

# THE TREATY OF TRIANON

*A Hungarian dilemma  
becomes a vital issue*

## **THE TREATY OF TRIANON**

*A HUNGARIAN DILEMMA  
BECOMES A VITAL ISSUE*

(1990)

A reference for leading Australian intellectuals and politicians on a subject of great concern for Hungarians in Australia and all over the world.

We believe it is important for these individuals to learn about the concerns at the very time when a more humane system is trying to evolve in Central Europe after half a century of tyrannical rule.

We believe that an individual, multicultural approach will - in the spirit of One World - be appropriate to settle this very painful issue.

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THE HUNGARIAN COUNCIL OF  
NEW SOUTH WALES**

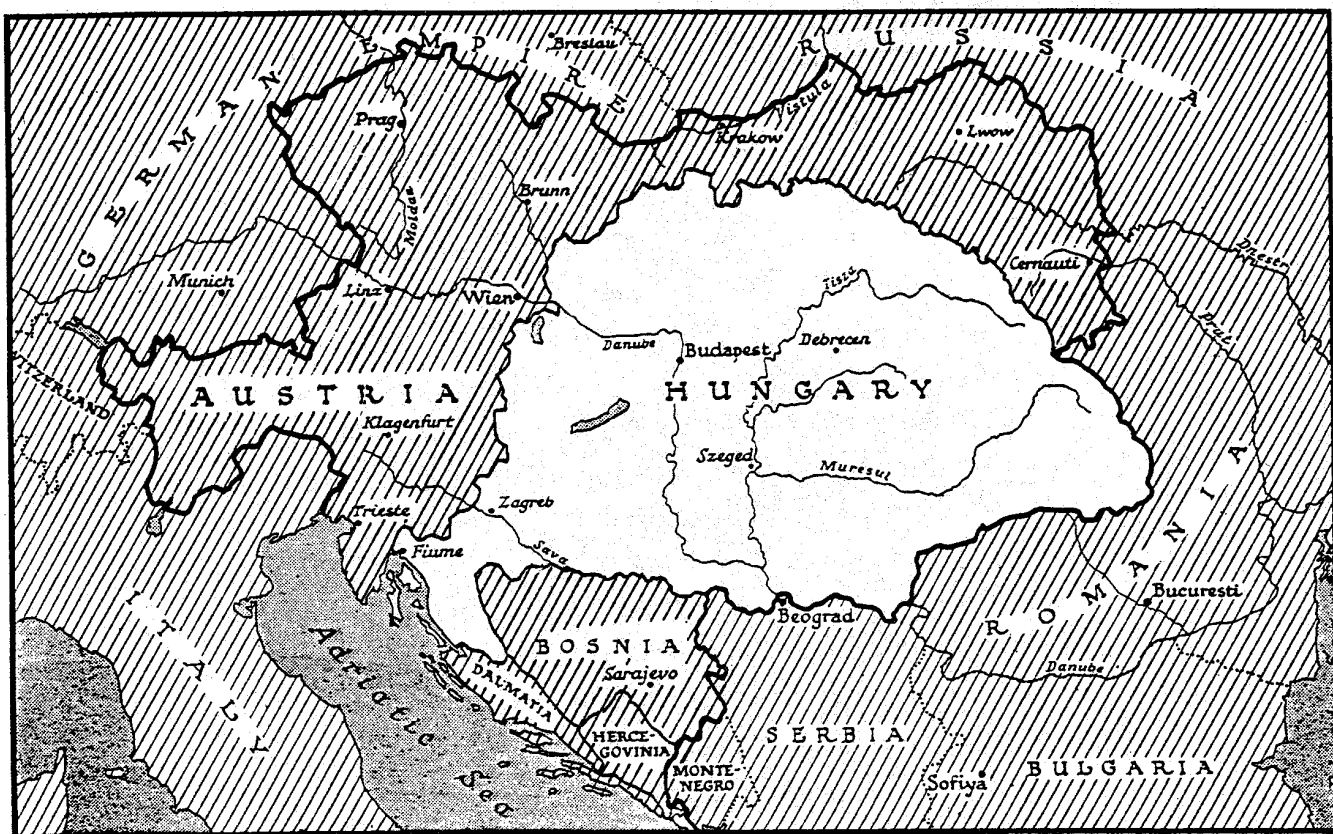
## Peace out of guns

One out of every three Hungarians lives outside the present borders of Hungary. How did this come about? At the end of World War I the victorious powers reorganized Central Europe, creating new states ("Successor States") with new borders. This happened 70 years ago, on the 4th June, 1920, when Hungary, under duress, signed the Treaty of Trianon (in a palace near Paris). Hungary's agreeing to sign this treaty was the condition imposed by the Allies for recognizing her sovereignty, albeit over just one third of its pre-war territory. Although the Western leaders who drew up this peace treaty maintained the importance of the principle of *national self-determination*, when the new borders were drawn up the populations in the areas concerned were not consulted, there were no plebiscites and no bargaining in Paris. Therefore, Hungary was faced with the choice of accepting humiliating losses of territory or complete annihilation as a state.

It is generally taken for granted that, after any war, the victorious nations create new borders. Each war rearranges the map of Europe. The vanquished get promises that nationalities separated from their own kind are to be guaranteed certain protection. Regrettably, experience shows that every war produces its own broken promises as well. World War II, for example, brought about the population shifts and forced transfers of millions of people from their original home, and the homeland of further tens of millions was "handed over" to other states. Since then, the basis of every international treaty has been the *inviolability of state borders*.

