

Mari Vares

# The Question of Western Hungary/Burgenland, 1918–1923

A Territorial Question in the Context  
of National and International Policy











## ABSTRACT

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The Question of Western Hungary/Burgenland, 1918-1923. A Territorial Question in the Context of National and International Policy

Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2008, 328 p.

(Jyväskylä Studies on Humanities

ISSN 1459-4331; 90)

ISBN 978-951-39-3099-8 (PDF), 978-951-39-3074-5 (nid.)

Finnish Summary

Diss.

The thesis discusses the decision-making of the new border between Austria and Hungary, the question of Western Hungary/Burgenland, 1918-1923. The purpose is to study the effect international relations and nation-state politics had on the question. The dispute did not only concern Austria and Hungary, but was part of the First World War peace process led by the Allies.

This research explores the national and international decision-making level motives. It begins with the assumption that central political themes were channelled into the border question. The study focuses on the *convergence of political ideas*. The study shows how *realism* met *idealism*: how the ideals of nation, democracy, and ethnicity met the interests of power politics. The discussion foregrounds the way the arguments strengthened each other rather than operated separately.

The aim has been to ponder *the converging of national and international politics* as accountable for the case of Western Hungary: how international politics affected this part of the peace settlement and, on the other hand, what was the role of national Austrian-Hungarian politics? To this border dispute between two losing sides of the war, the Allies could apply different methods than to politically more sensitive questions between the victors and the losers. In contradictory situations it was possible to act in accordance to *the policy of concessions*. Crises on the local and national level could be addressed by delegating some of the problem-solving authority to the national level. These methods could not, however, be allowed to evolve into a dangerous precedent for the opening up of other border questions. It was essential, then, for the Allies to emphasize the permanence of the peace treaties.

Keywords: Austria, Hungary, territorial questions, borders, international relations

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Long time ago, clichés of Habsburgian Central Europe inspired my interest towards Austrian and Hungarian history. Later I was happy for being able to combine my interests towards history and international relations with the history of Austria and Hungary, even though a post-Empress Elisabeth- one.

I feel privileged to be able to carry out my studies and work in the academic field. Professor Jorma Ahvenainen and professor Jorma O. Tiainen encouraged me to pursue my studies further at the beginning of my doctoral studies. Over the years professor Seppo Zetterberg has patiently supervised my thesis. I am very grateful for his continuous support and encouragement. I would also like to thank docent Anssi Halmesvirta, who has shared his experiences in studying Hungarian history and professor Toivo Nygård for his support along the way.

It is my pleasure to thank professor Arnold Suppan and professor Horst Haselsteiner from the University of Vienna, who guided me during the early phase of my studies in Vienna. In Budapest, professor Péter Sipos helped me to cope with the labyrinths of the archives. I would also thank professor Attila Pók and the Hungarian Academy of Science for the opportunity of studying in Budapest.

I thank my reviewers professor Kalervo Hovi and professor Max Engman for offering their time to my manuscript and for their valuable advice. I also thank professor Hovi for accepting the duty of the opponent.

The research work – either at home or in Paris or London – does not come without financial costs. I am most grateful for the financial support I have received from the University of Jyväskylä and its Faculty of Humanities and the Department of History and Ethnology, the Alfred Kordelin Foundation, the Emil Aaltonen Foundation and the Ellen and Artturi Nyysönen Foundation. Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), Austrian Exchange Service (ÖAD) and Hungarian Ministry of Education helped me to realize my research plans in the Central European archives and libraries. I am also grateful for the opportunity to continue and develop my research on borders, nations and ‘Otherness’ as a member of the Academy of Finland project (2007-2009) led by professor Heino Nyysönen.

Hannu Tervaharju, Tina Parke-Sutherland and Sini Paronen deserve special thanks for their hard work with the English manuscript. Marjo Meriluoto-Jaakkola also spent evenings consulting my questions about the English language. The map of Western Hungarian borders is drawn by Mika Rissanen.

Responsibility for the study rests with me, but without networks, circles of colleagues and friends the long way to the doctorate would have been much more difficult. I have had a long distance relationship with the Department of History and Ethnology of the University of Jyväskylä, but have also been able to enjoy the inspiring working environment and discussions with the colleagues



and students. Networks can be established both at the home campus and far away from it. I would like to thank Emilia Palonen for sharing the Central - or Eastern - European experiences. To Susanna Niiranen I could say "we shall always have Paris".

Maari Kallberg, Monika Lühje and Jukka Nyyssönen have witnessed my long term engagement with history and we have shared the experiences of secondary school class rooms as well as the experiences of doctoral studies. I thank Aija Lehtinen, Tuuli Kurkipää and Lotta Rinkinen for coffee breaks and rewarding discussions.

I began my doctoral studies devoting myself almost solely to the problems of Western Hungary and Burgenland. I end up finishing my thesis as mom of two daughters, Vilma and Hanna, and also giving my time for other research and teaching tasks. I am grateful to my parents Kaija and Seppo Uotinen for their patience and support, especially as grandparents. Above all, my deepest thanks go to my husband Vesa Vares for sharing the interests to history and research work and moreover, for sharing everything else than work and history.

Tampere, Tahmela, 8 December 2007

Mari Vares

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research topic and contextualization of border dispute

The system of states, nations, regions and their borders interacts with historical circumstances and with political, economic, military and administrative decisions. The relations between different territories are reflected in the development and evolution of borders.<sup>1</sup> The borders can be instruments of international control, identity building blocks or challengers, and their significances are contextual and shot through with ideologies.<sup>2</sup> The theme of this research, the Central European border issue, contextualizes the requirements of post-First World War international organisation and state ideology. In other words, the purpose is to study the effect international relations and nation-state politics had on the debate of borders and state territories during the reorganisation of Central and Eastern Europe after 1918.

The First World War and the downfall of the Central and Eastern European empires was followed by a crisis and re-evaluation of political and regional organisation, which was cemented at the Paris Peace Conference. The process of change affected the international community as well as national and regional units. The interaction of several different interests, political lines and practises were characteristic of the process, as was the confrontation of historical continuity and change in political and diplomatic decision-making.

The topic of the research is the dispute over the border of Austria and Hungary 1918-1923, i.e. the question of Western Hungary/Burgenland. It was characterized by the fact that it was about the border of two countries that had lost the war; a region that had not been occupied, and that had not become a

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<sup>1</sup> Paasi 1996, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Paasi 2002, 156-157.

significant theme for the national movement during the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. The state border that was drawn here – and that received its final form in 1923 – represented, for a long time, an intra-European political border; it has separated political systems and alliances in an area that, before 1918, belonged to the Habsburg Monarchy. At the same time, however, people in this area have looked beyond the state border when it came to cultural and economic contacts; increasingly so since the 1990s, just like before the events of 1918.

Between 1918-1923, the future of the Western-Hungarian region was an important element in reorganising the Danube area. The dispute did not only concern Austria and Hungary, but was part of the First World War peace process led by the Allies, as well as the wider critical period of the eastern parts of Central Europe – the territory of the former Dual Monarchy. Thus, the question is approached from the perspective of it being part of the building of the new state system of Europe. This study is a contribution to the political-territorial crisis of post-First World War Central Europe, acted on by both the victorious Allied Powers and the national leaders of the region.

The question of Western Hungary was an intricate process, which is seen to have arisen from the internal development of Austria and Hungary as well as from international reasons.<sup>3</sup> The chronology, historical events and occurrences, alone hint at the interplay of the international and national politics throughout the whole process.

In November 1918, the Provisional National Assembly of Austria declared German West Hungary (*Deutsch-West-Ungarn*) a part of German Austria. The area had been Hungarian territory from 907. In addition to the Austrian national, state level manifesto, the reunification had featured in the programmes of German-Hungarians and the nationalistic movements led from Vienna, but these programmes have been considered to have been of little significance. The territory had not been mobilised for any significant separatist or German nationalistic movements. The Paris Peace Conference gave a White Paper in favour of Austria, and so the area was assigned to be part of Austria in the Treaty of Saint-Germain. This decision was repeated in the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, but Hungary opposed the change. It made diplomatic efforts to change the ruling through Austria and the Allies and the Conference of Ambassadors, which was the organisation executing the peace treaties. Finally, Hungary resorted to armed opposition to prevent the execution of the peace treaty and the loss of Western Hungary. The crisis of autumn 1921 was solved with the help of Italian mediation in the Venice protocol and the plebiscite held in Sopron: Western Hungary was appended to Austria apart from Sopron, which was assigned to Hungary through the plebiscite. From 1922 to 1923, local changes to the border were made by the League of Nations and according to the covering letter of the Treaty of Trianon.

In the historical interpretations dealing with the question of Western Hungary, the reasons behind changing the border of Austria and Hungary are

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<sup>3</sup> Widder 1995, 632.

crystallized in the expression "complex co-incidences" introduced by Widder (1995).<sup>4</sup> In all likelihood, his interpretation refers to how several simultaneous phenomena and policy-makers, with different interests in the territory, influenced the decision that was made about the border. Several previous Burgenland studies have presented established explanations based on these diverse reasons for the decision the Peace Conference made about Western Hungary in the summer of 1919. According to Berlin (1974, 1979), these reasons included the territory's ethnic German majority, the food supply for Vienna, the easing of the severe peace terms on Austria, security for Austrian exposed eastern frontier and the fear of the spreading of Bolshevism. As Berlin states, no aspect by itself was decisive, but when taken together, the factors provided Austria with a convincing case.<sup>5</sup>

In this study, an effort is made to find a common context for these aspects, evident in the general politics of the Peace Conference: unlike in previous studies, the policies on Western Hungary are here considered part of a political whole, in the context of which Central Europe was organized after the war. Most evidently, these aspects were connected with the political lines of both realism and idealism presented in the Conference. The reasons for changing the Austrian-Hungarian border reflect the wider political aspirations of the Peace Conference and the superpowers: fighting the Great Germanism and revolutionarism, and building order by establishing capable, independent nation states with a role in international politics.

The purpose of this study is to explain the question of Western Hungary as part of wider developments in international politics, and to detach its history from the national and local perspectives that have dominated a lot of the earlier research. The policies of the Allies have not been examined as a whole, nor has the question of Western Hungary as part of the re-organisation of Central Europe.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the aim here is to ponder *the converging and encounter of national and international politics*<sup>7</sup> as accountable for the case of Western Hungary: how international politics affected this part of the peace settlement and, on the other hand, what was the role of national Austrian-Hungarian politics? The structure of this research arises from this point of departure. Two of the most central themes and pillars of the structure are, first, the case of "*the German vs. independent Austria*" (1918-1919), in which the border dispute is seen as being part of the building of a new Austria after the downfall of the monarchy. Second, this research introduces the question of "*Hungary's revision vs. the politics of enforcing the peace settlement*" (1920-1923). Here, the emphasis is on the problematic nature of the territoriality defined in Hungary's peace treaty.

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<sup>4</sup> Widder 1995, 632.

<sup>5</sup> Berlin 1974, 185; Berlin 1979, 79. Berlin did not, however, pay much attention to the German, i.e. Anschluss question in the Peace Conference.

<sup>6</sup> See chapter 1.3 on historiography.

<sup>7</sup> On national ('local') and international influence on Central European border questions, see Evans 1992.

In this study, the aim is to elevate the subject from history written from a national perspective and from Central European internationalism to the level of the international politics. As a concept, however, the national remains central: how the national (local) politics affected the question of Western Hungary, despite the fact that the Paris Peace Conference did not treat the defeated countries equally in the negotiations. As Evans has stated, in border disputes, local influential power and the historical roots of the territories could be even more decisive factors than the work of the Peace Conference, which was more like, to quote Evans, the icing on the cake. The borders set in Paris were also based on local development and could be decided according to the interests, history and ethnicity formed in the territory itself.<sup>8</sup> We can further develop the ideas Evans and Widder have on the roles of the national and international level. With regard to the borders, the national, Austrian-Hungarian policy interacted with the policies of the leaders of international politics. What it came down to was the converging of these levels: how the policies of the other party were understood and how their own policies reflected the conjectural interests of the other. For example, how Austria presented its policy on Western Hungary to the Paris Peace Conference and the Allies in a way that fitted the policies of the Great Powers; how it appealed to the Allies using the same arguments that they did.

After the First World War, the nucleus of the international system was the state<sup>9</sup>. What kind of a state, then, was the best kind of state from the viewpoint of the leaders of national and international politics?

The objective of producing the 'space of the state', borders and territories, is a viable community.<sup>10</sup> Borders are loaded with meaning. They are tools for controlling the international system and building desirable states and governmental systems. After the First World War, in the changing societal situation, new outlines and drawing of borders arose, and new contexts in which the state could function surfaced.<sup>11</sup>

The discourse on the border between Austria and Hungary was about the reconstruction of both countries so that they would correspond to the new political objectives. In this research, a question is posed on how the general politics of the peace process and reorganisation of Europe were reflected in this particular case. The general policy of the victors of the war and the leaders of the Peace Conference was dominated by two doctrines with very different argumentations; realism and idealism<sup>12</sup>. In what way were the guidelines of these potentially controversial policies laid out in the discourse and decision-making concerning Western Hungary? How was the border between Austria and Hungary situated in the power politics, also called Realpolitik, and the

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<sup>8</sup> Evans 1992, 500.

<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, there also were ideas on demilitarisation and international governance.

<sup>10</sup> Paasi 1996, 28.

<sup>11</sup> Paasi 2002, 155, 170, 174.

<sup>12</sup> See chapter 1.4.



national right of self-determination? Thus, the focus is on studying the *convergence of political ideas*; both their differences in interpretation and common interests. The hypothesis is that they were both applications of security policy.

In summary, the starting points and problems of this research arise from a gap in previous research. The aim is to pass by the nationally oriented viewpoints of the question of Western Hungary and to put the focus on how international politics affected the drawing of the border between the two states. In addition, the way in which the national politics of Austria and Hungary possibly influenced the process and outcome of the dispute is analysed.

- 1) Context: The demands of the national and international communities in the critical period of Central Europe.
- 2) Hypothesis: a) Defining the border was part of the creation of secure nation states and thus part of the creation of a secure international system. b) Meeting of different policy lines and politics was at issue.
- 3) Problems: How did the war victors organize the area and according to which motives; what were the arguments for the change and which means were used? How was the future of Western Hungary connected with, for example, the objectives of the alliance politics of France or the liberally articulated idealism of the United States? How did the territorial definition of a state diverge with these policies using different manners of argumentation and different means?

## 1.2 Conceptual and methodological framework

### Western Hungary or Burgenland – in Central or Eastern Europe?

Research concerning the question of Western Hungary/Burgenland must begin by specifying the names and concepts related to the area. First, the dispute needs a name: should the research settle on “the question of Western Hungary” or “the question of Burgenland” – or would it be better to stick to “the border between Austria and Hungary”? Next, the research needs to provide a context for the process: to which Europe does the area belong: Central Europe, Eastern Europe, East Central Europe, or, in the German manner, “Südosteuropa”? Finally the process needs definition: does it concern a border question or a territorial question?

The international level decision-makers, the Paris Peace Conference and the Conference of Ambassadors, mainly used the terms “Western Hungary” or “the border between Austria and Hungary”. They conceptualized the issue as joining to Austria Western Hungarian areas, not a unit named Burgenland. Moreover, in 1922-1923, when the Burgenland province already existed, the issue for the decision-makers remained primarily “delimitation of the Austro-Hungarian border”. In fact, in Austria, the name “Burgenland” stabilized only

during this process.<sup>13</sup> This research relies principally on the term “Western Hungary” in the same way the contemporary actors used it. This usage avoids the possible confusion arising from that fact that the name “Burgenland” could refer to the Austrian *Entstehungsgeschichte*: the founding of Burgenland province and the history of the territory’s becoming a part of Austria, a process outside the scope of this research. The name “Western Hungary” points to a particular political history as well, manifesting the area’s Hungarian past. Mária Ormos’s research (1990), for its part, titles the history of the question of Western Hungary the history of the Sopron plebiscite.<sup>14</sup> In a sense, the names “history of Burgenland” and “history of Sopron” refer to narratives of national “success” and achievement. The history of Burgenland described how Austria gained a new province while the history of Sopron underscores how Hungary got to keep the town of Sopron.

This research does not intend to discuss the question of Western Hungary and Burgenland from a provincial or local historical perspective. Instead, it aims to look at the process that created a state border. Still the Western Hungarian region did play a significant role in the process of setting the border since the arguments potentially concerned the region’s significance to the state and, conversely, the state’s significance to the region. A border question became a territorial question. As did the contemporary actors, today’s perspective can employ both notions. The dispute not only concerned the border but also the definitions of the territoriality and spatiality of states.

In English, the most unambiguous term to use is “border”. Although the Western Hungarian region was border territory, the term “frontier” fails to describe the nature of the question as accurately – even though in contemporary usage “frontier” can work as a synonym for “border”. “Boundary”, for its part, is used primarily to denote internal administrative borders.<sup>15</sup>

The problem of context questions to which Europe Western Hungary, Burgenland, and the border between Austria and Hungary belong, which Europe did the victorious side of the war consider itself to be reorganising, and into what part has the later world placed the region. Both historical and current perspectives clearly define Austria as part of Central Europe – despite anecdotes that imagine Vienna’s Landstrasse as the beginning of the East, or Asia. On the other hand, various historical perspectives have placed Hungary in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and *Südosteuropa* as well as with the Balkan States. To quote Sven Tägil (1999), “Although this term [Central Europe] is not clearly defined or homogenously applied, it is generally recognized that the areas included in Germany and the former Habsburg monarchy form a core area in this region. The precise demarcation of Central Europe from the rest of the continent varies, depending on the choice of criteria – geographical, political, economic or cultural – as well as the period in consideration.”<sup>16</sup> The

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<sup>13</sup> See chapter 1.3.

<sup>14</sup> As an example of using the concept “question of Sopron”, see Ormos 1990,7.

<sup>15</sup> For definitions see for example Weichhart 2000, 19-20.

<sup>16</sup> Tägil 1999, xiii.

political dimensions and historic variations of the concept of Central Europe make up an essential part of any discussion of Hungary's location either in Eastern or Central Europe.

The names "Eastern" and "Central Europe" were considered problematic as early as after the First World War. The concept of "Eastern Europe", associated with Russia, changed after the collapse of the empires and during the birth of the "border states" when the distinction between Eastern and Central Europe blurred. The concepts of "Eastern" or "East Central Europe" or *Südosteuropa* were similarly ambiguous. Were these areas, after all, in essence more "East" than "Central" Europe?<sup>17</sup>

The wide and geographically complicated concept of Central Europe has surfaced particularly since 1989, in the post-communist era. For the former Eastern bloc countries, Central Europe spelled a return to "normality", a "restoration of honour"<sup>18</sup>, as Milan Kundera put it. It has again become possible to associate Hungary with Central Europe: after the Cold War's political Eastern Europe phase, Hungary has rejoined Central Europe. From the modern perspective, a historical study of the years 1918-1923 can with more justification use of the name "Central Europe" than the name "Eastern Europe", as the "East" in the former territory of the Habsburg monarchy is associated with the Eastern bloc era. The East was not a geographical, but an ideological and political definition.<sup>19</sup>

In the broadest definition of all, areas belonging to traditional Eastern Europe and even the northern parts of Italy have been included in Central Europe.<sup>20</sup> A third alternative situates Hungary on historical and current maps as part of *Südosteuropa* together with the Balkan States.<sup>21</sup> Another option uses the wide concept of Europe Between.<sup>22</sup>

Just as some definitions oust Eastern Europe in a sense from "our Europe" due to its Cold War Eastern bloc background, Central Europeanness can be made to represent "Otherness" in comparison to Western Europeanness.<sup>23</sup> Central Europe is a kind of crossroads between East and West. For example, in his article published in the Austrian History Yearbook, Michael John leans on the definition of Hungarian Jenő Szücs and István Bibó as a kind of spatial entity, "fusion of Eastern and Western Europe".<sup>24</sup> Central Europe's "Otherness" is also based on historical *Mitteleuropa* plans and in a negative sense on the history of Germany in the twentieth century. In a way, Central and Eastern

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<sup>17</sup> Lemberg 1995, 214-215.

<sup>18</sup> On widely cited and quoted statement of Milan Kundera, see for example Gerner 2004, 41.

<sup>19</sup> Gerner 2004, 47.

<sup>20</sup> See the map in Tägil 1999, x.

<sup>21</sup> See for example definitions in Hatschikjan 1999, 1-27.

<sup>22</sup> Saarikoski 1997, 7-9.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Hungarian novelist Péter Esterházy (1991, Finnish translation 1996) has described this 'otherness' in his novel "Hahn-Hahn grófnő pillantása - lefelé a Dunán" [the Glance of Countess Hahn-Hahn (Down the Danube)].

<sup>24</sup> John 1999, 19.

Europe wound up in Europe's margins as early as the Hitler era.<sup>25</sup> Some argue Central European identity has become exotic because the area embodies a "museum of a lost past", haunted by the monarchy that disappeared in 1918 and the peoples' democracy that collapsed in 1989.

Among modern researchers, for example, Evans (1992) has used the concept of Central Europe to describe the Habsburg territory.<sup>26</sup> The name has emerged strongly also in the Swedish compilation *Regions in Central Europe*, edited by Sven Tägil of Lund University, and in Kristian Gerner's *Central Europa*, similarly of Lund University.<sup>27</sup> The more specific Central Europe definition of Eastern Central Europe remains a neutral concept, applicable to both interpretations from 1918-1923 and the present day. The concept of East Central Europe appears in *Geopolitics in Danube Region*, edited by Ignác Romsics and Béla K. Király.<sup>28</sup> Also in *Grenze im Kopf*, edited by Peter Haslinger, which presents Burgenland and Western Hungary from the perspective of the regional development after 1923, the concept is *Ostmitteleuropa*, i.e. East Central Europe – and the publisher is Österreichische Ost- und Südosteuropainstitut.<sup>29</sup> Haslinger also uses the concept *Südosteuropa* in his book on the relations between Austria and Hungary in 1895-1994.<sup>30</sup> Defining Central Europe as Central Europe has been easier from the outside while inside the area, the concept of "Easternness" dominates. Nevertheless, the 1990s reintroduced the Central Europe concept on the popular level. The actors of the era (1918-1923) also used parallel concepts. For example Great Britain's Foreign Office assigned Western Hungary to the Central Europe department and used the names Central-Europe and Eastern Central Europe side by side.

Finally, in spite of the many possibilities, Michael John presents a credible argument for the use of Central Europe when discussing the question of Western Hungary. The border question between Austria and Hungary finds a context in the continuity of Habsburgian Central Europe; as John comments, historical Central Europe had by no means disappeared in the 1920s.<sup>31</sup> In a sense the multiethnic and multilingual Burgenland, in addition to Vienna, continued the monarchy's Central Europe tradition in Austria.

### **Arguments and recognizing the policy's motives**

This research explores the policy's macro, decision-making level motives, often contradictory and complex, that influenced the decisions concerning the border. It attempts to see behind the arguments and to construct the overall policy picture from the details, analysing how the different parties justified the definition of the border. To forward those ends, it both looks at the justifications

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<sup>25</sup> Gerner 2004, 15-20.

<sup>26</sup> Evans 1992, *passim*.

<sup>27</sup> Tägil 1999, xiii; Gerner 2004, *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> See Romsics I. 1998, 1.

<sup>29</sup> See Haslinger (ed.) 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Haslinger 1996.

<sup>31</sup> John 1999, 45.

and arguments concerning the border as well as unearths the underlying motives that provided a context for the border decision.

This research discusses the problematics of international relations, mainly on the level of state and government actors and Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGO), particularly at the Peace Conference and its heir, the Conference of Ambassadors, finally also in the League of Nations. It also pays attention to the context explaining the decision-making process and policy on the whole, showing how the old diplomacy and power politics met the new diplomacy, collective security, and principles of liberal nationalism, as well as how the ideals of people, democracy, and ethnicity met the interests of Realpolitik in a changed Europe.<sup>32</sup>

This work discusses the encounters among different political objectives and alternatives by analysing the arguments presented in connection to the border question and begins with the assumption that central political themes were channelled into the border question during the peace process transition phase. These themes could manifest themselves in the discussion about Western Hungary as arguments or as motives for decisions. The topical political issues that threatened the Realpolitik world view rose both from the past and from prevailing circumstances. Fear of Germany's Great Power status and the possibilities of Habsburg restoration and revision of old borders rose from a fear of continuity of old politics. The threat of Bolshevism presented a new political theme.

These fears were potentially linked to idealistic new policy that emphasized the significance of nation and the ideal of democracy since authoritarianism and revolutionary trends threatened such new thinking. In this work the concept of 'nation' resembles the concept of 'people' - the group of people with sense of community. For example, the inhabitants of Western Hungary were claimed to be both Germans, German nation belonging to (German) Austria, and Hungarians, a loyal citizens of Hungarian state.

The role of nation and people in politics manifested in the contexts of the ethnic principle and the right of self-determination and democratic ideology. Nationality and ethnicity are, however, complex concepts lending themselves to various interpretations and uses, depending on context. The concepts of ethnicity and the right of self-determination need specific definition, as does the nature of their function. Research on Western Hungary, for example, needs to investigate whether decision-makers used the concept of ethnicity simply to support Realpolitik's conclusions or as a part of a wider ideology. Nation and people was, despite the many interpretations, a trendy argument in politics. To quote Johansson (1999) "the ethnonational way of thinking is based on the belief that the nation has discernible ethnic characteristics and is bound for various reasons to a given territory." The Peace Conference depended on spoken language to define the ethnicity of a given area's people since, in keeping with the romantic national tradition, the language spoken by a group was thought to indicate the people's heritage and its will to belong to a given

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<sup>32</sup> See for example Brown 2001; Gullberg 2000; Jönsson, Tägil & Törnqvist 2000.

group.<sup>33</sup> Using language conditions as grounds for decision-making seemed sensible to the contemporary actors who were important in terms of the question of Western Hungary – like the American Coolidge mission – and who considered ethnicity, nation, race, and language as constitutive parts of a people’s identity.<sup>34</sup> This view differed from the Central European one which, in the nineteenth century, viewed the self as part of a historic whole and understood language as only a part of that self-definition. A typical example of this kind of thinking is Hungarian nationalism’s view of the borders of historical Hungary as a sign of Magyarness.<sup>35</sup>

This thesis uses the concept of “argument” to refer primarily to the function of rhetoric called argumentation, i.e. the part of the reasoning process that directs people’s attention to a specific facet of the issue at hand. This research does not intend to assess the validity of the arguments or aptness of actual figures of speech but, for instead, to shed light on the rhetoric used at the national level to appeal to the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>36</sup> Although this project is not an actual study of rhetoric, it uses a standard rhetorical approach as it attempts to promote certain opinions at the expense of competing opinions.<sup>37</sup> Its objective is to explore the grounds and rhetorical approaches various parties used as they tried to influence certain outcomes, examining how, for example, Austria argued for the affixation of Western Hungary into a part of German Austria when political circumstances prohibited them from using the area’s German aspect as a point of rhetorical departure in terms of Realpolitik. In other words, this study investigates the arguments the parties used to promote their own interests, and those interests often, of course, diverged: the Allies wanted solutions they thought would correspond most closely to their own interests and those of the community while Austria and Hungary wanted to maintain their respective territories. In this sense, the concepts of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, the ‘Otherness’<sup>38</sup>, also conceptualize the politics of the border question. Different parties demonstrated the rightfulness of their viewpoints and at the same time the faults of the opponent.

This research focuses mainly on the international debate among the Allies on the decision-making level. This analysis of national politics does not attend to diplomacy between nations or details of the national politics as such but, instead, investigates the way national-level responded to and influenced the international-level decision-makers with their comments, as well as what aspects the decision-makers at the Peace Conference and the Conference of Ambassadors took notice of while making decisions. This project includes military history, paramilitary groups and other various semi-official Hungarian

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<sup>33</sup> Johansson 1999, 12-16.

<sup>34</sup> See chapter 3.2.

<sup>35</sup> Evans 1992, 495.

<sup>36</sup> An overall picture of argumentation rhetorics, Palonen & Summa 1998, 10-11.

<sup>37</sup> Perelman 1996, 171.

<sup>38</sup> See for example Haslinger & Holz 2000, 16-25.

groups promoting revision, and the work of German activists only insofar as these factors relate to the discussion on the highest decision-making level.

## Sources

The sources of this research reveal the primary position of the international political perspective. Earlier research has approached the internationality of the question of Western Hungary from a national and secondary perspective, relying on reports of envoys or on the historical tradition – earlier research that has formed a canon. This research has instead depended on primary sources to open up the international-level debate. Thereby, the main sources are archival in nature and concern the Paris Peace Conference, the Conference of Ambassadors (CA), and the League of Nations. They have been collected principally from the London *National Archive* (formerly Public Record Office). *Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères* in Paris has complemented the sources from the British archive. Interaction between the victorious Powers and the defeated countries, and particularly the sources concerning the League of Nations, have also been taken from the national archives of Austria and Hungary. The most central Austrian sources are the *Neues Politisches Archiv* (AdR, ÖStA) collections concerning Western Hungary; the key Hungarian sources come from the Foreign Ministry archives in the Hungarian State Archives, *Magyarországos levéltár* (MOL). For the question setting of this research, however, detailed charting of national sources has not been necessary. It has been more essential to analyse the notes and memorandum the countries delivered to the Peace Conference, the Conference of Ambassadors, and the League of Nations and the reactions and plans of the ministries and diplomatic-level national activities. The Austrian and Hungarian sources can also be used to determine whether or not certain arguments were tactical – i.e., intentionally forwarded to produce what the decision-makers in Paris wanted to hear.

Sources opening up the decision-maker level policy have also been published in several document collections. The minutes of the Peace Conference (Supreme Council/Heads of Delegations) are available in addition to archives also in document collections: they have been published first in the United States in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Paris Peace Conference* (FRUS, PPC). As regards the drawing of the Treaty of Trianon, the *British Documents on British Foreign Policy* (DBFB) is useful. The discussions among the Peace Conference commissions and sub-commission concerning the borderline are only available as archival sources, however, for example in *National Archives* (NA) in London, in the series FO 608 and 374. The minutes of the Conference of Ambassadors with their affixed memorandum, collected for the purposes of this research from the NA, can also partly be found in Jon Dale Berlin's collection of documentary publications containing American Burgenland sources (*Akten und Dokumente des Aussenamtes (State Department) der USA zur Burgenland-Anschlussfrage 1919-1920*, ADAUBA). Many of those documents can also be found from the FRUS.

The principles of patriotic history may indeed have had a bearing on the sources chosen to be included in the document collections. This claim particularly fits the spirit of the Hungarian *Papers and Documents Relating to the Foreign Relations of Hungary* (PDRFRH).<sup>39</sup> The situation of Hungarian foreign political sources is interesting. A large part of the contemporary sources have been destroyed, and they are available to researchers as English translations in three document collections. The original sources can only occasionally be found in archives. The first volume (1919-1920) was published before the Second World War, and the second (January-August 1921) was published in 1946. The third volume can be found only in manuscript form in the Hungarian State Archives (MOL). The history and status of the PDRFRH are interesting: Volume 1, for example, has apparently been mailed to different countries for propaganda purposes. The spirit of the source publication has been to represent and manifest the Hungarian foreign political activities and no doubt to legitimize within the international community the position of the “badly treated” and “misunderstood” Hungarian state. Hungary wanted to emphasize being an independent actor in politics after the country’s dual monarchy history and its opposition to the Bolsheviks. The intention was to distance Hungary from the “unhappy times”, i.e. Béla Kun’s Bolshevism. The sources, in fact, begin from the collapse of Kun’s power in August 1919. The intention of the publication was most obviously to present the Hungarian policy in the Europe of the 1930s. According to Foreign Minister István Csáky, who wrote the introduction, the intention was to provide researchers with objective material about Hungary’s complex position.<sup>40</sup>

Most Hungarian document collections, for their part, describe the Hungarian history from the perspective of Hungarian editions of French sources. The collection *Aussenpolitische Dokumente der Republik Österreich* (ADÖ), mediating the lines of Austrian foreign policy, has for its part been published since the late 1990s. The volumes have their own themes, related to topical issues in Austrian history.

Many researchers have used the first two volumes of the PDRFRH, but, for example, Katalin Sóos (1931) has also drawn from the third volume. A contemporary of Sóos’s research, Austrian Eduard Hohenbichler, focused in his research on Austrian sources instead. The perspective of the war victors has opened up to Sóos through the FRUS – in general, “Western” archives have nevertheless not been used in Central European researches. On the other hand, Mária Ormos, in her research published in 1990, used Italian and French sources in order to describe the process. Rarely used CA sources have provided information for Jürgen Heideking (1979), who wrote the history of the CA, and a short article by Hamard.<sup>41</sup> A short article by Jean Nouzille describes the perspective of French diplomatic sources while Jon Dale Berlin’s American

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<sup>39</sup> Wilson 1996, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Csáky 1939, x-xi in *Papers and Documents Relating to the Foreign Relations of Hungary* (PDRFRH).

<sup>41</sup> Heideking 1979; Hamard 1995, 285-305.



perspective has been transferred at least to the works of Charlotte Heidrich, Katalin Sóos, and Lajos Kerekes. The common feature in the use of sources from earlier research is that the border dispute process has often been illustrated “an sich” regardless of the source and its presumptions.

### **Dividing the process – the structure of the research**

In spite of extensive earlier literature concerning Western Hungary and Burgenland, this project is, in the end, basic research in nature, depending on an analysis of primary sources. Earlier histories written about Western Hungary, Burgenland, and Sopron have left open a perspective where the border question is explained as part of creating Europe’s peace system after the First World War. In this research the border dispute process takes form from a new perspective. The research naturally adopts a chronological organization, due to the presence of the history of events. Although the project does not intend to repeat the historical milestones presented in earlier research, the events inevitably emerge. In earlier research the international nature of the process has remained in the background, perhaps because of a lack of sources or a dominating role of national historical interests. In several research projects, the focus has been on national level politics, despite titles including words like “international” or “European”. Even then, the topic has been handled primarily from the perspective of national sources and actors. In the current research the national level politics open up in relation to the international context and describe attempts to influence the peace process policy.

The process is divided into two parts. The first of these concerns the decisions of the Peace Conference that created the border in 1918-1920. The second part focuses on the execution of the decision in 1920-1923 in a situation that, especially from the point of view of security, differed markedly from conditions that prevailed during the text’s drafting in the summer of 1919.

Earlier research has taken simpler points of departure, and, for example, have not brought up the idea of the “policy of execution”. The focal point has often been the conflicts of late 1921 and the Sopron plebiscite. For example, Austrian Otto Guglia’s (1961) research illustrating early scientific Burgenland research, divides the process as follows: 1) time before the execution of Trianon, July 26, 1921; 2) time before the cession date August 27./29, 1921; 3) failed Allied attempts to cede the area until October 13, 1921; 4) time to the cession January 1, 1922.<sup>42</sup> Mária Ormos’s (1990) main focus lies on the road towards the plebiscite and Sopron’s Civitas Fidellissima history, although she starts from 1918/1919.<sup>43</sup> Jon Dale Berlin naturally takes an American perspective and highlights the initial phase of the question, i.e. the Peace Conference where the Americans played an important role in the decision-making.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Guglia 1961, 38.

<sup>43</sup> Ormos 1990, passim.

<sup>44</sup> Berlin 1974 and 1977.

The extensive article of Gruber (1991), drawing from key historical representations concerning the question of Western Hungary/Burgenland, starts from the 1918 Austrian decisions in to annex the area to Austria. She searches for background for the border question in Austrian German-minded unrest and goes through the process until 1923. Gruber takes a primarily Austrian perspective showing how Austria gained the area despite difficulties. She also presents the final forming of the border in 1922-23.<sup>45</sup> The monograph of Soós (1971) similarly covers the whole process between 1918 and 1922. It brings up the history of events primarily from a Hungarian perspective emphasising "revolution": i.e. the era from Károlyi's revolution to Béla Kun and Horthy's "adventurous policy".<sup>46</sup>

Tibor Zsiga's works, particularly *Communitas Fidellissima* and *Burgenland vagy Nyugat-Magyarország*, place the focus on history after the autumn of 1921. He takes a Hungarian local perspective to look at Hungarian revision policy and the continuation of the activities of irregular bands.<sup>47</sup> All in all, few have researched the final border dispute phase, the League of Nations phase, while many have produced repetitions of the Sopron plebiscite history.

This research's limitation to the years 1918-1923 can be justified by arguing that during that time the question of Western Hungary was visible on the political upper level: first from the autumn of 1918 on the Austrian level, and after the Peace Conference particularly intensely during 1920-1921 on the agenda of the Conference of Ambassadors executing the peace treaties. From the international perspective, the crisis was over by the end of 1921, but the question continued in the delimitation process of the border until 1923. This research leaves out the wider inter-war development – the continuum of revision schemes – because the question altered its shape after the border had stabilized in 1923. The revision schemes went on, but the question disappeared from the agenda of international politics. Correspondingly, the history of the monarchy and the phase of the German peoples' movement preceding 1918 are absent from this research, as the focus lies on the formation of the new border as part of the post-war peace system.

### 1.3 "Civitas Fidellissima" or "Du jüngstes Land"? Histories of Western Hungary and Burgenland

#### Representing German Austrian or Hungarian inheritance of the border area

"Jede Geschichte kann aus verschiedenen Perspektiven erzählt werden." In other words, a historian's cultural horizon defines the perspective from which the

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<sup>45</sup> Gruber 1991, 11-41.

<sup>46</sup> Soós 1971.

<sup>47</sup> Zsiga 1991 and 1993.

historian approaches the research topic.<sup>48</sup> Naturally, then, different historians have taken a number of various perspectives in relating Western Hungary's and Burgenland's history. The complexity of the process has offered possibilities for various emphases and ways to bring up the border question's history of events. Several scientific, popular and even populist narratives of the past concern the history of the border area. The nature of texts defined as scientific has also varied from explicitly politicised histories to presentations describing the history of events in a versatile way. Many historians have chosen a national or Central European approach, but lately a regional perspective has gained ground.

The long and complicated development of Western Hungary invites a range of historical explanations. A recounting of the area's early history might focus on the area's German history contextualized within Austria or its Hungarian heritage. Western Hungary, the area of the rivers Leitha (Lajta) and Lafnitz, had been part of Hungary's kingdom since 907 AD. The area was controlled by strong Hungarian and German nobility. As a consequence of events in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the important Hungarian families of Esterházy and Batthyany extended their power in the area. Simultaneously, during Hungary's Turkish era, Western Hungary stabilized as territory belonging to the Habsburg family. Salzburgian and Swabian Germans moved to the area, but so did Croats. All of Hungary became Habsburg territory in 1687.<sup>49</sup>

During 1918-1923 both Austria and Hungary had opportunities to legitimize their presence in the history of the area. Later interpretations of history have also, at least indirectly, been able to explain the area as either Austrian or Hungarian. Because Burgenland formed an administrative unit as part of Austria after 1921, the problem of unity appears to be the central topic: how could an area that was never a unit comparable to a province under Hungary's rule be explained to be a province when connected to Austria? In his book introducing Austrian historical areas<sup>50</sup> August Ernst has solved the problems of the area's unity/disunity to the benefit of Austria. The reign of Hungary that began in 907 means for Ernst that Western Hungary developed into a disunited border area, the site of Germany's and Hungary's collisions where the tradition of German culture represented unity. He implies that the people developed and stayed loyal to German forefathers who had been able to settle the inhospitable area.<sup>51</sup>

The points of departure for explaining the area as belonging to either state can thereby be culled from history – the history of the nation or the state. The notion of Western Hungary as part of Hungary's historical kingdom – a part of the history of the Hungarians' political power – can be represented, for

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<sup>48</sup> Baberowski 2005, 9.

<sup>49</sup> Diem 1995, 293; Donati 1972, see "Zeittafel" in her Dissertation; Ernst 1970 (1985), 704.

<sup>50</sup> Handbuch der historischen Stätten Österreich. Donauländer und Burgenland. Ed. Dr. Karl Lechner (Stuttgart 1970 (1985)).

<sup>51</sup> Ernst 1970 (1985), 694-699.

example, with the help of maps.<sup>52</sup> Western Hungary's state history during the Habsburgian era can also be expressed by names referring either to Hungary or Austria: the area was either a part of Habsburgian *Hungary* or part of the Habsburgs' Austrian *empire*. Maps illustrating population development, on the other hand, manifest the area's German history in a more unambiguous manner.<sup>53</sup> The situation was further coloured by the fact that the area of Western Hungary was actually very multiethnic: the area was inhabited by Croats, among others, and the issue of the border area also involved the Yugoslavian border, i.e. the border of the Slovenes.<sup>54</sup> According to Burghardt (1962) three kinds of nationalistic claims targeted Western Hungary at the end of the First World War: claims that Hungary based on tradition, that Austria based on German language, and that the Slavs based on strategy.<sup>55</sup>

The early history of Western Hungary is thereby a history of a border area where the population and power relations can be interpreted in many ways. The significance of the area as the border between two political units was not the central issue, however, before the nineteenth century. Until the eighteenth century the state border was not necessarily the most important border affecting people's activities; inside the empire, many other borders and border crossings affected people. In the nineteenth century the significance of the state border began to grow.<sup>56</sup> According to Peter Haslinger a presence of a state border in the Austrian-Hungarian area can not be mentioned before the year 1867.<sup>57</sup>

During the dual monarchy the idea of nationality also emerged as comments concerning the status of the Germans in Western Hungary. Especially in rural areas, however, the degree of ethnic mobilization remained low. At least until the 1880s, the idea of "Hungarus" formed the main referential identity for the Germans in Western Hungary. The first activities concerning the position of Germans appeared at the turn of the century along with schemes to reorganize the area, either administratively or by ceding the area to Austria. Hungarization measures, particularly in 1906, have been proposed as the point of departure for German nationalist activities.<sup>58</sup> Although Western Hungary's German movement has been described as relatively small, from the Austrian perspective it provides an interesting point of departure for Burgenland histories and their national perspective: history of Burgenland's

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<sup>52</sup> On the history of Hungarian territory, see the maps in Kontler 2002, 57, 79, 115, 141, 225.

<sup>53</sup> See for example the maps in Gerner 2004, 237, 288, 298 and Kontler 2002, 193. Gerner's map illustrates the population in Central-Europe; Kontler focuses on the nations in Hungary.

<sup>54</sup> The multiethnicity and e.g. Croat background were visible also during the Burgenland phase. See for example Suppan 1983, 34-41; on Slovenia see Suppan 1982, *passim*.

<sup>55</sup> Burghardt 1962, 168.

<sup>56</sup> Heindl 1999, 32, 34-35.

<sup>57</sup> Haslinger 1999, 12.

<sup>58</sup> Haslinger 2001, 107.

founding<sup>59</sup>, the roots of which some attribute to the right of self-determination. However, even interpretations of this genre are not able to introduce the role of the local population as a crucial starting point for the history of Burgenland's separation from Hungary. German activities typically were organized outside Western Hungary. According to Burghardt, the first concerns about the status of Western Hungary Germans came from Berlin, but ultimately Vienna became the centre of activities. Activists operating in Vienna made the issue known to Viennese decision-makers and the public. The idea of separatism spread from Vienna to Western Hungarians. Inside Western Hungary, Karl Wollinger became the most prominent regional actor. The operation intensified in October 1918, under the leadership of Alfred Walheim, a Gymnasium professor of German literature in Vienna.<sup>60</sup>

August Ernst (1970), Otto Guglia (1961), and Christiane Gruber (1991), for example, have brought up the importance of Hungarization as the starting point for the Germans' reactions and ultimately for the Peace Conference's decision to revise the border. Ernst portrays the Germans who had been part of the Hungarian state as leading the people on the right path. Guglia also glorifies the nationalist movement and the prominent men. The goal of his book has been to analyse a political process resulting in the birth of a new province.<sup>61</sup> Gruber's overall presentation makes use of literature and is more objective in tone. She views the local population as part of Hungary's state while still being Germans. Thus, the area's rightful national affiliation remains unclear. The local population remained passive, failing to react to the German projects even during the Hungarization phase. Gruber explains the political lethargy as resulting from Hungarization and the population's lack of political rights. Therefore nationalist movements were more viable in Vienna than Western Hungary itself.

In fact, after the World War neither of the countries, Austria or Hungary, appeared decisively more attractive in the eyes of the local population. As losing states, they both had to find new stability and attractiveness. Hungary hoped to increase its attractiveness by promising autonomy for the area should it resist joining Austria. Party political differences also affected attitudes: the Social Democrats of the area favoured Austria while conservatives favoured Hungary - after Béla Kun's communist regime. During Kun's regime the situation was reversed. The most energetic and far-reaching action organized on the spot was undoubtedly Mattersburg's Republic of Heanzenland, founded in December 1919, and lasting only one day.<sup>62</sup>

Reorganization of the area's political future ultimately mattered more on the state level than on the popular level. In the new political situation of 1918-1919, both Austria and Hungary used the timely argument of the right of self-

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<sup>59</sup> See for example Ritschl 1991, 2-7.

<sup>60</sup> Burghardt 1962, 169-171.

<sup>61</sup> Ernst 1970 (1985), 708; Guglia 1961, 6-30. History before 1918 has also appeared in Aull's early publication (1930/1931) and in Schleizer, 1985.

<sup>62</sup> Gruber 1991, 14-15.

determination. At the same time as the Austrian Provisional National Assembly defined the area a part of Austria on the basis of self-determination, Károlyi's government in Hungary introduced the plan of the area's autonomous status.<sup>63</sup>

Some forwarded the image of Burgenland as "Austria's youngest child"<sup>64</sup> in need of a name. The concepts of German West Hungary (*Deutschwestungarn*), *Westungarn*, and Western Hungary's German areas emerged first from Austrian state leadership. These names were joined by the variously spelled *Heinzenland* or *Heanzenland* since it focused on describing the population. According to Walheim's contemporary comments (1924) it failed to describe the entire area. Chancellor Karl Renner also opposed the name. In the winter of 1918-1919 the name *Vierburgenland* emerged – according to Walheim, the inventor is unknown.<sup>65</sup> According to Macartney's early Burgenland history, the father of the name was Odo Rötig from Vienna. He began in 1919 to publish a paper called *Das Vierburgenland* – the name referred to Western Hungary's four Comitats and their German names ending in "burg": Pressburg (Pozsony, now Bratislava), Ödenburg (Sopron), Wieselburg (Moson), and Eisenburg (Vas). The name of Rötig's paper remained *Das Vierburgenland*, although at the Peace Conference it became clear, as early as 1919, that Pressburg would remain a part of Czechoslovakia.<sup>66</sup> In the summer of 1919 Renner proposed the name *Dreiburgenland*. Walheim himself proposed Burgenland. The latter was used officially on September 6, 1919.<sup>67</sup>

Defining the border area a part of a state presented problems that reached beyond names. The years of dispute and the stabilisation of the border in 1923 gave rise to opposition in the area between the different traditions. Many Austrian provinces, like the Burgenland itself, as well as Voralberg, Tyrol, Carinthia, and Styria had cross-border affiliations: their traditions extended outside Austria's territory. The provinces had independent foreign political activities, for example, organizing their own Anschluss plebiscites.<sup>68</sup> Kovács's interview research (2000) reflects Western Hungary's and Burgenland's multilingualism and multiethnicity and finds that, unlike other groups in the area, the North Burgenland population identified more strongly with Germany than with Austria in the 1920s and 1930s. Austrian support strengthened only after the Second World War, and even then it initially spread among the Hungarian population.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, the concept of Austrianness and identification with it became problematic also elsewhere in Austria during the inter-war period.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Haslinger 2001, 107.

<sup>64</sup> See for example Diem 1995, 293.

<sup>65</sup> Walheim 1924 (1981), 51-57. Walheim's article was originally published on February 24, 1924, in a Burgenland weekly called *Burgenländische Bauernstimme*.

<sup>66</sup> Macartney 1937 (1968), 41.

<sup>67</sup> Walheim 1924 (1981), 51-57.

<sup>68</sup> Haas 1995, 478-479; Swanson 2001, 39; Haslinger 2001, 106, 121.

<sup>69</sup> Kovács 2000, 246-247.

<sup>70</sup> See for example Vares M. 2003, 131-135.

The points of departure for the unification Austria and Burgenland were not simple: Burgenland was a newly created entity which lacked not only a background of administrative government but also an image of a German territory. After the Sopron plebiscite, Hungary formed aspirations in the area. An external Hungarian revision movement, especially until 1927, threatened the area more than internal disunity, however. Compared with Transylvania or Slovakia, Burgenland was only a marginal issue in Hungary; still, in the 1920s and 1930s, revisionist circles – among them traditional noble families like Esterházy<sup>71</sup> – functioning in the main centres of western parts of Hungary, aimed to influence opinion in Burgenland.<sup>72</sup>

Burgenland as a new regional unit was designed to counteract two challenges, one coming from its Hungarian past and the other coming from its present status as part of Austria. Economic regression and party political aspirations helped the area remain fragmented. According to Haslinger, pressures from many directions came together to forge an idea, developed by the early 1930s, of a Burgenland regionality integrated towards Austria. In this way, the region and the state did not necessarily form a contradictory relationship.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to the tensions between Austria and Hungary, and between regionality and nation state, the history of Western Hungary and Burgenland exemplifies the area's vulnerability to juxtapositions arising from international politics. After the border dispute of 1918-1923, international politics affected the development of the area, particularly during Austria's Anschluss and the Cold War. During the Anschluss the province was split in two parts, *Gau Niederdonau* and *Gau Steiermark*. The province recovered, but developed economically slowly during Austria's occupation in 1945-1955, when belonged to the Soviet Union's sector.<sup>74</sup> The history of the border area also includes the period of refugee flight from Hungary in 1956.<sup>75</sup> The area's long protest history also includes the Sopron Austro-Hungarian peace picnic that the leader of the Paneuropean Union, Otto von Habsburg, organized on the Hungarian Saint Stephen's Day, August 20, 1989, and that indirectly led to the breakup of the German Democratic Republic and the entire Eastern Bloc.<sup>76</sup>

The geopolitical problematics of the border area were, thereby, discernible not only in the conflict years of 1918-1923, but in later decades as well. Most recent – often multidisciplinary – research has taken the perspective of everyday experience near the state border. These recent projects join the Austrian-Hungarian setting with the international-political aspect. From the everyday life point of view, the state border between Austria and Hungary was rather transparent in the 1920s and 1930s. Váradi's research (1999) in

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<sup>71</sup> On the landowners in Western Hungary see Eddie 1998, 43-59.

<sup>72</sup> Haslinger 2001, 109-110. On the nature of revisionism in Burgenland between 1922-1932 see Haslinger 1993 and 1994.

<sup>73</sup> Haslinger 2001, 105-123.

<sup>74</sup> Diem 1995, 294.

<sup>75</sup> Kovács 2000, 251-253.

<sup>76</sup> Gerner 2004, 73.

Pinkamindzent (Allerheiligen) and Kovács's interview research on the Austrian side of the border both indicate that the significance of the border as a geopolitical frontier from the point of view of the local population deepened only after the Second World War. In other words, for everyday life, the importance of the border as a barrier surfaces only with the discourses of the Cold War.<sup>77</sup> During the Cold War, the border had a symbolic and separating value, especially from the Hungarian point of view. The physical border fence and zone between Austria and Hungary made a concrete "barrier" between two worlds. In fact, the Cold War spelled a breakup of the traditional border area activities and migration more than the collapse of the dual monarchy did in 1918. For the local population the physical fence created micro-historical experiences such as, for example, the accidents afflicting animals in the border zone.<sup>78</sup> After the Cold War the local everyday experiences of life in the border area have changed: the once significant and even barricaded border has been replaced by a view of a periphery, an oasis of pensioners' second apartments.<sup>79</sup>

### **National and political histories of the conflict years 1918–1923**

Most of the research concerning Western Hungary and Burgenland has concentrated on the conflict years and the birth of the current border line in 1918-1923. Research concerning prehistory as well as studies of recent times have considered the period as a turning point in the area's history. The extensive historiography concerning Western Hungary and Burgenland, however, still leaves room for a study of the peace process, international politics and dialogue on the national level.

Early presentations of history have undoubtedly formed foundations for subsequent interpretations and simultaneously created a tradition of national history to research the border problematics. In Austrian national history writing, the central feature has been the goal of annexing Burgenland province to Austria. Hungarian research, for its part, stresses the history of the Sopron plebiscite. Especially in the early historical interpretations, the views concerning the plebiscite do indeed vary quite a lot: on the one hand, it has been considered a show of loyalty, on the other a crime, either a breach of the right of self-determination or an ideal example of it. The Austrian perspective of injustice was emphasized soon after the plebiscite and the cession of Sopron in Viktor Miltschinsky's book based on "authentic material", published in January 1922. The first page of the book portrays Hungary as a power promoting destruction. Miltschinsky's interpretation is permeated by the injustices suffered by Austria: the circumstances of the plebiscite that changed the border were unjust and the result did not truthfully reflect the opinion of the people. Leaving Sopron a part of Hungary on the basis of the plebiscite was an injustice that breached the principle of right of self-determination. