

Saint-Germain and Trianon, 1919–1920. The Imperialist Peace Order in Central Europe

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The peace treaties of Saint-Germain and Trianon sealed the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy into seven successor states under international law. Due to the ethnically mixed settlement structures of Austria-Hungary, the application of the right of self-determination led to multiple demarcation conflicts between the new nation-states. When the Allied Powers started the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919, the negotiations were influenced by the unsettled atmosphere in East-Central Europe, which was suffering from an acute shortage of food and coal. Applying different political, strategic and economic principles, the peace treaties with Austria and Hungary were more vindictive than the one with Germany.

[Disintegration; Habsburg Monarchy; Demarcation Conflicts; Paris Peace Conference]

The peace treaties of Saint-Germain and Trianon sealed the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy into seven successor states under international law: Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Italy. The transition years from the dissolved Habsburg Monarchy to the majority republican successor states were usually difficult, sometimes chaotic. However, there were experienced politicians in most of the new states, who had already learned their trade in the parliaments of the defunct empire. At the beginning, the legal, administrative, economic, and social orders of Austria-Hungary had been adopted, but the political constitutions had now been reversed, as well as the politically guiding ideas. The repercussions of the “total war” experience, the impoverishment processes, the lack of food and coal, the “Spanish Flu”, as well as radical nationalism, including anti-Semitism, were felt intensely in the following years. The legal measures of the new governments also set in motion hundreds of thousands people between

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the successor states of the Habsburg Monarchy, especially previous Austrian and Hungarian civil servants. These devastating situations triggered millions of people's fears about the present and pessimism about the future.

At the end of October 1918, on the home front, national independence was claimed by everyone: Poland, Czechoslovakia, German-Austria, the State of the Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, Hungary, and the West Ukrainian Republic. In Vienna, the Social Democrat Karl Renner became State Chancellor of the German-Austrian government; in Budapest, the "Aster Revolution" triumphed with the appointment of Count Mihály Károlyi as Prime Minister; in Prague, the National Committee called together a National Assembly made up of Czech and Slovak deputies. In mid-November 1918, the German-Austrian, Czecho-Slovak and Hungarian parliaments proclaimed republics. Already on 29 October 1918, the National Council of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs in Zagreb had declared all South Slavic provinces of former Austria-Hungary an independent state, meaning Slovenia, Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Vojvodina. The armistice of Padova, signed on 3 November 1918, determined the withdrawal of the Austro-Hungarian troops from all occupied territories in Northern Italy, the Balkans, and Eastern Europe, the complete demobilization of the Imperial Army and its reduction in peacetime to a maximum of 20 divisions, as well as the right of the Entente armies to "*move freely inside Austria-Hungary and occupy strategic points*". Some 360,000 Austro-Hungarian soldiers found themselves taken as prisoners of war.

In point ten of his Fourteen Points to the Congress US President Woodrow Wilson had addressed: "*The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to safeguard and assure, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.*" Wilson also called for the removal of all economic barriers, the reduction of national armaments, and the alignment of borders after "*historically established lines of allegiance and nationality*". For all nationalities of Austria-Hungary nation-building meant the connection between ethnicity, territory, and sovereignty. The political representatives of all nationalities wanted on "their" territory to establish their own, independent nation-state. The nation-state was supposed to guarantee not only political, economic, social, and cultural independence but also physical security. Due to the ethnically mixed settlement structures in the Habsburg Monarchy, however, this application of the national right of self-determination led to multiple demarcation conflicts between the nations, particularly between the German-Austrians and Czechs or Slovenes, the Hungarians and Slovaks or Romanians or Serbs,

the Czechs and Poles, the Poles and Ukrainians, and the Italians and Slovenes or Croats.

The Paris Peace Conference

On 18 January 1919, the Peace Conference under the leadership of the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau convened at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. Achieving peace was undoubtedly complicated by the fact that a total of five Allied and 24 Associated States were represented. The directing force was the Supreme Council in varying form, first as the Council of Ten (the heads of government and foreign ministers of France, Great Britain, the United States, and Italy, as well as two representatives from Japan), later divided into the Council of Four (with Clemenceau, Wilson, the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, and Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando) and the Council of Five or Council of Foreign Ministers. The Council of Ten determined the agenda of the Peace Conference and appointed 58 expert commissions and committees, which included the Commissions on Polish, Czechoslovak Affairs, Romanian and Yugoslav Affairs, and the Central Committee on Territorial Questions. However, the defeated Central Powers were not given a right of audience in the negotiations. The most important clauses were agreed among the major Allies and quickly imposed upon the vanquished parties as the preliminaries for peace.

On 25 December 1918, the Austrian State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Otto Bauer had sent a comprehensive “Memorandum on the International, Political, and Economic Position of German-Austria” to all the powers and governments of the Entente states and the United States, which expressed the standpoints of German-Austria on its international legal recognition, the inclusion of German-Bohemia, the Sudetenland, South Bohemia, and South Moravia, the normalization of relations between German-Austria and Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Italy, the question of the Danube Federation, the *Anschluss* question, the critical economic situation, and national border disputes. For German-Austria, Bauer demanded a national territory of 107,555.69 sq km with more than ten million inhabitants, agreed with plebiscites under neutral control, and provided the *Anschluss* or a “Danube Federation” as possible alternatives.¹ Although some Austrian industrialists, bankers, employers,

¹ Memorandum State Secretary Bauer to all the powers represented in Vienna and to all Entente states and the USA, Vienna, 25 December 1918. In: K. KOCH –

and workers feared German competition and some Catholics feared Prussian Protestantism, the German-Austrian National Assembly had already unanimously voted for this union on 12 November 1918. Between 27 February and 2 March 1919, German-Austrian *Anschluss* negotiations took place in Berlin. The most difficult point on both sides was the question of currency and the relationship between the Austro-Hungarian Bank and the *Reichsbank*. Finally, it was stated that German-Austria, as an independent member state, should enter the German *Reich*, adopt the German customs system and enter into a monetary union with the Reich; Vienna would have become the second capital of the *Reich*. However, when Clemenceau was asked on 27 March 1919 in the Council of Four what the Allies should say to the Austrians who wanted the *Anschluss*, he clarified the French position: “*We ask only that you remain independent. Do with this independence what you will; but you should not join a German bloc and take part in a revenge plan.*” Therefore, on 2 May 1919, Clemenceau, Wilson, and Lloyd George approved Article 80 of the Treaty with Germany: “*Germany recognizes and shall strictly respect the independence of Austria within the frontiers that shall be fixed by the Treaty made between that State and the Principal Allied and Associated Powers; she recognizes that this independence is inalienable, except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations.*”²

The draft contract of the peace treaty handed out to the German delegation on 7 May 1919 contained, on the one hand, a series of tough conditions, but left, on the other hand, the German Reich in its potential position as great power. The German Reich was required to relinquish all of its colonies, Alsace-Lorraine, the Saarland, Eupen-Malmedy, North Schleswig, Danzig/*Gdańsk*, West Prussia, Posen/*Poznań*, Memel/*Klaipėda*, and Upper Silesia. Article 231 enshrined the responsibility of Germany and its allies – Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire – as the “originators” of the war and of the Allied losses and damage, which was regarded as essential justification for the demand for reparations. Conscription and the general staff were abolished, with the Germans restricted to an army of 100,000 men (Austria to 30,000 and Hungary to 35,000 men). Germany was forbidden to have an air force, to possess

W. RAUSCHER – A. SUPPAN (eds.), *Außenpolitische Dokumente der Republik Österreich 1918–1938* (hereinafter *ADÖ*), Vol. 1: *Selbstbestimmung der Republik*, Wien 1993, Doc. No. 104.

² N. ALMOND – R. H. LUTZ (eds.), *The Treaty of Saint-Germain: A Documentary History of its Territorial and Political Clauses. With a Survey of the Documents of the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference*, Stanford, London, Oxford 1935, p. 363.

tanks, armored cars, or submarines, and the German Navy as well as the merchant marine were drastically reduced. The German delegation's answer from 29 May 1919, especially criticized the "war guilt article," as well as the cession of Upper Silesia, the Saar area, Danzig, and the Memel.³ Wilson objected: "*The treaty is undoubtedly very severe indeed,*" but it is not "*on the whole unjust [given] the very great offense against civilization which the Germans committed.*" However, after fierce discussions among the Allies the mainly German-speaking Danzig and its environs was supposed to be made a free city; and plebiscites would decide the questions of Upper Silesia, Allenstein/*Olsztyn*, Marienwerder/*Kwidzyna*, Eupen-Malmedy, and northern Schleswig. Advised that the *Reichswehr* was too weak to face an Allied advance, the German government capitulated. The final ceremony took place in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, on 28 June 1919. In the end, Germany lost 70,579 square kilometers of territory (= 13 percent) with 6,476,000 people (= 10 percent), among them 3,482,000 Germans.

Before the Austrian delegation left for Paris, in mid-May 1919, the Council of Four had settled the questions of the Bohemian Lands, Lower Styria, Southern Carinthia, and South Tyrol. A few days after the proclamation of the Czecho-Slovak State, the Provincial Government of German-Bohemia sent a note to Washington via Sweden, protested against the "*imperialist encroachments of the Czech state*" and asked President Wilson to take over the protection of this German minority in Bohemia. The German-Austrian government then proposed a plebiscite to determine the wishes of the population in the German-inhabited regions of Bohemia and Moravia. However, Edvard Beneš, the new Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic, encouraged the Prague government to "militarily" occupy, *via facti*, the "historical" borders of the Bohemian Lands that had allegedly already been documented by the French government. Under French Marshal Ferdinand Foch's Allied High Command, the Prague government was able to complete the occupation of German-Bohemian and German-Moravian cities, markets, and villages by the end of 1918. The German property owners and educated *bourgeoisie* remained essentially calm, fearing both revolutionary riots and, in the case of resistance, a negative reaction from the Allies. When State Secretary Bauer sent a protest note to the governments of the Entente, French Foreign Minister

³ Observations of the German Delegation on the Condition of Peace, 29 May 1919. In: *Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereinafter *FRUS*). *The Paris Peace Conference 1919*, Vol. VI, Washington 1946, pp. 795–797.

Stéphane Pichon rejected the proposed referendum and granting the Czechoslovak state the borders of the historic provinces of Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia until the decision of the peace conference. On 25 December, Bauer warned the Entente against the possible consequences of a violent integration of the German-Bohemians in the Czechoslovak state: “*The peace of Europe would be permanently endangered by the German irredenta within the Czechoslovak state.*”⁴

The Czechoslovak President Tomáš G. Masaryk tried to persuade US Envoy Colonel Edward M. House that the Germans’ right to self-determination in Czechoslovakia could be achieved in a better way if the German minority was made up of three million and not one million citizens, but the US negotiators did not want to commit themselves. When the Czechoslovak Finance Minister Alois Rašín separated the Czechoslovak currency from the Austrian by affixing stamp marks to the Austro-Hungarian crowns, effected on 25 February 1919, and started a strongly deflationary policy, there was a wave of German protests against the over-stamping of the banknotes; but in the final analysis the Sudeten Germans also benefited because the Czechoslovak crown became a stable national currency. However, the monetary measure merged with the inaugural session of the newly elected Parliament of the German-Austrian Republic on 4 March 1919. As the Czechoslovak government had banned the holding of elections to that parliament in the Bohemian and Moravian border areas, the German Social Democratic Party organized a general strike. This time, the Czechoslovak government did not hesitate to use armed force: Fifty-four demonstrators were killed and eighty-four heavily wounded.⁵

Beneš and the Czechoslovak Prime Minister Karel Kramář presented Czechoslovakia’s case to the Council of Ten on 5 February 1919. At first, Beneš claimed Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian Silesia, Slovakia, and Lusatia “for ethnographic reasons”. He spoke of “*old historical causes that armed the Czech people against the Germanic masses*” and that “*the Czechs had always felt that they had a special mission to resist the Teutonic flood*”. While he reduced the number of Germans in Bohemia from 2,467,724 to 1.5 million, he enlarged (based on Wilson’s question) the number of Czechs from

⁴ Memorandum State Secretary Bauer, Vienna, 25 December 1918. In: *ADÖ*, Vol. 1, Doc. No. 104.

⁵ Notes circulaires State Secretary Bauer to all missions of neutral States, Vienna, 7, 8 and 13 March 1919. In: *ADÖ*, Vol. 1, Doc. Nos. 182, 184, 186.

4,241,918 to 4.5 million. The “best argument” for Beneš to claim all of Bohemia was the fact that the “*Czech-German parts of Bohemia contained nearly the whole of the industries in the country*”. When Lloyd George enquired what the reasons might be which had led to the concentration of industries at the edges of the country, Beneš replied that the presence of waterpower, coal, and minerals explained it. Describing the ethnic composition of the population engaged in these industries, Beneš made the false assertion “*that the majority was Czech,*” only “*the employers are chiefly German*”. When Lloyd George asked whether the area in question had been represented in the Austrian *Reichsrat* by German deputies, Beneš had to agree. Now, Lloyd George “*enquired whether the inhabitants of these districts, if offered the choice, would vote for exclusion from the Czecho-Slovak State or for inclusion. Beneš replied that they would vote for exclusion, chiefly through the influence of the Social Democratic Party, which thought that the Germans would henceforth have a Social Democratic regime*”.⁶ When the Council of Four discussed the report of the Commission on Czechoslovak Affairs the Sudeten German matter was quickly and almost casually settled. The French head of the commission insisted: “*The inhabitants of these regions were accustomed to live in close connection with the rest of Bohemia, and did not desire separation. [...] The result of the policy suggested by Mr. Lansing might be that the whole of Bohemia would elect to join Germany in order not to be separated from the German-Bohemians.*” Beset by the fact that the new borders of Czechoslovakia strongly contravened the principle of self-determination, the Council accepted Clemenceau’s suggestion to opt for the simple solution of following the pre-war border between Germany and Bohemia and include more than three million Germans in the new Czechoslovakia. Astonishingly, Colonel House who was the agent for the ailing American president raised no objections and agreed “*that we would accept the old line of the historical borders and would not delineate a new one*”.⁷

In local-council elections on 15 June 1919, the German parties won 33.08% of all votes in Bohemia, 21.41% in Moravia, and 66.80% in Silesia. The Allied Powers could have viewed the results of these municipal elections as a democratic vote, not including the Germans of the Bohemian countries in the Czechoslovak state. Both the vociferously proclaimed

⁶ D. LLOYD GEORGE, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, Vol. 2, New Haven 1939, p. 608.

⁷ FRUS. *The Paris Peace Conference 1919*, Vol. III, Washington 1943, pp. 877–883; D. HÁJKOVÁ – P. HORÁK (eds.), *Edvard Beneš, Němci a Německo*, Vol. 1, Praha 2014, pp. 345–349.

democratic principles and the equally loudly proclaimed right to self-determination gave rise to this. However, a reopening of the question of the affiliation of the Germans of the Bohemian countries was no longer up for discussion after the preliminary decisions made by the Allies in April 1919 in Paris. The Czech position had prevailed without compromise.

After military conflicts between Poland and Czechoslovakia over the former Austrian Duchy of Teschen in January 1919, the Allied Powers had to intervene in the conflict between the two new allies. According to the 1910 Austrian census, a total of 54% Poles, 27% Czechs, and 18% Germans lived in Teschen Silesia. Teschen/*Cieszyn/Těšín* and Bielitz/*Bielsko* were majority German towns, but the industrial and mining parts of the country were dominated by Polish and Czech workers. An important Czech argument was the fact that the only important railway linking Moravia and Northern Slovakia was the train line Oderberg/*Bohumín*–Teschen–Jablunkau/*Jablunkov*–Zsolna/*Sillein/Žilina*. When the Conference of Ambassadors tried to organize a plebiscite in July 1920, Beneš asked for an arbitration by the Conference of Ambassadors and pushed through the partition of the region and its main city without a plebiscite. As a result, Poland received only the eastern part of the disputed area, while Czechoslovakia received the more valuable western part with the mining and smelting facilities. At the same time, the Conference of Ambassadors assigned to Poland 25 Carpathian villages in the former Hungarian counties of Árvá/*Orava* and Szepes/*Zips/Spiš*.

In the atmosphere of social revolutionary tensions in Croatia-Slavonia and in view of the threat to Carniola, Istria and Dalmatia by advancing Italian troops, a majority of the Zagreb National Council formed a 28-member delegation, which travelled to Belgrade on 27 November. The National Council agreed to transfer governmental power to King Petar and the Prince Regent Aleksandar throughout the territory of the Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian state and wished to establish a joint parliamentary government and a common parliament. The prince regent accepted this address and on 1 December 1918 announced the union of Serbia and Montenegro with the countries of the independent State of the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (*Kraljevina SHS*).

