The 'Green Cadres' and the Collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918[*]

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This article sheds light on a forgotten aspect of Austria-Hungary's collapse at the end of the First World War. While the armed forces of the Dual Monarchy began to lose in the field in 1918 and working-class unrest convulsed the major urban and industrial centers, revolt spread across vast territories of the countryside. Here groups calling themselves 'Green Cadres' had coalesced from army deserters and radicalized local peasants. With strongholds in forested and mountainous areas, they violently resisted their reenlistment for the war effort and mounted armed attacks on civilian and military authorities. Strikingly, rural common people near their spheres of action often saw in these forces their emancipators. First mentioned by the authorities sometime in 1917 in the crown land of Croatia-Slavonia, the Green Cadres likely became the most fearsome opponents of the empire along its 'inner front' in the final months of the Great War.[1] Then, as the old monarchy began to collapse, they took the initiative in offering a new social-political order in the countryside. Yet to many observers, particularly among the propertied and respectable classes, the order imagined by the Green Cadres looked more like the disorder of the revolutionary mob. From late October through November 1918, the Green Cadres became indistinguishable from a wave of violence, arson and looting against former officials, landlords, and Jews. These disturbances were particularly severe in Croatia-Slavonia, Galicia,

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[1] Bogumil Hrabak, *Dezerterstvo, zeleni kadar i prevratna anarhija u jugoslavenskim zemljama 1914-1918* [Desertion, the Green Cadre, and Revolutionary Anarchy in the Yugoslav Lands 1914-1918] (Novi Sad, 1990), 95, 328; Richard Plaschka, Horst Haselsteiner, Arnold Suppan, *Innere Front: Militärassistenz, Widerstand und Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918* (Munich, 1974), Band II, 81-89.

and western Slovakia. In some other places where Green Cadres existed, such as in Moravia and Slovenia, these bands seemed to just disappear altogether.

The general conditions that facilitated the formation of Green Cadres are well known. These included the steady erosion of morale in the Austro-Hungarian armed forces, the rise of national liberation movements among the Empire's 'subject peoples,' often with the support of the western Allies; the return of radicalized POWs from Russian internment who had just witnessed the Bolshevik Revolution and were commonly enthusiastic about it; the dire provisioning situation in the hinterland as well as food and clothing shortages among enlisted men; and the disaffection of formerly loyal rural populations through forced requisitioning and war profiteering.[2]

Yet grasping the complex phenomenon of the Green Cadres as a transnational and loose social movement, and from the perspective of its members, can offer several important new insights into the region's modern history. This article proposes that the Green Cadres represented a major rural insurgency, perhaps the last in east central Europe, which bore the hallmarks of peasant revolts of previous centuries but was also a bid to influence, and participate in, post-imperial national politics.[3] In 1918, these forces helped bring down the Habsburg Empire – one of Europe's largest states. Perhaps more importantly, they embodied a new and culturally meaningful script, born late in the First World War, which was a synthesis of old elements and new. At its core, it combined armed rural resistance to a war ostensibly waged against the interests of the people, particularly the peasantry, with the prerogative of rural commoners to reorder society according to the principles of social justice and national liberation. Although the

[2] The most complete treatment of these factors is Plaschka et al, *Innere Front*, Band I-II.
[3] For a useful definition of rural 'insurgency' that emphasizes its syncretic nature, see Raj Desai and Harry Eckstein, "Insurgency: The Transformation of Peasant Rebellion," *World Politics* 42, no. 4 (1990): 441-465.

Green Cadres largely disappeared after 1918 as a fighting force on the ground, in part because of their lack of central organization, they endured as a symbol and an available script for action for decades afterward.[4] Recovering this movement from obscurity suggests a considerably more active role for the peasantry than the current scholarship on the imperial collapse in central and eastern Europe allows. More broadly, this case sheds new light on the political engagement of the peasantry in modern Europe, revealing it as a complex composite of fierce local loyalties, traditional and religious worldviews, along with radical ideas of international social revolution and national progress. To those who self-identified as Green Cadres, this synthesis seemed perfectly natural.

Moreover, the Green Cadres underscore the significance of 1918 – the end of the Great War and of empire across much of Europe – as a moment of revolutionary openness, of seemingly limitless possibilities for remaking the future, and for reshaping the foundations of state and society.[5] Scholarship has proliferated in recent years on how the First World War fundamentally recast norms in the spheres of diplomacy, the world economy, the rules of military engagement, humanitarianism, and international law.[6] Potent new scripts appeared at society's base as well; scripts which cannot be so easily subsumed into the existing literature on the 'brutalization' of combatant societies, to use George Mosse's famous term, or on the

[4] On the importance of cultural scripts for social movements, particularly those lacking effective organization, see Dingxin Zhao, "Theorizing the Role of Culture in Social Movements: Illustrated by Protests and Contentions in Modern China," *Social Movement Studies* 9, no. 1 (2010): 33-50.
[5] Compare Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, 2007).
[6] Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia, 2013), esp. ch. 2; Bruno Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1918-1924* (Cambridge, 2014); Isabelle Hull, *Making and Breaking International Law during the Great War* (Ithaca NY, 2014); Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2015); Adam Tooze, *The Deluge: The Great War and the Remaking of Global Order* (London, 2015).

attempted return (successful or not) to prewar normalcy.[7] In the sprawling territories of the Habsburg Empire during its demise, a transnational scenario of rural revolt framed at least partially as an intervention in national politics and social policy took root as well.

Apart from isolated studies focused on Croatia, the Green Cadres have been far from the center of historians' attention.[8] The first main reason for this neglect is the unwillingness of scholars, even (or especially) Leftist ones, to regard them as a movement with any political meaning. They possessed no leadership, no official program, and no formal organization. There was no political party directly linked to the Green Cadres. At best, they were 'pre-political,' like Eric Hobsbawm's 'primitive rebels' who put up inchoate resistance to the incursions of capital into their traditional communities.[9] Sympathetic Marxist historians from the region labeled the Green Cadres as 'instinctive' as opposed to disciplined, or subsumed them into a 'lower form' of mobilization, comparing them unfavorably in nearly all respects with Lenin's highly centralized Bolsheviks.[10]

Such thinking dates back to contemporary observations by Habsburg military authorities. With Bolshevism menacing the eastern horizon and fears circulating about other subversive organizations, Austro-Hungarian army intelligence launched an investigation in summer 1918

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[7] For an important update to the debate on brutalization, see Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, eds., *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (Oxford, 2012). A now classic study emphasizing social-cultural continuity is Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European cultural history* (Cambridge, 1995).

[8] These studies include Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*; Ferdo Čulinović, *Odjeci Oktobra u jugoslavenskim krajevima* [Echoes of October in the Yugoslav Lands] (Zagreb, 1957); Ivo Banac, "'Emperor Karl has become a Comitadj': The Croatian Disturbances of Autumn 1918," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 70, no. 2 (April 1992): 284-305.

[9] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York, 1959), e.g. 110-111.

[10] Ladislav Pál, "K významu činnosti „zeleného kádra" na západním Slovensku koncom prvej svetovej vojny," [On the meaning of the activity of the 'Green Cadre' in western Slovakia at the end of the First World War] in *Západné Slovensko. Vlastivedný zborník múzeí Západoslovenského kraja, 1973*, 1. ročnik (Bratislava, 1973), 14; Karel Pichlík, "Vzpoury navratilců z ruského zajeti na Slovensku v květnu a červnu 1918," [Mutinies of returnees from Russian internment in Slovakia May-June 1918] *Historický Časopis* IV (1963), 584.

only to conclude in early September that, 'the results of the investigation in this direction have thus far produced no positive proof that such an organization actually exists, indicating far more that the label "Green Cadre" is a common expression in the language of deserters for a free life, poaching, roving in the forests, etc.'[11] Later that month, an official touring Bosnia declared that a '"Green Cadre" with political goals' could not be said to exist in that territory since none of the civilian or military authorities with whom he spoke could verify any connection between the bands of deserters, since there was 'no proof that the bands [were] spreading Bolshevik or Yugoslav propaganda,' and finally because they had not yet attacked the local authorities and only targeted wealthy landowners.[12] The prejudices of the Habsburg military establishment, along with their narrow view of what constituted political action, have tended to set the tone for historians' passing mentions of the phenomenon.

The other reason for the historiographical marginalization of the Green Cadres is that they fit the post-1918 narratives of national liberation only uncomfortably. The foundation myths of Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia required national unity in the face of Austrian and Hungarian oppression, and reserved starring roles for the politicians that dominated the interwar landscape. None of these figures had meaningful contact with the Green Cadres. And even if these rural rebels did not exactly espouse Bolshevism, their vision for societal rebirth was far too radical for the forces that ultimately prevailed in Belgrade, Prague, and Warsaw. Conversely, the Green Cadres also proved not to be national enough – there is evidence that Magyars and Austrian Germans were in their ranks as well. The copious, often triumphalist literature on how the 'subject nationalities' of east central Europe emerged from under the baleful shadow of the Habsburg double eagle found no place for bands of poor villagers and ordinary infantrymen

[11] Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (OestStA), Kriegsarchiv (KA), Kriegsministerium (KM), Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 754, 64 – 46/27. See also 64 – 46/35.
[12] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 753, 64 – 46/10-6.

distant from the seats of national power. To the extent that the Green Cadres appeared in the annals of national histories at all, they served to demonstrate how the many streams of resistance eventually converged into the river of national consensus.