## A twenty million minority

It would be difficult to counter international trends. The status quo was brought about by real forces, and is upheld by real forces. One can complain about injustices and grievances, but these complaints go unheeded. The injustices of the Treaty of Trianon have been discussed in innumerable books, studies, documents and newspaper articles. A larger portion of these works sees the solution



The Peace Treaty of Trianon has deprived Hungary of 72% of her territory



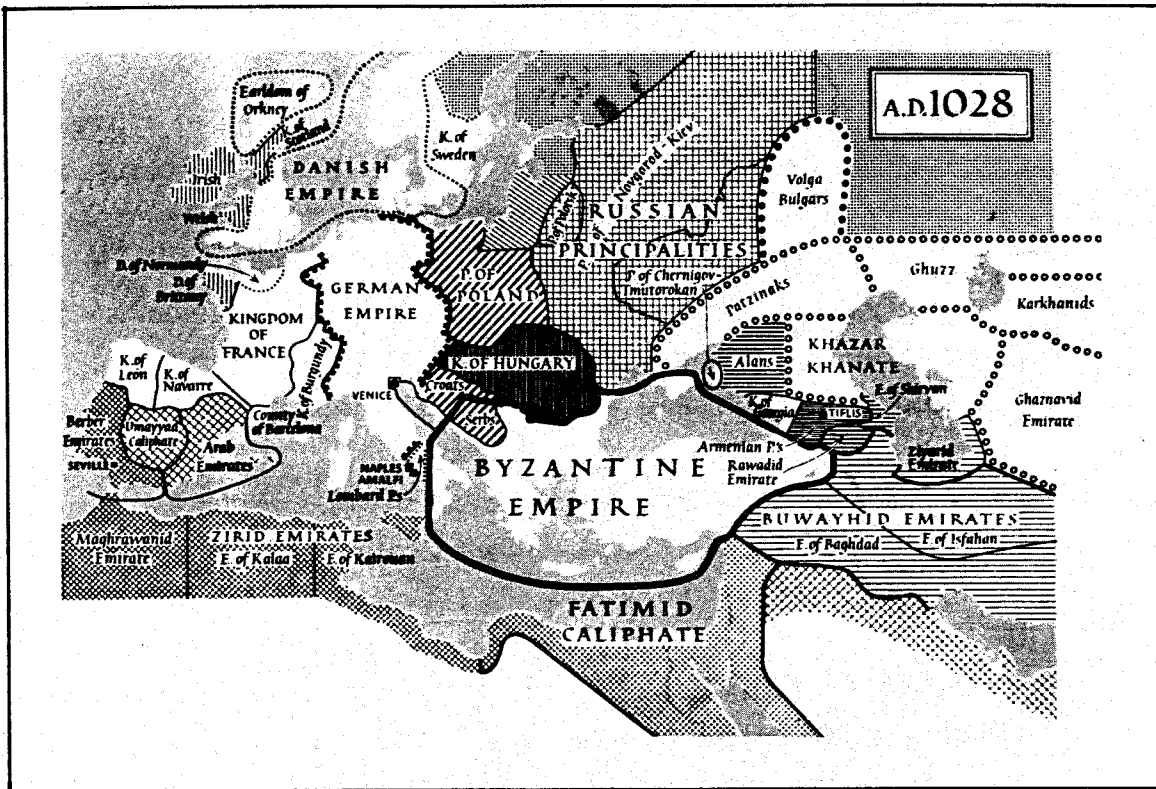
in changing the current borders. That solution is denied Hungary and we in this booklet would like to try to transcend it, because we accept that any kind of border change serves some interests and violates others. Presumably, in international politics it is simpler and more congenial to maintain the present arrangements, the status quo, (to let only Hungary suffer) rather than put up with what would undoubtedly be the ceaseless complaints of four different countries, were borders to be rearranged anew.

First and foremost, it is to be noted that this problem is not exclusively a Hungarian one. In East—Central Europe 20 million people live in *minority status*, though it is also true that one-fifth of these are Hungarians. Twenty million people live in a relatively small area, in unsettled conditions, deprived of their rights. In its present depressed state, this region is unfit to join the European community. It must also be pointed out that the misery of this 20 million cannot be relieved by any kind of border readjustments because, at best, that would merely remove the most flagrant injustices. The total problem can only be solved by some all-encompassing and comprehensive scheme.

