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**AWAKENING OF NON-TITULAR NATIONS  
AS A FACTOR OF THE BREAKUP OF EMPIRES  
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE HABSBERG MONARCHY)**

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the study is to show the influence of the national awakening of non-titular ethnic groups in the Habsburg monarchy on the development of disintegration processes in the state. The methodology of the research is based on the principles of historicism, systemicity, author's objectivity, as well as on the use of general scientific (analysis, synthesis, generalization) and special-historical (historical-genetic, historical-typological, historical-system) methods. The scientific novelty consists in a comprehensive study of the main factors influencing the process of a national-state revival of non-titular peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This is, in particular, the study of the impact on the processes of national consolidation of the territorial-political organization of the monarchy, locally-provincial or land-regional representative institutions, the place and social significance of the national elite of the non-titular peoples of the Habsburg monarchy in the formation of a national idea. The Conclusions.* *The authors are convinced that, being a random creation of history, the Habsburg*

monarchy for a long time combined the spiritual and cultural potential of the peoples of the empire with the political practice of the Austrian ruling dynasty. However, even taking into account the authority of the Danube monarchy as a factor in the multi-ethnic composition of the population, which had a beneficial effect on the development of the national culture of the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Croats and other ethnic groups, which, at the same time, became the basis for the formation of national-state formations of non-titular peoples of the empire, was unable to stop the process of disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the final phase of World War I.

**Key words:** Habsburg monarchy, non-titular peoples, national awakening, national-state revival.

## **ПРОБУДЖЕННЯ НЕТИТУЛЬНИХ НАЦІЙ ЯК ЧИННИК РОЗПАДУ ІМПЕРІЙ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ МОНАРХІЇ ГАБСБУРГІВ)**

**Анотація.** *Мета дослідження* – показати вплив національного пробудження нетитульних етносів монархії Габсбургів на розвиток дезинтеграційних процесів у державі. **Методологія дослідження** заснована на принципах історизму, системності, авторської об'єктивності, а також на використанні загальнонаукових (аналіз, синтез, узагальнення) та спеціально-історичних (історико-генетичний, історико-типологічний, історико-системний) методів. **Наукова новизна** полягає у комплексному дослідженні основних чинників впливу на процес національно-державного відродження нетитульних народів Австро-Угорської імперії. *Ідеться*, зокрема, про дослідження впливу на процеси національної консолідації територіально-політичної організації монархії, локально-провінційних або земельно-регіональних представницьких інститутів, місце і соціальне значення національної еліти нетитульних народів монархії Габсбургів у справі формування національної ідеї. **Висновки.** Автори переконані у тому, що, будучи випадковим творінням історії, монархія Габсбургів тривалий час поєднувала духовно-культурний потенціал народів імперії з політичною практикою австрійської правлячої династії. Проте навіть врахування владою Дунайської монархії чинника мультиетнічного складу населення, що сприятливим чином позначилося на розвитку національної культури чехів, словаків, угорців, поляків, українців, хорватів та інших етнічних груп, що водночас, стала підґрунтям для формування національно-державних утворень нетитульних народів імперії, було неспроможним зупинити процес дезинтеграції Австро-Угорської імперії на завершальній фазі Першої світової війни.

**Ключові слова:** монархія Габсбургів, нетитульні народи, національне пробудження, національно-державне відродження.

**The Problem Statement.** History knows the examples of the imperial state formations, where much effort was put in their affirmation primarily by the representatives of the non-titular peoples' intellectual elite of the empires. However, the study of this aspect is usually on the margin of scientific interests of the authors representing the title nation. For example, we (the titular ethnoscopes) came up with our opinions on the proclamation of the empire on our own. So, no wonder that the non-titular nations' contribution to the creation of empires remains practically unnoticed. And it should not be, because if we ignore the precise elucidation of the preconditions for the creation of empires it will be difficult to answer the question about the causes of their decline, since the fact that all empires once collapse is well-known. 100 years ago, according to the results of World War I, the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, German and Ottoman Empires ceased to exist. Main factors of the formation of national movements in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as the contribution of the non-titular nations' elite of the Habsburg Monarchy to its establishment and collapse, will be dealt with in this article.