Not fully nationalists, they were not bona fide communists either, conspicuously choosing the wrong color at a time when revolution was coded red. The Agrarian parties of the region – the 'Green' contingent of the 1920s – were often ambivalent toward grassroots direct action (certainly toward violence) and tried to channel rural populist energies into support for more respectable parliamentary agitation. Aside from the case of Bulgaria, where the peasant revolutionary Alexander Stamboliiski was prime minister from 1919 to 1923, the mainstream nationalist politicians of east central Europe generally proved adept at coopting the Agrarians and steering them away from far-reaching reforms that would benefit their smallholding constituencies.[13] Thus, while the Agrarians may have celebrated the radical impulses that the Green Cadres embodied, they remained aloof from them.

But the fact that they did not fit any available party political label does not mean that we should not take the Green Cadres seriously as a political phenomenon. The events of 1918 in the Austro-Hungarian countryside reveal a movement drawing strength from both national liberationism and the 'red wave,' but amalgamating them and other elements in ways that reflected the concerns of ordinary villagers at a time pregnant with possibility. This was a moment of synthesis and creativity on the part of rural Habsburg subjects, even if it also produced a wave of bloody violence against perceived oppressors not seen since 1848. These forces combined nationalist, internationalist, and social revolutionary impulses while conjuring the antipodes of peasant resentment and millenarian hope.

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[13] Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Seattle, 1977), 16-18.

The specific ways and proportions in which the Green Cadres combined these elements are arguably particular to east central Europe. This article focuses on the Habsburg territories that with the collapse of empire either formed wholly new polities on the map of Europe – Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia – or merged into a state resurrected after a long hiatus – Poland. At the end of the First World War, these countries were less stable entities than vexed and unresolved questions; questions that multiple groups felt empowered to answer. It was there that the Green Cadres became a significant factor in the imperial disintegration and what came after. Yet the very act of combining the local with the national, and the traditional with the social revolutionary bespeaks broader patterns of modern peasant political mobilization. Historians have often sought to distill out such substances from each other and measure the strength of one against the other, usually in order to determine whether the peasantry was modern and political in a particular historical situation or not.[14] Such an approach, however, ignores the essential syncretism of modern rural mobilizations in politics and culture.[15] Moreover, it is necessary not only to consider the precise compound of ideological and cultural elements that villagers are capable of articulating, but also the exigencies of historical moment in question and the opportunities that they appear to create.

In examining the diverse roles, cultural scripts, and ideologies that fused together in the Green Cadres movement, this article highlights the trajectories of several of its adherents, each embodying different tendencies within it: a Slovak named Jozef Ferančík, two Slovenes named Alfonz Šarh and Andrej Zlobec, and a Slavonian Serb named Jovo Stanisavljević, nicknamed

[14] This is evident, for example, the debate over French peasants' political consciousness in 1848, neatly summed up in Edward Berenson, "Politics and the French Peasantry: the debate continues," *Social History* 12, no. 2 (1987).
[15] Compare Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Peasant Land Occupations," *Past & Present* 62 (Feb. 1974), 120-152.

'Čaruga.'[16] These men were all born in the mid- to late-1890s, served as ordinary infantrymen in Austro-Hungarian army before deserting in uniform between 1916 and 1918, and, like most of the hundreds of thousands of others who called themselves Green Cadres, hailed from the smallholding peasantry. Their careers as Green Cadres indicate divergent emphases and priorities, along with many similarities. The fact that these men, who in all likelihood never met each other, self-identified as members of this transnational movement underscores its purchase across boundaries of language, ethnicity, and administration.

I. Deserters

Violent peasant uprisings were an age-old specter haunting the European countryside. More common than open rebellion was low-level resistance against political and economic elites characterized by passive noncompliance or symbolic subversion of hierarchy – what James Scott calls 'the weapons of the weak.' Instead of open revolt or revolution, Scott emphasizes 'the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on.'[17] In this scheme, desertion is a classic form of peasant resistance. Lacking any obvious political or revolutionary

[16] Three of these men exceptionally left first-person accounts of their involvement with the Green Cadres: Jozef Ferančík, *Nuhál, Rozpomienky na Zelený káder* [Nuhál, Memories of the Green Cadre] (Myjava, 1920); Alfonz Šarh, "Spomini na Zeleni kader v pohorskih gozdovih," [Recollections of the Green Cadres in the Pohorje Forests] in Janez J. Švajncer, ed., *Boj za Maribor 1918-1919. Spominski zbornik ob sedemdesetletnici bojev za Maribor in severno mejo na slovenskem Štajerskem* [The Battle for Maribor 1918-1919. A Collection of Memoirs on the 70th Anniversary of the Battles for Maribor and the Northern Border of Slovene Styria] (Maribor, 1988); Andrej Zlobec, *V vihri petih vojn* [In the Maelstrom of Five Wars] Vol. I: *V viharju prve svetovne vojne* [In the Whirlwind of the First World War] (Ljubljana, 2010) and Vol. II: *V bojich za severno in južno mejo* (Ljubljana, 2009). On Čaruga, see Marino Zurl, *Knjiga o Jovi Čarugi i Joci Udmaniću* [A book about Jovo Čaruga and Joco Udmanić] (Zagreb, 1977), which is written in the form of a historical novel, but clearly based on documentary evidence; and Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 12, 87, 219, 270.

[17] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, 1985), xvi, 30-31.

content, the act of escaping from the most coercive of state institutions and hiding in one's home district amounts to a rejection of the state and its authority. Such 'everyday forms of resistance' formed the protean building blocks of the Green Cadres, though in the extraordinary circumstances of the Great War, they evolved into an organism more complex and with unusually formidable striking power.

When the four men mentioned above deserted, they all made for forested areas near their home villages: Stanisavljević late in 1916 to the hinterland of his village Slavonske Bare; Ferančík in summer 1917 to the abandoned sheepfolds and shepherd huts above his village Veselé in the Váh River valley; Šarh in autumn 1917 to the Pohorje mountain range above his village of Ruše near Maribor; and Zlobec in spring 1918 to the Trnovski Forest south of his village of Ponikve in the Slovenian karst region. They were among the hundreds of thousands of Austro-Hungarian soldiers who from 1916 on deserted in the hinterland. Most of them were conscripts from rural areas. Many of them simply did not return to their units after periods of leave. Some, like Ferančík, escaped from the barracks – in his case, the garrison in Pressburg/Poszony (today Bratislava); others, like Zlobec, absconded from military hospitals during periods of convalescence. They often lived at home until the threat of arrest by gendarmes drove them to hide in nearby forests and fields and band together for mutual protection. Local populations by and large supported this treasonous activity, helping feed and clothe the deserters and warning them about approaching gendarme patrols. For Šarh and his fifteen comrades, the warning sign was a spruce twig stuck in the middle of a path or near a house, meaning danger was close. When the coast was clear, some of the Green Cadres helped with farm work, as Šarh did during the rich summer harvest of 1918.

In the last year of the war, the number of men living in this way was staggering. By April 1918, the Habsburg Empire had seven infantry divisions deployed in the hinterland to quell unrest and insubordination. But these demoralized and depopulated forces could do little to stem the tide of desertion. In June 1918, a high-ranking commander of the Hungarian gendarmerie reported a sharp rise in desertion in the Hungarian half of the monarchy: in 1917, 81,606 deserters had been arrested. In the first three months of 1918 alone 46,611 were apprehended, leading him to estimate that 150,000 would be brought in before the end of the year.[18] He guessed that the number of deserters at large was far greater. In October 1918 the assistant commander of military railways (*Stellvertreter des Chefs des Militär-Eisenbahnwesens*) surmised that a quarter of a million had by then escaped in uniform.[19]

Also in the final year of the war, the frequency of violent clashes between deserters and the gendarmerie increased.[20] Reports multiplied describing the helplessness of both civilian and military authorities in various parts of the monarchy against armed deserters. In May and June 1918, overwhelmed officials in today's Bratislava and Slovenian Styria blamed the deserters for the complete erosion of public safety.[21] Besides apparently doing whatever they pleased, the deserters began to openly threaten the authorities. In early June, authorities in the east Moravian

[18] Ľudovit Holotík, ed., *Sociálne a národné hnutie na Slovensku od Októbrovej revolúcie do vzniku československého štátu (Dokumenty)* [Social and National Movements in Slovakia from the October Revolution to the Establishment of the Czechoslovak State (Documents)] (Bratislava, 1979), 261-264.
[19] Plaschka et al, *Innere Front*, Band II, 63.
[20] Table showing the rise of deserters arrested in Hungary during the war:

Year	Deserters apprehended	Armed clashes
1914	6689	7
1915	26251	93
1916	38866	129
1917	81605	464
1918 (Jan-Mar)	46611*	275*

* The estimated number apprehended by the end of 1918 was 150,000; violent clashes in the same period estimated at 1200.
Source: Holotík, ed., *Sociálne a národné hnutie na Slovensku*, 261-264.
[21] On the environs of Bratislava: Holotík, ed., *Sociálne a národné hnutie*, 178-179, 191-193, 235-237. On Lower Styria: OestStA KA KM Präsidialbüro – Akten, carton 2429, 53 – 16/2, 53 – 16/22

village of Střelná found a poster affixed to a tree warning gendarmes against pursuing deserters if they did not want to be 'beaten like dogs.'[22] On the night of 10-11 June 1918 in the Galician village of Grodzisko Dolne, armed deserters assembled before the gendarmerie post and noisily demanded the release of their recently arrested comrades. When the post commander refused, he was shot dead and the perpetrators affixed a note to the wall: 'give us peace and we will leave you in peace. Otherwise you will forfeit your lives.' The investigation concluded that those responsible were 'organized gangs of armed deserters, escaped returnees and other suspicious persons.'[23] The gangs in Galicia became bolder during the course of the summer. In August, a group calling itself the 'Green Brigade' was looting trains near Rzeszów and fighting pitched battles with military patrols.[24] By the end of September, the military command in the district capital of Przemyśl reported that the population had lost faith in authorities' ability to suppress the deserters and that loyalty to the state was crumbling as a result.[25]