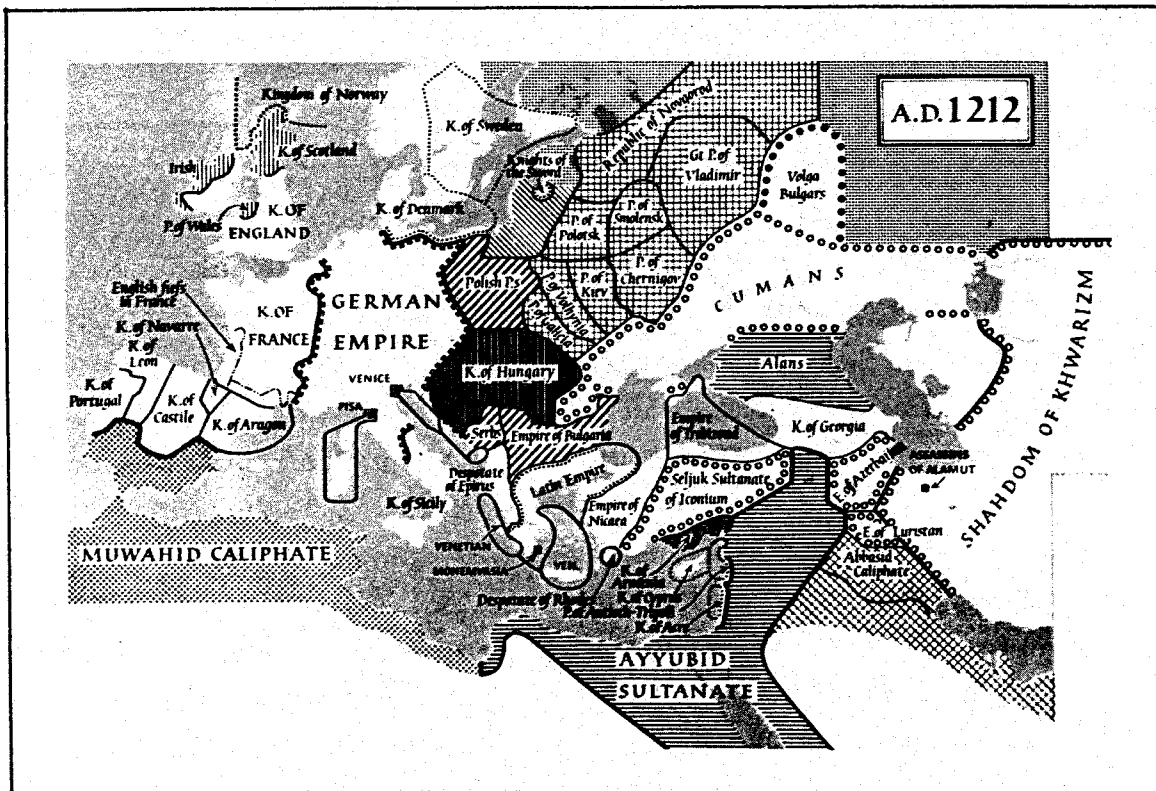
## War is not the right source of peace

Nationalism cannot be fought by means of propaganda, not even by logical arguments. There is no way of fighting it while the current international order has a tendency to re-generate nationalism. Fascism finds its base and support in the principle of *non-interference* in the internal affairs of a "sovereign" state. It is even helped by the very concept of *national states* and their *inviolable borders*.

Minority status is not a misfortune, not an act of God, but the unfortunate outcome of human negligence. As such, it should be possible to resolve satisfactorily the problems it engenders. First of all, a solution by war ought to be excluded, because wars do not improve the situation, only add more injustices. Arbitration by larger nations or the great powers cannot provide the necessary solution either. A particularly good example for this is the case of



This map shows the beginnings of the Hungarian Kingdom in 11<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, during the reign of the first king of Hungary, St. Stephen.  
 (Source: McElvedy 1961 Penguin Atlas of Medieval Europe)



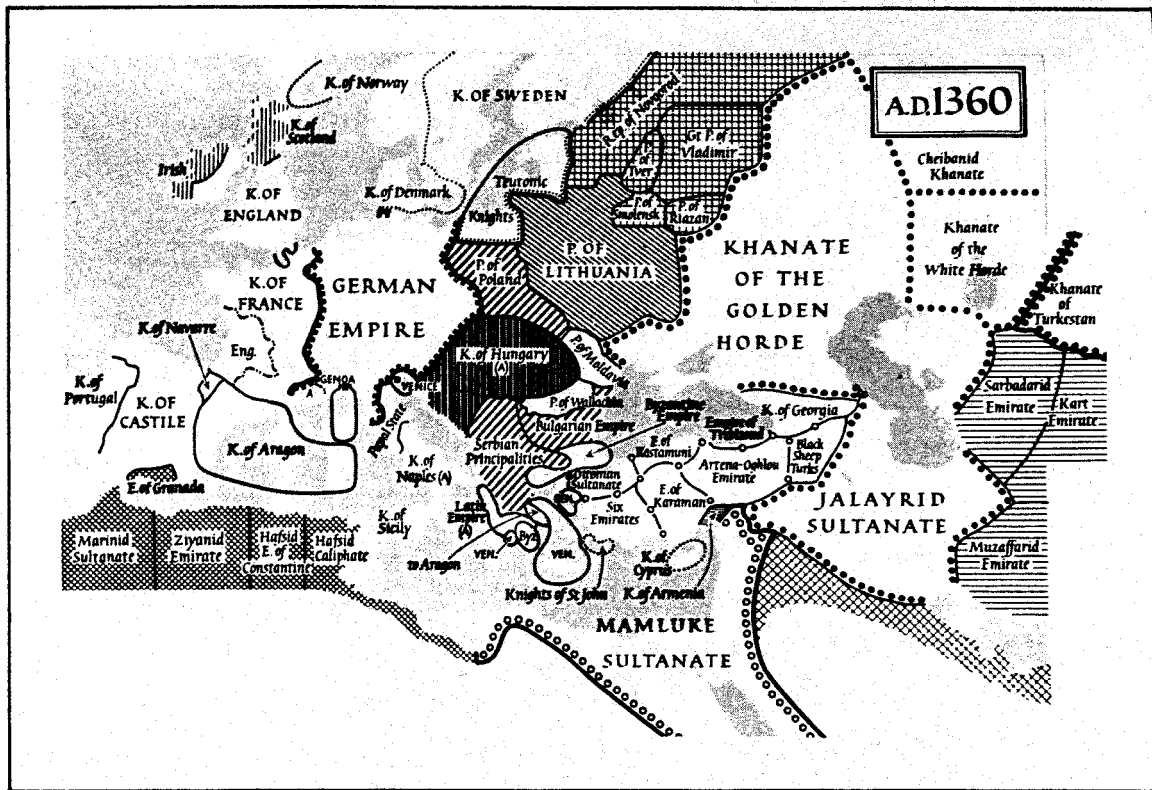
In the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the Kingdom of Hungary became an important power in Europe.  
 (Source: McElvedy 1961 Penguin Atlas of Medieval Europe)

Transylvania. In 1940 it was divided between Hungary and Roumania by a determination of the two Central European powers of the time, Germany and Italy. The only result was the acquisition by both parties, Hungary and Roumania, of roughly equal ratios of minorities, an unpopular acquisition. At the end of World War II, as a result of decisions made by the victorious Allied Powers, the Transylvanian situation reverted to its interwar state, whereby Roumania again became the multi-ethnic state, while Hungary remained the country deprived of her former territories and populations. Therefore, let us exclude from the available solutions the declaration of war, transfer of whole populations, slicing up of territories and arbitrary shifting of millions of people.

The present developments in East—Central Europe demonstrate a further significant point: whether the borders and the national minorities stay as they are (maintaining the status quo), or undergo modification, those differing ethnic populations which have been feeling hostile to one another for the past 70 years will continue to feel the same in the future as well. By now, the very existence of the current borders is the cause of the hostilities. Even the confederation concept would not work any more, as is amply demonstrated by the federated Yugoslavia, which is on the brink of disintegrating into its component, disparate republics.

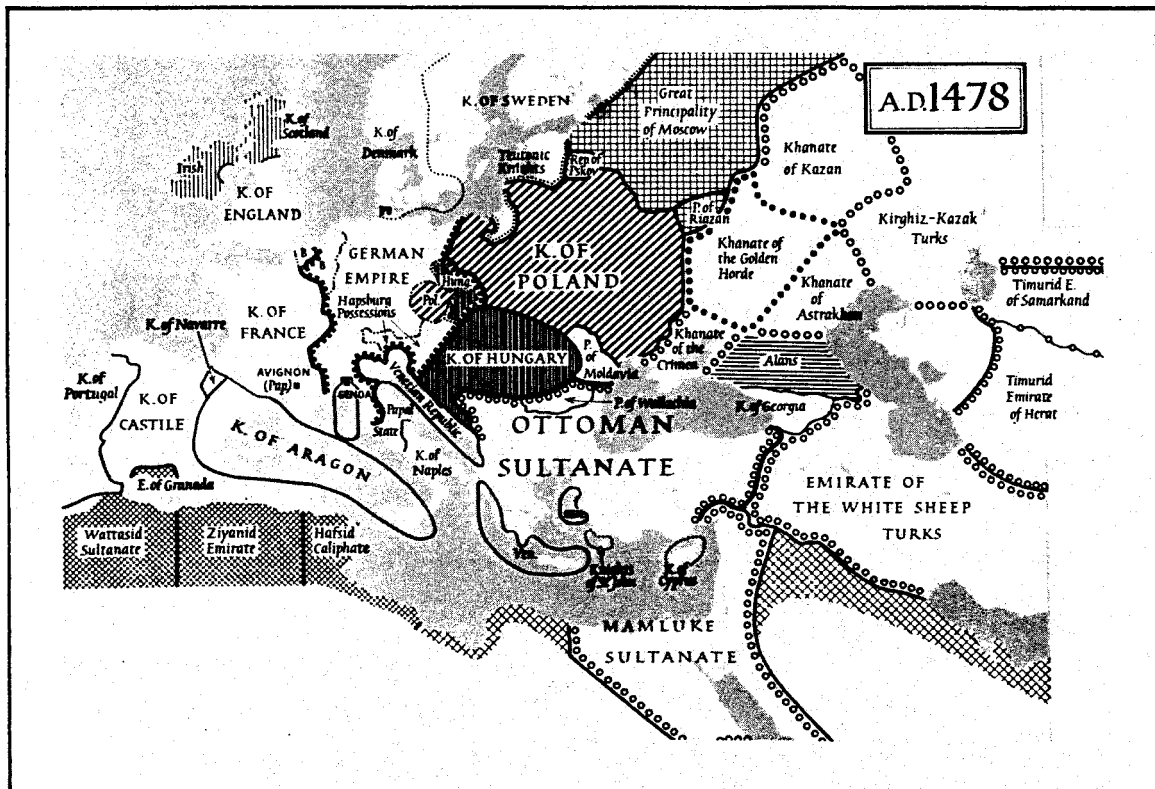
## The fate of minorities as an index of democracy

The manifold difficulties associated with minority populations reached their peak during the period of dictatorships. To be in minority status in a community which is planned to be *homogeneous* in the interest of uniform governing-capability, or some kind of *racial theory*, means being in the way of a power which quite willingly would awaken and maintain general public animosity against this minority. What type of action is taken by the rulers in such a situation? All ills and lack of success are singled out as having been caused by the minority. In this way, the eventual destruction of the minority becomes a national and patriotic matter,



The 14<sup>th</sup> Century is the first time that the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia appeared on the map of Europe. By this time the Byzantine Empire had very nearly disappeared.

( Source: McElvedy 1961 Penguin Atlas of Medieval Europe )



By the 15<sup>th</sup> Century the Ottoman Turkish Empire reached the southern frontier of Hungary, where for a while it was contained by the military power of a strong Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus.

( Source: McElvedy 1961 Penguin Atlas of Medieval Europe )



and the more primitive the given ruling community in a particular country, the worse is the condition of the minority, with its different language, religion and culture. If, on top of this, the minority section of the population happens to be culturally and educationally on a higher, more advanced level, it could even be surrounded by hatred. This kind of hatred transforms the members of a minority, sooner or later, into a community of persecuted individuals.

The *qualitative index* of democracy in a country is the nature of its treatment of minorities. Democracy can only exist where even the smallest ethnic group speaking a different tongue and following a different religion or sect has the constitutional right to use its own language, live according to its own culture and worship according to its own religion. If the aim of democracy is *harmony* in the whole population of a state, then the fundamental aspect of democracy is its capacity for *tolerance*. It may be that a dictatorship is capable of some grand achievements by sheer concentration of force, but the purpose of human existence is not the realization of grand schemes but life itself, *individual life*. Every individual has a right to live, a fundamental human right. Each individual has the right to a particular, self-chosen mode of life, so that the desired quality of life can be attained according to an individual's abilities and personal wishes.

## High time for a change

We wish to sound a warning —though we do not know precisely whom we should warn— that a new settlement of the minority problems in East—Central Europe is both timely and urgent while the current reforms and rearrangements are in process. The rearrangements must be all-encompassing, over the entire continent, and at the same time they must be sufficiently radical, embedded in such an overall, general change that the very reason for, and possibility of, expansionist policies which lead to one country occupying or conquering another would be removed.

Europe is on the threshold of momentous changes. A *United Nations of Europe* appears to be in the making. However, at the

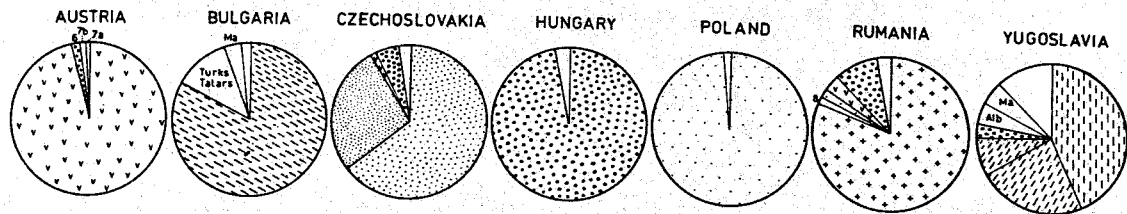
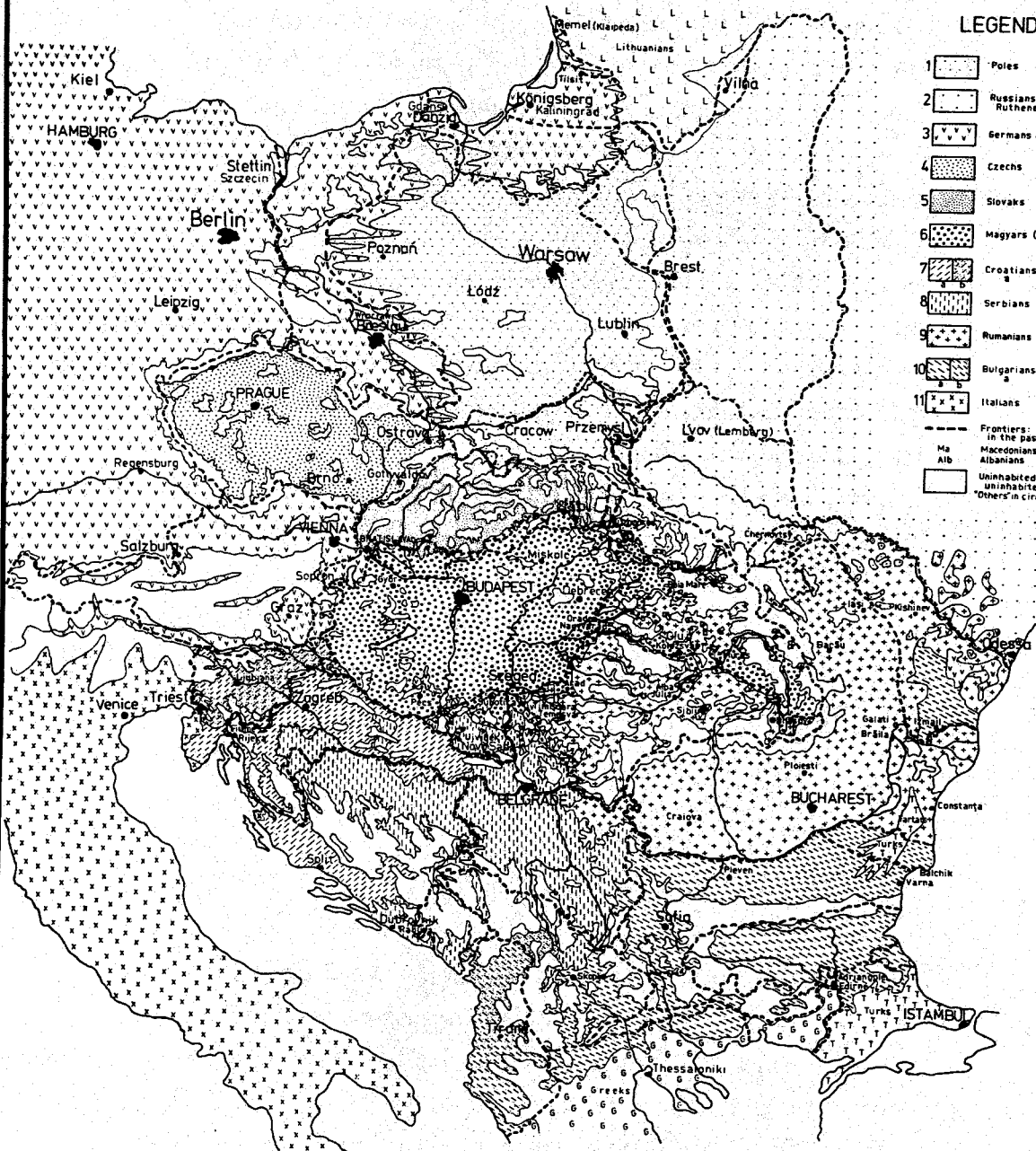
# ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP OF EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

G.Z. Foldvary

Based on ethnographic maps of: (1) P. Teleki (1918) with 1910 census data; (2) Das Bild der Erde, Atlas edited by F. Ambrosius & K. Frenzel; (3) Meyers Grosses Konversations-Lexikon, 6th ed., vol. 15, 1906; (4) Der Grosse Brockhaus, 15th ed., vols. 2, 4, 1929; (5) L. Kosinski, 1969 in: *The Geographical Review* 59, 388-402; (6) L. Jöcsik (1943).

## LEGEND

- 1 Poles
  - 2 Russians; Ukrainians, Ruthenes
  - 3 Germans (also Austrians)
  - 4 Czechs
  - 5 Slovaks
  - 6 Magyars (Hungarians)
  - 7 Croats, Slovenes
  - 8 Serbians
  - 9 Rumanians
  - 10 Bulgarians, Albanians
  - 11 Italians
- Frontiers: at present and in the past (20th century)
- Ma Macedonians  
Alb Albanians
- Uninhabited or relatively uninhabited areas  
"Others" in circular diagrams



This map shows how completely intermixed all the different nationalities are in East—Central Europe: *nation states* are an impossibility. A workable model should be found for the universal solution of the problem.

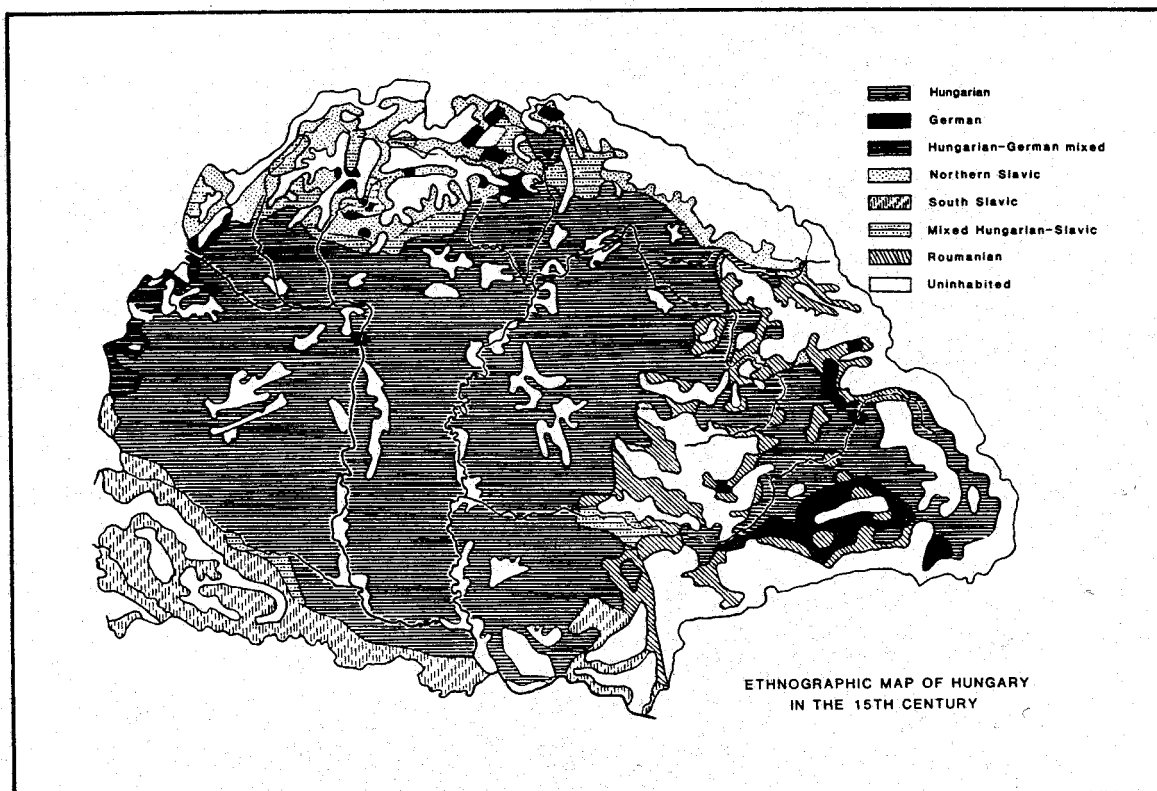
same time the present boundaries of states seem to be regarded as valid for all times. These two concepts are in conflict with each other, because either the existing division into sovereign states is perpetuated, and the significance of the borders thereby maintained or the present significance of state borders lessened by transforming them into purely administrative boundaries.

The European wars over the past few centuries could almost without exception be described as conflicts over territories. Every "peace" (i.e. peace treaty) was really a perpetuation of conditions imposed by force of war, i.e. by military conquest, or by expansionism. The present peace in Europe, despite its 40 years' duration is in actuality a peace arbitrarily maintained by *force of arms*. Human souls have not yet achieved peace, but it is now timely that they do so. In Europe, and particularly in multi-ethnic Central Europe, the state boundaries were fashioned not only from barbed wire but also out of *animosity*. It is not sufficient to cut the barbed wire. Real peace can only come if the accumulated tensions of the past 70 years are also dissipated.

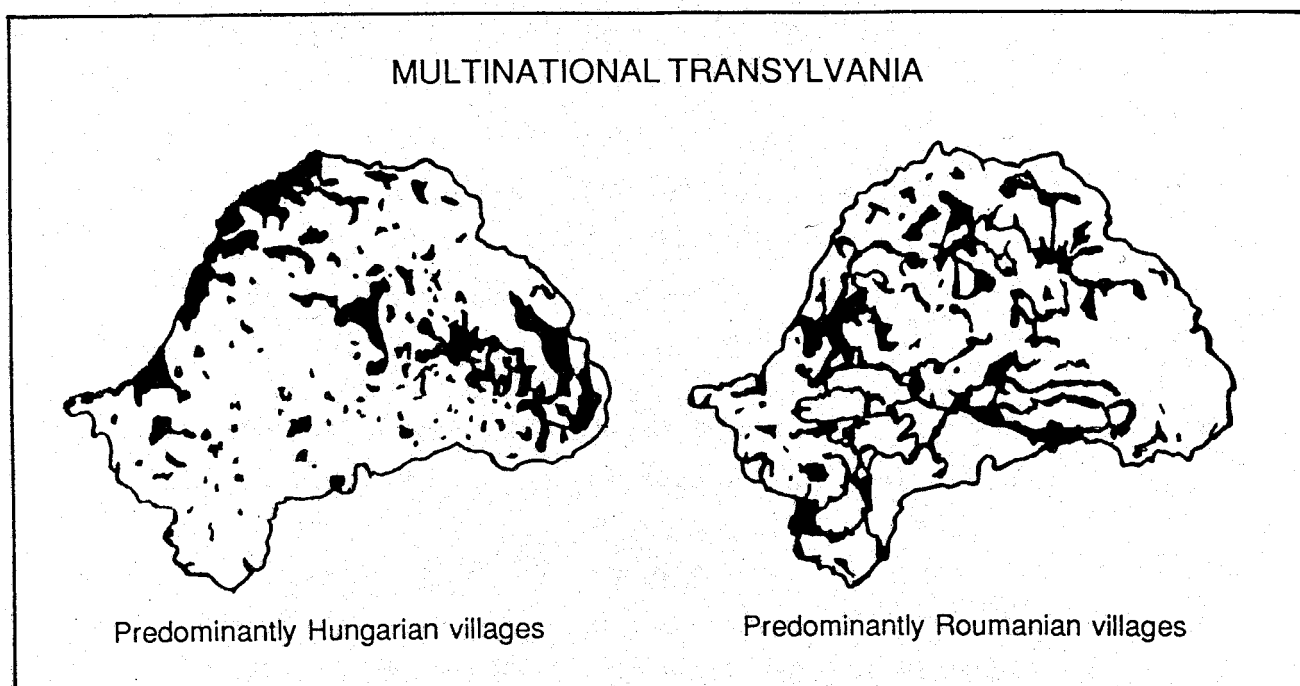
## Cultural entities in place of nation-states

It is of paramount importance to depart from the concept of the *nation state*. It may be replaced by a new concept of *cultural state* to reach all parts of a nation irrespective of state borders, without restriction. Furthermore, it must be recognized that there are certain *natural regional units*, which are intrinsically indivisible, which cannot be divided without the region as a whole suffering.

One such unique natural geographic unit is *Transylvania*, with its diverse nationalities, mixed cultures, one uniform history and one destiny. If it could not belong to Hungary (as it does not since World War I for reasons given above), it should not belong to Roumania either, and for the very same reasons. But there is another significant reason for denying Roumania possession of Transylvania. This land is the classic cradle of the principle of *religious tolerance*, which in 1557 was enacted as law by the *Diet of Torda*. Thus Transylvania —(at that time the real centre of



By the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Hungarian population very nearly filled the entire Carpathian Basin. Its population was equal in numbers to that of England or France at the time.



These two figures illustrate the positioning and distribution of the two main ethnic groups in Transylvania, based on the internationally recognized ethnographic map by Professor (Count) P. Teleki. This situation is characteristic of the whole of East—Central Europe's hopelessly mixed ethnic population (see also the ethnographic map of East—Central Europe in this Memorandum). By illustrating this situation on the above maps, it is intended to show the near-impossibility of determining and drawing state borders as equitable lines of division through Transylvania.

Hungarian culture, because of the Ottoman conquest of the middle part of Hungary )— became the first country in Europe to introduce the practice of religious tolerance. But Transylvania was also the classic country of the toleration of all nationalities on its soil. All the various ethnic groups that appeared and then disappeared over many centuries were able to enjoy their folk-cultural life undisturbed. This peaceful coexistence of various nationalities, the indigenous Hungarians (incl. Székelys), the German settlers and the refugee-settler Roumanians from the Balkans, was disturbed by the emerging nationalism of the 19th century.

Another *integral part* of the Carpathian Basin is the so-called "Upland" (the present-day Slovakia) which historically forms a cultural entity with Hungary. It was in this region that Prince Rákóczi's War of Independence (1703—1711) was mainly fought against Austrian absolutism. Slovaks, too, fought enthusiastically on the side of the Hungarians under Prince Rákóczi's banner, the two ethnic groups showing conspicuous solidarity. The Slovaks also supported the 1848—49 Revolution organized by the Hungarian patriot Louis Kossuth.

In the Southern part of the Carpathian Basin, just north of the Sava — Danube line (the present Voivodina area), Hungarians fought against the Ottoman Empire together with Serbs and, to some extent, Roumanians for centuries. As the Ottoman Turks advanced northwards, many Serbs, and also Roumanians, had to migrate north of the Danube and settle in what was Hungarian territory at the time. The centuries-long occupation by the Ottoman Turks devastated Serbia, as well as Wallachia and Moldavia in present-day Roumania, making them relatively backward.

Transylvania, this beautiful gem of land, with its medieval villages and famous universities was taken over and crushed by the intolerant attitude and barely endurable colonization policy of the invading Roumanians at the end of World War I. This was crowned by Ceausescu's plan of "homogenization" and "systematization": a program which was planned to be carried out with *ultra-fascist* methods to create the "homogeneous Roumanian people".

It is in the interest of all Europeans to have the whole of Transylvania nominated for *World Heritage Listing*, not only



### Kingdom of Hungary

Magyars, the first Hungarians, invaded in the ninth century after migrating from the Ural Mountain region. They were converted to Christianity by Stephen I, crowned in 1001.



### Turkish Rule

Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I defeated the Hungarian Army at Mohács in 1526, after which the nation was divided under Ottoman and Habsburg rule.



### Habsburg Rule

Maria Theresa, the first female ruler of the Habsburg dominions, succeeded Charles III as monarch of Hungary, ushering in 40 years of mild reform and domestic stability.



### Napoleonic Era

Hungarian nationalism grew in the decades before 1848, when a revolution led by Lajos Kossuth won independence. But Tsar Nicholas I of Russia helped put down the rebellion a year later.



