

Secret Negotiations between Hungarian, German (Bavarian) and Austrian Radical Right-Wing Politicians and Paramilitary Organisations after the Great War, 1919–1921. An Outline of the Idea of the White Internationale

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Abstract : *After the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles, some politicians of the defeated states, mainly those in Germany and in the successor states of the disintegrated Austro–Hungarian monarchy were very unsatisfied with the defeat and the considerable territorial losses, and sought the possibility of revision, including the help of possible allies. From 1919 onwards, Hungary’s new right-wing political leadership continued to actively seek contacts with German-speaking, mainly Bavarian and Austrian radical right-wing political forces and their associated paramilitary formations. On the Bavarian side, General Erich Ludendorff, Colonel Max Bauer and the then young and emerging far-right politician Adolf Hitler attempted to set up an international revisionist organisation at the end of 1919. The German radical right-wing politicians would have seen the possibility of changing the political situation mainly in the coalition of the Free Corpses, which were very numerous in both Germany and Austria and mainly consisted of First World War veterans. The plan envisaged by General Ludendorff would have consisted of an agreement between the Bavarian-German Free Corpses, the Austrian radical right-wing militias and the leaders of the right-wing counter-revolutionary Government. The present research article makes an attempt to explore the history of the Bavarian–Austrian–Hungarian secret negotiations the aim of which would have been a Central European military association against the Entente powers called the White Internationale, which, of course, was never realised due to the international political situations.*

Keywords: *diplomatic history, radical right wing movements, Central Europe after WWI, military history, revisionism.*

After the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles, some politicians of the defeated states, mainly those in Germany and in the successor states of the disintegrated Austro–Hungarian monarchy were very unsatisfied with the defeat and the considerable territorial losses, and sought the possibility of revision, including the help of possible allies. From 1919 onwards, Hungary’s new right-wing political leadership continued to actively seek contacts with German-speaking, mainly Bavarian and Austrian radical right-wing political forces and their associated paramilitary formations. On the Bavarian side, General Erich Ludendorff, Colonel Max Bauer and the then young and emerging far-right politician Adolf Hitler attempted to set up an international revisionist organisation at the end of 1919. The German radical right-wing politicians would have seen the possibility of changing the political situation mainly in the coalition of the Free Corpses, which were very numerous in both Germany and Austria and mainly consisted of First World War veterans. The plan envisaged by General Ludendorff would have consisted of an agreement between the Bavarian-German Free Corpses, the Austrian extreme right militias and the leaders of the right-wing counter-revolutionary Government and participants of the paramilitary wave of violence called White Terror¹ in Hungary, with the aim of a violent takeover of political power in both Germany and Austria as soon as possible. In the case of Hungary, it was already foreseeable that political power would permanently be in the hands of the right-wing politicians of the counter-revolutionary Government of Szeged and the commander-in-chief of National Army, Admiral Miklós Horthy who were strongly supported by the Entente powers. Otherwise Admiral Horthy was soon elected as head of

¹ Béla Bodó, *The White Terror. Antisemitic and Political Violence in Hungary, 1919–1921*, London, Routledge, 2019.

state of Hungary under the title Regent Governor in 1920,² since formally the country preserved its form of government as kingdom, although technically it was much more similar to the Republic of Weimar of Germany. In the winter of 1919, General Ludendorff and Colonel Bauer sent Ignác Trebitsch, the Hungarian-born international spy and adventurer to Hungary with the mission to persuade Hungarian right-wing circles to support the so-called Kapp–Lüttwitz Putsch in Germany, a coup d'état formally led by Prussian civil servant and nationalist politician Wolfgang Kapp, but in reality mainly organised by General Ludendorff.³ The contact with the Bavarian and Austrian radical right-wing organisations was sought primarily by a group of strongly nationalist military officers linked to the Double Cross Blood Union, the very influential Hungarian secret military organisation. Trebitsch and Colonel Bauer, for example, negotiated with Lieutenant Colonel Pál Prónay, one of the most notorious paramilitary commanders of the Hungarian right-wing counter-revolution during their first visit to Hungary.⁴ Prónay also belonged to the circles of radical right-wing officers who commanded the Double Cross Blood Union, and at the time the secret military organisation and its commanders had some influence even on Hungarian foreign policy for a while, although moderate conservative politicians tried to prevent them from leading Hungary into hazardous political actions.⁵