**The Analysis of Sources and Recent Researches.** There is a vast array of literature on the national awakening of the non-titular peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy, which began under the influence of the Great French Revolution at the end of the 18-th century (Glants, 2004; Bogdanov, 2003; Mayboroda, 2015; Фрейдзон, 1998; Šolta, 1974; Hroch, 1999; Kočí 1978; Cuřín 1985;

Xpox, 2011). The subject of the domestic and foreign scientists' researches was, in particular, the main stages of the awakening, formation and modernisation of Eastern European nations, the specifics and differences of their national development, etc. Nevertheless, the theme of identity preservation, formation of its national paradigm necessarily leads to scholars' constant and thorough attention. Nowadays this topic has become of particular relevance, when the apparent desire of European peoples to preserve their identity contradicts the processes of global political, economic and cultural unification.

**The Publication's Purpose.** The aim of the article is to analyse the main factors that influenced the national and state revival process of non-titular peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire as its future destroyers. The object of the analysis of the research is the Habsburg State and the subject is the effect of the non-titular peoples' national awakening of the Danube Monarchy on the establishment and decline of the empire.

**The Statement of the Basic Material.** The research of the topic of forming the national paradigms of the Austro-Hungarian Empire peoples requires the definition of the specifics of this process. It is known that the formation of nations of the non-titular peoples of the Danube macrosystem took place within the framework of the multinational Habsburg State. However, for the Ukrainians and the Poles, the same process took place in a political fragmentation of their ethnic groups (the Ukrainian and Polish lands were under the Austrian and Russian authorities, accordingly). Under such circumstances, the Austrian political model of the multinational dynastic monarchy could not be applied to the Ukrainian and Polish territories that were part of the Russian Empire.

Many people of different origins and religions were gathered under the "dynastic roof" of the Habsburgs. The energy, with which the Habsburgs tirelessly built up the rules of relations between the imperial core and the periphery, is worth paying tribute to. Definitely, their efforts brought resource dividends to the Austrian throne, at the same time preserving the Danube macrosystem. For several centuries under their authority, along with the Austrian Germans (Deutsch-Österreicher), there coexisted other peoples, which gave grounds for such carriers of Austrophilia as F. Schuselka, Baron von Andrian-Warburg, L. L. Tun, J. M. Tun etc. to write about the discrimination of the Germans with the selfishness, characteristic to the representatives of the title nation. In particular, in his book "Is Austria German?" F. Shuzelka emphasized the need to defend the Austrians' interests more resolutely. To substantiate his claim, he cited data according to which the absolute majority of the inhabitants of the empire, that was almost 16 million people, were the Slavs, while the Germans accounted for only 7 million. Applying to the data, the Austrian politician wrote that such a state "caused fears" because of the incomprehensible perspective in the sense of preserving German identity in conditions of numerical domination of the Slavs (Schuselka, 1843, p. 16).

Despite this, we should state that the very motley ethnic and social palette led to the existence of a high degree of multiculturalism, polyethnicity of the Austrian society. The Habsburgs were forced to provide a special "dynamic relationship" between the imperial centre and the ethnonational periphery. A striking example of the Habsburgs' political maneuvering was a demonstration of their favorable attitude towards the leaders of the monarchy's ethnic groups, that were encouraged to cooperate by providing them with positions, titles, material support, etc. They systemically stimulated the desired orientation of various pressure groups. Such a pragmatic approach allowed not only to alleviate the severity of interethnic relations, but also to rely on the "native" elites.