The formation of Green Cadres (or Green Guards/Brigades) was clearly connected with the rise in deserters' armed resistance in the hinterland. Green Cadres represented a more active form of desertion than a mere escape from military duty. It is naturally difficult to say how many there actually were. The figures we possess do not reflect the result of any systematic counting of deserters and local peasants who self-identified as Green Cadres, but rather the desultory testimonies of military intelligence agents and captured members. Both types of informants might have been tempted to exaggerate for reasons of personal ambition – i.e. to be rewarded for conveying particularly sensitive or sensational information, or, in the case of captured members, to menace the authorities. Yet it is possible that no one could have accurately gauged the size of

[22] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 754, 64 – 50/8-9.
[23] OestStA KA KM Präsidialbüro – Akten, carton 2428, 52 – 5/32.
[24] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 753, 64 – 41/8-72.
[25] OestStA KA KM Präsidialbüro – Akten, carton 2428, 52 – 35/5.

such dispersed and decentralized forces outside the most circumscribed localities. Notwithstanding the inherent problems with the data, we may conservatively estimate the strength of the Green Cadres (those who would have referred to themselves as such) among Croats, Serbs and Bosnians by September 1918 was around 50,000; in Galicia there were perhaps 20,000; in southern Moravia around 5,000; and in western Slovakia 4,000.[26] Such figures are necessarily rather impressionistic. Green Cadres were also strong in the Bakony Mountains north of Balaton in Hungary, in the Trnovski Forest in Slovenia, in parts of Transylvania, and in the forests around the Wechsel and Semmering mountains in Austrian Styria.[27] In many locales, they were well organized, showing a certain degree of continuity with the army they left behind: they had a rudimentary hierarchy, guard duty, reconnaissance units and possessed machine guns, explosives, and even artillery in some instances.

Although groups knew about the existence of other groups, no evidence exists of organized coordination between them, apparently due to practical obstacles. Even toward the end of the war, as the Habsburg Monarchy was collapsing, bands within specific provinces were unable to coordinate with each other. Šarh recalled that 'we knew about Green Cadres on the Croatian border, on [the nearby mountain] Boč and by Celje, but unfortunately we could not come into any kind of contact with them, which was to the detriment of the whole movement.'[28]

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[26] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 104, 140. Hrabak, leaving aside much larger contemporary estimates, gives rough totals of 14,000 for Petrova Gora in the Lika region of Croatia, 6,000 in Fruška Gora in eastern Syrmia, 7,000 elsewhere in Syrmia, 10,000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 400 on the island of Korčula. This sampling of figures does not include many other localities and whole regions (e.g. Slavonia) with strong Green Cadre presence. The figures for Moravia and Slovakia appear in Marián Hronský, *Slovensko pri zrode Československa* [Slovakia during the Birth of Czechoslovakia] (Bratislava, 1987), 198. For Galician Poland, see Piotr Szlanta, "Unter dem sinkenden Stern der Habsburger. Die Osterfahrung polnischer k. u. k. Soldaten," in Wolfram Dornik, ed., *Jenseits des Schützengrabens: der Erste Weltkrieg im Osten: Erfahrung—Wahrnehmung—Kontext* (Innsbruck, 2013), 150.

[27] Ferančík, Rozpomienky, 30; Petra Svoljšak, Augustin Malle, "Zeleni kader" [Green Cadre] in *Enciklopedija Slovenije* [Encyclopedia of Slovenia] Vol. 15 (Ljubljana, 2001): 151-152; Plaschka, et al, *Innere Front*. Band II, 86.

[28] Šarh, "Spomini," 233. No total numbers exist for these other regions.

It is nonetheless telling that he understood the Green Cadres as a 'movement.' Moreover, there existed within the Green Cadres of certain regions considerable international solidarity, such as in the miniature armies of deserters in Petrova Gora in southern Croatia and in the Trnovski Forest of western Slovenia, where Zlobec observed nearly all of the nationalities of Old Austria working together. The language of command among the Trnovski Forest deserters was a patois of Slovene and German, the latter being much more familiar to the non-Slovene soldiers who took refuge there, and the universal password was '*Grünwald*' ('green forest'). Ferančík spent a couple of weeks with the Magyar Greens in the Bakony range where he presumably communicated in Magyar or German.

The increasing powerlessness of the authorities against these armed, organized bands heightened the faith that rural populations had in them. A 6 September 1918 circular to all crown land authorities in the monarchy warned of the 'fantastic exaggerations' that the civilian population associated with the Green Cadres.[29] A Pilsen newspaper reported around the same time on the 'horrible rumors' and 'wild fantasy' surrounding the groups in the Buchlov Forest of eastern Moravia.[30] Rumors and speculation about the Green Cadres were discussed at the highest level of Austria-Hungary's armed forces in the context of a July 1918 meeting convened by the head of military intelligence, Maximilian Ronge. Lieutenant Colonel Wondraček, chief of the press bureau of the Prague Military Command, confirmed widespread 'circulating rumors about the Green Cadre' and manifold references to it in soldiers' correspondences. Ronge pressed his subordinate to investigate every letter writer 'most thoroughly.'[31]

[29] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 754, 64 – 46/27.
[30] "Zelená garda v buchlovských lesích" [The Green Cadre in the Buchlov Forest] *Nová doba*, August 10, 1918, 2.
[31] OestStA KA KM Präsidialbüro – Akten, carton 2429, 53 – 15/27.

Ronge may have felt governmental pressure to ascertain the extent of the Green movement and to stamp it out. In a secret sitting of the Austrian parliament on 24 July 1918, the Defense Minister Karl von Czapp came under fire for the deteriorating security situation in the hinterland, of which the Green Cadres were emblematic. One of his attackers did not mince his words: 'you are virtually forcing people through hunger and the logical consequences of the war into robbery and plunder, for these "Green Cadres," which you have precipitated through your abuses, have been made into robbers and plunderers by you.'[32] The idea that the Green Cadres were a social problem linked directly to military incompetence or mismanagement took root in fearful patrician circles. At the end of October, a distinguished member of the Austrian House of Lords (*Herrenhaus*), Count Attems, wrote directly to the National Defense Minister (*Minister für Landesverteidigung*), singling out the Green Cadre as 'a major social danger' that could reproduce the 'terror of anarchy' then reigning in Russia.[33]

Rumor and patchy information both heightened fear of the Green Cadres in some social groups and helped swell their ranks in others. In early 1918, spies reported on plans among troops in Budapest, Slavonia, and Timișoara to desert en masse to the Green Guard.[34] For troops stationed in Budapest, the Green Cadre was supposedly a 'winged word' signifying a rapid exit from lousy barracks and miserable provisioning.[35] The gendarmerie in eastern Moravia reported instances in which 'strangers – apparently deserters' had been inquiring locals as to the whereabouts of the Green Cadres' base camp with the intent of joining them.[36] In April 1918, a

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[32] Plaschka et al, *Innere Front*, Band II, 81.
[33] OestStA KA KM Präsidialbüro – Akten, carton 2429, 53 – 14/3/3. It is unclear from the report which Count Attems wrote the letter. At the time, there were several aristocrats in the *Herrenhaus* bearing the name Attems.
[34] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 753, 64 – 42/4, 64 – 46/10; carton 751, 64 – 24/5
[35] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 753 64 – 46/10.
[36] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 754, 64 – 46/27, Report from Moravian Governor [*Statthalter*] July 22, 1918.

Hungarian soldier on his way back from Russia encountered several other soldiers who explained to him that the Green Cadre was organizing for action and had four bases in the monarchy – two in Croatia and Syrmia, one in Galicia, and one in Lower Austria.[37] In many cases, returnees from Russian internment were implicated in spreading rumors about the movement or deserting to it. In June, a noncommissioned officer returning from Russia via the quarantine station in Volodymyr Volynskyi (now in the Ukraine) met a Silesian Czech soldier who told him that the 'Green Guard' is ready to 'pull something off.'[38] Then in August, a captured Czech deserter and returnee told gendarmes at Kralupy nad Vltavou that the Green Cadre in Bohemia was already 6,000-strong, made up primarily of returnees from Russian internment, and planning a revolution for the fall.[39] The Ministry of the Interior in Vienna, in a belated effort to stem the tide of rumor, instructed the Bohemian governorship in the autumn to suppress 'all newspaper articles about a "green guard" or a "green cadre".'[40]

II. Bandits

Exaggerations aside, it is clear that to many peasants the Green Cadres embodied what Hobsbawm dubbed 'social bandits' – men like Robin Hood or Jánošík (to give the parallel west Carpathian figure) who steal from the rich to give to the poor and who become focal points for social protest.[41] In contrast to robbers, who generally hailed from a socially ostracized

[37] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 754, 64 – 46/27, Reports from Military Police in Szeged, May 24-25, 1918.
[38] OestStA Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (AVA), Ministerium des Innern (MdI), Präsidiale, Sig. 22 "In genere" 1918, carton 2078, no. 16492/18.
[39] Národní archiv (NA), Prague, Fond Prezidium Místodržitelství (PM) 1911-1920, Signature 8/1/92/19, carton 5111, Unnumbered report from August 12, 1918.
[40] NA PM 1911-1920, carton 5111, no. 31588.
[41] Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, chapter 2, and *Bandits* (London, 1969), chapter 2.

underclass, bandits could rely on the support of the economically active rural population.[42] Adam Votruba has shown that such banditry was more prevalent in the Carpathian region, including Moravia, than in Bohemia and the German lands, where common robbery predominated.[43] It is perhaps no accident that these areas, to which we may add the south Slavic territories that lie outside the scope of Votruba's work, were bastions of Green Cadre activity. Their social mission was clear, if not undisputed in the eyes of some villagers whom the deserters did not spare in their requisitioning. As Ferančík recorded soon after the war ended, 'we lived merrily at the expense of the lords; and we were also able to give a lot to the poor, who lived in this time as in a time of famine…we helped a lot of poor people.'[44] Or, in the words of one south Moravian member of the Green Cadre who was interrogated in the 1920s for his involvement in train robberies on the Břeclav-Hodonín line, 'toward the end of 1918 I was a deserter at home in Tvrdonice and lived by helping people in the fields.'[45] His well-organized group repeatedly eluded the Habsburg military police and gave the goods looted from waylaid trains to waiting villagers who then carted them away for redistribution.[46]

Popular admiration made leaders of the Green Cadre into folk heroes. Ferančík's comrade Nuhál was himself rumored to be a giant with waist-length beard. Ferančík recalled, 'his name was known far and wide…everywhere there was talk only about Nuhál: great and small alike dreamed of him.'[47] The most spectacular case was likely that of Jovo Stanisavljević Čaruga, the 'Slavonian Robin Hood', who remains a household name in Serbia and Croatia, in

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[42] Adam Votruba, *Pravda u zbojníka: Zbojnictví a loupežnictví ve střední Evropě* [The Truth about Bandits: Banditry and Robbery in Central Europe] (Prague, 2010), 11-13, 52.
[43] Ibid., 12, 15, 39.
[44] Ferančík, *Rozpomienky*, 31, 34.
[45] Moravský zemský archiv (MZA), C 12 Fond Krajský soud trestní Brno, III. Manipulace, carton 1935, zn. Tk VII 3668/27 Jan Brzák a spol.
[46] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 752, 64 – 41/8/43; "Denní zprávy. Po stopách starých zločinů," [Daily News. On the Trail of Old Crimes] *Lidové noviny*, April 26, 1927, 2.
[47] Ferančík, *Rozpomienky*, 10.

part thanks to a popular Yugoslav film. This 'Green Cadre star,' in Serb historian Bogumil Hrabak's description, helped others evade front service and assisted poor peasants toward the end of the war.[48] He later joined up with the fearsome outlaw Božo Matijević in the Slavonian forests, and led a group of highwaymen until 1923 when he was finally apprehended and hanged in 1925 before a crowd of thousands in Osijek.

The Green Cadres projected a romantic image of bandit liberty that had been preserved in oral folk culture over the centuries. Some have connected them, including the name, to the *rokovnjači* – early nineteenth-century bands of highwaymen in Slovene Carinthia, originally formed of deserters from Napoleon's conscription campaign – or to the *Pandurs* – irregular Croatian units raised by Baron Trenck for Empress Maria Teresa's army in the 1740s, known for their pillaging.[49] Šarh, incognito in Maribor in spring 1918, decided to some give cocky soldiers in a pub 'a taste of *rokovnjaško'*: after they boasted to him that they would soon round up the Green Cadres in the nearby hills, he instructed the innkeeper to deliver them a note after his departure revealing that they had just allowed the notorious leader of the deserters to escape.[50] Meanwhile, some South Slav deserters drew consciously on the nineteenth-century Hajduk bandit tradition, clad conspicuously with the feathered hat, rifle, pistol, bandoliers, and scimitar of a *harambaša*, or Hajduk chief.[51] Extravagant clothing was typical of east central European bandits and symbolized their resistance to authority.[52]

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[48] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 87.
[49] Svoljšak, Malle, "Zeleni kader," 151; Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 193. For more on the *rokovnjači*, see Gregor Zupan, "Dezerterstvo na Slovenskem v 18. in 19. stoletju ter 1. in 2. Svetovni vojni," [Desertion in Slovenia in the 18th and 19th centuries as well as in the First and Second World Wars] *Vojnozdovovinski zbornik* 18 (Logatec, 2004), 18-23.
[50] Šarh, "Spomini," 235-236.
[51] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 97.
[52] Votruba, *Pravda u zbojníka*, 55-56.

There were other ways in which the Green Cadres affirmed and signified their sense of group belonging. One captured deserter in Dalmatia revealed to interrogators that members in that region were marked with the tattooed letters 'Ž.S.' meaning 'long live freedom' (*živila sloboda*).[53] This group even had its own argot featuring special terms for 'train', 'gendarme', and 'wealthier citizen', among others.[54] There were instances too of Green bands taking fanciful names, such as the 'Circle of Mountain Birds' around Matijević and Čaruga or the 'Mountain Elves.'[55] At other times, they identified with Empress Austrian Empress Zita of Bourbon-Parma, who, from spring 1918, was widely considered to be intriguing against the Habsburg monarchy for her familial ties with enemy states. In the village of Donji Mosti, Croatia, the 'Zita army' demanded tribute from 'traitors' and promised protection to humble local farmers.[56] In Syrmia, Vojvodina and Bosnia, folk songs celebrated the Green Cadres and their ability to outfox the authorities.[57]

For most, the romance lay in camping outdoors, poaching game, drinking, and eluding the authorities. Ferančík described a jolly winter scene when he and Nuhál were squatting in an unused and isolated shed near their village: 'in the middle of the shed a fire burned about two meters high, from which thick sparks flew to the roof, but didn't catch. We cavorted around the fire, we ate, drank, washed, baked, cooked, and there was a real feast.'[58] As noted above, the military authorities for some time believed that the Green 'organization' meant little else than such behavior. In the Czech lands, Green Cadres even visited pubs. In the village of Popelín in

[53] AVA MdI Präsidiale, Sig. 22 "In genere" 1918, carton 2078, no. 18658/18.
[54] OestStA KA KM Präsidialbüro – Akten, carton 2429, 53 – 16/11-3.
[55] Banac, "The Croatian Disturbances," 285.
[56] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 753, 64 – 46/23-12, Report from September 3, 1918.
[57] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 117-118, 121.
[58] Ferančík*, Rozpomienky*, 24.

the Vysočina region, they frequented dance parties.[59] At a pub in Hartvíkovice near Třebíč/Trebitsch, the innkeeper reported to authorities that, at one point during a September fête, the musicians suspiciously played a 'solo for the greens.'[60] A November 1918 newspaper article described the pleasant life of the Buchlov Forest Green Cadres in Moravia: they lived off game, mushrooms, and requisitions in the surrounding localities; neither gendarmes nor military police had much success in tracking them down because the Cadres possessed a dense support network and the gendarmerie was often too fearful to take action; in sum, 'they lived happily and carefree in the wild, knowing that the military would not risk taking action against them.'[61]

III. Avengers

The relatively benign character of the Green Cadres changed with the collapse of state authority in late October and early November 1918. In many places, the phase of anti-war peasant resistance centered on desertion and banditry transformed into anarchic and bloody rebellion as the Habsburg state crumbled. It seemed that the Green Cadres were at the forefront of the wave of violence that aimed to cast the rural hierarchy into the fire. The historian Hrabak judged the involvement of the Green Cadres during the days of 'revolutionary anarchy' to be deceptive, since freshly demobilized soldiers and poor villagers, who nonetheless often invoked the Cadres as a legitimization for their actions, pushed the deserters into the background.[62] Yet the tendency of the rural poor to call upon the Cadres indicates their deep anchoring in the

[59] "Převrat na Vojně" [Revolution in the Military] *Zájmy Českomoravské Vysočiny*, September 14, 1933, 6.
[60] Statní Okresní Archiv Třebíč (SOkA Třebíč), Fond Okresní Úřad Třebíč (OUT), Presidiálné spisy, carton 21, nos. 550, 5214 "Deserteursunwesen in Hartwikowitz."
[61] Quoted in Adolf E. Vašek, "Z doby zelených kádrů (Před 15 lety)" [From the Time of the Green Cadres (15 years ago)] *Moravská Orlice*, September 3, 1933, 25.
[62] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 8, 219, 236.

culture and society of the countryside. Starting in this phase, the Green Cadres script galvanized people beyond the groups of armed and organized Habsburg military deserters. Moreover, the Green forces often participated in the looting, burning, and attacks, even if they were not among the chief instigators. Their role in the violence of late 1918 cannot be neatly separated from their other actions, as tempting as this was to historians who played up their progressive and 'modern' inclinations.

The Green Cadres were now avengers of the ostensible injustices perpetrated on the impoverished peasantry, particularly in Croatia-Slavonia, western Slovakia, and Galicia. The Habsburg officialdom, socioeconomic elites, and Jews were among the primary targets of their wrath. Violence, as William Hagen has argued for the case of the nearly contemporaneous pogrom in Lwów/Lviv, appeared to be the only available means to restore a 'moral economy' shattered after over four years of war and privation.[63] Thus, beside impulses to remake the rural social order, the violence of the revolutionary anarchy possessed a restorative logic, a desire to return the world to its just balance that recalled peasant revolts of previous centuries.[64] This balance had been upset particularly in December 1917 when the regime in Vienna introduced forced requisitioning.[65] The apparently immense and undeserved profits that some merchants made during wartime only exacerbated popular anger. But socioeconomic resentment was inseparable from other deeply held cultural codes and, as discussed below, from new ideological agendas. In other words, the violence of these tumultuous weeks possessed potent cultural meaning. It did not erupt simply because the restraints on 'atavistic' impulses of the 'immature'

[63] William W. Hagen, "The Moral Economy of Ethnic Violence. The Pogrom in Lwów, November 1918," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 31, no. 2 (2005), 203-226.
[64] Jerome Blum, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe* (Princeton, 1978), 335-336.
[65] Plaschka et al, *Innere Front*, Band I, 211-233.

popular classes had been lifted, or because the theaters in which it occurred had become 'distant from the state,' though this was certainly an enabling factor.[66]

The reckoning that began in late October loomed even before Austria-Hungary entered its death throes. From May 1918, deserters (often returnees) were implicated in apocalyptic plots to eradicate all 'lords,' to rid the 'Slavic soil' of Germans, and to bring the war to an end by setting fire to grain crops across the monarchy.[67] Then, as the machinery of state ground to a halt and successor states were proclaimed, disturbances roiled broad territories where the Green Cadres were active. State officials were hounded out or killed, manor houses attacked and burned, and Jewish shops plundered and destroyed. Typical telegram messages sent in early November to the fledgling National Council (*Narodno vijeće*) in Zagreb read, 'the Green Cadre is burning and plundering. Has the army been sent?' (Dugo Selo), 'the Green Cadre along with the mob is robbing and burning' (Slatina), 'we are asking for urgent help because rebel bands [*komitadžije*] are destroying Donji Miholjac. Within two days Miholjac will be demolished' (Donji Miholjac).[68] One unsympathetic eyewitness of the revolutionary days in Trstín, formerly Nadáš, in western Slovakia recalled,

> the looting began especially when the so-called 'Green Cadre' arrived from Moravia, which was mostly composed of tramps. They not only plundered the Jews, but also the former landlady Palffyová, wife of Móric Pálffy [sic], the Austro-Hungarian envoy to the

[66] For an approach emphasizing the absence of restraints on violence in areas 'distant from the state' (*staatsferne*), see Felix Schnell, *Räume des Schreckens: Gewalträume und Gruppenmilitanz in der Ukraine, 1905-1933* (Hamburg, 2012) as well as Jörg Baberowski, "Einleitung: Ermöglichungsräume exzessiver Gewalt," in Baberowski, Gabriele Metzler, eds., *Gewalträume: Soziale Ordnungen im Ausnahmezustand* (Frankfurt am Main, 2012).
[67] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 753, 64 – 46/23-12, Report from May 8, 1918; OestStA AVA MdI, Präs, 22 i.g. 1918, carton 2078, nos. 15250, 16040; Holotík, ed., *Sociálne a národné hnutie*, 314-315.
[68] Čulinović, *Odjeci Oktobra*, 116-117.

> Vatican. They didn't even spare the local large landowner Ferdinand Krischker…The 'Green Cadre' also stormed into the local notary office and wanted to hang the notary Gejza Čederla, but the people of Nadáš, for his long years of conscientious service, rescued him from the clutches of the Cadres and saved his life.[69]

As this quote indicates, the Green Cadres were interested in a more root and branch remaking of the social order than many participants in the anti-Jewish violence at this time. Still, they too attacked Jews as alleged oppressors of the rural common folk. Ferančík voiced popular prejudices in claiming 'the poor said of us then that we were supposedly divine justice on the lords and Jews. Indeed they were right because the lords and Jews did not go to fight and were beasts toward the people, and aside from the Green Cadres no one knew how to punish this rabble.'[70] The misperception that Jews had somehow shirked military service was ubiquitous. In May 1918, an army spy among Slovak infantrymen garrisoned in Kragujevac reported widespread resentment against the 'Jewish life' of avoiding army service, making money off the war, and enjoying whores.[71] As a result, the 'pogrom spirit of 1848 resounded,' as one witness from Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Slovakia recalled.[72] Indeed, the immediate precedent in this part of Europe was the paroxysm of anti-Jewish violence that accompanied the 1848 revolutions, another period of upheaval and uncertainty.[73]

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[69] Karol A. Medvecký, ed., *Slovenský prevrat*, Sväzok IV [The Slovak Revolution, Vol. IV] (Bratislava, 1931), 96-97.
[70] Ferančík*, Rozpomienky*, 31.
[71] Holotík, ed., *Sociálne a národné hnutie*, 185-190.
[72] Karol A. Medvecký, ed., *Slovenský prevrat*, Sväzok III (Bratislava, 1931), 36.
[73] Compare Miloslav Szabó, "'Rabovačky' v závere prvej svetovej vojny a ich ohlas na medzivojnovom Slovensku," *Forum Historiae* 9, no. 2 (2015): 35-55; Michael Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford, 2010), ch. 6.

As in other peasant revolts in the past, carnivalesque scenes accompanied the violence. Singing, drinking, feasting, and mocking authority were commonplace. In the western Slovak village of Plavecký Štvrtok, the smell of 'roasting meat and innards' wafted through the parish for an entire week at the beginning of November.[74] In the vicinity of nearby Malacky, a gang of locals, 'took the manorial horses and carriage, loaded a barrel of liqueur mixed with water on it, and rode to the other end of the village, singing, shouting and cursing all Jews. From there they went to the granary, which they broke into and distributed the grain to the people. From there they set off to the distillery, where they emptied out all the barrels filled with liqueur. Half drunk [sic] they went to the notary and ordered him to prepare roast goose for them, threatening to kill him.'[75] At Vrbanja, Croatia, plunderers sang a cheerful ditty that even the Habsburg Emperor Karl had become a *komita*, or outlaw.[76] This was the world upside-down, the world of excess, licentiousness, and inversion of hierarchy that characterized the early modern European carnival season. As in those annual interludes of 'institutionalized disorder,' rituals of transgression could not always contain popular energies which sometimes spilled over into open rebellion.[77]

Observers regularly complained that the people had not grasped the correct meaning of 'freedom.' Many interpreted the end of the war and Habsburg rule as the freedom to do what they want, to take what they want, and to settle old scores. One witness of the disturbances caused by returning soldiers in Trnava, Slovakia remarked in typical fashion, 'above all they proclaimed freedom, which they expressed by plundering stores, robbing and looting.'[78] Even in a relatively peaceful central Bohemian district, which nonetheless had a noteworthy Green Cadre during the war, a gendarmerie commander commented in late November 1918 that, 'after the

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[74] Medvecký, ed., *Slovenský prevrat*, Sväzok III, 98.
[75] Medvecký, ed., *Slovenský prevrat*, Sväzok III, 81-82.
[76] Banac, "The Croatian Disturbances", 295.
[77] Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 1994), 190, 203-204.
[78] Medvecký, ed., *Slovenský prevrat*, Sväzok III, 88. See also pp. 57, 81, 103.

political revolution and the declaration of independence of a democratic Czechoslav [sic] state, excesses occurred in many places due to a poor understanding of the situation, particularly in the sense that some citizens considered the existing system and order to be abolished, so that it was possible to eliminate individual functionaries, authorities, etc. and for each to behave according to his wish.'[79]

IV. National Heroes

While the Green Cadres were heavily implicated in this vast, if brief, peasant rebellion of the old sort, they also merged to some extent with the nascent forces of order that quelled it. They thus demonstrated their tentative loyalty to the freshly minted nation states that arose on the rubble of the Danubian Monarchy. Already during the war, the Green Cadres had espoused bold designs for national independence. Then, with the war's end, many joined volunteer National Guards or existing military formations marching under new flags. Often, however, their motives and actions revealed a rather different understanding of national loyalty and fulfillment than that of nationalist elites in Zagreb, Prague, Warsaw, and elsewhere. Their bid to influence the national revolutions sweeping the region reveals another crucial dimension of this loose movement.

The existence of secret armies of deserters opposing the armed might of Austria-Hungary from within excited independence-minded nationalist leaders during wartime. There were attempts by such men to contact the Green Cadres and enlist them to their cause – seemingly without success. The famous Slovenian turncoat Ljudevit Pivko, who deserted to the Italian side

[79] NA Fond Zemské četnické velitelství (ZČV), carton 283, 19347/1918. On the Green Cadre in that area: "Novobydžovsko" [The Nový Bydžov Region] *Rozhledy*, September 17, 1926, 6.

in order to fight against the Habsburg army, in July 1918 dispatched a Croatian infantryman to bring a message to the Green Cadres in Croatia. He was to cross the front lines by pretending to be an escapee from Italian internment while carrying a coded message hidden in a prayer-book.[80] There is no evidence of the success of this mission. Exiled politicians in London and Paris agitating for the creation of a Yugoslav state possessed no reliable information about the Green Cadres. But the propaganda fliers they wrote, which were then dropped by airplane on Austro-Hungarian troops, contained copious references to the rising strength of the Green forces in a calculated bid to weaken morale.[81] In fact, Yugoslav politicians in other instances seem to have discouraged deserters in the hinterland from joining the unreliable, anarchic Green units in the mountains and forests.[82]

Further north, in late summer 1918, the *Maffie*, a conspiratorial group of Czech politicians in Prague, entrusted to Major Jaroslav Rošický, a Czech officer still serving in the Habsburg army, the task of preparing militarily for a power seizure. Point Four of Rošický's seven-point program was 'to organize the so-called "Green cadres," which were at that time forming in [southeast] Moravian Slovácko and in southern Bohemia, and were composed of military deserters from replacement regiments and from the field. These soldiers, armed and partially organized among themselves, would need leadership and financial support. Both [of these tasks] would be our responsibility.'[83] Point Four was never fulfilled. Rošický himself was intensely interested in the Green Cadres and wanted to see to the task himself. Some men from his regiment, whom he knew personally and valued as reliable and nationally conscious Czech

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[80] Ljudevit Pivko, *Proti Rakousku. II. Bok po boku. Díl II.: Kniha III.-IV.*, [Against Austria. II. Side by Side. Vol. II, Book III-IV] trans. František Roubík (Prague, 1929), 184-187.
[81] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 169-177.
[82] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 129, 133.
[83] Major Jaroslav Rošický, *Rakouský orel padá. Jak byla naše revoluce doma připravena a 28. října 1918 provedena vojensky* [The Austrian Eagle is Falling. How our revolution was prepared at home and the 28th of October 1918 militarily executed] (Prague, 1933), 41.