The radical right-wing forces finally attempted to take power in Germany in March 1920, but the Kapp–Lüttwitz Putsch, due to the hesitation of the Army, which did not support the coup, but did not defend the legitimate German Federal Government either, initially led to the Government's escape from Berlin, but within a few days it was overthrown by the general strike that followed the coup and the resistance of the bankers and the industrialists. In May 1920 Ignác Trebitsch together with Colonel Bauer and Captain von Stefany travelled to Budapest once again to deliver Ludendorff's letter, and they personally visited Admiral Miklós Horthy who had by then been elected Regent Governor of Hungary by the Parliament. The German radical right-wing politicians and the newly elected Hungarian head of state discussed the possibility of a possible German–Austrian–Hungarian right-wing alliance, mainly of military nature. It should be added that the parties did indeed negotiate with the serious desire to cooperate, and General Ludendorff considered it entirely feasible at that time, and he called the initiative of the cooperation between the right-wing forces of Central Europe the *White Internationale*. In his cordial letter, Ludendorff called Hungary the saviour of the nationalist idea and asked for financial support for Bavarian revolutionary organisations as well.⁶

The Germans offered Hungary a very detailed cooperation plan consisting of the following main points:

1. secret irregular military units would travel from Germany to Hungary.
2. these men would be trained in secret camps in Hungary.
3. the Hungarian Government will raise the necessary funds for training by printing and distributing counterfeit Russian rubels.
4. Bavarian military units trained in Hungary secretly infiltrate Vienna and overthrow the Austrian social democratic Government in due course.
5. After the capture of Vienna, the Bavarian-Hungarian-Austrian coalition troops attack Czechoslovakia.
6. The above-mentioned troops then occupy Prussia where Ludendorff establishes a military dictatorship.
7. Thus strengthened, the governments and armies of the White Internationale unleash a white revolution in Soviet Russia and overthrow the communist government.
8. After the successful right-wing restoration of Russia, the member states of the White Internationale declare war on the Entente, and the winners redraw the map of Europe, returning the territories of Hungary annexed by the Treaty of Trianon.⁷

It is also worth mentioning here that the Ludendorff and his companions had particularly high hopes for the participation of the monarchist Russian forces fighting against the Bolshevik Government in the White Internationale, since the outcome of the Russian civil war was not yet a decided in 1919, and hundreds of

² Dávid Turbucz, *Horthy Miklós*, Budapest, Napvilág Kiadó, 2011, 66–92.

³ About the Kapp–Lüttwitz Putsch see in more details: *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Ludendorff Putsch. Dokumente*, ed. Erwin Könneman–Gerhard Schulze, Berlin, Olzog, 2002.

⁴ Bernard Wasserstein, *Az igazi Trebitsch. Az átváltozóművész*, ford. Molnár György, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2016, 217–238.

⁵ About the activities of the radical right-wing Hungarian secret military organisation the Double Cross Blood Union see: Balázs Kántás, *The Double Cross Blood Union: Outline of the History of a Secret Military Organisation of Hungary in the 1920s*, *Anglisticum*, 2021/6, 52–70. <https://www.anglisticum.org.mk/index.php/IJLLIS/article/view/2218>

⁶ *Horthy Miklós titkos iratai*, ed. Miklós Szinai Miklós–László Szűcs, Budapest, Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1962, 33–38; Ildikó Szerényi–Zoltán Viszket, *Buzgó Mócsing, az igazi Trebitsch*, Archivnet, 2006/3.

http://www.archivnet.hu/kuriozumok/buzgo_moelsing_az_igazi_trebitsch.html

⁷ László Gulyás, *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája I. Az első évek, 1919–1924*, Máriabesenyő, Attraktor Kiadó, 2012, 42–43.