Although the United States recognized the new kingdom on 7 February 1919, Britain, France, and Italy preferred to negotiate with the Yugoslav delegation in Paris under the title “Delegation of the Kingdom of Serbia”. Although on 6 January 1919, Prince Regent Aleksandar once again

emphasized that the Yugoslav peace delegation should demand “*only the ethnographic borders of our people*,” on 18 February 1919 the Yugoslav delegation, under the leadership of Prime Minister Nikola Pašić, presented a whole series of wider territorial demands before the Council of Ten that affected the majority German-Austrian cities Villach, Klagenfurt, and Marburg/*Maribor*, the majority Magyar cities Pécs, Zombor/*Sombor*, Szabadka/Maria-Theresiopel/*Subotica*, *Szeged*, and *Arad*, the majority German city Temesvár/Temeschwar/*Timișoara*, some Bulgarian cities, the Albanian city of Skutari/*Shkodër*, and the majority Italian cities of Fiume/*Rijeka*, Pola/*Pula*, Trieste/*Trieste*/Trst, and Görz/*Gorizia*/*Gorica*. Yugoslav delegates and experts pointed to the Italianization in the Littoral, the Germanization in Carinthia and Lower Styria, and the Magyarization in southern Hungary, and tried to represent the ports of Trieste and Fiume as indispensable for the Slovenian and Croatian economy.⁸ The admission of the Yugoslav delegation to the Council of Ten on 18 February was less friendly than that of the Polish, Czechoslovak, and Romanian delegations since Italy had acted from the outset as a great competitor.

Because the Vienna Parliament in accordance with the provincial assemblies in Graz and Klagenfurt also demanded the inclusion of the Drava Valley in Lower Styria and of the Karawanken border in Carinthia, no fewer than eleven Styrian and thirteen Carinthian judicial districts with a total of 470,000 inhabitants (among them 229,000 Slovenes and 218,000 Germans) were disputed regarding future state affiliation. On 1 November 1918, the commander of the *k.k. Landsturm* District Command in Marburg, the Slovene Major Rudolf Maister, had already seized military power in Marburg and its surroundings, and built a “Styrian Border Command”. When it came to the South Slavic occupation of southeastern Carinthia at the beginning of December 1918, the Provisional Carinthian State Assembly unanimously decided not to oppose Entente troops but to “*oppose the entry of Yugoslav troops*”. Indeed, after Christmas Day 1918, the Carinthians undertook a counter-offensive and reconquered about half of lower Carinthia. This defensive struggle by those who were the directly affected was ultimately decisive for the future border demarcation since knowledge of these events also reached the US Study Commission of

⁸ Mémoire présenté à la Conférence de la Paix concernant les Revendications du Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes; Annex: La frontière Nord avec l’Autriche allemande, Paris, 3 March 1919. In: B. KRIZMAN – B. HRABAK (eds.), *Zapisnici sa sednica Delegacije Kraljevine SHS na Mirovnoj Konferenciji u Parizu 1919–1920*, Belgrade 1960, pp. 52–54.

Professor Archibald C. Coolidge (Harvard University) in Vienna. During armistice talks in Graz, two US officers, Lieutenant Colonel Sherman Miles and Lieutenant LeRoy King, joined the negotiations and proposed mediation. On 27 January 1919, Miles set off from Graz to Maribor with his mission, where they were received by General Maister. While the Slovene general explained the Slovenian demands concerning Carinthia in Maribor's town hall, a large German-Austrian demonstration with thousands of participants took place outside. The crowd surrounded and attacked a South Slav officer, whereupon the Yugoslav troops positioned by Maister opened fire without orders, killing thirteen people and wounding sixty. Between 28 January and 6 February 1919, the Miles Mission toured several small towns, markets, and villages in ethnically mixed Lower Carinthia, and spoke to secular and spiritual dignitaries, peasants and workers, market goers and schoolchildren. As early as 7 February, the mission submitted a first report to Coolidge, stating in their majority report, *“that the entire [Klagenfurt] basin is a geographical and economic entity and should be assigned to Austria because the majority of the population, even those of Slovene nationality, would like it”*. While Miles stated, *“[...] there are many Slovenes who do not wish to join Yugoslavia [...] – we strongly recommend that the final frontier between Austria and Yugoslavia in the province of Carinthia be drawn along the watershed of the Karawanken mountains,”* Professor Robert Kerner advised: *“Thus the Drau-Mur Line would appear to answer the demands for a good boundary.”* Coolidge, however, accepted the majority report with just a few changes and sent Miles to Paris to give a personal report to the US delegation. Although the Yugoslav peace delegation protested against publication, and French Foreign Minister Pichon spoke of the *“actions of a certain Mr. Coolidge,”* the Council of Ten assigned the Carinthian and Styrian frontier questions to the Commission on Romanian and Yugoslav Affairs to study.⁹

This Commission, chaired by the later French Foreign Minister André Tardieu, discussed the demarcation of Yugoslavia and Austria in March and April 1919. Very quickly, it became apparent that the French and British delegates wanted to join Maribor and the surrounding area to Yugoslavia, while the Italian delegate spoke in favor of German-Austria.

⁹ A. C. COOLIDGE, *Life and Letters*, H. J. COOLIDGE – R. H. LORD (eds.), Boston, New York 1932, pp. 198–201; Ch. M. GIGLER, *Die Berichte der Coolidge-Mission im Jahre 1919. Die mitteleuropäischen Interessen der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, Klagenfurt 2001, pp. 68–125.

The Americans Charles Seymour and Clive Day, however, pleaded unequivocally for the preservation of the Klagenfurt Basin in Austria, both for economic reasons and as a result of the military resistance of the German- and Slovene-speaking Lower Carinthians, which “*can be interpreted like a referendum*”. In the end, the Commission recommended that the Council of Five “*assign to Yugoslavia the Marburg Basin*” but hold a plebiscite in the Klagenfurt Basin. On 12 May, Ambassador Tardieu explained the principle of the plebiscite to the Council of Ten; then, Clemenceau, Wilson, and Lloyd George agreed. Now the Yugoslav peace delegation tried to divide the Klagenfurt Basin without a plebiscite, along a so-called “Green Line”. However, neither the occupation of southeastern Carinthia by Yugoslav troops nor an intervention by the Serbian envoy Vesnić at the Council of Four on 4 June 1919 could change this decision, not even a direct intervention by the Ljubljana Bishop Jeglič and the Slovene Governor Brejč with Wilson.¹⁰

When the Peace Conference started, the Italian delegation did not pay much attention to the creation of the new principles in foreign relations and gave the impression it was interested only in gaining all the territories the secret Treaty of London (26 April 1915) had foreseen, with the addition of the Hungarian port Fiume/*Rijeka*. In November 1918, Italian troops had entered Trieste, Pola/*Pula*, Fiume, *Zara/Zadar*, and Sebenico/*Šibenik*, as well as Trento, *Bozen/Bolzano*, and even Innsbruck. Because the Entente had promised Italy for entering the war against Austria-Hungary the future border at the Brenner Pass, the Rome government demanded not only the Italian part of South Tyrol but also the district of Ampezzo populated by Ladinians and the whole of the German parts of South Tyrol, although 220,000 Germans, 19,000 Ladinians and some 6,000 Italians lived north of the Salurner Klause. However, the Italian delegates submitted a memorandum to the Council of Ten on 7 February 1919 in which the incorporation of Tyrol was required up to the Brenner, in addition,

¹⁰ Report of the Commission on Romanian and Yugoslav Affairs, Paris, 6 April 1919; Discussion by the Council of Ten, Paris, 12 May 1919; Memorandum of the Delegation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to the Peace Conference, Paris, 31 May 1919; Annotations on the discussions of the Council of Four on the Klagenfurt Area. All in: ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 363–364, 380–384, 508–510; D. HUNTER MILLER, *My Diary at the Peace Conference of Paris. With Documents*, Vol. XVI, New York 1924, pp. 264–270; M. ÁDÁM – Gy. LITVÁN – M. ORMOS (eds.), *Documents diplomatiques français sur l'histoire du bassin des Carpates 1918–1932*, Vols. I–II: octobre 1918–juin 1920, Budapest 1993, 1995; Vol. I, Doc. Nos. 227, 239, 323, 326.

the Sesto Valley, the Kanal Valley, and the region of Tarvis/*Tarvisio*. The memorandum spoke of the liberation of his oppressed brothers in Trentino, Alto Adige, and Venezia Giulia, a “*geographical and political unity*” of Trentino and Alto Adige, in which an alleged 420,000 Italians and only 180,000 Germans lived, and introduced the need for the strategic Brenner border. The US “Inquiry” had originally been against the Brenner border, but in October 1918, Colonel House could imagine the Brenner border in connection with autonomy for South Tyrol and the liberation of young German men from military service. On 21 January 1919, the “Inquiry” proposed a division of German South Tyrol, whereby the Etsch Valley with Bozen and *Meran/Merano* should be given to Italy, while the Eisack and Puster Valleys with *Brixen/Bressanone* and *Bruneck/Brunico* should remain in Austria. Wilson, “*who for some reason had a preference for the solution of the Adriatic problem in favor of Yugoslavia,*” was obviously prepared to accept the Italian position in the Alpine border from the end of January 1919.

On 26 February 1919, the Tyrolean Government sent a petition to President Wilson that stated: It has been proven that the territory from Kufstein to the *Salurner Klause* “*is solely, and in a compact mass, inhabited by Germans; [...] The Germans as well as the Ladinians of Tyrol have repeatedly declared their earnest wish to remain united, and to decide their future for themselves. [...] The people of Tyrol [...] trust in the achievement of the President’s ideal political aims, as put down in the 14 points of his message*”. The Tyrolean Government enclosed a Memorandum “*concerning the indivisibility of this country,*” pointing to Point IX of Wilson’s 14 points that speaks of an adjustment of the Italian frontier “*along clearly recognizable national lines*”. The Memorandum also underlined the clear separation of the German and Italian speaking districts and the contrast between the social and economic conditions of the Germans and the Italians.¹¹

In the Council of Ten, Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando talked dramatically about Austria being Italy’s main enemy during the war; his deputies at Paris kept hold of the London Treaty and argued using strategic reasons and that the Poles, Czechs, Romanians, and Yugoslavs were also breaking the principle of nationality. Other notes by the Austrian Government and the Tyrolean Diet to the Council of Ten followed, offering a military neutrality of German Tyrol; but even the threat of a Tyrolean *irredenta* and

¹¹ Memorandum Tyrolean Government, Innsbruck, February 1919; Memorandum Tyrolean Government to President Wilson, Innsbruck, 26 February 1919. Both in: *ADÖ*, Vol. 1, Doc. Nos. 170 and 170 A.

an *Anschluss* of North Tyrol to Germany did not help. After negotiations on 14, 19 and 24 April 1919, the Council of Four decided in favor of Italy. Wilson himself would later admit that he conceded the territory based on “insufficient study” and that he had come to regret this “ignorant” decision.¹² On 3 May 1919, the Tyrolean State Assembly even dared “to proclaim the closed German and Ladinic territories up to the Salurner Klause as an independent, democratic and neutral Free State of Tyrol,” if only the unity of these areas could be respected; but this desperate step was also never agreed to by the peace conference.

In February 1919, Prime Minister Orlando persuaded his main Allies that the Adriatic settlement remain in the exclusive competence of the Council of Ten. Of course, Orlando and the Italian delegation strongly opposed the expansive demands of the Yugoslav delegation, which included not only the whole of Dalmatia and Istria but also Trieste and Gorizia. When President Wilson made the compromise proposal in mid-April 1919, which largely took account of the ethnic circumstances, of joining the eastern part of the territory of Gorizia and Istria as well as Fiume and all of Dalmatia to Yugoslavia, it came to “stormy” clashes between Wilson and Orlando; but when the Italian delegation stubbornly refused a compromise solution, Wilson appealed directly to the Italian people, and the Italian delegates left the Peace Conference on 24 April 1919, in order to reinforce their authority at home. With this political mistake, the role of Italy became less influential. On 7 June 1919, Wilson made public a new memorandum on the Italian-Yugoslav border. The memorandum mentioned the creation of a Free State of Fiume, according to the model of Danzig, which would include the city (with an Italian majority) and the entire eastern part of the peninsula of Istria (with a Croat majority). However, when Wilson returned to the United States, on 28 June 1919, the strongest protector of the Yugoslav demands had left the stage.

The invasion by Gabriele D’Annunzio and his legionnaires in Fiume on 12 September 1919 worsened the Yugoslav negotiating position. After armed incidents in Spalato, Zara, Fiume, and Trieste, the new Italian government under Giovanni Giolitti with Foreign Minister Count Carlo Sforza demanded the border in Istria on Mount Nevoso/*Snežnik*, Fiume

¹² Note Staatsamt für Äußeres to foreign missions (without Italy), Vienna, 9 April 1919; Tyrolean Government to President Wilson, Innsbruck, April 1919. Both in: *ADÖ, Vol. 2: Im Schatten von Saint Germain*, Wien 1994, Doc. No. 209; see Wilson’s Note concerning the basis for decisions regarding frontiers especially the Italian frontiers, Washington D.C., 24 February 1919. In: ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 346–350.

as an independent state with a territorial connection to Italy as well as the Quarnero Islands of Cherso/*Cres* and Lussino/*Lošinj*, and in return, was ready to leave all of Dalmatia – with the exception of Zara and some islands – to Yugoslavia. Soon after the failure in the Carinthian plebiscite, Prime Minister Milenko Vesnić and Foreign Minister Ante Trumbić went to Italy, to negotiate the Istrian community of Castua/*Kastav* remaining in Yugoslavia and signed the Treaty of Rapallo on 12 November 1920. Italy kept the whole Littoral with Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, and the Quarnero Islands of Cherso, Lussino, and Unie, but only the city of Zara and the islands of Lagosta/*Lastovo* and Pelagosa/*Palagruža* in Dalmatia; Fiume/*Rijeka* was to become a buffer state between the two countries, but in 1924, was divided between Italy and Yugoslavia: Italy kept the city of Fiume, while Sušak was given to Yugoslavia. However, 350,000 Slovenes and 150,000 Croats in Italy became new minorities without minority rights. Nonetheless, in Italy the myth of “mutilated victory” (*Vittoria mutilata*) was born. Of course, the main reason was Italy’s passing over from the division of the former German colonies and some decision-making by the “Big Three” in the former Ottoman Empire.

The Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye

On 14 May 1919, the German-Austrian delegation under the leadership of State Chancellor Karl Renner arrived at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, a suburb of Paris. On 29 May, Renner was told “*The Allied and Associated Powers have decided to recognize the new Republic under the name ‘Republic of Austria’*”. The first draft of the peace treaty, handed over by Clemenceau on 2 June, did not include all clauses. Renner was given the opportunity to present the views of the German-Austrians and, thus, also of the Sudeten Germans, South Tyroleans, Carinthians, and Styrians. Renner denied that the new Republic – as the other nation-states – could be considered the successor of the late Monarchy, and stressed that the new Republic “*has freed herself from all those imperialist aspirations, which have become so fatal to the existence of the ancient Monarchy*”. And: “*The German-Austrian Republic [...] has never declared war, never carried on war, and in relations with the Western Powers never had the position of a warring Power from an international point of view.*” Nevertheless, getting the first draft, the Austrian delegation “*felt very sad, bitter and depressed when we realized that Austria had received harsher terms than Germany*”. The German districts in the Bohemian lands were allotted to Czechoslovakia, South Tyrol to Italy, and Lower Styria with Maribor to Yugoslavia. Reparations and other financial clauses were copied from

the conditions imposed on Germany but added to these conditions was the confiscation of all property held by Austrians in the territories of the former Monarchy. And little Austria was to be burdened with the majority of the debts of the former Austrian Empire. State Secretary Bauer commented with bitterness: “*The confiscation of bank branches, factories, trading companies, and estates located in foreign language area means the downfall of Vienna.*”¹³

The Austrian delegation was only allowed to make written objections. Therefore, the note of Section Head Richard Schüller “Austria cannot live” was the first to be transmitted to the Supreme Council, protesting with great energy against the confiscation of property belonging to Austrian citizens in the territories of former Austria-Hungary. Indeed, the article was replaced by the interdiction of such confiscation. However, Article 88 of the treaty expressly stated that the independence of Austria is “inalienable” and forbade the joining of the two German states (also the joining with Hungary or with any other state) unless the consent of the Council of the League of Nations was given. On 20 July 1919, the “Final Text of Peace Conditions” comprising 381 articles was delivered to Renner. Referring to the “*wall of prejudices and incorrect judgements*” that were directed against the German-Austrian people abroad, Bauer resigned a State Secretary, on 27 July: “*I cannot hope to find confidence among the French rulers, who, as Marx taunted, still consider the disunity of the German people a right of the French nation.*”¹⁴

The definite text of the peace conditions started with the Covenant of the League of Nations and the establishment of a Permanent Court of International Justice. Part II fixed the frontiers of the new Austria along the watershed between the Inn and Etsch Rivers as well between the Drau and Tagliamento Rivers. The inhabitants of the Klagenfurt Basin were supposed to indicate in a plebiscite to which State they wished the territory

¹³ ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 38–64; State Secretary Bauer to Austrian representatives in Berne, The Hague, and Berlin, Vienna, 3 June 1919: in: *ADÖ*, Vol. 2, Doc. No. 260; Minute of the National Assembly, Vienna, 7 June 1919. In: *ADÖ*, Vol. 2, Doc. No. 268; Comment of the Austrian Delegation (Renner) on the 2 June Draft of the Conditions of Peace with Austria, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 10 June 1919. In: ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 204–209.

