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Trianon
100 Years After

Report from the LSE IDEAS
Central and South-East Europe
Programme Desk at FSPAC 2020

Edited by
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LSE IDEAS Central and South-East Europe Desk at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences (FSPAC) of Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca aims to contribute to the global exchange of ideas and knowledge building on our joined interest for academic research and outreach to a broader professional as well as general public.

The Desk seeks to develop research opportunities focused on regional and European priorities, building on the experience of our team of experts, on topics ranging from European values and security to regional economic development and political participation.

The Desk hosts annual conferences, lectures and presentations by affiliated experts that will contribute to a deeper understanding of regional developments. It presents and publishes reports and contributions in support of public policy decision making or private initiatives.

The Desk hosts an ongoing fellowship program, encouraging scholars with a focus on regional trends and developments to be part of the team while pursuing their research interest during their fellowship. Fellows are encouraged to be part of the academic community delivering presentations and engaging students in their field of interest.

The fellowship is intended to aid international scholarly contacts and foster inner and inter-disciplinary dialogue that addresses problems specific to the political, social and economic developments of Central and South East Europe in general and Romania in particular.

The Desk fosters bilateral cooperation by organising student and academic exchanges and study visits as well as engaging traditional partners at local, national and regional level to broaden professional networks.

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Introduction

Mădălina Mocan and Megan Palmer, CSEEP Desk, Romania

The second report of the LSE IDEAS Central and South-East Europe Programme's Romania Desk, hosted at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences (FSPAC) of Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, provides to a wider audience insightful perspectives on one on the most consequential events following the Great War: the Treaty of Trianon and its legacy. It follows an equally important contribution in 2019 that zoomed in on the legacies of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, also available online.

The current publication brings together historians and political scientists from Romania, Hungary and the United Kingdom with a long record of systematic research of the region(s). It is the result of the Desk's annual conference during which our colleagues, together with distinguished guests, exchanged ideas, perspectives and insights on a region in which competing narratives of the past are often used for short-term political gains. However, beyond such political strategies are the complex dynamics of multicultural societies seeking a common future while honouring a painful past. The conference "Trianon: 100 Year After" acknowledged the local nuances and the regional implications of this reality. It benefitted from the contributions of established scholars and researchers and built upon the experiences of our previous endeavour: "Europe; 30 Years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall" (Cluj-Napoca, 2019). In this, and from the beginning of our partnership, we have confronted the challenges of bridging political economy, contemporary history and political science, in order to achieve a broader and longer view that will serve a wider audience of students, researchers and professionals, as well as the general public, in the pursuit of a deeper, systemic understanding of the region.

The report is in two parts. Part One contains contributions by Professor Michael Cox, LSE, and Professor Levente Salat, Babeş-Bolyai University, based on their discussion in the conference's keynote public event. Professor Cox provides a detailed assessment of the geopolitical realities facing the Great Powers at the Paris Peace Conference in 1918–1920, and how those shaped the Treaty of Trianon and the interwar years. Professor Salat then considers the legacy of the Treaty one hundred years later, emphasising the complex ways in which self-identity and collective identities are challenged and shaped by Trianon discourse—and, at times, exploited for political gain.

Part Two, 'Reflections and Perspectives', is introduced by Professor Dennis Deletant, UCL. As Professor Deletant eloquently unpacks in his introduction, the second section explores various outcomes of the treaty and its persistence in the collective memories, experiences, and identities of people in the region since 1920. We direct the reader to Professor Deletant's introduction to its contents to learn more. The report ends with some concluding remarks by the editors.

The LSE IDEAS Central and South-East Europe Programme's Romania Desk at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences (FSPAC) of Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca benefits from the support of Professor Christopher Coker, Director of LSE IDEAS, Professor Michael Cox of LSE IDEAS, Professor Cosmin Marian, Political Science Director of Department and Professor Călin Hinţea, Dean of the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences (FSPAC) of Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca: the initiators of this IDEAS hub in Cluj-Napoca. The initiative stands out as part of an already vibrant academic community of Cluj-Napoca, by bringing together distinguished scholars and researchers from the extensive networks of knowledge of LSE IDEAS and Babeş-Bolyai University.

We hope this report, the result of the series of workshops and lectures that took place in June 2020, will generate relevant exchanges of ideas and we are eager to receive your thoughts related to the contributions published in it, as we prepare a new joint endeavour dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe.

Please direct all correspondence to the LSE IDEAS CSEEP Romania events@fspac.ro

SECTION ONE

Trianon: One Hundred Years Later

Trianon and its Legacy

Michael Cox

Punishing the defeated

In this part of Europe at least a League of Nations will not have to seek for its troubles.[1]

-J.Macfarlane (1920)

It is now just over a century since the First World War came to an end and the various Treaties—five in all—signalling the formal conclusion of hostilities were signed. Much ink has been spilled by historians discussing what happened in Paris. But of one thing we should be clear. Behind all the fine sounding phrases about building a new liberal order on the foundation of a newly constructed League of Nations, the winners after 1918 were determined to make sure that another catastrophe like the one they had just experienced would never happen again, and one way of making sure of this was by punishing Germany and 'her allies'—including Hungary—who they believed were guilty of having caused the war in the first place.

Not all of the people who gathered in Paris in 1919 were bent on revenge. Indeed, some like John Maynard Keynes believed that one should treat former enemies—Germany in particular—in a moderate fashion and in this way lay the foundation for a more stable European order. However, his argument for a peace that took account of the continent's longer-term economic needs, rather than one that played to the public gallery, fell on deaf ears. In the fetid atmosphere of the time, the principal representatives in Paris were less interested in his grand liberal schemes and more on making sure that those who had brought about the war should pay a heavy price for their aggression.[2]

One should hardly be surprised or shocked therefore by what happened in Paris in those beautiful buildings (though one—Sevres—was a porcelain factory) where those punitive treaties were finally signed. Indeed, having suffered massive

casualties during the war while facing the enormous task of rebuilding shattered economies, the allied politicians were in no mood to compromise. Moreover, they were now in the driving seat and could effectively dictate the terms of the peace from a position of strength. It was not quite copybook Thucydides. After all, the peacemakers in Paris were not aiming to destroy their beaten enemies and enslave those who were left behind. But the lessons were clear enough. As Thucydides pointed out in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* in possibly one of the most quoted of quotes repeated ever since he first put pen to paper over two thousand years ago, "the *strong* do what they will, the *weak* suffer what they must." So it was in Ancient Greece; and so in broad terms, without the massacre of the men and the slavery of the women and children, it turned out to be again in 1919 when the winning side imposed some very tough terms on the defeated.[3]

Imperial Germany was the first to feel the full force of the allies' hostility ceding Alsace Lorraine back to France, losing territory to the East, while being forced to stand by and watch as seven million of its German-speaking citizens were compelled to live outside the Reich. Nor was this all. The Rhineland was demilitarised, Germany's few colonies were confiscated, its military was reduced to a shadow of its former self and it was forced to pay reparations. The Habsburg Empire fared just as badly, if not worse, as the once great power of Central Europe (and former world power)[4] disintegrated leading to the establishment of a series of 'new states' in the shape of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and of course Hungary which announced its independence in October 1918. It was also compelled to cede eastern Galicia, Trento, southern Tyrol, Trieste, and Istria to its various neighbours. Finally, the Ottoman Empire was unceremoniously dissolved leaving behind a rump state in the form of Turkey which was then obliged to renounce all rights over Arab Asia and North Africa. The pact also provided for an independent Armenia, for an autonomous Kurdistan, and for a Greek presence in eastern Thrace and on the Anatolian west coast, as well as Greek control over the Aegean islands commanding the Dardanelles.

> "
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> But vindictiveness here amid the strong.
>
> And there amid the weak an impotent rage.
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> "
>
> Thomas Hardy, The Dynasts, Quoted in John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of The Peace* (1919)

Eger, Hungary—August 2020: Trianon monument which symbolises the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War and the Peace Treaty signed in June 1920.

Hungary: a special case?

> *The history of more fortunate nations is punctuated by triumphs and victories. The history of Hungary is punctuated by disasters and defeats.*[5]
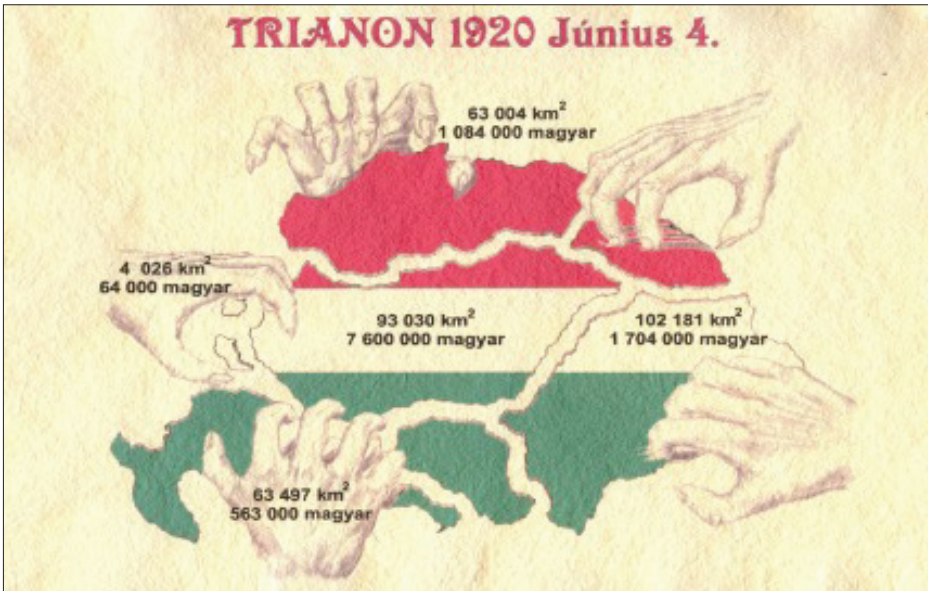> – Bryan Cartledge (former UK Ambassador to Hungary, 2008)

But what about Hungary, one of the key constituent parts of the old empire which had fought alongside Imperial Germany? Was it treated especially harshly, perhaps even 'stabbed in the back' by its enemies at home and betrayed by an arrogant West, as its Prime Minister Victor Orban was still insisting one hundred years after Hungary had signed the peace treaty in June 1920?[6] Or was it, as others would claim, treated like all the other defeated powers at time, namely as an enemy state which had been party to a war that had led to millions of deaths and the near destruction of a European civilisation from which it might never recover.

Unsurprisingly, there is no single or indeed simple way of answering these questions. However, even those without much sympathy for Hungary, then or now, could hardly dispute the fact that the country suffered what has been described by one observer as 'staggering territorial loses' after the First World War.[7] As one of the main historians of the peace treaties has argued, all of the losing powers were punished, but it was 'Hungary' which was 'the big loser in the post-war settlement' forfeiting 'nearly two thirds of its territory and nearly 60% of its people'. The country was also left landlocked, its navy ceased to exist, its army was limited to 35,000 officers and men, and perhaps most problematic of all, up to three million Magyars or more now found themselves living outside Hungary proper 'in neighbouring states'.[8] Nor was it just the neighbouring states of Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia who benefitted. So too, ironically, did the country with which Hungary had been constitutionally bound since the signing of the 'Austro-Hungarian Compromise' of 1867. Having to concede Burgenland, a largely German speaking strip of territory on the western edge of Hungary hardly compared to the losses Hungary experienced in say Transylvania or to the North or South West. Yet, to give up any territory to Austria was especially galling and caused a good deal of tension which finally led to armed clashes when Hungarian militias clashed with Austrian police forces in 1920–1921.

Trianon also had a massive impact on Hungary itself, not only causing psychological anguish at home and a profound sense of victimhood, but also making any 'normal' relations with its neighbours nigh impossible. The losses which Hungary experienced also dealt a major blow to its already very fragile economy. Indeed, Hungary suffered at least three economic blows at about the same time, one caused by the Romanian expropriation of vast amount of goods following its occupation of the country in 1919, the other because of Trianon itself and the loss of 84 percent of its timber resources, 43 percent of its arable land, and 83 percent of its iron ore, and the third as a result of being cut off from its natural markets in Central Europe. Hungary may

Trianon: Hungarian propaganda poster depicting Magyars being torn from their country

Admiral Horthy and Hitler

have successfully negotiated the economic rapids in the 1920s. However, once the depression struck, it was left vulnerable to the entreaties of another country which also felt it had been dealt with harshly after the war: namely Germany. Admiral Horthy, the anti-semitic Regent of Hungary, may (or may not) have been a reluctant ally of Hitler. However, Hungary's growing economic dependence on Germany in the 1930s—not to mention its desire to see a major revision of the hated Treaty of Trianon—made some kind of alliance with Nazi Germany close to a foregone conclusion with all the terrible consequences which followed both for Hungary and its neighbours.[9]

Upheaval at home

We all know….that these new frontiers were not fixed in the calm atmosphere of peace, but when the political air was still whirling round the deepest storm-centre of history.[10]
—A. Ogilvie (1924)

But why in the end did Hungary lose as much as it did, aside from the very obvious fact that it found itself facing more powerful opponents across the negotiating table in 1920 who were clearly in no mood to be generous to a country which had formed part of a hostile axis which in 1914 had precipitated the bloodiest war in history?

One very obvious explanation is at the very moment when the discussions about the future of Central Europe were getting underway in Paris in early 1919, Hungary descended into chaos as the 'putatively liberal democratic regime established in late 1918' under Mihaly Karolyi gave way in March 1919 to 'revolution and a self-proclaimed Soviet republic led by Bela Kun'.[11] This not only alarmed the French in particular who were now more than ever concerned about the spread of Bolshevism to the rest of Europe. It also caused enormous consternation amongst all the main western leaders, who having earlier failed to deal with Karolyi and recognise the new independent Hungary back in November of 1918, were now reaping the whirlwind in the shape of a government now ideologically allied to Soviet Russia. It also meant that there was now no legitimate government in Budapest itself with whom the allies either could, or would, ever think of negotiating.