thousands of tsarists, or at least Russian citizens who were not sympathetic to the Bolshevik Government had left their country since the outbreak of the communist revolution. The largest group of the so-called White Russian emigrants had settled in Germany, and there were still many Russian prisoners of war who refused to return to Soviet Russia, and several tsarist Russian generals considered it possible to overthrow the Bolshevik regime with the help of the above mentioned soldiers.⁸ Ludendorff also contacted, through Ignác Trebitsch and Colonel Bauer, tsarist General Vassily Biskupsky who himself had visited to Budapest in June 1920 and took part in negotiations between the German, Austrian and Hungarian right-wing political forces.⁹ The negotiations also resulted in memoranda of detailed plans, but actual cooperation with the White Russian forces fighting against the Bolshevik Army, which were otherwise very fragmented and poorly organised, could not really take place on the part of the planned participants in the White Internationale from Central Europe, due to the great geographical distances.¹⁰

The negotiations between the European nationalist forces, mainly based in Budapest, could not have been conducted under complete secrecy, of course, as the French and British intelligence services were also informed about them, and the Entente powers expressed their strong objections, which warned the Hungarian Government to be cautious in the field of diplomacy and foreign policy.¹¹ In parallel with Bavarian nationalist forces, the Hungarian Government also sought contact with Austrian radical right-wing political forces and paramilitary organisations in the 1920s, in the hope of establishing the same Central European white coalition. The Hungarian Government and military leadership, in close cooperation with them Hungarian nationalist social organisations, played a contradictory game, as their plans included assistance to overthrow Austria's elected left-wing government and to bring local right-wing and radical right-wing political forces to power, including even through Hungarian military intervention.¹² Hungarian radical right-wing military officers also drew up a plan for a military operation under the codename 'Remény' – 'Hope', which was certainly never realised.¹³ The Austrian right-wing paramilitary organisations were also in close contact with the Bavarian nationalist circles led by General Ludendorff, so the secret negotiations were not only conducted between the Hungarian and the Austrian side, but also involved the competent Bavarian politicians. The Hungarian General Staff, due to the weakness of the Austrian paramilitary organisations and the military preparations of Czechoslovakia, considered a possible intervention against Austria to be feasible only with the support of Bavarian irregular military units.¹⁴ The Bavarian–Hungarian–Austrian secret negotiations, which were intensively conducted during 1920, were personally led by Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Count Pál Teleki and by Colonel Tihámér Siménfalvy, commander of the secret military organisation Double Cross Blood Union and close friend to Regent Governor Horthy on the Hungarian side; on the Bavarian side, Rudolf Kanzler, leader of the right-wing militia ORKA (Organisation Kanzler),¹⁵ and Georg Heim, a peasant-party politician; and on the Austrian side, mainly members of the radical right wing of the Christian Socialist Party, for example, by Prince Johannes von Liechtenstein. On 25 and 26 August 1920, the parties met at Hungarian Prime Minister Teleki's house in Budapest.¹⁶ It should be stressed that while in the case of Bavarian and Austrian politicians the negotiators were mainly members of political movements aspiring for power, in the Case of Hungary, the representatives of the Government and the Army took part in the negotiations, although there were certainly tensions between the moderate conservative and the radical nationalist wings of the governing United Party and the political and military elite. However, in this period the Hungarian head of state Admiral Horthy, who was himself a high-ranking military officer and hero of the Great War similar to General Ludendorff, strongly supported the sometimes adventurous plans of radical officers and politicians.¹⁷

By August 1920, the Hungarian Government had abandoned their plans of the military intervention against Austria due to the international situation, but they continued to do its best to ensure that a right-wing government would come to power in the forthcoming Austrian parliamentary elections, so they tried to intervene in the internal affairs of the new Austrian State by conspiratorial means. At the same time, the Hungarian military intervention was no longer approved by the Bavarian paramilitary leader Rudolf Kanzler either. Furthermore, there were significant conflicts of interest between the Bavarian, Hungarian and Austrian sides, for example, they could not agree on the issue of the king and the future territorial status of Western

⁸ About the Russian aspects of the White Internationale see: Attila Kolontáry, *Alekszej von Lampe, Vrangél báró katonai képviselője Magyarországon*, Pécs, PTE BTK Történettudományi Intézet–Modernkori Oroszország és Szovjetunió Történeti Kutatócsoport, MOSZT-füzetek 1., 2015

⁹ Wasserstein, op. cit. 254–255.