¹⁴ Austrian Delegation to Staatsamt für Äußeres, Saint-Germain, 20 July 1919; Draft Eichhoff, Saint-Germain, July 1919; Minute of the National Assembly, Vienna, 26 July 1919; Bauer to Seitz, Vienna, 25 July 1919. All in: *ADÖ*, Vol. 2, Doc. Nos. 316, 318, 327, 324; ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 178–203.

would belong. A part of Western Hungary with Ödenburg/*Sopron* would become a part of Austria. The borders with Czechoslovakia remained the old administrative borders between Lower and Upper Austria and Moravia and Bohemia; but even some Lower Austrian communities near Feldsberg/*Valtice* and *Gmünd/Cmunt* were given to Czechoslovakia. As one of the two heirs to the Habsburg Monarchy, Austria had to accept a “war guilt” clause (Art. 177) and was made liable for reparations. According to Art. 197, “*all the property and all sources of revenue in Austria were first and foremost to pay the costs of redress and all other burdens arising from the present treaty*”. This right to general lien (*Generalpfandrecht*) was not abolished before January 1930. Article 207 conceded to all successor states according to the territorial principle all the state property within their borders: administrative, court, and school buildings, barracks and fortresses, railroads, archives, libraries, etc. It also included “*all crown property as well as the private property of the former Austro-Hungarian ruling family*”. However, the liquidation of state debts and assets proved difficult, as well as things like the rolling stock of the railroads and the central archives in the former imperial capitals of Vienna and Budapest.¹⁵

An explanation for the harsh conditions of the Saint-Germain Treaty was given by Clemenceau in his cover letter, delivered to Renner on 2 September 1919: “[...] *The Austrian people share in a large number with their neighbor, the Hungarian people, responsibility for the ill, which Europe has suffered in the course of the last five years. [...] It is now evident that this ultimatum [on Serbia, A. S.] was but a hypocritical pretext to begin a war, which the old autocratic government in Vienna, in close accord with the rulers of Germany, had prepared long ago, and for which it judged the moment had arrived. The presence of Austrian cannons at the sieges of Liège and Namur is a proof more, if one were needed, of the close association of the government of Vienna with the government of Berlin in the complot against public law and the liberty of Europe. [...]*

If the Austrian people had during the years, which preceded the war, made efforts to repress the spirit of militarism and of domination; [...] if it had raised an effective protest against the war; [...] but the war was acclaimed from the moment of its declaration at Vienna, the Austrian people have been from beginning to end its ardent partisan; [...] proof sufficient that conformably to the sacred rules of justice, Austria should be held to assume its entire share of responsibility for the crime, which has unchained upon the world such a calamity.

¹⁵ Observations of the Austrian Delegation, 9 August 1919. In: ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 310–325.

But there is more: the Allied and Associated Powers feel obliged to point out that the polity of the old Habsburgs had become in its essence a polity destined to maintain the supremacy of the German and Magyar peoples over the majority of the inhabitants of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. [...] It is this system of domination and oppression, setting the races against one another, and to which the Austrian people has given its constant support, that has been one of the most profound causes of the war. It has produced on the borders of Austria-Hungary those irredentist movements, which have fostered in Europe fermenting agitation. [...].”¹⁶

Clemenceau’s mantle note, oozing with more than dubious double morality, suppresses the fact that Austria-Hungary did not declare war on France, Great Britain, Japan, Italy or the United States, but that all five Allies had declared war on the Habsburg Monarchy. Of course, all the deputies of the Austrian National Assembly considered this cover letter to be an intense humiliation, and, of course, the Austrian politicians and the Austrian public did not forget this humiliation – at least until March 1938. Nevertheless, on 6 September 1919, the Social Democratic and Christian Social deputies voted under protest – particularly against the deprivation of the German-Austrian nation’s right of self-determination and the separation of the Sudeten Germans and the Germans of South Tyrol – for the Treaty and instructed Renner to sign the Peace Treaty.¹⁷ Renner returned to Paris and signed the Treaty at the Castle of Saint-Germain-en-Laye on 10 September 1919.

According to Article 49 of the Treaty the inhabitants of the Klagenfurt area should be called upon to indicate by a vote the State to which they wish the territory would belong. The Klagenfurt area was divided into two plebiscite zones, the first (A or I) to the south and the second (B or II) to the north of a transversal line beginning east of Villach – through Wörthersee – south of Klagenfurt – north of *Völkermarkt/Velikovec*. While the Governor of the Province of Carinthia, Arthur Lemisch, protested to the Interallied Commission against the “tyranny” of the Yugoslav authorities in the southern plebiscite zone, the Slovenian government recognized an unfavorable situation, because “*our own military has behaved to the Slovene people, as if they were in enemy territory*”. In fact, Slovene politicians, the military and civil servants were placed on the defensive by the anti-royal and anti-Orthodox German-Carinthian propaganda, which

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 225–230.

¹⁷ Minute of the National Assembly, Vienna, 6 September 1919. In: *ADÖ*, Vol. 2, Doc. No. 355.

also challenged the general compulsory military service in Yugoslavia. However, anti-Semitic and sexist interventions did not help when Slovene propaganda leaflets warned not only against the “Viennese Jewish economy” but also the civil-law anchoring of the marriage in Vienna. In a foreign policy debate on 20–22 April 1920 in the Constituent National Assembly the Carinthian Social Democratic deputy Florian Gröger tried to weigh the expected voting behavior: *“It is true that in Zone A the majority of the population belongs to the Slovene nation. But all these Slovenes are able to speak German and they all gravitate to Klagenfurt, to Carinthia, to German-Austria. It is the economic and political circumstances that are more relevant to voting in the contested area than the national one. [...] The workers [...] have for decades been members of the trade unions, political and consumer cooperative organizations of Austrian Social Democracy.”*¹⁸

When, on 6 August 1920, the demarcation line was reopened, the population of Zone I hurried to Klagenfurt and stormed, above all, the manufacturing shops and hardware stores. The opening of the demarcation line between the two voting zones had been forced by the Interallied Commission formed in March 1920, which demanded now the release of passenger traffic and trade, the facilitation of return for expellees and refugees, and the abolition of sequestration. On 10 October 1920, nearly 96% of the over 39,000 eligible male and female Lower Carinthian voters participated in the plebiscite Zone I, which was carried out smoothly and in the correct form, monitored by British, French, and Italian officers. Although there was a narrow majority for Yugoslavia in two districts, the overall result was clear with 22,025 votes for Austria (= 59.04%) compared to 15,279 votes for Yugoslavia (= 40.96%). About 11,000 Germans and Slovenes each voted for Austria, and just over 15,000 Slovenes for Yugoslavia. Therefore, a plebiscite in Zone II (with Klagenfurt) was dropped. As this result was perceived as national catastrophe in Slovenian politics and public debate, there were brief military and diplomatic attempts to prevent the plebiscite from being cleared. However, the Paris Conference of Ambassadors recognized the result and the Plebiscite Commission subordinated Zone I once again to the sovereignty of the Republic of Austria. Chancellor Renner praised the policy of Professor Coolidge:

¹⁸ ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 521–523; Anketa, Ukrepi za izvedbo plebiscite na Koroškem, *Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja*, Ljubljana, Fasz. 30/7 and Fasz. 144; Konstituierende Nationalversammlung der Republik Österreich, *Stenographisches Protokoll zur 73. bis 75. Sitzung*, Vienna, 20–22 April 1920. In: *ADÖ, Vol. 3: Österreich im System der Nachfolgestaaten*, Wien 1996, Doc. No. 444.

“[...] *It is no doubt in consequence of the impartial reports to that Mission [the Coolidge Mission], based for the greater part on local information, that the Interallied Powers granted the population of Southern Carinthia the advantage of deciding its own future. Thanks to the impartiality, zeal and broad-minded counsels of this eminent man, [...] there triumphed a principle, which according to the intention of the United States, should have served as a basis for the reconstruction of all our frontiers.*”¹⁹

The Treaty of Trianon

When the Hungarian Prime Minister Count Mihály Károlyi came to Belgrade to sign a separate armistice with the Entente, on 13 November 1918, the French Commander-in-Chief of the Oriental Army, General Louis Franchet d'Esperey, did not welcome him in a friendly manner: “*In your country, you have oppressed those who are not Magyar. Now you have the Czechs [?], Slovaks, Romanians, and Yugoslavs as enemies.*” Already at the beginning of November 1918, Serbian troops had advanced over the Sava and Danube and had occupied Újvidék/Neusatz/Novi Sad, Szabadka/Maria Theresiopel/Subotica, and Temesvár/Temeschwar /Timișoara, later even Pécs/Fünfkirchen with its coalmines, and the Belgrade Convention accepted these occupations. In Transylvania, Romanian troops followed the retreating German Mackensen Army, and the Entente fixed a demarcation line on 23 December 1918. In the North, under the influence of the Czech representatives in Paris, the preparatory commission of the Peace Conference declared a new demarcation line following the Danube and Ipoly Rivers directly to the mouth of the Ung into the Tisza River. Therefore, at the beginning of January 1919, the Czechoslovak Army occupied several cities and towns in Slovakia, including Pozsony/Pressburg/Bratislava and Kassa/Kaschau/Košice and tried to establish its authority.²⁰

The mood in Paris was anything but Hungary-friendly. Many politicians, diplomats, and journalists saw Hungary as a land of aristocratic landowners who were still oppressing their peasants. This negative sentiment was also transmitted to the Commission on Romanian and Yugoslav Affairs, particularly to the French and Italian experts, while the British and American were looking more for the ethnic frontiers. Therefore, the US

¹⁹ S. WAMBAUGH, *Plebiscites since the World War. With a Collection of Official Documents*, Vol. 2, Washington 1933, pp. 126–130; ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 524–533; COOLIDGE, pp. 215–216.

²⁰ ÁDAM – LITVÁN – ORMOS, *Documents diplomatiques français*, Vol. I, Doc. No. 33 and Map 1.

delegate Seymour demanded the number of the future Magyar minorities in Czechoslovakia should be kept as low as possible. Nevertheless, on 20 March 1919, Lieutenant Colonel Ferdinand Vix actually handed a note from the Supreme Council to President Károlyi that the Hungarian troops were to pull back within ten days to an area west of the neutral zone in the Tisza area, i.e. west of the exclusively Magyar cities Debrecen, Békéscsaba, Orosháza, Hódmezővásárhely and Szeged. This was to prevent further military clashes between Hungarian and Romanian units, which could advance to the line Szatmárnémeti/*Satu Mare*–Nagykároly/*Carei*–Nagyvárad/*Oradea*–Arad. Károlyi lost his nerves: “*Make it a French colony, or a Romanian colony, or a Czechoslovak colony.*”²¹ On the next day, Károlyi left his power to a government of Social Democrats and Communists, which proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat under the leadership of a Revolutionary Governing Council led by Béla Kun.

While the Communist-led Hungarian government decreed public ownership of industry, agriculture, trade, and finances, and the Red Guards put pressure (and even terrorized) not only on aristocrats, the bourgeoisie and well-to-do peasants, but also the lower strata of the peasantry, Romanian and Czech units continued to advance towards core Hungary. Therefore, the Revolutionary Governing Council mobilized the workers of Budapest and provincial towns and began counterattacks in Slovakia in May 1919. Despite the military successes of the Hungarian Red Army, led by former *k.u.k.* Army and *Honvéd* officers, the Council of Four accepted the demarcation proposals submitted by the Commission. At the beginning of June, the Hungarian Red Army even occupied large part of eastern Slovakia with Kassa/*Košice* and Eperjes/*Prešov* and proclaimed a Slovak Soviet Republic. Nevertheless, on 13 June 1919, the Allies presented Hungary’s new borders. Although Kun withdrew Hungarian troops from Slovakia, Romanian troops remained on the Tisza Line and began attacks towards Budapest. On 1 August 1919, Kun fled with his government on a special train to Vienna, from where they travelled to Moscow.²²

Only in November 1919 did France and Great Britain order the governments in Bucharest, Prague, and Belgrade to withdraw their troops immediately from Hungarian territory, which of course meant the new lines of

²¹ *Ibid.*, Map 1.

²² P. MANTOUX (ed.), *Les Délibérations du Conseil des Quatre (24 mars–28 juin 1919)*. Notes de l’Officier Interprète, Paris 1955, pp. 338–339, 354; H. NICOLSON, *Peacemaking, 1919*, London 1933, p. 298; M. HRONSKÝ, *The Struggle for Slovakia and the Treaty of Trianon, 1918–1920*, Bratislava 2001, p. 200.

demarcation. The Peace Conference sent the experienced British diplomat Sir George Clerk, who succeeded in forcing the withdrawal of Romanian troops from Budapest and, on 24 November, forming a new Hungarian coalition government with Christian, Liberal, and Socialist ministers. Already on 16 November, the former *k.u.k.* Vice Admiral Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya – since May Minister of War of a counter-government in Szeged – had ridden at the head of his troops in Budapest and had taken over the real rule. After elections at the end of January 1920, the new parliament declared Hungary a kingdom on 28 February, and on 1 March, Horthy was elected Regent by the National Assembly.

Under the guidance of Count Albert Apponyi and Count Pál Teleki the Hungarian delegation to the Peace Conference prepared material with 346 memoranda and 100 maps and statistical material, translated into French and English. However, the Hungarian memoranda could not explain why the Hungarian language clearly dominated the school system and why there were only a handful of minority representatives among the 413 members of the Hungarian Parliament. A few days after the Hungarian delegation had arrived in Paris on 6 January 1920, Count Apponyi received the draft from the Allied Powers: Hungary should not only lose all of Upper Hungary, the entirety of Transylvania as well as the greater part of southern Hungary, but also areas with predominantly Magyar population such as the Csallóköz/*Velký Žitný ostrov*, the region around Komárom/*Komárno*, the south of the Kassa–Rimaszombat/*Rimavská Sobota* line, the regions of Szatmárnémeti/*Satu Mare*, Nagyvárad/*Oradea*, and Arad, and the Szabadka/*Subotica* area in the northeast of the Bácska/*Bačka*. In reply, the Hungarian notes marshaled numerous counterarguments to these frontier proposals: linguistic and ethnic, historical, cultural and religious, economic and hydrographic. Apponyi, who delivered his speech in French, English, and Italian, stressed that Hungary was more harshly punished than the other defeated nations. It lost two thirds of its territory and population; three and a half million Magyars would now be living outside the Hungarian borders. Therefore, Apponyi proposed that the disputed areas should be allocated in accordance with the wishes of their peoples – under the principle of national self-determination advocated by President Wilson. France, however, reproached Hungary for having supported Prussian policy since 1867 and later German imperialism.²³

²³ A. APPONYI, *The Memoirs of Count Apponyi*, London 1935, pp. 253–256, 270; ÁDAM – LITVÁN – ORMOS, *Documents diplomatiques français*, Vol. II, Doc. Nos. 132, 154, 156.

Hungarian diplomacy met with interim-success when there were question in the British Parliament during the meeting of the heads of governments and foreign ministers of the Allies at the end of February/beginning of March 1920 in London about some provisions of the peace treaty with Hungary. Because of economic questions, Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon and Prime Minister Lloyd George suddenly brought border issues back onto the agenda. A British delegate suggested leaving the Csallóköz and an area around Kassa with Hungary, and the Italian Prime Minister Francesco Nitti even called for the repatriation of Pozsony to Hungary. However, the Political Director at the Quai d'Orsay, Philippe Berthelot, strongly warned against the reopening of demarcation discussions, as they set a dangerous precedent for the peace treaties with Germany and Austria that had already been concluded. Thus, the Allied heads of government and foreign ministers decided against any change, even against an amendment to the draft treaty for Hungary.²⁴

Surprisingly, the new Secretary General at the Quai d'Orsay, Maurice Paléologue, had begun secret negotiations with Hungary in April 1920 to strengthen the influence of France in the Danube region within the framework of a Central European Confederation. Budapest offered the French arms company Schneider in Creusot, which had already taken over majority shareholding of Škoda in Plzeň in autumn 1919, the control of the arms factories on Csepel Island, the Hungarian State Railways for 90 years and an option for the Hungarian General Bank. With the help of French capital, a Danube port was to be developed in Budapest and the construction of a Danube-Tisza canal started. In return, Pozsony, the Csallóköz and an area around Kassa should stay with Hungary, as well as Carpathian Ruthenia. Now, Hungarian Foreign Minister Teleki also believed that the Bácska should be called south to the Franz Joseph Canal and the whole Banat; but now Britain and Italy pointed out that they had no interest in revising the peace provisions.²⁵

On 6 May 1920, the Conference of Ambassadors sent the final peace terms to the Hungarian delegation and set a deadline of 21 May. The new president of the Peace Conference, the French Prime Minister Alexandre Millerand, tried to explain the Hungarian government the territorial clauses of the treaty: “[...] *The nationality situation in Central Europe is such*

²⁴ I. ROMSICS, *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary. The Peace Treaty of Trianon 1920*, Boulder, Col. 2002, pp. 169–170.

²⁵ ÁDAM – LITVÁN – ORMOS, *Documents diplomatiques français*, Vol. II, Doc. No. 173.

that it is not possible to make political frontiers fully agree with ethnic frontiers. As a result of this, the powers, although not without regret, had to decide to leave certain areas with ethnic Hungarian or Magyar population under the sovereignty of other states. [...] The powers had decided not to accept the demand for a plebiscite only after achieving certainty that such an appeal to public opinion, although it could be done with a complete guarantee of sincerity, would not bring results significantly different from those achieved by careful study of ethnic situation in Central Europe and national wishes. That is: The demand of the nations was expressed in the two months of October and November 1918, when the Dual Monarchy disintegrated and the long oppressed nations united with their Italian, Romanian, Yugoslav, and Czechoslovak brothers.”²⁶

It is true that the preliminary decisions for future demarcations had already been made in November and December 1918, albeit by military occupation, which was covered by the Allied Powers. Presumably, plebiscites in both the south of Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia as well as in Máramaros/Maramureş, in Körösvidék/Crişana, in the Banat, and in the Bácska would likely have been in favor of Hungary. However, the Hungarian delegation had to admit the complete lack of success of its activities and resigned on 19 May 1920 its mandate. Government and Parliament were now in a dilemma to reject the conditions, but to sign the peace treaty. In the end, the Minister of Public Works and Social Welfare together with an envoy were sent as plenipotentiaries to Paris. The signing ceremony occurred on 4 June 1920 in the Grand Trianon Palais at Versailles. The Treaty was perceived by Hungarian society as a “blatant injustice,” and on the day, the treaty was signed, hundreds of thousands protested on the streets in Budapest with the slogan: “Nem! Nem! Soha!” [No! No! Never!] Revision became the alpha and omega of all parties in the Hungarian political spectrum for a quarter of century or more.²⁷

Surprisingly, the precise marking of the new borders laid down in the peace treaty generally proceeded without major obstacles and relatively quickly. Only in the Baranya triangle and in Western Hungary were there difficulties. The Allies had determined the third week of August 1921 to be the date for the withdrawal of the Yugoslav troops from the Pécs coal region. It was only under pressure from the major powers that the

²⁶ F. DEÁK – D. UJVÁRY (eds.), *Papers and Documents Relating to the Foreign Relations of Hungary, I: 1919–1920: Excerpts from the Political Diary of the Hungarian Peace Delegation*, Budapest 1939, p. 918.

²⁷ ÁDAM – LITVÁN – ORMOS, *Documents diplomatiques français*, Vol. II, Doc. Nos. 170, 206, 252; *Pester Lloyd*, 2–5 June 1920.

Belgrade government gave way, and the Hungarian Army was able to take possession of the majority of the Baranya. In Western Hungary, when the regular Hungarian Army had vacated the area to be relinquished to Austria, Hungarian irregulars offered military resistance with the tacit approval of the Hungarian government, forcing the Austrian gendarmes to retreat.

The State Declaration by the German-Austrian National Assembly on 22 November 1918 had also insisted on the annexation of the closed German settlements in the Hungarian counties of Pozsony/Pressburg, Moson/Wieselburg, Sopron/Ödenburg, and Vas/Eisenburg, because they allegedly belonged geographically, economically and nationally to German-Austria and were indispensable for the food supply of the city of Vienna. According to the Hungarian census of 1910, a total of 332,148 inhabitants (= 27.6%) had German as their mother tongue in these counties and in the two municipal cities Pozsony/Pressburg/*Bratislava* and *Sopron/Ödenburg*. Amazingly, State Secretary Bauer did not include this demand for Western Hungary in his memorandum of 25 December 1918; in return, the Károlyi government had promised autonomy for the predominantly German territories of Western Hungary.²⁸

In May 1919, the Council of Ten discussed for the first time the borders of Austria and Hungary, and on 12 May, the Supreme Council decided for the time being to leave the border of 1867 between Hungary and Austria unchanged. However, when the Austrian delegation demanded a plebiscite in Western Hungary, in its notes to the Peace Conference in June 1919, a border dispute began between Vienna and Budapest. On 16 June, the Austrian Government presented its memorandum on territorial questions, claiming an area of 5,000 sq km with about 300,000 inhabitants in western Hungary. The Austrian delegation presented national, economic, strategic, and historical arguments; Renner also stressed an ideological standpoint against the “Bolshevik Government” in Budapest.²⁹

Following discussions in the Supreme Council on 1 and 2 July 1919, the US and British delegation expressed their willingness to accept Austria’s intervention in Western Hungary. Coolidge reiterated his argu-

²⁸ ADÖ, Vol. 1, Doc. Nos. 26, 27, 104; *Volkszählung in den Ländern der Ungarischen Heil. Krone im Jahre 1910, VI: Zusammenfassung der Endergebnisse*, Budapest 1924, Tables 4, 25, 29.

²⁹ Lansing’s note about a conversation in the Council of Ten, 12 May 1919. In: J. D. BERLIN (ed.), *Akten und Dokumente des State Department der USA zur Burgenland-Anschlussfrage 1919–1920*, Eisenstadt 1977, Doc. Nos. 22 and 25; Austrian Replies to Allied Terms, 10, 16 and 18 June 1919. In: VARES, *Western Hungary*, pp. 126–128.

ments in the Commission to Negotiate Peace (the German population, the economic context, and the military aspects) and highlighted the approximately 332,000 Germans out 350,000–400,000 inhabitants of the region who wanted to join Austria. On 7 July in the Council of the Heads of Delegations, the US, British, French, and Japanese delegates (but not the Italian!) agreed to designate to Austria a Hungarian territory that included a German-speaking population of 250,000. Hungary retained the railroad from Pozsony to Zagreb via Hegyeshalom, Csorna and Nagykanizsa. Therefore, the second part of the peace terms, which was presented to the Austrian delegation on 20 July, read: *“The frontier between Austria and Hungary has been modified so as to follow more closely the ethnic frontier rather than the frontier of 1867. This results in including in Austria two thousand two hundred square miles of former Hungarian territory and three hundred and fifty thousand persons of whom an overwhelming majority are of German speech. The new frontiers will extend from a point south of Pressburg to a point on Yugo-Slav frontier fourteen miles northeast of Radkersburg.”*³⁰

On 16 September 1919, the Inter-Allied Military Mission in Budapest informed the Hungarian Foreign Minister Count József Somssich that the western Hungarian territory had *“has now been assigned to the German-Austrian Republic,”* and that Hungarian officials had to cease operations. However, the Hungarian Foreign Minister denied the Saint-Germain border determination and continued to assert the validity of Hungary’s state sovereignty in Western Hungary in completion of the peace treaty with Hungary. The British Special Envoy Clerk recommended to the Supreme Council that the withdrawal of Hungarian troops from Western Hungary be combined with the withdrawal of Romanian troops from eastern Hungary, but the Supreme Council made no pressure on the Hungarian government. Opinions among the Allies about remaining tough with Hungary regarding the western Hungary issue changed, and the British military attaché in Vienna even warned about attaching western Hungary to Austria because, in the case of an *Anschluss* with Austria, this area could one day fall to Germany. Only the Italian Prime Minister Nitti offered Renner his support in the implementation of the Treaty of Saint-Germain.³¹

³⁰ Reports Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace, Vienna, 13, 15 and 21 May 1919. In: Berlin, Doc. Nos. 27, 29–31; Discussions in the Council of Heads of Delegations, Paris, 7, 9, 10 and 11 July 1919. In: ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 416–419; Supreme Council to the Austrian delegation, 20 July 1919. In: BERLIN, Doc. Nos. 41, 43, 45.