Thus, in particular, the "creator" of the Czech nation F. Palacký was appointed as a lifelong member of the Noble Council by the Emperor Franz Joseph I, the famous Czech "Slavophile" P. J. Šafárik, held the position of a censor, later – "full-time kustos (custodian. – Author.) of the

Royal Library” (Shafarik, 1841, p. 141). A famous figure of the Czech national rebirth F. Čelakovský became Professor at the University of Prague, and the Slovak national warden J. Kollár was appointed to the post of Professor at the University of Vienna by the Imperial Decree. Another Czech intellectual J. Dobrovský received 6 thousand guilders from the Emperor for his scientific trip to Stockholm (Snegirev, 1884, p. 159). Another Czech national awakener F. Pelcl went his way from an educator at the County of Sternberg to a Professor of the Department of the Czech Language at the University of Prague. Supporting the modernisation activities of the Emperor Joseph II, the intellectual called the Emperor a revolutionary and successor of the outstanding Czech figure Jan Hus (Pelcl, 1956, p. 46).

The consequence of the monarchy’s cooperation with the intellectual elite of non-titular peoples was that in the years of the greatest threat to the existence of the monarchy, during the period of the Germans’ refusal from the Austrian, or more precisely, “prohabsburg” identity in favour of the great power identity, Austro-Slavism, proposed by the figure of the Czech National Revival F. Palacký, was chosen for the ideological foundation of the preservation of the Austrian Empire and not pan-Germanism. For this reason, in one of his letters to the Parliament, the Austro-Slavism leading ideologist F. Palacký wrote: “If the Austrian state had not existed for a long time, we should have done our best to create it in the interests of Europe and humanism” (Palacký, 1869, p. 256). Developing his own programme on reforming the empire, F. Palacký combined the ethno-linguistic principle with the idea of preserving historical and political units. At the same time, the basis of the territorial system was laid the principle of “forming a new, just, not artificial Austria, and an alliance of free and equal peoples with the obligatory hereditary power of a strong emperor” (Palacký, 1898, p. 90).

This concept emerged due to the fact that the Habsburg dynasty protected the ethnic communities of Central Europe from the Eastern and Western external enemies for many centuries, that gave it a sacred symbol of the peoples’ defender. The fact that for several centuries the representatives of the ruling dynasty skillfully carried out an internal political line for strengthening the imperial political structure, an integral part of which was the unitary structure of the Empire, also contributed to the long lasting existence of the Danube Monarchy. Of course, in their reign, the Crown Holders had to take into account the historical, national and cultural features of the controlled territories. This tactic allowed the Habsburgs, relying on “soft power” in the sense of neutralising the political ambitions of regional elites, to gradually include the regions in their own state and turn the local elite into their allies.

This was proven by awarding the Austrian Monarch his title, who had already had the titles of the King of Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, Croatia and Slovenia, Galicia and Lodomeria. The Habsburgs always demonstrated their propensity to pursue their policy of “minimal steps” in terms of recognising the rights of national provinces. At the same time, “playing the giveaway” with indigenous ethnocrats served the ultimate goal: to preserve their control of power and to secure the status of the empire as a great state.

Correspondingly, the practice of political development of the Danube Monarchy, as well as of some other European monarchies, contributed to the fact that the Central Europe peoples retained the specifics of administrative land distribution for many centuries – “Land” (Freydson, 1999, p. 23). The latter was carried out by taking into account the principle of national-historical peculiarities. This approach did not destroy the germs of ethno-regional consciousness, but also quite often became the basis for the growth of local patriotism and emancipation, regional self-identification. In this way, linguistic and cultural identity, and the sprouts of local regional traditions were preserved.

An important role in accelerating the national consolidation of non-titular peoples was played by the self-governing bodies that actually served as regional representative bodies and were embedded in the political system of the Habsburg Monarchy. However, the ability or right of representative bodies (Landtag, Sejm, Assembly, Parliament, Sabor) of the regions (lands) of the monarchy to act on the basis of traditions, recognised and endowed by the central government, depended on the historical and political individuality of the regions. For example, Sejms – the representative bodies of the Czech Republic and Moravia – evolved from the meetings of the higher aristocracy representatives of the early medieval society to the symbol of the national Czech self-government. Despite the fact that the political sovereignty of the representative bodies on the lands of St. Wenceslas Crown was suppressed and limited by the centre, the land self-governing traditions were preserved thanks to the ruling elites of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. The existing political traditions became a condition for the emergence of a compromise premises of the Czech National Movement.

