by those who warned against it—chiefly the *Reichswehr* that wisely abstained from taking part.

The initiation of the Kapp Putsch emanated chiefly from the Ludendorff-Bauer radical minority faction within the *NV* that advocated a pre-emptive strike to topple the government without waiting for the anticipated leftist uprising. The timing—or rather mistiming—was the result of the government's threat in early January to begin troop reductions of the 200,000-strong *Reichswehr* by April 1, 1920.<sup>187</sup> This applied to the *Freikorps* as well, which meant the dissolution of the very instrument the Ludendorff-Bauer circle had envisioned as a vanguard against the Weimar Republic, the highly disciplined *Freikorps Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt*.

The Ludendorff-Bauer circle faced identical circumstances in early July when Defence Minister Noske threatened to dissolve Major Pabst's *Freikorps Garde-Kavallier-Schützendivision*. It was at this time that cooler heads dissuaded Pabst from staging a coup in Berlin on his own in the hope of saving his formation. This advice was consistent with Ludendorff's recommendation that proper preparations for such a move

would take at least two years; the sources do not indicate that any such argument was made by the general in the case of the Kapp undertaking.

Original document sources regarding the planning of the Putsch are limited due to Bauer's private secretary, Luise Engeler,<sup>188</sup> having removed all sensitive papers from the *NV* offices after Bauer, Pabst, Lüttwitz and Kapp were alerted by sympathetic persons in the Berlin police that arrest warrants had been issued in their names.<sup>189</sup>

It is known, however, that during the last meeting of the *NV* on March 12 Bauer outlined the course of the next few days: the immediate declaration of a military dictatorship and the removal of all members of the government who opposed it. Thoroughly out of touch with popular sentiment, he also requested that 'all good citizens are to join the *Einwohnerwehr* and temporary volunteer companies' to combat threats from the left. Bauer was convinced that with 'decisive action, in a few days [they would be] masters of the situation'.<sup>190</sup> With the Ebert government safely sequestered in Dresden and later Stuttgart, and because, in the famous words of General Hans von Seeckt, '*Reichswehr* do not fire on *Reichswehr*',<sup>191</sup> there was no opposition to Erhardt's *Freikorps Marinebrigade* as it surrounded the government buildings. The 'military success' prompted Captain Ehrhardt to later state, 'the fault [of the failure] lies with the civilians; militarily I held Berlin within my hands.'<sup>192</sup> Despite General Maercker's pronouncements to the contrary, Kapp believed that the two rightist parties in the *Reichstag* and—more importantly—the *Reichswehr* would be behind the endeavour due to General Lüttwitz's participation.<sup>193</sup>

It must be understood that regardless of whose names were attached to the venture, Colonel Bauer was the wirepuller in the *NV* and during the Putsch. As '*Reichskanzler*' Kapp's political adviser, Bauer screened all visitors and messages

coming in and out of the *Reichskanzlei*, which left Kapp curiously isolated from actual events.<sup>194</sup>

For the first two days the Putsch went much as Bauer had envisioned: he himself took over the post of Group Commander of the *Reichswehr* and Ehrhardt assumed the position of *Reich* Defence Minister.<sup>195</sup> This was, of course, nothing more than having walked into a deserted building, sitting at equally deserted desks and giving themselves official titles. Meanwhile, *Reichskanzler* Kapp declared a military dictatorship under General Lüttwitz as Ludendorff had suggested the previous July. Soon, however, Bauer began to doubt Kapp's qualifications to lead the counter-revolution after the latter, upon hearing of the general strike issued by the Weimar government-in-exile, expressed a desire on the third day to capitulate. Bauer advised against it and the matter was temporarily dropped.<sup>196</sup> It was at this point that Bauer assumed control of the situation to the point where he eventually became the outward decision-maker of the entire enterprise.<sup>197</sup>

At this juncture one observes a series of fantastic actions on Bauer's part that belie any sense of reason. As the probable failure of the Putsch became ever more apparent, Bauer turned to the British press through the new *Reich* Foreign Press Bureau Chief—his trusted co-conspirator Trebitsch, who arranged an interview with a correspondent of *The Times*. Bauer announced that the Putsch was meant to be temporary all along and was staged only to bring attention to the breach of constitutional law by the Ebert government, citing its refusal to hold new, popular-based presidential elections.<sup>198</sup> Failing to be taken seriously, he then had Trebitsch announce that the Spartacists had formed their own government in the north of Berlin and called on the citizenry to support Kapp.<sup>199</sup> It may be assumed that Bauer saw Britain as a sympathetic quarter based on his mistaken belief that the British tacitly approved of a

coup, as per his earlier correspondence with military representatives of His Majesty's government in July 1919.

As with the Hohenzollern restoration plot, Bauer and Trebitsch had completely miscalculated the response of the press. While Bauer's declaration of the reasons behind the Putsch were disregarded as pure fantasy by the British, the fact that the interview was arranged by the former Member of Parliament for Darlington, a suspected German spy, caused a sensation. The *Daily Telegraph* wrote:

Nothing could be more typical of the childishness of the Kapp gang than the fact than they chose this man to be their link of communication to the British Press . . . . There was something almost Olympian about this man's scoundrelism . . . [upon whose face] deceit, dishonesty, and brutality are written for all . . . to read.<sup>200</sup>

Another example of Bauer's fanciful tactics is that he once again approached the Communists for help to save the situation. In an effort to put the working class on his side to mitigate the power of the general strike, he invited the sworn enemy of the counter-revolution to join in the Putsch, promising offices in key ministries.<sup>201</sup> The reaction of Major Pabst and Captain Ehrhardt was one of shock. The latter even threatened to withdraw his troops from Berlin if members of the left were to join the government.<sup>202</sup> The representatives of the left understandably declined the offer, as did Ludendorff himself to take over from Kapp.<sup>203</sup>

The five-day Kapp regime fell for a number of reasons. They included, but were not limited to, a widespread lack of support from the *Reichswehr* and even from most *Freikorps* units; the seeming lack of any concrete plan once the government offices were taken over; and the successful general strike called by both the *SPD* and the liberal German Democratic Party (*DDP*) that paralysed Berlin. In fact, the regime failed for all the reasons long explained to Bauer by the more moderate right and the *Reichswehr* since July 1919. The irony was, of course, that the expected leftist uprising so feared by

Bauer did indeed finally occur in the Ruhr—not as a precondition for the Putsch, but as a result.

The above two examples of Bauer's conspiratorial actions illustrate trends that emerged in the White International and contributed to its failure. In the Hohenzollern restoration plot, one sees a willingness by Bauer and Trebitsch to assume a position to change the course of history completely on their own initiative. Bauer's desire to re-establish the Hohenzollern dynasty was consistent with his praise of Oswald Spengler's vague notions of 'Prussian socialism', as opposed to the 'false democratic socialism' of the Weimar Republic, and was a clear reflection of Bauer's tendency to base political actions on theoretical and ideological foundations. The amateurish miscalculations and assumptive nature of the plot resulted in an unbridgeable chasm between himself, the *Reichswehr* and the more circumspect elements of the right who saw a better chance of success by working with the machinery of the state. Significantly, Bauer's blunder put an end to any ideas of a restoration for the foreseeable future. In fact, neither the Kapp Putsch nor the White International mentioned the restoration as a goal.

The Kapp Putsch, while also a striking example of ineptitude, serves to highlight elements found within the White International plot. Bauer would draw the wrong conclusions from the successes and failures of the experience. The successful bloodless coup carried out by the *Freikorps Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt* led him to naïvely justify his unswerving faith in the effectiveness of paramilitary forces. Conversely, he blamed the failure of the Putsch on 'indecisive and weak-kneed civil servants' such as Kapp, and on the *OHL* for their cowardly position of neutrality. Consequently, the White International plot would be cursed with the very same flaws that contributed to the failure of the Kapp Putsch. Further, both episodes reveal a trait characteristic of all Bauer's plots: he would measure the chance of success against the degree of the *need*

for success. This compulsion justified the action before the fact and precluded any serious analysis after it. Failures, in Bauer's view, were attributable to human deficiencies and never to plans themselves.

### Conclusion

It is argued that the White International plot was to a large degree a continuation of strategies and processes established in the period from the founding of the *Freikorps* in January 1919 to the Kapp Putsch of March 1920.

Colonel Bauer erroneously saw the *Freikorps* as a politicized body of sufficient strength and discipline to act as the instrument of the counter-revolution to topple the Weimar Republic. While sufficient to brutally crush the Spartacist movement during the revolution (as described in Major Stephani's own recollections of the Battle of Belle-Alliance Platz)<sup>204</sup> and to visit atrocities upon the citizens of the young Baltic Successor States (as discussed in Robert Gerwarth's 'The Central European Counter-revolution' and in Robert Waite's classic *Vanguard of Nazism*), the German *Freikorps* units were far from the politicized personification of the moral warrior, fighting for the rejuvenation of stolen Prussian pride, as envisioned by Bauer. They were, in fact, generally undisciplined freebooters made up of discontented ex-soldiers who could not or would not adapt to the humdrum existence of civilian life, or students with no prior military experience at all who romanticized the war their youth had conspired to cheat them of.

The Pan-German League's Bamberg Declaration that advocated the continuation of pre-war expansionist foreign policy, and the initially Entente-encouraged Baltic

Campaign to thwart Bolshevik Russian expansion, provided the justification and the opportunity—but they also demonstrated the unworthiness of *Freikorps* units as an infield military force. When faced with organized troops such as the Latvian-Estonian Army, the *Freikorps* formations continually proved themselves wanting as a field army and thus incapable of fighting effectively against the national armies they would undoubtedly be facing in an all-European war the White International would certainly bring about. This fact was lost on Bauer, however.

It is further argued that the Baltic Campaign provided the model for creating a transnational, counter-revolutionary fighting force that would be the very core of the White International plot. German *Freikorps* formations were augmented through recruiting from the vast store of tsarist Russian prisoners of war sequestered in Germany, just as outlined in Bauer's later plan. Persons from the Russian émigré monarchists directly involved in both the recruitment and the actual fighting in the Baltic, such as White General Vasili Biskupsky, would re-emerge as principal players in Bauer's White International plot. There was also consensus among the German right and Russian monarchists that the two countries' futures were tied to each other.

The Baltic Campaign provided a further precursor. The term 'White International' implies a counter-answer to the 'red internationalism' of the left. Bauer's writings indicate, however, that the liberal, democratic, middle-class Entente was seen in no less unfavourable a light than the left—especially England with its 'poisoning materialism' and with its perceived intentions of economically colonizing Eastern Europe. In 1919 the April coup against the Entente-supported Ulmanis's Latvian government, the blatant defiance of the Entente's June order to withdraw from the Baltic and the open warfare by German-White Russian forces against the Entente-

sponsored Latvian-Estonian Army in the failed Riga Offensive of October all point to an early, strong anti-Entente position.

It is also argued that the very fantastic nature of the White International plot was a continuation of the far-fetched plans emanating from the mind of Bauer, which betrayed an apparent inability to tell the difference between what was possible and what was not. A good case in point was his demand for immediate military action against Weimar upon the acceptance of the Versailles Treaty. Rejecting caution advocated by a senior field commander, Bauer took it upon himself to construct grand plans for a coup against Berlin which included sending a memorandum to the British government to sound out the latter's position were a Putsch to occur. The British decision not to dignify his missive with a reply was, typically, misunderstood by Bauer as being a tacit endorsement.

Colonel Bauer's two conspiratorial actions before the White International are significant. The Hohenzollern restoration plot and the Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch both involved working with political adventurer Trebitsch-Lincoln, co-author of the White International plot. Each conspiracy bore the marks of amateurism and miscalculation. The restoration plot was undertaken entirely by Bauer and Trebitsch, and was roundly condemned even by Crown Prince Wilhelm, whose support was the very object of the effort. It also resulted in Bauer's isolation from the German monarchists whose more circumspect plans he unwittingly foiled. Similarly, the Kapp Putsch isolated Bauer from the *Reichswehr* and all who had tried to convince him that plots without adequate preparation would fail.

The lessons of the Kapp disaster were lost on Bauer as he placed the blame on the 'weak-kneed' civilians involved while the military, he believed, had the situation

‘well in hand’.<sup>205</sup> The reasons for the initial military success of the venture eluded him, as did the reasons for its ultimate failure.

The mosaic was complete: the loss of the war provided the indignant anger, the *Freikorps* provided the means, the Bamberg Declaration provided the stated goal, the Russian-German experience in the Baltic provided the transnational model, and social democracy, the Versailles Treaty and the Entente provided the enemy. All the components of the White International were in evidence between November 1918 and March 1920.

#### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The moderate Social Democratic Party of Germany (*SPD*) split in 1915 when its left wing under Hugo Haase refused further support for war credits. In 1917 the Independent (*unabhängige*) *SPD* (hereafter *USPD*) was established by Haase in Gotha and the leftist group *Spartakusbund* merged into it. During the German Revolution of 1918, the *SPD* under Friedrich Ebert and the *USPD* actually worked together in the provisional government until the founding of the National Assembly (*Nationalversammlung*) in January 1919, when the *USPD* was eliminated from the government but still remained an effective minority in Parliament (the *Reichstag*).

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Ebert (1871-1925) was leader of the majority *SPD* in the *Reichstag*. Appointed Chancellor (*Reichskanzler*) in November 1918 after the fall of the monarchy, he became *Reichspräsident* from January 1919 until his death in 1925. Far from a revolutionary, he hoped for a constitutional monarchy but due to the abdication of the Kaiser and the Declaration of the Republic by Gustav Scheidemann, Ebert was forced to accept the situation. He worked closely with General Groener and Defence Minister Gustav Noske (*SPD*) to steer the revolution away from the radical left by endorsing the founding of the *Freikorps* formations.

<sup>3</sup> Kurt von Schleicher (1882-1934) served as a General Staff officer under General Groener and was instrumental in the creation of the *Freikorps*. In 1933 he followed Franz von Papen as *Reichskanzler* until *Reichspräsident* von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler to the office. He was assassinated by Hitler in 1934 in the Night of the Long Knives for his efforts to restore the Hohenzollern dynasty.

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<sup>4</sup> General Karl Eduard Wilhelm Groener (1867-1939) was attached to the Prussian General Staff in 1899, put in charge of the Army Railway Section in 1912 and became Prussian Deputy War Minister in 1916. He replaced General Ludendorff as First Quartermaster General (Deputy Chief of the General Staff) under Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

<sup>5</sup> This is sometimes called the Ebert-Groener Pact. Ebert promised to suppress the Bolshevik-led revolution and maintain the *Reichswehr* as it then was as a pillar of the German state, basically allowing it to continue as a state within a state. For General Groener's part, he promised to fully support the new Ebert regime, soon to be referred to as the Weimar Republic. This came, however, with the proviso known as the 'Doctrine of Responsibility' whereby the *Reichswehr* could choose not to act at the behest of the government if it felt to do so would compromise the army. The incident of General Hans von Seeckt's refusal to intervene against the Kapp Putsch serves as an example. See Robert G. L. Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism: The Free Corps Movement in Postwar Germany 1918-1923* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1969), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Gustav Noske, *SPD* member of the *Reichstag*, was generally amenable to military needs during the war. He was instrumental in peacefully putting down the Kiel Mutiny in 1918 and endorsed the creation of the *Freikorps* to combat the Spartacist revolt. He served as Defence Minister under the Scheidemann government from 1919 until he resigned for failing to protect the government from the Kapp Putsch. After the signing of the Versailles Treaty, he refused to accept an invitation from the radical right to establish a military dictatorship and thus fell out of favour.

<sup>7</sup> General Ludwig von Maercker was reputedly the founder of the very first *Freikorps* unit, *Freiwilligen Landesjägerkorps*, in December 1918.

<sup>8</sup> Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*, 16.

<sup>9</sup> G. Feldman, 'Economic and Social Problems of the German Demobilisation, 1918-19', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 47 (1975), 17.

<sup>10</sup> Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 128.

<sup>11</sup> Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*, 21.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Gerwarth, 'The Central European Counter-revolution: Paramilitary Violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War', *Past and Present*, no. 200 (August 2008), 181.

<sup>14</sup> Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*, 31.

<sup>15</sup> The German names for the various kinds of paramilitary groups used in this work are consistent with Robert Waite's signal work *Vanguard of Nazism*. The most important groups carried names according to their degree of military readiness: the Volunteer Corps or Volunteer Corps soldiers (*Freikorps* or *Freikorpskämpfer*) dominated and

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constituted actual military units often billeted outside cities throughout Germany. They could range from the highly disciplined *Freikorps Reinhardt* or *Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt* that marched on Berlin in the Kapp Putsch, to virtual brigands roving the countryside living off intimidation of the peasantry. Other groups included the Citizens' Guard (*Einwohnerwehr*) and the Volunteer Force (*Freiwilligwehr*) which can best be described as a kind of reserve militia found virtually everywhere in the *Reich* and seldom regarded as possessing any real military bearing. All such units were overtly or covertly armed and supplied by the *Reichswehr* though they had no official ties to it. The *Freikorps* units and their leaders represented the most radical of nationalist sentiments in post-war Germany, with the important exception of Bavaria where the units, especially the *Einwohnerwehren*, tended to be little more than village guards.

<sup>16</sup> Speech of July 16, 1919, quoted from Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*, 39.

<sup>17</sup> Detlev J. K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 67.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>19</sup> The *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* was made up of members of the old Wilhelmine German Conservative Party, the Free Conservative Party and the National Liberal Party. They remained a party of opposition to the Republic but never demurred at active participation in the *Reichstag*. Their platform was basically monarchist and supported by large landowning nobility and industrialists.

<sup>20</sup> Peukert, *Weimar Republic*, 75.

<sup>21</sup> Max Bauer, *Der große Krieg in Feld und Heimat: Erinnerungen und Betrachtungen* (Tübingen: Osiander'sche Buchhandlung, 1922), 285.

<sup>22</sup> Ben Scott, 'The Origins of the Freikorps: A Re-evaluation', *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History*, No. 1 (2000), 7-9.

<sup>23</sup> Gerwarth, 'Central European Counter-revolution', 181.

<sup>24</sup> Franz von Stephani (1876-1939) served before the war in German West Africa (Cameroon). During the war he was promoted to Major in 1917 and was attached to the Reserve Infantry First Regiment of Foot Guards. On December 12, 1918, he took the remnants of his unit and the Imperial Potsdam Regiment, and created his *Freikorps-Potsdam* of some 1,200 men, mostly young officers, cadets and students. He later founded, with Captain-Lieutenant Ehrhardt, the Association of Nationalist-minded Soldiers (*Verband der nationalgesinnter Soldaten*) and during the 1930s would serve as an officer in the *Stahlhelm Freikorps* and in Hitler's *Sturmabteilung* (Storm Troops).

<sup>25</sup> Franz von Stephani, 'Freikorps Potsdam: Der Sturm auf das Vorwärtsgebäude', in *Deutsche Soldaten*, ed. Hans Roden (Leipzig: Verlag von Breitkopf & Härtel, 1935), 41-6.

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<sup>26</sup> Pan-Germanism was an early nineteenth-century nationalist movement aimed at the unification of the separate German states. After unification, the Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verband*) of 1893 was to heighten German nationalist awareness, especially as pertaining to colonization. After the war it displayed a visceral reaction evident in its call to reclaim substantial German-speaking areas lost under the Versailles Treaty.

<sup>27</sup> Attempts to have the Bamberg Declaration adopted by the National Assembly were defeated by the Bavarian bloc led by Georg Heim, a strident anti-Prussian and ‘Bavarian nationalist’ with whom Bauer would deal while in Bavarian exile.

<sup>28</sup> Werner Jochmann, *Nationalsozialismus und Revolution: Ursprung und Geschichte der NSDAP in Hamburg 1922-1933: Dokumente* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1963), 14-21.

<sup>29</sup> Burgenland was still attached to Hungary proper at the time of the Bamberg Declaration but would later be awarded to Austria by the Treaty of Saint Germain-en-Laye. It would become a major point of dispute between pan-Germans and Hungarian revisionists and thus represent a weakness in the White International plot.

<sup>30</sup> Jochmann, *Nationalsozialismus und Revolution*, 16.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> In fairness, virtually every politically significant group in Germany advocated an *Anschluß* with Austria. Ebert’s Foreign Minister Ulrich Graf von Brockdorff-Rantzau in his speech ‘Großdeutschland vom Brenner bis zum Belt’ to the *Reichstag* on February 14—two days before the Bamberg Declaration—called for the continuation of German colonial policies and an *Anschluß* with German-Austria. See Ulrich Graf von Brockdorff-Rantzau, *Dokumente* (Charlottenburg: Deutsche Verlags-gesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1920), 44, 49.

<sup>35</sup> The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 officially ended hostilities between Germany and Bolshevik Russia. Germany gained control over a huge swathe of territory from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea that included Finland, Estonia, Latvia, the Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland. Under it Russia lost one-third of its population, half of its industry and 90% of its coal reserves but gained peace and time necessary to consolidate the Revolution throughout Russia. The Armistice in the West of November 11, 1918, abrogated the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

<sup>36</sup> John Hiden and Patrick Salmon, *The Baltic Nations and Europe: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Twentieth Century* (London: Longman, 1994), 30-1.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

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<sup>38</sup> Article XII of the revised conditions of the Armistice reads: ‘All German troops at present in territories which before the war formed part of Russia must return within the borders of Germany as soon as the Allies shall think the moment suitable.’ See Harry R. Rudin, *Armistice, 1918* (New Haven: 1944), Appendix G.

<sup>39</sup> Kurt Eisner (1867-1919) was the *USPD* leader who launched the Bavarian Revolution in November 1918 that deposed the monarchy, and served as the first premier of the Republic of Bavaria. He was defeated in Bavaria’s first election in February 1919 and assassinated shortly thereafter. The ensuing chaos resulted in the proclamation of a short-lived Soviet Republic of Bavaria that was gruesomely crushed by mostly non-Bavarian *Freikorps* units in April 1919.

<sup>40</sup> Kārlis Ulmanis (1877-1942), Latvian Prime Minister 1919-1938, founded the Latvian People’s Council and declared independence from Bolshevik Russia in November 1918. With the encroachment of the Red Army in 1919, he appealed to the Entente Powers who recognized his Republic of Latvia. England urged Ulmanis to seek help from German troops already there with disastrous consequences.

<sup>41</sup> Hiden and Salmon, *Baltic Nations*, 34.

<sup>42</sup> August Winnig (1878-1956) was *SPD* General Representative in Upper East Prussia. Winnig advocated a form of socialism based on nationalism but was neither a National Socialist nor an anti-Semite. He was involved in getting the *Freikorps* to the Baltic area and wished to see a strong German component in a sovereign Latvia. He supported the Kapp Putsch and was thus expelled from the *SPD*. After World War II he was one of the founders of the conservative Christian Democratic Union party in Germany.

<sup>43</sup> August Winnig, *Am Ausgang der deutschen Ostpolitik; Persönliche Erlebnisse und Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Staatspolitischer Verlag GmbH, 1921), 82-3.

<sup>44</sup> Count Gustav Adolf Joachim Rüdiger von der Goltz (1865-1946), as Major General in World War I, commanded the First Infantry Division of Foot Guards in France. In March 1918 he was transferred to Finland and successfully helped nationalist forces defeat the Red Army there. After the Armistice, demoralized German troops withdrew from the Baltic except for the *Freikorps* ‘Iron Division’ (*Eisene Brigade*) and remnants of the Eighth Army that combined under General von der Goltz (as he was by then) in the Baltic Campaign. After the collapse in the Baltic, he became a member of the *NV* with the Ludendorff-Bauer circle and would later emerge in Budapest.

<sup>45</sup> Wolfgang Kapp (1858-1922) was a Prussian civil servant and, as a *Reichstag* representative during the war, was involved with Colonel Bauer in the plot to dismiss Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg. He was a dedicated counter-revolutionary figurehead that served as Chancellor during the Kapp Putsch and after its failure spent two years in Swedish exile. He died shortly after his return to Berlin to face trial.

<sup>46</sup> The *Deutsche Vaterlandspartei* was not a political party in the traditional sense but an extreme nationalist organization that, during the last year of the war, secretly planned to depose the Kaiser and install Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz as military dictator of a new German nationalist regime with Kapp as his adviser.

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<sup>47</sup> Rüdiger von der Goltz, *Meine Sendung in Finnland und im Baltikum* (Leipzig: Verlag von K. F. Koehler, 1920), v.

<sup>48</sup> Rüdiger von der Goltz, *Als politischer General im Osten (Finnland und Baltikum) 1918-1919* (Leipzig: Verlag von K. F. Koehler, 1936), 165.

<sup>49</sup> This view of Germany looking to Russia to compensate for what was lost from defeat in the West was observed by the Chief of the American Mission to Latvia, Lieutenant Colonel Warwick Greene, reporting from Libau in June 1919. US Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) (Washington DC: 1947), vol. XII, 200.

<sup>50</sup> Waldemar Pabst (1880-1970) was a captain in the wartime *Reichswehr* General Staff and founder of the *Freikorps* Guards Cavalry Division. After the war he served as Chief of Staff to Major Alfred Fletcher in the Baltic Campaign and was co-founder and General Secretary of the NV. Following the Kapp Putsch, Pabst was active in organizing paramilitary units in Austria including the *Heimwehr* (Home Guard) with *Organisation Kanzler (Orka)* connections.

<sup>51</sup> Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*, 109. The so-called Latvian Army is also referred to as the 'Baltic Defence Force' (*Baltische Landeswehr*).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>53</sup> During the discussion on the matter, Ebert asked Foreign Minister Balfour if His Majesty's Government was prepared to defend the Baltic in the absence of von der Goltz and his volunteers. Britain relented. See Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*, 116, wherein he quotes from Friedrich Purlitz (ed.), 'Vom Waffenstillstand zum Frieden von Versailles', *Deutscher Geschichtskalender* (Leipzig: 1920), 470-76.

<sup>54</sup> Rohan Butler et al. (eds.), *Documents on British Foreign Policy (DBFP) 1919-1939*, First Series (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1947-), vol. III, 66; George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 159. Mosse notes that *Freikorps* atrocities were very widespread and could be found virtually anywhere, but especially in the Baltic, during action against the Bavarian Soviet regime and among the Hungarian *Freikorps* detachments during the 'White Terror'. The author states that such atrocities were due to the soldiers no longer being restrained by military discipline as compared to when the same soldiers fought during the war.

<sup>55</sup> *DBFP*, vol. III, 12, 17.

<sup>56</sup> Taras Hunczak, 'Operation Winter and the Struggle for the Baltic', *East European Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1970), 43.

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<sup>57</sup> *DBFP*, vol. III, 10, 17, 19; Herbert Michaelis and Ernst Schraepler (eds.), *Ursachen und Folgen: Vom deutschen Zusammenbruch 1918 und 1945 bis zur staatlichen Neuordnung Deutschlands in der Gegenwart*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Dokumenten-Verlag Wendler & Co., 1979), 560.

<sup>58</sup> Robert C. Williams, *Culture in Exile: Russian Émigrés in Germany, 1881-1941* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972), 91.

<sup>59</sup> Goltz, *Meine Sendung*, 127. Von der Goltz shared this view with Bauer.

<sup>60</sup> Wilhelm Lenz, 'Deutsche Machtpolitik in Lettland im Jahre 1919, Ausgewählte Dokumente des von General Rüdiger Graf von der Goltz geführten Generalkommandos des VI Reservekorps', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 36 (1987): Document no. 4, 'an die Anwerbestelle Baltenland', 540.

<sup>61</sup> Court records of charges against Sergei Taboritsky and Piotr Shabelsky-Bork of May 29, 1922, for the assassination of jurist and ex-Kerensky government official Vladimir Nabokov. In 1936 Taboritsky would serve under Vasili Biskupsky who headed up Hitler's Department of Émigré Affairs. *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Repositur* 83a, no. 14953, 16, cited in Michael Kellogg's *The Russian Roots of Nazism: White Émigrés and the Making of National Socialism, 1917-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 86-7.

<sup>62</sup> Goltz, *Meine Sendung*, 124, 221.

<sup>63</sup> General Baron Piotr Wrangel (1878-1928) was a Baltic Russian of German ancestry who commanded an Imperial Cavalry unit. After the revolution he went to the Crimea where he eventually commanded the White Army of the South. Major reversals led to evacuation and ultimately his retirement, and he settled in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. He was very distrustful of General Biskupsky and other Russian émigrés associated with the Ludendorff-Bauer circle.

<sup>64</sup> Pavel Skoropadskii, *Erinnerungen von Pavlo Skoropadsky aufgeschrieben in Berlin in der Zeit von Januar bis Mai 1918*, trans. Helene Ott-Skoropadskii (Berlin: Institut für Zeitgeschichte, 1918), 346, 348, 351, 378, cited in Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 59.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from Alfred Fletcher to Wolfgang Kapp, March 1919, *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Repositur* 92, no. 801, 57, cited in Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 87.

<sup>66</sup> Goltz, *Meine Sendung*, 242-3.

<sup>67</sup> August 26 message from British General Burt in Riga to Balfour in Paris that Major Bischoff had informed his Iron Division that evacuation would not be enforced. *DBFP*, vol. III, 74.

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<sup>68</sup> Otto Wilhelm Heinrich Wagener, *Von der Heimat geächtet* (Stuttgart: 1920), 48.

<sup>69</sup> Williams, *Culture in Exile*, 93.

<sup>70</sup> Sources are inconsistent regarding his name. Often the 'Avalov' appears before the 'Bermond't'. Indeed, 'Avalov' may not have been part of his name at all. It is rumoured that he paid an authentic Prince Avalov to claim Bermond't as his illegitimate brother. In any case, the name as it appears in his autobiography is used in this work.

<sup>71</sup> Pawel Bermond't-Awaloff, *Im Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus: Erinnerungen von General Fürst Awaloff, Oberbefehlshaber der deutsch-russischen Westarmee im Baltikum* (Glückstadt und Hamburg: J. J. Augustin, 1925), 51-2.

<sup>72</sup> General Max Hoffmann (1869-1927), Chief of Staff under Hindenburg in 1917. He was an expert on eastern matters and is generally considered the brilliant strategist responsible for early German victories at the Battles of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes, and for the strategy to take Riga during the war that brought Trotsky to accept the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of 1918. Hoffmann was to play a leading role in the 1920-aborted plan for a Franco-German rescue of Warsaw in the Russo-Polish War. In 1925 he wrote *An Allen Enden Moskau*, outlining his 1922 attempt at international intervention by Germany, France and Hungary in Bolshevik Russia.

<sup>73</sup> General Nikolai Yudenich (1862-1933) served as a Russian Army commander in the Caucasus under both the imperial government and the provisional government, but he was removed for insubordination. After the Bolshevik Revolution he became commander of the North-west White Army in Estonia under British auspices. Having failed in the Petrograd Offensive, he was forced to disarm his army and was evacuated by the British in 1920.

<sup>74</sup> Bermond't-Awaloff, *Im Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus*, 51-2; report from General Malcolm on German governments' authorization of Bermond't-Avalov's recruitment of Russian prisoners of war, *DBFP*, vol. III, 53-4.

<sup>75</sup> Bermond't-Avalov and von der Goltz tell a different version in their respective autobiographies. See Bermond't-Awaloff, *Im Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus*, 222-3.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 217. The number of troops varies wildly between sources. This is partially explained by the constant separation and rejoining of the many *Freikorps* units. A general rule of thumb is that the figures, especially those reported by Bermond't-Avalov, are exaggerated.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Colonel Bermond't-Avalov promoted himself to the rank of general presumably because he now had General von der Goltz officially serving under him.

<sup>79</sup> Beyond Robert Williams's mention of Baron Belgard, the sources provide nothing more on him.

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<sup>80</sup> For the most thorough treatment of General Vasili Biskupsky's military and post-military career, see les Archives militaires françaises, Château de Vincennes, Service Historique de la Défense (SHD), Deuxième Bureau (DB), Fonds Moscou, fond 7, opis 2, dossier 25082.

<sup>81</sup> Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 55.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Williams, *Culture in Exile*, 93.

<sup>85</sup> Vasili Biskupsky's testimony included in a police report to the Bavarian Foreign Ministry, June 2, 1923, cited in Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 96.

<sup>86</sup> Colonel Max Bauer (1875-1929) was a Prussian wartime artillery specialist attached to the German General Staff and a political adviser to General Ludendorff. He was instrumental in the 1917 plot to remove Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg and a prolific writer, supporting the idea of Prussian revitalization of Germany as a great power. After Versailles he became joint leader of a radical right anti-Weimar circle. Bauer was a co-conspirator with Trebitsch-Lincoln in the abortive 1919 Hohenzollern restoration plot, the Kapp Putsch and the White International plot. After the latter's failure, he served as a military adviser in Argentina, in the Soviet Union and to Jiang Jieshi in China. Colonel Bauer died of smallpox in China in 1929.

<sup>87</sup> John Hiden, *Republican and Fascist Germany: Themes and Variations in the History of Weimar and the Third Reich 1918-1945* (London: Longman, 1996), 18.

<sup>88</sup> Hermann Ehrhardt, *Kapitän Ehrhardt, Abenteuer und Schicksal*, ed. Friedrich Freska (Berlin: August Scherl GmbH., 1924), 145.

<sup>89</sup> For the complete text, see Gustav Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Revolution* (Berlin: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1920), 196-7.

<sup>90</sup> Goltz, *Als politischer General im Osten*, 145.

<sup>91</sup> Kapp, 'Zur Vorgeschichte des März-Unternehmen', 1922, Nachlaß Kapp (Kapp Papers), 1309/309, No. 7, 18, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BaK).

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Bauer, 'Der Irrwahn des Verständigungs-Friedens', in *Tag*, No. 4 (Berlin: 1919), 14.

<sup>94</sup> The Bavarian *Einwohnerwehren* were even less able to successfully wage a full-scale war than were the *Freikorps* units.

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<sup>95</sup> Nachlaß Oberst Max Bauer, *signatur* 1022, 26 (letters and documents), 4 (subsection), 203f (page or document number); hereafter N Bauer, 1022/26/4/203f, BaK.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Letter from Crown Prince Wilhelm to Bauer, September 27, 1919, N Bauer, 1022/26/21/71, BaK.

<sup>98</sup> *DBFP*, vol. VI, 25.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 28-9.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>101</sup> Adolf Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer, Generalstabsoffizier im Zwielficht* (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1974), 257.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> 'Ereignisse im Baltikum vom Herbst 1918 bis Ende 1919', January 1920, Nachlaß Kapp, *sig.* 1309/247/91/6, BaK.

<sup>104</sup> Included in a record of the German State Commission for the Supervision of Public Order from a report of September 9, 1921, Centre for the Preservation of Historical-Documentary Collections, Moscow, cited in Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 96.

<sup>105</sup> Revealed in charge deposition against Captain Hermann Ehrhardt from May 5, 1923, German State Commission for the Supervision of Public Order, Bundesarchiv Berlin, 1507, no. 339, 87/5, cited in Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 97.

<sup>106</sup> Nachlaß Kapp, 1309/247/91/7, BaK.

<sup>107</sup> Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism*, 130. Interestingly, the idea of producing one's own currency for military financing would be placed under the auspices of Russian Committee leader General Biskupsky in the White International plot.

<sup>108</sup> *DBFP*, vol. II, 744.

<sup>109</sup> *DBFP*, vol. III, 253.

<sup>110</sup> See E. Stutz, *Oswald Spengler als Politischer Denker* (Bern: 1958).

<sup>111</sup> Bauer bemoaned women's suffrage and the lowering of the voting age. His position on women is closely scrutinized in Martin Kitchen, 'Militarism and the Development of Fascist Ideology: The Political Ideas of Colonel Max Bauer, 1916-18', *Central European History*, vol. 8 (1975), 209-11.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 199-220.

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- <sup>113</sup> Ibid., 202.
- <sup>114</sup> Bauer, *Der große Krieg*, 287f.
- <sup>115</sup> Biskupsky memorandum, N Bauer, 1022/26/35, BaK.
- <sup>116</sup> Bauer, *Der große Krieg*, 290.
- <sup>117</sup> Bauer's foreword to F. Solf's *Deutschlands Auferstehung 1934* (Berlin: 1920).
- <sup>118</sup> Bauer, *Die Vernichtung Deutschlands durch den Marxismus* (Vienna: 1923), 19.
- <sup>119</sup> Bauer, *Der große Krieg*, 298.
- <sup>120</sup> N Bauer, 1022/26/5/65, BaK.
- <sup>121</sup> Bauer's published brochure, *Wer trägt die Schuld an Deutschlands Unglück? 15 Fragen an Herrn Philipp Scheidemann und Genossen* (Tübingen: Osiander, 1922), 14.
- <sup>122</sup> Bauer, *Das Land der roten Zaren: Eindrücke und Erlebnisse* (Hamburg: 1925), 118.
- <sup>123</sup> Martin Kitchen, 'Militarism and the Development of Fascist Ideology: The Political Ideas of Colonel Max Bauer, 1916-18', *Central European History*, vol. 8, 1975, 215.
- <sup>124</sup> Bauer article in the rightist Berlin newspaper *Der Tag*, November 19, 1919.
- <sup>125</sup> Bauer, *Der große Krieg*, 285.
- <sup>126</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>127</sup> Letter of November 11, 1918, to Bauer from von Tieschowitz of Supreme Command, N Bauer, 1022/26/22/31, BaK.
- <sup>128</sup> Undated letter from Bauer to Ludendorff, N Bauer, 1022/26/22/48f, BaK.
- <sup>129</sup> N Bauer, 1022/26/22/29-31, BaK.
- <sup>130</sup> For an investigation of national Bolshevism during the time frame in question, see Klemens von Klemperer, 'Towards a Fourth Reich? The History of National Bolshevism in Germany', *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (April 1951), 191-210.
- <sup>131</sup> Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf, 'Radek in Berlin: Ein Kapital deutsch-russischer Beziehungen im Jahre 1919', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, No. 2 (1962), 87-166.
- <sup>132</sup> Ibid.