³¹ Bandtholz to Somssich, Budapest, 16 September 1919; Somssich to the Inter-Allied Military Mission in Budapest, 30 September and 1 October 1919. In: DEÁK – UJVÁRY,

Even after signing the Treaty of Trianon, the Hungarian government tried to negotiate a new border with Austria. However, on 22 December 1920, at the urging of the new Austrian government under the leadership of the Christian Social Professor Michael Mayr, the Conference of Ambassadors decided to hand over western Hungary to the Allied Military Commission in *Sopron*/Ödenburg. Further discussions by Hungarian and Austrian government officials did not bring any substantive progress. Although the Hungarian side accepted the figures with the German majority in western Hungary, the mayor of Sopron and the president of the Ödenburg chamber of commerce and trade, both bilingual Germans, protested against the annexation to Austria for economic reasons. The Roman Catholic bishops of *Győr*/Raab and *Szombathely*/Steinamanger as well as the majority of their Magyar, German, and Croatian parish priests also took a pro-Hungarian standpoint. In the meantime, Hungarian legitimists had worked for the return of King Károly/Karl IV, believing that his would ensure the reestablishment of the constitutional and legal order. When the last Habsburg ruler appeared in Hungary, during Easter week of 1921, Horthy and his supporters in the officer corps rejected Karl's claims. While the neighboring countries Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia mobilized, the Allied Powers informed the Hungarian government that a Habsburg restoration was unacceptable. Nonetheless, in October 1921, Karl made a second attempt, was arrested and interned on the island of Madeira, where he died six months later.³²

At the end of June 1921, the Conference of Ambassadors pledged the Austrian and Hungarian parties to comply with the limits set forth in the peace treaties, and made it clear that, with the exception of minor local corrections, a change in them would be left to the consent of the victors. On 26 July 1921, Austria and Hungary actually exchanged the ratified versions of the Treaty of Trianon, and the surrender of the parts of the western Hungarian counties granted in the treaties of Saint-Germain (Art. 27) and Trianon (Art. 71) Austria was scheduled for 29 August 1921. Nevertheless, Hungary continued to insist on the ownership of

Vol. 1, Doc. No. 17; Telegram Clerk to the Supreme Council, Budapest, 9 November 1919, and Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers, Paris, 30 December 1919. Both in: *FRUS, The Paris Peace Conference 1919, Vol. IX*, Washington 1946.

³² M. ÁDÁM – Gy. LITVÁN – M. ORMOS (eds.), *Documents diplomatiques français sur l'histoire du bassin des Carpates 1918–1932, Vol. III: juillet 1920–décembre 1921*, Budapest 1999, Doc. Nos. 122, 217–223, 231, 235, 263, 403–442, 454, 461, 473, 495, 498, 508.

Sopron as the economic and traffic center of western Hungary. When the regular Hungarian Army left the area to be relinquished and the regular Austrian Gendarmerie invaded western Hungary, Hungarian irregular armed units offered military resistance with the tacit approval of the Hungarian government. However, although the Austrian government protested, the diplomatic representatives of France, Britain and Italy did not give Hungary an ultimatum. Now, the Italian Foreign Minister Pietro Tomasi Marchese della Torretta, on the basis of a confidential letter from the Hungarian foreign minister, proposed to mediate a plebiscite in the contested area to which Austria agree with resignation. On 13 October, Torretta, the Hungarian Prime Minister Count István Bethlen, and the Austrian Federal Chancellor Johannes Schober signed the Venice Protocol according to which Hungary undertook to immediately repatriate its irregular armed units and to transfer the territory to Austria with the exception of the city of Sopron and its environs. The Allied General Commission in Sopron would monitor these measures and hold a referendum in the city of Sopron and its environs eight days after complete pacification. Although the Hungarian military did not leave the plebiscite zone until 12 December, two days before the start of the voting, and the Hungarian authorities still exercised all administrative power, the plebiscite was carried out against the protests of the Austrian government. In the city of Sopron 72.8% of the participants voted for Hungary, in the neighboring eight villages 54.6% voted in favor of Austria. According to the Venice Protocol, the two results had to be added together, giving a total of 65.1% for Hungary. Since the Council of Ambassadors had overruled the Austrian protests, on 31 December 1921, the Vienna government told the Entente representatives that its objections to the plebiscite would not be upheld. Thus, on New Year's Day 1922, the Entente Commission officially handed over Sopron and its environs to Hungary.³³

A Reassessment after 100 Years

1) The Allied Powers treated the new Republic of Austria and the new Kingdom of Hungary as the sole heirs to the Habsburg Monarchy and having been guilty of causing World War I (together with Germany). Neither

³³ ÁDAM – LITVÁN – ORMOS, *Documents d'archives français*, Vol. III, Doc. Nos. 280–281, 284–310, 333, 335, 337, 344, 350, 361, 372, 379, 384–386, 391, 397–398, 448, 463, 526, 528, 539–541, 545; ADÓ, *Vol. 4: Zwischen Staatsbankrott und Genfer Sanierung*, Wien 1998, Doc. Nos. 549, 553–554, 571, 573–576, 584–585, 597, 602, 606, 610, 612, 616, 618, 620, 625–626, 636; ALMOND – LUTZ, pp. 436–437.

Austria nor Hungary could abandon their independence without the consent of the Council of the League of Nations; in other words, Austria could neither unite with Germany nor reunite with Hungary.

2) From the former Habsburg Monarchy with 676,614 sq km and 51,390,649 inhabitants (1910), only 83,709 sq km with 6,647,241 inhabitants remained in the new Austria and 92,833 sq km with 7,606,971 inhabitants in the new Hungary. The newly formed Czechoslovakia took over 140,183 sq km with 13,546,307 inhabitants, the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes 143,297 sq km with 7,696,843 inhabitants, the new Poland 80,089 sq km with 8,196,458 inhabitants, and the enlarged Romania 113,123 sq km with 6,053,516 inhabitants. The Kingdom of Italy annexed 23,351 sq km with 1,590,422 inhabitants, while 52,891 people remained in the Free State of Fiume of 28 sq km. On the one hand, of 10 million German-Austrians only 6.1 million belonged to the new republic (plus a quarter million of Hungarian Germans), and of the ten million Magyars only 6.8 million remained in Trianon-Hungary. On the other hand, approximately a third of the population of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania consisted of national minorities, particularly Germans, Magyars, Ukrainians, and Jews. In freeing the old nationalities, the peace treaties created millions of new national minorities.

3) Austria had to pay two thirds of the Austrian war loans and more than one third of the war debts. To guarantee the reparations, the Reparations Commissions got the right to sequester all Austrian respectively Hungarian properties and all their sources of income (until January 1930). Hungary was obliged to pay 200 million gold crowns as reparations over the next twenty years. Over and beyond that, the “nostrification clause” allowed the victors to acquire capital shares of Central Power nationals in enterprises within their borders, either as reparations or with just compensation. The peace treaties did not respect the economic consequences of the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy. The common railway network was interrupted, new customs and currencies hindered the trade. The new nation-states introduced protectionist measures to gain autarky. So, after 1918, something like a permanent state of customs wars developed among the successor states.

4) Since the French and partly the British governments wanted to create “an eastern barrier” (*cordon sanitaire*) in East-Central Europe as a counterweight to Germany and Soviet Russia, the Allies tacitly tolerated the inclusion of borderlands with clearly visible German and Magyar majorities into Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia.

Clemenceau told the Council of Four: “*Our firmest guarantee against German aggression is that behind Germany, in an excellent strategic position, stand Czechoslovakia and Poland.*” A. J. P. Taylor’s commentary makes the point: “*This was a surprising exaggeration of Czech and Polish strength.*” However, even Clemenceau had some doubts: “*Yes, this treaty will bring us burdens, troubles, miseries, difficulties, and that will continue for long years. I cannot say for how many years, perhaps I should say for how many centuries, the crisis which has begun will continue.*”³⁴

5) The Paris Peace Treaties were made against the losers and not with them. However, many problems were left unsolved: the problem of Germany’s eastern borders (including the Danzig question); the *Anschluss* question; the problem of borderland minorities in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Italy; the question of Hungary’s new borders; the South Tyrolean question; the problem of the Italian-Yugoslav border; the Ukrainian question; and the problem of the Romanian–Bulgarian border. After the peace treaties, Europe remained divided along many fault lines: between victors and losers, defenders of the treaties and revisionists, militarism and pacifism, capitalism and communism, right and left.

On the substance of the peace treaties of Saint-Germain, Trianon, and Neuilly, the British historian Zara Steiner passed a noticeably clear judgment: “*The treaties with Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria were far harsher and more vindictive than the one with Germany. The Austrian and Hungarian settlements were punitive in the extreme. [...] Austria became a shadow of its former self, with nearly a third of its population in Vienna and the rest scattered in its uneconomic Alpine hinterland. It was left in a perilous economic condition and only rescued from bankruptcy in 1922 by League-organized loans. Hungary, now ethnically homogenous, was economically viable but so stripped of territories and people as to guarantee its revisionist status.*”³⁵

³⁴ A. J. P. TAYLOR *The Origins of the Second World War*, Harmondsworth 1964, pp. 63–64; G. CLEMENCEAU, *Grandeur and Misery of Victory*, New York 1930.

³⁵ Z. STEINER, *The Lights That Failed. European International History 1919–1933*, Oxford 2005, pp. 99, 608.