¹⁰ Wasserstein, op. cit. 255.

¹¹ Elek Karsai, *Számjeltávirat valamennyi magyar királyi követségnek*, Budapest, Táncsics Kiadó, 1969, 63–64.

¹² Katalin G. Soós, *Burgenland az európai politikában 1918–1921*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971, 90.

¹³ Archives of Hungarian Military History, HU-HL-VKF-1920-II-21197.

¹⁴ G. Soós, op. cit. 90–91.

¹⁵ As for the history of ORKA and other radical right-wing German paramilitary organisations see: John T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria, 1918–1934*, Copenhagen, The Royal Library–Museum Tusulanum Press, 2007.

¹⁶ G. Soós, op. cit. 91.

¹⁷ Turbucz, op. cit. 66–92.

Hungary, which was an important element of Hungarian–Austrian relations. In the end, the Hungarian Government only signed an agreement with the radical right-wing political forces in Bavaria on the supply of a substantial amount of arms, to which the Bavarian Provincial Prime Minister Gustav von Kahr who was also strongly right-wing and on good terms with Ludendorff, subsequently agreed.¹⁸

In parallel, there were also lively negotiations between the Austrian and Bavarian right-wing forces in progress the main aim of which was the unification of the Austrian right-wing paramilitary organisations under German command and the unification of the German-speaking states with their cooperation. However, there were significant conflicts of interest and differences of opinion between the German-speaking parties as well. On 6 and 7 September 1920, further negotiations took place in Vienna between Bavarian and Austrian radical right-wing organisations, presumably with the participation of the Hungarian Ambassador in Vienna, Gusztáv Gratz where the parties agreed to mutually support each other's anti-communist aims, but at the same time Austrian Christian Socialist politicians abandoned at the last moment their plans to overthrow the Austrian Government by force. The leaders of the Austrian Heimwehr militias¹⁹ said that they could not provide the armed forces that would have been necessary to overthrow the social democrat Government by military means, but that they would do everything in their power to ensure that a right-wing government of their own design would come to power in Austria in the forthcoming elections.

The Hungarian Government primarily provided financial support to the Austrian Heimwehr organisations, in the hope that it would be able to use them for its future foreign policy goals.²⁰ At the same time, in Bavaria, General Ludendorff and his very radical circle were no longer willing to hear the much more sensible scenario agreed on at the earlier September talks. They committed themselves to military action in any case, by the rapid establishment of a military alliance called the *League of the Oppressed Peoples*, to be set up by the countries that had lost the First World War. Furthermore, Ludendorff once again requested financial support from the Hungarian Government, not for the first time and not for the last.²¹ By this time, however, Teleki was explicitly opposed to the Hungarian financial support for the Bavarian radical right, and the Hungarian Government saw the participation in the League of Oppressed Peoples and thus a possible new military conflict as increasingly risky.²²

The Hungarian Government was, by this time, of course, cautious, and realistic political considerations finally seemed to prevail over the despair coming from the huge territorial losses and the resulting radicalism, but they did not explicitly reject the possibility of joining the League of Oppressed Peoples, which was only a conceptual cooperation, and in their reply to Ludendorff and his circle they wrote that they would continue to maintain good relations with the Bavarian organisations. Teleki also indicated that Austria which geographically separated Hungary and Germany should in any case be put at the service of their own political and military aims, but not by an immediate military intervention.²³

The relations between the Austrian counter-revolutionary groups and the Hungarian Government were spoiled by the fact that the two largest successor states of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy failed to reach an agreement on the question of the belonging of Western Hungary, and the issue was to be decided by the victorious Entente powers, primarily by France.²⁴ The question remained unresolved for some time, but it worsened the relations with both the official Austrian Government circles and the Austrian radical right-wing movement which was fuelled by aspirations for power, and the parties tried to obtain a decision from the great powers that was as favourable as possible for them.