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- <sup>133</sup> Bruno Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis 1919-1923: München als Zentrum der mitteleuropäischen Gegenrevolution zwischen Revolution und Hitler-Putsch* (Munich: Stadtarchiv München, 1978), 378.
- <sup>134</sup> J. T. Trebitsch-Lincoln, *The Autobiography of an Adventurer* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1931), 153-4.
- <sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 159-60.
- <sup>136</sup> N Bauer, 1022/26/38a-40b, BaK.
- <sup>137</sup> E. J. Gumbel, *Verschwörer: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Soziologie der deutschen nationalistischen Geheimbünde seit 1918* (Vienna: Malik-Verlag GmbH, 1924), 65.
- <sup>138</sup> Wolfgang Kapp founded the *Deutsche Vaterlandspartei* in 1917 after having successfully championed the removal of Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg. With the Armistice and revolution of 1918, Kapp changed the party name to the 'Bureau for National Union'. Pabst shortened the name and thoroughly overhauled the organizational apparatus as well as the intent.
- <sup>139</sup> Johannes Erger, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Putsch: Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Innenpolitik 1919/20* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag und Druckerei GmbH, 1967), 86.
- <sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>141</sup> Kapp, 'Zur Vorgeschichte', Nachlaß Kapp, 1309/15, BaK.
- <sup>142</sup> Erger, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Putsch*, 87.
- <sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.
- <sup>144</sup> *Neue Preußische Kreuzzeitung* article of October 12, 1919, cited in Erger, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Putsch*, 91.
- <sup>145</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 342. Bauer's biographer relates an interesting anecdote apropos of Noske's information that the NV was a 'harmless organization'. Earlier in 1919, radical right-wing Major F. E. Solf had published a futuristic work that sold more than 10,000 copies, entitled *Deutschlands Auferstehung 1934* (Germany's Resurrection 1934). In it he depicts a certain political 'Klub der Harmlosen' led by a nameless 'General' who, at X Hour, mobilizes a network of 'Klubs' to take over the government of Germany. This accomplished, a war of revenge against France would then commence. Colonel Bauer wrote the foreword to Solf's book.
- <sup>146</sup> Estimates of *Einwohnerwehr* membership vary significantly. David Clay Large put its membership in January 1920 at some 500,000 throughout Germany. See David Clay Large, *The Politics of Law and Order: A History of the Bavarian Einwohnerwehr, 1918-1921*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia for Promoting Useful Knowledge, Vol. 70, Pt. 2 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1980), 81. A more recent estimate puts the number at 361,000 in Bavaria alone

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at the time of its dissolution in July 1921. See Roy G. Koepp, ‘Conservative Radicals: The *Einwohnerwehr*, *Bund Bayern und Reich*, and the Limits of Paramilitary Politics in Bavaria, 1918-1928’ (PhD dissertation, University of Nebraska, 2010), 88.

<sup>147</sup> Sources offer varying names for the Berlin-based ‘White Ruthenian government-in-exile’. Authentic or not, the individual members of the ‘government’ played a major role in the short life of the White International. The Kerensky government of the new Russian Republic recognized the Ukrainian People’s Republic (not a ‘Ruthenian’ one) in July 1917. There Ukrainian General Pavel Skoropadsky reorganized remnants of the Russian tsarist officer corps that had flooded in with the fall of the Empire, among their number being General Biskupsky and Colonel Bermond-Avalov. In April 1918 a coup d’état sanctioned by the Imperial German *OHL* toppled the ineffectual Ukrainian regime and set up pro-German Skoropadsky as hetman who, with the aid of high-ranking tsarist officers and German troops, spent the next seven months repelling Bolshevik forces. With the withdrawal of German troops from Kiev in November 1918, Skoropadsky abdicated power and fled to Berlin accompanied by leading tsarist officers and politicians.

As to whether the Ruthenian government-in-exile was recognized as such, the answer is best put by Peter Krawchuk, the noted Ukrainian-Canadian Communist: ‘All the Ukrainian politicians who landed in exile in Vienna, Berlin, Paris or Prague, claiming they were representatives of the “Ukrainian state” and [sitting in] “offices” they called “governments” and posing as “ministers” and “diplomats” of these “governments”—on various “foreign missions”. . . [In] all their comings and goings to Western European embassies and consulates . . . they were received only by the receptionists or, as a last resort, by office staff’. Quoted from Vic Satzewich, *The Ukrainian Diaspora* (London: Routledge, 2004), 76.

<sup>148</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 373.

<sup>149</sup> N Bauer, 1022/26/30/7f, BaK.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 1022/26/4/15.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 1022/26/27/35f.

<sup>152</sup> Williams, *Culture in Exile*, 93. Biskupsky was one among several who had vied for control of the 150,000-odd Russian refugees in and around Berlin alone. By November 1919 the matter had been settled with the appointment by the Council of Ambassadors in Paris of the very able Sergei Dmitrievich Botkin who would hold his position until the 1930s.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>154</sup> N Bauer, Trebitsch court documents, 1022/27/112-160, BaK. Quoted from the extensive protocol written by Trebitsch while held in pre-trial confinement by Viennese authorities, found in the Bauer Papers of the Federal Archives in Coblenz. Like all of Trebitsch’s writing, the court documents are replete with exaggerations of his own importance but do report faithfully of actual events (hereafter N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27, BaK).

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<sup>155</sup> Trebitsch's autobiography claims that 'two thousand million' (2 billion) Duma roubles were to be counterfeited. This is either a typical Trebitsch exaggeration or a misprint. See Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 154.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>157</sup> A large collection of Karl von Wiegend's papers are held at the Hoover Institute, Stanford University, and include Trebitsch's correspondence with the former during his sojourn in China.

<sup>158</sup> For the best treatment of Trebitsch's life, see Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*. Chapter 10 includes the eponymous character's role in the White International. See also David Lampe and Laszlo Szenasi, *The Self-Made Villain: A Biography of I. T. Trebitsch-Lincoln* (London: Cassell & Co, 1961). A less reliable, albeit interesting, source is Trebitsch-Lincoln's own self-promoting work, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*.

<sup>159</sup> Sir Basil Thompson to Sir E. Troup, July 3, 1919, Home Office Papers, quoted from Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 126.

<sup>160</sup> Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 141-6. See also Lampe and Szenasi, *Self-Made Villain*, 106-10.

<sup>161</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 242, 245-8.

<sup>162</sup> Wulle to Trebitsch, September 4, 1919, N Bauer, 1022/26/27/8, BaK.

<sup>163</sup> Quoted from Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 130.

<sup>164</sup> 'German Spy Visits Wilhelm: Political Coup Hinted', *New York Tribune*, September 22, 1919, <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1919-09-22/ed-1/seq-1/>> [accessed June 16, 2013].

<sup>165</sup> Trebitsch to Bauer, October 2, 1919, N Bauer, 1022/26/1, BaK.

<sup>166</sup> Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 132.

<sup>167</sup> Trebitsch to Bauer, October 6, 1919, N Bauer, 1022/26/3, BaK. In his autobiography Trebitsch claimed he was reluctantly convinced by leading members of the NV to visit the crown prince. See Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 145-6.

<sup>168</sup> Bauer, *Der große Krieg*, 213f.

<sup>169</sup> Wasserstein quotes Freiherr von Hünefeld's account of Trebitsch's visit as found in *Memoirs of the Crown Prince of Germany (Der Deutsche Kronprinz—Der Mensch/der Staatsmann)* 1926 by Georg Freiherr von Eppstein. See Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 134-6.

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Trebitsch to Kummer, October 17, 1919, N Bauer, 1022/26/9-15, BaK.

<sup>173</sup> Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 137.

<sup>174</sup> Trebitsch to Kummer, October 17, 1919, N Bauer, 1022/26/7, BaK.

<sup>175</sup> Kummer to Bauer, October 27, 1919, N Bauer, 1022/26/8, BaK.

<sup>176</sup> Memorandum dated November 11, 1919, N Bauer, 1022/26/41, BaK.

<sup>177</sup> Interview text found in N Bauer, 1022/26/4/575f, BaK.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Officially, the US remained at war with Germany until 1921.

<sup>184</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 283. Here Vogt paraphrases the article found in the newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung*, No. V, December 8, 1919.

<sup>185</sup> The documents do not indicate if Ludendorff was aware of Bauer's plan but one may assume that he was.

<sup>186</sup> At this time and for the immediate future, the press—German and foreign—would refer to the radical right as 'monarchists' simply because a 'third way' had not yet entered into the public consciousness. Anyone or any group in opposition to the Weimar Republic was seen as advocating a return to the status quo before the 1918 revolution.

<sup>187</sup> Richard J. Schuster, *German Disarmament after World War I: The Diplomacy of International Arms Inspection 1920-1931* (New York: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2006), 76.

<sup>188</sup> Luise Engeler was a long-time friend of the Bauer family and served as Bauer's private secretary. She would voluntarily follow the colonel into exile in Bavaria, Hungary, Austria, Argentina, the Soviet Union and eventually China until Bauer's death in 1929. An interview from the 1950s before her death is included in the Bauer Papers at the Federal Archives in Coblenz and corroborates much of what was already offered by participants in the White International plot.

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<sup>189</sup> Erger, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Putsch*, 90.

<sup>190</sup> N Bauer, 1022/26/28/50f, BaK.

<sup>191</sup> In reality, Seeckt had no choice but to withdraw the army to a position of neutrality. Any bloodshed would have divided the one remaining element of national continuity. His reluctance to defend the Republic should not be seen as tacit support for the putschists any more than his refusal to join them as tacit support for the government.

<sup>192</sup> Erger, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Putsch*, 225-27 (Documents Supplement).

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>194</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 263.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> Interview, *The Times*, March 19, 1920.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>200</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, March 22, 1920.

<sup>201</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 263.

<sup>202</sup> N Bauer, 29/74/22-29, BaK.

<sup>203</sup> Erger, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Putsch*, 95.

<sup>204</sup> Stephani, 'Freikorps Potsdam', 41-6.

<sup>205</sup> See Bauer's tract, *Der 13. März 1920* (Munich: Max Riehn Buch- und Kunst-Verlag, 1920), written only weeks after the failure of the Putsch.

## Part II

### Development of the White International Plot in Bavarian Exile

It is argued here that Colonel Bauer's plot conceived in Bavarian exile to form a White International was essentially a highly exaggerated continuation of the same flawed methods and fantastic ideas previously employed by the radical right in the fifteen months leading up to the Kapp Putsch of March 1920. These included the use of ineffectual German *Freikorps* formations, in cooperation with sequestered tsarist Russian prisoners of war led by a White Russian émigré monarchist, as in the Baltic Campaign. The difference was simply a matter of scope: Bauer hoped to draw the Bavarian, Austrian and Hungarian radical right into the scheme to establish a truly transnational alliance or 'international union' for the purpose of coordinating Europe-wide counter-revolutionary activities, which would replace the now disbanded, Berlin-based National Union that had concerned itself with German domestic operations only. Bauer's grand plan was largely grounded in the mistaken belief that the failed Putsch in Berlin had inspired success in Munich—a fatal misreading that would colour the role Bavaria was to play in the plan.

It is further argued that beyond what would directly serve Bavarian particularist interests, Bauer's proposal to annul the Paris Treaties by launching a multi-front military campaign against the Entente-sponsored Successor States received only vague support from Bavaria's conservative right-wing leadership. The support Bauer did receive owed more to his close association with General Ludendorff and to the desire of the new conservative right-wing von Kahr government to create in Bavaria a rightist *Ordnungszelle* (sphere of law and order) with as few ties to Berlin as possible. Indeed, in very important ways Bauer's plan was contrary to Bavaria's attempt to re-establish its

political position within the *Reich* in an effort to ameliorate its relationship with the Entente, especially France. Any real and open support for Bauer's scheme was found only from the various Munich-based, disenfranchised fringe groups such as the Russian monarchist émigré community, the radicalized, displaced Baltic Germans and the scattered Kapp Putsch sympathizers.

## Chapter 8

### Relocation of Counter-revolutionary Activity to Bavaria

#### A. Retreat from 'Red Prussia' and Illusory Assessments

As the Kapp venture began to spiral downward to its ultimate demise during the general strike, Colonel Bauer, Captain Ehrhardt, Trebitsch-Lincoln, Major Stephani and other co-conspirators met in an all-night session on March 16, 1920. Grasping at straws to save the situation, Bauer suggested that his mentor General Ludendorff replace General Lüttwitz; the former wisely—and typically—refused the honour. Bauer then offered the command to General Seeckt who 'saw through the chronic little conspirator and coolly declined his offer'.<sup>1</sup> The Kapp Putsch was over. To Bauer, though, it merely seemed a lost battle in a greater war, due to the irresponsibility of others.

The withdrawal of the *Freikorps Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt* from Berlin appeared to mark the end, politically, for General Ludendorff and his circle in Germany—at least around the capital. The general's strongest connection to the *Reichswehr* had been severed with the removal of the Commander-in-Chief of the Berlin area, General Lüttwitz, who was superseded by General Seeckt. A very important source of financial

support had dried up as Hugo Stinnes, Arnold Rechberg and other sympathetic industrialists shied away from any association with the ex-putschists.<sup>2</sup> Also, much of the top leadership of the National Union, under threat of arrest and imprisonment, had ceased to be active in the short run. For these reasons and for the safety of Ludendorff himself, the general—holding a false passport in the name of ‘Herr Lange’ acquired during the Putsch days for this very eventuality—donned civilian clothes and, together with some associates, stole away to Munich on the night of March 17-18.<sup>3</sup> So confused was the situation in Berlin immediately after the Putsch attempt that Colonel Bauer holed up in the apartment of a certain Professor Nernst before meeting Trebitsch and Major Stephani again.<sup>4</sup>

Undaunted by the failure of the Putsch, Bauer first spoke of relocating his base of operations to East Prussia, which he saw as the last bastion of counter-revolutionary action. According to Trebitsch’s autobiography, however, it was he who convinced the colonel that the entire Ludendorff-Bauer group should relocate to Bavaria, which was host to the only rightist regime in the country that had emerged in the wake of the Kapp Putsch. There, it was hoped, the Bauer group could engage in efforts to win over the already legendary leader of the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr*, Georg Escherich, the radical nationalist Munich Police Chief, Ernst Pöhner, and the *BVP* sympathizer and newly elected Minister-President of Bavaria, Gustav von Kahr, to their agenda of active counter-revolution.<sup>5</sup>

Days after Ludendorff had made his flight, Colonel Bauer, his faithful private secretary Luise Engeler and Major Franz von Stephani fled Berlin and alighted separately at Munich station, undetected in the rightist-friendly atmosphere of the Bavarian capital. From here Bauer and his circle travelled to the home of a well-disposed nobleman just south-east of Munich. Trebitsch arrived some days later. In *Der*

13. März 1920, Bauer's hastily penned apologia for the failure of the Kapp Putsch published only weeks after the debacle, the author revealed his reasons for favouring a southern basis of operations. In it the colonel came to the conclusion that

Prussia, once the vanguard and founder of the German *Reich*, is now bankrupt [and] . . . in the hands of Jews and [leftist] revolutionaries. However, *Das Volk* . . . are as healthy and ready as ever and await only a cadre of leaders to set them free from the foreign yoke of the democratic and socialist government [in Berlin].

Bauer felt that the rescue and re-establishment of Germany as a great power now lay

in the hands of its sons who, in the war against the entire world had held out; sons, who in earlier times had placed themselves under the highest authority and had unquestioningly endured privations for the sake of the *Vaterland*.<sup>6</sup>

These willing and able 'sons of Germany' were (at least in Colonel Bauer's assessment) the paramilitary units who, during the Putsch in Berlin just weeks before, had removed the 'red' *SPD* Hoffmann regime in Munich that had been in power since the fall of the Bavarian Soviet one year earlier. In fact, the Hoffmann regime had not fallen to any 'sons of Germany' but—while certainly pressured to resign—did so according to legal constitutional procedures.

#### B. The 'Supreme Secret Committee' and the White International Plot

By late March 1920 those who would make up the core of counter-revolutionary action had arrived in Munich. Of these, Bauer, Stephani and Trebitsch rather assumingly named themselves the 'Supreme Secret Committee of all Counter-Revolutionary Powers in Germany'. Among others, who had also relocated but were not included in the immediate circle around Bauer, were General Lüttwitz who ceased all counter-revolutionary activity, Waldemar Pabst who went on to Austria and engaged in

the organizing efforts of Tyrolean paramilitary formations such as the *Heimwehr* and Major Bischoff, Commander of the *Freikorps* Iron Division that had fought in the Baltic.<sup>7</sup>

The Committee (Bauer, Stephani and Trebitsch) wasted no time in renewing their counter-revolutionary campaign. Colonel Bauer maintained contact with the scattered remnants of the Berlin *NV* (renamed the *Preußischen Ordnungsblock*) supportive of the Kapp Putsch attempt, as well as with the Bavarian *Freikorps* leader Franz von Epp at that time combating resurgent leftist forces in the Ruhr. According to an unsubstantiated report from Trebitsch that later appeared in a Parisian weekly, a new plan was conceived calling for Bavarian, Silesian, Pomeranian and Mecklenburger *Reichswehr*, along with various voluntary *Freikorps*, to simultaneously march on Berlin and militarily oust the government.<sup>8</sup> This was, of course, identical to the Kapp scheme that had just failed with the added component of Bavaria playing a larger role.

The plan never went past the concept stage due to the arrival of two undercover, plain-clothes policemen from Berlin acting on warrants for the arrest of Bauer and Trebitsch. The suspects acquired false identities in the names of Dr Börner and Dr Lamprecht respectively through the exertions of Munich Chief of Police Ernst Pöhner.<sup>9</sup> In the interest of preventing any unnecessary difficulties for their Bavarian hosts, Bauer and his group relocated to the villa of a certain sympathetic Dr von Tust near Garmisch-Partenkirchen to avoid detection.<sup>10</sup> From here Bauer kept in close contact with General Ludendorff who was staying with Baron von Halkett in Stefanskirchen near the small city of Rosenheim some 50 kilometres south-east of Munich.<sup>11</sup>

Ludendorff's accommodation at the von Halkett estate was arranged by Georg Escherich who had served under General Ludendorff as Minister of Forests in Poland from 1915 to 1916. *Forstrat* (Forestry Superintendent) Georg Escherich was also the

powerful founder and leader of the huge *Freikorps* Citizens' Guard organization in Bavaria, the *Einwohnerwehr*, which he had been slowly but steadily building ever since the fall of the Bavarian Soviet in 1919.<sup>12</sup> It was Georg Escherich too who stood close to his friend Gustav von Kahr, the new, conservative right-wing, pro-Wittelsbach legitimist Minister-President of Bavaria. The former, taking advantage of the unsettling circumstances caused by the Putsch attempt in Berlin, had engineered the removal of von Kahr's predecessor, the *SPD*'s Johannes Hoffmann.<sup>13</sup> Thus Ludendorff and—if only by association—Bauer, Trebitsch and Stephani were immediately in contact with the leading spirits of the new Bavarian rightist *Ordnungszelle*. Escherich's motives for drawing the famous general into the Bavarian rightist sphere would soon become evident; the role of Bauer and his associates in it would be less clear.

The Ludendorff-Bauer circle had truly found themselves among rightist-friendly hosts—in Bauer's mind fertile ground, indeed, for the cultivation of the plot to create a White International.

### C. Birth of the White International Plot

On April 6—a mere three weeks after the failure of the Kapp Putsch—Bauer communicated to Ludendorff at his residence near Rosenheim that he had a plan the particulars of which he would transmit in writing by courier.<sup>14</sup> Liberally quoting from his soon-to-be-published work *Der 13. März 1920*, Bauer went on to give the reasons why he felt Bavaria should now serve as the new centre for counter-revolutionary action. The salient point of his message was as follows: '[The] ... moment has come when ... a new federal state (*Bundesstaat*) must take over the leadership' of rightist

action.<sup>15</sup> In short, it was from Munich that ‘a new Central European Alliance must come into being with the aim of annulling the Paris Peace Treaties and combating the spread of democratic, socialist and Communistic disease in Central and Eastern Europe.’<sup>16</sup>

Colonel Bauer and his co-conspirators were further convinced that, on the basis of the comrade-in-arms relationship during the war and the similarity of their respective political situations after the war, all the ingredients were in place for Germany to cooperate closely with Hungary. Both countries had lost land and people, both had lost their ruling dynasties, both were experiencing conflict between the political left and right. The important exception was that Hungary had regained a rightist leadership—with the establishment of the Horthy regime sometime after the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic under Béla Kun—but Germany (save for right-leaning Bavaria) still had a leftist government to contend with. The continued social-democratic government in Berlin made for a poor balance with Hungary, Bauer reckoned, but Bavaria, assuming the leadership of Germany, would level the playing field and provide for a more equal partnership with the rightist leaders in Budapest.<sup>17</sup>

Arguably, Bauer’s idea of cooperation with the Hungarians had its origins in late 1919, months before the Kapp Putsch. Towards the end of December, shortly after the Hohenzollern restoration fiasco, Colonel Bauer had dispatched Trebitsch to Budapest where the latter mixed with members of the press and politically influential persons during the unsettled time following the fall of Béla Kun. The assumption is that Bauer wished to weigh the chances of a possible German-Hungarian ‘joint action’ (*gemeinsame Aktion*) against the Paris Treaties that were especially harsh regarding Hungary. Accordingly, Trebitsch met with István Friedrich, the leader of the Christian National Unity Party (*KNEP*) and an ardent Habsburg legitimist, who had served as State Secretary in the early post-war government of Count Mihály Károlyi and as Prime

Minister of a short-lived post-soviet government before Admiral Horthy was elected head of state. The meetings produced no exceptional results.<sup>18</sup> Bauer, however, saw developments in the Danube states as promising and on February 8 sent Trebitsch again to Budapest, this time with significant results. The latter met leaders of the Hungarian extremist right affiliated with Gyula Gömbös<sup>19</sup> who showed a keen interest in the preparations for the coming Kapp Putsch and arranged an introduction for Trebitsch to the then Prime Minister Károly Huszár.<sup>20</sup> Before any firm developments could take place, though, Trebitsch was summoned back to Berlin to prepare for the March Putsch, leaving the threads to be picked up at a later date.<sup>21</sup>

So impressed was Bauer by Trebitsch's report of the receptive nature of the Hungarian extreme right around Gömbös that, at this point, the colonel realized he might build on contacts already in place with the Hungarian right, bringing together the World War I vanquished to form a nationalist-based, international organization with the goal of smashing the Versailles system.<sup>22</sup>

While Adolf Vogt asserts that Bauer and Trebitsch were the authors of the plot and worked out the basic structure during their Bavarian exile after the collapse of the Kapp Putsch,<sup>23</sup> Hungarian-American historian Nicholas Nagy-Talavera points out that the inspiration may well have come from Gyula Gömbös himself who had earlier mentioned the need for a 'Nationalist International'.<sup>24</sup>

Whatever its origins, the new and daring plan was far more ambitious than anything Bauer had devised to date. It bore all the hallmarks of German extreme nationalist policy going back to January 1919, but in a highly exaggerated form. The plan (hereafter referred to as the 'Rosenheim plan') called for close political and military cooperation between Bavaria and the Horthy regime in Budapest, reinforced by covert, counter-revolutionary elements in Austria and Russian monarchist émigré

elements in Germany, to form a 'White International'. The stated goals of this implied answer to the 'Red International' included, first of all, secreting Prussian *Freikorps* units into Hungary posing as farm labourers. Once in Hungary they would train with Hungarian forces,<sup>25</sup> then cross into Austria to topple the social-democratic government of Chancellor Karl Renner in 'red' Vienna, aided by Escherich's Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr* forces working in unison with Austrian paramilitary groups. This was to be followed by the declaration of a Bavarian-Austrian-Hungarian Confederation to take place simultaneously with the advance into Czechoslovakia of Bavarian, Austrian and Hungarian *Freikorps* units charged with 'rescuing' the German-Bohemian and Hungarian lands from Czech and Slovak control respectively.<sup>26</sup> Depending on the degree of Czechoslovak opposition, Saxon, Prussian and Pomeranian *Freikorps* units would move in from the north. The next step was to establish a military dictatorship in Germany under General Erich Ludendorff. The new German government would then cooperate with the White Russian Army, at that time doing battle against Bolshevik forces in the Ukraine. This partnership was to be supported, in an unspecified manner, by the Russian monarchist émigré community (now, too, centred in Munich) and the Russian ex-prisoners of war still within Germany with the aim of re-establishing the Russian monarchy. The Baltic Successor States, along with Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, were to be divided between Germany, Russia, Hungary and Italy in undetermined portions. Finally, with the creation of a *Großdeutschland* (Greater Germany) through an *Anschluß* with Austria, the first phase of the plan would be complete. At this juncture, there was to be a declaration of war against the Entente. To help meet the costs of such an expensive operation, it was suggested that currency to the tune of 2 million Duma roubles be forged.<sup>27</sup> This was, of

course, the same ruse of counterfeiting cash employed during the death throes of the Baltic Campaign by Generals von der Goltz and Bermond-Avalov.

The Rosenheim plan would go through important changes but in its present form it acted as a basic framework for the negotiations with the differing groups. The documents reveal little if any response from Ludendorff himself to such a grandiose plan. One does find in Ludendorff's memoirs published three years after his death that he, Colonel Bauer and Captain Ehrhardt—the latter having relocated to Munich along with many of his men from the erstwhile *Freikorps Marinebrigade*—maintained close contact with one another and with Minister-President Gustav von Kahr and Police Chief Ernst Pöhner.<sup>28</sup> It was, nevertheless, up to Bauer to initiate the needed communications with elements of the Bavarian and Austrian right as well as with the Hungarian Consulate in Munich.<sup>29</sup>

The readiness of the Ludendorff-Bauer group to conceive such a fantastic undertaking can be seen as the act of desperate individuals who were already wanted by the police and had nothing to lose. The recognized national leaders that they would have drawn into the plot, however, jealously guarded their own political agendas and were unlikely to throw these over in favour of the fantastic dreams of unsuccessful Prussian ex-putschists, unless such a collaboration could further their own goals. The Bauer group sensed that persuading the Bavarians to embrace the Rosenheim plan would not be without its difficulties.

## Chapter 9

### The Task of Convincing the Bavarians to Adopt the Rosenheim Plan

This chapter argues that there was little chance of the Bavarians adopting Bauer's fantastic plan for three reasons, all of which reveal a Bavarian conservatism that had scant room for political radicalism from either the left or the right.

Firstly, the authors of the Rosenheim plan had abandoned the tactic of simply threatening existing governments with *Freikorps* units positioned outside ministerial windows as in Berlin. Bauer's plan called for a policy of first-strike, coordinated, all-out military attacks throughout Central and Eastern Europe with the leading role going to the Bavarian paramilitary. Thus a discussion on the development of the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr* and the attempt by its leaders to form an all-German paramilitary-coordination organization is critical because, by the time of the Ludendorff-Bauer group's arrival, the *Einwohnerwehr* had become a virtually autonomous paramilitary state within a state, with sufficient men and arms to strike anywhere in Central Europe—at least in theory. Colonel Bauer saw in the new Bavaria and its massive *Einwohnerwehr* the ideal instrument to initiate the redrawing of the map of Central Europe under the direction of the White International. What he failed to observe, however, was that in spite of the organization's immense size, the great political influence of its leadership and the position it assumed of speaking for all paramilitary units within Germany, the intensely parochial nature of the rank-and-file guardsmen rendered *Einwohnerwehr* military effectiveness almost non-existent beyond the village level—hardly suitable as shock troops.

The second reason why Bavaria was unlikely to adopt Bauer's plan is that the colonel was mistaken in imagining that the Kapp Putsch had triggered the political changes in Munich. In fact, the transition there from a social-democratic government to a rightist-oriented one was legally orchestrated to *prevent* the emergence of such an extreme rightist government as Kapp's.

The third problem Bauer faced proceeds naturally from the second. The Munich government hoped the *Einwohnerwehr* would be sanctioned by the Entente not only as a stabilizing agent against further spread from the left, but also as a viable Francophile, Central European force in an anti-Prussian reorganization of the *Reich* ostensibly conducted in the best interests of Paris. Thus while the Rosenheim plan entailed an eventual renewal of war between Germany and France, Bavaria was actively seeking a basis for a rapprochement with its fellow Catholic neighbour. Further, whereas Bauer's plan was predicated on a strong, centralized Germany, Bavaria was just as passionately scheming to reassert the special status within the *Reich* it had enjoyed before the war or even to win a French-approved total separation of Bavaria from Prussia—in any case, a geopolitical arrangement wholly contrary to Bauer's goal.

#### A. The Freikorps Question in Bavaria and the Creation of the Bavarian *Ordnungszelle*

The source of the *Ordnungszelle* idea is traceable to the days of the Bavarian Soviet in April 1919 that had so thoroughly shaken the staunch southern German conservatism. According to Hans Fenske, the consequence was an almost pathological hatred of Bolshevism and Marxism that among the middle classes and the peasantry manifested itself as an 'immeasurable embitterment against all things seen as socialist

and republican. Democracy, the Republic, pacifism, and all forms of socialism were seen as essentially the same as Bolshevism. The result was an instinctive yearning for ... law and order (*Ruhe und Ordnung*), which had previously resided in the person of the king.’<sup>30</sup>

It could be argued that the disappointment of the Bavarian people at Ludwig III’s inability to thwart the wartime centralizing policies of Berlin had been a factor in the proclamation of the Bavarian Republic in November 1918. It follows that the utter disgust with the short-lived Bavarian Soviet that succeeded *USPD* Minister-President Eisner’s assassination in January 1919—and with its chaotic and bloody fall in April at the hands of the predominantly northern German *Freikorps*—contributed to the Bavaria-wide ‘yearning’ for a return to ‘law and order’. In short, Bavaria had disastrously toyed with socialism but would no more.

The leading spirits behind the creation of an anti-left *Ordnungszelle* were a troika made up of *Einwohnerwehr* founder *Forstrat* Georg Escherich; his close ally ‘*Bauerndoktor*’ Georg Heim,<sup>31</sup> who worked tirelessly for an anti-Prussian, Franco-Bavarian rapprochement; and Minister-President Gustav Ritter von Kahr. The latter two were co-founders of the *BVP* (Bavarian People’s Party)<sup>32</sup> that, with the proclamation of the Bavarian Republic, had split from the Catholic-dominated *Zentrumspartei* (Centre Party) in a bid against the centralizing policies of the Weimar Constitution emanating from Prussian Berlin.

For the purposes of this work, it is important to discuss the development and character of the *Einwohnerwehr* movement at length to determine its value, if any, as a shock force capable of such a military operation as that outlined in the Rosenheim plan. The discussion also serves to determine the nature and overall views of the principal

figures behind the movement whose cooperation with Bauer—or lack thereof—would decide the feasibility of setting up the White International.

With the demise of the Munich Soviet in April 1919, the loose collection of rightist guard units such as the *Flurwehr* (Harvest Guard) and *Ortswehr* (Village Guard) either joined the *Reichswehr* or simply went home. From early summer onwards, however, the *Reichswehr* could only absorb so many. The Versailles Treaty signed in June 1919 expressly restricted the manpower of the German regular army to 100,000. With limited room in the *Reichswehr* or for those unwilling to commit to years of active military service, there were two further alternatives. One was the already existing *Freizeitwilligen* (Temporary Volunteers) who tended to be unattached young men willing to leave their homes at a moment's notice when called up to serve under the auspices of the *Reichswehr*. These units were originally ordered into existence by Defence Minister Gustav Noske during the Spartacist Uprising of January 1919 in Berlin and were later extended into Bavaria during that state's short-lived Soviet.<sup>33</sup> The other alternative was to serve in the local militia, namely the *Einwohnerwehr*. This option satisfied the impulse to do paramilitary service but offered the freedom to stay at home without having to muster to the *Reichswehr* if a call to arms arose.<sup>34</sup> This particular form of paramilitary was to dominate the Bavarian scene for the next two years and was what Colonel Bauer envisioned as the rank-and-file troops to be used by the White International to redraw the map of Central and Eastern Europe.

While *Einwohnerwehr* units sprang up all over Bavaria following the defeat of the Munich Soviet, the strongest showing was in the south-east corner in the area around Rosenheim under the leadership of Rudolf Kanzler, a government surveyor and rabid nationalist.<sup>35</sup> His *Einwohnerwehr* Chiemgau (formerly *Freikorps* Chiemgau) became the model of *Einwohnerwehr* organization throughout Bavaria and would be the

departure point for Bavarian rightist activity in neighbouring western Austria. The key to Kanzler's success was the encouragement and substantial financial support of the Hoffmann government after the fall of the Bavarian Soviet. Despite being an ardent anti-socialist, Kanzler may well have understood that feigned acceptance of the *SPD* Hoffmann regime for the sake of a renewed charter and 500,000 marks was well worth the price.<sup>36</sup>

Although Kanzler can be acknowledged as the earliest *Führer* of the infant movement, he was soon eclipsed by *Forstrat* Georg Escherich who would eventually emerge as chief of the entire *Einwohnerwehr* movement throughout Bavaria. This was the same Escherich who would later arrange Bavarian refuge for General Ludendorff and his close circle after the collapse of the Kapp Putsch, acting as a kind of nexus between the paramilitary organizations in and around Munich and the Ludendorff-Bauer group. Escherich and Kanzler would continue to work with Bauer, if only due to the latter's association with Ludendorff, over the next few years.

Georg Escherich was the very embodiment of the new Germany that emerged during the first years of the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup> Through his boundless enthusiasm, Escherich had caught the eye of Emperor Wilhelm II who appointed him in 1912 to study the prospects for forestry in Germany's newly acquired African colony of the Cameroons. Shaped by his experiences abroad, Escherich 'developed the classic personality traits of the "Great White Hunter"—mitigated only by a Teutonic passion for order and discipline'.<sup>38</sup> This was coupled with a loathing for the 'lesser orders' that included Slavs and Jews.<sup>39</sup> Escherich was also very ambitious and, though a commoner, had a lifelong admiration for the nobility with whom he continuously nurtured contacts that served him well both during the war and in paramilitary politics after it.<sup>40</sup>

When war broke out, Escherich enlisted at the rank of captain but was soon wounded and, unable to return to combat, called on his many contacts to secure a post as head of the German occupying forces in the heavily forested Polish district of Białowiecki. Here he was put in charge of the thousands of tsarist Russian and Polish prisoners of war who worked in the huge wood-processing plants and who were later sequestered in Germany. It was these very same Russian prisoners of war that would fight in the Baltic Campaign under General Rüdiger von der Goltz and whom Bauer would see as the vanguard force to topple the Bolshevik Russian regime. Renowned for his efficiency and organizational skills, *Forstrat* Escherich soon attracted the attention of General Erich Ludendorff, then commanding the Eastern Sector of the German Supreme Command.<sup>41</sup>

Not content to return to the lacklustre activities of a peacetime bureaucrat back in his Bavarian hometown of Isen, Escherich became involved in the struggle against the new socialist order. He, like Rudolf Kanzler and his ilk, despised all leftists including the Social Democrats in power in Berlin as much as he admired the old monarchist order they had replaced. By April 1919 *Forstrat* Escherich had become a high-salaried lobbyist for the Bavarian chapter of the rightist organization the Association of German Nobles and Estate Owners (*Verein der Deutschen Standesherrn*), a conglomerate of agricultural and timber interests bent upon preventing the socialist threat of prominent estate owners' extensive holdings being nationalized.<sup>42</sup>

It was during this time that Escherich began a massive letter-writing campaign to his many well-placed and influential connections, seeking support for the establishment of a Bavaria-wide, counter-revolutionary militia and offering himself as *Führer*. Among the recipients were future Minister-President of Bavaria Gustav von

Kahr, at that time District Minister-President of Upper Bavaria; Defence Minister Gustav Noske; and the notorious *Freikorps* leader Colonel Franz Ritter von Epp.<sup>43</sup> The latter had been largely responsible for the violent overthrow of the Bavarian Soviet and had since joined the *Reichswehr*. There is no mention of Escherich having contacted Colonel Bauer at this early stage but it is safe to assume that, as Ludendorff's adjutant, Bauer was known to the *Forstrat*. Escherich was, however, in contact with Major Waldemar Pabst and other influential members of the *NV* before the Kapp Putsch.<sup>44</sup>

To the influential '*Bauerndoktor*' and founder of the Bavarian Peasants' Union (*Bayerische Bauernbund*), Georg Heim, Escherich sent a six-point programme calling for an immediate arming of the peasantry that was to be led by a civilian *Landeshauptmann* (governor) who would be 'ruthless, energetic and unafraid of spilling a little blood'.<sup>45</sup> Escherich volunteered for the position.

With the fall of the Bavarian Soviet, Escherich insisted on the need to remain vigilant not only against a resurgence of the left, but also against any subsequent weak government in Bavaria which might not have the will necessary to implement draconian measures;<sup>46</sup> no doubt he was referring to *SPD* Bavarian Minister-President Johannes Hoffmann who was reinstated after the Munich Soviet fall.

The self-appointed *Landeshauptmann* immediately got to work. In April 1919 he organized a single *Ortswehr* unit, which within one month had grown to nearly thirty units, encompassing villages with 880 recruits and 262 rifles.<sup>47</sup> This illustrates Escherich's preferred method of expansion, which differed from that of Rudolf Kanzler in two important ways. Firstly, he insisted on the immediate and rapid extension of the *Einwohnerwehr* throughout the entire state of Bavaria<sup>48</sup> and, secondly, while Kanzler came to eschew any association with the government, Escherich believed that the Hoffmann regime was ultimately responsible for financing the organization.<sup>49</sup> Escherich

promised to maintain close contact with the Bavarian Ministry of Military Affairs and to provide the state with a reliable and loyal grass-roots defence capability.<sup>50</sup> In fact, almost from the beginning, the wily Escherich was able to circumvent government and *Reichswehr* interference while continuing to secure state-sanctioned financial support and arms.

*Landeshauptmann* Escherich's most important assistance came from District Minister-President Gustav von Kahr who, after consulting with other members of his government, decided that Escherich should enjoy their full backing. Interestingly, it was also agreed at this meeting that disassociation from the military would be better served by avoiding military terminology such as *Wehrkommando* (area of military command) in favour of the neutral *Kreis* (district) and *Gau* (county or shire).<sup>51</sup> This is echoed in the future National Socialists' use of the terms but is not to indicate that there was any tie between the two. At a further district-level meeting on July 2 that Escherich attended, it was resolved that he would serve officially as *Landeshauptmann* with Rudolf Kanzler as his deputy. Thus by early July 1919 Gustav von Kahr had successfully insinuated himself into the movement.