soldiers, had deserted to the Cadres. But other tasks distracted him in the final months of the war and the travel limitations imposed on military personnel kept him from making his planned journey to southeast Moravia. Austrian authorities on occasion speculated that the Green Cadres in Moravia had the backing of powerful anti-militarist and nationalist circles in Prague, but no evidence has yet surfaced to corroborate the theory.[84] The only wartime coordination between the movement and what might be called nationalist leaders occurred on the local level between pro-independence officers of the Moravian gendarmerie and some Green Cadre bands, who received friendly warning about approaching patrols or army raids on their lairs.[85]

With the establishment of Czechoslovakia and the short-lived State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (DSHS) on former Habsburg south Slav territories, the persistence of Green Cadres became a severe liability. In a stormy sitting of the Croatian assembly – the *Sabor* – on October 29, delegates attempted to formulate a policy on the Greens, now at the center of the revolutionary anarchy. The assembly president Bogdan Medaković attacked the deserters, calling them 'not only thieves and arsonists, bandits and killers, but also enemies of the people.'[86] The Croat peasant populist Stjepan Radić, who sympathized deeply with the concerns of the rural Croat masses (and, *mutatis mutandis*, the Green Cadres), urged clemency – a policy of 'preventing' rather than 'suffocating' – and called for the Green forces to willingly submit to the

[84] OestStA KA KM Präsidialbüro – Akten, carton 2429, 53 – 15/27; František Martinek, "Co věděla rakouská vojenská správa o slovenském odboji," [What did the Austrian Military Administration Know about the Slovak Resistance] *Prúdy* XIII (Bratislava, 1929), 429.
[85] Václav Šlesinger, "Četnictvo a zelené kádry na Moravě," [The Gendarmerie and the Green Cadres in Moravia] in Dr. Josef Kudela, ed., *Brno v boji za svobodu*. *Zborník vzpomínek*. Druhý svazek [Brno in the Struggle for Freedom. A Collection of Memoirs. Volume Two] (Brno, 1937), 251-254. See also Václav Šlesinger, "Brňáci bojují ve Světové válce. Zelený kádr na Moravě" [The People of Brno Fighting in the World War. The Green Cadre in Moravia] *Lidové noviny*, September 9, 1932, 1-3; Adolf E. Vašek, "Z doby zelených kádrů," 25.
[86] Čulinović, *Odjeci Oktobra*, 92.

coalescing national army.[87] The conservative politicians behind a Moravian newspaper pursued similar aims in a 5 November 1918 announcement: 'Czech soldiers, deserters of the Green Cadres, report immediately to your respective supplementary commands. Give your strength willingly to serve the national army. Every individual is needed for the holy national cause. Do not tarry! To work!'[88]

The Green Cadres often confounded such aspirations. For this reason, interwar nationalist icons such as Pivko categorized them retrospectively and dismissively as Bolsheviks.[89] The influential Slovak politician Vavro Šrobár, who assumed several cabinet positions in interwar Czechoslovakia, perceived in them a curious mixture of atavistic and revolutionary elements: 'Bolshevik gangs of bandits in the mountains that adorned their crimes with the Jánošík legend – with hatred toward the lords and generosity to the people, they avenged manorial wrongs and defended the rights of the poor.'[90] Perhaps only the Slovak Catholic populist Ferdiš Juriga had meaningful contact with the Green Cadres, at least those in the Malé Karpaty mountains near Bratislava, which, according to his own testimony, followed the cues he broadcast in the newspaper Slovak People's News (*Slovenské ľudové noviny*).[91] Juriga exaggeratedly claimed that he was the guiding spirit of this 'genuine dispatch of the people' and that his radical motto, 'take him out!' (*Ohol ho!*), resounded as the Green Cadre went into action with the end of Austria-Hungary. Indeed, the slogan was heard during a June 1918 soldiers' mutiny in the Bratislava

[87] Čulinović, *Odjeci Oktobra*, 92-94, 113.
[88] "Denní zprávy" [Daily News] *Moravská orlice*, November 5, 1918, 3.
[89] Ljudevit Pivko, *Proti Rakousku. II. Bok po boku. Díl I.: Kniha I.-II.*, trans. František Roubík (Prague, 1926), chapter 14, esp. 270-272.
[90] Vavro Šrobár, *Osvobodené Slovensko. Pamäti z rokov 1918-1920*. Sväzok prvý. [Liberated Slovakia. Memoirs from the years 1918-1920. Volume One] (Prague, 1929), 369-370.
[91] Ferdiš Juriga, *Blahozvesť kriesenia slovenského národa a slovenskej krajiny* [Good Tidings of the Resurrection of the Slovak Nation and Slovak Territory] (Trnava, 1937), 121, 145.

garrison and in November during the violence against Jews and notaries in Ferančík's village of Veselé.[92]

Yet Juriga hardly overreached in asserting that, 'the Green Cadres, transforming into Slovak volunteers and supplemented by new ones, form[ed] the first foundations of Slovak rights.'[93] For their part, members of the movement fancied themselves an integral part of the national liberation struggle. Nuhál, described by his friend Ferančík as a conscious and 'awakened Slovak,' oversaw the hoisting of the first 'Slovak flags' in the south Váh valley, repulsed armed attacks by Hungarian units, and led his victorious followers in singing patriotic songs in the heady November days.[94] Zlobec perceived in the multinational Trnovski Forest Cadre the 'beginnings of new, independent armies.'[95] It appeared as though the multinational Habsburg army had given way to a multinational deserter movement aimed at the national independence of its constituent peoples. As Zlobec put it, 'here in the Green Cadre we all found our refuge. We were united by the desire to fight for the smaller homeland and not for sprawling old Austria.'[96] Šarh was a staunch Yugoslavist, as was the hundred-man group of the Dalmatian seaside village Betina.[97] This latter contingent was responsible for occupying the buildings of local authorities during the national revolution and organizing public demonstrations with nationalist song and banners.

In many places, the unruly and agitated masses associated the Green movement with the principle of national self-determination. On the eve of state collapse in October 1918, the Green

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[92] OestStA KA KM Hauptreihe – Akten, carton 752, 64 – 26/29; Medvecký, ed., *Slovenský prevrat*, Sväzok III, 58. At the time, the phrase apparently meant something closer to 'cut off his head.'
[93] Juriga, *Blahozvesť*, 146.
[94] Ferančík, *Rozpomienky*, 3, 36-39.
[95] Zlobec, *V bojich za severno in južno mejo*, 18.
[96] Zlobec, *V viharju prve svetovne vojne*, 173.
[97] Šarh, "Spomini," 229-232; Gojko Jakovčev, "Zeleni kadar Betine 1918. godine," [The Green Cadre of Betina in 1918] *Zadarska revija* 38, no. 1-2 (1989): 137-147.

Cadres were fêted at demonstrations in Croatia. A 23 October telegram to the Vienna War Ministry read, 'situation in Zagreb very serious – demonstrations repeated – officers participating along with POWs – fraternization with soldiers – shouts long live Wilson, long live Masaryk, long live the Green Cadre.'[98] Similar chants were reported on the same day in Karlovac and Otočac as well as several days later in Varaždinske Toplice and in Zagreb again.[99] At the village level, Šarh received a hero's welcome from the inhabitants of his native Ruše near Maribor when he emerged from the forest on 1 November wearing a Yugoslav tricolor cockade. The grassroots character of Green nationalism was evident in the Slavonian town of Valpovo, where on 28 October eighty Cadres boisterously rejected the local National Council committee chosen by local notables. After a committee of technocrats was selected to mollify the aggrieved factions, the deserters skewered a portrait of Emperor Karl in the assembly chamber with a bayonet and demonstratively hoisted a picture of President Woodrow Wilson and a Yugoslav flag in its place. They proceeded to loot the town warehouses and manorial properties.[100]

To many, autumn 1918 was the real 'springtime of nations' (in a way that the abortive revolutions of 1848 could not have been) and there was widespread confidence in the ability of ordinary people to shape its course. Such confidence was in large part inspired by Wilson's vague and elastic rhetoric about 'self-determination,' as Erez Manela has shown.[101] This perhaps explains why so many left the Green Cadres to enlist in the new national forces. Their record from the vantage point of the new national capitals was mixed. Zlobec and his fellow Slovene Cadres became National Guards and helped prevent chaos as thousands left the Isonzo Front on

[98] OestStA KA KM Präsidialbüro – Akten, carton 2428, 52 – 11/2.
[99] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 202, 210, 225.
[100] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 211.
[101] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*.

foot across Slovene territory.[102] In Croatia-Slavonia, the Green credentials of National Guards in a number of locales actually prevented closer ties with the National Council in Zagreb.[103] The 'Circle of Mountain Birds' around Matijević and Čaruga adopted the National Council's program and Čaruga became commander of the National Guard in his home village by popular acclaim, but shortly after this he murdered a defiant priest.

In southeast Moravia, a particularly interesting situation arose. Many of the Green Cadres there joined the "Slovácko Brigade" (*Slovácká brigáda*) that formed in early November in Hodonín, named for the historic region that bridged Czech and Slovak cultural-linguistic zones.[104] At the end of 1918, Cyril Hluchý, the brigade's commander, felt compelled to defend his men's track record as well as their 'Green' background: 'a whole brigade built from nothing; it was stamped directly out of the earth by the work of a number of individuals, who, gathering around themselves "Green Cadres" of Austrian deserters, assumed the most urgent work and created the framework and foundation, healthy and natural, corresponding fully to the spirit of our people, soldiers, and population: they created the Slovácko Brigade on a tribal [*kmenovém*] basis.'[105] Yet the 'tribal' (regional/local) character of the brigade appeared to the Czechoslovak Army's high command to denote lack of discipline and Hluchý and his men caused frequent headaches for the Provincial Military Command in Brno in the years 1918-19.[106] The brigade was dissolved in 1919.