In October 1920, the Social Democrat Karl Renner was replaced by the Christian Socialist Michael Mayr as Chancellor (Prime Minister) of Austria, but the Hungarian Government, or at least the radical right-wing Hungarian military circles close to the Government was still secretly considering the possibility of military intervention against Austria again. In November, the Hungarians again contacted Ludendorff through their military attaché in Munich, Colonel Béla Janky, and in January 1921, on the orders of Minister of Defence General Sándor Belitska, the Hungarian General Staff, then operating under secrecy due to the strict limitations of armament of the Peace Treaties of Paris over the defeated countries, drew up a plan for military intervention against Austria in the event of a communist takeover in the neighbouring country and the coming to power of a radical left-wing government.²⁵ After the plan had been worked out, Count Gedeon Ráday travelled to Munich on behalf of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss the details of the possible action with

¹⁸ G. Soós, op. cit. 92.

¹⁹ As for the history of the Austrian paramilitary Heimwehr movement see: Lajos Kerekes, *Olaszország, Magyarország és az osztrák Heimwehr-mozgalom*, Történelmi Szemle, 1961/2, 199–216

²⁰ G. Soós, op. cit. 93.

²¹ HU-HL VKF-1920-II-23152.; G. Soós, op. cit. 94.

²² G. Soós, op. cit. 95.

²³ Central Archives of the National Archives of Hungary, HU-MNL-OL-K 64-1922-20-1920/384.

²⁴ Katalin G. Soós, *Magyar-bajor-osztrák titkos tárgyalások és együttműködés, 1920–1921*, Acta Universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József Nominatae. Acta Historica, 1967/Tomus XXVII., 3–43, 23.

²⁵ HU-HL VKF-1921-1-266. Cited by G. Soós, op. cit. 25.

Bavarian Provincial Prime Minister Kahr and paramilitary commander Rudolf Kanzler. On 16 January 1921, at a secret meeting held in the presence of Regent Governor Horthy, the Hungarian Government decided that any military action against Austria could only take place with German (Bavarian) participation.²⁶ The Hungarian Government's decision also implied that if the Bavarian political forces saw the need for military intervention in Austria of their own accord and carried it out, Hungary would support them, providing them primarily with material support, equipment and munitions, and Hungarian irregular military units would also volunteer to help the Bavarian forces. These Hungarian units would have been provided by the secret irregular, reserve-force like military organisation, the Double Cross Blood Union under the command of Colonel Tihamér Siménfalvy,²⁷ which, as already mentioned, played a very important role in the clandestine revisionist negotiations, and in fact, from the Hungarian side, it was precisely the radical right-wing military officers of the Blood Union who were the main promoters of such a military cooperation.

The plan for military cooperation against communism in Central Europe was not looked upon too favourably by the Entente powers, especially France and Britain, mainly because the Austrian and Bavarian positions also strongly implied the intention of unifying Austria and Germany, the so-called Anschluss. At the end of January 1921, Gusztáv Gratz, the former Hungarian ambassador in Vienna, and by then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, had a great deal of diplomatic information and tried to dissuade the Hungarian Government from even the idea of participating in any reckless military action. He indicated that Britain and France would regard the Hungarian–German–Austrian anti-Bolshevik league as a pretext for the territorial revision of the peace treaties of Paris, and that in his opinion there was a real danger that in the event of any Hungarian military action against Austria, the neighbouring Little Entente states, Czechoslovakia, Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes would also intervene against Hungary.²⁸

Bavarian Provincial Prime Minister Kahr was increasingly losing ground against France in the international diplomatic arena, and the Bavarian side gradually passed the right to negotiate to Rudolf Kanzler. In February 1921, Count Gedeon Ráday and the Bavarian paramilitary commander also signed a cooperation agreement between the Hungarian Government and the Bavarian ORKA militia, but this was mostly a symbolic declaration. The parties agreed that if the opportunity arose, the ORKA would attempt to 'restore order' in Austria, with the Hungarian Government providing financial assistance, and that if the ORKA were successful, the Trianon Peace Treaty would be declared invalid. However, Kanzler asked the Hungarian Government for too much money, a sum of 4,5 million German marks, to organise the very risky operation, which the Hungarian side refused to provide, and for this reason no actual agreement was reached between the parties.²⁹