The practice of compromises is explained by the internal land circumstances (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia) and the fact of the territorial, Czech-Austrian centuries-long common historical destiny. The idea of regional patriotism based on the background of the historical right of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown, the historical identity of the regions, and the recognition of the peculiarities of the Czech-German proto-national community within the State of the Habsburgs, albeit contributing to lowering the degree of the Czech movement opposition concerning a universal imperial ideology, but accelerated the process of the national caste – representative bodies formation.

Established in the 1290-ies the Parliament (Országgyűlés), a caste-representative body of the Hungarian Kingdom, and the decisive supply of the Hungarian political elite, became a valid reason to preserve the Hungarian identity in conditions of stateless existence since the end of the 17th century. Focused on the energetic protection of its ethnicity, the Hungarian ruling class defended a significant amount of its privileged classes and state-political rights. It is significant that the state autonomy bodies of the Hungarians survived even during the heyday of Austrian absolutism in the 17-th century.

The traditions of Hungarian parliamentarism also contributed to the National Revival of the Slovaks, since the competence of the Hungarian Parliament extended not only to the Hungarian ethnic territories. On the eve of the revolution of 1848 – 1849, when the period of “academic” nationalism was replaced by the era of national competition and new political opportunities, the participation of representatives of the Slovak elite in the work of the Hungarian Parliament became an important factor in the Slovak National Revival. Thus, the ideologist of the Slovak national movement L. Stur used the Hungarian Sejm to promote Slovak national ideas, as, for example, the Slovak National Newspaper (*Slovenskije národňje novini*) reported in the October issue of the newspaper in 1847, writing about L. Stur’s demands on the implementation of “the mother tongue in elementary schools”, the use of the Slovak language in theology and its compulsory mastery by physicians and lawyers (Štúr, 1847).

The presence of such a caste-representative institution as the Sejm had an exceptional significance in the sense of preserving and developing the national identity of the Poles. The imperial bodies of Europe, which contributed to the decline of Polish statehood in the last third of the 18-th century, had to take into account this tradition. In the process of forming the national paradigm of the southern Slavs, the Sabor played a positive role – a representative body that functioned separately in Croatia and Slavonia from the 18-th century. History shows that in Croatia in the late Middle Ages, autonomous legislative power (Sabor), a system of the state regional

self-government (Župa), a representative of the executive power in the person of the Royal Governor (the ban) functioned (Kirilina, 2011, p. 96).

In the second half of the 18th century the starting point for national-political changes in Croatia and Slavonia was the reform activity of Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II, whom Prince Metternich called “a powerless follower of his mother” (Gradovskiy, 1899, pp. 602–603). In 1790 the symbol of the noble historical law – “constitution” – was restored; at the same time, the so-called “municipal rights” were preserved, this fact provided for some privileges for the local gentry. Croatia and Slavonia were recognised as a special part of the lands of the Hungarian Crown. The Sabor retained the right of legislative initiative and recruiting, as well as it asserted the right to determine the official language and to preserve the traditions of religion.

In 1815, Croatian self-government became the object of the reformist pressure of Franz II, the infinite pedant “with clumsy mind” as contemporaries joked about him. Relying on bureaucratic officialdom, the last emperor of the Holy Roman Empire forbade the activities of the Sabor in the framework of an absolutist monarchy. The provincial elite was hostile to the emperor’s actions due to the features of the socio-political development of Croatia in the Middle Ages, as well as the attempt to counteract the policy of absolutism carried out by the Habsburgs in the national peripheries of the empire. The struggle for feudal autonomy gained the form of an ethnic opposition of the Croats to the Austrian authorities. Under the policy of general unification, the Sabor becomes a symbol of the struggle for national rights, a relic of a lost statehood. Since 1825 the activities of the Croatian Assembly were restored, but it was impossible to stop the process of national revival of the people (Kirilina, 2011, pp. 122–152).