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[102] Zlobec, *V bojih za severno in južno mejo*, 19-24. On the situation in Slovene territory see, Arhiv Republike Slovenije (ARS), Ljubljana, Fond Deželna vlada za Slovenijo, Poverjeništvo za narodno obrambo (1918-1921), carton 2, nos. 1-188.
[103] Banac, "The Croatian Disturbances," 298.
[104] L. Jandásek, "Z počátků Slovácké brigády," [On the Beginnings of the Slovácko Brigade] in Kudela, ed., *Brno v boji za svobodu*, 276-278; and Šlesinger, "Četnictvo a zelené kádry" in Ibid., 254.
[105] Vojenský historický archiv (VHA), Slovácká brigáda, carton 3, no. 96.
[106] VHA Zemské vojenské velitelství Brno (ZVV Brno), Presidium, carton 1, nos. 13, 230, 364; carton 3, no. 46.

V. Social Revolutionaries

The problematic integration of the Cadres into the coalescing national armies of the successor states was at least partially rooted in their radical social expectations. The Bolshevik October Revolution exerted immense, if vague influence on the war-weary peoples of east central Europe. As Péter Hanák showed on the basis of confiscated letters written by Austro-Hungarian infantrymen, many ordinary people looked hopefully in 1918 to the Russian 'example' and the 'wind from the east.'[107] Austrian authorities sometimes speculated that the Green Cadre had blown in on this wind.[108] The returnees from Russian internment raised anxieties further. Following the October Revolution, Lenin's government could no longer administer the POW camps and by June 1918, over half a million Austro-Hungarian POWs – one quarter of the two million taken prisoner by Russia – returned home before the conditions of their transfer had been finalized.[109] Numerous documents testify to the influence of Bolshevism among them, which led scholars in Communist eastern Europe to overestimate the extent of ideological indoctrination among Austro-Hungarian deserters.[110]

Yet the definition of Bolshevism circulating at this time among both its self-declared friends and foes was extremely imprecise. Indeed, in most parts of the world in the early years after November 1917, it loomed more powerfully as a 'phantom menace' and a 'fantasy' rather

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[107] Péter Hanák, *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest* (Princeton, 1998), 202-203.
[108] OestStA KA KM Präsidialbüro – Akten, carton 2429, 53 – 15/27.
[109] Plaschka et al, *Innere Front*, Band I, 278-280
[110] For examples of Bolshevik influence see, OestStA AVA MdI, Präsidiale, Sig. 22 "In genere" 1918: carton 2074, no. 9705; carton 2076, no. 8021; carton 2077, no. 11325. See also Hannes Leidinger, Verena Moritz, *Gefangenschaft – Revolution – Heimkehr: Die Bedeutung der Kriegsgefangenenproblematik für die Geschichte des Kommunismus in Mittel- und Osteuropa 1917-1920* (Vienna, 2003). Scholars who used such documentation to deduce a widespread commitment to some form of Leninist Communism include Čulinović and Holotík.

than as a real force for change on the ground.[111] To the timorous authorities before and after the fall of the Habsburg Empire, the label often denoted any kind of unrest, military disobedience, or revolutionary tendencies. To the mutineers, rebels, and organized deserters, it covered a similarly broad spectrum. In September 1918, a gendarme captain on leave in western Slavonia encountered two armed men of the Green Cadre who explained to him that their goal was simply 'to incite revolution among the people, as occurred in Russia.'[112] Such pronouncements conveyed broad hopes associated with Russia, but also a degree of ignorance as to what was actually going on there. Ferančík, inspired by Russian events and repulsed by the 'Austro-Hungarian rabble,' absconded to Russia in June 1918, only to return some months later. His revolutionary convictions stayed with him and in 1921 he published *A Short Workers' Catechism* that proselytized faith in socialism and its two outstanding prophets – Karl Marx and Jesus Christ.[113]

Distance from events in Russia gave the Austro-Hungarian Green Cadres license to see themselves as soldiers of national liberation from the Habsburg yoke as well as scions of Bolshevik revolution, though clearly of a heterodox 'green' variety. Conversely, the 'Green Armies' and 'Green Guards' that emerged in the context of the Russian Civil War operated within the more circumscribed exigencies of peasant self-defense against the depredations, requisitions, and conscription campaigns of Red and White Armies alike.[114] Because these Russian and Ukrainian Greens did not appear until spring of 1919, it is possible that they

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[111] Tooze, *The Deluge*, 21; Robert Gerwarth and John Horne, "Bolshevism as Fantasy: Fear of Revolution and Counterrevolutionary Violence, 1917-1923," in idem., eds. *War in Peace*, 40-51.
[112] Čulinović, *Odjeci Oktobra*, 108.
[113] Jozef Ferančík, *Malý robotnícky katechismus* (Myjava, 1921).
[114] Erik C. Landis, "Who Were the 'Greens'? Rumor and Collective Identity in the Russian Civil War" *Russian Review* 69 (January 2010): 30-46; Vladimir N. Brovkin, "On the Internal Front: The Bolsheviks and the Greens," *Jahbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 37, no. 5 (1989): 541-568; Michael Malet, *Nestor Makhno in the Russian Civil War* (London and Basingstoke, 1982), 150-156.

imported the Green Cadres script from Austria-Hungary. In any case, the career of those rebels who self-identified as Greens was short, lasting only until the late summer of 1919, although later historians applied the label more liberally as part of a broader search for rural agency during the Civil War.[115] The ambitious welding of older modes of peasant resistance to new ideologies appears not to have occurred in Russia, or did not stir the imagination to the same extent as it did farther west.

How did the social revolutionism of the Austro-Hungarian Greens actually look? While they may have touted their allegiance to Lenin along with Wilson and Masaryk, their actual program, to the limited extent that it was articulated or implemented, appeared closer to a form of radically decentralized peasant democracy based on land reform. Broadly speaking, since the abolition of serfdom in 1848-9, the smallholding peasantry of east central Europe was increasingly land hungry and perennially indebted, at usurious rates, to town-based lenders. The rise of the Green Cadres offered the chance to right these wrongs, sometimes violently. In the most tumultuous areas, the insurgents targeted Jews as usurers and war profiteers and ethnic-national others as landowners and 'lords' – particularly Magyars and Germans in Slavonia and Slovakia (in western Galicia both peasants and lords tended to be Polish). Yet forward-looking programs also emerged in the apparent anarchy, particularly in South Slav territories where the Cadres were strongest.

One dimension of the protean new social order envisioned by the Cadres was the redistribution of land and property. Already before the regime change, they had introduced 'taxes' on wealthier citizens, priests, officials, gendarmes and others, redistributing the earnings in cash or goods to impoverished villagers.[116] Larger scale requisitions of supposedly ill-gotten

[115] Landis, "Who Were the 'Greens'?," 32-33.
[116] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 186-189, 196-197.

war gains ensued.[117] Early November witnessed proclamations for the socialization of land in Slavonian locales, to which the National Council responded with a competing program, promising all Croatian peasants enough fertile land for subsistence. In Croatia and Slavonia, the National Guards often socialized and redistributed large estates.[118] These schemes did not involve the abolition of private property, merely its more equitable redistribution.

Another dimension was the spate of short-lived peasant republics that were established in Slavonia, the Zagorje and Podravina regions, Vojvodina, and the Slovene Dolenjska region. Typically, National Guards drawn from Green Cadres removed large landowners from positions of influence and went about establishing new local authorities, introducing censorship of the post, telegraph, and telephone and initiating redistribution schemes.[119] A few Green Cadre leaders, such as Božo Matijević, also a returnee from Russia, viewed such initiatives as just the initial steps toward the establishment of Soviet rule in the future, though it is not entirely clear what that would entail. The National Council in Zagreb, aided by the Serb army, mercilessly cut short these manifestations of peasant social revolutionism.

In the Galician theater of Green Cadre activity, stretching from the hinterlands of Rzeszów and Przemyśl to the Polish Carpathians, a similar experiment occurred in the form of the so-called Tarnobrzeg Republic proclaimed on 6 November 1918 and lasting into January 1919, when it was suppressed by the Polish army. Here, Green Cadre activity in the surrounding forests may have augmented the 'radical agrarian populist agitation' that formed the context of the short-lived polity under the leadership of the peasant-born officer Tomasz Dąbal and the

[117] Čulinović, *Odjeci Oktobra*, 110-111; Banac, "The Croatian Disturbances," 285.
[118] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 321-323.
[119] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 323-326; Banac, "The Croatian Disturbances," 301.

radical priest Eugeniusz Okoń.[120] At the republic's inception, Okoń told a mass gathering of 30,000 peasants on Tarnobrzeg's main square that they had earned ownership of the land by defending it against the enemy during the war.[121] Dąbal was later an important Communist activist and played a central role in the 1923 establishment of a Red Peasant International in Moscow (the *Krestintern*), which aimed to create a self-consciously revolutionary peasantry in eastern Europe.[122] In the minds of such men and their followers, a radical agrarian social program went hand in hand with national loyalty and punishing violence against Jews. And to the mostly critical onlookers who later published their recollections, all these actions were closely related to the bandits and robbers that plagued the countryside at this time.[123]

VI. Epilogue

After 1918, the Green Cadres appeared to either merge with other social-political orientations and armed forces or dissolve into the forests whence they had come. In part this was due to their contradictory, fissile, and violent record during the imperial collapse. But it was also because other scenarios appeared more plausible and coherent, above all that of post-imperial nation-states buttressed by Allied support and ruled centrally from capital cities. Equally important was the call for demobilization in a context of war exhaustion and officially trumpeted

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[120] William W. Hagen, *Poland's Resurrection and the Jews, 1914-1920* (unpublished book manuscript), chapter 5; Witold Stankiewicz, *Konflikty społeczne na wsi polskiej 1918-1920* [Social Conflicts in the Polish Village 1918-1920] (Warsaw, 1963), 137-157. A first-person testimony of a Green Cadre member from the vicinity of Jasło is in *Pamiętniki chłopów* [Peasant Memoirs] (Warsaw, 1935), 675-694.
[121] Stankiewicz, *Konflikty*, 139: 'Ty broniłeś tej ziemi przed wrogiem, a skoro ją obroniłeś, ty masz prawo do tej ziemi.'
[122] George D. Jackson, *Comintern and Peasant in East Europe 1919-1930* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966), 66-76.
[123] Stankiewicz, *Konflikty*, 154.

victory in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia. The social pressure to rally to the new 'victor' states was intense, and resistance appeared increasingly futile.