All in all, the idea of military intervention against Austria was unrealistic in the given political situation, and the parties finally realised this in the first half of 1921. Although Austria's new Chancellor was a right-wing Christian Socialist politician, he belonged to the more moderate wing of the party, and the Hungarian Government was moving closer to the radical wing of the Austrian Christian Socialists. Very close links existed between the Austrian Heimwehr militias and the radical wing of the governing Christian Socialist Party, and the possibility of overthrowing the moderate Mayr Government was soon raised. Instead of a Hungarian or Bavarian military intervention, however, the new negotiations were dominated by the idea that the Austrian right-wing paramilitary organisations should themselves force a change of government in Austria, and the Austrian side was represented by General Josef Metzger and the later Chancellor Ignaz Seipel on behalf of the Heimwehr organisations in Vienna and Lower Austria. The Austrians expected the Hungarian Government to provide financial support for the major arming of the Heimwehr militias, and the Hungarian Government demanded in return that if the Austrian radical right-wing forces succeeded in bringing to power a government of their own design in Vienna, Austria should temporarily give up the territory of Western Hungary, and negotiations should continue until the new Austrian Government was able to settle the question of Western Hungary in a way that was favourable to the Hungarian side. Although the leadership of the Austrian Heimwehr organisations and the group led by Seipel were by no means free from the idea of royalism, the attempted return of King Charles IV of Habsburg to Hungary at the end of March 1921 also made the idea of a Habsburg restoration in Austria completely unrealistic. On 31 March 1921, the Hungarian Ambassador in Vienna, Szilárd Masirevich reported to Minister of Foreign Affairs Gusztáv Gratz that he had personally negotiated with Seipel who was deeply shocked by Charles IV's decisive removal from Hungary. Certainly, the Entente powers did not allow any attempts of restoration of the House of Habsburg in any successor states of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, therefore, the Hungarian Government had decisively deny Charles IV to return to the throne of Hungary. Among other things, this was the moment that made Seipel realise the extent of the political and military influence of the Entente powers in the region, and that an armed change of government in Austria with

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ HU-HL VKF-1921-1-266.

²⁸ HU-MNL-OL-K 64-1921-41-34.

²⁹ HU-MNL-OL-K 64-41-72.

the help of the Heimwehr militias was as unrealistic as the Habsburg restoration itself.³⁰ In Austria, the attempted return of Charles IV to Hungary was followed by vivid political debates, and Federal Chancellor Mayr expressed in Parliament his firm belief that he considered the republican form of government laid down in the Treaty of Saint Germain to be obligatory on Austria, and that he would defend it by all means against any legitimist-monarchist plotting.³¹ Although Seipel came to power shortly afterwards, he himself was forced to adapt to the interests of international politics and to consolidate. Furthermore, the attempted return of Charles IV caused a domestic political crisis in Hungary as well, with the resignation of Gustáv Gratz, the Minister of Foreign Affairs who was a well-known legitimist on 4 April 1921, followed by the resignation of Prime Minister Count Pál Teleki on 8 April. Teleki was succeeded as Prime Minister by Count István Bethlen, and Gratz was replaced by Count Miklós Bánffy. Although the period of Bethlen's policy of consolidation had begun, the secret negotiations between Hungary, Bavaria and Austria on the establishment of a possible anti-communist and revisionist alliance still continued for some time. While the parties continued to agree on the main points of the earlier negotiations, relations between Austria and Hungary became even more negative, partly because of the attempted legitimist coup in Hungary. Alongside the Bavarian Kanzler, the Austrian radical right was represented at this stage of the negotiations mainly by politicians from Styria, such as the Styrian Provincial Prime Minister Anton Rintelen who later became Austria's Federal Minister of Education. During these negotiations, the leadership of the Bavarian ORKA organisation argued for the general invalidity of the Paris Peace Treaties and urged the Austrian and Hungarian sides to settle the dispute over the territorial integrity of Western Hungary within the framework of a friendly agreement.³² However, given that Austria was then only represented in the negotiations by politicians with local influence, their position on the issue was of no importance as for international politics. Both the Austrian and German radical right-wing organisations asked for additional financial support from the Hungarian Government, and there was rivalry beginning between them. From May 1921 onwards, representatives of the Hungarian side – with the Government's knowledge and authorisation – were present at the negotiations, and Colonel Tihamér Siménfalvy asked the ORKA militia to try to involve not only the Styrian radical right forces but all similar organisations in Austria, especially influential Viennese politicians, in the cooperation.³³ During the negotiations, the question was raised whether Austria would be prepared to make concessions to Hungary on the issue of Western Hungary if the ORKA succeeded in bringing a radical right-wing government to power in Austria, to which Styrian Prime Minister Rintelen could not give a definite answer. General Josef Metzger attempted to reconcile the differences between the parties, but he failed. In May 1921, Ervin Morlin, the official of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Hungarian Government that Anton Rintelen himself did not seriously believe that he could replace the Mayr Government with the men of the ORKA.³⁴ The activities of the Bavarian and Austrian radical right-wing organisations became more and more limited to obtaining more and more financial support from the Hungarian Government, but they did less and less political activity in their own countries that was of any use to the Hungarian Government. At the end of May 1921, Hungarian military diplomat Colonel Boldizsár Láng informed the Hungarian Government about the fragmentation and poor equipment of the Austrian Heimwehr organisations.³⁵ At the same time, Bavaria was experiencing a huge economic and social crisis, and the local government could less and less afford to pursue a foreign policy that differed from that of the Federal Government, while there was also a disunity between the various radical right-wing paramilitary organisations, and their political activities were increasingly confined to the provincial borders of Bavaria. The rise to power of the Bavarian and Austrian radical right then and there was becoming more and more the simple daydream of a few politicians who unable to accept the changes that had taken place after the end of the First World War rather than a real political possibility.

Hungary was not able to reach a compromise with the Austrian side either through the secret negotiations with the radical right which was trying to rise to power or through formal diplomatic negotiations with the legitimate Government of Austria. The dispute over the status of the region of Western Hungary which had been debated since the disintegration of the Monarchy in 1918 was not solved. Although the peace treaties of Paris eventually awarded the territory to Austria, the Hungarian Government refused to evacuate and hand over the area called Burgenland by the Austrians as long as possible. Since peaceful negotiations reached no results, by the summer of 1921, irregular military units were already being organised, with the strong but silent support of Prime Minister Bethlen himself to break in the region shortly afterwards.³⁶ In the autumn of 1921, the

³⁰ G. Soós, *op. cit.* 35.

³¹ G. Soós, *op. cit.* 36.

³² HU-MNL-OL-K 64-1922-20-1921/198.

³³ HU-MNL-OL-K 64-1922-20-1921/199.

³⁴ HU-MNL-OL-K 64-1921-41-221.

³⁵ HU-MNL-OL-K 64-1922-20-1921/244.

³⁶ G. Soós, *op. cit.* 42.

so-called Uprising of Western Hungary³⁷ finally broke out, and Hungarian irregular military units, with the silent consent of the Government, marched in Western Hungary and prevented Austrian troops to occupy the region. This action finally deteriorated the otherwise tense relationship between Austria and Hungary to an unresolvable degree, both between official government circles and secretly negotiating radical right-wing movements. Apart from the international political situation itself, it was a further reason why the Hungarian–Bavarian–Austrian secret negotiations gradually became symbolic, then finally ceased by 1922–1923. The White Internationale, of course, was never realised, and the political situation of Central Europe was completely determined by the Entente powers, mainly England and France by 1922.

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³⁷ About the Uprising of Western Hungary see: József Botlik, *Nyugat-Magyarország sorsa, 1918–1921*, Vasszilvágy, Magyar Nyugat Könyvkiadó, 2012.; Imre Tóth, *Két Anschluss között. Nyugat-Magyarország és Burgenland Wilsontól Hitlerig*, Budapest, Kronosz Kiadó, 2020.

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