The new wave of the Sabor’s activity dates from the revolution of 1848 – 1849. Accordingly, the Croatian “revolutionary spring” was intertwined in time with the Hungarian Revolution and with preparation and convening of Frankfurt Assembly. On March 18, 1848, the Croatian Sabor meeting (Hrvatski sabor) was opened in Zagreb. A number of bold decisions were made in the walls of the parliament. First of all, Croatia was defined as the unity of Slavonia, Dalmatia, Istria and the Military Frontier.

As far as the local self-government of Ukrainian ethnic lands is concerned, it is known that its traditions in the territory of the Dnieper Ukraine were mercilessly destroyed by the Tsarist Russia. In the West Ukrainian lands, which appeared after division of Poland, the Sejm functioned, in particular, in the territory of Galicia. Forming this caste-representative body, the Austrian Emperor relied not only on the representatives of aristocracy, but also on the local clergy. So the dynastic monarchy “carefully discovered” political opportunities for Ukrainians. This caused the formation of a loyal, benevolent attitude towards the Habsburg House and transformed into an element of the national historical consciousness of the population of Western Ukraine.

The Galician Sejm was last convened in 1845, nevertheless, the executive body of the Sejm – Administration of the Estates acted until 1861, when its powers were transferred to the executive body of the new Sejm – Administration of the Land. It will be fair to assume that the parliamentary traditions in the lands of Galicia were not the least to become the reason for the increased political activity of the population during the “People’s Spring”. The direct proof of the statement is the creation of the Supreme Ruthenian Council, a political organisation of the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the Uniate clergy, in Lviv on May 2, 1848. The organisation officially proclaimed the Ukrainians of Galicia a part of the Ukrainian people for the first time (MTSSIL, f. XXI, p. 1212).

It is known that the main reason for a significant shift in the national and cultural consciousness of the “Ruthenian people” was the “advent” of nationalism to Europe. At the same time, the very multiethnicity of the Danube Monarchy caused the emergence of an intellectual paradox.

Its meaning was in coexistence of the ideology of nationalism, which had a centrifugal nature, with liberalism, which was the antipode of nationalism with a centripetal nature. According to sources (messages, applications, requests) (CSHAUK, f. 442, d. 798, c. 153, pp. 354–355; CSHAUK, f. 442, d. 793, c. 433, p. 159–161; CSHAUK, f. 442, d. 798, c. 153, p. 437–438), for the non-titular peoples of the monarchy, including the Ukrainians, the process of national emancipation was accompanied by the development of liberal political ideas about civil rights and constitutionalism. In addition, Western Ukrainians under the Austrian Empire's rule, unlike the Ukrainians under the Russian Empire's power, had a greater experience in organising a socio-political life, and their intellectual discourse around the content of the national paradigm turned into traditions of the political life. These circumstances became the reason for the fact that over time the Ukrainians declared themselves the independent people with their own language and culture, who had their right to the territorial and administrative autonomy within the Austrian Empire.

Consequently, the activity of the caste-representative institutions had a tremendous impact on the formation of the national identity of the Danube Monarchy peoples. Autonomous bodies of self-government created conditions for regional political activity and consolidation of the provincial elite, contributed to the emancipation of collective identities within the framework of the general imperial political process.

At the same time, the evolution of a political nation depended directly on the ability of national elites to overcome the path from ethnic separation to a national state, from amorphous social formations to socio-political groups capable of formulating a national ideological cliché. Despite the significant influence of the Polish, Hungarian, Czech and Slovak dominant groups on the process of nation-building, the national and state revival of the ethnic groups of the Danube Monarchy, which did not have their national bourgeoisie, was led by the intelligentsia of various ranks (*riznochyntsi*) and clergy.

Was it good or evil? Did the existence of a “complete” or “incomplete” social structure of the ethnic group influence the velocity of the national revival of the Austrian Monarchy's non-titular peoples? Finally, is it possible to explain the problem of slow development of the Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian and other national institutions only by the weakness of their national elites or by the result of the negative influence of the “plebeian” ethno-social structure on the process of national and state revival? Were the Marxists right, explaining the slow movement of “non-historical” peoples to the revival of national statehood by the lack of a complete social structure of society?