Yet the Green Cadres cast a long shadow into the twentieth century. On the one hand, their influence was negative in the sense that the successor states consolidated their power in response to the threat they posed. The inability of the Zagreb National Council to discipline its hinterland gave the Serb army a free hand to restore order, ensuring the demise of the DSHS and giving Belgrade a decisive advantage in negotiating the future structure of the Yugoslav state.[124] In the despairing words of one National Council deputy from Slavonia, 'the people are in revolt. Total disorganization prevails. Only the army, moreover only the Serbian army, can restore order. The people are burning and destroying. I do not know how we shall feed Dalmatia and Bosnia. The mob is now pillaging the merchants, since all the landed estates have already been destroyed. Private fortunes are destroyed. The Serbian army is the only salvation.'[125] Czechoslovak troops occupying Slovakia contended with Magyar irregulars but also faced the problem of Green Cadres, which made ethnic Slovaks less likely to enlist. A 17 November report from Brno to the Ministry of National Defense in Prague explained that, 'as a result of the long war there is distaste for further uniformed service, so that soldiers returning from the front usually scatter homeward. Demoralized elements then join robber gangs and thus "Green Cadres" persist.'[126] This situation contributed to the mutual mistrust between many Slovaks and Czech soldiers from the very beginning of the republic.

On the other hand, the Green Cadres continued to represent a radical alternative to the post-1918 social-political order. Many rural citizens were disappointed with the half-hearted

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[124] Hrabak, *Zeleni kadar*, 181, 267, 332; Čulinović, *Odjeci Oktobra*, 120.
[125] Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca and London, 1984), 131.
[126] VHA ZVV Brno, Presidium, carton 1, no. 26.

reform programs undertaken by Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Or they perceived too much continuity between the administration of the Old Monarchy and its successors. Some of the centers of Green Cadre activity in 1918 remained restive for years. In the Trnovski Forest and Pohorje regions of Slovenia, small Green Cadres re-formed in early 1919 composed of servicemen avoiding enlistment in new Yugoslav army, or deserting from it.[127] Southeast Moravia around Hodonín and Uherské Hradiště witnessed a disproportionate number of land seizures by radical peasants in 1920.[128] In the same year, a major revolt erupted in central Croatia over the state's campaign to register and brand draft animals. The rebels again invoked the Green Cadre.[129] We may see these as attempts to recapture some of the radical openness and possibility that ordinary rural people felt during the imperial collapse.

The durability of the script was evident in the fact that Green Cadres formed again in the period of the Second World War. Faith in the Green forces proved more robust than allegiance to the parliamentary Agrarian parties of east central Europe, which from the late 1920s fell victim to the economic downturn and advancing authoritarianism. By the Second World War, the Green Cadres symbolized autonomy and self-determination to recalcitrant peasants across the political spectrum. Most often, however, the name was associated with anti-Nazi partisans. Among the first partisan groups in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was the Green Cadre of the Hostýnské vrchy highlands in eastern Moravia.[130] Persecuted Carinthian Slovenes formed

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[127] Janez J. Švajncer, *Svetovna vojna 1914-1918: Slovenci v avstro-ogrski armadi* [The World War 1914-1918. Slovenes in the Austro-Hungarian Army] (Maribor, 1988), 45.
[128] Jaroslav César, Milan Otáhal, eds., *Hnutí venkovského lidu v českých zemích v letech 1918-1922* [The Movement of Rural People in the Czech Lands in the Years 1918-1922] (Prague, 1958), 16, 358, 368.
[129] Banac, *The National Question*, 248-260.
[130] Josef Přikryl, *První partyzánská skupina Zelený kádr* [The First Partisan Group, the Green Cadre] (Kroměříž, 1985).

another Cadre in Karawank range on Austria's southern border.[131] Occasionally, leaders of the Green Cadre in 1918 became partisan leaders after 1941, such as Alfonz Šarh or the Czech Roma Josef Serinek.[132] In 1943, Šarh was killed in action battling German forces. At least a few groups of the 'peasant battalions' (*Bataliony chłopskie*), the armed wing of the Polish Peasant Party, adopted the name.[133] So too did pro-Nazi north Bohemian German farmers avoiding the Czechoslovak draft in 1938, though with a good deal more cynical irony.[134]

As in 1918, many Green Cadres during the Second World War appeared to offer a broad tent of national liberation and social revolutionism based in the countryside. According to the Austrian émigré aristocrat and journalist Ferdinand Czernin in 1944, they were one of the key forces of anti-Nazi popular resistance in occupied Austria besides Communism and Social Democracy. Resisting the military draft and hiding in the forest hills, they were 'armed with old weapons which are occasionally supplemented by modern weapons taken from army depots or stolen from soldiers on leave.' Czernin considered the Green Cadres 'of great political and psychological importance' because they abandoned the traditional conservatism of the peasantry and thus effected a rapprochement of town and country – the two opposing forces that, in his

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[131] Janez Turk, "Gorska vas v primežu vojne. Zgodba o koroških antifašistih: Zeleni kader od Karavank," [A Mountain Village in the Grip of War. The Story of the Carinthian Anti-Fascists: The Green Cadre from the Karawanks] *Mladika* 58, no. 9 (November 2014): 18-23; Wilhelm Baum, ed., *Wie ein im Käfig eingesperrter Vogel. Das Tagebuch des Thomas Olip* (Klagenfurt, Vienna, 2010).

[132] Ondřej Slačálek, "Rozhovor: Setkání s černým partyzánem," [Conversation: A meeting with a black partisan] *Novy Prostor* (http://www.novyprostor.cz/clanky/422/setkani-s-cernym-partyzanem.html). This is an interview with the historian Jan Tesař (b. 1933).

[133] I am grateful to Frank Grelka for pointing me to this connection.

[134] Otto Zacke, *Vom Grünen Kader zur Braunen Armee* (Böhmische Leipa, 1939), e.g. p. 51: 'Uneingeweihte sollen glauben, daß wir zum tschechischen Heer und nicht zum "grünen Kader" einrücken. Zum erstenmale ist das Wort "Grüner Kader" gefallen. Teilnehmern des Weltkrieges ist es nicht unbekannt. Damals drückten sich viele Tschechen vom Frontdienst, indem sie sich daheim in den Wäldern herumtrieben. Das war der "Grüne Kader". Nun haben die Rollen gewechselt. Wir Deutschen werden als Deserteure zum Grünen Kader einrücken.'

view, had torn the Austrian First Republic apart.[135] Likewise in Yugoslavia, according to the sociologist Dinko Tomašić writing in 1943, they comprised one of the two revolutionary forces in a three-way contest for mastery over the anti-German underground scene alongside the Chetniks and the Communists.[136] Even in the face of the unprecedented upheavals and violence of the Second World War, recalcitrant rural people across east central Europe found in the Green Cadres of 1918 a familiar scenario and symbolic grammar through which to interpret their agency.

The Green Cadres script had such broad appeal in part because it was so flexible, conferring legitimacy on a panoply of rural uprisings. But it was not so vague to be without meaning. A potent amalgam of old elements and new – desertion, social banditry, and the *jacquerie* alongside social revolution and populist nationalism, its articulation by Austro-Hungarian peasant soldiers in the First World War provided a touchstone for the post-Habsburg peasantry through Europe's 'age of catastrophe.' The full consequences of this cultural-political innovation have yet to be explored. Among other things, it suggests the salience of broader global dynamics of revolutionary peasant insurrection, usually confined to studies of the Global South, for understanding twentieth-century European history.[137] The experience and legacy of the First World War, itself increasingly understood by scholars as a global conflict, was seminal in producing these configurations.[138] The Green Cadres were in part responsible for bringing

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[135] Ferdinand Czernin, "Austria's Position in Reconstructed Europe," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* vol. 232, A Challenge to Peacemakers (March 1944), 73-74.
[136] Dinko Tomašić, "Reconstruction in Central Europe," *The American Political Science Review* 37, no. 5 (October 1943), 890-891 (ft. 7).
[137] Paradigmatically, see Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1969), along with Theda Skocpol, "What Makes Peasants Revolutionary?" *Comparative Politics* 14, no. 3 (1982): 351-375, and Desai and Eckstein, "Insurgency," 462.
[138] Hew Strachan, *The First World War. A new illustrated history* (London, 2003); Robert Gerwarth and Ezra Manela, "The Great War as a Global War: Imperial Conflict and the Reconfiguration of World Order, 1911–1923," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 4 (2014).

down a major European land empire, though the resulting geopolitical order was not what they hoped for. Nonetheless, and not least, they provide vivid evidence for the creativity and ambition of the peasant population of east central Europe, which has been commonly overlooked.