Reaction in Munich was telling. Bavarian Minister-President Hoffmann—von Kahr's immediate superior—had become reluctant to encourage and subsidize the further growth of the blossoming organization but here again Escherich's contacts paid off. The growing *Einwohnerwehr* had caught the notice of Defence Minister Gustav Noske who appealed to fellow *SPD* member Hoffmann in Munich to sponsor the organization, as long as it conformed to the guidelines laid out in a May 17 meeting of Bavaria's Minister of the Interior and Minister of Military Affairs. State financial support, however, came only with the *Einwohnerwehr* leadership's willingness to place

itself under the auspices of eleven *Wehrkommissare*, military inspectors made up of army officers stationed throughout Bavaria.<sup>52</sup>

While assenting to the conditions outwardly, Escherich and Kanzler immediately began a successful, year-long campaign to release the *Einwohnerwehr* from both government and army controls.<sup>53</sup> In fact, one element that set the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr* apart from all other state-sanctioned paramilitary organizations was the degree to which Escherich was able to create a private army nominally under state auspices yet virtually devoid of any state interference. This is germane to this work because such independence would render the *Einwohnerwehr* all the more attractive for Bauer and his purposes.

There were two causes that led to the autonomy of the *Einwohnerwehr* so desired by Escherich and Kanzler. One was the convenient but basically cogent argument that prevailing attitudes in the countryside where *Einwohnerwehr* membership was highest were still hostile towards the authority of the state. Any central government and military bureaucratic ties to the organization, Escherich argued, would result in a loss of members or an anti-government reaction. Escherich further argued that an independent force would not only win greater acceptance among the Bavarian population, but also prove to be a reliable 'instrument of the state'.<sup>54</sup> This was, in essence, a promise for the creation of a responsible militia in exchange for autonomy.

The *Reichswehr*, however, saw in the *Wehrkommissar* system its one instrument of preventing the *Einwohnerwehr* from going its own way. General Arnold Ritter von Möhl, Commander of the Bavarian *Reichswehr*, actually urged an increase in army influence because he felt it necessary to oversee some degree of *Einwohnerwehr* coordination with the regular army in matters of tactics and training. To thwart military influence, Escherich and Kanzler adopted a policy of simple non-compliance with

directives and ignored enquiries lodged by the various *Wehrkommissare*. It is thus safe to assume that there was very little if any coordinated training with the army, which served to diminish the *Einwohnerwehr*'s usefulness in real combat situations. In defence of his policy of non-compliance, Escherich argued that the national army was rife with 'unreliable elements' such as Communists and 'National Bolsheviks'.<sup>55</sup>

Here Escherich was referring to a nebulous group who entertained the idea of cooperation with the Bolsheviks to achieve nationalist goals. Importantly, during the last desperate hours of the Kapp Putsch, Colonel Bauer had approached certain Bolshevik contacts to save the coup, but to no avail. The fact that Bauer had previously courted the 'enemy'—regardless of his reasons—was a tactical and philosophical point of contention between Bauer and Escherich that patently hindered any close working association between the two.

The *Einwohnerwehr* leadership was eventually able to cast off the *Reichswehr*'s meddling with help from an unlikely quarter. On July 7 Defence Minister Noske warned *Reichswehr* Supreme Command that the Versailles Treaty, with its army manpower limitation of 100,000, 'would undoubtedly forbid the development of *Einwohnerwehren* on a military basis'. He accordingly suggested that the organization be 'divested of all military character' to prevent its dissolution.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, due to the *Einwohnerwehr* leadership's appeal to maintain only the barest of ties to the government in order to facilitate recruitment among the citizenry, and the necessity to 'demilitarize' the *Einwohnerwehr* to appease the Entente, Escherich and Kanzler in large measure succeeded in their campaign to create an autonomous paramilitary organization while still maintaining all the advantages of state funding and materiel support. This is all the more remarkable when one remembers that both the

Berlin and Munich governments were in the hands of the *SPD*, the sworn enemies of the *Einwohnerwehr*.

Escherich then proceeded to organize the inner structure of his *Einwohnerwehr* so as to place himself in a position of virtual one-man rule (*Führerprinzip*) that trickled down undiluted to the smallest *Ortswehr*.<sup>57</sup> An executive cadre of top aides was formed, which included Captain Hermann Kriebel who was appointed Chief of Staff (*Stabsleiter*) in July 1919. Important to this work is that *Stabsleiter* Kriebel would ultimately gravitate towards the more radical and anti-Semitic elements on the Bavarian nationalist scene such as Epp's adjutant, Ernst Röhm. Like his friend Colonel Bauer, Kriebel hoped that the *Einwohnerwehr* would some day play an aggressive role in the political and military revitalization of Germany. With the organization's eventual demise, Kriebel, unlike Bauer, drifted into the National Socialist group and was instrumental in the *Bierhaus* Putsch of 1923. For his pains he was sent to Landsberg Prison with Adolf Hitler. Kriebel would later accompany Colonel Bauer to China where the two served as military advisers to General Jiang Jieshi. Kriebel was subsequently Hitler's Ambassador to Nationalist China.<sup>58</sup>

In the interest of increased autonomy from the Hoffmann government, Escherich's organizational skill and contacts with highly placed persons in the nationalist camp bore equally impressive fruit in the areas of fund-raising and armaments procurement. While continuing to receive large subsidies from the Hoffmann regime,<sup>59</sup> Escherich early on tapped into private sources, the most important of which was the nationalist lobby group Homeland-Service Bavaria (*Heimatsdienst Bayern*) made up of agricultural and industrial interests as well as the Munich Bankers' Association and the Association of Bavarian Brew Masters.<sup>60</sup> The most significant contact man in raising private funds throughout Bavaria, however, was once again

Upper Bavaria District Minister-President Gustav von Kahr who, on the heels of declaring support for Escherich in July 1919, called a secret meeting of Munich's commercial and industrial leaders including the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and the Head of the Association of German Nobles and Estate Owners. After the meeting he was able to report that 'the men were all agreed on the great significance of the *Einwohnerwehr*; it will clearly be indispensable to them.'<sup>61</sup> The net result was that by late July 1919 the *Einwohnerwehr* could claim as its portion of the commercial generosity of the above-mentioned 'influential sources' a sum of over 1,340,000 marks.<sup>62</sup>

So as not to compromise efforts to carry on collecting state funds from the Hoffmann regime, these and other private funds were handled through special bank accounts provided by sympathetic Munich bankers.<sup>63</sup> In fact, as well as contriving to hide the private funds, the *Einwohnerwehr* leadership managed not to be accountable to the state for either its financial holdings or the purchases it made with them. *Forstrat* Escherich had achieved not only organizational and operational autonomy but also fiscal self-determination.<sup>64</sup>

The *Einwohnerwehr* administrative organization eventually become so large that, through the benevolent funding of a consortium of Munich banks, it rented the large Ring Hotel in the centre of Munich. The new headquarters was completely renovated and fitted with bars on the windows; an elaborate communications section was installed; and vast stockpiles of rifles, machine guns and grenades were housed in its armoury along with medical equipment and enough food to withstand a long siege.<sup>65</sup>

With regard to the weapons that filled *Einwohnerwehr* headquarters and numerous hidden stockpiles, Escherich was able to build on the already widespread myth that the revolutionary left had secreted large caches of arms throughout Bavaria.

While a significant number of arms were certainly hidden during the revolution, most had since been collected by the reinstated Hoffmann government after the Soviet fall in April 1919.

To solve the problem of securing heavier weapons—which the state was adamant that it would not supply—Escherich nurtured connections with Colonel Epp, in the latter's new role as Commander of the Bavarian *Reichswehr Schützenbrigade 21*, who would simply direct his subordinate in charge of secret weapons stockpiles, Ernst Röhm, to supply the *Einwohnerwehr* with whatever it requested. This included light and heavy artillery pieces, mortars and machine guns—the very sort of weapons the Hoffmann regime had earlier refused to supply.<sup>66</sup>

It was becoming ever more obvious that any promises made by the *Einwohnerwehr* leadership to support the *SPD* Hoffmann regime would not be fulfilled unless it was allowed to regulate its own affairs. To follow the logic one step further, such self-determination would lead to the complete abandonment of the Hoffmann government by the *Einwohnerwehr* because the former's support was no longer needed.<sup>67</sup>

As the first year of *Einwohnerwehr* development neared its end, Escherich, Kanzler and Kriebel became increasingly outspoken in their attacks on Hoffmann. From January 1920 onwards, a series of monthly reports issued from the leadership that reflected the favourite old complaint that the government was coddling socialists and tolerating 'a greater boldness on the part of radical left elements'.<sup>68</sup> Escherich further warned that the *Einwohnerwehr* was growing intolerant of the Hoffmann administration for allowing the leftist press to spread distrust about the self-defence movement.<sup>69</sup> It is true that the leftist press was intensifying its attacks on the *Einwohnerwehr*. A good case in point was a series of articles by the official organ of the *USPD* that questioned

the real motives of the enormous right-wing organization.<sup>70</sup> This, of course, only served to perpetuate the mutual attacks that became more vitriolic by the time of the Kapp Putsch in mid-March 1920.

Being the best armed, the best organized and virtually independent of state interference, the largest paramilitary group in all of Germany would certainly have seemed a ready tool for any would-be proponents of change through military means. The truth was, however, that *Einwohnerwehr* members were not the renegade, freebooter ex-soldiers fiercely loyal only to their leaders that could be found in the north, as seen for example in the Baltic region. The Bavarian variety was mostly made up of local *Flurwehren* with little more to do than protect foodstuffs from marauding town dwellers and requisition squads left over from the war years. Due to their strong parochial tendencies, the virtually untested *Einwohnerwehr* members could never have acted as a viable strike force.

Though very adept at establishing itself in towns and villages, the organization was weak in cities, notably the larger ones. Membership in Munich was less than in all the rest of Upper Bavaria wherein Munich lies. At first, membership within the cities did include a certain per cent of socialists, but by the early winter of 1919, the mass of *Einwohnerwehr* members throughout Bavaria were conservative peasant or middle-class and virtually all non-urban.<sup>71</sup> Nor were certain elements from the far right, such as the still insignificant National Socialists, included in the organization. Escherich in particular had no desire to deal with Nazis whom he referred to as 'National Bolsheviks'.<sup>72</sup> The general membership of the *Einwohnerwehr* from the towns and small cities was the epitome of middle-class respectability, having a healthy percentage of lawyers, court officials, inspectors, teachers, businessmen and large landowners, especially in the *Gau* leadership. One of the main reasons for the organization's appeal

was that it was well represented among those who ran the political, economic and social life of the state.<sup>73</sup>

In rural areas the popular appeal of the *Einwohnerwehr* resided in its ability to articulate the fear of a disintegration of what were perceived as traditional values. Even before the war there was a general fear that socialists from the cities and the encroachment of modernity would, if not checked, overwhelm and destroy what was considered the essence of native culture.<sup>74</sup> *Einwohnerwehr* members were encouraged to wear their traditional local costumes, refurbish historic buildings, attend folk festivals and, above all, participate in the revival of the ancient alpine *Schießstände* (shooting societies or contests).<sup>75</sup> The promotion of the cult of the *Schießstände* and other such *volkstümlich* (populist) activities was a conscious effort by the *Einwohnerwehr* leadership to revive the ancient traditions of decentralized village autonomy symbolized by their own self-defence organizations. In other words, these activities were by definition celebrations of local autonomy, at odds with loyalty beyond the village. The *Reichswehr Wehrkommissar* reports are filled with disparaging remarks as to the unwillingness of *Einwohnerwehr* personnel to bother themselves with anything beyond their own fences. The *Wehrkommissar* of Upper Bavaria's report in August 1919 is typical: 'we can say that the peasant population is concerned exclusively with defending its own property; it would take considerable effort to get these people to perform services outside the perimeter of (even) a single *Gau*.'<sup>76</sup>

In May of that year, fully aware of the pervasiveness of this proclivity to localism, Kanzler had attempted to transcend the local focus with the establishment of mobile brigades (*Landfahnen*) within his *Einwohnerwehr* Chiemgau. These were smaller *Freikorps* units of a more soldierly bearing that had actually seen some action—mostly during the brutal last days of the Bavarian Soviet in the spring of 1919. Still, it

was not until early 1920 when the *Reich* government, under pressure from the Entente since December 1919 to disband the part-time units, encouraged *Landfahnen* members to join the *Einwohnerwehr* within their home communities. This was seen by Escherich as the perfect opportunity to fuse these younger, less attached ex-soldiers, more willing and able to serve for extended times in distant locations, with the local *Einwohnerwehr* units in the hope that he could break the curse of localism.<sup>77</sup> The net result, however, was less than desirable. The initiative only heightened the contrast between the local *Einwohnerwehr* personnel and those who had spent the last year closely associated with the *Reichswehr*. The *Freikorps* veterans were contemptuous of the old-fashioned parochialism of local members who were comfortable in their sedentary village life and whose military commitment went little beyond *Lederhosen* slap-dancing, shooting festivals and beer drinking with the *Einwohnerwehr* leadership of the locality.<sup>78</sup> Escherich himself admitted in a letter to his *Kreis* and *Gau* leaders that the average *Einwohnerwehr* unit was ‘dominated by middle-aged men who had neither the vigour nor the time to participate in extensive paramilitary activities’.<sup>79</sup>

#### B. Meaning of the Kapp Putsch in Bavaria and Implications for Bavarian Support of the Rosenheim Plan

Just as Bauer misread the potential effectiveness of the *Einwohnerwehr*, so, too, did he fail to understand that the replacement of the *SPD* government in Munich with the rightist government of von Kahr did not mean that the Kapp Putsch had been successful in Bavaria. In fact, the victory of the *BVP* over the Hoffmann government did not signify *support* for the Kappist elements in Bavaria—as Bauer might have imagined—but the *elimination* of the radical Kappists from the political scene and, at

the same time, the strengthening of the Bavarian rightist *Ordnungszelle*. The point is that Bauer had long exhibited a failure to grasp the reality of situations, as evidenced in his many publications, in his mismanaged restoration plot and in the Kapp fiasco. It would be consistent with his nature if he were, in addition, to misread the ascension of the right in Bavaria as a validation of that which had failed in Berlin. If this were the case, it would follow that he would also misread the establishment of the Bavarian *Ordnungszelle* as a potentially useful factor in his White International *Aktionsplan*. A brief overview of what actually took place in Munich during the Kapp Putsch serves to illustrate Bauer's virtual insignificance in the matter.

During the evening of March 13, 1920—the day the *Freikorps Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt* made its fateful march on Berlin—*Landeshauptmann* Escherich noted a significant number of Kappists amongst the younger *Einwohnerwehr* and *Landfahnen* officers milling about the streets of Munich. He then hastened to Operational Headquarters where he countermanded Chief of Staff Hermann Kriebel's orders for a full mobilization. Escherich opted for a more moderate—and indeed legal—course. Both men had been taken by surprise and were rather tepid as to the wisdom of the whole Kapp enterprise.<sup>80</sup> Later that night Escherich met with his greatest supporters, Upper Bavaria District Minister-President Gustav von Kahr, Munich Police Chief Ernst Pöhner and a group of *Einwohnerwehr* officers, and demanded that Bavarian *Reichswehr* Commander General Arnold von Möhl declare a state of emergency. The general understood the situation perfectly. Having earlier that day officially proclaimed that the *Reichswehr* stood by the legitimate government,<sup>81</sup> he would (to all intents and purposes) be acting according to his word by now informing Minister-President Hoffmann that only with the authority of martial law could he (Möhl) save the government from the Kappists in their midst. Nor was the situation lost on Hoffmann

who keenly sensed his lack of options. The declaration of martial law, as suggested by General Möhl, would most certainly be backed by the massive Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr* that had of late increased its condemnation of the Hoffmann government. Hoffmann and most of his cabinet resigned in protest at the thinly veiled threat of *Reichswehr* and *Einwohnerwehr* collusion. During the next few days of meetings at the Bavarian Provincial Chamber (*Landrat*), a new government headed by von Kahr was formed.<sup>82</sup> Hence the legal government structure did not fall to Kappist elements. This is important because the *Ordnungszelle* had been achieved without a Putsch and now stood with the blessing of the legitimate government that was made up of its very designers.

Thus the Kapp Putsch failed in Munich just as everywhere else. In Bavaria there was a twist, however. Escherich had taken full advantage of the fluidity of the situation to stage a lawful change of government from one he despised to one now in the hands of his rightist colleague and chief *Einwohnerwehr* supporter Gustav von Kahr. Though the leadership of von Kahr and Escherich gave succour to the Prussian exiles after their escape from Berlin, it had no desire to embrace the ill-conceived, foolhardy designs of the Prussian ex-Kappists themselves.

Yet when General Ludendorff, Colonel Bauer, Trebitsch and Major Stephani arrived at Munich *Hauptbahnhof* from Berlin, they stepped into a political and ideological milieu seemingly—at least to them—ideal for the development of an *Aktionsplan* to further their nationalist agenda. Their hopes were further raised by Escherich's attempt to consolidate the various, scattered paramilitary units throughout Germany under the single authority of the Bavarian *Ordnungszelle*. The legendary General Ludendorff served Escherich's purpose by expressing his support. The question is, was Bauer's plan served? It was not. While the paramilitary consolidation drive was

certainly consistent with the needs of the White International plot, the former was not engineered for the sake of the latter.

## Chapter 10

### Conflicting Agendas: The White International Plot in the Context of Bavarian Domestic and Foreign Policy

#### A. Creation of *Orgesch* and *Orka*, and Implications for the Rosenheim Plan

Months before the Kapp Putsch, Georg Escherich came up with the idea of creating an all-German, Bavaria-based central committee for the coordination of paramilitary organizations throughout the *Reich*. His plan was not conceived in a vacuum, however.

The formation of the *Einwohnerwehr* in the spring and early summer of 1919 was in direct conflict with Article 177 of the Versailles Treaty signed on June 28, 1919, which not only limited the *Reichswehr* to 100,000 men but also forbade any organizations with military associations. Because Escherich's organization would be subordinated to the regular army during times of mobilization, it clearly fell into this category, at least as far as the Entente was concerned. In early July 1919 Defence Minister Noske sought to 'demilitarize' the *Einwohnerwehr* by placing it under a completely civilian leadership in order to save it.<sup>83</sup> By the end of 1919 the disassociation of the *Einwohnerwehr* from the military—at least on paper—had been accomplished but the Entente was not satisfied. Accordingly, at the London Conference in early 1920, the Entente notified Berlin that as well as regular *Reichswehr* troops, all irregular forces in Germany would be included within the 100,000-troop limit.<sup>84</sup> Noske

then decided to dissolve all paramilitary formations throughout the *Reich*, opting to sacrifice the *Einwohnerwehr* rather than weaken the *Reichswehr*.<sup>85</sup> All the German states except Bavaria complied with the Berlin order.

Bavaria now stood as the hope and model of all counter-revolutionary organizations in the north that, though officially dissolved, were loath to succumb either to the wishes of the social-democratic Ebert government or to those of the Entente.<sup>86</sup> Forstrat Escherich resolved to go one step further and create in Bavaria an all-German organization to coordinate paramilitary action for the entire *Reich*.

In January 1920 he went to Berlin in response to a letter from a municipal official called Schliephacke, the leader of a paramilitary organization there with a rather innocuous name, the *Vereinigung zur Sicherung der Volksernährung* (Union for the Safeguarding of People's Foodstuffs).<sup>87</sup> Escherich met with Schliephacke who, as it so happened, was working in close cooperation with General Ludendorff and his circle through the *NV*. Present at discussions about the creation of an all-German paramilitary-coordination organization were Schliephacke, *Stahlhelm Freikorps* leader Franz Seldte and Major Waldemar Pabst, all of whom were at that time busily preparing for the Kapp Putsch.<sup>88</sup> It was concluded that Bavaria would host a secret meeting to that end.

The venue for the meeting, held on May 8-9, 1920, was provided by the third member of the Bavarian troika, Georg Heim, at his *Bauernzentrale* (Peasants' Union headquarters) in Regensburg, the capital of the Bavarian Upper Palatinate District (*Oberpfalz*).<sup>89</sup> It was decided there that all the *Freikorps* units north of the river Main (the northernmost border of Bavaria), as well as the *Jungdeutscher Orden* or *Jungdo* (Young German Order) that was particularly strong in western Germany, would be placed under the overall leadership of *Einwohnerwehr* head Georg Escherich. *Stahlhelm*

leader Franz Seldte<sup>90</sup> christened the resulting organization *Der Deutsche Hort* but Escherich immediately changed the name to *Organisation Escherich* or *Orgesch*.<sup>91</sup>

For the authors of the plot conceived in Rosenheim, the creation of *Orgesch* as a central administrative structure for the coordination of all paramilitary activity was clearly in line with their dreams of establishing a White International. Moreover, the establishment of *Orgesch* appeared to mark Bavarian recognition of the Ludendorff-Bauer circle as re-entering the counter-revolutionary sphere. Sources do not indicate that either Bauer or Ludendorff attended the Regensburg Meeting but they do suggest a rather dramatic moment when General Ludendorff's emissary, Major Stephani, coming directly from a session of the Ludendorff-Bauer group in Rosenheim, arrived at the *Bauernzentrale*. He carried with him the general's wish that the northern paramilitary representatives place themselves under the Bavarian leadership of *Forstrat* Georg Escherich.<sup>92</sup>

The professed goals of *Orgesch*, solemnly declared at the Regensburg Meeting, with which (at least openly) the *Jungdo* and the *Stahlhelm* had agreed, were in fact directly counter to Bauer's plan but consistent with Bavarian efforts to present to the Entente—especially the French—a conciliatory face. These included the maintenance of law and order through the defence of the Weimar Constitution and the rejection of all revolts from both the left and the right.<sup>93</sup> Another avowed goal was to combat Bolshevism and national Bolshevism; the second point certainly posed an obstacle to Bauer's chances of acceptance on the part of the Bavarians. For Bauer's part, however, there would have been nothing objectionable about Escherich's statement, made in his opening address to the Regensburg Meeting on May 9, that the challenges ahead were a matter of 'the White Army against the Red Army'.<sup>94</sup>

The act of Ludendorff lending his illustrious name to *Orgesch* could well be viewed as a strategic move on the part of the Ludendorff-Bauer circle to gain Bavarian support for the White International in return. It was arguably the intention of Bauer and Trebitsch to cast the anti-Versailles, counter-revolutionary old general, the hero of the Battle of Tannenberg, in the role of rallying point for all national and international paramilitary activity—a fact not lost on Escherich. Indeed, in a letter to Munich Police Chief Pöhner, Bauer maintained that through all the machinations after the Kapp Putsch, Ludendorff ‘from the very beginning was seen as [the] inter-allied military leader’.<sup>95</sup>

Thus the Regensburg Meeting of early May 1920 occasioned the re-establishment of a central coordination committee of rightist counter-revolutionary activity in Munich to replace the Berlin-based *NV* banned in the wake of the Kapp Putsch. In a newspaper interview with the *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, Escherich stated that *Orgesch* was a direct product of the Kapp Putsch venture that had left the northern German paramilitary organizations in tatters and the *NV* outlawed.<sup>96</sup> For the Ludendorff-Bauer group, *Orgesch* repaired some of that damage because not only did it replace the erstwhile Berlin-based central organization, but it also claimed to speak for all of Germany, something the *NV* never did. Such control of all paramilitary groups within the *Reich* was exactly what the Bauer plan required if it were ever to set in motion multiple, well-coordinated military attacks across Germany’s southern and eastern borders.

The second outcome of the Regensburg Meeting had an even more direct relevance to the formation of a White International. Along with the creation of *Orgesch* and its reach into northern Germany came the creation of *Organisation Kanzler (Orka)* that sought to reach southwards for the coordination of paramilitary activities between

Bavaria and Austria. The *Einwohnerwehr* Deputy and founder-leader of *Freikorps* Chiemgau, Rudolf Kanzler, was the logical choice for its leadership due to his extensive experience in the Alpine area of Bavaria and its close proximity to the Tyrol of western Austria. The establishment of *Orka* is crucial for the purposes of this work because it marked a genuine attempt at setting up a body of international cooperation beyond Germany's borders that was very much in line with Bauer's dream.

The decisions at Regensburg in May 1920 were nothing less than the first step in realizing the Rosenheim plan and creating the White International. It must be pointed out, however, that sources dealing specifically with the Regensburg Meeting barely mention Ludendorff and none mention Bauer.<sup>97</sup> It would appear that the resolutions at Regensburg, while certainly favourable to the Rosenheim plan, were not passed specifically for its sake. For Bauer and his group, this mattered little.

The above facts of Bauer and Trebitsch's virtually negligible role at the Regensburg Meeting are not consistent with testimony offered by Trebitsch in Vienna at his trial for high treason in February 1921.<sup>98</sup> According to his diary entry of May 8, 1920, '[at] the conference of the German [paramilitary] associations in Regensburg, a new plan was worked out . . . [and] Colonel Bauer laid the *Aktionsprogramm* before the assembly and it was approved.'<sup>99</sup> One suspects that, in an attempt to cast himself as having prevented a possible all-European war by coming forward, Trebitsch may have altered his own diary to give the appearance that the plot had been widely approved and adopted by the Bavarian leadership, which was not the case. Whatever Trebitsch's motives were later to be, for the moment the Supreme Secret Committee was satisfied enough that on the day before the meeting adjourned, it departed Munich to initiate the next step in the Rosenheim plan to establish a White International, one that would take it to Budapest.

Regardless of whatever credibility Ludendorff's name may have lent to *Orgesch* and *Orka*, the Ludendorff-Bauer circle's propensity for ill-advised military *Aktionspläne* was quite out of step with the more circumspect, conservative Bavarian leadership that was committed to more diplomatic means. Markedly at variance were Bauer's declared anti-French leanings in the face of Bavaria's ongoing attempts at a Franco-Bavarian rapprochement in the hope of keeping its precious *Einwohnerwehr* intact and seeing a revision to the Versailles Treaty as it pertained to Bavaria.<sup>100</sup>

#### B. Bavarian Foreign Policy and its Incongruity with the Rosenheim Plan

The point of possible conflict between the new Bavarian leadership and the Bauer circle arose from the question of Bavaria's position within the *Reich* and the related question of Bavaria's foreign policy regarding delicate, ongoing attempts at a Franco-Bavarian rapprochement. Bavaria sought to cast Catholic southern Germany in general—and Bavaria in particular—as a victim of Protestant Prussian militarism and thus worthy of reconsideration in respect of the Entente demand for the dissolution of the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr* and Article 80 of the Treaty of Versailles which forbade an *Anschluß* with Austria (Article 88 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain forbade the same).

Munich realized that any hope of success in this area required a return to the pre-war *Reservatrechte*, an arrangement whereby certain sovereign rights extended to Bavaria under the 1871 Imperial Constitution. This alone would give France the opportunity to recognize Bavaria as a quasi-autonomous entity, and Bavaria the opportunity to present itself to France through such reinstated ambassadorial channels as had existed before the war.<sup>101</sup> To fully appreciate Bavaria's position and how very

out of line it was with Bauer's plan, it is necessary to touch on Bavaria's endeavours from the defeat of November 1918 in regard to federalism.<sup>102</sup>

Bavaria's pre-war privileges within the *Reich* were considerable and included the right to exchange and receive ambassadors—a prerogative Bavaria would retain unofficially throughout the early 1920s.<sup>103</sup> Immediately after the collapse in November 1918, Bavaria scrambled to undo the centralizing policies set in motion by Berlin to meet the exigencies of managing a wartime economy. Indeed, this was the prime reason for the founding of the *BVP* by none other than the aforementioned 'Bauerndoktor' Georg Heim who facilitated the creation of *Orgesch* and *Orka*.

Days before the collapse in 1918, and after Austria's withdrawal from the war on November 3, Dr Heim travelled to Innsbruck to inform the Provincial President of Tyrol that due to the fluid situation caused by the imminent Armistice and the fall of the Central Powers' royal houses (Kaiser Karl I of Austria-Hungary did not abdicate but, rather, renounced all participation in the affairs of state on November 11), the time was propitious for doing away with the border crossing between Germany and Austria—an act Heim felt would be impossible later.<sup>104</sup> Despite unanimous support for the suggested *Anschluß* in the Austrian Constituent Assembly, by the end of November Heim had revised his position in a series of articles for the Munich *BVP* organ the *Bayerischer Kurier* wherein he recognized that, 'Under no circumstances would the Entente permit the inclusion of ten million German-Austrians' as part of the German *Reich*.<sup>105</sup> He proposed, instead, two alternative possibilities: either Germany would return to its federalist status, as before the war, with the inclusion of Austria as a rump state or—his preferred arrangement—areas of German-Austria (minus its non-German portions) would secede from Vienna and unite with areas of the former German *Kaiserreich*. More specifically, he envisioned an association of the western Austrian panhandle

provinces of Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Styria and Upper Austria with Bavaria, not Germany. He went on to say that later, ‘when Vienna again belongs to the Viennese and has freed itself from the international Bolshevik quagmire [of the Renner government], it too can be added.’<sup>106</sup> Heim was referring to Chancellor Karl Renner, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (*SPÖ*).<sup>107</sup> Here one finds agreement between Bauer and Heim in their characterization of the Viennese government. Thus the White International plot originated in a desire to topple the ‘red’ Renner regime.

Other points within the same series of Heim’s articles were also in agreement with Bauer’s ideas. The former suggested that the French-occupied Rhineland, Hanover and western Germany as far eastwards as the river Elbe be attached to the proposed Greater Austria-Bavaria. This, he explained, would provide the new state with mineral and coal reserves as well as access to the sea. As for northern Germany—meaning Prussia—Heim wrote that the ‘Jewish, Marxist ulcer must be isolated but the south must never give up hope that the *Reich* in its entirety will one day be reunited’.<sup>108</sup> He concluded that with such a novel configuration of the *Reich*, the Entente would have no difficulty with an *Anschluß* with the German ethnic areas of Austria.<sup>109</sup> This was more than a year before Bauer came up with a similar arrangement but for far different reasons.

The sticking point in the approaches of Heim and Bauer was not the political reconfiguration itself but the Bavarian focus on a rapprochement with the French both before the Versailles Treaty in an attempt at a ‘special consideration’ for Bavaria, and after the Treaty in an attempt at revision. On March 19, 1919, shortly before the fall of the Bavarian Soviet, Heim met with French General Desticker, an intimate friend of Marshal Foch, in Luxembourg. There the Bavarian federalist proposed the establishment of a ‘*katholischen und konservativen Bloc*’<sup>110</sup> made up of Austria and

south-western Germany as a bulwark against Bolshevism that had already spread to Hungary and Bavaria. Heim also argued that such an arrangement would serve as a hedge against the re-establishment of a Germany under Prussian control. He further proposed that the Entente assume a protectorate role mainly in the sphere of economics.<sup>111</sup>

Nothing came of this meeting partly due to the French Prime Minister, Georges Clemenceau, still harbouring the wartime longing to see Germany reduced to a collection of petty principalities as had existed before Bismarck.<sup>112</sup> The French military under Marshal Foch, however, saw French interests as well served by the formation of an anti-Prussian, anti-Bolshevik bloc to the east but was concerned with having to maintain its economic viability at a time when France could ill afford it.<sup>113</sup>

Bavarian approaches to the French were not limited to moderates such as Heim. Bavarian pan-German activist Count Karl Bothmer engaged in ongoing efforts from a much more extreme rightist position than that of his more conservative compatriot.<sup>114</sup> On matters of federalism he went further than Heim in calling for the reduction of Prussia to a mere *Bundesstaat* confined within the borders as they stood in 1863. Like Heim, Bauer, Ludendorff and most of those who held to the *Ordnungszellenideologie*, Bothmer considered that Berlin had become a bridgehead of the 'Red International', and that Bavaria must take the initiative lest it too become contaminated by Bolshevism.<sup>115</sup> In fact, Bothmer saw the *Reich* itself as no longer a viable political entity; it solely existed, he postulated, in the inner yearning for order within the German *Volk*. Only when the *Ordnungszelle* of Bavaria stopped believing the lie of a living *Reich* could Germany be saved.<sup>116</sup>

Count Bothmer's rather *völkisch* approach to *Realpolitik* aside, from January 1919 until well into the summer of 1920 Heim collaborated with him in an attempt to

broaden his *BVP* base to include the old conservative, pro-Wittelsbach legitimist faction along with the pan-Germans who favoured an *Anschluß* with Austria as a hedge against leftist influences from the north. This was especially the case during the post-Kapp leftist revolts in the Prussian Ruhr area that sent a new wave of fear of the north falling under Bolshevism. Such alarm was reflected in *Einwohnerwehr* Chief of Staff Major Kriebel's remarks at the Regensburg Meeting that created *Orgesch* in May 1920. In his opening address he stated that with the Prussian dissolution of its own *Einwohnerwehr*—at Berlin's insistence—it was all the more urgent that Bavaria maintain its own formations to contain Bolshevism to the north.<sup>117</sup> Regardless of hopes that the French would allow Bavaria to keep its *Einwohnerwehr*, the idea of a strong Bavarian *Ordnungszelle* was all very consistent with Bauer's approach, but even the more rightist individuals with whom Bauer and his circle had to deal were Bavarians first and foremost, and saw their future as closely tied to France.

According to Heim, the aim of his negotiations was to confuse the French into believing he had total separation from the north in mind—not just a return to the pre-war federalism. In this way he wished to, as he put it, 'throw sand in their eyes'.<sup>118</sup> On the surface, Bauer would be in favour of this tactic. A key element of the Rosenheim plan called for united military action against Czechoslovakia. Because the new Successor State was a close ally of the Entente, the plotters could expect that any attack against it would result in an immediate and strong countermeasure—especially from France. If the Bavarians, however, were to appear to favour loosening the ties with northern Germany or—better yet—separating entirely from it, the French would see in this a weakening of German potential for danger in Central Europe, causing France to 'let down its guard'<sup>119</sup> concerning Czechoslovak security. Taking advantage of France's lack of attention, Bavaria (not Germany) would thereupon attach itself to Austria to

form a southern German state sharing a border with Hungary to the east. Both northern Germany and the new Bavarian-Austrian-Hungarian Confederation would then jointly attack Czechoslovakia while the French struggled to respond.<sup>120</sup>

Bauer, though, could not be certain if Heim was trying to deceive the French or him. Every approach Heim made to France in the name of Bavaria would bother Ludendorff and Bauer, as would the tensions that threatened the unity of Prussia and Bavaria.<sup>121</sup> There was a justified fear that Bavaria, at the urging of the very influential Heim, might refuse reunification with northern Germany after ‘*Groß-Bayern*’ (*Anschluß* with Austria) had been achieved.<sup>122</sup> This was especially worrisome because, were it to take place, it might well be with the blessing of France. This would certainly preclude any need for Bavaria to participate in Bauer’s scheme.

The amenability of the Bavarians to the idea of an *Anschluß* gave Bauer pause for another reason. Munich had, since late 1919, been considering the possibility of an Austrian *Anschluß* with the Bavarian state to the point that preparations were well under way within the Bavarian *Reichswehr*—albeit unofficially—by the time Bauer, Ludendorff and their circle arrived in Munich. In other words, Bavaria sought an *Anschluß* for uniquely Bavarian reasons. Here Bruno Thoß speculates that Bauer might have been uncomfortable with the pro-Catholic rhetoric in much of the language in support of an *Anschluß*. Such unilateral action on Bavaria’s part would come dangerously close to rekindling the historical dichotomy between the Lutheran Prussian north and the Catholic Austrian south, as was the case during the Hohenzollern-Habsburg conflict that contributed to the *Kulturkampf* and the Austro-Prussian War some 50 years earlier.<sup>123</sup>

Indeed, the differences of a historical and cultural nature between Prussia and Bavaria were still very real concerns in post-war Bavaria. Whatever political

philosophies Ludendorff and his circle shared with the Bavarians, they were tainted by a general distrust held by some of the more prominent Bavarian rightist leaders who saw Bauer and his circle as 'Prussian'—and inept Prussians at that. For though Bavaria provided a safe haven and the Bavarians even exhibited a vague willingness to work with the ex-putschists, non-Bavarian Germans have always been—and to a degree still are—treated as foreigners. Trebitsch-Lincoln was to later show his frustration at what he perceived as an obstructionist attitude of his hosts when he wrote in his diary, 'The *Orgesch*, which was absolutely Bavarian, separatist and hostile to Prussia, was spinning webs everywhere around us.'<sup>124</sup> Such a split along cultural lines was manifestly inconsistent with the idea of any kind of united front with Prussia that was needed for the Rosenheim plan to be successful.

Plainly, there were sufficient reasons for Colonel Bauer to be wary of the Bavarians' motives behind their politics—even those consistent with the outlines of the Rosenheim plan. There was yet one more venture of Georg Heim's that—like the creation of *Orgesch*, *Orka*, the *Einwohnerwehr*, the *Anschluß* with Austria and, indeed, the entire *Ordnungszellekonzept*—seemed tailor-made for the Rosenheim plan.

Since early 1920 '*Bauerndoktor*' Georg Heim, in his capacity as leader of the influential Bavarian Peasants' Union, had been organizing a 'Green International' for the sake of transnational cooperation in agricultural matters and—more importantly—as an anti-Bolshevik measure to combat leftist influences among the peasantry.<sup>125</sup> By the time the ex-putschists arrived in Munich in March, the organization had already grown to include Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>126</sup>

The importance of the Green International was not lost on either Bauer or Heim who both recognized the value of working with one another. Heim—his particularist leanings notwithstanding—saw the opportunity to further strengthen his movement

around Bauer's united-front advocacy within Germany and beyond. Bauer, for his part, hoped to build an international foundation of anti-Bolshevism at the agrarian level upon the network already set down by Heim. At first glance it appeared that the Peasants' Union leader would be a valuable co-conspirator in the execution of the Rosenheim plan. It was Heim and Munich Police Chief Pöhner who had invited Ehrhardt and several of his leading officers to Munich for talks and had arranged their billeting after the Kapp disaster. It was also Heim who, for whatever reason, had recommended the strengthening of *Orgesch* and the inclusion of Escherich in the inter-workings of the Rosenheim plan.<sup>127</sup>

Ostensibly, there was common ground for collusion between the Bavarian leadership structure (von Kahr, Escherich, Heim) and the authors of the Rosenheim plan (Bauer, Trebitsch). The truth was, though, that regardless of similar philosophies—and there were many—their Bavarian hosts were reluctant to allow Bauer and his fellow Prussian officers into the inner circles of Bavarian political business. This did not go unnoticed by Bauer who hoped to eventually win them over to his plan once the participation of Hungary was established.<sup>128</sup> For the time being, however, the politically active Bavarian right was not going to commit itself to Bauer and Trebitsch's fantastic scheme.

This is not to say that Munich lacked those ready to embrace Bauer's plan. The Supreme Secret Committee of Colonel Bauer, Trebitsch and Major Stephani would receive their greatest support from radical refugees who, like themselves, had little to lose. It is not difficult to understand the enthusiasm displayed by the Russian monarchist and Baltic German émigré communities of Munich towards Bauer's plan. Included in its goals were both the revival of the Russian monarchy and the dismantling of the Entente-sponsored Baltic Successor States. The problem lay, of course, in that

these groups were essentially 'stateless' and though long on enthusiasm, they were short on any real means to set such an endeavour in motion.

## Chapter 11

### Dubious Fellow Conspirators: Support from Russian Monarchist and Baltic German Émigré Communities

The Bauer circle did find support, beyond the lip service of its Bavarian leadership hosts, from the more radical factions that had gathered in Munich during the course of the last year and since the Kapp disaster. Amongst these factions were Russian monarchist émigrés made up of several fleeing leaders such as General Biskupsky and Pavel Bermond-Avalov who had worked with the Ludendorff circle through the *NV* in Berlin, and displaced, ultra-nationalist, anti-Semitic Baltic Germans who had retreated westwards into the *Reich* with the *Freikorps* formations at the close of the failed Baltic Campaign in 1919. To a very great extent during the spring and summer of 1920, Munich would witness a resurrection of the Baltic Campaign by many of the very same persons displaced by Bolshevik and Entente victories in Eastern Europe less than a year earlier—except that this time efforts would be on a continental scale.

A. The Russian Monarchist Émigré Community of Munich

There were important differences between the Russian émigré community in and around Berlin and the one in Munich, especially in their respective political orientations. The existence of a short-lived (Bolshevik) Russian Embassy in the capital in 1918 (a residual of the abrogated Treaty of Brest-Litovsk), and ongoing negotiations with the Weimar government concerning the repatriation of the 150,000 ex-tsarist prisoners of war, provided a Bolshevik presence, no matter how slight. To the German radical right, this was simply a further example of the red contamination of northern Germany in general and of Berlin in particular.

In Munich a markedly anti-Bolshevik character was apparent in the émigré community even before the Berlin-based Ukrainian government-in-exile re-established itself in the Bavarian capital after the Kapp Putsch. During the term of the von Kahr government, Munich Police Chief Pöhner required two references from already existing members of the Munich émigré community before anyone wishing to take up residence in the city could do so. Consequently, even those moderate leftists who stood opposed to the Bolshevik regime such as Constitutional Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries or Mensheviks were very few in number.

Many White Russian émigré nobles, bureaucrats and officers within the upper echelons of the Imperial Russian Army had belonged to the radical rightist clandestine organization the Black Hundreds. Such groups were in easy contact with the more *völkisch* German elements found in the post-Kapp *Ordnungszelle* atmosphere that dominated in Munich.<sup>129</sup>

White Russian émigré arrivals there involved in—or associated with—the Kapp Putsch included Colonel Pavel Bermond-Avalov of the Baltic Campaign,<sup>130</sup> and Piotr

Shabelsky-Bork and Sergei Taboritsky who in Berlin had edited the anti-Bolshevik newspaper *Der Ruf* and had been active in the erstwhile Ruthenian government-in-exile. Soon General Vasili Biskupsky was to follow, keeping his close ties with Bauer and Trebitsch as well as with pro-German White Russian groups organizing paramilitary forces to some day aid in establishing monarchical regimes in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>131</sup>

#### B. The Baltic German Émigré Community of Munich

Another group disenfranchised by both the Russian Revolution and the Entente-sponsored Successor States was the Baltic Germans. One of the more virulent, anti-Bolshevik, anti-Semitic leaders, Max von Scheubner-Richter,<sup>132</sup> would work closely with White Russians Fedor Vinberg, Shabelsky-Bork and Taboritsky as well as his Baltic German compatriots of the ultra-nationalistic *Rubonia* fraternity from his Riga Polytechnical Institute student days, Otto von Kursell,<sup>133</sup> Arno Schickendanz<sup>134</sup> and Alfred Rosenberg.<sup>135</sup>

After his arrival in Munich following the Kapp failure, Scheubner-Richter along with other Baltic Germans and members of the White Russian émigré community sought to foster a Bavarian-Ukrainian military and economic alliance in the hope of supplying Russian and German officers, troops and supplies to fellow Baltic German General Piotr Wrangel's White Army of the South in the Crimea.<sup>136</sup> Simply put, the Baltic Germans and their Russian émigré co-conspirators wished to resurrect the Baltic Campaign, this time waging it from the Ukraine in the south instead of from the Baltic region in the north-west.

To this end, the ‘Society for Ukrainian-Bavarian Import and Export’ was established as a front organization with an operating capital of some 300,000 German marks from right-wing firms such as the Munich-Augsburg Machine Factory.<sup>137</sup> Discussions of forming a delegation to General Wrangel were held in May 1920 in Regensburg with General Ludendorff, Colonel Bauer and Iron Division Commander Major Bischoff of the Baltic Campaign representing the German side.<sup>138</sup> For the Russians were the ex-Mayor of Odessa Boris Pelikan, Black Hundreds publicist Mikhail Kommissarov and General Biskupsky, with Scheubner-Richter and Rosenberg mediating between the two sides.<sup>139</sup>

According to French intelligence reports, the above meeting of the so-called Society for Ukrainian-Bavarian Import and Export produced two significant outcomes. It was decided the participants should adopt Bauer’s overall plan to annul the Paris Peace Treaties by force; overthrow the Bolshevik regime by uniting Germans, Russians, Hungarians, Bulgarians and Turks; re-establish the ex-monarchies of Central and Eastern Europe; and, finally, partition the Successor States amongst them—in other words, the Rosenheim plan. The second outcome was the decision to send a delegation on a mission via Vienna and Budapest to General Wrangel in the Crimea to outline the terms of mutual assistance.<sup>140</sup> In June 1920 the delegation made up of Scheubner-Richter, White Russian émigré leaders including Kommissarov and Pelikan, and some Hungarian and Austrian rightist representatives travelled first to Vienna and then on to Budapest<sup>141</sup> where the entourage benefited from advance work conducted by Bauer, Trebitsch, Major Stephani and General Biskupsky in mid-May.<sup>142</sup>

Earlier on May 8, 1920—the very day Major Stephani travelled to the Regensburg Meeting as Ludendorff’s personal representative to lend the General’s name to the establishment of *Orgesch*—Trebitsch, Colonel Bauer, his personal secretary

Luise Engeler and Baron Kovács, a member of the Hungarian Consulate, left Bavaria for Budapest to initiate the next part of their scheme: convincing the Hungarian government to support the Rosenheim plan.<sup>143</sup>

Before their departure they made one last visit to Police Chief Pöhner to procure documentation to ease their passage over the Austrian border. Fräulein Engeler recalled in her memoirs the curious particulars of the meeting. Police Chief Pöhner opened his desk drawer allowing a box containing the necessary stamps for passage to come into full view of Bauer. At this point he excused himself from the room for a few minutes, which gave Bauer and his secretary enough time to stamp the forged passports of Dr Börner (Bauer) and Karl Lamprecht (Trebitsch-Lincoln) that they had obtained some days earlier on April 28 from the Hungarian Consulate in Munich.<sup>144</sup> Besides the forged passports, Pöhner also arranged for the group's sensitive documents needed in Budapest to be sent ahead by diplomatic courier, which precluded the possibility of them being found on the persons of Bauer and Trebitsch.<sup>145</sup>

The fugitives passed into Austria via Salzburg with some anxious moments.<sup>146</sup> In Vienna they once again changed their identities. The Hungarian Legation in the Austrian capital supplied Bauer and Trebitsch with new passports in the names of Dr Bürger and Dr Tibor Lehotzky respectively. As a further precaution, the last leg of the journey from Vienna to Budapest was made by passenger steamer.

### Conclusion

It is argued that the Rosenheim plan to create a Europe-wide White International reflected a continuation of policies and actions that had already failed. In Bauer's mind,

however, the failures were due to a lack of scope, a misplaced reliance on civilians over paramilitary forces and a ‘red’ contamination of Prussia that had reached a stage that rendered Berlin unsuitable as a base from which to stage the counter-revolution. He thus produced a plan on an all-European scale involving mostly paramilitary or ex-military personnel within the rightist-friendly atmosphere of the Bavarian *Ordnungszelle*. Any thought that the earlier plans were themselves ill conceived or amateurishly executed was pushed aside.

It is also argued that Bauer’s task of persuading his more circumspect and conservative Bavarian hosts was bound to fail for a number of reasons. Firstly, he misread the potential military effectiveness of the Bavarian-based *Einwohnerwehr* that was to be used as a vanguard in the White International forces. A critical assessment of its development shows that despite its incredible size and its characterization as a ‘state within a state’, the *Einwohnerwehr* was virtually untested and its own founder and leader bemoaned its uselessness beyond the defence of its members’ home villages.

Secondly, given Bauer’s record of poor assessment, one may assume he saw in the removal of the *SPD* Hoffmann government and the setting-up of the rightist *Bayerische Ordnungszelle* a kind of Bavarian Kapp Putsch success. In fact, it was a legal transfer of power—albeit highly opportunistic—motivated partly by preventing dilettante Kappist forces, as ill prepared to rule as was Bauer himself, from taking power in Munich. It was also a bid to prevent continued centralist rule from Berlin—as it surely would have been under a Prussian-dominated Kapp regime. The Bavarians were in no hurry to trade one Prussian master in Berlin for another.

Thirdly, Bauer’s plan was fundamentally inconsistent with Bavarian domestic and foreign policy. Bavaria saw that its best chance of winning a consideration for treaty revision from the Entente was to cast itself as a victim of centralized Prussian

militarism. To that end, delicate attempts at a Franco-Bavarian rapprochement were under way with the view of isolating Prussia through the creation of a French-friendly, Bavarian-Austrian Catholic bloc. This included the not-unrelated Bavarian plea to retain its *Einwohnerwehr* to thwart any further spread of Bolshevism. Such policy was clearly incompatible with Bauer's Rosenheim plan that wished to use the *Einwohnerwehr* to first destroy the Entente-sponsored Successor States and then declare war on France.

Fourthly, were the Bavarians and the Bauer group actually of like mind as to goals, the fact still remained that the plan was simply so fantastic and politically naïve—as were the Hohenzollern restoration plot and the Kapp Putsch before it—that it could not possibly meet with any measure of success.

Reasons for the Rosenheim plan's likely failure aside, it is argued that there was much to encourage Bauer. This came from three sources. One was the effective re-entry of Ludendorff and, by association, Bauer into the Bavarian counter-revolutionary movement occasioned by the establishment of the all-German paramilitary-coordination organizations of *Orgesch* and *Orka*. Ludendorff's support accounted for much of the success of their launch; and such organizations as *Orgesch* and *Orka* were consistent with—perhaps even necessary for—the establishment of a White International. Another was the willingness of *BVP* founder and politically influential Georg Heim to work with Bauer within the Green International. The agrarian organization had established a Central European transnational network that could greatly facilitate Bauer's connections with potential participating countries.

The greatest source of encouragement came from the disaffected émigré communities of Russian monarchists and Baltic Germans who had joined forces in post-Kapp Munich. Being basically landless and, like the Bauer group, having little to lose, they were receptive to any plan, regardless of how fantastic, that promised the return of

their lands and status in the east. The extreme nature of the Rosenheim plan suited the equally extreme hopes and plans of the émigrés. In fact, the readiness of the Baltic Germans and the White Russians to commit to the plan would set the course for the next phase: to enlist the help of the Hungarian government.

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> *L'Europe nouvelle*, no. 15, 'Les dessous de la politique réactionnaire en Europe Centrale et ses dangers pour la France' (April 9, 1921), 475-477.

<sup>2</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 117.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> For a description of the circumstances of the fleeing Kapp conspirators, see 'Der Oberreichsanwalt an den Reichsminister der Justiz, Berlin, über die Aufnahme der Strafverfolgung. Leipzig, 24. März', in E. Könnemann and G. Schulze, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Ludendorff-Putsch: Dokumente* (Munich: Olzog Verlag GmbH, 2002), doc. no. 270.

<sup>5</sup> Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 180.

<sup>6</sup> Bauer, *Der 13. März 1920*, 28.

<sup>7</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 291.

<sup>8</sup> *L'Europe nouvelle*, no. 15, 477.

<sup>9</sup> Ernst Pöhner (1870-1925) was Police Chief of Munich 1919-1922 and a vicious right-wing anti-Semite close to von Kahr until the Hitler Putsch attempt of 1923 that von Kahr did not support. He was appointed Premier of Bavaria by Hitler during the night of the Putsch and served prison time with Hitler who praised him in *Mein Kampf*.

<sup>10</sup> Luise Engeler memoirs, N Bauer, 1022/69/10, BaK; Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 192.

<sup>11</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 292.

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<sup>12</sup> Escherich received a doctorate in Forest Law in 1897 and afterwards worked as *Forstrat* with the Bavarian State Forestry Administration. As such he taught for five years at Kaufbeuren Forestry School. Escherich continued to use the title *Forstrat* throughout the remainder of his life.

<sup>13</sup> Rudolf Kanzler, *Bayerns Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus: Geschichte der bayerischen Einwohnerwehren* (Munich: Verlag Parcus & Co., 1931), 31. Kanzler's signal work cited here, while understandably tainted by his own subjectivity, is very thorough.

<sup>14</sup> Luise Engeler memoirs, N Bauer, 1022/69/34, BaK. The document was delivered with an 'L' on the front for 'Luise' Engeler, the assumed courier; see Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 660.

<sup>15</sup> Bauer, *Der 13. März 1920*, 28.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 294. Here Vogt makes assumptions about Bauer's argument as to how Hungarian and Bavarian cooperation would be beneficial to both.

<sup>18</sup> N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27/99, BaK.

<sup>19</sup> Gyula Gömbös (1886-1936) served as captain in the Austro-Hungarian Army during World War I but was a staunch anti-Habsburg advocate of Hungarian independence. After the war he organized the anti-Bolshevik army for Admiral Horthy in Szeged; formed his own paramilitary force, the Hungarian National Defence Union (*Magyar Országos Véderő Egylet* or *MOVE*); and acted as Horthy's Minister of Defence in the Szeged government. Under Horthy's Regency Gömbös became leader of the Conservative Party and, being pro-Horthy and anti-legitimist, thwarted the 1921 attempts by King Károly IV (Kaiser Karl I of Austria) to regain the Hungarian throne. He advocated single-party government and in 1929 served as prime minister; Gömbös backed a close association with Nazi Germany from 1933 until his death in 1936.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Eckhardt to Trebitsch, February 19, 1920, N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27/13, BaK.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>22</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 388.

<sup>23</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 295.

<sup>24</sup> Nicholas Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Rumania* (Palo Alto: Hoover Institution Press, 1970), 53; M. Broszat, 'Fascismus und Kollaborationen in Ostmitteleuropa zwischen den Weltkriegen', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 14, no. 3 (1966), 225.

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<sup>25</sup> Whether ‘Hungarian forces’ meant *Freikorps* detachments or the National Army is not mentioned.

<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, in the original documents the Czech lands and Slovakia were never referred to as ‘Czechoslovakia’ due to the construct’s perceived artificiality by the anti-Versailles factions, the Czech lands having been carved out of Austria, and Slovakia out of Hungary.

<sup>27</sup> *L’Europe nouvelle*, no. 16 (April 16, 1921), 509-512. SHD, DB, report from September 9, 1920, fond 7, opis 2, delo 2575, reel 1, 99. (Note: DB reports cited in Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, were still housed in the Soviet Archives in Moscow at the time his work went to press. They have since been returned to Vincennes but not all have been recatalogued and remain inaccessible.) Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 196-207. Aufzeichnungen des österreichischen Generals Krauß, vol. 16. XII. 1921, Abt. IV, Bayerische Hauptstaatsarchiv (BHStA), Munich. Pál Prónay, *A határban a halál kaszál ...*, Ágnes Szabó and Ervin Pamlényi eds. (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1963), 201f.

<sup>28</sup> Erich Ludendorff, *Von Feldherrn zum Weltrevolutionär und Wegbereiter Deutscher Volksschöpfung*, vol. I (Munich: Ludendorffs Verlag GmbH, 1940), 137-8.

<sup>29</sup> This was typical of the working relationship between Ludendorff and Bauer as seen on other occasions. During the preparations for the Kapp Putsch, one observes Ludendorff apparently in agreement with the plans and their execution yet remaining in the shadows. General Ludendorff would remain almost a political abstraction, in whose name plans were conceived and deeds were carried out but with no real presence or active participation on his part.

<sup>30</sup> H. Fernau, ‘Bayern und die monarchistische Gefahr’, *Wissen und Leben*, vol. 14, 1920/21, p. 211, quoted from Hans Fenske, *Konservatismus und Rechtsradikalismus in Bayern nach 1918* (Berlin: Verlag Gehlen, 1969), 62.

<sup>31</sup> Georg Heim (1865-1938) was born in Aschaffenburg in northern Bavaria. He gained a doctorate in Agri-economics from the University of Würzburg in 1893 and later founded the Bavarian Peasants’ Union in Regensburg. His dedication to the betterment of the Bavarian peasantry earned him the sobriquet ‘*Bauerndoktor*’.

<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, Gustav von Kahr, a Protestant, never joined the *BVP* he helped found or any other political party.

<sup>33</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 16.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Kanzler, *Bayerns Kampf*, 33-34.

<sup>36</sup> In his memoirs Kanzler had kind words for the *SPD* Hoffmann regime: ‘I would like to say that the then entirely socialist Hoffmann government, and especially

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Interior Minister Endres, showed an understanding, friendly and encouraging attitude towards the *Einwohnerwehr*. This is all the more laudable in view of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the volunteers, particularly in the rural districts, as well as all the influential leaders, were members of the middle-class parties.' *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>37</sup> The very prolific Georg Escherich wrote at least twelve short autobiographical works about his early life and over a hundred articles. For the sake of brevity, this thesis relies on the biography of Georg Escherich found in Horst G. W. Nußer, *Konservative Wehrverbände in Bayern, Preußen und Österreich, 1918-1933, Part I* (Munich: Nußer Verlag, 1973).

<sup>38</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 18.

<sup>39</sup> Nußer, *Konservative Wehrverbände*, 24.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Nußer, *Konservative Wehrverbände*, 59-74.

<sup>42</sup> Memorandum of Dr Dickel, *Geschäftsführer der Standesherrn*, June 6, 1919, Nachlaß Escherich, vol. I, Abt. V, Personalakten, BHStA.

<sup>43</sup> Franz Schober, 'Geschichte des Landesverbandes der Einwohnerwehren Bayerns sowie seiner Landesleitung', Manuscript (MS) 920, 1922, 1a, 66b, 66c. The unpublished manuscript is housed in Abt. IV, Akten des Landesleitung der Einwohnerwehren Bayerns (EWA), BHStA. According to Large, *Hauptmann Franz Schober's* work remained unpublished due to the sensitive nature of its contents. Access was long denied historians including Rudolf Kanzler whose work is regarded as the standard history of the *Einwohnerwehr*. See Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 10, footnote 53.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Schober, MS 920, BHStA, 66-7.

<sup>46</sup> Escherich to *Landtag Abgeordneter Weinböck*, May 8, 1919, Schober, MS 920, 66c.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 66g, 66h.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 60g.

<sup>49</sup> Kanzler, *Bayerns Kampf*, 40.

<sup>50</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 19.

<sup>51</sup> Schober, MS 920, BHStA, 70a.

<sup>52</sup> A copy of the guidelines is found in Schober, MS 920, BHStA, 74-76.

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<sup>53</sup> David Large is correct in his analysis that the government, and especially the army, ‘were perfectly aware of the dangers inherent in a “private” paramilitary force’ which one day might ‘take a direction “opposed to the government”’. It would also further undermine state authority; the government would be degraded to a supplier of funds and equipment with no control over their use. And the [*Einwohnerwehr*] itself, free of government and military guidance, would be prey to dilettantism’. See Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 21f.

<sup>54</sup> Escherich to Ministerium für Militärische Angelegenheit, May 26, 1919, Abt. II, Außenministerium (MA) 1943, 103089, BHStA.

<sup>55</sup> See Escherich to Möhl, July 27, 1920, Abt. IV, EWA, Gruppekommando 4/1, Bund 3, Akt 1 (Bd. 3/1), BHStA; see also Escherich interview in *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, nr. 327, August 13, 1920.

<sup>56</sup> See a copy of Noske’s letter in Schober, MS 920, BHStA, 95.

<sup>57</sup> Geschäftsordnung der Landesleitung, Abt. IV, EWA, Bd. 3/1b, BHStA; Kanzler, *Bayerns Kampf*, 131-160.

<sup>58</sup> On Kriebel’s politics, see Nußer, *Konservative Wehrverbände*, 107-13.

<sup>59</sup> By September 1919 the *Einwohnerwehr* was receiving upwards of 300,000 marks monthly from the Hoffmann government that grew to over 10 million marks for the year of 1920. See *Einwohnerwehr* budget of May 15, 1920, Abt. I, Finanz Ministerium (MF), Nr. 67420, BHStA.

<sup>60</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 26.

<sup>61</sup> Schober, MS 922, BHStA, 2, 10-12.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>63</sup> Schober, MS 920, BHStA, 22.

<sup>64</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 26-7.

<sup>65</sup> Hausverteidigung der Landesleitung, Schober, MS 923, BHStA, 4f.

<sup>66</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 29.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>68</sup> Monatsbericht, January and February 1920, Schober, MS 920, BHStA, 222-23.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>70</sup> *Der Kampf: Südbayerische Tageszeitung*, Thursday, April 15, 1920, stated, ‘The organization of the *Einwohnerwehren* . . . claims it cares only for quiet and order [yet it] involves itself in political matters, engages in espionage, is associated with the *Polizeiwehr* [a municipal police counterpart to the *Freikorps* established in many Bavarian cities after the fall of the Munich Soviet] and maintains its own department for weapons and munitions procurement.’

<sup>71</sup> On the social make-up of the Bavarian *Freikorps*, see H. J. Gordon, Jr, ‘München, Böhmen und die Bayerische Freikorpsbewegung’, *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte*, vol. 38, no. 2 (1975): 755-6.

<sup>72</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 40.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 41-44.

<sup>75</sup> The climax of the annual shooting contests took place in Munich each September, complete with Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr* shooting teams as well as several paramilitary teams from Austria. There was much fanfare that included speeches in honour of Bavarian and Austrian (or ‘alpine’) solidarity by Escherich and Minister-President von Kahr. The shooting contests were, however, the only example of a coordinated all-Bavarian effort. See Schober, MS 920, BHStA, 377.

<sup>76</sup> Schober, MS 920, BHStA, 110.

<sup>77</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 25-6.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Landesleiter* (Escherich) to *Kreis* and *Gau* leadership, March 9, 1921, Schober, MS 922, BHStA, 27a.

<sup>80</sup> In a letter from Kapp in Swedish exile to Ludendorff dated March 4, 1921, the former explained that ‘Escherich’s position throughout the March [1920] days was questionable to me.’ See Könnemann and Schulze, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Ludendorff-Putsch*, 539.

<sup>81</sup> Ministerratsitzung, March 13, 1920, Abt. II, MA, 103471, BHStA.

<sup>82</sup> The choice of von Kahr was not a foregone conclusion; he won by only one vote. Georg Escherich also put himself up for the post but was spurned by *BVP* leaders.

<sup>83</sup> A copy of the official document issued by Noske is found in Könnemann and Schulze, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Ludendorff-Putsch*, 373.

<sup>84</sup> The consensus of most sources is that the *Einwohnerwehr* in Bavaria alone constituted more than triple the Versailles 100,000-troop limit.

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<sup>85</sup> Large, *Politics of Law and Order*, 48.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.; Schliephacke to Escherich, January 16, 1920, Abt. IV, EWA, 3/1c, BHStA. Schliephacke's first name is not given in sources.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> For a thorough treatment of the Regensburg Meeting and the founding of *Orgesch*, see Kanzler, *Bayerns Kampf*, 79.

<sup>90</sup> Franz Seldte (1882-1947) was founder of the *Frontsoldaten Organisation Stahlhelm*, which he led from 1918 to 1933. He served as *Reich* Minister of Labour between 1933 and 1945. He was convicted in the Nuremberg Trials and died in prison in 1947.

<sup>91</sup> Kanzler, *Bayerns Kampf*, 79.

<sup>92</sup> Letter from Bauer to Escherich, January 13, 1921, N Bauer, 1022/26/30/143-149, BaK.

<sup>93</sup> Kanzler, *Bayerns Kampf*, 81.

<sup>94</sup> See handwritten minutes of the Regensburg Meeting of May 8-9, 1920, Abt. IV, EWA, Bd. 5/3a, Bl. 21, Protokoll der Regensburger Tagung, BHStA.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from Bauer to Pöhner, February 26, 1922, Abt. IV, Bund Bayern und Reich, Bd. 36/1, BHStA.

<sup>96</sup> Escherich interview article in the *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, nr. 327, August 13, 1920.

<sup>97</sup> Kanzler's *Bayerns Kampf* represents a contemporary and very precise account of the history of the *Einwohnerwehr* and of *Orgesch* by its second in command. Though reference to Bauer is made in the work, there is no mention of him having any association with the Regensburg Meeting itself.

<sup>98</sup> The charge of high treason against Trebitsch brought by the Vienna police was the unforeseen consequence of his attempt to sell sensitive documents of the plot after he had betrayed his erstwhile co-conspirators in the early autumn of 1920.

<sup>99</sup> Trebitsch's diary presented by him as evidence in his trial for high treason, N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27/53, BaK.

<sup>100</sup> To this end, Escherich made very certain that all knew—especially the French—that the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr* was in no way associated with *Orgesch* and that his leadership of both was merely a personal affiliation. 'The *Einwohnerwehr* is only a

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Home Guard.’ See Associated Press interview with Bavarian Minister-President Dr Gustav von Kahr while visiting Berlin on government business on November 26, 1920, in *New York Tribune*, vol. LXXX, no. 17041, November 28, 1920.

<sup>101</sup> The desire to return to the pre-war arrangement of the *Kaiserreich* was early on shared by most Bavarian political party figures, including *USPD* leader Kurt Eisner who assumed the premiership after the Bavarian Revolution of November 1918. See Allan Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria, 1918-1919: The Eisner Regime and the Soviet Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 132-3.

<sup>102</sup> In this case the term ‘federalism’ is not to be understood as the model existing in the US whereby virtually all power resides in the national capital. Perhaps a term better applicable to the wishes of the Bavarian government in post-war Bavaria is the decentralized model of ‘confederalism’. This is often referred to as ‘particularism’ but should never be understood as ‘separatism’ eschewing all association with Berlin; a position advocated by only an insignificant handful.

<sup>103</sup> For a good outline of Bavaria’s position within the *Reich* before, during and after the war, see D. R. Dorondo, *Bavaria and German Federalism: Reich to Republic, 1918-33, 1945-49* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1992), 1-26.

<sup>104</sup> See Centre Party leader Karl X. Bachem’s letter to then *BVP* leader Heinrich Held, November 7, 1918, Abt. II, Nachlaß Heinrich Held, doc. 35, BHStA.

<sup>105</sup> Article series by Georg Heim, ‘Eisners Irrgänge und Bayerns Zukunft’, *Bayerischer Kurier*, beginning with Nr. 334, Munich: November 30-December 3, 1918.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* See also Hermann Renner, *Georg Heim, Der Bauerndoktor: Lebensbild eines ‘ungekrönten Königs’* (Munich: Landwirtschaftsverlag, 1960), 170-3.

<sup>107</sup> Karl Renner (1870-1950) joined the Social Democratic Party of Austria (*SPÖ*) in 1896, served as a *Reichsrat* representative from 1907 to 1918 and led the Austrian delegation to Saint-Germain in 1919. He was Chancellor of the First Republic of Austria between 1918 and 1920, and Chancellor of the Second Republic in 1945. He was a long-time advocate of *Anschluß* even under the Nazis.

<sup>108</sup> Heim, ‘Eisners Irrgänge’. See also F. Walther Ilges, *Die geplante Aufteilung Deutschlands* (Berlin: Walter Bacmeisters Nationalverlag, 1933).

<sup>109</sup> Heim, ‘Eisners Irrgänge’.

<sup>110</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 390.

<sup>111</sup> This particular meeting between Heim and members of the French military would later occasion fierce reaction from National Socialist sympathizers who called for Heim’s arrest on a charge of high treason. Such is the diatribe by Ilges, *Die geplante Aufteilung Deutschlands*, published tellingly in 1933. The work, nonetheless, serves as an excellent source of letters, speeches and articles by Dr Georg Heim.

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<sup>112</sup> A. Wolfers, *Britain and France between Two Wars* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1963), 17.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Fenske, *Konservatismus und Rechtsradikalismus*, 117.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Bogislav von Selchow, *Hundert Tage aus Meinem Leben* (Leipzig: 1936), 347, cited in Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 391.

<sup>118</sup> Quoted from Renner, *Georg Heim*, 178.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Concerning the plan for a separation of a Greater Bavaria from the remaining *Reich*, see General Krauß's record of his first discussions with Colonel Bauer in the summer of 1920, Abt. IV, Bund Bayern und Reich, Bd. 26/3, BHStA.

<sup>121</sup> Ludendorff made reference to his uneasiness concerning Bavarian particularism in a letter of introduction for Bauer delivered to Hungarian Regent Miklós Horthy. On Bavarian right-wing activities he wrote, 'I trust they make German politics and not just Bavarian politics.' See Szinai and Szücs, *Confidential Papers*, 26-7.

<sup>122</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 394.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 392.

<sup>124</sup> Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 188.

<sup>125</sup> For treatment of the Green International, see Saturnino M. Borrás, Jr, 'Transnational Agrarian Movements: Origins and Politics, Campaigns and Impact', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, vol. 8, nos. 2-3 (2008): 169-204.

<sup>126</sup> Report of the German General Consulate from Budapest, May 22, 1920, Abt. II, MA, 100884, BHStA.

<sup>127</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 392.

<sup>128</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 300.

<sup>129</sup> Baur, Johannes, 'Russische Emigranten und die Bayerische Öffentlichkeit', in *Bayern und Osteuropa: Aus der Geschichte der Beziehungen Bayerns, Frankens und Schwabens mit Rußland, der Ukraine und Weißrußland*, ed. Hermann Beyer-Thoma (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), 462-3, 471.

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<sup>130</sup> General Rüdiger von der Goltz, who had led Bermond-Avalov's forces, relocated to Budapest after the Kapp Putsch.

<sup>131</sup> German Foreign Ministry Report from November 4, 1920, Political Archives of the Foreign Ministry (Berlin), cited in Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 113.

<sup>132</sup> Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter (1884-1923) was of a Baltic German family in Latvia under Imperial Russian rule. He fought against revolutionaries in the 1905 Russian Revolution and was vehemently anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitic. He relocated first to Berlin and then to Munich after the establishment of the Entente-sponsored Latvian Republic in 1919. He founded the ultra-nationalist German *Aufbau* that sought the reinstatement of tsarist Russia and the end of the Successor States in the Baltic; joined the Nazis in 1920; and co-planned the *Bierhaus* Putsch during which he was killed while marching arm in arm with Hitler. Though Scheubner-Richter worked with Bauer in mid-1920, Bauer did not follow him into the Nazi camp. For a discussion of *Aufbau*, which to a large degree developed on the heels of the White International plot's demise, see Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 109.

<sup>133</sup> Otto von Kursell (1884-1967) was a Baltic German artist from an influential Estonian noble family in St Petersburg and a close ally of Scheubner-Richter. He was later employed by the National Socialists as a portrait artist and caricaturist famous for his racist cartoons.

<sup>134</sup> Arno Schickendanz (1892-1945), influenced by classmates Alfred Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter, served in the Foreign Ministry of the National Socialist German Workers' Party and, during the war, as leader of the Reich Ministry of Occupied Areas of the East. He committed suicide at the end of the war.

<sup>135</sup> Alfred Rosenberg (1893-1946) was a highly educated scion of a wealthy Estonian family. He earned a degree in architecture from Riga Polytechnical Institute, and a PhD in engineering from St Petersburg University in 1917. After World War I he followed his mentor Scheubner-Richter to Munich in the wake of the Baltic Campaign failure of 1919. He was a member of the German Workers' Party (later the National Socialist German Workers' Party) before Hitler joined and is said to be responsible for articulating Nazi cultural and racial philosophy as well as the *Lebensraum* concept. He was tried and executed at the Nuremberg Trials.

<sup>136</sup> SHD, DB, report from September 6, 1920, fond 7, opis 2, delo 2575, reel 3, 253, 254.

<sup>137</sup> Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 116.

<sup>138</sup> The date of the meeting of the 'Society' that Bauer attended in May 1920 is not given but must have occurred on or before May 8—the date that he, Trebitsch and Luise Engeler departed for Budapest.

<sup>139</sup> SHD, DB, reports from September 9, 1920, and March 8, 1921, fond 7, opis 2, delo 2575, reel 1, 99; delo 953, reel 2, 117.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., reel 1, 99.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 118.

<sup>143</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 301.

<sup>144</sup> Luise Engeler memoirs, N Bauer, 1022/69/15, BaK.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 17-19.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. See also Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 191-2, for an accurate if over-dramatized version of the trip to Budapest.

### Part III

#### Establishment and Fall of the White International in Budapest

Hungary was wracked by the shock of defeat and the collapse of the old order, by foreign invasion and the failure of a pro-Entente, liberal republic. The establishment of the *Magyar Tanácsköztársaság* (Hungarian Soviet Republic) that followed produced two self-exiled, counter-revolutionary communities: one in Vienna and one in French-occupied Szeged. It will be shown that beyond their shared goal to sweep away the soviet regime, the two groups were internally too diverse in make-up and outlook either to form a cohesive, functioning body capable of any coordinated military countermeasures against the soviet regime or to take back the reins of power with any measure of facility once the Soviet Republic had fallen. It will also be demonstrated that the various groups, whether vying for influence with the government-in-exile or pursuing their own agendas independently of it, carried their factious nature into the post-soviet transitional stage and even into the Horthy Regency.

From among these groups, General Ludendorff's emissary Colonel Max Bauer was attracted to and found his greatest support from the ultra-nationalist group that tended to be anti-Semitic, anti-Habsburg and militant in its rhetoric. Conversely, Bauer's detractors were mostly from the aristocratic, pro-Habsburg legitimist groups wherein one found traditional politicians and the scions of pre-war Hungary, generally well versed in the art of diplomacy and compromise, who would hold key ministerial positions in the Hungarian government.

It is argued here that the new Hungarian National Army, under the nominal command of Admiral Horthy but recruited, organized and led by renegade detachment

commanders, was paramilitary in nature and, like its *Einwohnerwehr* counterpart in Bavaria, totally unsuited for the military role the Rosenheim plan had assigned it.

It is further argued that despite claims in the historical literature to the contrary, after the failed Bolshevik experiment in 1919, Horthy exhibited an instinctive political acumen as he consolidated his position in the eyes of the Entente by assuming the title of Commander-in-Chief while distancing himself from the notorious renegade detachments and the legitimists that the Entente objected to. He was particularly effective in securing British acceptance and even a degree of political support, which lasted for most of the 1920s.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, Horthy was fully aware that the creation of the new Hungarian state would only be possible by working closely with the Entente, who saw in him the best chance for any semblance of lasting stability in the southern flank of Central Europe. He had therefore made common cause with the Entente well before Bauer showed up with other ideas. This is not to say, however, that Horthy shied away from all military adventures.

From the moment of the signing of the Treaty of Trianon in early June 1920, Hungary's foreign policy centred on treaty revision. Horthy and his government were willing to pursue any avenue to that end. It is thus argued that Hungary played a double game: while secretly engaged in more traditional modes of diplomacy with Austria and the Entente, Horthy affirmed his commitment to Bauer's plan—as fantastic and ill-conceived as it was—as a contingency against the failure of diplomacy.

In Chapters 14-17, the reasons for the ultimate foundering of the plan to create a White International are discussed. They include distrust between members; the refusal of key national leaders to recognize the authority of the White International; rank amateurism; a general growing awareness that chances to achieve national goals would be better met by working with the Entente, not defying it; and lastly, the lack of

solidarity within the Bauer group itself, evidenced by Ludendorff's unwillingness to stand behind the plan that was conceived in his name.

## Chapter 12

### Background: Hungary from the Collapse of 1918 to the Treaty of Trianon

In the wake of Austria-Hungary's collapse in October 1918, the Hungarian Democratic Republic was declared under the leadership of the liberal-progressive Count Mihály Károlyi.<sup>2</sup> It was hoped by the people and the 'Red Count' himself that his earlier parliamentary opposition to the war and his embrace of a pro-Western, liberal approach would pave the way for favourable—or at least less objectionable—terms from the Entente at the Peace Conference due to open in January 1919.<sup>3</sup>

The young republic was immediately beset with insurmountable difficulties. The lack of a viable military force, on account of its near abolition ordered by the pacifist Károlyi, invited an invasion of Transylvania by Romanian troops and of Slovakia by Czech troops—in direct contravention of armistice terms—who grabbed what they could in the hope of presenting a territorial *fait accompli* at the Peace Conference at Hungary's expense. At the same time, fleeing Hungarians streamed into the heart of the country, increasing the burgeoning unemployment and severely taxing the means to feed the people.<sup>4</sup>

Convinced that a new armistice under the auspices of French General Louis Franchet d'Esperey, then in occupation of southern Hungary, would forestall further incursions of Successor State troops into historic Hungary, and be more advantageous

than the rather lenient but now abrogated Armistice of Villa Giusti between the Entente and Austria-Hungary, Károlyi signed the Belgrade Armistice that proved instead to be much harsher. The first action of General d'Esperey through Lieutenant Colonel Ferdinand Vix of the French Military Mission, sent to Budapest to supervise the implementation of the Belgrade Armistice Agreement, was to convey to the Hungarian government the Entente demand to withdraw its troops from Slovakia that had been occupied by Czech troops.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Romanian troops occupied large areas of Transylvania that contained Hungary's last remaining coalmines—the others already lost to Czech-controlled Slovakia. The result was that a very truncated Hungary's future borders were determined even before the Peace Conference had begun.<sup>6</sup>

Severe coal and food shortages in the dead of winter, runaway inflation and failed land reform—all these fuelled protests against the bungling Károlyi government instigated by conservative Count István Bethlen,<sup>7</sup> who by February 1919 was considered the nominal leader of the counter-revolutionary opposition.

As would later be the case in Vienna, Bethlen's efforts to create a vital, united front from the disparate parties were frustrated due to the ideological positions of their leaders. Patriotic appeals at inter-party conferences to set differences aside produced vows of support for a united front solely from the liberal-conservative sections of the Party of National Work and the Hungarian Bourgeois Party.<sup>8</sup> In late February 1919 Bethlen decided to form a new party altogether. The resulting Party of National Unity (*Nemzeti Egyesülés Pártja*) had at its core unaffiliated, former conservative members of Parliament who would not join any of the post-war parties.<sup>9</sup> In the opening address of the organizational meeting of the Party of National Unity only weeks before the Hungarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed, Bethlen did not speak of tactics or even an overarching goal but stressed the need for 'nationalist' interests over 'class interests'

through reconciling ‘democratic institutions with traditional institutions’;<sup>10</sup> in other words, basic platitudes all could agree upon.

For the purposes of this work, it is important to note the breadth of Bethlen’s reach in an effort to bring all counter-revolutionary groups under one umbrella. Besides working with moderates, he was also in contact with leaders of extreme right-wing organizations from whom Bauer would receive such enthusiastic support the following year. These included General Staff officer Captain Gyula Gömbös, who led an organization of discharged and active army officers called the Hungarian National Defence Union (*Magyar Országos Véderő Egylet* or *MOVE*), and Tibor Eckhardt, leader of the Union of Awakening Hungarians (*Ébredő Magyarok Egyesülete* or *ÉME*), both discussed in greater detail below. According to Gömbös’s memoirs, it was he who was dispatched by Bethlen to lay the groundwork for the establishment of a counter-revolutionary committee in Vienna in the event of the Communists taking power in Hungary.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, Bethlen worked to undermine Károlyi’s standing with the Entente. He warned the French that the new cabinet appointed in February 1919 was a move in the direction of Bolshevism. Both the French Military Mission in Budapest and the Quai d’Orsay immediately accepted this. They were convinced that the contagion of Communism in Central Europe was a distinct possibility, especially given recent Red Army successes in the Russian Civil War.<sup>12</sup>

Reacting to unfounded Romanian claims of an imminent Hungarian-Bolshevik Russian alliance, the Supreme Council of Four in Paris and the French government firmly in the hands of Clemenceau and Marshal Foch instructed Lieutenant Colonel Ferdinand Vix to inform the Károlyi government that Romanian troops were to be allowed to advance deeper into Hungary as far as the Szatmárnémeti-Nagykároly-

Nagyvárad-Arad line.<sup>13</sup> Having no other choice, on March 20, 1919, President Mihály Károlyi signed the Vix Note and promptly resigned. The Social Democrats, thinking of a possible approach to Bolshevik Russia in the light of the failed Western orientation, formed a coalition government with the Communists and proclaimed the Hungarian Soviet Republic under the direction of Foreign Minister Béla Kun.<sup>14</sup> One day later, István Bethlen, along with close associates in the Party of National Unity, fled and set up a counter-revolutionary committee in Vienna where Gyula Gömbös had already made the necessary preparations.<sup>15</sup>

The Hungarian Soviet Republic was short-lived but, defying the Vix Note, it made a genuine effort to evict the Czechoslovak Army from Slovakia and the Romanian Army from Transylvania.<sup>16</sup> With virtually no army at Kun's disposal due to Károlyi's policy of demilitarizing Hungary in the hope of gaining Entente favour, a Red Army of young *KuK* officers and Budapest workers was hastily formed. They agreed to serve not because of any shared social values or political philosophies but as the only means available to maintain—or regain—Hungary's territorial integrity and hopefully turn back the Entente-supported Romanian and Czech armies. Many of these same officers who survived the purges of the army would subsequently serve in Admiral Horthy's Hungarian National Army with no less patriotic goals. There were some initial successes in Slovakia but Entente representatives in Paris were hostile to the idea of a 'red' army warring against forces of the Entente-sponsored Successor States, and military reverses soon followed.<sup>17</sup> By June and July mounting dissatisfaction amongst all classes with Bolshevik policy,<sup>18</sup> and the initiation of a Red Terror of rogue revolutionary courts that resulted in the execution of hundreds suspected of counter-revolutionary activities, cost Kun his popular support, especially in the countryside where promised land reform was not carried out.<sup>19</sup>

Thus both the pro-Entente approach of Károlyi's Hungarian Democratic Republic and the Hungarian Soviet Republic of Béla Kun had been discredited. This was not lost on Bauer and accorded with his rejection of both the Entente and the Bolsheviks as panaceas for Central Europe's woes.

A. Emergence of the Vienna-based Anti-Bolshevik Committee and the Szeged Government-in-exile

It is argued that beyond shared goals of destroying the Soviet Republic in Budapest, the radicalized, displaced nobility and the middle classes that made up the self-exiled groups in Vienna and Szeged were too factious, and the newly established Hungarian National Army and its detachments too inept, to launch an attack without significant foreign assistance. It is further argued that during the year of self-exile, two main factions developed: one would prove receptive to Bauer's plan and the other obstructive. The ascendancy of the latter to a position of influence during the transitional period between Kun's fall and Horthy's election would ultimately prevail.

Upon the declaration of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in Budapest in mid-March, the so-called Anti-Bolshevik Committee (ABC) led by Count István Bethlen was founded in Vienna.<sup>20</sup> Some two months later a second committee under the leadership of Count Gyula Károlyi<sup>21</sup> set up a group in his home county of Arad in eastern Hungary, but owing to pressures from the Romanian Army relocated to French-occupied Szeged in the south where on May 31 he proclaimed a Hungarian government-in-exile with himself as prime minister.

The two committees were different in make-up, due to the differences in their respective participants, but not necessarily antagonistic; they shared a broad set of political assumptions. However, in the Vienna-based ABC one found a greater number

of traditional, conservative statesmen who maintained a limited commitment to some liberal principles but often conflicted on matters of method. Within the ABC was also found the core of the pro-Habsburg movement. The Szeged group, on the other hand, was more militant in its rhetoric and methods. Many of its members embraced a strident anti-Semitism and were open to demagoguery, whilst some of the more radical elements were willing to employ violence and terror as political weapons, as had been used in the Baltic Campaign and within Germany proper.<sup>22</sup> Szeged, too, was where Admiral Miklós Horthy would build his new Hungarian National Army that Colonel Bauer saw as ideal to the needs of his White International.

Importantly, both the ABC and the Szeged group suffered from irreconcilable internal divisions. Aside from the overarching consensus shared by both that the Kun government must be swept away, factions, especially within the ABC, could not agree on method or the nature of the Hungary that would follow. In the end neither group 'swept' the Hungarian soviet away; it dissolved of its own accord. What is noteworthy here is that the conflicting nature of the various groups endured into the transitional post-Kun period of late 1919 and into the early days of the Horthy regime.

The Vienna-based ABC comprised the cream of Budapest business interests including Jewish bankers, high-ranking officers and traditional statesmen of long standing. The largest single group consisted of aristocratic refugees who had fled their vast estates in advance of the Romanian, Czechoslovak and Yugoslav armies, and Hungary itself when the Hungarian soviet was proclaimed. In all, nearly 100,000 Hungarians flooded into Vienna alone including ten to fifteen thousand officers radicalized by the loss of land and status. The bulk of these were from the middle and upper classes, of which royalist aristocratic officers of the old Habsburg Dual Monarchy

were the most apparent.<sup>23</sup> Because one of Bauer's greatest challenges would be with the legitimists, a closer look is warranted.

According to fellow ABC participant and future Hungarian Minister in Vienna Gusztáv Gratz,<sup>24</sup> the ABC encompassed two basic and often contentious groups. The first was composed of the founders of Bethlen's Party of National Unity who were mostly from the east and south-east. They tended to be Protestant, patriotic and demonstratively anti-Semitic. They rallied around Count István Bethlen, an anti-liberal of the old school with legitimist tendencies, and Count Pál Teleki,<sup>25</sup> both from ancient and respected noble Transylvanian families whose lands were now in Romanian hands. Others of note were Count Igmándy-Hegyessy Géza; three counts of the ancient Zichy family, János, Géza and Aladár, who had lost estates ceded to Czechoslovakia; and Gusztáv Gratz himself. According to Bethlen's biographer Ignác Romsics, Captain Gyula Gömbös was included within this group.<sup>26</sup>

The larger second group was heavily made up of the aristocratic, émigré great estate owners who stood strongly within the pro-Habsburg, legitimist circles. They tended to be from Transdanubia, particularly the western counties of Vas, Sopron and Zala, and from northern areas now lost to Slovakia. They were Catholic and cosmopolitan, mingling freely with Austrians and often having estates in more than one country. They included such magnates as Margrave György Pallavicini of the Constitutional Party from central Hungary,<sup>27</sup> Count Gyula Andrássy the Younger<sup>28</sup> and, like the other group, prominent members of the noble Zichy family. From western Hungary were Count Antal Sigray,<sup>29</sup> Count Zsigmond Batthyány and powerful members of the middle class such as György Szmrecsányi of the People's Party<sup>30</sup> and Ödön Beniczky.<sup>31</sup>

Generally speaking, ABC participants were more circumspect and less violent than their Szeged counterparts. It would be a mistake to consider them all so, however, especially among the more militant, younger aristocratic legitimists. Several examples serve to illustrate this. Against Bethlen's wishes, György Szmrecsányi and Count Pallavicini organized a robbery of some 150-160 million crowns from the Hungarian Legation in Vienna. A portion of it was used to finance an abortive, comic-opera attempt at a military breakthrough in the Austrian border town of Bruck.<sup>32</sup> In another example, Count Antal Sigray instructed ardent legitimist Baron Antal Lehár to form a legitimist, counter-revolutionary centre in Graz, which he did. There Szmrecsányi joined him in June, following disagreements between rival legitimist camps in Vienna, and brought sufficient funds taken in the robbery to purchase weapons and materiel for another invasion attempt of West Hungary that, however, never took place. Still, the 'Graz Command' did become the headquarters for orchestrating attempts to restore the Habsburg Károly IV to the throne of Hungary.<sup>33</sup> Finally, the aristocratic legitimist Count Ostenburg<sup>34</sup> was just as notorious as Pál Prónay and Iván Héjjas when it came to atrocities meted out to anyone suspected of collusion with the Communists. It was these Transdanubian radicalized, aristocratic legitimists that would later obstruct Bauer at every turn.

On the recommendation of Count Bethlen of the Vienna group, Count Gyula Károlyi founded the Hungarian government-in-exile in Szeged and invited the closest thing Hungary had to a war hero, Admiral Horthy, to accept the portfolio of Minister of National Defence and to act as *fővezér* (Commander-in-Chief) of the yet to be established Hungarian National 'White' Army to rid Hungary of the Bolsheviks.<sup>35</sup>

One of the fatal flaws in Bauer's plan to create a White International was his unshaken belief that paramilitary units would triumph over the more disciplined state

armies of the Successor States and, if put to the test, over Entente forces. A key component in Bauer's scheme was the role the essentially paramilitary Hungarian National Army was to play, which therefore needs to be examined in more detail here.

Horthy's army was overwhelmingly made up of young officers in their twenties drawn from the lower gentry. Like their German *Freikorps* counterparts, they had gone through an intense post-war period of radicalization. This radicalism born of displacement was not unlike that found among the Baltic German and Russian émigré officers Bauer worked with in Munich.<sup>36</sup> Of the mere 6,570 volunteers who heeded Horthy's call, more than half were either former infantry or cavalry officers, or officers of the gendarmerie.<sup>37</sup> The separate paramilitary 'detachments' also attracted displaced and disgruntled Hungarian citizens who had lost their positions with the railways, utilities and other institutions that once belonged to the Hungarian state and were now in the hands of the Successor States.

According to Mária Ormos, the Hungarian National Army was really no national army in any sense. It was basically an amalgam of individual detachments recognizing no hierarchy beyond their respective commanders.<sup>38</sup> Besides the wartime experiences of many of the officers, it was untested in any form of disciplined field combat; the same applied to the so-called special detachments. The army was without any real structure, ranks or even weapons, the latter due to conditions insisted upon by the French.<sup>39</sup> This organization—or lack thereof—was typical of Central European paramilitary forces such as the Austrian *Heimwehr* and the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr*. Though it is true that Admiral Horthy was the main cohesive force of the army, he did not organize it nor did his Deputy Minister of National Defence, Gyula Gömbös, as Thomas Sakmyster holds.<sup>40</sup> This was the work of field officers who were often leaders of the semi-independent 'special detachments' such as that under Lieutenant Colonel Pál Prónay.

Other historians challenge this assessment. In Robert Gerwarth's article on transnational cooperation, he correctly identifies the pervasiveness of paramilitary activity throughout the vanquished nations. He argues, however, that the Hungarian Army and paramilitary units were much more structured and capable of maintaining a vibrant network of information and active cooperation across borders that 'contributed to the creation of a transnational zone of paramilitary violence'.<sup>41</sup> Thomas Lorman agrees with Ormos about the lack of any real hierarchical structure and restraint in the Hungarian Army that, like the detachments, regularly conducted independent 'liberations' on its own authority as late as 1923, despite attempts by the civilian government to curtail such paramilitary actions.<sup>42</sup>

Béla Bodó counters rather weakly in his 2006 article 'Militia Violence and State Power in Hungary, 1919-1922' that since neither Prónay, Héjjas nor Lehár and their paramilitary detachments joined the National Army, Hungary was not a 'paramilitary state'.<sup>43</sup> He goes as far as to reason that because the detachment leaders never entered the National Army, there was no link between them and the army—thus no link between the White Terror and the state.<sup>44</sup> This is echoed in his 2010 article 'Hungarian Aristocracy and the White Terror', wherein he asserts that the detachments were entities unto themselves of mostly radical right aristocrats that did not enter the National Army.<sup>45</sup>

Ormos argues that in any case, whatever Horthy may have thought about the excesses of the detachments, their dissolution during the Szeged period and immediately thereafter would have resulted 'in the evaporation of his National Army'.<sup>46</sup>

Thus a mutualism existed whereby Horthy needed to allow a large measure of independence to both the detachments and the leaders within the Hungarian Army if he hoped to have an army at all; and the detachments themselves needed the authoritative

patronage that only Commander-in-Chief Horthy could offer in order to carry out their terrorist activities. This would imply that, contrary to the historical interpretations of some, Hungary could be seen as a paramilitary state.<sup>47</sup> This further shows that the renegade and uncontrollable Hungarian forces were no more suitable for the job Bauer would assign them than the docile, untested rural Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr*.

At Szeged one also found the aforementioned leaders of ultra-nationalist associations who, at least until the establishment of the Regency in March 1920, had some influence on Horthy. Many of these same extreme right leaders would make up the so-called Hungarian Supreme Committee of Bauer's White International established in May 1920.

The first of these was Tibor Eckhardt who in 1917 had founded the nationalist organization *ÉME* to which many leading political and military persons belonged. At its inception the organization was shaped by officers and soldiers discharged during the war. The initial aim of *ÉME* was to maintain the pre-war borders of Hungary. With the proclamation of Károlyi's Hungarian Democratic Republic in November 1918, however, the organization became the epicentre of the Hungarian counter-revolution that later found its most violent expression against the remnants of the Kun regime. *ÉME* proudly declared itself to be anti-democratic, anti-socialist and anti-Semitic, and adhered to a stridently *völkisch* programme based on *Magyarság* ('Hungarianness')—an obvious parallel to *Deutschtum* and the sentiments taking root at that time in Germany. From 1919 until 1921, when it was formally banned, *ÉME* chiefly comprised high-ranking officials and ex-officers who saw themselves as the standard-bearers of the Hungarian counter-revolutionary movement.<sup>48</sup>

Eckhardt's contact with the Bavarian right was alluded to in his autobiography wherein he stated that Hungary, surrounded on the east, north and south by the new

hostile Successor States and ‘isolated by Marxist [*sic*] Austria from the West, was desperately in need of a friend’.<sup>49</sup> He was thus commissioned by Regent Horthy in May 1920 to meet with Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, who informed him that ‘the secret plan, in which the Hungarian Regent took great interest, had to be dropped.’<sup>50</sup> The nature of the ‘secret plan’ was not explained, but we know from Eckhardt’s recollections that it included an attempt for a Wittelsbach restoration to the throne of Bavaria in the name of the Crown Prince and that French Premier Clemenceau had rejected the idea.<sup>51</sup> The importance lies in that Tibor Eckhardt, officially representing the Hungarian government, was in communication with the Bavarian radical right at the very time that Bauer and Trebitsch were seeking Hungarian cooperation. Although *ÉME* is said to have been the most bloodthirsty of the patriotic associations, its influence was rather limited and it never developed into the kind of organization that included a large number of state policy-makers, as was the case with *MOVE*.

Because of its similarities to the Berlin-based, pre-Kapp *NV* wherein Ludendorff and Bauer played such leading roles, and because its founder and leader would subsequently be Bauer’s main link with Horthy, a closer look at *MOVE* is appropriate.

Originally designed during the last years of the Habsburg era to defend Hungary’s (not Austria-Hungary’s) national integrity and social stability,<sup>52</sup> it was transformed and reinvigorated into an anti-legitimist, rabidly anti-Semitic, ultra-reactionary organization when ex-General Staff officer Captain Gyula Gömbös was elected *MOVE* president in January 1919.<sup>53</sup> A natural organizer in much the same way as was Georg Escherich in Bavaria, Gömbös established covert societies couched within the more overt, public organization. Two such secret societies, one military and one civilian, functioned as the inner forces of *MOVE*.<sup>54</sup> Associated with *MOVE*, among other right-wing, patriotic associations, was the Christian National League (*Keretsztény*

*Nemzeti Liga*), a secret society within the league 'Resurrection' (*Feltámadás*), which was led by 50 'Battle Leaders' made up of many prominent individuals, including the influential diplomat Kálmán Kánya and future prime ministers such as Bethlen, Teleki and László Bárdossy, as well as important bishops.<sup>55</sup>

This loose affiliation of patriotic associations amounted to an enormous nationwide network covering virtually every interest group. They were often encouraged and even clandestinely subsidized by members of the government and became the chief vehicle for the spread of nationalist revisionism, irredentism and anti-Semitism. Consequently, Gömbös through *MOVE* and its affiliations, was in a powerful position to influence matters of state.<sup>56</sup> Hungarian-American historian Nagy-Talavera argued along similar lines, characterizing Gömbös as 'the most significant figure among the Szeged men'.<sup>57</sup>

With the fall of the Károlyi government in March 1919 and *MOVE* officially dissolved, Gömbös fled to the Vienna headquarters of the émigré political right where he wrote newspaper articles against the Bolshevik regime in Budapest. After the fall of Kun in August 1919, Gömbös returned to Budapest and continued where he had left off with a resuscitated *MOVE*.<sup>58</sup>

The historical assessment of Gömbös has changed somewhat since the fall of Central European Communism in the early 1990s.<sup>59</sup> He is no longer regarded as the proto-fascist, arch-enemy of such conservatives as Teleki and Bethlen. The links between the moderates and the radicals remained fairly close throughout the interwar years, and the hostility between the moderates in Vienna and the Szeged group was grossly exaggerated in the Cold War historiography.<sup>60</sup> Gömbös along with Eckhardt and Miklós Kozma would later become deputies of the Smallholders' Party in the Lower

House of Parliament and Gömbös, from 1922 on, a member of Bethlen's Party of National Unity.

Gömbös is credited with a number of firsts within the sphere of proto-fascists, such as coining the terms 'national socialism' and 'Rome-Berlin Axis'. More to the point, in a speech to the Lower House of Parliament, he advised his counter-revolutionary fellows of the need to form a 'Nationalist International' for the purpose of collectively battling against the 'gold international' (Jewish-dominated capitalism) and the Moscow international.<sup>61</sup>

Eventually expelled from Szeged by the French due to his radical activities, Gömbös continued to work with the government-in-exile.<sup>62</sup> By the time the Bauer group arrived in Budapest in May 1920, Gömbös was serving as State Secretary and would continue to be a confidential adviser to Regent Horthy.

Another individual who is counted among the early radical right organizers was Miklós Kozma. In late 1918 he was a leader of a small group of officers when, it is surmised, he met Gömbös in November 1918.<sup>63</sup> Kozma was a staunch supporter of *MOVE* and spent his energy promoting it nationwide until its ban in February 1919. He was subsequently to reach Szeged and, with Horthy's help, be named for an intelligence post in the government-in-exile in June. His task was to establish a network of communication between counter-revolutionary groups at home and abroad, and bring them all under the leadership of the Ministry of Defence.<sup>64</sup> After the fall of the Bolshevik regime, he organized an intelligence and counter-intelligence service, first in Szeged then in Siófok and Budapest, until March 1920. He was also involved with the more unsavoury types such as Pál Prónay in capturing and 'kidnapping' former members of the Communist government who had fled to Vienna.<sup>65</sup>

Later Kozma would play an active role in Horthy's government as head of the Hungarian Telegraph Agency (*Magyar Távirati Iroda*) and become an active member of the Smallholders' Party with Eckhardt and Gömbös.<sup>66</sup> The three men were all friends and would remain important advisers to Admiral Horthy.<sup>67</sup> The significance for this work lies in that Kozma's papers and diary, housed in the Hungarian State Archives, now serve as one of the very few glimpses accorded the historian into Bauer's dealings with the Hungarian government during the summer of 1920.

Certainly the most notorious individual within the Szeged group—but to some extent acting independently of Gömbös and Eckhardt and their organizations—was Lieutenant Colonel Pál Prónay, a most virulent anti-Semite who displayed a pathological lust for torture and murder in inventive ways.<sup>68</sup> Prónay, who became a 'Battle Leader' in Eckhardt's *ÉME* in 1919, had more in common with the likes of *Freikorpskämpfer* Major Stephani than with Gömbös or Eckhardt.<sup>69</sup> He formed both Admiral Horthy's personal bodyguard at Szeged and a partisan militia known as the White Guard. Though officially part of Horthy's new National Army, Lieutenant Colonel Prónay's detachment conducted a self-initiated, two-year White Terror campaign of reprisals against Jews, Social Democrats or anyone else deemed to have anything to do with the Soviet Republic of Hungary.<sup>70</sup> With Kun's fall in August, the atrocities only intensified as the National Army—with Prónay's detachment as its vanguard—moved north and some months afterwards entered Budapest. Prónay had wished to stage a city-wide pogrom but was prohibited by Horthy.<sup>71</sup> This man of action, whose legendary cruelty and visceral hatred of all that was liberal and democratic, eventually became an embarrassment to Horthy's new conservative regime.<sup>72</sup> According to Bauer's personal secretary who accompanied him to Budapest, Prónay was to become the closest of all the Hungarians to the Bauer group.<sup>73</sup>

The Szeged government-in-exile was unable to realize its goals for two reasons. Firstly, the French never recognized its validity and refused any Entente co-intervention against Kun. In response to French Command criticism that its leaders were too reactionary, Premier Gyula Károlyi resigned in mid-July in favour of Dezső Ábrahám, who had served in the pre-Kun government of Count Mihály Károlyi, hoping, in vain, to put a more democratic face on the administration. Secondly, like the ABC, the Szeged government-in-exile was neither unified nor unifying. It was condemned by officers who wished to form a dictatorship under Horthy, and by bourgeois liberal civilians who were unable to sway Horthy to their intentions.<sup>74</sup> On August 19 the Ábrahám political administration dissolved itself without a successor, basically leaving Horthy with a Hungarian National Army but no government.

In sum, the counter-revolutionary committees in Szeged and Vienna both failed in their avowed aims. They could no more convince the Entente to intervene on their behalf than they could take action themselves against the Kun regime, save for such foolhardy fiascos as the Bruck venture. Also, the two committees were plagued by diverse groups vying for control, so preventing any kind of unanimity of purpose, which would echo in the post-Kun era and the early Horthy Regency.

Although the extreme nationalist organizations *ÉME* and *MOVE*, and their far-reaching networks, could serve Bauer well were they put at his disposal, the undisciplined, rogue, militarily untested paramilitary forces that were associated with them were little different from their counterparts in the Baltic and Bavaria. These 'elite detachments' engaged in gang-style beatings, kidnappings, robbery, extortion and outright murder. Though the Prónay detachment had the worst reputation for violence, it was representative of the detachment mentality in general.<sup>75</sup>

B. Transition: From the Fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic to the Regency, August 1919 until March 1920

The transitional period serves to illustrate both the influence of the various groups on the Horthy leadership and the nature of the leadership itself. As for the first consideration, according to Mócsy,<sup>76</sup> after the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic it was simply a matter of which royalist group of two would emerge as the most powerful: the Szeged-based, free-elector, anti-Habsburg group with which Bauer would find support, or the Vienna-based aristocratic pro-Habsburg legitimist group whose estates now lay outside Hungarian control. It became clear that though the Entente would not allow the return of a Habsburg as head of state, the noble legitimists would slowly be brought into the Friedrich and Huszár provisional governments that ushered in the Horthy Regency, thus placing Bauer's legitimist detractors in positions of more direct influence over Horthy.

As for the nature of the leadership itself, Horthy has often been cast as Sakmyster portrays him: an upright gentleman and national symbol, but at the same time an incoherent babbling and intellectual lightweight easily manipulated by the leaders of the detachments throughout the early days of his Regency. Further, Sakmyster depicts both Gyula Gömbös and Pál Prónay as supremely ruthless, sadistic paramilitary leaders who, as Horthy's closest advisers, relentlessly steered the malleable Commander-in-Chief in the direction of establishing a military dictatorship.<sup>77</sup>

As shown below, Ormos correctly argues that after Szeged Horthy was far from being an intellectual lightweight, revealing an instinctive political acumen and, though the detachments were still useful, gradually weaning himself off them as he pursued a more moderate course in the interest of creating a state acceptable to the Entente.<sup>78</sup>

Admiral Horthy as Commander of the Hungarian National Army disassociated himself from the Szeged government-in-exile even before it ceased to exist in August 1919. He bided his time as the six-day social-democratic government of Gyula Peidl, which held office just long enough to repeal most of the legislation passed by the Hungarian Soviet Republic, was followed by a coup d'état that forced Peidl to accept Archduke Joseph von Habsburg as Regent who, in turn, appointed István Friedrich of the Christian National Unity Party as the new Prime Minister. It was at this point that Horthy began a series of moves that seven months later would see him installed as Head of State.<sup>79</sup>

Having divested himself of the office of Minister of National Defence with the Szeged government, and recognizing neither the Peidl nor the Friedrich governments, Horthy first managed to convince 'Homo Regius' Archduke Joseph von Habsburg to recognize him as Commander-in-Chief. This legalized Horthy's position somewhat in this very fluid political environment.<sup>80</sup>

Commander-in-Chief Horthy next needed to negotiate with the other armies operating within Hungary. Completely on his own authority, he secured permission from the Romanian Command in Budapest to occupy areas of north-west and south-west Transdanubia where he set up his headquarters in the north-central city of Siófok. Meanwhile, legitimist Colonel Antal Lehár's Graz Command had quickly moved east over the Austrian border into Hungary as soon as Kun fell and now controlled the western counties of Sopron, Vas and Zala.<sup>81</sup> Horthy was also able to secure Colonel Lehár's formal recognition of him as Commander-in-Chief, with Lehár to continue his own military activities under the auspices of fellow legitimist and patron Count Antal Sigray.

Horthy knew full well that the Entente and the Successor States would never allow the return of a Habsburg. For that reason, he began to distance himself from legitimists such as Lehár, whose position declined in the eyes of the Entente as his own correspondingly rose. Upon the withdrawal of the Romanian forces from the countryside, Horthy occupied the rest of Transdanubia with the Entente's blessing.

Preferring their support rather than their enmity, Horthy wisely did not exclude the legitimists from the process of state-building. Once the Romanian Army had withdrawn from the capital, Horthy and British High Commissioner Sir George Clerk—sent by the Council of Ambassadors in Paris to midwife the establishment of a new Hungarian state—arranged for the same Colonel Lehár to have the honour of entering Budapest with the National Army on November 14. Horthy made his own ceremonial entry two days later.<sup>82</sup>

Meanwhile, the Entente continued to withhold official recognition of the Friedrich government even as the Prime Minister repeatedly reshuffled his cabinet to suit the former.<sup>83</sup> These constant changes, however, inadvertently laid the cornerstone of the right-wing coalition that would ultimately rule Hungary for a decade. At the beginning of September Friedrich began filling posts with the ABC legitimist radicals and conservative supporters of the aristocracy once they started returning from Vienna.<sup>84</sup> Ödön Beniczky became Minister of the Interior and thus controlled the police; to Count József Somssich, a wealthy aristocrat, went the portfolio of Foreign Minister; and Gyula Rubinek, leader of the powerful Association of Hungarian Great Estate Owners, was named Minister of Agriculture. In Friedrich's last government, ABC returnees held nine of sixteen posts.<sup>85</sup> The nature of Friedrich's cabinet resulted in an alliance of the rightist, conservative parties of the Christian bloc that would govern Hungary for years. The Christian National Unity Party was strongly backed by such

magnates as Count Gyula Andrásy, the Zichy family and Count Albert Apponyi, not to mention Bethlen and Teleki, the latter much more ardent a legitimist than the wily Bethlen who tended to indulge Horthy's ambitions.<sup>86</sup> In short, the political machinery of the legitimist-leaning Christian National Unity Party that would do so much to derail Bauer's plans had been established.

Hungary and the Entente were anxious to build a legitimate government so that the economic blockade could be lifted and a peace treaty be concluded. To that end, the Clerk Mission insisted that a provisional government be formed that would later conduct democratic elections. Friedrich appointed Károly Huszár, a relatively unknown politician, as provisional Prime Minister. Both these men were among the contacts Trebitsch would make on his pre-Kapp Putsch visits to Budapest in late 1919 and early 1920. Bauer would be seemingly oblivious of the fact that neither man was considered influential enough to have Horthy's ear.

The next task of the Clerk Mission was to oversee the creation of a provisional Head of State. According to Sakmyster, Gyula Gömbös and Director of Military Intelligence Miklós Kozma fed Horthy exaggerated or inaccurate reports of an impending Communist coup d'état in Austria to point the 'impressionable Horthy' in the direction of establishing a military dictatorship.<sup>87</sup> While it is true that Horthy saw the Huszár government as inept, he also knew that regardless of how appealing the creation of a military dictatorship might be, the Entente would never allow it. This soon became a moot point when the first British Minister in Budapest, Sir Thomas Hohler, an old naval acquaintance of Horthy's, backed the idea of Horthy as a candidate for the office of Head of State. The National Assembly thus overwhelmingly elected Admiral Horthy as 'Provisional Regent' in March 1920, an office he held for the next 24 years.

Not everybody supported Horthy's election. A brief examination of those groups in opposition helps to define their relative positions in the new regime. The most obvious were the aforementioned Social Democrats and Liberals—thoroughly without any influence in the government and, due to lingering intimidation from the various detachments, unable to seek redress.

A more immediate threat to Horthy came from the strong legitimist wing of the traditional conservatives in the Christian National Unity Party.<sup>88</sup> Horthy's close relations with free-elector, anti-Habsburg Gömbös and various detachment leaders made the legitimists wonder just how much Horthy as Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary was committed to a restoration.<sup>89</sup>

Conservative traditionalists such as Counts Bethlen, Teleki, Apponyi and Andrassy who supported Horthy's candidacy also had concerns about a military commander as Head of State and could only soothe their anxieties by telling themselves that once in, Horthy could be controlled, his army tamed and the atrocities of the detachments ended.<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, Sakmyster notes that Colonel Lehár, 'who had been revolted by the excesses of the "White Terror," rejoiced over Horthy's election [thinking now] the special detachments would be curbed'.<sup>91</sup> In more recent sources, Lehár has been roundly implicated as a contributor to the White Terror, putting in doubt his role as a 'revolted' observer.<sup>92</sup>

There were also those who were hopeful that Horthy as Regent would address their respective agendas. The legitimists saw the title of 'Regent' as a symbol of historical continuity, and a cautious first step towards the return of the exiled Habsburg King Károly IV after the signing of the Peace Treaty. The free-elector faction, like Horthy, was fully aware that the Entente would not entertain a Habsburg on the throne

and hoped that Horthy, as Regent, would next arrange for the election of a king with no ties to the former Empire.

Meanwhile, Huszár resigned, according to the requirements of his provisional status, and Horthy invited Sándor Simonyi-Semadam to form a government as the new Prime Minister. On April 14 Horthy's respected friend Count Pál Teleki became Foreign Minister, which brought a decidedly liberal-conservative hue to the government.

## Chapter 13

### Negotiations with the Hungarians and Further Development of the White International Plot

The Hungarian government was facing the imminent signing of the Trianon Treaty that would truncate Hungary to its ethnic core. Indeed, the signing of the diktat from the Grand Trianon Palace in Paris on June 4, 1920, would reduce the land holdings of Hungary more than those of any other defeated power from World War I. Within weeks of Bauer and Trebitsch's arrival in Budapest, the former kingdom stood to lose 67.3% of its territory (including Croatia), 32.5% of its ethnic Hungarians, access to the sea and half of its larger cities.<sup>93</sup> There would also exist an increasingly irredentist nationalism in large portions of Romania, Slovakia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; and a border dispute over Burgenland on the Austrian-Hungarian border with what was deemed the 'revolutionary, left-wing government' of Karl Renner's Republic of Austria. To a large degree the cordiality extended to Bauer and the Ludendorff group showed a desperate Horthy grasping at straws, ready to consider any

means possible whether diplomatic or military, if not to thwart the inevitable treaty, at least to see it revised.

#### A. Favourable Reception of the Bauer Group in Budapest

On May 15 Colonel Max Bauer, Ignatius Trebitsch-Lincoln and Luise Engeler arrived in Budapest by steamer from Vienna. They were warmly greeted at the landing place by a certain Baron Kovács and immediately lodged in the luxurious Hotel Pannonia under their new Hungarian passport identities of Dr Bürger and Dr Tibor Lehotzky respectively, obtained for them by the Hungarian Minister in Vienna, Gusztáv Gratz.<sup>94</sup>

The next day a series of meetings ensued headed up by Colonel Bauer and Trebitsch, and leading Hungarian officials.<sup>95</sup> The group met with Pál Prónay, Tibor Eckhardt and Gyula Gömbös at the Hotel Pannonia. Gömbös received Bauer's plan with enthusiasm and promptly arranged for Bauer to be presented to Regent Horthy on May 18.<sup>96</sup> In his memoirs, Prónay praised Colonel Bauer for his intelligence and organizational skills, but thought him gullible for 'trusting the Jew Trebitsch-Lincoln'.<sup>97</sup> Prónay also noted that Bauer and his group wanted to create an 'international, anti-Bolshevik, anti-Semitic alliance'.<sup>98</sup>

Two days later Bauer handed Admiral Horthy a letter of introduction given to him by General Ludendorff that outlined the basic tenets of the Rosenheim plan to form a White International.<sup>99</sup> Bauer pointed out to Horthy the great opportunity at hand for Hungary to win back its former national borders. He went on to explain the problems involved in organizing and financing such an undertaking against both the Bolsheviks

and the Entente, and added that due to the presence of the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission in the capitals of the defeated powers—including Budapest—any open work along the lines indicated in the plan was out of the question. Bauer therefore suggested the formation of a secret committee within which the three most important groups (or ‘Supreme Committees’) could work unmolested. These three groups were to be the ‘German Supreme Committee’ made up of Colonel Max Bauer, Trebitsch-Lincoln, Major Franz von Stephani (who was soon to join the two in Budapest) and representatives of the Bavarian-based *Orgesch*; the ‘Russian Supreme Committee’ comprising representatives of the Berlin and Munich émigré communities of White Russians around General Vasili Biskupsky; and the ‘Hungarian Supreme Committee’. Bauer proceeded to clarify that the financial burden would be eased by the production of counterfeit Russian Duma roubles, as trialled in the Bermond-Avalov scheme during the Baltic Campaign the year before.<sup>100</sup> Horthy promised to give his answer concerning Hungarian participation at a later time.<sup>101</sup>

During the last half of May 1920, interest in the Germans had grown within the official circles of the Hungarian capital. Some days after the Horthy audience, Bauer and Trebitsch were received by the Chief of the General Staff, Count Béla Berzeviczy, whose feigned curiosity about the Rosenheim plan betrayed a hidden agenda, for he represented the Habsburg legitimists and saw in Bauer’s plan a possible obstacle to the restoration of King Károly to the throne of St Stephen.<sup>102</sup> Thus within days of their arrival in Budapest, the Bauer group had encountered both their most enthusiastic supporters, found in the Szeged Prónay-Eckhardt-Gömbös trio, and their ultimately victorious detractors amongst the legitimist aristocratic statesmen.

B. The May 26 Memorandum: 'Liquidation of all Revolutionary Elements'

Heartened by the vague but promising audience with Regent Horthy, Colonel Bauer and Trebitsch, joined by Major Stephani who had since arrived from Munich, embarked on a series of meetings with their Hungarian counterparts, headed up by Eckhardt, Gömbös and Prónay, to work out the details along organizational, financial and political lines. The Rosenheim plan was greatly broadened to include the cooperation of all the old wartime Central Powers and any group who might, for any reason, stand against Bolshevism and the nations of the Entente. The resulting document referred to in Bauer's papers as the 'May 26 memorandum' was, thus, the furthest expression of interwar transnational conspiracies. This can only be appreciated by recital in extenso here. A cautionary note should be added: the general consensus among historians is that the actual memorandum was likely drafted by Trebitsch but initiated by Bauer with his characteristic 'B' as a mark of his approval.

The memorandum first named the key German, Hungarian and Russian representatives from their respective Supreme Committees to form a Central Committee whose task was made clear by the heading of the document: 'Liquidation of all Revolutionary Elements' (*Beseitigung aller Umsturzelemente*).

This refined and more detailed version of the plan was even more fantastic than the original drafted in Rosenheim. It called for a simultaneous revolt of Irish revolutionaries and Arab nationalists with the idea that while the English were busy in Ireland, and the French with their mandate in the Near East, the plan would be initiated in Central Europe.<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile, Hungary was to close its borders and stand in readiness for eventualities, should they arise.<sup>104</sup> Nationalist organizations in the separate member countries were to subordinate their activities to German leadership (presumably

through *Orgesch*) with its central base in Budapest from where all actions would be coordinated. Next, German and Hungarian forces were to support General Biskupsky in the liberation of Russia from Bolshevism. Finally, upon success in the east, Germany and Hungary would turn westwards and engage the armies of the Entente who would be caught unawares.

The resulting map would contain only four powerful states in Central and Eastern Europe. Firstly, a Greater Germany would stretch from the English Channel and the western frontier of Alsace-Lorraine in the west to include West Prussia and Bohemia in the east. The north-south dimensions were to be from the southern border of Denmark up to and including German-Austria in the south. Secondly, in the south-west would lie a Greater Hungary that would include Burgenland in the west and extend to the Black Sea<sup>105</sup> and from Slovakia's northern border to Croatia. Thirdly, a Greater Bulgaria would encompass Romanian Dobrudja, Turkish Thrace, northern Albania and Serbia. Fourthly, Russia would regain its pre-1914 borders and, as compensation for relinquishing its pre-war pan-slavism, be given a free hand in the Dardanelles and northern Persia.<sup>106</sup>

The separate countries were to finance their activities themselves but would be supported by the Central Committee who, through the efforts of the White Russian representatives in Hungary (Biskupsky et al.), would produce counterfeit Russian Duma roubles at that time still considered legal tender.<sup>107</sup> The memorandum also put special emphasis on the importance of a unified press service (Trebitch had served as 'Press Agent' for the short-lived Kapp government). It was further decided that representatives from all the important nations involved in the plot would meet once weekly, when they would have an open opportunity to report on activities and make requests as needed. Section I closed with notice that all collaborators must swear an oath of loyalty—any

breach of which was to be answered by death. This was an interesting stipulation given the betrayal of the White International by Trebitsch himself early that autumn.

Section II concerned preparations for eventual war against the Entente. Bauer stated that each of the participating nations must renew their respective military forces so as to thwart any interference of the Entente with ‘our liquidation of all revolutionary elements [and] ... our efforts to compel the annulment of the so-called “Peace Treaties”’.<sup>108</sup> The description of military preparations continued:

- 1) The organization of the separate armed forces is to be the responsibility of the nations concerned. Germany is to concern itself with the organization and coordination of the training of officers to be sent to the individual participating countries.
- 2) Germany is to be charged with the purchase of weapons and ammunition from German representatives [which should be] distributed according to need.<sup>109</sup> The procurement of weapons is to be initiated as soon as possible.
- 3) In the event weapons cannot be delivered from Germany or the individual countries are unable to procure them themselves, Germany is to arrange the necessary machines, raw material and personnel for the manufacture of new weapons [presumably in Hungary].<sup>110</sup>

Section III outlined the economic and political concerns, and charged the Hungarian government with providing ‘produce, livestock, wine and so forth’ for export from surplus stock—a crucial consideration in the event that the Entente decided to renew the blockade against Germany. The exports themselves were to be controlled by an undesignated German-Hungarian private company through which the secret distribution of foodstuffs to the individual forces would be carried out.

The placement of troops within Hungary was to include the settlement of *Freikorps* and *Einwohnerwehr* personnel conducted by German and Hungarian representatives, who had been chosen by the Central Committee, posing as a civilian immigration agency. The ‘settlers’ would come over the borders as civilian workers, be given residence permits by the Hungarian government and gather in specific locations awaiting their deployment. This scheme would also serve to ‘save’ (Bauer’s term) key

*Freikorps* and *Einwohnerwehr* units from dissolution, as currently demanded by the Entente. They would simply disperse in Germany and reassemble in Hungary.<sup>111</sup>

Colonel Bauer's May 26 memorandum is indicative of what his biographer, Adolf Vogt, refers to as Bauer's inclination towards abstract thinking and draftsmanship without any real consideration as to how his plans would be carried out.<sup>112</sup>

With growing impatience for an official declaration of Hungary's willingness to participate, Bauer sent a note on May 30 reminding his Hungarian hosts that he was 'still without a binding answer'. He tried to impress upon them the urgency of their decision in view of 'the expected rapid development in the policies of the great powers as with the events in the Russo-Polish War',<sup>113</sup> adding that 'Turkey and Germany necessitate quick action to take advantage of the favourable opportunities.'<sup>114</sup> On June 1 Horthy, through his representatives on the Hungarian Supreme Committee, made a promise to take part and to give the Bauer undertaking his full support.<sup>115</sup>

Bauer and his colleagues also found a receptive audience in Budapest from the more radical elements of the Szeged group. The crowning moment, though, was when Admiral Horthy as head of the Hungarian state had offered his participation in the daring venture.

What Bauer did not understand was that his scheme, with all its meticulous planning and memoranda, was little more than a desperate fallback plan for the Hungarians—taken seriously by few—should the preferred traditional, diplomatic approach to securing treaty revisions fail.

## Chapter 14

### Hungarian Foreign Policy and the Incongruous Position of the White International

This chapter discusses two examples illustrating that Hungary's foreign policy approach from the early days of the transitional period to the summer of 1920 was contrary to Bauer's plan. In the first example, Hungary pursued a secret policy of rapprochement towards France based on massive economic concessions in the hope of French support for border revisions. In the second example, the Hungarians, in their negotiations with the Austrian right regarding the Burgenland issue and the fight against the left, favoured a policy of the legal removal of Chancellor Renner over the military solution advocated by Bauer that was, in fact, slated as the first action of the White International.

Hungary was now surrounded by Entente-sponsored Successor States that had made up two-thirds of the former Kingdom of Hungary. The result was a foreign policy bent on territorial revision once the Treaty of Trianon was signed. Certainly, all rightist groups within Hungary shared this goal but there were very different ideas as to how this was to be achieved. One side believed Hungary's fate lay in the traditional German orientation. Among this group may be counted Tibor Eckhardt, Gyula Gömbös and the former Prime Minister István Friedrich who on May 25 addressed the Hungarian National Assembly and declared, 'The Entente created the League of Nations for the exploitation of its victory; the World War vanquished must, therefore, form a counterweight together to secure our common interests; Hungary must again look to her old and faithful federal partners.'<sup>116</sup> With this group Bauer was likely to find at least sympathy if not outright support.

It is argued here that an orientation towards Germany and espousing the need for a ‘counterweight ... to secure ... common interests’,<sup>117</sup> while consistent with the basis of Bauer’s scheme, does not mean that the Rosenheim plan was endorsed or even considered by the pro-German elements in the Hungarian government. Nor does it mean that those who thought it prudent to contemplate both Entente and German orientations in the interest of keeping Hungary’s options open included anything beyond a simple alliance of the vanquished within the Danubian region—which would effectively exclude the fantastic and wholly unworkable extremes that Bauer’s plan brought to the table.

The other side was made up of career diplomats and more traditional statesmen who saw Hungary’s future better based on a rapprochement with France, hoping to secure investments in Hungarian enterprises that would so engage the Parisian government in Hungarian economic matters that France would itself seek a revision of the Trianon settlements in its own interest.<sup>118</sup>

Bauer and his group were well aware of the latter school of thought. Had not the Bavarian ‘*Bauerndoktor*’, Georg Heim, pursued a similar approach to France? What the Bauer group did not know, however—nor were they told when they arrived—was that secret talks with the French had long been under way.

The legitimist faction around the relatively moderate Foreign Minister, Count Pál Teleki, and his co-workers—the Deputy Foreign Minister, Baron Kálmán Kánya, the Department Chief of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, Count Khuen-Héderváry, and the Chief of the General Staff, Major General Béla Berzeviczy<sup>119</sup>—favoured playing the French card. For that reason, the activities of the pro-German, anti-Habsburg Gömbös-Eckhardt-Kozma group were viewed with concern. In short, Bauer and his Rosenheim plan stood at cross purposes to the Francophile legitimists. Trebitsch was well aware of

this, stating in his autobiography that ‘we had to encounter the opposition of the Hungarian Legitimists, who—justly—regarded our plans as likely to create obstacles for any restoration of the Habsburgs, and who, therefore, worked against us wherever they could.’<sup>120</sup>

#### A. Secret Franco-Hungarian Negotiations: Territorial Revision

Admiral Horthy realized the importance of staffing his cabinet, especially his Royal Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with professional civil servants well versed in the arts of diplomacy. He achieved this long before the arrival of the Bauer group in Budapest in May 1920. These highly skilled individuals had been hard at work exploring diplomatic solutions with the Entente, particularly France. The goal was, of course, to find a mutually beneficial basis for constructive Franco-Hungarian cooperation in the region with possible treaty revisions in mind.

Hopes rose when the new French Prime Minister, Alexandre Millerand, assigned the supposedly pro-Hungarian Maurice Paléologue to the post of General Secretary of Foreign Affairs at the Quai d’Orsay. Alexandre Millerand was one of those in Paris who questioned the wisdom of the complete break-up of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. The instability of the entire Balkan Peninsula, greatly exacerbated by the current Russo-Polish War, only served to justify French concern and a way was sought to establish a political and economic presence in the region. Because the Italians feared the creation of a strong Danubian confederation and the French were hostile to an Austrian-German *Anschluss*, a bargain was struck whereby Italy would oppose an *Anschluss* and France would oppose a Danubian union.<sup>121</sup> This was welcome news to the Horthy regime, as well as to Britain. The Foreign Office was naturally concerned that the advantages the

British High Commission enjoyed over other Entente missions in Budapest through Hohler's close friendship with the Regent would be eroded by a strong French presence in the area. Further concern surfaced with the appointment of Count Teleki, a known Francophile, to the office of prime minister in July.<sup>122</sup>

Initial contact between Hungary and France took place, in the first half of April 1920, concurrently with the negotiations at Trianon. The talks were based on extending economic concessions to France for which Hungary would expect military and territorial revisions to the Treaty.<sup>123</sup> At the same time Count Armand de Saint-Sauveur, director of the Lothering plant of the powerful Schneider-Creusot foundry, entered into talks with Dr Károly Halmos, a Hungarian lawyer with strong connections to the major banking houses in Budapest.<sup>124</sup> According to a document allegedly given to him by Paléologue, dated April 15, 1920, Halmos reported to the Hungarian government that France had promised a Hungarian military convention allowing for a larger army; the French government was willing to favour Hungary in treaty revision negotiations, and Hungary would become the centre of a new combination in Central Europe.<sup>125</sup> After what seemed an encouraging beginning, Foreign Minister Teleki (as he still was then) sent a delegation led by Count István Bethlen, diplomat Count Imre Csáky and the director of the state railways, M. Tolnay, to Paris on April 23 to open official talks, making options offered to Schneider-Creusot conditional on French government assurances.<sup>126</sup> On May 4 an agreement was reached that Schneider-Creusot would lease the Hungarian railways, build a port in Budapest and hold control of the General Credit Bank, if and when approved by the French Parliament. The Hungarians then added conditions, in particular an increase in the size of the army, a delay in handing over West Hungary (Burgenland) to Austria and the speedy Romanian and Yugoslavian evacuation of occupied territory.<sup>127</sup> The French government answered that it had no

authority to meet any of the Hungarian demands but the matter of locating an ‘International Commission’ in Budapest would be discussed.<sup>128</sup>

Paléologue was concerned that the Hungarians were reading too much into the talks regarding treaty revisions. There was no chance that any of Hungary’s independent neighbours would hand over territory to Hungary and there was little desire from the Entente to compel them to do so. The Hungarians would, for the moment, have to be satisfied with the dictates of the French but revision of the borders remained the cornerstone of Hungarian foreign policy for years to come.

The changing military situation in Russia strengthened Hungary’s bargaining position in June 1920. Up until that time Horthy had openly listened to his advisers around Gömbös and Kozma who served as the Regent’s official links with the Bauer group.<sup>129</sup> He now informed Baron Lehár, a prominent leader of the legitimists, that from now on he was ready to engage ‘in the dirty business’ with France, which meant offering Hungarian economic concessions in return for border revisions.<sup>130</sup> Moreover, Horthy declared to German Military Attaché General Massov that at this juncture, France presented a quicker and less risky way for Hungarian revisionism than did his German counterparts around Bauer.<sup>131</sup>

To ingratiate himself further with France, Regent Horthy considered a possible role in military aid to Poland. Accordingly, Teleki let the French government know that he was prepared not only to pledge Hungarian munitions reserves to Poland but also to restart the munitions plant in Csepel if the need arose. On July 14 Teleki asked Paléologue directly whether Hungary should form a strike force for the defence of Poland through Slovakia.<sup>132</sup>

In mid-July the French delegation headed by Saint-Sauveur gathered at Horthy’s summer palace in Gödöllő, some twenty miles from Budapest, to finalize three treaties

concerned with economic concessions to France, at the very time when the Bauer group was at the height of its negotiations with the Hungarians.<sup>133</sup> The first was the so-called Railway Lease Treaty of July 19, which stipulated that Hungary's railway system was to be set up as a Hungarian-French railway lease joint-stock company controlled by representatives of several large French banks (Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas and Crédit Lyonnais) for a period of fifty years. The second Treaty of Gödöllő of July 23 contained vague promises of French assistance with the territorial revision of the Trianon Treaty. The third treaty was the Military Convention of July 27 that dealt with the French agreement to offer financial and materiel aid to boost the strength of the Hungarian Army from 35,000 (as stipulated at Trianon) to 150,000 so as to strike against the Bolshevik Russian forces in Poland.<sup>134</sup>

This would certainly appear a very encouraging gain in the revisionist-inspired foreign policy of Prime Minister Pál Teleki (as he had now become), but all was not as it seemed. Paléologue assured Teleki that Millerand was not averse to some kind of strengthening of the Hungarian Army in future but the time was not ripe for this yet.<sup>135</sup> Some weeks later at the British-French Conference at Port Lympne, near Hythe in Kent, the Polish crisis was discussed. Lloyd George and Clemenceau decided that no Entente troops were to be sent to Warsaw. Shortly thereafter Paléologue's adversaries in the French Foreign Ministry, notably Philippe Berthelot, managed to outmanoeuvre the pro-Hungarian party and the French Parliament failed to ratify the treaties. Thus in one fell swoop, any hope of territorial revision by the French was dashed.<sup>136</sup>

The consequences for the Bauer group were significant. Not only had Horthy pursued a course of diplomacy contrary to the spirit of the White International behind Bauer's back, but he had also reduced the influence of the extreme nationalists by making common cause with Teleki and the legitimists within the Foreign Ministry. In

other words, Bauer's pro-German link to Horthy through Gömbös, Eckhardt and Kozma was now much more tenuous.

Meanwhile, in mid-August the Polish Army launched a desperate attack against the weaker of the pincer arms surrounding it. The result was the so-called Miracle on the Vistula whereby a combination of intense fatigue of the Red Army and overextended supply lines led to Russian defeat on August 16 and the humiliating Peace of Riga. The French could then gracefully inform the Hungarians that the Polish victory removed any danger of Bolshevism in Europe and thus there no longer existed any need to strengthen the Hungarian Army.<sup>137</sup> For the Hungarians the dream of revising the Trianon Treaty with the blessing of the French was over. Horthy's view then reverted to the Austrian matter in the hope that at least a small revision concerning Burgenland could be achieved.

#### B. Austro-Hungarian Negotiations: The Fate of Burgenland and the Fight against the Left

This section will show that, in stark contrast to Bauer's plan, during Hungary's long negotiations with the rightist opposition to the Austrian government, there was no talk of militarily removing Karl Renner or even offering assistance were the Austrian right to attempt such a coup. The desired end would come through the constitutional processes of the state.

As regards the Vienna government, a genuine belief prevailed amongst most Hungarian policy-makers that the Renner administration was simply the precursor of a Bolshevik regime. It had happened before. The liberal left-leaning Hungarian government of Mihály Károlyi's Chrysanthemum Revolution had paved the way for

133 days of Bolshevik rule. The *USPD* government of Kurt Eisner had been succeeded by the short-lived Bavarian Soviet Republic shortly after his assassination. Hungary saw the Renner-led Austria as a hostile nation no less than it did the surrounding Entente-sponsored Successor States. In January 1920 Horthy explained to a British representative in Budapest that socialism in Austria was so strong that it was Bolshevism in all but name.<sup>138</sup>

Hungary put out feelers to rightist organizations—mostly monarchist—in Austria as soon as the anti-Bolshevik government of István Friedrich<sup>139</sup> took power from Béla Kun's successor, the Social Democrat Gyula Peidl, in August 1919. The basis of this collaboration was a concern shared by Horthy and members of the loose Austrian organization *Die Führer der konservativ-monarchistischen Richtungen* (Leaders of the Conservative-Monarchist Direction) that the Renner government posed a threat of a social-democratic Central Europe. Elements among foreign policy-makers in Vienna seemed to be moving towards establishing a confederation with the Successor States; Horthy perceived this as encirclement. There had already been ill feeling due to the asylum granted by Austria to all fleeing Hungarians after the fall of the Kun regime. Besides most of the representatives of the People's Commissars of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, Austria took in many left-wing journalists who immediately began printing weekly and monthly journals full of anti-Hungarian literature.<sup>140</sup>

In December 1919 the rightist leader from the southern province of Styria, *Landeshauptmann* Dr Anton Rintelen,<sup>141</sup> accompanied by his deputy Dr Jakob Ahrer, came to Budapest for talks with Hungarian Interior Minister Count Beniczky and with Count Antal Sigray, both well-known legitimists. Rintelen was concerned with the existence of a strong left-wing movement in the Styrian industrial centre around Graz and Kapfenberg, and requested that Hungary send troops along the Hungarian-Styrian

border to intimidate the left and, if that did not hinder their growth, across the border to secure local food supplies.<sup>142</sup> After the talks, the royalist Head of the Hungarian Legation in Vienna, Count Gusztáv Gratz, informed Rintelen that due to the current international tensions, direct military action in Styria was out of the question.<sup>143</sup> Whilst such an event was hardly likely, the Austrian extreme right certainly did not shy away from requesting Hungarian aid in pursuit of their domestic political agenda. Thus at least the idea of transnational rightist cooperation on a military level predated Bauer's arrival, as did looking to Hungary for financial support of rightist activities outside its borders.

Further contacts were made in the rightist *Vereinigung für Ordnung und Recht* (*VOR*; Union for Order and Justice), the Austrian equivalent of the old Berlin-based National Union, that was striving to remove the *SPÖ* government of Karl Renner.<sup>144</sup> Hungarian influence in *VOR* was so great that in January 1920 Gratz recommended to his government in Budapest that he serve as political leader of the organization.<sup>145</sup> His reasons included keeping the proverbial 'foot in the door' to influence an acceptable settlement of the so-called Burgenland question involving the previous province of West Hungary awarded to Austria by the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye on September 10, 1919.<sup>146</sup> Eventually the question of financial support for the Austrian rightist movement, the leadership of *VOR* and the issue of Burgenland grew so intertwined that the future status of the province became a bargaining chip between the Austrian and Hungarian sides.

On January 24, 1920, Count Leopold Hartig of *VOR* sent a message to Gratz in Vienna to 'clarify the Austrian right's position on the Burgenland issue'. Hartig stated, 'in the interests of both states, the Entente needed to be reminded that the territory under question should be settled through a plebiscite.'<sup>147</sup> On March 23 a meeting was held,

attended by *VOR* leader Hartig, National Councillor Heinl, City Councillor Vaugoin and Dr Rader.<sup>148</sup> A copy of the minutes exposes at least a willingness on the part of the Austrian right wing to consider an accommodation with the Hungarians regarding Burgenland, given that the disputed area was consistently referred to as *Westungarn* (West Hungary) throughout the text. The province in question was designated as being in the ‘temporary custody’ of Austria and the dictates of Saint-Germain were described as ‘very unhealthy to the interests of both states’.<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, the document contained the following declaration: ‘we are of the view that a lasting neighbourly relationship between Austria and Hungary can only be [achieved] if a revision is submitted.’<sup>150</sup> Accordingly, the status of West Hungary was to be solved through a plebiscite.<sup>151</sup> In exchange for their support of Hungarian claims to Burgenland, Hartig requested both huge financial subsidies and the Hungarian government’s unconditional guarantee of Austria’s access to the province’s agricultural surplus. Hungary agreed to the conditions and Horthy authorized a remittance of 10 million Hungarian crowns to twelve councillors of *VOR* from January to mid-July.<sup>152</sup>

In mid-March Hungary set a new condition for the arrangement: the *VOR* leadership must endorse all future negotiations. To this end, Father Ignaz Seipel, representing the new right-of-centre Christian Social Party wing of the organization, entered into discussions again with Gratz and stressed that the takeover of power in Vienna by the Christian Social Party was his most urgent concern.<sup>153</sup> In the event of an armed, leftist backlash, he explained, the militia and *Heimwehr* must be better equipped. For this reason, Seipel requested that an additional 50 million Austrian crowns be transferred to *VOR* by the Hungarian government. Speaking for Horthy, Gratz made two conditions for the release of this sum: in the event of a Christian Social Party electoral victory, a swing to the right must shortly follow, and the new Austrian government must

solve the Burgenland question with Hungary in a peaceful manner. Seipel, of course, accepted the rather modest demand regarding a swing to the right and replied that, concerning *Westungarn*, there existed a willingness to accept Hungary's desired solution but that immediate formal action would meet opposition and the issue must, therefore, be handled in an unhurried fashion. Most of the funds were thus handed over to Austrian *Heimwehr* leader Field Marshal Metzger and his successor, General Ehrenfels, through the Hungarian Legation in Vienna.<sup>154</sup>

The negotiations discussed above show that, firstly, Hungary was making overtures in all directions long before, as well as during, Bauer's stay in Budapest. Secondly—and most importantly—the Hungarian government plainly preferred the ascendancy of the moderate-right Christian Social Party through the legal political machinery of the Austrian Constitution to any military action. It offered the possibility of an amenable settlement of the Burgenland question in Hungary's favour, precluding the need to get involved in an Austrian civil war and rendering Bauer's master plan of militarily toppling 'red Vienna' unnecessary.

The attempted rapprochement between Hungary and France, and the nature of the extended negotiations with rightist elements in Austria, clearly serve to indicate that the methods advocated by Bauer were completely out of step with Hungary's preferred approach to foreign policy.

## Chapter 15

### The White International and the Seeds of its Demise

It is argued here that despite the impressive progress made by Bauer in coordinating actions between Bavaria and Hungary concerning support for the Austrian

rightist leadership, the seeds of the White International's demise had already been sown. These included the repeated failure of Ludendorff to come to Budapest in person to assume the leadership of the nascent organization. This gave the appearance of a lack of commitment on his part and also contributed to the beginnings of strife within the Bauer group itself. It is further argued that the insistence of the Bavarian *Orgesch* and *Orka* that they act as sole agents in dealing with Hungarian funds for the Austrian extreme right caused concern within the Hungarian camp, which eventually led to Hungary returning to the policy established with Austria before the Bauer group arrived and thus souring relations with Bavaria.

A. Ludendorff's Refusal to Come to Budapest and the Weakening of Bauer's Authority

Upon Horthy's declaration of his willingness to cooperate with Ludendorff and his emissaries in creating a White International, Colonel Bauer was immediately confronted with obstacles. The first of these was Ludendorff's absence in Budapest. Bauer posted a letter to Major Stephani, then in Munich, instructing him to bring Ludendorff to Budapest straight away so he could take charge of the White International.<sup>155</sup> Due to an International Trade Union boycott of all communications in and out of Hungary in protest at the White Terror, Stephani did not receive Bauer's letter until three weeks later. Bauer was thus confined to acting on his own without discussion or instructions from Ludendorff at this most crucial time. With the resumption of rail travel in late June, Colonel Bauer and Major Stephani travelled to Ludendorff's Bavarian residence in Rosenheim to finally fetch Ludendorff but he refused to come to Budapest. It was at this time that Bauer reported back to Trebitsch,

still in the Hungarian capital, that differences had arisen between the Ludendorff circle and the Bavarian parties.<sup>156</sup> On July 9 Bauer and Stephani returned to Budapest with representatives of *Orgesch* and the von Kahr government in tow—but without Ludendorff, much to the disappointment of the Hungarian activists around Gömbös and Trebitsch.

In fact, General Ludendorff never ventured to Budapest to assume the leadership of the White International. He did, however, send Admiral Horthy a handwritten letter on August 19 wherein he gave the excuse that his presence in the Hungarian capital could compromise the ‘great cause’, and affirmed that he had full confidence in Colonel Bauer. Other than that, the letter simply outlined what Bauer had already explained to Horthy some three months earlier.<sup>157</sup> Of course, Ludendorff’s reluctance to travel to Budapest was to a large extent justified by the duplicity of the Hungarians, as evidenced by their ongoing discussions with representatives of the Entente.

The significance of Ludendorff’s absence is twofold: Ludendorff was not only the dominant German factor in the White International but also its spiritual leader. Without the famous general, the legitimacy of the German side—not much to begin with—was greatly reduced, to the advantage of the von Kahr circle that contemplated a possible bilateral combination of a Greater Bavaria (with Austria attached) and Hungary. Bavaria, like Hungary, had a legitimate government whereas Colonel Bauer represented no country at all. He was merely an emissary from someone the German government considered an outlaw and a counter-revolutionary loose cannon.

A second obstacle facing Bauer, connected to the first, was the emergence of fissures in the German side. Trebitsch had long felt that the Bavarians could not be trusted. In an undated letter to Bauer, he expressed his frustration, stating he would not proceed ‘even one step further’, fearing that the ‘whole grandiose matter will degenerate

into a Bavarian party business'. Nor did Trebitsch shy away from attacking Bauer, personally forecasting a 'second Kapp affair in grand style'.

I ... want to make world policy and not small-time Bavarian pettifoggery. It was agreed that Ludendorff would come here for the laying of the foundation stone. My decision is made. If L does not come, then the matter will not succeed. Neither you nor I can manage the Bavarians without Ludendorff. It will be a fiasco. One fiasco because of my blind trust in you was enough for me [a reference to the Kapp Putsch].<sup>158</sup>

#### B. An Uneasy Working Relationship between the Bavarians and the Hungarians

In the absence of Ludendorff, on July 9 a delegation representing Minister-President von Kahr led by *Orka* Chief Rudolf Kanzler arrived in Budapest. On July 11 they entered into initial discussions with Regent Horthy in Bauer's company.<sup>159</sup> The actual agenda of the meeting is not to be found in the documents but, as was Bauer's practice, he produced a memorandum (not unlike that of May 26) in which he acknowledged Bavarian involvement. Below is a key passage:

The suppressed *Völker* [people] of Europe must bind together, a) to battle against Bolshevism, Communism, radicalism, etc. on the one side and the growth of capitalism on the other and, b) to do away with the unfulfillable and disgraceful peace treaties.

The following points of his text were marked as urgent:

1) A common Bavarian-Hungarian border must be achieved as soon as possible ... in order that economic and military cooperation is viable. Austria must therefore provide in the separate constitutions of its provinces the necessary clauses to occasion an *Anschluß* in relation to Bavaria<sup>160</sup> and the establishment of a strong civilian government [from the right]. Actions in Austria must come from Austria itself through already prepared organizations that will be led by Bavarians. It is necessary to raise special operations troops from dependable German elements.<sup>161</sup> Hungary and Bavaria are to remain officially neutral but at the ready if their help in the elimination of the ... Renner government is needed. Hungary is to support the operation through financial loans to the Austrian government [*sic*] for payment of the raising of troops and the completion of arming the Austrian organizations.

2) Hungary will be obliged to provide Bavaria with grain surplus. For its part, Bavaria will provide Hungary with farm machinery and fertilizer, etc. Bavaria is

also to send official representatives from the Agriculture and Finance Ministry to help in the coordination of the process.

3) The delivery of arms from Bavaria to Hungary is to be undertaken by *Orgesch*. Hungary will determine the type and number of weapons and equipment needed and then make an advance payment.

4) For Russia's part it must make every effort to gain ground in Russia for the sake of the economic future of Hungary and Bavaria. The particulars are to be prepared by the current White Russian representatives in Budapest, Biskupsky and Miller.<sup>162</sup>

5) On matters of organization, leadership and financial appropriations for their respective military needs, each country will be given a free hand. In the case of large military operations, however, a supreme command will take over coordination activities. On matters as to who would command in such a case, a speedy resolution is necessary.

6) On matters of communication and discussion between Hungary and Bavaria a special system of couriers is to be set up.

Bauer's awareness of Bavarian sensitivities was reflected in the memorandum.

He referred to an *Anschluß* between Austria and Bavaria—not Germany—that was consistent with the radical right Bavarian agenda. Perhaps the most important aspect was the issue of who was to assume overall command. It had always been understood that General Ludendorff would hold this position but Bauer only noted that a 'choice must be made soon'.<sup>163</sup> Little wonder Trebitsch often saw his co-conspirator as appeasing the Bavarian right at the expense of all-German considerations.

### C. *Orgesch* and *Orka* in Austria and the Matter of Hungarian Funding

Shortly after the Kanzler-Horthy discussions, Bauer began talks with representatives of the Austrian extreme right that included former Mayor of Vienna Richard Weiskirchner. The documents do not indicate if any Hungarians were present.

Bauer envisaged the participation of Bavarian, German and Hungarian troops in support of Austrian *Freikorps* collectively referred to as the *Heimwehr*. While *Orgesch* units were supposed to march over the eastern Bavarian border and occupy the western provinces of Tyrol, Salzburg and Upper Austria up to the Linz-Tauern Tunnel line, Austrian *Orka* troops would take charge of Carinthia and Styria bordering Italy and Slovenia in the south. The contribution of Hungarian troops was to be limited to the occupation of Burgenland.<sup>164</sup> Lower Austria and the capital of Vienna were to be assigned to special units of the *Organisation Consul*, the assassination squad that ex-putschist *Freikorps* leader Ehrhardt had been assembling throughout the summer of 1920 mostly from northern German *Freikorpskämpfer*.

In order to give a strictly Austrian appearance to the military undertaking, Hungarian and German paramilitary units were to be given Austrian military uniforms. Germany was to supply the necessary arms for the Hungarian and German troops by smuggling them over the borders.

It was also intended that through the good offices of Bauer's banking friends in Berlin from the pre-Kapp *NV* days, and his contacts in the Rhineland steel industry, arms factories would be founded in Hungary. The plan went as far as establishing a coordinating committee called the 'Hungarian Trust' under the leadership of Budapest Police Chief Gábor Béla.<sup>165</sup> This was all in preparation for action scheduled to commence in November 1920.<sup>166</sup>

By the beginning of August, Colonel Bauer's efforts to bring the Bavarians and Hungarians together on the issue of military and economic cooperation began to bear fruit. In response to the Kanzler-Horthy talks, the Bavarian Economic Minister, accompanied by a representative of the Finance Ministry, arrived in Budapest quite openly for official talks concerning economic matters.<sup>167</sup>

As a result of the talks the Hungarian government dispatched their representative, Colonel Kocsárd Janky,<sup>168</sup> to Munich with the first instalment of the requested 12.5 million Hungarian crowns to arm and equip Ehrhardt's forces. Colonel Janky had already held negotiations with the von Kahr government and Ludendorff in Munich, and had returned to Budapest with a memorandum concerned with fitting out the Austrian *Orka* and setting up a kind of propaganda bureau for dispensing anti-Bolshevik information.<sup>169</sup>

By mid-August, military preparations were under way on the borders with Austria. The Bavarian *Orgesch* had moved a considerable number of *Freikorps* troops into the provinces of Tyrol and Salzburg; Ehrhardt had placed his special units along the borders where they were to be smuggled into Austria; and Hungarian troops along with the Héjjas detachment<sup>170</sup> were moving in the direction of Czechoslovakia.<sup>171</sup>

The funding provided by Hungary for the Austrian operation was to be channelled to the Austrian *Heimwehr* through the Bavarian *Orgesch*. The loan was to be recognized and repaid by the new Austrian government once *SPÖ* Chancellor Karl Renner had been removed.

The crucial point of this arrangement was that, unlike earlier transactions whereby Hungarian funds were channelled directly to *VOR* through the Hungarian Legation in Vienna to be distributed as it saw fit, the 'channel' in this case was the Bavarian *Orgesch* that, through *Orka* and its operatives in Austria (specifically those in Styria and Tyrol), would then disburse the funds to the individual Austrian *Freikorps* units.<sup>172</sup> In this way, the Bavarian *Orgesch* would control the Austrian paramilitary units through its overarching role of financial middleman, leaving Hungary very much cut out of the process. Were Hungary to distribute the funding as it had before, it would do so at the expense of the Bavarian-led *Orgesch*.

## Chapter 16

### Refusal of Support from Desired Participants

#### A. Failure to Obtain Approval from White Russian Command

General Vasili Biskupsky, his ‘Foreign Minister’ Bruno Miller and his adjutant Colonel Zjakine were in Budapest at least by the middle of June 1920.<sup>173</sup> Since the collapse of the Kapp Putsch they, too, had relocated from Berlin to Munich where many fellow monarchist émigrés were already well established. As the recognized leader of the White Russian monarchists, Biskupsky met with Horthy and members of the Foreign Ministry on or about June 21. The result was the naming of Baron Zsigmond Perényi<sup>174</sup> as the official Hungarian contact with the new Russian Supreme Committee.<sup>175</sup>

While in Budapest, General Biskupsky produced a ‘strictly confidential’ memorandum dated July 8, 1920, which outlined his role in the international conspiracy, as he saw it. The document was replete with both pro-German and anti-English sentiment—the latter he shared both with the vengeful Trebitsch and with Bauer, who saw the English policy of support for the white armies during the Baltic Campaign as a ploy to create an ‘English colony’ out of western Russia. Biskupsky warned that the only way to survive the present crisis in Central and Eastern Europe was through the creation of a ‘Greater Russia, a Greater Germany and a Greater Hungary’.<sup>176</sup> He further called for the establishment of a ‘*centrale militaire*’ made up of ‘*Führers*’ (Biskupsky’s term written in German) in a capital where such leaders could operate unmolested (Budapest). In short, Biskupsky was essentially parroting Bauer’s scheme but with a few suggestions of his own.

General Biskupsky's memorandum revealed a profound lack of knowledge of the real situation in his native Russia. Its author displayed an amazing ability to draw up fantastic plans with no clue as to how they were to be carried out, an aptitude he clearly shared with Bauer. This was evident in his plan for the destruction of the Bolshevik regime and the subsequent restoration of the monarchy that relied upon a strict formula of a highly unlikely chain of events that required both collaboration with and betrayal of the Red Army. In the pre-Kapp days of the NV, Bauer had hatched a similar plan to that which Biskupsky was now trying to sell in Budapest.<sup>177</sup> The Biskupsky memorandum ended with the following '*Plan Général*' that showed the extremes to which the Bauer group's fanciful ideas were being taken:

- 1) The Red Army liquidates Poland and re-establishes the boundaries of 1914;<sup>178</sup>
- 2) General Wrangel's (White Russian) Army fights a holding action until the moment when the 1914 borders are re-established by the Red Army;
- 3) Ukrainian partisans attack the Poles;
- 4) Belo-Russians conclude an agreement with Moscow and attack the Poles when the (1914) borders are re-established;
- 5) Commanding officers of the Red Army mainly of the old regime prepare for an uprising and the organization of a military dictatorship;
- 6) Wrangel's Army begins an offensive in coordination with the 'military centre';
- 7) Armies of the central European states mobilize to face the threat of Bolshevism and attack the Communist armies with White Russian troops in the vanguard. The people will be prepared through propaganda and the distribution of an unlimited amount of Russian (counterfeit) money to organize an anti-Communist movement in the rear of the Communist army;<sup>179</sup>
- 8) Ukrainian partisans commanded by officers of the old regime attack the Communist army from the rear;
- 9) Belo-Russians invite Russian and German volunteers to clear their country of the Communists;<sup>180</sup>

10) White sympathizers in the Red Army organize an uprising in the capitals and invite Russian, German, and Hungarian volunteers to restore public order;

11) A union of Russia, Germany, and Hungary is announced on the basis of all three states promising eternal peace and mutual economic well being;

12) The thrones will be restored and the republican states returned to the position they deserve.<sup>181</sup>

Admiral Horthy responded favourably. Expressing his confidence in General Biskupsky, he authorized the sum of 2 million Hungarian crowns to finance his work in Budapest and Munich.

The plan obviously required the establishment of a working association with White Russian General Piotr Wrangel then operating in the Ukraine. The ground was prepared by a cordial exchange of letters between Horthy and Wrangel in mid-July mutually recognizing the folly of having fought against each other in the Great War.<sup>182</sup>

To win Wrangel's support for the great transnational purposes of the White International, a series of meetings was convened.<sup>183</sup> Representatives of the General Staff and Foreign Ministry made up the Hungarian side of the discussions. On the White Russian side were General Biskupsky, 'Foreign Minister' Bruno Miller, Adjutant Colonel Zjakine, former Mayor of Odessa Boris Pelikan and Black Hundreds publicist Mikhail Kommissarov.<sup>184</sup> On the German side were two Munich-based businessmen and right-wing supporters, Ketschmar and Wagner, who represented the sympathetic Bavarian industrialists.<sup>185</sup> Also present was military specialist Captain-Lieutenant von Sichart of the outlawed *Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt* who had accompanied the latter to Budapest. Acting for the growing circle of Russian émigré monarchists in Munich were Baltic Germans Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter and Alfred Rosenberg.

This was, in fact, nothing less than the reconvening of the so-called Society for Ukrainian-Bavarian Import and Export that had met in Regensburg in early May for the

purpose of sending a delegation to Wrangel. The only real difference was the inclusion of the Hungarians representing the General Staff and the Foreign Ministry.

The whole episode was an exercise in self-delusion. At the meetings the émigré Russians offered the Germans access to the vast resources of raw materials to be found in southern Russia—an area General Wrangel's White Army no longer controlled—in exchange for the delivery of much-needed weapons for Wrangel's forces.<sup>186</sup>

At the insistence of the Hungarians, a delegation was to be dispatched to Wrangel's headquarters in Sebastopol to assess the general situation in the Ukraine. This was done but with far from expected results.<sup>187</sup> Firstly, General Wrangel informed Biskupsky's emissary, Adjutant Colonel Zjakine, through intermediaries that he would not cooperate with, nor recognize the authority of, the Budapest-based Russian Supreme Committee. Secondly, he warned the Hungarian government to have nothing to do with General Biskupsky whom he characterized as a thoroughly untrustworthy officer.<sup>188</sup>

As it so happened, General Wrangel had made a political swing towards the French from whom he sought assistance, facilitating the process by a marked condemnation of the pro-German, counter-revolutionary émigré monarchists such as the group surrounding Biskupsky. These he defined simply as 'German agents'. According to Wrangel, Adjutant Colonel Zjakine, Mikhail Kommissarov, General Biskupsky and General von der Goltz (also in Budapest) had incorporated tsarist prisoners of war into the ranks of General Bermond-Avalov's Northern Russian Army during the Baltic Campaign on the pretext of combating Bolshevism but, in reality, were there to join with German *Freikorps* units to remove the Weimar government in favour of a Hohenzollern restoration 'contrary to the wishes of the Entente'.<sup>189</sup>

Wrangel's response to the emissary sent by the Russian Supreme Committee in Budapest was most damaging. It rendered the latter devoid of any authority to speak for

the White Russian forces then combating the Red Army. Further, Wrangel cleverly made mention of those individuals of the radical right who were at that moment in Budapest and tied them to earlier foolhardy events in which they had played major roles, namely Trebitsch and Bauer in the restoration and Kapp fiascos. By this turn of events, one of the main missions of the White International, to rescue Russia from the Bolsheviks, was aborted.

#### B. Failure to Secure Italian Participation

In the unlikely event that the Rosenheim plan was ever set in motion, Entente intervention seemed to be a certainty. Trebitsch, however, felt confident that there was little chance of a move against them from the Western Powers. He based his assumption on what he saw as Britain's lack of objection to the Kapp Putsch—so long as there was no attempt to restore a German monarchy.<sup>190</sup> It followed, according to Trebitsch, that because there were no monarchist designs to the current endeavour, Britain's position would be the same. Trebitsch also reasoned that due to France's strong desire to see a weakened Germany, it would actually welcome the creation of a southern confederation of Bavaria, Austria and Hungary. Moreover, continued Trebitsch, France 'looked on with benevolent neutrality at the creation of the *Orgesch* and peeped through her fingers at Hungary with its standing army ... of perhaps fifty thousand men'.<sup>191</sup> It was further thought that if France did respond as expected by occupying the Ruhr, this would rally the German working class behind the extreme nationalists.<sup>192</sup> Whether Bauer shared this rather naïve view is not indicated by any of the documents.

There was concern, however, over how the young Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes that bordered Hungary in the south and south-west might react to a counter-revolutionary, military action in Austria. Geography dictated that the Yugoslav Army could do very little about any movement of German—or Bavarian—forces into Austria from the north. However, the Yugoslav Army could at least make it difficult for paramilitary troops to move westwards from Hungary into the southern Austrian provinces of Styria and even Carinthia. It was thus prudent to draw Italy into the plot so as to protect the southern flank against a Yugoslav invasion.

At that time the Italians had some eight thousand men in and around Carinthia, and were still in occupation of Villach as stipulated by the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission. In late July Trebitsch, General Biskupsky and Colonel Bauer, accompanied by his personal secretary, Luise Engeler—and without the knowledge of either the Bavarians or the Hungarians—journeyed to Villach in southern Austria close to the Italian border.<sup>193</sup> There they met with Italian General Nascimbene who listened to the details of Bauer's mission. Besides military aid in the event of a Yugoslav attack, Bauer requested financial help and enough weapons and food for twenty thousand men. Some days later Bauer, Trebitsch and Biskupsky travelled by car to the influential General Caviglia's headquarters in Trieste. After hours of questioning, Bauer was asked to produce a memorandum and send it directly to the Italian Prime Minister, Giovanni Giolitti, in Rome. According to Trebitsch's autobiography, the document was also to be shown to the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, who was then in Lucerne.<sup>194</sup>

There is a curious document in the Bauer Papers at the German Federal Archives that bears both Biskupsky and Bauer's signatures. It is a letter of introduction, carried by Trebitsch, addressed to the leader of the still infant Fascist Party, Benito Mussolini. Apparently, Trebitsch was to go on his own to Milan to meet with the still relatively

unknown editor of the fascist newspaper *Popolo d'Italia* and 'to discuss with him ... all political, military, and financial questions and ... to collect or receive money for [the White International's] account'.<sup>195</sup> It is safe to assume that the meeting never took place. There is no mention of it in any other documents or in Trebitsch's autobiography. Written in 1931, it is doubtful that the author would have failed to mention a meeting with such an internationally recognized individual of the radical right as was Mussolini by that time.

The final outcome of the Italian venture was little more than a polite refusal. Giolitti declared he would have nothing to do with the scheme but would not stand in the way of its execution. This benevolent neutrality indicated that there was no hope of Italy acting against the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes should the latter move against Ehrhardt's troops in Carinthia or Styria in southern Austria but, by the same token, no fear of Italy joining in any Entente reaction.

Clearly, the Giolitti government doubted that Bauer's plan had any merit. More to the point, with Italy on the cusp of fascism, it was certainly not in Giolitti's interest to facilitate the establishment of a strong, right-wing government in neighbouring Austria.

## Chapter 17

### The White International on the Eve of its Fall

The rapidly changing geopolitical realities conspired to make the spiritual leadership of the White International less than totally committed to seeing the plot through to its conclusion. It is thus argued that amongst the individuals who drove the nails into the coffin of the White International, General Ludendorff must be included.

#### A. Resurrection of the German-Entente Alliance Scheme against Bolshevik Russia

If there was one single foreign policy goal shared by all members of the international rightist community, it was the defeat of Bolshevism in Russia. In Germany this was coupled with the desire to return the *Reich* to its pre-war great-power status, and that meant the elimination of Poland. Efforts to this end were reflected in the Baltic Campaign and certainly in the Rosenheim plan. If the end justified the means, then in the event that both could be achieved through one action, it would be prudent to pursue this even if it meant deviating from whatever course was currently being followed. Such an opportunity did arise, and thus an old scheme was resurrected that called for General Ludendorff to make common cause with the Entente. Though the alliance scheme was never realized, the importance is that while Bauer was seeking the commitment of rightist elements and even heads of state to the Rosenheim plan, Ludendorff's own commitment to it came into question. Whatever sense there might have been in working with the Entente, the idea of doing so contributed to the weakening of the Budapest-based White International.

On April 25, 1920, while Bauer and his co-conspirators were consolidating their connections with the Bavarian government, Poland's military leader Józef Piłsudski<sup>196</sup> moved his troops into the Ukraine, initiating the last phase of the Russo-Polish War. Piłsudski dreamed of a Greater Poland reaching from the Baltic to the Black Sea and felt secure in the support of the Ukrainian nationalists.

The Allies were split on the wisdom of such a move. Lloyd George was opposed and, citing recent reversals of Admiral Kolchak and White Generals Yudenich and Denikin, advised Piłsudski to sign a peace treaty with the Bolshevik Russians. The pro-

Polish Marshal Foch supported the attack and saw in it a possible strengthening of the French security system in Eastern Europe as a block to Bolshevism.<sup>197</sup>

After initial Polish successes and the taking of Kiev on May 7, the Red Army regrouped to stabilize its lines by the river Dnieper. After a series of brilliant successes in June and July, the Red Army pushed Piłsudski all the way back into the heart of Poland. By the end of July the very gates of Warsaw were threatened and the rest of Europe began to contemplate life with the Bolsheviks at their front door.

This was especially the case for the German extreme right that again faced the old questions. Should Germany look to the east and work with the Bolsheviks to eliminate Poland and thus re-establish the old borders of 1914?<sup>198</sup> Could an association with the Bolsheviks end Germany's international isolation,<sup>199</sup> as Colonel Bauer, Major Pabst and others had entertained in 1919? Or should Germany look westwards and request a cooperative military undertaking with the Entente against the Bolsheviks, as had also been considered in 1919?

Such considerations were not limited to the extreme right. Within the highest levels of the *Reichswehr*—which had moved significantly to the political centre—discussions had been under way since early 1920. Major Werner von Fritsch in his 'Internal Conditions Speech' of February 1920 commented that in the event of a Russo-Polish War, Germany should work with the Entente in the hope of a revision of the Treaty of Versailles. General Seeckt, as overall commander of the German forces, felt that even 'if for the moment we cannot help Russia to re-establish her old imperial boundaries, we should not interfere with her doing so.'<sup>200</sup> Direct German support for Poland against the Bolsheviks was never discussed, however. The sole dilemma appeared to be whether Germany should stand by and let the Red Army smash Poland,

or offer its assistance to the formation of an Entente coalition force to come to Poland's rescue and thus garner Entente favour.

It was the latter consideration that proved so debilitating for the White International. Among the most outspoken advocates of a German military intervention alongside the Entente was the liberal-right industrialist Arnold Rechberg of the Ludendorff circle, who during the Baltic Campaign had pressed for German-Entente cooperation against the Bolsheviks.<sup>201</sup> In the current situation he saw an opportunity not only for possible treaty revision but also for the inevitable strengthening of the German military, which was at that time facing massive reductions as stipulated in the Versailles Treaty. Regardless of the outcome of a joint offensive against the Red Army surrounding Warsaw, he reckoned, the German military would be strong enough to serve the needs of a 'war of *Revanchement*', or so he had been assured by the radical rightist officers around Ludendorff and Bauer.<sup>202</sup>

Rechberg made important contacts throughout the spring and summer of 1920, ranging from those around Ludendorff and von Kahr in Munich to Entente diplomats and *Reichswehr* officers. The issue caused many to reconsider the wisdom of the imminent dissolution of the *Freikorps* units, including von Kahr's *Einwohnerwehr*. The American Supreme Commander in the Rhineland, General Allen, characterized the disarming order from the Spa Conference of July 1920, given the crisis in Poland, as 'playing with fire'.<sup>203</sup> The British Ambassador in Berlin, Viscount d'Abernon, feared that the seriousness of the situation in Poland with its dangers of infecting Germany was greatly underestimated in London and Paris.<sup>204</sup> Finally, the French Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, Émile Haguenin, told Rechberg directly that his colleagues in Warsaw sent 'very pessimistic news' to which Paris was 'apparently blind'.<sup>205</sup> Rechberg was able to secure an audience with British General Malcolm who spoke of the possible success of such a

venture. Even more favourable were Rechberg's contacts in Munich where he had the advantage of lines already open in the ongoing disarmament discussions between Bavaria and France.<sup>206</sup>

The creation of an Allied force including German troops was a bold idea, but also one that appealed to German politicians of different persuasions. The leader of the German People's Party (*Deutsche Volkspartei*) and future chancellor Gustav Stresemann arranged a meeting between Rechberg and British representative Lord Kilmarnock in Berlin in mid-July. Stresemann was enthusiastically behind the German-Entente joint intervention plan and suggested that overall command should go to French Marshal Foch with General Ludendorff as his Chief of Staff. As a guarantee against possible German designs to use their reinvigorated army to threaten the Entente and the Successor States, it was further suggested by him that French forces would be allowed to occupy German fortresses during the operation.<sup>207</sup>

Lord Kilmarnock was later to report from Berlin that émigré Russian groups seemed 'ready to prepare a fresh Baltic manoeuvre' using the remnants of the Bermond-Avalov troops in Lithuania, East Prussia and Latvia.<sup>208</sup>

Some days later Rechberg passed on a note from Ludendorff to Lord Kilmarnock,<sup>209</sup> stating that the general was agreed to the plan but that his willingness to accept the role of second in command was contingent upon a promise from the Entente that the enforcement of the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles would be set aside during the course of the operation—an obvious attempt to halt the *Einwohnerwehr* disarmament. Ludendorff further requested that the *Reichswehr* would provide a force of 500,000 men under the command of himself and General Hoffmann.<sup>210</sup>

Ludendorff sent on an additional demand to Lord Kilmarnock that upon his acceptance of becoming Marshal Foch's subordinate, the Rhineland must be

immediately and completely evacuated of all Entente troops and personnel. This was too much. The British Undersecretary Eric Phipps condemned the demand as 'laughable'.<sup>211</sup> German President Ebert's state secretary was approached about the idea and reported that neither the President nor the working classes of Germany could ever support Ludendorff in such a role.<sup>212</sup> French Marshal Foch, under whose command Ludendorff was supposedly to serve, held that the very idea of arming half a million Germans was 'out of the question'.<sup>213</sup>

It is a telling fact that Ludendorff was willing to join the Entente in a military operation whilst his subordinate in Budapest was arranging for the eventual declaration of war against it. Given Ludendorff's continual refusal to go to Budapest to assume the leadership of the White International and his readiness to cooperate with the Bauer group's sworn enemy, one must count General Ludendorff as a key factor in the failure of the White International.

#### B. Austro-Bavarian Relations in August 1920: Nationalist Agendas versus Transnational Considerations

In early August, while waiting for word from the Italian government, Colonel Bauer and Trebitsch journeyed to Vienna to shore up support from the considerable right-wing organizations there. They met with General Alfred Krauß, the influential leader of the Austrian Pan-German League who was active in *VOR*.<sup>214</sup> It was hoped that his support would smooth the way for an Austrian *Anschluß* with Bavaria and facilitate the choosing of an overall Austrian Commander of the several *Freikorps* units there. Instead, it exposed serious divisions amongst the Austrian rightist leadership that would prove irreconcilable and a growing distrust of Bavarian motives. This seems to be a

typical example of the dominance of nationalist agendas over transnational considerations, which arguably hampered the whole project from the very outset.

It was generally agreed that because Austrian ex-*KuK* officers would be directly under the auspices of the Bavarian *Orka*, overall command in Austria would be only nominal.<sup>215</sup> It was also agreed that German commanders would lead the individual units.

For the position of Austrian Supreme Commander there were two main candidates, General Alfred Krauß and Prince Johannes von Liechtenstein, each representing quite differing positions. The anti-Habsburg, pan-German, pro-*Anschluß* group—largely found within the Austrian Christian Social Party and amongst the Bavarians—favoured Krauß. Prince Johannes was an ardent legitimist and thus unacceptable to the Ludendorff-Bauer group and the anti-legitimists in Hungary that included Regent Horthy and the Hungarian Supreme Committee of Prónay, Gömbös and Eckhardt.

Nor was this a simple matter of one side opposing the other. Many in the anti-Habsburg camp in Hungary were opposed to any general of the old Austrian Army, especially a pan-German such as General Krauß, who, with such a force behind him, could forcibly hold Burgenland for Austria.<sup>216</sup> A third candidate, the mutually acceptable Field Marshal Metzger, was chosen for the position in the more anti-Habsburg environment of Munich, but this did little to address the differences between the parties that Bauer now found himself caught up in.

The dynamics of conflict between two transnational concepts such as the White International and pan-Germanism exposed a serious flaw in the former. After Metzger was appointed Supreme Commander of the Austrian paramilitary forces, General Krauß began to withdraw his support for the White International, noting that he could not

endorse Bauer's plan regarding Burgenland. For the pan-German Austrian general, the Bamberg Declaration of February 1919 was inviolable. He refused to sacrifice his *völkisch* goals for alliance opportunities, stating it was a 'national indignity if one seeks ... the friendship of 7 million Magyars for the 70 million people of Germany [and Austria] at the price of 400,000 Germans [living in Burgenland]'.<sup>217</sup> Bauer would later complain of the *Überalldeutsche* (ultra-pan-Germans) such as Krauß and his Austrian colleagues as 'holding their *völkische* principles higher than judicious recognition of necessity and opportunity'.<sup>218</sup>

The matter of an *Anschluß* with the German *Reich* engendered its own problems that further exposed their nationalist agenda over international concerns. Of the Bavarians, Minister-President von Kahr, Georg Heim and *Orgesch* Deputy Leader Rudolf Kanzler favoured an *Anschluß* with Austria but only if Bavaria were to regain its pre-war, semi-autonomous status within the *Reich* and if the western panhandle provinces of Salzburg, Tyrol and Vorarlberg were to secede from Austria and be attached to Bavaria proper. Only then could the remaining rump of Austria in the east be joined with the German *Reich*, independent of Bavaria.

The issue of the partitioning of Austria was the source of the eventual unilateral action by Austria's extreme right. Again, pan-German leader General Krauß was adamantly against any partitioning of Austria on the one hand and distrustful of what he saw as the separatist leanings of the Bavarian *Orgesch* on the other, despite its declarations to the contrary. He was also against the Munich-based *Orka*'s assumption of leadership of the separate Austrian *Heimwehr* units and instead demanded a unified Austrian command over its own troops with *Orgesch* and *Orka* purely in support. In short, Krauß would welcome an *Anschluß* of Austria with Germany proper but not at the price of an Austrian partition. It would seem he was first and foremost a nationalist.

General Krauß further declared his lack of trust in the Bavarians, citing their ‘ridiculous plan’ to separate themselves from the *Reich* as a red herring for the sake of fooling the French, the ulterior motive being to rejoin the rest of Germany at a later date. He saw it as ‘possible, even probable’ that Bavaria, once the separation was completed, would simply omit the second phase of the plan and remain an independent state.<sup>219</sup>

Nationalist proclivities were not limited to the Austrian-Germans. By mid-August the Hungarians had become just as adamant that the pre-war borders between Austria and Hungary that ran along the river Leitha should remain. This would place Burgenland within the Hungarian state. Moreover, during the summer of 1920, Hungarian troops were still occupying ‘West Hungary’.<sup>220</sup> The Horthy regime also reminded the Austrian nationalists that, after the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, Hungary had pledged materiel and financial aid to the Austrian right to build up its *Heimwehr* units on the understanding that Austria would consider the solving of the Burgenland question once the Renner government was removed.<sup>221</sup> Bauer had been able to placate the Hungarians on the issue by vague promises during his sojourn in Budapest, for the sake of the advancement of the alliance, but the stubborn demands of General Krauß were bringing it all to the fore at a most inopportune time.<sup>222</sup>

### C. Unravelling

Disappointment now seemed to be the rule rather than the exception for the Bauer group. At an early September Central Committee meeting in Munich, the group suffered yet another unpleasant surprise when the Austrian delegation leader, Dr Weisner, announced that the Christian Social Party had decided not to allow any armed action against the Renner government at all. The Austrian rightists saw the withdrawal of Renner and his *SPÖ*-led coalition, and the formation of a transitory government of the Christian Social Party under party leader Michael Mayr, as inevitable. The chances of a peaceful political turnabout in Austria in the upcoming National Council elections, set for October 17, were too promising to risk civil war by following the Rosenheim plan.<sup>223</sup> Electoral victory would then allow the passing of the necessary legislation to disarm the various Austrian leftist *Volkswehr* (People's Guard) units. Weisner acknowledged that the possibility of armed resistance from the left was still very real and urged that Bavarian and Hungarian support for the strengthening of the Austrian *Selbstschutz* (rural defence leagues loosely affiliated to the *Heimwehr*) should not be reduced. The Austrian rightists would, however, not engage in any Putsch.<sup>224</sup>

The defeat of the left by parliamentary means offered the Austrian right a double advantage: a civil war as well as a military invasion would be averted and the territorial recompense for the associated Bavarian and Hungarian forces—Burgenland and the western Austrian provinces—would be greatly diminished if not eliminated altogether.

For Bauer and the Bavarians it was a terrible blow. The Rosenheim plan was sketched out according to a series of military strikes that had to occur in a predetermined order with Austria as the initial target. Also, the binding element between Austria and Bavaria had long been the *Orka* set up by *Orgesch* Deputy Kanzler. By maintaining units on both sides of the border, *Orka* had effectively already achieved a kind of paramilitary *Anschluß* upon which further transnational cooperation

could be built. With Austria's new unilateral course—at least in matters military—*Orka* no longer served as a bridge between the two countries.

There was another discouraging development. Although Hungary had agreed to continue its financial support for the Austrian extreme right defence units, in mid-September news reached the *Orgesch* offices in Munich that the Austrians had requested that this financial support be transferred from Budapest directly to the *Heimwehr*, leaving *Orgesch*, *Orka* and the Ludendorff-Bauer group out of the Austrian picture entirely.<sup>225</sup> Bauer hastily dispatched Major Stephani to Budapest to try and convince Prime Minister Teleki to revert to the previous arrangement, but to no avail. Pressing the issue, Stephani was informed by Count Khuen-Héderváry of the Foreign Ministry that from then on the monthly 2 million Hungarian crowns would be remitted to the Hungarian Minister in Vienna, Count Gusztáv Gratz, and from there distributed to the separate *Heimwehr* units, thus returning to the arrangement Hungary enjoyed with Austria before Bauer's arrival. At about the same time, Baron Kálmán Kánya of the Foreign Ministry convinced the Regent to suspend payment of support funds that had hitherto flowed into the coffers of the Russian émigré community in Munich.<sup>226</sup>

The whole affair was falling down around the German plotters' ears. At this point even the unflappable Colonel Bauer had to admit the severity of the situation. In a letter to Trebitsch dated September 10, 1920, Bauer stated that the plans were in 'temporary suspension'.<sup>227</sup>

On September 24 Bauer sent his 'Memorandum of the Historical Development' to Admiral Horthy, reminding him of the several promises made between May and August, and warned that efforts to procure Burgenland through negotiations with the Austrians could be 'derailed from their course and thus be harmful to our intended

end goals'.<sup>228</sup> Bauer's warning seems to have been based on the illusion that Horthy and Teleki remained on board for the Rosenheim plan.

By mid-October the Bauer group had lost virtually all the participants with any power or influence in the countries they supposedly represented. The Austrians were going their own way, especially after the fall of the Renner government and the election of Michael Mayr on October 17, just as Dr Weisner had predicted. *Orgesch* was still intact but had no one to fight. Its continued existence was very much a matter of debate, as was that of the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr*, as during the spring and summer of 1920 membership had begun to wane.<sup>229</sup> The von Kahr government in Munich was still very much alive but its particularist plans so embraced by Georg Heim were stalled and the matter of the *Anschluß* would have to wait for another time. The dreams of the rightist émigré Russian monarchists around General Biskupsky had dissipated with the last wisps of smoke of the Russo-Polish War and the Treaty of Riga that officially ended the struggle. The defeated General Wrangel, once so assured of victory that he snubbed the overtures of the Budapest-based Russian Supreme Committee in favour of the French, was now in Belgrade writing his memoirs. The Hungarians, who had all along played a double game between the Bauer group and the French, had lost both and were about to face the trials of two Habsburg restoration attempts in 1921 that would greatly discredit those legitimists that took part. There remained only the initial Bauer-Stephani-Trebitsch group and that too was about to face its own crisis.

Upon his return from his activities in Italy in mid-August, Trebitsch inadvertently came across a letter addressed to Bauer from Major Stephani.<sup>230</sup> According to Trebitsch's autobiography and his Vienna court testimony, the letter suggested that he be eliminated due to suspicions of his treachery; as a Jew he was an easy target during the White Terror in Budapest.<sup>231</sup> When confronted with the letter,

Bauer reaffirmed his complete trust in his long-time closest confidant but Trebitsch demanded that Stephani be paid off and released from the organization. This was done.

Some weeks later Trebitsch, learning that Stephani had been reinstated and fearing for his life, packed a large suitcase with sensitive and ultimately incriminating documents, and attempted to sell them to the French Legation in Vienna and later to the Czechoslovak government. Trebitsch was held on charges of treason and conspiracy but acquitted. The documents were placed in the custody of the Czechoslovak government.

### Conclusion

Much has been written about the international spread of Communism during the chaotic post-war years in Central Europe, and about right-wing counter-revolutionary measures to halt its advance. Studies of the radical right, however, deal almost exclusively with the efforts of individual nations. This work draws attention to a little-known attempt to establish an ultra-rightist 'white' transnational organization of the vanquished as an answer to the 'Red International', with the dual goals of annulling the Paris Treaties by militarily destroying the Entente-sponsored Successor States and of eradicating Communism in all its forms from all of Europe including Russia.

The declared scope and objectives of the plot itself also serve to highlight all that was wrong with post-war Central Europe in the eyes of the radical, disgruntled right. The mission of the White International was essentially to restore the pre-war order, the time when the Second *Reich* and the Triple Alliance were strong, the military enjoyed respect, people knew their place in society and Communism was a harmless if misguided theory discussed in coffee houses. In the aftermath of defeat, this belle

époque was gone, but Colonel Max Bauer tirelessly urged its return in his prolific wartime and post-war writings, his ill-conceived, counter-revolutionary ventures and his grand White International *Aktionsplan* that aimed above all to reinstall Germany at the pinnacle of power within a German-friendly Central Europe.

The study of the White International exposes a political tipping point—a transitional phase between desperate attempts to reclaim that which was lost by the vanquished and endeavours to become reconciled to the new conditions in Central Europe with an eye to future cooperation with the Entente. For, as this study has shown, though there was no dearth of sympathetic officers and leaders of post-war Central Europe who shared Bauer’s vision, to the extent of participating in laying the foundations of the White International, they expressed merely feigned interest in his proposed methods.

The White International was bound to fail for several reasons. Bauer saw cooperation between paramilitary *Freikorps* units of the vanquished nations as the first and only option to correct Germany’s position and thus as the ideal martial arm of his International. The precedent for this was provided by German paramilitary units who, after brutally smashing leftist unrest domestically, joined with tsarist ex-prisoners of war led by émigré Russian monarchists to form a rudimentary German and White Russian transnational army to fight against Bolshevism and perceived Entente colonial designs in the Baltic. With the withdrawal eastwards of the scattered remnants of the mercenary red armies from the Baltic region, these German-Russian ‘white international’ paramilitary units then became agents of blatant expansionist aggression against the Entente-sponsored new Baltic republics, as discussed in John Hiden and Patrick Salmon’s *The Baltic Nations and Europe* (1994) and Robert Gerwarth’s ‘The Central European Counter-revolution’ (2008). Outright defiance of Weimar and Entente

orders to cease operations and withdraw created a renegade paramilitary army—quite separate from the *Reichswehr*—that engaged in a stridently nationalist political agenda. Demonstratively anti-Entente and anti-Bolshevik, the agenda was consistent with the Pan-German League's 1919 Bamberg Declaration that advocated the continuation of pre-war expansionist policy.

The ultimate failure of the Baltic Campaign was conveniently and erroneously explained by Ludendorff, Bauer and his circle of co-conspirators at the *NV* as another 'stab in the back' by the pro-Entente, leftist Weimar government that had so treacherously betrayed the *Reichswehr* and the German people in 1918. In truth, the Baltic Campaign failed largely because the German-Russian paramilitary formations did. While sufficiently brutal to terrorize the citizens of the Baltic republics, they were not militarily proficient enough to defeat their armies.

The inability of Bauer to grasp this reality is clearly seen in the two examples of the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr* and the Hungarian National Army, and the role that he assigned these essentially paramilitary forces in his grand plan.

It has been shown that though the Munich-based, paramilitary *Einwohnerwehr* constituted the single greatest *Freikorps* organization in all of Germany, even its leaders recognized its ineffectiveness beyond members' own villages.

It has also been demonstrated that the invasion and occupation by Hungary's former ethnic minorities that displaced thousands of Magyar lower gentry and upper-class nobility, and the establishment of the Soviet Republic in Budapest, conspired to create an intensely radical, new Hungarian National Army and numerous auxiliary detachments, both markedly paramilitary in nature. Other than the occasional failed attempts by the detachments to engage red forces, and the terror they successfully visited upon Hungarian civilians suspected of collusion with the Kun government, these

units were thoroughly untested. Thus, like the German-Russian paramilitary units in the Baltic and the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr*, the Hungarian National Army was unsuited to face any of the disciplined field forces that Bauer's plan would have provoked from the Entente and the Successor States. The only conclusion to be drawn is that, were the paramilitary forces of the White International to actually take the field, they would be no match for those who would certainly oppose them.

It has been argued that the *Reichswehr* was quite willing to covertly support the respective paramilitary units while feigning non-involvement. General von der Goltz was overall commander of the Baltic Campaign but not as an officer in the *Reichswehr*. Neither did General Seeckt participate in the paramilitary-led Kapp Putsch, nor did he attempt to stop it. During the Kapp Putsch, Bavarian *Reichswehr* General Arnold von Möhl did convince incumbent Bavarian Minister-President Johannes Hoffmann to proclaim a state of emergency but just until the legal transfer of power to Gustav von Kahr was completed. In Austria there was no national army to speak of until 1926. Prior to that, there existed only the *Volkswehr*—replaced by the *Republikanische Schutzbund* (Republican Defence League) in 1923—and the *Heimwehr*, which served as the paramilitary formations of the left and the right respectively.

Contributing to the general failure of the plan was Bauer's inability to correctly read the meaning of events. This was evidenced in his post-Kapp Putsch tract *Der 13. März 1920* wherein he cited the lack of not involving other war vanquished nations, the involvement of 'weak-kneed civil servants' and the completeness of Bolshevik contamination in Berlin as the three outstanding reasons for the failure of the Baltic Campaign, his farcical Hohenzollern restoration plot and the Kapp Putsch. These patently delusional assessments were clearly echoed in his White International plot.

The inclusion of all the war vanquished in the plot was the most obvious change as the now officially banned, Berlin-based *NV* was replaced by a Budapest-based international body. There was also a noticeable lack of civilian involvement—a matter that was not well received by Horthy's civilian government. The self-exiled Bauer abandoned 'red' Prussia for a Munich-Budapest axis as the new centre of the counter-revolution where, in his mind, Bolshevism had already been destroyed by victorious rightist forces. In fact, the White International was in many ways a much expanded and more complex version of the failed Baltic Campaign that had preceded it but with German and Hungarian officers and exiled Russian monarchists at its core. Paradoxically, its multinational nature further contributed to its demise.

On the one hand, the plot's international dimensions set it far apart from all other right-wing efforts to challenge the post-war settlement in Europe. On the other hand, the internationalist credentials of the German officers who championed a paramilitary collaboration of the right were hampered from the outset by nationalist concerns. The dynamics between member nations and the former comrades-in-arms who proposed to take on the victor powers exposed irreconcilable and fundamental differences that manifestly hindered transnational cooperation.

By mid-1920 the more explosive events such as the Spartacist Uprising, the Posen and Baltic Campaigns, the Kapp Putsch and the rise and fall of the short-lived Soviet Republics of Bavaria and Hungary were over. In their place there emerged a willingness on the part of the vanquished nations to forgo counter-productive defiance of the Entente and accept that the sole road to political and economic recovery lay through seeking a rapprochement.

While international cooperation between the extralegal German *Freikorps* commanders and Russian émigré monarchist leaders in the politically fluid days of the

Baltic Campaign did not require the forfeiture of the national goals of either, this simply was not the case with Bavaria, Austria or Hungary. There are ample examples of how, regardless of what the Central European leaders were communicating to the Bauer group, each was pursuing policies unique to their own needs.

Bavaria had been long engaged in discussions with France about support for the *Einwohnerwehr*, arguing that it was not only a hedge against a resurgent left but also a French-friendly force in a reorganized *Reich*. Moreover, there were Franco-Bavarian negotiations on the idea of attaching areas of western Germany, including sections of the French-occupied Rhineland, to a Greater Bavaria, essentially isolating Prussia. Although these came to nothing, they indicate a Bavarian *Weltanschauung* that was quite out of step with Bauer's plans for an eventual reinvigorated Germany with all power emanating from a redeemed Berlin under a military dictatorship of General Ludendorff.

Hungary too played a double game. While overtly supporting the Ludendorff-Bauer plan that promised the return of lost territories through military means, it simultaneously sought a rapprochement with France based on economic concessions in the hope of securing support for treaty revisions. In addition, well before Bauer's arrival in Budapest, Horthy had agreed with the Austrian right-of-centre Christian Social Party leadership to provide financial support for the *Heimwehr* if, once the Renner government were legally overturned in the next general election, Austria would be willing to discuss border revisions favourable to Hungary concerning Burgenland. Hungary could thus achieve its foreign policy goals vis-à-vis Austria through peaceful means, rendering Bauer's plan for an *Orgesch*- and *Orka*-led military coup in Vienna wholly unnecessary.

Further, dismayed that the above-mentioned funds it provided Austria now flowed through the Munich-based *Orgesch* as per Bauer's plan, the Budapest government simply defied the arrangement and resumed its former method of aiding the Austrian counter-revolutionaries directly through its Legation in Vienna, greatly reducing Bavarian (and Bauer's) influence in Austria.

Even the Austrian right threw up obstacles. Bauer was unable to gain the crucial endorsement for his plan from General Alfred Krauß, the powerful leader of the Austrian Pan-German League, not due to the latter's desire to work with the Entente but rather his unwillingness to work with prospective White International members. As a pan-German, Krauß objected to Bauer's promise to cede the heavily German-populated Burgenland to Hungary. As an Austrian nationalist, he objected to the plan to cede three western Austrian provinces to Bavaria—the latter's precondition for an *Anschluss*. Nor did Krauß trust the Bavarian '*los von Berlin*' scheme to placate French fears, in which Bavaria would rejoin the German *Reich* after Bauer's plan was initiated, citing that Bavarians were separatists first and foremost and would likely not rejoin.

To the list of those Central and Eastern European powers and their representatives looking to the Entente must be added White Russian General Wrangel. His adamant refusal to recognize the authority of the Budapest-based Russian Supreme Committee and its leader, General Biskupsky, more or less eliminated Russia from the German-Hungarian-Russian troika that was at the very core of the White International. Wrangel also took pains to cast the Ludendorff-Bauer circle as working in defiance of Entente policies in Eastern Europe. As well as discrediting the Bauer group, this resulted in Hungary's refusal to further fund Biskupsky and his Russian Committee, so completing the latter's removal as a political factor.

The Stresemann proposal for General Ludendorff to serve as second in command to French Marshal Foch in a German-Entente joint effort against the Red Army then surrounding Warsaw is significant to this study for a number of reasons. Its rejection by the Entente illustrates well the mindset of the victors who were more inclined to coexist with the Bolsheviks contained within their western border, as later defined by the Treaty of Riga in 1921, than to contribute to a reinvigoration of the Germany military. The episode also exemplifies the above-mentioned tipping point between radical and rational approaches in foreign policy. British documents reveal that consideration of the proposal was not limited to the ultra-right circle around Ludendorff but reached the upper levels of the Weimar government, the *Reichswehr* and Entente diplomats. France's vitriolic reaction to Ludendorff's demands aside, such widespread deliberations clearly showed a remaining vestige of the type of support once extended to the German government in the spring of 1919 during the Baltic Campaign. The decision at the Port Lympe Conference in August 1920 to reject the idea just as plainly indicated the shape of things to come in Central and Eastern Europe.

It has been argued throughout that the White International was destined to fail. This begs the question of why Bauer and his plan received the support they did. The backing of the émigré Baltic German and Russian monarchist groups in Berlin and Munich can be readily understood for, like Ludendorff, Bauer and his entourage after the Kapp Putsch, they had little to lose. The reasons why the legitimate, incumbent governments of Bavaria and Hungary should have supported Bauer are more complex. Cautious speculation would suggest that if there was a greater willingness to work with the Entente, there was also an unwillingness to limit one's options.

In the case of Bavaria, it has been shown that the safe haven enjoyed by the fleeing putschists was not because the Kapp Putsch had been welcomed in Munich,

because it had not. In fact, the turn to the conservative right was engineered to prevent the more radical elements that the Kapp Putsch represented from getting a foothold in Bavaria. Bavarian hospitality to Ludendorff and Bauer was instead based on the desire to create an *Ordnungszelle* independent of Berlin in the form of an all-German paramilitary-coordination organization (*Orgesch*), and a transnational Austro-Bavarian organization (*Orka*) to facilitate an *Anschluß* after Austrian Chancellor Renner's ousting. For these purposes, the war hero Ludendorff and his politically active entourage still stood for something, as Bruno Thoß has correctly suggested.<sup>232</sup> Further, Bauer's plan contained elements not dissimilar to *BVP* leader Georg Heim's regarding the threat of Communism in the essentially agrarian Danubian countries. While von Kahr, Escherich and Heim's particularist proclivities worried Bauer, he felt such problems could be smoothed out once Hungary was on board.

Hungarian secondary sources are dismissive on the question of why Teleki, Kánya, Bethlen and other seasoned diplomats and politicians went along with Bauer's radical plan for as long as they did. Treatment by Sakmyster, Romsics and Ormos is generally confined to a brief mention of Bauer's plan as merely one of several fantastic ideas that Horthy was advised to steer clear of by his more circumspect government. It is maintained in Sakmyster's *Hungary's Admiral on Horseback* (1994) that the government expressed interest in the plan to humour Horthy while slowly undermining Bauer's access to the Regent.<sup>233</sup> However, as Ormos asserts in *Hungary in the Age of the Two World Wars* (2007), it seems unlikely that Horthy would have been so easily duped.<sup>234</sup>

Understandably, German secondary sources such as Thoß's signal work *Der Ludendorff-Kreis* (1978) and Vogt's biography *Oberst Max Bauer* (1974) cover Bauer's activities in Budapest in greater detail because of their respective foci on the radical

right activities of both men. In any case, amongst the few available documents on the subject at the Hungarian State Archives and the copious documents found in the Bauer Papers at the German Federal Archives, as well as amongst the autobiographies of the principals involved, it is clear that Regent Horthy and his government—especially his Foreign Ministry—held meetings with Bauer, with members of his entourage and with representatives from Austria, Bavaria and the Baltic German and White Russian émigré communities on a regular basis from May until well into August 1920.

The reasons are open to conjecture. If the means are directly proportionate to the needs, a nation in chaos (as was Hungary), directionless and surrounded by hostile neighbours, may well regard a plan such as Bauer's as at least a contingency while pursuing more traditional modes to redress its international situation.

Another possible reason is that much in Bauer's plan, as in Bavaria, was not inconsistent with Hungary's policies already in hand. Methods aside, the goal of coordinating efforts to thwart the spread of Communism was consistent with the goals in all areas outside Bolshevik Russia. Bauer's more specific agenda of negotiations with the Austrian right regarding the return of Burgenland, the creation of a Danubian combination with Austria attached to Germany and the removal of Renner from Austria also held considerable appeal for Hungary. The realization of any singular aspects of the plan, however, did not necessarily mean that any or all of the parties would be willing to participate in it to the full.

It has been shown that in Hungary the greatest support came from those with whom Bauer and his entourage had the most in common, such as free electors and ultra-rightists Gömbös, Eckhardt, Kozma and Prónay. The former two led organizations not unlike the pre-Kapp *NV* in Berlin and were designated by Horthy as liaisons between the Hungarian government and Bauer. By varying degrees, the historical literature tends

to cast all four as influential proto-fascists in their relationship to Horthy. Romsics's *István Bethlen* (1995), Kádár Lynn's *Tibor Eckhardt in his Own Words* (2005) and both Ormos's *Hungary* and her biography on Kozma, *Egy magyar médiavézer* (2000), rectify such partisan blanket assumptions by showing Gömbös and Eckhardt as evolving, like Horthy, from advocates of a military dictatorship to parliamentarians, and Kozma as becoming a respected senior public servant as head of the Hungarian Telegraph Agency.

In truth, the only few individuals the framers of the plan to create a White International could fully count upon were those within Bauer's entourage itself. Not one national leader in all of Germany, Austria and Hungary, and no recognized leader of the White Russians, was ready to support Bauer's plan to its ultimate extent. Those who did hold the reins of power amongst the desired participants of the plan were more interested in securing their respective positions in the new order dictated by the Entente than abandoning all reason in the name of a plot conceived of by radical dreamers and political adventurers.

In sum, the reasons why the White International never developed tell us more about post-war Europe than does the conception of the plot itself. The direction in which inter-European relations were moving after 1920 signalled a spirit of cooperation wherein Bauer's White International had no place. Within a few years of Bauer's initial audience with Horthy, the Treaties of Rapallo and Locarno were signed and, one by one, Austria, Hungary and Germany became members of the League of Nations.

### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> There was as little consensus in the British government as to the future of Hungary as there was regarding the wisdom of the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire itself.

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Horthy was capable of garnering the support of Sir George Clerk who, though a champion of the 'New Europe' views regarding Czechoslovakia, recognized the hopeless position of Hungary due to the misguided policies of some in the Foreign Office. See Gábor Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe, 1918-1933* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 9-17.

<sup>2</sup> Count Mihály Károlyi (1875-1955) was appointed as President of the National Agrarian Society in 1909 and later joined the Progressive Party of Independence. While in Parliament he became an ardent critic of the war and began making covert contact with French and British diplomats in Switzerland. In 1916 he formed the United Party of Independence, advocating a widening of suffrage and independence from Austria. As Prime Minister in November 1918, then as President of the Democratic Republic of Hungary until March 1919, Károlyi failed to achieve a 'Switzerland of the East' as minorities refused to stay within Hungary. With the establishment of the Kun regime, Károlyi withdrew from the government. During World War II he resided in Britain, returning to Hungary in 1946 and serving as Ambassador to France from 1947 to 1949.

<sup>3</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *Mihály Károlyi and István Bethlen: Hungary, Makers of the Modern World: The Peace Conferences of 1919-23 and their Aftermath* (London: Haus Publishing, 2009), 34-5.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral on Horseback: Miklós Horthy, 1918-1944* (Boulder, East European Monographs, 1994), 13-15.

<sup>5</sup> Magda Ádám, György Litván and Mária Ormos, eds., *Documents diplomatiques français sur l'histoire du bassin des Carpates, 1918-1932*, Vol. I, *Octobre 1918-Août 1919* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1995), 211-254.

<sup>6</sup> Cartledge, *Mihály Károlyi*, 49.

<sup>7</sup> Count István Bethlen (1874-1946) was of Transylvanian noble birth. He was a liberal member of the pre-war Hungarian Parliament; a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference acting on behalf of Mihály Károlyi's government; and founder of the Party of National Unity as the counter-revolutionary opposition to the Károlyi administration. From self-exile in Vienna, Bethlen led the Anti-Bolshevik Committee during the Hungarian Soviet Republic. On his return to Budapest, he re-established the Party of National Unity under Regent Horthy in 1921 and served as Prime Minister of the coalition government until 1931. Although vehemently anti-Nazi, he was arrested by the Soviets, dying in a Moscow prison in 1946.

<sup>8</sup> Ignác Romsics, *István Bethlen: A Great Conservative Statesman of Hungary, 1874-1946*, trans. Mario D. Fenyo (Boulder, Social Science Monographs, 1995), 95.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Gyula Gömbös, *Egy Magyar Vezérkari Tiszt Bíráló Feljegyzései a Forradalomról és Ellenforradalomról* (Budapest: Budapesti Hírlap nyomdája, 1920), 31.

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<sup>12</sup> Romsics, *István Bethlen*, 97.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Béla Kun (1886-1938) was born into a middle-class, lapsed Jewish family and was attracted to the Hungarian leftist intelligentsia before World War I. In 1916 Kun fought for Austria-Hungary and was captured by the Russians; as a prisoner of war he was indoctrinated in Communist theory. In 1917 Kun served in the Russian Civil War and in 1918 he formed the 'Hungarian Group of the Russian Communist Party', an ultra form of Communism to the left of Lenin's mainstream party. In November 1918 Kun returned to Hungary and founded the Hungarian Communist Party; he was leader of the Hungarian Soviet Republic until its fall on August 1, 1919, after which he escaped to Austria. In 1928 he was arrested in Vienna and deported to Russia where he was executed during the Stalinist Purges of 1937-8.

<sup>15</sup> Gömbös, *Egy Magyar Vezérkari Tiszt*, 31.

<sup>16</sup> Pressed by *MOVE* to initiate a coup d'état, Bethlen refused due to the Kun government's resolve to push the Romanians out of Transylvania. Bethlen felt that the Bolshevik regime in Budapest could be crushed after Kun's liberation of Transylvania. See Romsics, *István Bethlen*, 97-8.

<sup>17</sup> Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, 15.

<sup>18</sup> This was especially the case in the countryside after promised land reforms were not initiated, so driving the peasantry into the counter-revolutionary camp.

<sup>19</sup> Mária Ormos, *Hungary in the Age of the Two World Wars, 1914-1945*, trans. Brian McLean (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 2007), 49.

<sup>20</sup> Romsics, *István Bethlen*, 99-113.

<sup>21</sup> Count Gyula Károlyi (1871-1947) was born to a noble family in eastern Hungary and studied law at the University of Budapest. He was elected to the House of Magnates in Arad County in 1906 and to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1915. During the war Károlyi served on the Eastern Front at the rank of lieutenant. In 1919 with the establishment of the Kun regime, he assumed the title of Prime Minister of the Hungarian government-in-exile in Arad, then in French-occupied Szeged. In late 1919 Károlyi retired from politics but returned in 1928 for a short stint as Minister of Foreign Affairs under Bethlen and, in 1931 with Bethlen's retirement, was appointed Prime Minister. In 1932 he retired from office in favour of Gyula Gömbös. Gyula Károlyi died in Budapest aged 75.

<sup>22</sup> See Gerwarth, 'Central European Counter-revolution'.

<sup>23</sup> István Mócsy, 'Counterrevolutionary Movements in Austria and Szeged', in *The Effects of World War I: The Uprooted: Hungarian Refugees and their Impact on Hungary's Domestic Politics, 1918-1921* (New York: Social Science Monographs-

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Brooklyn College Press, 1983), Online Books, John Mark Ockerbloom (ed.), HTML at Corvinus Library, <<http://www.hungarianhistory.com/lib/mocsy/mocsy13.htm>> [accessed June 10, 2013].

<sup>24</sup> Gusztáv Gratz (1875-1946) was born in the Slovakian Zips to a bilingual, evangelical German family. In 1898 he received a PhD in law at the Universities of Budapest and Klausenburg. Gratz worked as a journalist in several German-language newspapers including Budapest's *Pester Lloyd* and Vienna's *Die Zeit*. Until 1918 he represented Saxon cities in Transylvania as a Deputy in Parliament. As a liberal economist Gratz advocated an economic confederation between Germany and Austria-Hungary, and represented Austria-Hungary as economic negotiator at both the 1918 Treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest that brought him much prestige. After the 1918 Chrysanthemum Revolution he moved to Vienna and later joined the ABC. Following the fall of the Kun regime in August 1919, Gratz assumed the post of Hungarian Minister Plenipotentiary in Vienna, initially in an unofficial capacity. He served officially from November 21, 1919, until January 17, 1921.

<sup>25</sup> Count Pál Teleki (1879-1941), though born and based in Budapest, was from an ancient noble family with holdings in Transylvania. He was a noted geographer and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Teleki served as Foreign Minister in 1920 and then had two tenures as Prime Minister (1920-21, 1939-41). During his last tenure he sought a non-belligerent role for Hungary in World War II.

<sup>26</sup> Romsics, *István Bethlen*, 99.

<sup>27</sup> Margrave György Pallavicini (1881-1946) was born into an Austrian noble family of Italian origin and became a great landholder with a family palace in Austria and castles in Hungary. Within the ABC he was renowned as a loose cannon. It is assumed he died in the Soviet Union in 1946.

<sup>28</sup> Count Gyula Andrassy the Younger (1860-1929) belonged to a powerful political family in eastern Slovakia. He served as a member of several Austro-Hungarian governments prior to World War I and actively participated in Hungary's attempt to prevent the Balkan War of 1912. As Foreign Minister in 1918, Andrassy pronounced the alliance with Germany to be at an end and attempted to conclude a separate peace. In 1920 he became a non-partisan delegate to the National Assembly and subsequently assumed the leadership of the Christian National Party (*KNP*).

<sup>29</sup> Count Antal Sigray (1876-1947) was a great magnate of western Hungary. In 1904 he acted as Deputy to the Upper House. In 1919 the Friedrich government appointed him Commissioner of the Counties of Vas, Sopron, Zala and Moson where he sanctioned the brutal actions by Colonel Antal Lehár's Graz Command. In 1920 he served as a diplomat to Switzerland and is assumed to have died at the hands of the Communists in 1947.

<sup>30</sup> György Szmrecsányi (1876-1932). In 1918 he resigned as governor of the District of Bratislava, refusing to work with the Károlyi government. In 1919 Szmrecsányi fled to Vienna and became a member of the ABC.

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<sup>31</sup> Gustav Gratz, *Augenzeuge dreier Epochen: Die Memoiren des ungarischen Außenministers Gustav Gratz 1875-1945*, Vince Paál and Gerhard Seewann eds. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2009), 238-9; Romsics, *István Bethlen*, 99.

<sup>32</sup> Ormos, *Hungary*, 51.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> From October 4 to November 5, 1921, Count Gyula Ostenburg-Moravek, Pál Prónay and ex-Prime Minister István Friedrich established the short-lived Hungarian state of Lajtabánság in the Austrian province of Burgenland in a vain attempt to defy the Treaty of Trianon that had awarded the area to Austria. Horthy's demand that they evacuate illustrates the divisions that had developed between the Regent and the likes of Prónay.

<sup>35</sup> According to Sakmyster, those who drew a parallel with the White Russian Armies fighting the Red Army in the Baltic and elsewhere used the sobriquet 'white' at the time. Thus the term 'white' was used in the context of Hungary before Bauer's idea of a White International. See Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, 20.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 22; Nagy-Talavera, *Green Shirts*, 52.

<sup>37</sup> Gerwarth, 'Central European Counter-revolution', 186. The ratio of officers to enlisted personnel in Central European paramilitary units was quite high. In Germany proper about a quarter were officers while in Bavaria and Austria the number compared to non-commissioned troops was about half.

<sup>38</sup> Ormos, *Hungary*, 50.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, 23-4.

<sup>41</sup> Gerwarth, 'Central European Counter-revolution', 178.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Lorman, 'The Right-radical Ideology in the Hungarian Army, 1921-23', *Central Europe*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (May 2005), 67-81.

<sup>43</sup> Béla Bodó, 'Militia Violence and State Power in Hungary, 1919-1922', *Hungarian Studies Review*, Vol. XXXIII, Nos. 1-2 (2006), 133.

<sup>44</sup> Bodó, 'Militia Violence', 124.

<sup>45</sup> Béla Bodó, 'Hungarian Aristocracy and the White Terror', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (October 2010), 703-724.

<sup>46</sup> Ormos, *Hungary*, 68.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-7.

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<sup>48</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 302-03.

<sup>49</sup> Katalin Kádár Lynn (ed.), *Tibor Eckhardt in his Own Words: An Autobiography* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2005), 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* In Kádár Lynn's edited work on Eckhardt's autobiography, the latter bemoaned Clemenceau's decision to disallow the 'plan' that included the separation of the Roman Catholic south and the Rhineland from 'flaming red' Prussia. The resulting rump state would have been a constitutional monarchy with Bavarian Crown Prince Rupprecht on the throne. Eckhardt reproached the French government for failing to create a situation whereby Hitler could never have taken power. Supporters of the plan included Bavarian Minister-President Gustav von Kahr and General Erich Ludendorff. This was not unlike the plan put forward by Dr Georg Heim during Bauer's sojourn in Bavaria.

<sup>52</sup> See Miklós Zeidler, 'Gyula Gömbös: An Outsider's Attempt at Radical Reform', in Rebecca Haynes and Martyn Rady (eds.), *In the Shadow of Hitler: Personalities of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2011), 121-137.

<sup>53</sup> Randolph L. Braham, 'Right Radicalism in the Immediate Post War Period', in Herbert Strauss (ed.), *Hostages of Modernization: Studies on Modern Antisemitism, 1870-1933/39: Austria-Hungary-Poland-Russia* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1993), 917f.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* The military secret society was the Society of the Double Cross (*Kettős-Kereszt Szövetség*), referring to the Cross of Lorraine on the Hungarian coat of arms. The civilian counterpart went by two names: the Hungarian Scientific Race-Protection Society (*Magyar Tudományos Fajvédő Egyesület*) and the *Etelközi Szövetség* named after a ninth-century Hungarian ancestral home at the mouth of the river Don. The latter was often referred to as *EKSz* or simply 'X'. Induction into *MOVE*'s secret societies involved a primitive ritual in which one swore absolute allegiance and total subordination to the leader.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Nagy-Talavera, *Green Shirts*, 52.

<sup>58</sup> Zeidler, 'Gyula Gömbös', 123.

<sup>59</sup> See Jenő Gergely, *Gömbös Gyula: Politikai pályakép* (Budapest: Vince Kiadó, 2001); Zeidler, 'Gyula Gömbös'.

<sup>60</sup> This is especially the case with expatriates such as Hungarian-American historians Sakmyster and Bodó.

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<sup>61</sup> Országgyűlési Napló Képviselőház (1919-1945) [Parliamentary Diaries of the Lower House (1919-1945)], January 10, 1924, 107, found in Nagy-Talavera, *Green Shirts*, 52-3.

<sup>62</sup> Ormos, *Hungary*, 50.

<sup>63</sup> Mária Ormos, *Egy magyar médiavezér: Kozma Miklós Pokoljárás a médiában és a politikában (1919-1941)*, Vol. I (Budapest: Polgart Könyvkiadó Kft., 2000), 55.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> In fact, there was much contact between students serving in *ÉME* and Prónay's detachment. See Béla Bodó, 'Paramilitary Violence in Hungary after the First World War', *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Summer 2004), 11-14.

<sup>69</sup> It will be recalled that the Spartacist Uprising witnessed particularly brutal excesses on the part of Stephani.

<sup>70</sup> Figures vary between 600 and 2,000 for the number of murders committed during the White Terror.

<sup>71</sup> Bodó, 'Militia Violence', 145-7.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Luise Engeler memoirs, N Bauer, 1022/69/22, BaK.

<sup>74</sup> Ormos, *Hungary*, 51.

<sup>75</sup> See Gerwarth, 'Central European Counter-revolution'.

<sup>76</sup> Mócsy, 'Counterrevolutionary Movements'.

<sup>77</sup> Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, 34.

<sup>78</sup> Ormos, *Hungary*, 68.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Ormos, *Hungary*, 61.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 62. Colonel Lejár's forces were largely made up of the pro-Habsburg Graz Command that was formed after a split with the more moderate legitimists surrounding

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Bethlen and Teleki. This group was also very much associated with the excesses of the White Terror.

<sup>82</sup> Ormos speculates that Lejár's entry into Budapest was the price Horthy paid for the former's recognition of him as Commander-in-Chief. Lejár's political career was short-lived as he was implicated in the second failed attempt at a restoration of Habsburg Károly IV in the spring of 1921. See Ormos, *Hungary*, 73.

<sup>83</sup> Horthy, too, refused to recognize the Friedrich government that, ironically, fully recognized him as Commander-in-Chief.

<sup>84</sup> István Mócsy, 'The Struggle for Power and the White Terror', in *The Effects of World War I*, <<http://www.hungarianhistory.com/lib/mocsy/mocsy16.htm>> [accessed June 10, 2013].

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> The result of the elections of January 1920 was a split between the agrarian peasant-based Smallholders' Party with 77 seats and the Christian National Unity Party with 76. The latter was an umbrella party that contained many legitimists and began to disintegrate within a few months.

<sup>87</sup> Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, 46-7.

<sup>88</sup> Ormos, *Hungary*, 57.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. The only other candidate for Head of State was Count Apponyi who enjoyed support from the legitimists, some Liberals and Social Democrats, but not the Smallholders. The latter doubted land reform would be on the agenda of an aristocratic landowner.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>91</sup> Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, 57.

<sup>92</sup> See Ormos, *Hungary*, 66.

<sup>93</sup> The figures given by the Successor States were generally inflated when referring to their own ethnic populations and reduced when referring to ethnic Hungarians. See Ferenc Glatz (ed.), 'Data on Trianon Hungary', in *Hungarians and their Neighbors in Modern Times, 1867-1950* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1995), 106-7.

<sup>94</sup> Luise Engeler memoirs, N Bauer, 1022/69/17-21, BaK.

<sup>95</sup> The dates of these early meetings vary from document to document. Evidence given by Trebitsch-Lincoln at his trial of early 1921 is based primarily on his own appointment book, N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27, BaK. Other references are found in Luise Engeler memoirs, N Bauer, 1022/69, BaK; Bauer's September 1920 Memorandum über die geschichtliche Entwicklung located in the Hungarian State

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Archives (Magyar Országos Levéltár [MOL]), Foreign Ministry Documents (Külügyminisztérium [K]-64-1919-1920; excerpts from the Miklós Kozma Diary, MOL K-429-1918-1920; and Ormos, *Egy magyar médiavezér*, 46. Discrepancies in when the meetings were held and who attended are insignificant and in no way suggest that they did not take place.

<sup>96</sup> Prónay, *A határban a halál kaszál ...*, 202; Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 166.

<sup>97</sup> Prónay, *A határban a halál kaszál ...*, 200-1.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>99</sup> Many secondary sources mistakenly identify a subsequent letter from Ludendorff to Horthy written in August 1920 as the letter of introduction here mentioned. The contents of the initial letter from Ludendorff are unknown as it was most likely destroyed after reading.

<sup>100</sup> This refers to the self-appointed 'Prince' Bermond-Avalov who formed and commanded the White Army of the West. He supported his exploits in the Baltic in the late autumn of 1919 by printing his own currency based on land holdings he never controlled. See Bermond-Awaloff, *Im Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus*, 145. The idea of counterfeiting for the sake of counter-revolutionary support was often discussed in pre-Kapp days in the *NV*.

<sup>101</sup> Bauer, Memorandum über die geschichtliche Entwicklung, MOL K-64-1919-1920, 1-6. There are many references to this all-important Horthy audience but with no sources indicating who was there or exactly what was said. What is offered here is based on the assumptions of Vogt. See Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 303-4.

<sup>102</sup> See July 6, 1920, letter from Major General Berzeviczy to Deputy Foreign Minister Kálmán Kánya, questioning the motives of Bauer and Trebitsch-Lincoln based on the latter's Jewish origins and nefarious career, MOL K-64 res. pol. [political reserve] 1920, bundle 41, 191.

<sup>103</sup> Curiously, the May 26 memorandum mentions neither the scenario of attacking the Renner-led government of Austria nor that of invading Czechoslovakia, as outlined in the initial Rosenheim plan.

<sup>104</sup> In this version Bauer relegated Hungarian forces to a more non-committal, reserve status, perhaps to minimize Hungary's actual participation in the hope of gaining Horthy's support.

<sup>105</sup> In order for the proposed 'Greater Hungary' to extend to the Black Sea, the Romanian Old Kingdom would have had to be included. In fact, the Regat had never been part of the Kingdom of Hungary and there was no claim to it by the Hungarian delegation at the Paris Convention.

<sup>106</sup> Pro memoria, Miklós Kozma Papers, MOL K-429-1920-1922.

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<sup>107</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 396. Vogt states that progress was made through working with the Budapest Chief of Police and that the printing plates had been smuggled into Hungary via a diplomatic pouch from the Hungarian Legation in Berlin; see Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 309. Here the discussion ends but there is a mention in Luise Engeler's memoirs that problems beset the scheme in Hungary and that the whole enterprise was then moved to a priory in Bavaria, but whether production of the Duma roubles actually took place is not indicated; see Luise Engeler memoirs, N Bauer, 1022/69/27, BaK.

<sup>108</sup> Beseitigung aller Umsturzelemente, memorandum of May 26, 1920, N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27/32-4, BaK.

<sup>109</sup> Thoß mentions that Bauer was to renew contact with the German arms industry from his days as an artillery specialist with the General Staff during the war. This does not appear in the documents containing the actual memorandum and may simply be an assumption by the author. See Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 398.

<sup>110</sup> N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27/33a-b, BaK.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>112</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 308.

<sup>113</sup> In April 1920 regular Polish forces entered Western Ukraine, resulting in defeats of General Wrangel's White Russian Army that was battling the Red Army on behalf of the Republic of Western Ukraine during the summer of 1920. Colonel Bauer's sense of urgency refers to his need to draw General Wrangel into the workings of the Rosenheim plan.

<sup>114</sup> Written message from Bauer to Gömbös, Eckhardt and Prónay on May 30, 1920, N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27/31a, BaK.

<sup>115</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 399.

<sup>116</sup> *Pester Lloyd*, Vol. 26, 1920, quoted from Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 305.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> See Anne Orde, 'France and Hungary in 1920: Revisionism and Railroads', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 15, no. 3 (July 1980), 475-492; see also Béla Király and Peter Pastor, 'France and Hungary at the Beginning of the 1920s: Danubian Confederation of Little Entente', in Magda Ádám (ed.), *The Versailles System and Central Europe* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishers, 2004).

<sup>119</sup> Berzeviczy served as Horthy's Chief of the General Staff from March 15, 1920, to January 4, 1922.

<sup>120</sup> Trebitsch, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 193.

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- <sup>121</sup> Orde, 'France and Hungary', 476.
- <sup>122</sup> See Bátonyi, *Britain and Central Europe*, 120-27.
- <sup>123</sup> See instructions from Teleki of April 23, 1920, in Francis Deák and Dezső Ujváry (eds.), *Papers and Documents Relating to the Foreign Relations of Hungary*, Vol. I, 1919-1920 (Budapest: Royal Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1939), 251ff.
- <sup>124</sup> Letter from Halmos to Paléologue dated April 23, 1920, discussing progress of negotiations with Count de Saint-Sauveur, MOL K-64-1920-11-51.
- <sup>125</sup> Orde, 'France and Hungary', 477-8.
- <sup>126</sup> Halmos to Paléologue, MOL K-64-1920-11-52; Cartledge, *Mihály Károlyi*, 102-3.
- <sup>127</sup> Orde, 'France and Hungary', 480-1. The demands of the Hungarians also included relocating an 'International Commission' to Budapest but the documents do not indicate exactly what body this was.
- <sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>129</sup> The role of Gömbös as contact man between Horthy and Bauer is likely based on his official membership of the so-called Hungarian Supreme Committee set up by Bauer. Mária Ormos assigns the link between Horthy and the conspirators to Kozma whose 'most important role was to keep abreast of the amateurish planning from the spring of 1920 until he became head of the Hungarian Telegraph Agency'. See Ormos, *Egy magyar médiavezér*, 45.
- <sup>130</sup> Anton Lehár, *Erinnerungen: Gegenrevolution und Restaurationsversuche in Ungarn 1918-1921*, Peter Broucek ed. (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1973), 160.
- <sup>131</sup> Report of German General Massov of an audience with Horthy, June 26, 1920, found in Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes Bonn, Pol. Abt. II, Nr. 3 Frankreich-Ungarn, cited in Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 414.
- <sup>132</sup> Teleki to the Hungarian authorities in Warsaw, in Deák and Ujváry, *Papers and Documents*, 437.
- <sup>133</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 414.
- <sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 415.
- <sup>135</sup> Deák and Ujváry, *Papers and Documents*, 503.
- <sup>136</sup> Gyula Juhász, *Hungarian Foreign Policy 1919-1945* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979), 48. To make matters worse, Italy found out about the secret Franco-Hungarian negotiations. When Italian Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza informed the Czechs, the reaction was swift. Czech Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš met in Belgrade with the

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leaders of Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes who, due to their suspicion of an arrangement of a Danubian Federation against them, laid the foundations for the establishment of a defence union for the preservation of the provisions worked out at Trianon. Thus the 'Petite Entente' of August 14 originated not as a French design, but, quite the contrary, as a reaction of the Successor States to the secret Franco-Hungarian negotiations.

<sup>137</sup> Deák and Ujváry, *Papers and Documents*, 603.

<sup>138</sup> Juhász, *Hungarian Foreign Policy*, 43.

<sup>139</sup> Trebitsch would meet Friedrich in December 1919 and February 1920 when dispatched by Bauer to feel out Hungary's take on a right-wing Putsch in Germany.

<sup>140</sup> Lajos Kerekes, 'Die "Weiße Allianz": Bayrisch-österreichisch-ungarische Projekte gegen die Regierung Renner im Jahre 1920', *Österreichische Osthefte*, vol. 7, no. 5 (September 1965), 357.

<sup>141</sup> Anton Rintelen had contact with Hungarian counter-revolutionary 'White Officers' in Styria during the summer of 1919 under the leadership of Antal Lehár who would participate in the August takeover of Budapest. *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>142</sup> MOL K-64 res. pol. 1920-11-1437.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> Count Leopold Hartig led the small operational staff that included Dr Friedrich Weisner, National Councillor Heintl and Prince Johannes von Liechtenstein. See Kerekes, 'Die "Weiße Allianz"', 364f.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>146</sup> Burgenland (referred to as 'West Hungary' by the Hungarians) was part of Hungary until awarded to Austria after the war. At the time under discussion, it was also still occupied by Hungarian troops. It should be noted that Hungarians constituted less than 10% of the population whereas the German population exceeded 74% in the 1910 census.

<sup>147</sup> MOL K-64 res. pol. 1920-20-181.

<sup>148</sup> The documents do not indicate where the meeting took place.

<sup>149</sup> Abschrift des Protokolles der Sitzung vom 23. III. 1920, MOL K-64-1920-41.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> MOL K-64 res. pol. 1920-20-181, as found in Kerekes, 'Die "Weiße Allianz"', 357.

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<sup>153</sup> The Christian Social Party was a moderate right-wing organization founded by Vienna Mayor Karl Lueger in 1893. The election of a Christian socialist candidate would end the coalition led by Chancellor Karl Renner and thus render Bauer's plan to seize Vienna unnecessary.

<sup>154</sup> Kerekes, 'Die "Weiße Allianz"', 357-8.

<sup>155</sup> N Bauer, 1022/26/27/53, BaK.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 1022/26/27/54. Unfortunately, the documents fail to explain the nature of the differences. Thoß speculates that Bavarian anxieties were piqued due to Bauer having actually convinced Horthy to participate in the Rosenheim Plan that would surely rekindle a world war just as the Bavarians were trying to convince the Entente of the purely defensive nature of their *Einwohnerwehr*. See Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 400.

<sup>157</sup> Letter from Ludendorff to Horthy, August 19, 1920, from English translation in Szinai and Szücs, *Confidential Papers*, 26.

<sup>158</sup> Undated letter from Trebitsch to Bauer, N Bauer, 1022/26/27/34a, BaK. The English translation is from Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 172.

<sup>159</sup> In Trebitsch's Vienna court documents of 1921, he lamented that instead of Ludendorff coming to lay the cornerstone of the White International, the delegation was made up of Bavarians only: 'Bauerndoktor' and BVP leader Georg Heim, Orka leader Rudolf Kanzler and his 'guard dog', Dr Müller. To Trebitsch this was evidence enough that the Bavarians had little interest in working with the Prussians on the Rosenheim plan; see N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27/34a, BaK. There is mention in the Hungarian Foreign Ministry documents that the former Bavarian military attaché to Paris, Major von Branca, was also present; see MOL K-64 res. pol. I/4 1922-20, as cited in Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, endnote 48, 667.

<sup>160</sup> In the entire document Bauer made no references to 'Germany' and, instead, used the term 'Bavaria'.

<sup>161</sup> Vogt assumes this refers to elements from the former *Freikorps Marinebrigade-Ehrhardt* or possibly operatives of Ehrhardt's notorious *Organisation Consul*, a secret assassination organization responsible for the murders of Matthias Erzberger and Walther Rathenau in 1921 and 1922 respectively. Later references to Ehrhardt's proposed role in the elimination of Renner give credence to this idea. See Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 317.

<sup>162</sup> Days after Bauer issued the memorandum, Biskupsky and his group would fail to be recognized by General Wrangel of the white armies fighting in Russia.

<sup>163</sup> It is not to be inferred that this was due to Ludendorff's absence.

<sup>164</sup> This was to be the last time Bauer would produce a plan that included Hungarian Army troops taking action outside their territory before Teleki's demand to the contrary.

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- <sup>165</sup> Richard Lewinsohn, *Das Geld in der Politik* (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1930), 131.
- <sup>166</sup> Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 195.
- <sup>167</sup> Vogt, *Oberst Max Bauer*, 317.
- <sup>168</sup> An infantry officer during World War I, Kocsárd Janky was promoted to Major General in August 1920 and became Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian Army in 1925.
- <sup>169</sup> Kozma Papers, MOL K-429 res. pol. I/4-1920-1922-19.
- <sup>170</sup> On July 27, 1920, Héjjas led a successful raid over the Czechoslovak border to a Fürstenfeld armoury and carried off a cache of weapons. See Béla Bodó, 'Iván Héjjas: The Life of a Counterrevolutionary', *East Central Europe*, vol. 37, nos. 2-3 (December 1, 2010), 247-279.
- <sup>171</sup> Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 197. The extent of troop movements is not corroborated by other sources.
- <sup>172</sup> MOL K-64 res. pol. 1920-20-384.
- <sup>173</sup> N Bauer, 1022/26/27/112, BaK.
- <sup>174</sup> Baron Zsigmond Perényi (1870-1946) was a pro-Habsburg Hungarian politician. He served as Minister of the Interior in the Friedrich government and as a trusted adviser to Horthy. Governor of Zakarpattia District from 1939 to 1940, he later became a member and eventually Speaker of the House of Magnates. In 1944 he resigned in protest at the establishment of a fascist cabinet.
- <sup>175</sup> MOL K-429-1920-1922.
- <sup>176</sup> Biskupsky memorandum, N Bauer, 1022/26/38b, BaK.
- <sup>177</sup> For a curt but illuminating treatment of the relationship between the Bauer group and the Russian émigré leader, see Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 169.
- <sup>178</sup> Already in Biskupsky's first of twelve goals he has miscalled the outcome of the then current Russo-Polish War that ended in the Peace of Warsaw in 1921. The post-war status of Poland was far from 'liquidated' as he envisioned. Thus, according to Biskupsky's own formula, none of the remaining goals could have taken place.
- <sup>179</sup> This is an allusion to the Bauer-Trebitsch plan to counterfeit millions of Duma roubles to help finance the counter-revolution.
- <sup>180</sup> The 'volunteers' here referred to are both the ex-tsarist Russian prisoners of war still sequestered in various camps throughout Germany and German *Freikorps* units.

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<sup>181</sup> English translation from Williams, *Culture in Exile*, 101. A copy of the entire original document in French is found in N Bauer, 1022/26/27/38a-40b, BaK.

<sup>182</sup> Letter exchange from mid-July 1920 between Horthy and Wrangel, MOL K-64-1920-41-300.

<sup>183</sup> A report on the participants and their positions on matters discussed is found in MOL K-64 res. pol. 1922-24-189.

<sup>184</sup> These individuals, especially Kommissarov, were well known as corrupt and wholly unreliable. See Kellogg, *Russian Roots of Nazism*, 113-16.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-14. The first names of the two Bavarian representatives are not given.

<sup>186</sup> MOL K-64 res. pol. 1922-24-189.

<sup>187</sup> Bauer, Memorandum über die geschichtliche Entwicklung, MOL K-64-1919-1920, 4.

<sup>188</sup> MOL K-64 res. pol. 1922-20-488.

<sup>189</sup> SHD, DB, fond 7, opis 2, (delo) dossier 25082, 4, 7f.

<sup>190</sup> It will be remembered that the British made no such guarantee.

<sup>191</sup> Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 198. There are few documents regarding this portion of the conspirators' activities, so most details have to be drawn from Trebitsch's autobiography. There are enough documents, however, to show that the attempt to bring Italy into the plot did, indeed, occur.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 199. Trebitsch-Lincoln's autobiography was published in 1931, which gave him the advantage of historical hindsight. His account of the anticipated German reaction to a (notional) French invasion of the Ruhr in 1920 was based on the observed reaction to the (actual) invasion of 1923.

<sup>193</sup> Luise Engeler memoirs, N Bauer, 1022/69/39-40, BaK. See also Trebitsch-Lincoln, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 200.

<sup>194</sup> There is no archival evidence of this.

<sup>195</sup> Photographic copy showing original signatures of Bauer and Biskupsky, N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27/248, BaK.

<sup>196</sup> Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935) was Polish Head of State from 1918 to 1922 and became First Marshal in 1920. He is largely considered responsible for Poland's independence in 1918. Between 1919 and 1921 Piłsudski commanded the Polish forces in the Russo-Polish War. He withdrew from politics in 1923; after a 1926 coup d'état, he was installed as de facto dictator until his death.

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<sup>197</sup> *DBFP*, vol. VIII, 442, 502-06.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> This question anticipates the 1922 Treaty of Rapallo between Bolshevik Russia and Germany.

<sup>200</sup> Friedrich von Rabenau, *Seeckt: Aus seinem Leben, 1918-1936: Unter Verwendung des Schriftlichen Nachlasses* (Berlin: von Hase und Koehler, 1940), 252, quoted from Piotr Stefan Wandycz, *France and her Eastern Allies 1919-1925: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from the Paris Peace Conference to Locarno* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), 161.

<sup>201</sup> See Arnold Rechberg, *Was kostet der Friedensvertrag die Entente?* (Munich: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1922), 116f. His basic conclusion was that the Entente's irresponsible demand for adherence to the Versailles Treaty prevented the formation of a German-Entente military coalition against Bolshevik Russia at Europe's peril.

<sup>202</sup> Arnold Rechberg, 'Die bolschewistische Vormarsch und Deutschland', *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, No. 260, July 1, 1920, paraphrased in Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 404-5.

<sup>203</sup> Allen, journal entry of July 8, 1920, quoted from Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 406.

<sup>204</sup> Note from British Ambassador in Berlin, Viscount d'Abernon, Lord d'Abernon's diary, 91. See Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 406.

<sup>205</sup> Note from Rechberg to Konrad Ritter von Preger, Bavarian Envoy in Berlin, July 7, 1920, Abt. II, No. 1097, BHStA.

<sup>206</sup> Note from Rechberg to von Kahr, July 3, 1920, Abt. II, No. 1097, BHStA.

<sup>207</sup> Report of Kilmarnock to Curzon, July 14, 1920, *DBFP*, vol. X, 272.

<sup>208</sup> Unofficial report of Kilmarnock to Hardinge, July 23, 1920, *DBFP*, vol. X, 276.

<sup>209</sup> The note appears to have been passed from Ludendorff's agent to the Berlin correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, who then passed it to Arnold Rechberg, who in turn brought it to Kilmarnock.

<sup>210</sup> Kilmarnock to Curzon, July 25, 1920, *DBFP*, vol. X, 277-8.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>213</sup> Général Charles M. E. Nollet, *Une expérience de désarmement: Cinq ans de contrôle militaire en Allemagne* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1932), 107.

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- <sup>214</sup> General Krauß was Bauer's first contact in Vienna on the Colonel's covert journey to Budapest in early May. Krauß had expressed reservations about the worthiness of Bauer's ambitious plan all along.
- <sup>215</sup> MOL K-64 res. pol. 1920-20-304.
- <sup>216</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 419.
- <sup>217</sup> Krauß's note of December 16, 1921, Mein erstes Zusammentreffen mit Oberst Bauer, N Bauer, 1022/27/46, BaK; Abt. IV, Bund Bayern und Reich, 26/2, BHStA.
- <sup>218</sup> Bauer letter to Pabst, March 4, 1923, Abt. IV, Bund Bayern und Reich, 26/2, BHStA.
- <sup>219</sup> Krauß's report from December 16, 1922, Abt. IV, Bund Bayern und Reich, 26/2, BHStA.
- <sup>220</sup> See Wulf Schmidt-Wulffen, 'Das Burgenland und die deutsche Politik 1918-1921', *Österreichische Osthefte*, vol. 11, no. 5 (1969), 271. The optimism of the Hungarians that the Austrians would be willing to negotiate on the Burgenland question arose from the mistaken notions that Austria was dependent on Hungary's agricultural surplus and that Bavaria would be prepared to forfeit Burgenland to Hungary after the *Anschluß* once Hungary and Bavaria shared a border.
- <sup>221</sup> Kerekes, 'Die "Weiße Allianz"', 365ff.
- <sup>222</sup> For Bauer's position, see Krauß's declaration in N Bauer, Trebitsch court docs, 1022/27/79, BaK.
- <sup>223</sup> Kerekes, 'Die "Weiße Allianz"', 361. See also Kanzler, *Bayerns Kampf*, 102.
- <sup>224</sup> Kerekes, 'Die "Weiße Allianz"', 361.
- <sup>225</sup> Bauer, Memorandum über die geschichtliche Entwicklung, MOL K-64-1919-1920, 4.
- <sup>226</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>227</sup> N Bauer, 1022/26/27/31, BaK.
- <sup>228</sup> Bauer, Memorandum über die geschichtliche Entwicklung, MOL K-64-1919-1920, 6.
- <sup>229</sup> Shuster, *German Disarmament*, 85.
- <sup>230</sup> See Trebitsch-Lincoln's own account, *Autobiography of an Adventurer*, 205-7; see also Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 175. Another version of the episode is found in the Luise Engeler memoirs, N Bauer, 1022/69/26-7, BaK.
- <sup>231</sup> Wasserstein, *Secret Lives of Trebitsch-Lincoln*, 176.

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<sup>232</sup> Thoß, *Der Ludendorff-Kreis*, 126.

<sup>233</sup> Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral*, 65.

<sup>234</sup> Ormos, *Hungary*, 68.

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