Meanwhile, Hungarian forces were locked into a deadly military conflict with its neighbours (aided and abetted by France) which by the summer had led to a Romanian occupation of a good part of Hungary, and by August of Budapest itself, where, according to one source, Romanian troops 'immediately embarked on a systematic programme of expropriation, deportations and looting'.[12] Nor did their reluctant departure bring much in the way of order to Hungary as the 'red' revolution led by Kun was followed by counter-revolution overseen by Admiral Horthy—he who entered Budapest on a white horse—which then proceeded to unleash a 'white terror' against all leftists, progressives, trade unionists and the 'Jewish community' who were held 'collectively responsible for the communist revolution of March 1919'.[13] This however did not deflect Romania in its territorial ambitions which they continued to press against Hungary; and as if to make their intentions absolutely clear, proceeded to remove as much booty, or what they termed 'reparations', from Hungary when they finally departed in late 1919.

Romania and other neighbours

Romania's role in Hungary's fate was thus crucial, raising the important question as to why the allies more generally were so well disposed towards the government in Bucharest? There were no doubt several reasons, part cultural and part historical; but in terms of interests and alliances the most immediate reason was that after having failed to come into the war in 1914, Romania was finally 'persuaded' to do so in 1916 when a secret agreement was entered into with the Entente. Italy had done much the same the year before and Romania now followed suit; moreover like Italy, demanded a price, which in Romania's case meant acquiring Transylvania—which was 55 percent ethnically Romanian anyway—as well as some other territories to the east of river Tisza, provided of course Romania entered the war against Austria-Hungary.

Romania duly lived up to its promise, declared war on Austria-Hungary in August of the same year, only to suffer heavy losses at the hands

of the Central Powers before being forced to surrender by the spring of 1918. Still, Romania had in the end chosen the winning side, though not before it had been humiliated itself. The peace treaty it was compelled to sign in May 1918 may not have been quite so brutal as the terms earlier imposed on Bolshevik Russia by the Central Powers, or later imposed on Hungary by the allies. But the Treaty of Bucharest was punitive enough, containing clauses that effectively reduced the country to a dependency of Germany and Austro-Hungary.[14]

But it was not just Romania which was to benefit at Hungary's expense. The new states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia also saw an opportunity of acquiring territory; in fact both believed it was essential to do so if they were to emerge as viable entities after the war. In this endeavour they were supported by the western allies, who though hesitant for most of the war about undermining the Austro-Hungarian empire—at first they talked of autonomy for the nationalities not full independence—in the end decided that once the empire had collapsed, it would have to support the creation of these two new states. They certainly saw the risks of doing so, but really felt they had no choice but accept, or at least not oppose, changes which in the end could not but impact on Hungary.

The story of what happened next almost reads like a whodunit detective novel. Two parallel committees were established in the early part of 1919 (long before Trianon) with the sole purpose of establishing new borders for the two new entities. Ominously for Hungary perhaps, they completed their work 'with remarkable speed'.[15] Even more ominously, the committee created to discuss Czechoslovakia only met seven times and only took evidence from one witness: the future Foreign Minister of the new country, Eduard Benes. They then made their recommendations in the spring of 1919. The Hungarians were then informed, who, unsurprisingly, protested the

outcome of discussions in which they had not been involved and whose recommendations in their view amounted to the dismemberment of the country.

Whether or not what happened was the result of a cruel plot hatched by certain individuals in Britain and France who were fundamentally hostile to the country, or the result of promises made to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia whose consequences had not been fully thought through, is still being debated today. It is interesting though that at least one writer whose views on Hungary can hardly be described as negative—a former British Ambassador to Hungary no less—has argued that the outcome was less the consequence of 'malice, revenge, nor even of any powerful urge to punish' but rather derived 'mainly from the determination of the Allies to satisfy and consecrate the national aspirations of the formerly subject peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.'[16] Either way, there is little doubt about who in the end won, and who in the end lost.

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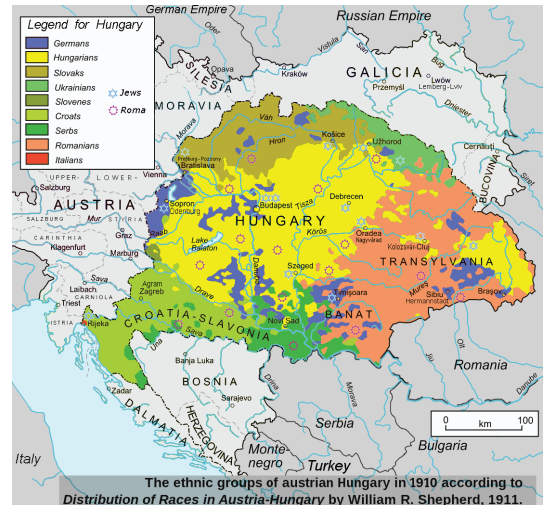*Poster urging Romania to join the war for 'freedom and justice'*

Nationalities and nationalism

If the Central-European monarchies suffer defeat in the war, the subject nationalities of Hungary will act like the Polish subjects of Germany and vote to the last man for liberation from the Magyar state.[17]

–Arnold Toynbee (1915)

The ethnic groups of austrian Hungary in 1910 according to *Distribution of Races in Austria-Hungary* by William R. Shepherd, 1911.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS / PUBLIC DOMAIN
The ethnic map of former Hungary (1920)

Decisions taken at the highest level in Paris in 1919 and 1920 clearly had an enormous impact on the future of Hungary. However, even the most well-disposed of peace-makers would have faced an uphill job constructing nations in a part of the world where there was such ethnic complexity. There is no doubting that there were some on the western side who were none too fussed where those borders were drawn, as long as it was to the disadvantage of Hungary. But there was a much bigger problem: namely that Hungary itself was made up of a very large number of minority groups, many of whom may have felt some degree of loyalty to the wider empire in which they had lived for centuries (significantly many kept fighting for the empire up to the moment of surrender in late 1918) but a good deal less to Hungary itself. Moreover, as the war went on and the centre began to disintegrate, these minority groups—just under half of Hungary's total population—came to feel that they would better be represented in the new successor states rather than in a country whose ruling elite in Budapest had for many years shown little respect for the various non-Magyar groups living within Hungary's original borders.

Hungary moreover faced what all multi-national states have had to face in the twentieth century: a desire by subject peoples to live (metaphorically speaking) 'under their own flag'. Indeed, with or without Trianon, and possibly even with or without the First World War, nationalism was already beginning to threaten the integrity of Austro-Hungarian empire. It was after all a nationalist outrage in Sarajevo in June 1914 which was the immediate spark leading to the

conflict; and it was in defence of an empire under threat from within that finally pushed Austro-Hungary into declaring war on Serbia a month later.[18] To make matters even more explosive, it was 'the non-German, non-Magyar nationalities' who had in effect been 'relegated to second class citizens within the empire' who were now 'called upon to bear the brunt of a war' in defence of an empire in which their interests 'ran counter to those of their German and Magyar masters'.[19] The situation was clearly untenable, and as the war progressed the demand for self-determination grew ever louder. Moreover, this had less to do with conspiracies orchestrated by enemies abroad—though they certainly took advantage of it—and more with that most basic desire to speak one's own language and practice one's own rituals in spaces that were not overseen or controlled by some alien power.

Whether in the end 'liberation' was ever likely to lead to politically liberal, or even economically rational, outcomes in the new states was by no means certain.[20] As one of the great writers on nationalism later observed, 'far from increasing political stability and political liberty, nationalism in mixed areas' (which perfectly described post-

Count Apponyi led the Hungarian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference

war Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) could not but lead, as of course it did, to increased 'tension and mutual hatred'.[21] But that lay somewhere down the line, and in the tumultuous years following a long and bloody conflict when nationalist passions which had been fomenting for years were on the rise, it was hardly surprising that peoples would seek whatever security they could in new arrangements which they felt would best protect their identity and advance their interests.

No friends in high places

> In late 1918 when Hungary emerged from the war as an independent state, diplomatic relations between London and Hungary were literally non-existent.[22]
> —Gabor Batonyi (1999)

If nationalism was one of the more obvious factors that in the end spelled doom for Hungary, another was the position adopted by the Entente powers themselves. Hungarian leaders such as the cosmopolitan Count Apponyi may have made a very good impression at Trianon with his well-crafted speech delivered in fluent English, French and Italian.[23] But it was clear that the allies were in no mood to make any changes to the original treaty, in part because they simply wanted to move on and in part because Hungary in the end was really not that important to them. William Beveridge who was sent out by the British government to examine the situation in Central Europe may have been sympathetic to the plight of ordinary Hungarians. But he summed up in words what many were thinking at the time. As he put it, none too delicately, 'the Entente had many more important things to think about' after the war 'than the fate of 10 million people in Hungary'.[24] Even so, there were still those amongst the great powers who had their doubts about the wisdom of Trianon, including Lloyd George who apparently became increasingly agitated when he found out that a total of close to three million Hungarians 'would be transferred' to other countries. Such a proposal would 'not be easy to defend' he believed. Indeed, could there
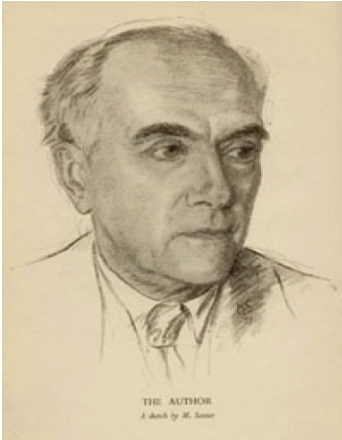
ever be peace in Central Europe, he asked, 'if it were discovered afterwards that the claims of Hungary were sound, and that a whole community of Magyars had been handed over like cattle' to the Successor States?' But he was never prepared to push the case. Nor could he easily counter the argument that where one had stood in the war would in the end determine what one got out of it. As a member of the British Foreign Office put it rather succinctly at the time: "it was only natural to favour our ally Romania over our enemy Hungary."[25]

But it was not just a question of where one had stood in the war which determined how one was treated after it. It also depended on perceptions and how one was perceived, and here of course Hungary suffered from what might politely be called a 'positive image deficit'. Western politicians may not have been known for thinking deeply about foreign countries in faraway places. However, whenever they did think about Hungary—which was not very often one suspects—it always seemed to tell to Hungary's disadvantage. The democratic revolutions of 1848 may have produced western heroes like Kossuth. But much had happened in the intervening years which undercut this earlier and much rosier construction of Hungary. Its policy of forced Magyarisation, the chauvinism it displayed towards its own minorities, the poverty of its peasantry and the continued power of its landed aristocracy—including the deeply conservative Apponyi himself—were hardly likely to make it a poster child of the enlightenment in the liberal West. Indeed, it seems that some western official officials, including the influential diplomat Harold Nicholson [picture left] did not even regard Hungary as being western at all.[26]

Harold Nicholson, influential British diplomat

Yet even in those countries where Hungary might have made a positive impact—most obviously the United States—it did remarkably little to polish up its image. Woodrow Wilson had no special animus against a country about which he probably knew very little anyway. The case for Hungary however was never made to him or his advisers.[27] This not only left the field open to its many detractors, like British Foreign Office official Alan Leeper,[28] not to mention the influential editor of *The Times,* H. Wickham Steed.[29] It also made it that much easier for others to fill the vacuum with their own particular narrative—and one country which did so with very great success was Romania. Indeed, after it had joined the western war effort, it became very active abroad, both in France— where it had serious support—as well as in Britain where its 'English-born, thoroughbred monarch' Queen Marie proved to be major 'soft power' asset making the case for Romania at every conceivable
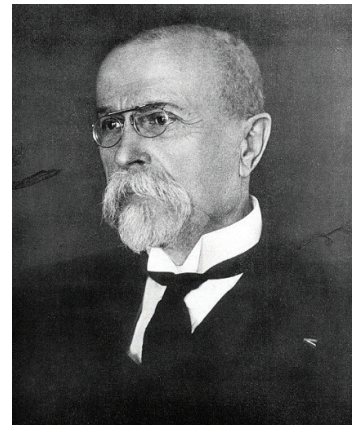
David Mitrany
PUBLIC DOMAIN

opportunity.[30] The Romanian- born, British-based and LSE-educated David Mitrany was also active on the propaganda front, and in 1917 even published a short but influential pamphlet in which he regaled tales of Hungarian oppression and Romanian sacrifices during the war in an attempt to mobilise support for his idea of a 'Greater Romania'.[31]

Others were perhaps even more active, none more so than the energetic Robert Seton-Watson whose early support for the Habsburg empire soon gave way to a strong dislike for Hungary and admiration for what he came to regard as the oppressed Slavic nations of Central and Southern Europe. He may not have always found favour in the corridors of power. Nonetheless, he was a forceful advocate both for the Serbs, who were making their own sacrifice on behalf of the western Entente, as well as for the Czechs. Forever active in making the case for the peoples he so obviously admired, he not only supported and found employment for his Czech friend Tomas Masaryk (first President of the new Czechoslovak republic). Both together then went on to found and publish *The New Europe* (1916), a weekly periodical whose clearly stated objective was to support the 'national rights' of the 'subject races of Central and Eastern Europe' by liberating them from the control of both the 'Germans and Magyars'. In fact, in its view, the war itself was 'not only a German War' but a 'Magyar War' too. Thus the defeat of one would of necessity lead to the total defeat of the other and what they believed would be the emancipation of all those—like the three and a half million Romanians—who had been living under one of 'the grossest tyrannies which the modern world' had ever 'known'.[32]

Robert Seton-Watson
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Tomas Masaryk
PUBLIC DOMAIN

The Little Etente: France allies with Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania

Conclusion—after Trianon

Several factors and not just one therefore combined together and produced what could only be described a perfect storm for Hungary which finally concluded with Trianon. Furthermore, once it had been signed, Hungary had few options but to protest the agreement at every possible opportunity—with absolutely no chance of success—while trying to mobilise public opinion in the West. It had some success in London where it played on British suspicions of French foreign policy in the region, and some too in the League of Nations of which it finally became a member in 1922. It also had a few foreign intellectual supporters, one of whom at least produced a major study on Trianon and its 'consequences'.[33] However, there was little enthusiasm abroad for altering the original agreement, if for no other reason that to do so would only reopen questions which all the great powers on the winning side in the war believed had now been settled once and for all.