The concept of the influence of the incomplete social structure of society on the pace of national and state revival of the non-titular peoples of the empires was reasonably substantiated by A Shpis, I. Leshchilovska (Shpis, 1982, pp. 133–134; Leschilovskaya, Freydzon, 1973, p. 30). Over the years the concept was developed by such researchers of the process of nation-building in the lands of the Slavic peoples as M. Khorkh, N. Korovitsyna (Hroh, 2011; Korovitsyna, 2006, pp. 103–104) and others, who used Marxist theory of an incomplete social structure to answer the question of the causes of the low pace of national and state ripening of the Slovak, Czech, Croatian, Bulgarian and Romanian societies.

For example, Y. Tybensky claims that the social structure of the Slovak society was represented quite conditionally by its own ethnocrats. Then in his writings the researcher cites the figure of “ten thousand” families of the small elite, which, accordingly, solved the social and economic fate of the Slovak people (Tibenský, 1964, p. 34). Y. Tibensky believes that a narrow layer of the ethnic elite became one of the conditions of political moderation or even conservatism of the Slovak national movement. A similar approach to the causes of underdevelopment of the national movements of the Austrian Empire's non-titular peoples is quite typical of Soviet historiography,

whose principal representatives believed that “the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Serbs, the Slovenes, the Romanians (in Hungary) were practically deprived of a national nobility” (Leschilovskaya, Freydzon, 1973, p. 30). In return, the Hungarian historian E. Niederhauser was not so categorical, analysing the social structure of the peoples of Central Europe, and quite rightly considering that “some ethnic groups had their own feudal elite, their ruling class, and in some did not” (Niederhauser, 1998, p. 29). However, the above-mentioned reaffirms the decisive role of the national elite in shaping the idea of national statehood as the ultimate goal of a nation's development. Consequently, the methodological approach by which the process of modernisation of the Czech, Slovak, Romanian, Serbian and Ukrainian societies was a matter of mostly a small social layer – intelligentsia, of course, should be considered as basic in the estimation of maturation rates in the context of national movements of the idea of separation.

As to the role of the leading layer in the national and state revival of non-titular nations in the Habsburg Monarchy, it will be logical to assume that it was exactly such a category of ethnic elite as gentry (szlachta) that not only defended its social privileges, including cherishing the idea of a certain political revenge, keeping the memory of historic greatness of its past, but also served as an additional social source for the formation of a new political and spiritual elite, that is, it was the subject of the process of modernisation. In its effort to protect the principle of its historical law, to justify its claims to the status of privileges, territorial possessions, the gentry armed itself with the attributes of national ideology and took part in the political struggle of the age of the formation of nations.

Active participation of the Hungarian and Polish gentry in the national liberation movement of their countries became an example of this fact. Thus, in 1867 the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I was compelled to compromise with the Hungarian elite, which resulted in that the Austrian Empire transformed into a dual state – Austro-Hungary. Although the Polish gentry, as it is known, could not achieve such results, since 1815 it became a part of the Russian Empire on the rights of the Kingdom of Poland.

With this in mind, we can ask a question: where is the hidden mechanism that triggers a sense of personal dignity and high degree of national patriotism, and why did the Hungarian and Polish gentry find the strength to manifest themselves in the active phase of their movements, and, for example, the Czech, and even more so, Slovak elites remained almost invisible participants in the periods of radical challenge? Comparison of the quantitative indicators of the national gentry of the peoples enslaved by Habsburgs, will help to answer this question. Thus, according to the well-known statistician E. Fényes' estimates, about 800 thousand representatives of gentry lived in the lands of the Hungarian Crown in the early 1840's (Schuselka, 1843, pp. 68–75). As the Soviet researcher R. Averbukh noted, by its number the Hungarian gentry almost four times exceeded the number of craftsmen's population of the Hungarian Kingdom (Averbukh, 1965).

According to the Polish Encyclopedia of Gentry, the Polish gentry accounted for more than a million out of ten million of Polish people or 10 % of the number of all Poles (Polska encyklopedia, 1935). Taking into account that almost every tenth citizen of the Rzecz Pospolita (Commonwealth) had the title of nobility, 8 – 10 % of the whole state's population participated in parliamentary activities.

Gentry was the most important and quite big part of the Slovak population of the empire. By the way, more than a half of the total number of the privileged class of the kingdom lived on the Slovak ethnic lands that occupied one fifth of the territory of Hungary (in 1787 – more than 95,700; by 1846 the number of gentry grew to 163,500) (Bogdanov, 2003, pp. 210–211).

Among the abovementioned peoples, not only the members of wealthy and influential families (magnates), but also the holders of the so-called Privilege Certificates should be classified



as gentry. For the latter, the positive principle of constructing a collective identity was formed on the basis of the status membership, because ethnic affiliation was something secondary in their outlooks.

The above-mentioned fact allows us to state the presence of a heterogeneous structure of a higher caste. The structure of the gentry included not only large landowners, or landlords, but also zemans (Latin “nobilies” or “nobiles regni”, that is, nobles or Royal Nobles). Certainly, petty gentry as an inner layer of the noble hierarchy was no exception, inherent only to the territories of the Habsburg Monarchy, but it was rather a pan-European phenomenon.

By the way, similar processes of class differentiation also took place in Croatia. At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century 84 % of the gentry did not own peasants, and because of the “terrible poverty” they could not even carry out military service (Freydzon, 2001, pp. 71).

Thus, the petty gentry (zemans) represented a big part of small landowners in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and they quite often carried out their economic activities on their own, and sometimes were even hired to cultivate peasant lands. The main thing that distinguished the petty gentry from peasants was a system of feudal law, in which the order of hierarchical social relations was fixed. Thus, in spite of the size of material prosperity, the petty gentry of Central Europe, in any case, was legally more privileged than the peasants who had a lower position on the social ladder. Accordingly, on the eve of the Peoples’ Spring, the nobility, including the small landowners, was an integral part of the higher ruling class according to all formal indicators. This means that the social structure of the ruling class of the Danube Monarchy was variegated and differentiated.

At the same time, the social structure of certain Slavic peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy was quite typical and did not differ fundamentally from the social structure of the rest of the empire’s regions. With regard to the modernisation of the Czech, Serbian, and Slovak spiritual culture and language, it was a matter of a small social layer of the national intelligentsia (priests, teachers, doctors) as well as of regional and provincial gentry. According to the Slovak scholar J. Hučko, the social basis of the intellectual elite was represented by people of different states, which included 20–25 % of the local gentry representatives (Hučko, 1974, p. 2). The rest of the regional elites’ representatives were petty gentry with its high degree of national amorphism, conformism, and, thus, the mere desire to preserve its status of feudal lords, since only the nobility was the bearer of political rights.

**The Conclusions.** So the policy of de-ethnicization of the upper layers of the population in the Habsburg State did not lead to the formation of ethnic groups with an “incomplete social structure”, as argued by Marxists, but this policy caused a certain disbalance or “stratification imbalance” within certain ethnic groups of non-titular nations.

At the same time, the ruling elite’s heterogeneity of a number of ethnic groups of the Habsburg Monarchy became a significant factor in deterring their socio-political activity, that resulted in the ruling elite’s indifferent attitude to the ideology of national revival and, consequently, the gentry’s loyal attitude towards the metropolis.

Another part of the national elite’s representatives of the non-titular ethnic groups of the Danube Monarchy, mostly petty gentry, became the driving force behind the acceleration of the national process, the intellectual condition of active national propaganda and a qualitative component of the Peoples’ Spring. Such national revival leaders as Archbishop O. Rudney, the Slovak awakening participant A. F. Kollár, the scientists and language coders M. Bel, A. Bernolák, J. Csaplóvics, J. Palkovič, the theater founder G. Fejérpataky-Belopotoczky, Hungarian radical

revolutionaries S. Petőfi and L. Kossuth, were representatives of the petty gentry environment. Finally, the petty provincial gentry was the core of the non-titular national elite of the Habsburg Monarchy and the leader of their national movement for gaining independence. However, World War I and new principles of International Order, determined by the victorious powers of the Great War, became the external factors on their way to independence.

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