### World War I

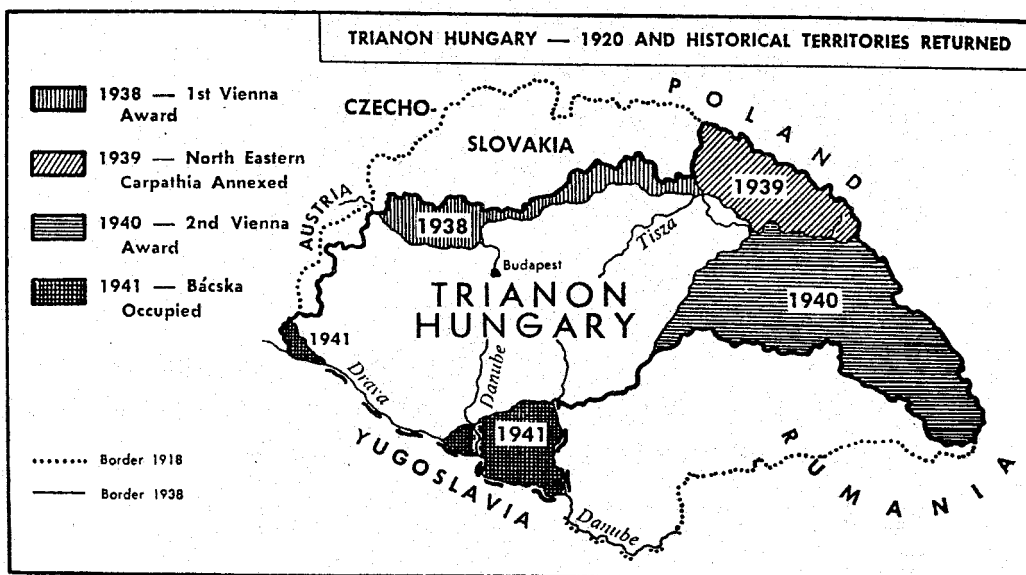
Hungary entered World War I as part of the expanded Dual Monarchy. After defeat in 1918 Hungary lost 64 percent of its population and 71 percent of its territory (next map).



### World War II

Hoping to regain lost lands, and defenseless against Nazi Germany, Hungary entered the war on the Axis side. Soviet forces were victorious in 1945; Communist control was complete by 1949.

(Source: National Geographic, February, 1983, Vol. 163, No.2)



because of its natural beauty and richness, but also that Transylvanian culture and its centuries-old model of ethnic and religious tolerance may be restored and preserved. Yes, indeed, this is in the interest of all mankind, for the Transylvanian model promises every country in the world a solution for her nationality/minority problems, problems which are a nagging source of conflict everywhere.

## The need for an Intracontinental Charter

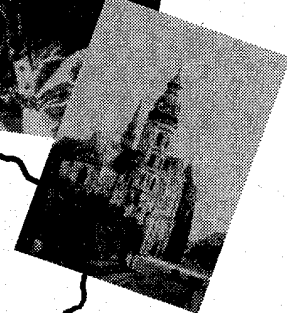
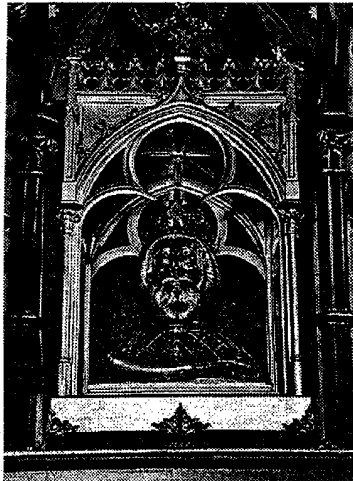
There is a need for a dual constitution in every European country. Firstly a *European Constitution* (as the common land of nations) and, secondly, a *Constitution for the Nation*. The two together may form the administrative constitution of the region, and this will have to form the preliminary conditions for acceptance into the *European Community of Countries*.

While Transylvania and other parts of the Carpathian Basin alienated from Hungary are only the birthplace of the Hungarians and not their caring and beloved *fatherland* at the same time, nobody should be surprised about the attitude of Hungarians demanding a sufficiently adequate expanse of land to accommodate all the ancestral Hungarian ethnic groups. The fate of 4 million ethnic Hungarians outside the borders of today's Hungary seriously burdens the conscience of the political and spiritual leaders of Hungary concerning the permanency of the state boundaries.

The anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon has to be commemorated, because it is a 70 year old burden of reparation in international law. Let the present anniversary of the Treaty be the occasion for lifting this seventy year old burden on the moral conscience of the world. May mankind also draw a lesson from the past seventy years and avoid the occurrence of another Trianon-type settlement, not only in the Carpathian Basin, but indeed anywhere in the world.

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# SHELL WE DIG UP THEIR GRAVES?



ANTI-CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

**LADISLAS I**, King of Hungary, 11th century. Buried in a church in Nagyvárad (today Oradea, Rumania). *Hungary was, on the whole, lucky in its kings. Ladislas I, who, like Stephen and his son Imre, was canonised after his death, was the outstanding personality among them: a true paladin and gentle knight. A protector of his faith and his people, and of the poor and defenseless.*

**JÁNOS HUNYADI**, Governor of Hungary, 15th century. Buried in Gyulafehérvár (today Alba Julia, Rumania). *His crowning achievement came in 1456, when he so heavily routed a Turkish army which was besieging Belgrade that it was seventy years before the danger recurred in so acute a form...for which the Pope ordered all the church-bells of catholic Europe to ring daily at noon...*

**MÁTYÁS CORVINUS**, "THE JUST" King of Hungary, 15th century. Born in Kolozsvár (today Cluj, Rumania). *He was...a true Renaissance prince...a brilliant natural soldier, a first-class administrator, an outstanding linguist ...a learned astrologer, an enlightened patron of the arts...Mátyás' Hungary could challenge comparison with most European states of the day.*

**FERENC RÁKÓCZI II**, Prince of Transylvania. 17th century. Buried in the Dome of Kassa (today Kosice, Slovakia). *A gentle and unassuming soul, Rákóczi was one of the most reluctant rebels in history. He drifted into the role mainly out of pity for his wretched fellow-countrymen...The Rákóczi rebellion is that on which later Hungarian historians have looked back with more romantic pride than any other in their history.*

*Italics are excerpts from C.A. Macartney's work: Hungary a short History, Edinburgh University Press, 1962.*