Hungary also found itself in the unenviable position of being a small (and after 1920 an even smaller power) protesting a post-war settlement to which France especially had become strategically wedded. This may have had something to do with the rather 'special relationship' France as a nation felt it had with Romania. However, the more basic reason was its ambition to maintain a balance of power in post-war Europe following a war against a German foe whose intentions, according to the French leader Clemenceau, could never be anything other than hostile. As one of the most influential writers on the inter-war period has observed, 'the most important and persistent single factor in European affairs in the years following 1919 was the French demand for security'.[34] Germany may have been defeated by 1918, but given its size and industrial strength there was every reason to think it would rise again.

The answer to this challenge seemed obvious: the construction and maintenance of an alliance system, largely revolving around France and built

on the somewhat shaky foundations provided by the three new states of Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia, all of whom had 'profited most by the break up the Austro-Hungarian monarchy' more generally and of Hungary more particularly.[35] Not for the first time in history, nor the last, the needs of at least one of the great powers for security in an insecure world would determine who it would back and who would be sacrificed on the altar of *realpolitik*. We now know of course that this carefully constructed 'little entente' was unlikely to last, and was finally blown away once Hitler's Germany set out to establish a new German hegemony in the 1930s. It is easy to say that this only represented a defeat for French diplomacy. But the collapse of the 'little entente', and with it France in the spring of 1940, also proved disastrous for Europe as a whole. The overturning of the Versailles system, of which Trianon formed a part, may have been greeted with whoops of delight in some capitals. But we all know what then followed when Germany and 'her allies' set about redrawing the map of the continent once more by breaking out of the prison into which they believed had been unjustly interred at the end of the First World War. But that—as they say—is another (tragic) story for another time. ■

Endnotes

1   J. McFarlane, 'The reconstruction of Europe'. *Scottish Geographical Magazine,* 1920, 36(4), pp.227–8.

2   See centennial edition of John Maynard Keynes's, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, (1919) with a new introduction by Michael Cox, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2019, pp. 1–44.

3   Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, (c 431BC). Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009.

4   See Martyn Rady, *The Habsburgs: The Rise and Fall of a World Power*, London, Allen Lane, 2020.

5   Quoted in Bryan Cartledge, *Mihaly Karolyi and Istvan Bethlen: Hungary*, London, Haus Publishing, 2008, p.3.

6   In a speech delivered on the 100th anniversary of the signing of Trianon in 2020, Victor Orban referred to the treaty as a 'peace diktat' which not only ended the First World War for Hungary but also 'ended the era of Hungarian history leading up to it'. https://rmx.news/article/article/full-transcript-viktor-orban-s-2020-state-of-the-nation-speech

7   Quote from Robert Gerwath, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917–1923*, London, Penguin Books, 2017, p. 208.

8   Alan Sharp, *Versailles 1919: A Centennial Perspective*, London, Haus Publishing Ltd, p. 15.

9   A useful guide to the diplomatic gyrations undertaken by Horthy in WW2 can be found in the State Department and Foreign Affairs Record, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State. RG84, Hungary.

10   A. Ogilvie, 'Modern geography as a study and as an aid'. *Scottish Geographical Magazine*,1924, 40(1), p. 74.

11   Peter Jackson, *Beyond The Balance of Power: France and the Politics of National Security in the Era of the First World War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 217.

12   Bryan Cartledge, p. 83.

13   Csaba Toth, 'Jobbik commemorates Miklos Horthy's 1919 march on Budapest' *The Budapest Beacon*, November 17, 2014.

14   Bryan Cartledge, *Mihaly Karolyi and Istvan Bethlen: Hungary*, London, Haus Publishing, 2008 op cit, p. 71.

15   Amongst other things, the 'economic provisions' of the Treaty of Bucharest of May 1918 'amounted to the virtual creation of a protectorate over Roumania in respect of the exploitation of her natural resources' with an 'army of occupation' now to be 'maintained at the expense of Roumania'. See the detailed summary of the Treaty of Bucharest in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Nov., 1918), pp. 713–715.

16   Bryan Cartledge, *Mihaly Karolyi and Istvan Bethlen: Hungary*, p.141.

17   Arnold J. Toynbee, *Nationality & The War*, London, J.M.Dent & Sons, 1915, p. 158.

18   See Geoffrey Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe; The Outbreak of World War 1 and the Collapse Habsburg Empire*, New York, Basic Books, 2015, p. xxi.

19   Ronald C. Monticone. 'Nationalities Problems in the Austro-Hungarian Empire', *The Polish Review*, Vol. 13, No.4, Autumn 1968, pp. 123–124.

20   A point made by E.H.Carr in his, *Nationalism and After*, London, Macmillan, 1945. See also the new edition with a new introduction by Michael Cox (forthcoming) Palgrave, 2021.

21   Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, London, Hutchinson University Library, p. 115.

22   Gabor Batonyi, *Britain and Central Europe, 1918–1933*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1999, p. 74.

23   Apponyi may have had his admirers in the West like Theodore Roosevelt, but he is also remembered for his 1907 educational law which made Hungarian a compulsory subject in all schools in the Kingdom of Hungary.

24   William Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1953, p.15.

25   Meeting (Feb.13, 1919), Commission on Romanian and Yugoslav Affairs (in French), PRO, F0374/9.

26   See also Margaret Macmillan, *The Peacemakers*, London, John Murray, p. 265.

27   See Tibor Gant, Through the Prism of the Habsburg Monarchy: Hungary in American Diplomacy and Public Opinion during the First World War, Unpublished Phd, Warwick University, 1996, pp. 276, 282.

28   Alan Leeper was not just hostile to Hungary but also a strong supporter of Rumania whose ambitions he advanced even before the end of the war. See Alan Wigram and Alan Leeper, *The Justice of Romania's Cause*, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1917.

29   Known later as the 'Spiritual Godfather' of the post-Habsburg new states, H. Wickham Steed was seen as a leading expert on Eastern Europe who advised the British government to seek the liquidation of Austria-Hungary as a war aim. For more details on Steed's life, see Andre Liebich*, Wickham Steed: The Greatest Journalist of His Time*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2018.

30   Tessa Dunlop, 'Romania's Wartime Queen' *History Today*, 6 November, 2018.

31   David Mitrany, *Greater Romania: A Study in National Ideals*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1917. For Mitrany in the UK between 2008 and 2018, see Mihai Alexandrescu, 'David Mitrany during the First World War: Some Ambiguities in his Biography', *Historia,* Vol. 62, No 2 , December 2017, pp. 48–59.

32   *New Europe.* https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/04/The_New_Europe%2C_volume_1.pdf

33   See C.A.W. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors: The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, 1919–1937*, Oxford University Press, 1937.

34   E.H.Carr, *International Relations Between The Two World Wars, 1919–1939,* London, Macmillan, p. 25.

35   Ibid, p.38.

The Legacy of Trianon: From an in-between perspective

Levente Salat

> "
> Commitment to the Romanian national movement was interpreted as lese-majesty by the Hungarian state authorities, and seeking integration within the frameworks provided by the Hungarian state's legal system was considered high treason by the representatives of the Romanian national movement
> "

What can a political scientist born and living in Transylvania, Romanian citizen, socialised into Hungarian identity and culture, and yet fairly integrated into Romanian society and the Romanian institutional system, who has witnessed the past 40 years of developments within the two competing nation-building processes see—and do—with regard to the legacies of Trianon 100 years after the treaty? The first and most important thing is, most probably, to declare the bias which burdens his or her assessment, in spite of genuine efforts to remain impartial. If ethnic/national identity is not eluded, sticking to the standards of objectivity required by political science is hardly possible if the goal is to understand why the topic of the Trianon can exert the impact it has, 100 years later, upon the Romanian-Hungarian relationships and why genuine reconciliation of the two nations continues to remain out of reach.

Assuming Hungarian identity today, in 2020, in accordance with provisions of the Romanian Constitution (Article 6), triggers a dilemma met approximately 130 years ago by Grigore Moldovan, citizen of the quasi-sovereign Hungary of the time (part of the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy). Grigore was a Romanian ethnographer and public intellectual who believed that the most effective way to serve the Romanian minority's interests was to seek integration into the institutions of the Hungarian state and facilitate access for the Hungarian public to accurate information regarding the way of life and values, on the one hand, and the desires and problems, on the other, of Transylvanian Romanians. After a spectacular professional career and impressive scholarly output, he was ultimately labelled a renegade by more radical representatives of the Transylvanian Romanian national movement, which led him to conclude that the position from which he had tried to find appropriate accommodation of the Romanian minority by the Hungarian state proved to be a dead-end: commitment

Grigore Moldovan (1845–1930) was professor of Romanian language and literature at the Franz Joseph University in Cluj/Kolozsvár, serving as Dean of the Faculty of Philology for two mandates and Rector of the University for one mandate (1906–1907). As an ethnographer, he published extensively Romanian folklore translated into Hungarian, as well as ethnographic field research documenting the Romanian way of life in Transylvania. As a public intellectual, he published several works in which he tried to raise awareness among the Hungarian public of the problems that burdened the Romanian-Hungarian relationships and the difficulties Romanians in Transylvania encountered due to the assimilationist state policies. He held, however, that the legal frameworks of the Hungarian state provided Romanians with the appropriate means to stand up for their rights. When a memorandum by Romanian students in Bucharest (Memoriul studenților universitar români privitor la situația românilor din Transilvania și Ungaria. București: Tipografia Carol Göbl, 1891) accused the Hungarian authorities of attempts to denationalise Romanians in the name of an illusionary Hungarian nation-state, Grigore Moldovan published a detailed and documented pamphlet in which he declared the intervention of the Romanian students in Bucharest undue, asserting the right of Romanians in Transylvania to seek integration on their terms. While Moldovan's opinion was warmly received and widely echoed in the Hungarian public sphere, mainstream Romanian publications labelled him a renegade and he was depicted as "Romanian patriot" only in the Hungarian press. This bitter experience made him conclude that "Our patriotism is declared lese-majesty from the Hungarian point of view, while our attachment to the Hungarian state is considered high treason from Romanian point of view." (Magyarok, románok. A nemzetiségiügykritikája. Kolozsvár: Gombosés Sztupjárnyomdája, 1894, p. 19).

to the Romanian national movement was interpreted as lese-majesty by the Hungarian state authorities, and seeking integration within the frameworks provided by the Hungarian state's legal system was considered high treason by the representatives of the Romanian national movement.

Mutatis mutandis, this is true with regard to Hungarians in Transylvania retaining their identity while seeking integration within the frameworks of the Romanian state in the post-1989 context: the Romanian authorities expect members of the Hungarian minority to be Romanian citizens in the way Grigore Moldovan was a Hungarian citizen in his time, which triggers the label of renegade-ness on the Hungarian side; assuming Hungarian identity, according to the expectations dominating the Hungarian public sphere, fuels suspicion by the Romanian authorities and justifies a high level of mobilisation against perceived Hungarian threat.

The situation in-between offers, nevertheless, a perspective from which the unfolding of events may be observed rather objectively, and certain aspects of the path dependence of the two main actors, the Hungarian and Romanian states may be, at least partially, explained. Though (ethnic) bias cannot be erased and full impartiality is unattainable, watching from the middle the two competing discourses on the legacy of Trianon 100 years later allows one to observe once again the Weberian truth: knowledge-claims regarding social phenomena are always 'knowledge' from particular points of view. Yet, objectivity is not freedom from values, as Weber explains, but stating the standpoints and establishing values prior to analysis. The value which drives the following comments is the sustainability of the collective existence of Romania's Hungarian minority, and since this objective seems to be under threat currently both from the Romanian and the Hungarian state actors, the standpoint is the middle between the two competing narratives.

The 100th anniversary of the Trianon Peace Treaty proved to be another lost opportunity to trigger the start of genuine reconciliation, and has provided further evidence regarding the path dependence of the two nations and states. Though the statement that 'the future is more important than the past' is present in the political and academic discourses of both countries, the legacy of Trianon continues to shape the behaviour of the two states in rather peculiar ways.

In Hungary, the losses suffered through Trianon continue to poison the country's politics and public sphere, with deep divisions resulting both from attempts to explain the causes of the national disaster, and projects of dealing with the consequences. Among the latter, the relationships between the Hungarian state and the sizeable Hungarian communities hosted by successor states remain the most consequential, impacting not only domestic politics but also bilateral relations with neighbouring states. In Romania, the perceived threat of Hungarian irredentism, and concern for the intensifying relationships of members of the Hungarian minority with the Hungarian state, are used to justify a relatively high level of mobilisation by state authorities. This mobilisation provides an interesting example of the trap from which various actors cannot escape, often associated with path dependency.

This strange 'lock-in' by historical events observable in both countries can be explained by a number of factors. There are plenty of influential actors in both states (the Academy, political parties, public intellectuals with high profile) who keep the issue on the public agenda by delivering recurrent messages about what should be done to heal historic pain or to prevent a repeat of historical disasters. The continued success of these actors is facilitated by an enduring interest on the demand-side, public opinion in both countries reflects obsessive

fixations: in Hungary there is a popular apothegm saying that the 'Hungarian is the one who feels pain due to Trianon'; in Romania public opinion polls indicate wide agreement with the statement that 'Hungary will never give up its claims regarding Transylvania'. It is largely due to these obsessions that policy makers and public authorities in both states are reluctant to commit to change, fearing the possible costs and preferring to exploit the collective neurosis rather than dismantling it: another indicator of path dependence.

Certain aspects of this path dependence are reciprocally generated. When the Hungarian Academy finances a project aimed at helping Hungarian society to come to terms with the legacy of Trianon, the Romanian Academy issues alarming declarations condemning the alleged anti-Romanian propaganda. If Hungary inaugurates (as on 24 August 2020) a Trianon Memorial in Budapest (officially called the Memorial to National Cohesion, listing the names of over 12,000 localities which belonged to pre-Trianon Hungary and now are situated in successor state territories), the Romanian Parliament adopts (as on 3 November 2020) a law declaring 4 June 'The Day of the Trianon Treaty' on which state institutions and public authorities are expected to organise commemorative events to raise public awareness of the treaty's importance (this law is a late reaction to a similar act adopted in 2010 in Hungary, declaring 4 June 'The Day of National Unity', when all Hungarians are expected to recall that the Hungarian minorities hosted by neighbouring states are part of the Hungarian nation).

Two recent publications dedicated to Trianon's anniversary illustrate eloquently this 'lock-in' caused by prolonged grief, on the one hand, and extended fear, on the other. In Hungary an impressive collection of over 300 texts elaborating on various aspects of Trianon, written by the most influential Hungarian literary

authors and academics, was published (*Remembering Hungary*), along with a reprint of a controversial collection of texts (entitled *Bleeding Hungary*) prepared for publication in 1920 prior to the Treaty, with the aim to send a clear message to the Great Powers ready to conclude the war by punishing the losers (the publication also includes a collection of spectacular maps deployed in the anti-Trianon propaganda).

In the concluding chapter, the editor provides an inventory of the collection's dominant themes, which include the causes that led to Trianon (26), counterarguments to the logic followed by the designers of the treaty (9) and possible solutions (11) of what has happened as a consequence of Trianon. The editor's overall assessment is that most of the explanations regarding the causes which triggered Trianon are self-deceiving and based on misjudgement, the counterarguments are illusionary, and the solutions are non-workable. The only way out of the collective trauma is to come to terms with the poisoned legacy of Trianon and to fill the cleavages that fuel the ongoing and divisive fights within Hungarian public life and domestic politics.

The Romanian publication commemorating the anniversary—with a suggestive subtitle: "a century of revisionist political mythology"—is intended as a response to what the authors of the collective volume perceive as aggressive attempts by the Hungarian side to repeatedly put Trianon on the public debate agenda, contesting its justified character and suggesting that it could be invalidated.

The volume includes a series of detailed analyses in the fields of historiography, law, political science, sociology and international relations, emphasising the positive outcomes of the Treaty: Hungary was officially recognised as a sovereign state, regaining the status it had lost subsequent to the defeat in the battle of Mohács (1526); the situation of the minorities in Central and South-East Europe has improved spectacularly compared to the pre-Trianon situation; the bases of political stability have been consolidated in the region. The arrogance and sense of superiority displayed by various Hungarian politicians before, during and after the peace treaty (Apponyi's famous speech in Paris is often mentioned), the lack of realism by the Hungarian political elite which forced the country time and again into authoritarian detours, and the lack of modern political culture in managing the Hungarian state are recurrent themes in the volume.

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Comparing the tone of the two publications, the differences are striking: while the dominant discourse pattern of the Hungarian publication is appealing to emotions, the Romanian collection of studies emanates cold rationality. The logic-driven arguments deployed in the Romanian publication seem to be rooted in the comfort provided by the position of the winner, and yet is in flagrant contradiction with the perceived Hungarian threat institutionalised at a high level by the Romanian state. The important message the Hungarian publication tries to convey to the country's public—the need to come to terms with the poisoned legacy of Trianon—is seemingly undermined by the tone which dominates the vast majority of the texts included in the collection, suggesting that the pain felt due to Trianon is so pervasive that the right to it cannot be questioned.

What would be needed, then, to leave behind these two parallel and yet strongly intertwined, mutually-reinforcing path dependences? In an ideal world, logic would require realising that the Romanian version of Trianon syndrome is essentially and to a considerable extent reactive to the developments occurring on the Hungarian side, particularly the reluctance to downplay the importance of the issue in public life. Accepting this as a starting point, the solution could be to help Hungary come to terms with the trauma, which could trigger subsequently the dismantling of the phobia on the Romanian side. A more empathic dealing with Hungary by the international community, admitting, among others, that the underlying norm of the prevailing world order and the principle of self-determination of peoples has left Hungary in considerable injustice, might help to break the vicious circles which keep the Hungarian political elite in continued bewilderment at bad answers provided to bad questions (such as 'who is the true and genuine Hungarian?') and which repeatedly push Hungarian society in collective hysteria. Rapprochement and a subsequent true

reconciliation between Hungary and Romania could also play an important role in overcoming the Trianon syndrome.

If we leave wishful thinking behind, however, and we return to the real world of politics, it is impossible not to observe that political elites and influential actors of both states have been in the past, and are currently, uninterested in stepping out of this path dependence. In fact, they need each other to continue in the way they have for the past 100 years, as the advantages of exploiting the poisoned legacy of Trianon in domestic politics is far greater than the benefits of a genuine reconciliation, not to mention the costs. As the example of the French-German reconciliation has proven, it takes long term commitment and appropriate institutional-financial backing to create and reproduce in at least two generations the social bases of genuine reconciliation. Since the stakes of the Romanian-Hungarian reconciliation do not justify such an investment, it is more convenient to rely on the assumption that in terms of the main obstacle and the potential key beneficiary of the reconciliation—the Hungarian minority in Romania—there is, in fact, no disagreement between the two competing nation- and state-building projects: Hungary needs the Hungarians living in Transylvania as demographic and labour force supply, Romania is happy to see Hungarians leaving since this speeds up the process of accomplishing a truly homogeneous nation-state, as stipulated in the Constitution.

Judging from a position in-between and based on the prevailing trends in politics, domestic and international, it seems for the time being that the legacy of Trianon will fade away gradually, in parallel with the progressive shrinking of the Hungarian minority in Romania. When the size of the Hungarian minority in Romania becomes comparable with the number of Romanians in Hungary today, actors and authorities of the two states will lose interest in the topic. ◾

SECTION TWO

Reflections and Perspectives

Introduction

Dennis Deletant

Nothing is guaranteed to charge Romanian and Hungarian emotions more violently than the subject of Transylvania, since both Romanians and Hungarians regard the province as an integral part of their ancestral homeland. For many Romanians, 1 December 1918 marked the day when, to borrow from the Irish poet Seamus Heaney, hope and history rhymed (1990). That rhyming came from President Woodrow Wilson's 8 January 1918 address to the Congress of the United States in which he proposed Fourteen Points as a blueprint for world peace to be used for negotiations after World War I.

Wilson, in his tenth point, proclaimed that "The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development" (1918). Historians have generally interpreted this as a call for self-determination. The fourteenth point, meanwhile, called for the establishment of a world organisation to provide collective security for all nations. This later point was incorporated into the Treaty of Versailles; the world organisation would later be known as the League of Nations.

Wilson's implicit union of Transylvania with Romania was greeted with much enthusiasm by Romanians in the region, as recounted by Nicolae Mărgineanu, then a high school student in Blaj. As Mărgineanu, who later became an instructor in psychology at Cluj university in 1926 and was the first Romanian holder of a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship, recalled in his memoirs (2017):

> Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points were common knowledge. His conditions for durable peace included the right to self-determination for all subjugated peoples.
>
> A few weeks later, the Hungarian language stopped being taught, and one evening all of us students gathered in the cathedral square and burned our Hungarian language textbooks, linking hands and dancing around the bonfire. I will never forget the song we sang: 'Let us join hands /Whosoever is Romanian of heart . . .' On December 1, 1918, the Grand National Assembly gathered in Alba Iulia and decided that Transylvania would join the motherland.

That the union of Transylvania with Romania should have evoked such emotion is hardly surprising; the true identity of the provinces' Romanians had been frequently

denied, and attempts had been made to give them a new one in order to disguise their true origin. After more than a century of such manipulation, it was only natural that Romanians in Transylvania, along with their brothers and sisters across the Carpathians, would assert their instinctive identity. In that assertion, the justice of the Romanians' right to exercise self-determination—to correct what they considered to be the injustice of the suppression of their identity—was self-evident. But the righting of that wrong ran the risk of creating new injustices against the minorities of the newly enlarged state created by the Paris Peace Settlement.

In post-war Europe, the nation-state of the dominant majority supplanted the empire of the dominant minority. But in the redrawing of national frontiers, new minorities were created—and with them the seeds of new territorial disputes sown. This potential for upheaval was recognised by the Great Powers, who made their guarantee of new national frontiers conditional upon protection for minorities. President Wilson made this clear in a 31 May 1919 speech at the Preliminary Peace Conference in Paris (1919):

> We cannot afford to guarantee territorial settlements which we do not believe to be right and we cannot agree to leave elements of disturbance unremoved which we believe will disturb the peace of the world…If the great powers are to guarantee the peace of the world in any sense is it unjust that they should be satisfied that the proper and necessary guarantee has been given… Nothing, I venture to say, is more likely to disturb the peace of the world than the treatment which might in certain circumstances be meted out to minorities.

To protect racial, linguistic, and religious minorities, treaties were signed with Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Greece guaranteeing certain rights of education and worship and participation in the state bureaucracy. Almost identical provisions were introduced into the Peace Treaties with Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Turkey. But no means of enforcing the treaties was established; by the early 1930s, they were effectively meaningless. The new minorities of the post-1919 period, in turn, were incensed with the Peace Settlement, which deprived them their former privileged status as part of a majority group. The Hungarians in Romania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, as well as the Germans in Czechoslovakia and Poland, belonged to this category. Portraying themselves as the "victims of Versailles", they campaigned against the Peace Settlement and vigorously defended their ethnic identity in the face of forced integration. By placing loyalty to their ethnic group above loyalty to the state, they invited discrimination;

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when this inevitably occurred, they appealed to their "mother states" for assistance. In the cases of the German and Hungarian minorities, such assistance was readily given, since both Germany and Hungary considered themselves to have been grossly maltreated at Versailles and were bent on revising it. Thus, state support of their minorities soon morphed into encouragement of irredentism in an effort to destroy the European status quo. Unsurprisingly, the host states of these minorities suspected them of being "fifth columns" serving a hostile power. The host states regarded it as no accident that the largest number of petitions to the League on alleged minority abuses were presented by the Germans in Upper Silesia, followed by the Hungarians in Transylvania.

Wilson discovered during negotiations in Paris that his ideal of freedom of the national group was impossible to translate in an international agreement, as the on-the-ground reality suggested. "The doctrine of self-determination, expressive of national freedom, Wilson soon discovered to be an untrustworthy guide, incapable of universal application," Charles Seymour wrote in *Foreign Affairs* (1956). Conflicting aspirations meant, for example, that the principle of self-determination, if applied in the Sudetenland, would contradict the premise of self-determination upon which the new state of Czechoslovakia had been based. In addressing this conundrum Wilson invoked the application of the principle of justice. "It must be a justice that seeks no favorites and knows no standards but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned," he proclaimed (Seymour, 1956). "No special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all." Yet, as proved in Paris, various governments felt that justice for their own people required "a protection of national security that often could be achieved only at the expense of another" (ibid.).

The contributions to this volume on the significance of the Treaty of Trianon demonstrate the past's saliency, reminding readers that history defines us all. Understanding the past can indeed lead to tolerance. We may not be responsible for the past, but we are responsible for what we choose to remember and how we chose to remember it, and for what we choose to forget. Virgiliu Țârău, for instance, argues that "If, for Hungarian historiography, Trianon remains a powerful keyword that conjures not only the peace but also a traumatic turning point for the nation, for historians in Romania, it is just a small part of a story that ends the process of Romanian national unity after the World War One". That history is a political football, however, as illustrated by Țârău's contention that "the reconciliation process between Hungary and Romania at the political level contributed to the normalisation of relations between national historiographies". And yet, the gulf between myth and reality is exemplified by declarations of some in the Hungarian establishment in respect to Trianon, as Thomas Lorman discusses. After comparing Hungary's Trianon trauma with others in the country's history, Péter Balázs, for his part, suggests a practical step towards reconciliation between Hungary and Romania, offering the reconciliation of France and Germany as a model.

An enduring question arises from Trianon: How do we establish a balance between autonomy and integrity? The difficulty of finding an answer is couched in the paper by Kinga-Koretta Sata, in which the author argues that the Hungarian minority in Transylvania was caught between two increasingly authoritarian and nationalist states, within a Europe hastening towards a new world war. Both Romania and Hungary were keen on promoting a non-divided allegiance of their citizens; they increasingly required also a unitary alignment in national terms. Neither could conceive of their nation-building projects as being polycentric. Zoltán Pálfy furthers this position in a thoughtful and rewarding analysis

of the Cluj/Kolozsvár University before and after Trianon, ultimately arguing that "depending on who gained the upper hand, both the Hungarian and the Romanian academic elites carried out an inter-ethnic 'revolution' against one other, both failing to secure the intra-ethnic social emancipation that higher learning theoretically promises".

Historical research has often been conducted with the aim of consolidation, of supporting the idea of a nation-state, since only the nation-state, it was argued, could offer the cultural unity in which its members could prosper intellectually and economically. All those born to a culture, it is implied, must live under the same political roof. Indeed, national history, the particularities of a nation, are values without which a culture cannot be understood. Nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies. Yet the distortion of the past for political ends vitiates the future to which many of the younger aspire. We cannot have the benefits of the present age if our sensibilities and intellectual means do not draw upon them. We cannot truly affirm a national identity if it is conceived in opposition to tolerance. Let this collection of papers provide a lesson. ∎

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The Hungarian Minority in Romania: Construction of a new community after Trianon

Kinga-Koretta Sata

> " An essential feature of the post-Trianon Hungarian community in Romania was its acceptance of a distinct social and cultural identity, its transformation of forced separation from the core of the nation into a willed common identity "

Before the Trianon Treaty, there was no separate Hungarian community in Transylvania. Hungarians there saw themselves as citizens of Hungary, within Austria-Hungary, and part of the *Magyar* ethnic nation, Hungary's dominant ethno-national community. In certain instances these Hungarians referenced varying regional identities, but these usually had no political or social significance, nor did they extend beyond the Hungarian ethnic community to include or at least address other present ethnic groups. The most Transylvanian regional initiatives one could recognise were, first, Transylvanian parliamentarians attempts to create a lobby within a Hungarian parliament to vaguely demand more de-centralisation of Hungarian state-sponsored economic, educational, and cultural projects, and, second, the more radical demands of a single man, the architect Károly Kós, who in his short-lived magazine, *Kalotaszeg*[1], for the democratisation of Hungarian institutions in Transylvania so that they "serve" more the common people (in his version, the peasantry), rather than just the elite.

Once the Trianon Treaty severed Transylvania from Hungary and gave it to Romania, Hungarians in the region found themselves needed a new mode of self-identification. Thus, the elite set out to imagine a community that could enjoy the support of the Hungarians in Transylvania and possibly act also as a conceptual and practical safety net for community members who suddenly found themselves marginalised in an intensely nationalising and centralising Romania.

It is no accident that the Károly Kós was, in fact, one of the first intellectuals to clearly vindicate the distinctiveness of Transylvanian Hungarian society, placing it at the junction of Hungarian ethno-cultural nationality, Transylvanian multi-ethnic common ground, and against a nationalising and colonising Romanian nation-state. Kós's powerfully-stated need for a distinct Transylvanian Hungarian cultural and political

identity belongs to the somewhat fluid category of political pamphlet as exhortation. His little booklet, *Kiáltó szó*[2] addressed the members of the would-be Transylvanian political community: "the Hungarians of Transylvania, Bánság [Banat], Körösvidék [Crişana], and Máramaros [Maramureş]"—that is, the historically-Hungarian provinces that become Romanian. While these regions are generally considered parts of Transylvania, their residents necessarily did not consider themselves as such. Here one can witness the political change of a geographic historic denomination: Transylvania has gradually come denote those former parts of Hungary that became parts of Romania due to the Trianon treat, despite residents' self-identification.

Kós's exhortation spelled out ethnic Hungarians' need to come to terms with their new situation in Romanian Transylvania. He repudiated the political position adopted by the Hungarian elite in these provinces from the 1919 military takeover until 1920, suggesting that Hungarian-speaking citizens give Romania conditional loyalty and engage in a community-building process to create both the substance and the institutional framework for the distinct Hungarian community in Romania. His conditions for civic loyalty were twofold: Romania should make democratisation possible and give scope to the autonomous self-organisation of the Hungarians within the larger political setting.

The authors of two similar booklets spelled out the details of these conditions. István Zágoni's *A magyarság útja*[3] sketched the institutional framework necessary for Hungarian national autonomy (including territorial autonomy in mono-ethnic territories), while Árpád Paál's *A politikai aktivitás rendszere*[4] proposed the political institutional organisation of the Hungarian national minority based on a union of Hungarian parties within a Romanian parliamentary democracy, arguing also for full participation in Romanian parliamentary politics, including possibly even cooperating with Romanian parties. Paál argued that Hungarians in post-Trianon Romania following Trianon were in a position to actively promote the coming world democratic transformation by transfiguring Romania into a state based on the union and intense co-operation of its free autonomous nations, possibly also bringing about an economic union of Danubian states, followed by the eventual creation of the United States of Europe.

These proposals were radically inclusive. Zágoni explicitly stated that the central body of the national community, the national council, had to be based on the widest democratic representation, as "the will of the nation has to mean the aggregated wills of the members of the nation". He also explicitly vindicated the inclusion of the Hungarian-speaking Jewry in the national community, either as a distinct sub-community

> " [He suggested] that Hungarian-speaking citizens give Romania conditional loyalty and engage in a community-building process to create both the substance and the institutional framework for the distinct Hungarian community in Romania "

or as non-specific members, according to their own choice. While his booklet certainly proves the influence of radical bourgeois or even social-democratic ideas, such claims were not unacceptable to the traditional Transylvanian Hungarian elite, including church leaders and the aristocracy. What distinguished these proposals were their optimistic and self-reassuring vision for world peace and democracy, rather than their real political objectives.

An essential feature of the post-Trianon Hungarian community in Romania was its acceptance of a distinct social and cultural identity, its transformation of forced separation from the core of the nation into a willed common identity. In this sense, it was a distinct nation-building project separate from the Hungarian and the Romanian nation-building projects, both of which relied on their respective nation-states. (Indeed, it is very telling that even the most extreme Hungarian claims for revision were projecting their desired outcome on the country of the Crown of St. Stephen; nobody wanted Austria-Hungary back.) The Transylvanian Hungarians' project, as promoted by Kós and his fellow radicals, was based on cultural or ethnic nationality, which these radicals dissociated from the state as much as possible. This project was from the start multi-ethnic: It took into account, in this sense, that Hungarians could potentially be dominated by the new majority, the Romanians. That is probably the reason why they were so eager to break any connections to the state: They wanted to ensure that the Romanian state's might would not be used against the Hungarians. In this endeavour they also counted on the support of the Transylvanian Saxons, German-speakers who were similarly fearful of Romanian domination. Thus, the Hungarian radicals argued that local Transylvanian national communities had to be the focus of the public life and would eventually integrate themselves in the wider framework of the state.

What is peculiar about this vision is something that will seems very familiar to students of 18th and 19th century Transylvanian history: the conception of the ethnic nation as a corporation. This idea arguably has its origin in the traditional Transylvanian system of corporate representation of three nations—the Hungarians, Szeklers, and Saxons—which remained in place until the 1848 revolution. Amid the late 18th and early 19th century national awakening, the Romanian elite of Transylvania—initially the Greek Catholic and Orthodox church leaders, later the nascent intelligentsia—demanded that the Romanians be included as the fourth corporate nation in the Transylvanian constitution. Against such demands, the 19th century Hungarian national liberals proposed a liberal agenda of individual rights safeguarded by a state based on the rule of law in a more or less democratic representative parliamentary regime. The political system adopted in the 1867 compromise enshrined the Hungarian national liberal vision, though coupled it with very limited suffrage, and ended Transylvania's political peculiarities by incorporating it into Hungary.

Strangely, this marked a return to the earlier type of arguments that the Romanians (and the Saxons) had employed against the Hungarian state. Such reinvigoration of old ideas indicates that there might not have been any other viable option for dealing with the power discrepancy in a majority-minority relationship within an increasingly national state. Indeed, it was as clear for the Romanian minority in pre-World War I Hungary as it was for the Hungarian minority in post-World War I Romania that the state was not ethnically neutral, that it marginalised members of non-dominant ethnic groups, and that it preferentially treated members of the dominant group. Accordingly, in the minority imagination, no option besides national corporate representation—or, to use a more modern term, national autonomy—could secure the non-dominant group's interests.

What distinguished the interwar Hungarian intellectuals was their emphasis on using the shared Transylvanian cultural, social, and political heritage of the region's different ethnic groups to shape a shared common future. This emerging political and literary ideology, self-consciously recognised by its practitioners and promoters as "Transylvanism", thus assumed that Transylvanian people of all mother tongues would necessarily have a more pluralistic and sympathetic outlook, and that they have a common ground of historic experiences on which to build a political system based on cooperation, negotiation, and mutual acceptance. Their only novel concept was deeming corporate national groups, that is, the internally organised, self-governing autonomous national communities as the prime actors of this political setup. The more radical democrats like Kós were happy to emphasise the equality of these distinct national groups and the necessity of cooperation among them, while the more right-leaning traditional elite focused on the Hungarians' assumed civilisational preeminence, thus promoting the vision of a multicultural Transylvania built on Hungarian supremacy. The two groups had distinct visions of this project's long-term goal: While the democrats saw change in sovereignty as permanent, the conservatives envisioned it as a temporary misfortune to be corrected by a later revision of the Trianon treaty (very much in line with the official ideology of the later Horthy regime in Hungary). What both these groups equally argued for, however, was the autonomous national communities' exclusive grip on matters relating to their members, including language, education, and culture, but also local government, economic matters, and the administration of justice. How they imagined this internal organisation and functioning, as well whom they envisaged as leaders of the community, was very different. Nevertheless, both visions included the intermediary level of social and political organisation—of the corporate nation between the individual citizen and the state.

Both Árpád Paál's belief that a pluralist Transylvania could serve as a building block for peaceful European integration and Transylvanian Hungarian elites' more realistic political proposals proved to be only instances of "wishful thinking". The Hungarian minority in Transylvania was instead caught between two increasingly authoritarian and nationalist states, within a Europe hastening towards another world war. Both Romania and Hungary remained keen on promoting the non-divided allegiance of their citizens, thus increasingly requiring unitary alignment in national terms. Neither could conceive of their nation-building projects being polycentric. And while after 1989 the time looked ripe for multidimensional identities and non-exclusive allegiances, and in in 2020 Hungarians and Romanians are politically integrated in the European Union, the two countries—and multiple peoples within them—are not much closer to mutual understanding and acceptance of their political ideas. ∎

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1 In Romanian: Țara Călatei, the name of a Transylvanian rural region West of Kolozsvár/Cluj where Kós bought land and built a house, and took up residence after his return from Budapest following World War I.

2 In English: The Word that Cries.

3 In English: The Hungarians' Road.

4 In English: The System of Political Activity.

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The Cluj/Kolozsvár University Before and After Trianon

Zoltán Pálfy

> The Monarchy's former 'educational commonwealth', limited in scope as it was, split into highly nationalised (and nationalising) segments. Together with fragmentation, higher educational markets became battlegrounds of national militancy and political partisanship

Owing to its uniquely mixed ethnic surrounding, Cluj/Kolozsvár University's composition of the was in the pre-Trianon Treaty era symptomatic of Austria-Hungary's underlying social inequalities, as well as the ruling elite's advantages. Indeed, this local segment of the monarchy's educational 'commonwealth' was, in fact, limited in scope and highly selective in regards to the various ethnic minorities.

The university was conceived of as a Hungarian institution that would present the local ethnic minorities with the chance of upward social mobility. From the outset, this elicited protests namely by the sizable Transylvanian Romanian community. With a relatively weak middle class, the Romanians most acutely lacked an educated elite, which in the long run could have been an agent of modernisation and integration. But the Romanians did not protest on this ground; rather, they believed that integration would have meant 'disintegration' of their ethnic society, and accordingly often argued for a separate Romanian-only institution of higher learning.

The great majority of the Romanian population was of a rural and traditional character, having been only sporadically touched by the major changes occurring elsewhere in Central let alone Western Europe. Insularity and political apathy thus persisted until the end of the 19th century, with Romanians directing their social grievances against the ruling *Magyar* element. But there were scarcely any intra-ethnic Romanian clashes. Instead, they tended to strive for self-preservation via passive resistance. Their educational choices reflect and reinforce this same sense of group-solidarity and ethnically-minded strategy of securing social mobility through education. On the other hand, however, they largely could not afford to break away from cultural traditions and 'modernise': instead of 'compensating', they 'conserved'. The

Romanians' lower relative ratio of academically-based career-paths is but one of the several examples that illustrate this point.

The Romanians' implied political logic fore-shadowed their coming claims of territorial supremacy, soon to carry the day amid weakening imperial ties. It is in this sense that Hungarian state-engineered nationalisation in educational matters proved counter-productive: albeit indirectly, they fostered a Romanian national emancipation movement with a secessionist edge that sharpened over time. There was yet another side to the mentioned logic. Lay or ecclesiastical, cultural or political, the majority of Transylvania's Romanian leaders realised that maintaining their privileged positions was possible only by closing ranks amid the challenges of integration into a 'Magyarising' society.

Beyond politics and economics, the previous status quo's dissolution also altered the network of higher education. The Monarchy's former 'educational commonwealth', limited in scope as it was, split into highly nationalised (and nationalising) segments. Together with fragmentation, higher educational markets became battlegrounds of national militancy and political partisanship, hence the altered patterns of enrollment, student migration, and social mobility of academic elites. In the inter-war period, higher education again became a means of nationalist policymaking.

During this post-war period, the Hungarian-dominated educational system came under siege in the ceded territories. The ensuing influx of a great number of ethnic Hungarian refugee students into post-Trianon Hungary had a double effect. The presence of these students further worsened the already overcrowded academic job market, also justifying cultural policies that substituted openly revanchist political goals with those of cultural supremacy.

The main target of the Romanian 'cultural offensive', launched by Old Kingdom based leaders, was unification by getting rid of regional boundaries and enhancing Romanians' positions in general. Social boundaries, as well as the situation of the peasantry, were not among the main preoccupations. More than once, however, Romanian leaders were tempted to treat their own Transylvanian co-nationals as untrustworthy and 'corrupted' by their long co-existence with Hungarians. That non-Romanian 'aliens', especially *Magyars,* were potentially disloyal and hence least fit to fill the ranks of the new national administration, was considered as a matter of course. Tackling the Hungarians proved to be the most difficult anyway; attempts at integration, let alone assimilation, were largely ineffective. Just as was the case with Romanians under Hungarian rule only a few years before, neither ethnic group manifested any willingness towards changing their identity. This latter trend was, in fact, consciously avoided, especially in regard to Jews.

Enrolment figures in general rose constantly in the surveyed period, from a few hundred in the early years to over two thousand. Even with the war conjuncture—a time of Romanian takeover—the largely Hungarian Kolozsvár student body numbered around 2,000. The overwhelming majority of this generation became refugees, following the university into its inner Hungary exile. Roughly half of this contingent again represented the Hungarian minority by the early 1930s, when the total number of students in Cluj rose to a little over 4,000. A decrease soon after followed, largely to the detriment of ethnic minority students. All throughout its 'Romanian period', Cluj was in third place as regards the size of its student body, with Bucharest and Iaşi leading the way.

It was only for a short while that the internal expansion of the higher educational market in countries like Romania fostered upward social mobility. Even this limited 'democratisation'

was not to last longer than the national elites' enthusiasm for 'changing the guard'. Meanwhile, Transylvanian Hungarians on average maintained older patterns, socially extracting higher learning clientele.

The national academic sector's rapid growth was sheerly quantitative, veiling an acute crisis in the modernisation process of education (among other sectors). The ensuing overcrowding and unemployment in the academic job-market—a seemingly paradoxical reiteration of pre-war Hungarian malfunction—pushed student masses towards right-wing radicalisation. While the official standpoint was for 'rationalisation', academic over-production filled in the blanks for in the educated middle class largely employed in state bureaucracy. Each side viewed the student population, once it passed through the filter of national loyalty, as a 'fifth battalion' in the service of their nation-state. This made political and ethno-cultural loyalty a chief criterion of selection, repeatedly overruling professional considerations. The spell of false and half-hearted modernisation in the academic sector remained.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the number of Hungarians at Cluj/Kolozsvár University rose considerably. Still, far fewer Hungarian students than expected given their population size enrolled in and obtained diplomas from Romanian. Indeed, it was now Romanians' turn to marginalise their former *Magyar* rulers. Yet, despite contemporary Hungarian complaints of under-representation in the *academe*, the seriously altered academic job market would not by any means have offered ethnic Hungarian degree-holders the same chances it provided their fathers.

Most stable in this sense were Transylvania's German-speaking communities, the Saxons and Swabians, whose positions remained by and large intact until the communist takeover. This is because it was the Germans, besides the Jews, who depended least on the local state-owned educational market. Beyond having their own resources, the Germans maintained close ties with the large extra-territorial German academic market, which remained at their disposal in times of need.

The university's provincial status remained intact in the long run. At first, Transylvania's Romanianised academe was somewhat positively discriminated, with the Cluj/Kolozsvár University integration into the legislative framework happening only in fits and starts, the process suffering from contradictions and burdensome lacunae. In several instances, the new centre charged the university for its perceived regionalist attitude. While the Romanian faculty at Cluj/Kolozsvár pleaded for non-interference into internal matters, they lived up to a demoralising paradox: Their strife for autonomy went hand in hand with their aspiration of full legal integration and legitimation of the university into and within the 'national system'. Such centralist bureaucratism tended to eliminate all the Western-type university autonomy of Cluj/Kolozsvár, where many of the academic staff still aspired to attain such ideals. Meanwhile, by far the largest university of the country in terms of student body, teaching staff, and budget, the University of Bucharest had roughly half or even more of the total of students involved in higher learning in Romania.

In a specifically paradoxical way, ambitious plans of instant nationalisation and integration compelled the Romanians to leave their inherited academic structure basically unchanged. That is to say, law remained by far their largest department, followed by the medical school, the result of considerable lacunae in its inter-war development. Letters and philosophy involved a suddenly large number of ethnic Romanians, an understandable switch if we keep in mind the former ethnic setup, let alone the present acute need for teachers. Natural sciences were the least

touched by the change of ownership in the sense that they continued to involve but with a very small number of students. On the whole, the period proved unfavourable for any modernisation of the scholarly structure. Curricula rigidity was a matter of course in the rather stiff academic market, so much the more since this market became virtually closed along nation-state borders in the inter-war period.

Both before and after Trianon, Transylvania's university followed a basically unilateral national paradigm in recruitment, organisation, and promotion of elites through certain scholarly endeavours. This was a pluri-ethnic setup, reluctantly admitting non-dominant ethnic and social group clusters while privileging the politically-sponsored, relatively over-represented dominant ethnic contingent. Just as the overall circumstances never really allowed for a multi-cultural arrangement in society, the local educational market did seldom, if ever, represent more than a restricted pluri-ethnic arrangement. Whether assimilative or dissimilative, cultural domination was repeatedly reiterated as the university's 'foremost mission'.

Irrespective of who dominated whom, the underlying assumptions were that ethnic domination could work as a substitute for reform and social advancement, that quantitative gains could replace qualitative shifts, and that repeated failures in these was due to the presence of competitive rivals. Moreover, political shifts induced a peculiar conservatism in the academic field: competition aimed to conserve the expectations toward and the social functions of higher learning rather than address its inner structure. Student enrollment patterns also betrayed a tendency towards social conservatism, with major tendencies of selection by social background cyclically retrenching. Depending on who gained the upper hand, both the Hungarian and the Romanian academic elites carried out an inter-ethnic 'revolution' against one other, both failing to secure the intra-ethnic social emancipation that higher learning theoretically promises. ∎

Trianon: myth and reality

Thomas Lorman

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> Myth-making continues to frame almost all Hungarian discussion of Trianon, in turn obscuring the real reasons why Hungary was repeatedly reduced in size during the twentieth century and periodically embittering relations with some of its neighbours, notably Romania
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Each year since the fall of communism, Hungarian politicians from across the political spectrum have commemorated the anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon, signed on 4 June, 1920, in what is now called a "Day of National Unity". This year, Budapest's liberal mayor won bipartisan praise for ordering a minute's silence and, in an accompanying article, deeming it "beyond debate that Trianon was a serious loss for Hungary". Likewise, Hungary's president, János Áder, in his own speech to parliament bluntly declared that "in 1920 Hungary was forced to relinquish two-thirds of its territory". Such statements encapsulate the myth-making that continues to frame almost all Hungarian discussion of Trianon, in turn obscuring the real reasons why Hungary was repeatedly reduced in size during the twentieth century and periodically embittering relations with some of its neighbours, notably Romania.

Hungary's Trianon myth ignores the following salient points. First, Hungary's early history was marked by territorial expansion. Then, for almost two centuries after 1526, much of the country became a Turkish *pashalik* (territory), and even after Habsburg recapture Transylvania was administered as a separate crownland. The "big Hungary" that was allegedly dismembered by at Trianon had only existed in the later middle ages and for just 51 years before 1918.

Secondly, Hungary's post First World War (WWI) territorial losses occurred primarily in 1918 and 1919—*before* the Great Power representatives had even begun their work at Trianon. Czechoslovak troops had occupied almost the entirety of entirety of northern Hungary by the end of 1918, while Romanian troops had occupied the entirety of Transylvania by the beginning of spring that same year. The dismemberment of Hungary after the WWI took place, therefore, with minimal intervention by the Great Powers; it was actually the result of the actions of Hungary's aggrieved minorities and expansive neighbours who had, by August 1919, occupied even the capital of Budapest.

Thirdly, the Great Powers had endorsed Hungary's borders by 1920, largely following the ceasefire lines that had been drawn the previous year. Thus, the Treaty of Trianon was essentially a formal recognition of the facts on the ground. Moreover, where the Great Powers amended the pre-existing ceasefire lines, they tended to do so in Hungary's favour. For example, as a result of Trianon, southern Baranya county, including the regional capital of Pécs, was returned to Hungarian control by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes; likewise, the Kingdom of Romania was ordered to relinquish its control of a swathe of land east of the Tisza river including the important town of Debrecen. The only territory that Hungary was actually required to hand over as a result of Trianon was the so-called *Burgenland*, which became part of Austria, and even there Hungary was permitted to retain the regional capital, Sopron, following a plebiscite. In total, Hungary actually increased in size following the signing of the Treaty of Trianon.

Fourthly, the borders marked out by the Treaty of Trianon were in effect for less than twenty years. They were substantially modified between 1938 and 1941 to Hungary's advantage. Hungary was then stripped of these territories after the Second World War by the victorious powers (led by the Soviet Union). It was, actually, the 12 February 1947 Treaty of Paris that established Hungary's current borders. Curiously, though, there has never been any significant commemoration of this treaty and these territorial changes in Hungary. The myth of Trianon has prevented a proper reckoning of what took place at the end of both the first and the second world wars.

Hungary's neighbours have their own myths about what took place in WWI's aftermath, substantially over-estimating the popularity of these territorial changes. They are, nevertheless, broadly correct in regarding the Treaty of Trianon as anything but a critical moment in their own modern histories. Until Hungary, led by its leaders, reaches the same conclusion, the myths of Trianon will continue to mar regional relations. ∎

Syldavia and the Borduria Treaty: Trianon at 100

Jeffrey Sommers and Cosmin Gabriel Marian

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> The Allied Powers blamed Balkan nationalism for triggering World War I and, accordingly, believed breaking up the last of the region's empires (Austria-Hungary) to be an essential prerequisite for ensuring that World War I would indeed be the "war to end all wars
> "

One hundred years ago the Trianon Treaty aimed to settle Eastern Europe's political and territorial disputes following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Allied Powers blamed Balkan nationalism for triggering World War I (WWI) and, accordingly, believed breaking up the last of the region's empires (Austria-Hungary) to be an essential prerequisite for ensuring that World War I would indeed be the "war to end all wars."

The Treaty, however, opened the field for political, economic, and social experimentation in Eastern Europe, experiments ranging from the tragic to comic. On the tragic side, experiments went far beyond George Orwell's *1984* or Kafka's *The Trial* with their Draconianism. On the comic side, experiments approached Vulgaria, the backdrop for Ian Fleming, Roald Dahl and Ken Hughes *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* musical fantasy. A century later, the ultimate irony is that Austria-Hungary's imperial structure, which permitted an expansive free-trade zone, has now been recreated with the Eurozone, on even a grander scale.

Over the past 100 years, Hergé's cartoon character Tintin could have easily recognised any two of Trianon's neighbouring signatories as similar to Herge's fictional rivalrous countries of Syldavia and Borduria, portrayals of intra-war Central Europe complete with monarchy and totalitarianism, village life, and "sturdy peasants puffing on large pipes"—and a tense relationship hounded by a history of tensions.

Following Trianon, the new post-Austria-Hungary East European countries fought hard to become independent nation states, but within a generation found themselves begging Nazi Germany for military and political protection, forfeiting their independence to joining the German's genocide. The Cold War, meanwhile, followed

by initially providing international protection—by the Soviet Union—but this too came at cost of independence for Eastern European states (arguably with the partial exceptions of Yugoslavia and Albania). Within a generation, though, Eastern Europe's Soviet political and economic models slowly evolved into Hungary's Goulash communism, as well as Yugoslavia's Titoism and *samoupravljanje* (workers' self-management), Romanian national-communism, and the Czechoslovakian experiment. Following the Cold War's end, however, all asked for integration into the European Union and NATO.

The Austrian and subsequent Austro-Hungarian Empire of 1867 were constructed as a large economic space comprising multiple ethnicities and multiplied the potential for commerce and extracting economic surpluses across the growing empire. Its antecedents could be found in the Ottoman Empire, of which much of the Austro-Hungarian Empire once was part.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire provided a commercial space largely free of impediments to trade. A common currency facilitated commerce within its imperial borders. Its 1892 linkage to the gold-standard further reduced barriers to European, if not global, trade. This period, on the back half of the Belle Époque and lasting until 1914, represented an idealised economic model in the mid-20th century for intellectuals such as Friedrich von Hayek.

The Empire's problem, however, was its privileging of a power anchored class and certain ethnicities. The degree of privilege within the empire was attributed to an ethnic group's dispersal therein. Germans, as one would suspect, were the most widely distributed, followed by then Hungarians.

Much of the 19th century was, as the late Jewish diasporic historian Eric Hobsbawm deemed it, an "Age of Revolutions". The middle classes challenged aristocratic rule anchored in birth. Revolutions thus saw local bourgeoisies looking to replace those from the imperial centre, in the process creating a state from their nation. Their creation of nation-states provided channels for the national middle classes to advance economically, politically, and socially.

Resolving the Austria-Hungary-era national question was seen as key to creating a stable post-World War I order. The Balkan question, in particular, had festered ever since the Ottoman period in the region. Its resolution came at the expense of Hungary, which saw a substantial loss of territory: Hungary lost Transylvania to Romania,

> " The Austrian and the subsequent Austro–Hungarian Empire of 1867 were constructed as a large economic space comprising multiple ethnicities and multiplied the potential for commerce and extracting economic surpluses across the growing empire "

and its access to the Mediterranean with the creation of Yugoslavia.

After the collapse of Austria-Hungary, Eastern Europe geopolitics were dominated by the ideas of the "nation-state" and "self-determination." The intended post-WWI arrangement was to create new nation-states out of the multi-ethnic centuries-old Habsburg-led empire. The result, however, was far from that.

Between 1918–1920, Austria took hold of the entire region of *Burgenland* (Western Hungary); the newly created Czechoslovakia received Northern Hungary, sub-Carpathian Ruthenia and the region of *Pressburg* (Bratislava); the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes were granted Croatia-Slavonia and part of the Banat region; Romania received the other part of Banat and Transylvania.

The ethnic problem, meanwhile, remained unsolved. Three million people for whom Hungarian was their native language found themselves living now in Romania, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (re-named Yugoslavia in 1929) and Czechoslovakia; Romania was left with more than 700,000 Germans, and about the same number of Jews. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had more than 300,000 Germans and more than 200,000 Romanians. Hungary had more than half a million Germans, more than 140,000 Slovaks, a little less than 100,000 Southern Slavic people, and more than 20,000 Romanians. Czechoslovakia was an ethnic mix of 6.5 million Czechs, 3.1 million Sudeten Germans, 2.2 million Slovaks, three-quarters of a million Hungarians, and almost a million of others, including Russians and Jews. All post-Trianon Eastern European states were thus multinational states, thereby straining relations between each new "nation-state" and its minorities and, where applicable, those minorities' motherland.

Political enterprises complicated these new states. Hungary was a kingdom with no king. Romania was a kingdom led by a German dynasty. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, while ruled by the Serbian Karadjordjevic family, was particularly heterogeneous, with two alphabets, three main religions, and Serbs as only a relative majority of the population. The First Czecho-Slovak Republic was a political project intended to make Sudeten Germans a smaller minority in a Czech-controlled polity.

Hungary worked with some success to reverse the Trianon borders by attaching itself to an ascendant Nazi Germany. German military pressure collapsed the First Czechoslovak Republic, and in 1939 the First Vienna Arbitration allocated to Hungary the majority *Magyar*-populated territories in southern Slovakia and Southern Carpathian Ruthenia. Eventually, in March 1939, Hungary occupied the rest of the Carpathian Ruthenia. In 1940, the Second Vienna Arbitration redrew the Hungarian-Romanian Border, allocating Northern Transylvania to Hungary with a relatively balanced mix of Hungarian and Romanian populations. In 1941, the Hungarian military occupied and then annexed the Yugoslav territories of Bačka, Baranja, Međimurje, and Prekmurje.

The mid-1930s and early 1940s were characterised by the post-WWI international order's gradual erosion, and Germany's re-emergence as Europe's preeminent political, military, and economic power. Germany signed economic and trade treaties with every country in Central and Southeastern Europe (except Czechoslovakia). Eastern Europe benefitted from these economic arrangements, which also bound them to Germany's political and military projects. Central and Southeastern European politicians were motivated both by economic advantages and security considerations, with each country trying to keep Germany in check, particularly in reference to its border revisionism,

and to protect against rising Soviet threats. Generally, Central and Southeastern European countries were granted favourable price sales for their agricultural commodities and natural resources, yet the money so gained had to be used to purchase industrial goods from Germany. In addition, Germany's economic aid came with financial and political support to ethnic Germans cultural and religious organisations in all these countries.

At the end of World War II, the Vienna Arbitration decisions were declared null and void. With minor changes, Hungarian borders with Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia were restored to those that existed in 1938. Border re-drawing was accompanied also with forced population exchange between Hungary and Czechoslovakia, but more than half a million ethnic Hungarians remained within Czechoslovakian borders. After 1945, about 1.5 million ethnic Hungarians and more than 300,000 ethnic Germans were now living in Romania; a bit more than half a million Hungarians were living in Yugoslavia; Hungary, meanwhile, became more ethnically homogeneous.

The Canadian-American economist John Kenneth Galbraith once remarked that "all successful revolutions are the kicking in of a rotten door". Communism was indeed a spent force by the start of the 1980s, but communist states were not bereft of economic gains in the 1950s, 1960s, and even the 1970s, as states mobilised their under-utilised potential for positive development. In fact, the United States and the United Kingdom had done the same during World War II in their wartime planned economies to maximise economic output. Economic planning plus importing technology boosted economic output. Moreover, Soviet raw material exports provided a subsidy to sustain Warsaw Pact states. Yet, these same states spent massively on internal surveillance and militaries that took resources from personal consumption.

But economic growth, not to mention dynamism, lasted only a single generation in the Trianon region. Yugoslavia was the most successful economy of the region but saw its potential cut short by a shift toward financialisation in the 1970s that slowed growth and opened the door toward ethnic conflict after Marshall Josip Broz Tito's passing.

Meanwhile, Romanian leader Nikolai Ceaușescu's visit to Beijing and Pyongyang in 1971 fueled his megalomania, as he observed the cult of personality states built around Mao Zedong and Kim Il-Sung. In response, upon his return home he launched an investment programme that required massive borrowing; Romania's foreign debt then grew ten-fold by 1982. This was the time of the global debt crisis, as commodity prices collapsed in the 1980s while the dollar soared, thus making debt-service payments to foreign banks expensive. Romania, like many other debtor nations, had to make recourse to International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to service its payments foreign lenders. Ceaușescu then imposed punishing austerity in the 1980s to maintain his international credit rating, making him simultaneously the IMF's darling, but the villain of his own people.

Czechoslovakia had the most privileged position of the Trianon economies. Its economy was the least damaged by World War II and the most complex of the region. Seeing solid growth during the Cold War, it nonetheless ran aground in the 1980s. Yet, this meant only stagnation, rather than economic pain, even if its economy remained highly-planned and nearly fully state-owned. Its external debt was manageable too, at only a fifth the size of Romania's in 1981.

Hungary, the least unhappy "prisoner" of the socialist camp, handled the 1980s crisis through more private and informal employment. Hungary still was part of the Soviet *ecumenae* (in the Braudel sense of the term) and was thus unable

to stave off the general decline of the 1980's Soviet bloc. The USSR still pumped cheap raw materials into its bloc states, but the Soviet economy was breaking down given the collapse of oil prices and the Soviet Union's military foray into Afghanistan, actions which Washington had a hand in creating. The Soviet Union, ultimately, lacked the economic power to substantially support its bloc states. Thus, by the end of the 1980's "the rotten door was kicked in".

German imperatives dictated much of the post-Soviet regional reorganisation. The European Union, increasingly a German project by the 1990s, exercised much influence over the Trianon area. Yugoslavia kept its nationalism frozen during the Cold War; thawed by Tito's passing, the region then witnessed hot wars. The many ethnic Hungarians in Yugoslavia, along Hungary's border, ensured interference by the latter as Yugoslavia broke apart. Serbian assertions of power later in the 1990s drew in NATO for reasons of human rights, or to give NATO a post-Cold War purpose, or for both. NATO imposed peace through bombing in 1999. The result was Serbia's loss of control over the Kosovo; its ensured autonomy generated the first major post-Soviet break in relations between the United States and Russia.

Meanwhile, in domino fashion, Czechoslovakia (soon to become two states with their amicable split in 1993), then Hungary, and then Romania, in succession saw the arrival of German investment. Austria played a role too, especially with investments in natural resource extraction (e.g. timber and mining) but also banking, petrochemicals, and other sectors. German industrial capital, especially automotive, would become the most visible in the region. These expanded supply chains into comparatively low wage Trianon areas kept German manufacturing competitive.

This integration of the Trianon region into a German investment space limited the development or creation of national "bourgeoisies" in the latter. Most communist-era enterprises were uncompetitive, so they either died quickly or slowly, starving on declining state subsidies. Of the few that were internationally competitive, some were bought out by Western capital, which only closed them to eliminate competition. In short, in terms of the economy, an Austro-Hungarian like economic structure was created, but with Germany as the most privileged member, Austria the second.

The largest post-Cold War problem for national economic development in the "Second World" was the elimination of "natural tariffs": distance and the ease with which international capital

> " The changed economic and political environment—the expanded European Union, Maastricht, and then the Lisbon Treaties—constructed a veritable Berlin Wall, thereby preventing a return to national economic development "

could set up production abroad. Globalisation as a percent of trade was nearly as big during the Belle Époque as it was in the post-Cold War. But the difference was that most Belle Époque trade was in commodities, whereas in the post-Cold War world it has been in manufactured goods. The interwar era of national economies was over, leaving the Trianon region's national elites with the carrots and sticks of EU structures and regulations that punished those departing from the post-Cold War economic liberal orthodoxy and rewarded those who adhered to it. There simply was no path back to the interwar period of developing nationally oriented economies, nor even of the post WWII Keynesian Bretton Woods version of national development. The changed economic and political environment— the expanded European Union, Maastricht, and then the Lisbon Treaties—constructed a veritable Berlin Wall, thereby preventing a return to national economic development.

The EU presented a detour from the nationally-oriented economic models that emerged in Western Europe during the 19th century and flourished in the post-WWII generation. The Cold War saw Western Europe develop along Keynesian lines: National economic development was encouraged as a means to develop industry that would then result in international trade, with countries having something to offer on global markets. Capital controls and other means were deployed to spur national development.

The post-Cold War period, on the other hand, saw Europe shift development paradigms. Instead of nationally oriented development, Europe's development was to be integrated. Capital would flow from rich to poor countries in both private sectors (investment) and public sectors (structural funds). The vision was essentially Hayekian in its goal to create a free trade sphere along the lines of the Belle Époque era Austro-Hungarian Empire, writ large across Europe, but with Germany as the economic hub. The creation of the Euro gave Germany an undervalued currency, thereby keeping its manufacturing strong. Simultaneously, the Euro made exports from the former Warsaw Pact (and most other European) states expensive. This held true even for non-Eurozone states, many of whom aspired to future Eurozone membership and thus kept their national currencies linked to the value of the Euro, permitting only the smallest deviations in exchange rates from it.

Ironically, what may bring even more West European investment to the Trianon region, not to mention more opportunities for new enterprises to emerge out of these nations, is a world where pandemics incentivise the shortening of supply chains and, more generally, an end to Adam Smithian "allocative efficiency". COVID-19 revealed the dangers of globally stretched supply chains and efficiencies derived from minimising inventories and redundancies. If this coronavirus returns in waves, or we see new pandemics, this will force a replacement of neoliberalism with a system or systems that intentionally build in short-term "inefficiencies" in the interest of survival. Pandemics fly in the face of neoliberalism's relentless search for cost savings, and instead require us to identify optimal 'inefficiencies'. It is in this structure that the Trianon region may find the greater national autonomy it has sought for more than a century. ∎

Getting Beyond Trianon

Péter Balázs

The impact of peace treaties on national self-images

> Neither of the World Wars nor the Cold War were ended by a stable peace arrangement with long term effects; on the contrary, latent tensions broke out and new conflict situations emerged

Peace treaties are important milestones in international relations, defining and determining, for the following period, the signatory states' size, power and influence. The Paris Treaties, which concluded the First World War (WWI), had a particularly deep impact on the actors' self-perception. The nations in question have, both consciously and unconsciously, preserved and reflected this influence by constructing historical memories of these treaties. And while the duration of a consolidated post-conflict order depends on the stability of the peace system, the Paris Treaties fostered peace in Europe for only two decades. But these arrangements established hierarchical relationships between winners and losers of the preceding conflict, that contained the germs that would cause the next one—some of which have endure for over 70 years.

In the 20th century, Europe was the gravitational centre of all major world-wide conflicts. Neither of the World Wars nor the Cold War were ended by a stable peace arrangement with long term effects; on the contrary, latent tensions broke out and new conflict situations emerged. The Second World War (WWII) effectively replayed the WWI conflict one generation later, starting with more-or-less the same adverse parties. The United States and the Soviet Union—the two great winners, both coming from the remote peripheries of Europe—then launched the third global conflict, the Cold War, shortly after.

That Cold War's 1990s conclusion exhibited some unique features compared to traditional post-conflict arrangements. First, while the West won the Cold War without any doubt, no 'peace treaty' was negotiated and signed. For that reason, uncertainty has since reigned concerning the extent of influence zones, with some aggressive powers trying to change the status quo in their favour. Second, both great pillars of the bipolar system played a different role in international relations than during Cold War times. Although

the Soviet Union fell apart, Russia, as its successor, has become an emerging expansive actor. The United States, meanwhile, retrenched from the international scene under the Trump administration, diminishing its engagements from Berlin to Nairobi. Both Russia and the United States, however, belong to the founders of the actual world system as permanent members of the UN Security Council; and yet, they are the ones questioning the validity and the benefits of the post-WWII international order.

With this background, attempted historical reconciliations in the eastern part of Europe in the 21st Century must take into consideration the fundamental elements of national self-perceptions. Constructed histories of states and their ruling classes determinate, in part, nations' self-images. In Europe, for instance, the 20th century produced new states, and new identities. The post-WWI collapse of three feudal empires—Austria-Hungary, tsarist Russia, and Ottoman Turkey—birthed a multitude of smaller nation states, while the post-Cold War dissolution of three post-WWI federal constructions—Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union—put 24 new states on the map.

In both cases, international relations became more complex, as formerly internal tensions became international, directly impacting global security. Even to this today, several European nations attach their identities to, and base their constructed histories on, one of the last century's post-conflict arrangements in both positive and negative ways. For those nations living together in the Carpathian Basin region, two historical milestones are of particular importance: the post-WWI dissolution of empires and the post-Cold War birth of post-federal states.

> " Understanding and properly handling Hungary's trauma is an precondition to any national reconciliation between Hungary and its neighbours "

Hungary's Trianon trauma

For Hungarians, the Trianon Treaty of 1920 is one of the most important national turning points. This event is an undigested and oversized trauma frequently compared by Hungarians to the medieval Hungarian kingdom's defeat by the Ottoman Turks at Mohács in 1526. Understanding and properly handling this trauma is an precondition to any national reconciliation between Hungary and its neighbours. But unclarified aspects, misperceptions, and political pre-judgments connected with Trianon severely complicate the task of reconciliation.

Hungarians must understand and accept some important facts and arguments. Firstly, they must recognise that between 1541 and 1920, there was no independent Hungary. In contrast, it was the hated Trianon Treaty that sealed the new Hungarian state's birth in the Habsburg Empire's ashes. Hungarians, after centuries of lost freedom fights, in 1920 won national sovereignty at the price of sharply reduced territory and a divided population. Under the shock of unexpected and heavy damages, the general perception of the event did not consider the gains of national sovereignty but regretted the past unity of the nation under the cover of one and the same state. Independence from the Habsburg supremacy did not, for Hungarians, compensate the loss of their influential second place within the Austro-Hungarian monarchy that assured the whole nation's territorial integrity (with very few exceptions) and a high degree of self-determination.

After Hungary's 1867 Compromise (*Ausgleich*) with Austria, Vienna disseminated the illusion of having re-established 'Great Hungary', which Hungarians accepted with pride and pleasure. A map with sharp contours of the Empire's Hungarian part was on the wall of all Hungarian schools, suggesting the existence of a Hungarian state. The Millennium festivities in 1896, which commemorated the supposed date of the arrival of Hungarian tribes in the Carpathian Basin, deepened that belief. In reality, for Hungarians the internal situation in the Hungarian part of the dual Monarchy did not differ from the daily life of any nation-state: People elected their leaders, spoke their own language in schools, churches, and the administration, and generally operated as Hungarians, rather than Austro-Hungarians. The imperial court's remote power dealt mainly with three key government functions: finances (including the customs system), defence, and foreign affairs. All other issues were in national— this is, regional—hands.

Given the context, Hungarians did not consider a few hard facts. It is not common knowledge in Hungary today that the "Great Hungary" on post-1867 maps, and on contemporary car stickers, was not a fully sovereign state but an integral part of the Habsburg Empire. Budapest's marvellous neo-gothic parliament building did not host an independent legislation; legal acts had to be approved by both authorities in Vienna and the Habsburg Emperor wearing the Hungarian crown. Hungarians were the largest nationality but represented a relative minority on the territory of their land, as other nationalities taken together constituted the majority. The dominance and integrity of the Hungarian nation was made possible only by the cohesion of the Habsburg Empire, which united and kept together the various parts of medieval Hungary after expelling the Ottoman Turks.

It is also not common Hungarian knowledge that for most of the neighbouring nations, the Paris treaties brought victory and territorial expansion. Even Austria, having lost the war and the whole Habsburg Empire, won a piece from "Great Hungary" (*Burgenland* in German, *Őrvidék* in Hungarian). Hungary, in fact, was the only post-WWI Central European "loser". In addition to decreased territory and population, the Hungarian economy lost its integrity, with neighbours securing market segments as well as transport routes and infrastructure. Significant parts of the Hungarian nation found themselves minorities in the new or enlarged neighbouring states. Unlike during the Hapsburg period, they had to fight for elementary rights like the use of mother tongue in education, public administration and religion—a fight that continues to this day.

The chances for national reconciliation

Is it even possible for a nation to reconcile with a century-old historical event at all? We must be optimistic, in spite of the fact that, in this respect, the last 100 years were almost completely lost. Between the two World Wars, Hungary opted for revanchinism, siding with Nazi Germany to reclaim parts of its former territory. History proved this strategy wrong-headed when Hungary's temporary gains were lost again. Under Soviet rule, any form of nationalism was strictly forbidden; during those decades, the Trianon problem sank in total silence, while dialogues with neighbouring nations failing to progress. Since the systemic change of 1990, politicians have used and misused various components of national memory. In Hungary, the right-populist Viktor Orbán government propagates revanchism, mostly in somewhat hidden forms. For instance, Budapest's new Trianon memorial commemorates the names of all settlements—cities and villages—in parts of former Hungary under foreign administration since 1920, thereby taking purely territorial vision of Hungary, rather than account for cultural, economic or other ties. Moreover, in June 2020, the Hungarian parliament adopted a decision about "protecting national identity" that used mostly pre-war chauvinist rhetoric, focusing on the "Carpathian Basin", which is a political synonym for "Great Hungary" in the given context.

A sincere will for reconciliation is needed to overcome mutual historical or political misperceptions. National memories and self-images are formed and maintained by politics, schools, and research. National literature and "oral history" matter, too. But in Hungary today, all of these components are under strict government control. The influence of politics is not negligible in some of its neighbours either. Rapprochement, however, starts only with mutual respect and the acceptance of objective historical facts on both sides.

Reconciliation models are at hand, particularly of the exemplary German-French case, but their adaptation and the implementation under the special conditions of other relationships—like that of Hungary and Romania—requires enormous political engagement and financing resources. At the price of closing the past and reconciling with each other, Germany and France won stability, increased international prestige, and a substantial economic benefit.

Advocates of any Central European reconciliation project must be highly motivated, attracted and pushed by real political gains. Reconciliation indeed requires great political and economic investment, bringing its fruits only in the long-term. To the reconcilers' detriment, in the short run, nationalism is usually more attractive, offering politicians grand rewards—namely votes—in exchange for minimal investment. ■

Trianon Treaty:
One hundred years later

Virgiliu Țârău

> During the interwar years, propaganda actions by Hungary transformed the name of the palaces at Versailles where the treaty was signed into the sum of all ills of the Paris Peace Treaties. It was the beginning of the so-called nationalist-populist Trianon Syndrome that subsequently dominated Hungarian public life

A century ago, on the day when the Hungarian delegation and representatives of the Allies signed at Versailles the treaty that ended the war for Hungary, in the Trianon Palace, in Romania almost nobody—with the notable exception of some of the representatives of the diplomatic and political circles—noticed the event. The main reason for this could be related to the lack of speed in the distribution of the news in that period. Or, maybe, because in Romania it was an election day and all the newspapers were engaged in reporting the election results. Both explanations could be true, but what was more important was the fact that Romanian public opinion was already informed about the decisions negotiated in Paris during the previous year. The reality is that, only three days later, a very small note of the event was published in the main newspaper of Romania, *Universul*, on the front page. Less than one percent of its editorial space was dedicated to the news that telegraphically said: 'Friday, in the gallery that connects grand to small Trianon, was signed the peace with Hungary' (*Universul*, 7 June, p.1). A week later, on 14th June, on the second page of the same newspaper, condensed and abridged parts of the Treaty were published in a short article, relating to the political dispositions (art. 41–45) and minority protections (art. 54–57). In the following months, the Treaty and the place where it was signed was not mentioned anymore in the press and reappeared only with the so-called optants problem and agrarian reform. In the next decade, as a consequence of Hungary's political campaign against Trianon, the word appears more frequently in the Romanian media mainly as a reaction to the judicial controversies that were exposed under the aegis of League of Nations in relation to the expropriations of the great properties in Romania in 1920–1921. During the interwar years, propaganda actions by Hungary transformed the name of the palaces at Versailles where the treaty was signed into the sum of all ills of the Paris Peace Treaties. It was the beginning of the so-called nationalist-populist Trianon syndrome that subsequently dominated Hungarian public life. And, for sure, its revision became the main danger for other states in the region.

Trianon was not a major, nor even a unique, subject in Romanian historiography, being a part of the historical inquiries of the larger considerations of the Paris Treaty Systems. Even when it was discussed in the contexts of judicial and foreign policy issues (for example during the pleas of Romanian—Nicolae Titulescu—and Hungarian—Count Apponyi—representatives to the Arbitral Tribunal in the twenties) these were usually embedded within the broader perspective of the Peace Conference. Consequently, in the last century, it was rarely a distinct topic in the Romanian historiography—the monograph of Lucian Leustean (*România, Ungaria şi Tratatul de la Trianon*, 1918–1920 [*Romania, Hungary and the Trianon Treaty, 1918–1920*], Ed. Polirom, Iaşi, 2002) is a valuable exception with his balanced view and nuanced explanation at the level of national historiographies. Certainly, it was a subject disputed by politicians (as it is to this day), and by diplomats, lawyers, and other legal specialists, but in the academic milieu, broadly speaking, it was developed only in the framework of the Paris international settlement. It was an event like the ones that materialised at Versailles, Saint Germain, and Neuilly in the previous year. In consequence, Trianon was a part of a system that was interpreted as new, that responded to the actual problems of the world. It ended a historical process (the war) and tried to build up a new one, based on new principles—all of them connected with the democratisation of international politics under the aegis of the victorious Great Powers. That means that in the last one hundred years it was discussed as a diplomatic history episode, a part of the general story that put an end to the war and tried to lay down foundations of a new international peace.

A general overview of such a historical perspective takes into account the last phases of the war, the revolutions, ideological and social pressures that eventually led to the end of military operations. All the historical chains of events that

materialised in Eastern Europe and the nature of the changes that happened then were connected not only to the military evolutions but to the world that collapsed in the last months of 1918. A world of empires, Hohenzollerns, Habsburgs, Romanovs and Ottomans, that did not withstand the pressures from the inside or the military defeat in the autumn of 1918, disappeared. Their ruin started a process of political transformation that led to the establishment of the successor states: Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, The Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia. On the other side, the defeated powers were also reorganised as new sovereign statehoods: Turkey, Bulgaria, Austria, Hungary, and Germany.

In essence, in October and November 1918, new political authorities emerged on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and consequently, national states appeared on the map of Europe. The Armistice did not stop the war in this part of Europe. The transformative events of the winter of 1918–1919 did not develop peacefully and in the spring the war continued not only militarily but also in ideological terms. As a consequence, the exit from that war in the West was not a reality in the East. While the Conference progressed in Paris the eastern part of the continent was in turmoil. New waves of violence and social, economic, and political disruptions were present across the region. To prevent further tensions, negotiations by the Allies in Paris on the two most sensible issues at the Conference—territorial and minority matters—were discussed without the countries who were directly interested or involved. Redrawing the map of states in Europe and solving the minorities issue were the crucial problems of the peace arrangement. In the end, taking into account the auto-determination principle and other criteria, the victors succeeded in enforcing the ethnic homogeneity of the new states and reduced the quotas of minorities from more than 50 percent (as it was in the former Empires) to around 25 percent in the new political

geography of Eastern Europe. All the new states were dominated by national majorities (more than 90 percent in the case of Hungary and Bulgaria, 70 percent in case of Romania and Poland, less in the case of Czechoslovakia and future Yugoslavia) and the recognition of the new borders was conditioned by the Great Powers upon the protection of minorities. Nevertheless, the minority issue remained an important one in the interwar years, being at the core of revisionist and anti-revisionist foreign policies of different states. In that way, the reconciliation between states and, more importantly, between majorities and minorities remained a dream: a dream that became a nightmare in the late 1930s when the shadows of the war transformed the political realities of Europe.

If, for Hungarian historiography, Trianon remains a powerful keyword that conjures not only the peace but also a traumatic turning point for the nation, for historians in Romania, it is just a small part of a story that ends the process of Romanian national unity after the World War One. These different interpretations were standard ones, from a national point of view. Unfortunately, used with intensity by nationalist politicians, in time, the normal distance in interpretation becomes more and more radical. Common lectures and understanding of that moment, and agreements on the bridges that connect our past, were marginalised, with parallel discourses being developed instead to fulfil nationalist dreams and the vengeance of history.

Many contemporary fears are still connected with what we could call *historical traumas*. These are events of the past which, beyond their essence and importance, are used and manipulated to explain the past through political lenses. Ideological stands, political discourses, and social and cultural perspectives contribute to the enforcement of these myths that have been constructed around such events to legitimate or delegitimate different versions of the past. When

such a trauma is conjured up, winners and losers, ideological and political opponents, competitors and adversaries, develop over time their version of past events, leaving no room for a balanced perspective about the past. In that way, they build up not only different histories but also distinct memories, in which our common life and shared heritage disappears. Each side builds gaps and trenches, not bridges, to enforce their positions. This is a very cruel reality that can be overcome in time, but only when historical discourse is separated as much as possible from political bias. But this is not the case in all instances.

On the other side, looking back, we can observe that in many situations historians were at the centre of these controversies, reinforcing the one-sided, national version of the past. They added fuel to political disputes, giving legitimacy to their national political stances, through their own interpretations. If in the first seventy years after the peace arrangements their response was to political commandments, the last thirty years mark a slow transformation. The reconciliation process between Hungary and Romania at the political level has contributed to the normalisation of relations between national historiographies. The formal dialogue that existed previously at the institutional level, has, in the context of our common route into Euro-Atlantic alliances, more substance. Even if we continue to write history with a national focus, it is informed by the intensification of our dialogue over the past, including not only the controversies and differences but also our common cultural and historical heritage. That means that we can praise more the tolerance, civic spirit, and ethnic and cultural diversity that existed in the past. We can try in that way to rediscover our intersectional points, personalities and organisations that build bridges between peoples, cultures, and identities. That means we may need to change our perspectives over the past by adapting our old political lenses in the favour of cultural, social and economic ones. Or, using the words

of Koos Karoly, we need to understand that here '...the national constituents traditionally lived their own lives, building their own social and cultural institutions, not mingling with each other, but not bothering each other; learning from each other, influencing each other'.[1] And after Trianon such cases were developed in Transylvania, even if historians did not always notice them right away.

Let's look at the only one example. In the last decade, in the context of the institutionalisation of the Transylvania International Film Festival (TIFF), one of the main cultural entrepreneurs of Cluj in the first part of the century, Jenő Janovics (1872–1945) was rediscovered. Janovics was an actor, but also a filmmaker, a producer, and director (his studios Proja, Corvin, and Transylvania produced, from 1913 to 1920, 73 silent artistic movies), the leader of the Hungarian Theatre in Cluj, and he was involved in many political and cultural organisations. Some biographical articles were published about him at the end of the sixties (Jordaki Lajos). Other were published in the last decades (Lajos Kömendy, Gyöngyi Balogh, John Cunningham, or the documentary film directed in 2012 by Balint Zagony, *Jeno Janovics a Hungarian Pathe*). But many of them ended his cultural, political, and national life in 1919 when, symbolically, he gave up the keys of the National Theatre to the new Romanian authorities and his movie studios ceased to be productive. He continued his artistic career until his death on the stage of Cluj Theatre on 16 November 1945. He ran the Hungarian Theatre; he toured with his artistic team extensively in Transylvania, as well as Hungary. He tried to build genuine communication between the Hungarian and the Romanian cultural scenes in Cluj after 1919. Actors in leading or supporting roles were soon performing in plays staged at either of the theatres. He extended invitations to important artists of the Romanian Opera: Traian Grozăvescu, Jean Athanasiu, Aca de Barbu and conductor Jean Bobescu, who performed on the Hungarian Theatre stage to great acclaim of the public at the beginning of the 1920s. He also stimulated an ongoing cultural exchange between national groups. Several plays by Romanian writers such as I.L. Caragiale, Lucian Blaga, Ion Minulescu, Octavian Goga, Mihail Sadoveanu were performed at the Hungarian theatre until 1926. From 1921 he organised the Transylvania Artists' Association, and was involved in the management of many Hungarian cultural organisations. From the middle of the 1930s he produced and directed, in Romania, 17 documentary and commercial movies.

The second part of his career in which he travelled constantly between Romania and Hungary, making huge efforts to preserve his own cultural and national identity while building at the same time many cultural bridges within his new state, is still awaiting its historian. ◾

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1   Quoted in Marcel Cornis-Pope, John Neubauer, *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe. Junctures and Disjuctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, vol. 2, John Benjamin Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2004, p. 270.

Concluding Remarks

Megan Palmer and Mădălina Mocan

The works in this report reveal just how problematic the word Trianon remains. For some, it is merely a now-obsolete treaty (Hungary's contemporary borders were not determined by the Treaty of Trianon, after all). For many others, however, it is a word charged with emotional significance: the loss of Greater Hungary is repeatedly invoked as a painful and unifying collective memory. Trianon is, for many Hungarians, a lament. The very word signifies humiliation, betrayal, deception, or threat, depending on myriad interpretations and intentions. Its elusiveness is what makes it powerful.

The discussions in our panels and roundtable that led to this report explored a wide range of ways in which Trianon manifests, including lesser-known historical episodes that hint at the possibility of reconciling opposing views on Trianon. These include, ethnic Hungarians in post-Trianon Transylvania who believed in a tolerant, multi-ethnic community, post-1989 moves towards friendlier relations between Hungary and Romania, and the publication of large historical works that aimed to illuminate the complex circumstances around the treaty's creation.

A recurring theme in the report is the manipulation of the memory of Trianon for political purposes. Hungary is commonly the culprit, but Romania has also stoked fear among its citizens by evoking a latent Hungarian threat, both from its neighbour and its minority population. Such fearmongering and sabre-rattling by politicians from both countries is reprehensible and harmful. The ease of the political point-scoring, however, makes this fearmongering highly attractive.

Another theme is the misunderstanding of the history and circumstances of the Treaty in both the Hungarian and Romanian populations. Bringing together historians not only from these two countries but also from further afield, as we have here, opens the possibility of fresh perspectives and understandings of the past. Impartial and analytical education is vital for combatting entrenched attitudes around Trianon. Several contributors to this report have discussed the possibilities for reconciliation based on attempts to harmonise historical narratives (recalling France and Germany's great success in this area). They have also pointed to an absence of political will to do so—precisely because easy political points are harder to score with a better-informed public.

Across the world citizens are grappling with their collective histories—sometimes narratives of oppression or mass murder, other times narratives of subjugation and hardship, but always complicated. In Transylvania, such narratives entrench its population in simple tales of winning and losing, of who deserved what. The reality, of course, has always been more complex. There were Transylvanian Hungarians who did not harm Romanians, just as there were Transylvanian Romanians who treated Hungarians harshly in victory. Living Hungarians are not subjugated daily by a historical document just as contemporary Romanians are not under constant threat of a Hungarian fifth column. A deeper understanding of the past would help to diminish such anxieties and lessen the word's power.

It was not the intention of our conference and this report to 'solve' the problems around Trianon discourse—such an ambition would be foolhardy. Instead, we wanted to widen the conversation to include the voices of historians, political scientists and political economists—Hungarian, Romanian, and British. Our public events attracted a global audience (an advantage of being required to hold the conference online). Judging by the contributions to this report, and the positive engagement we attracted throughout the conference, it has been a success. It is our deep hope that we have stimulated constructive and novel conversations across disciplines and beyond the academy to demystify Trianon. One hundred years after the Treaty of Trianon was signed, perhaps its controversies may be beginning to abate. ◾

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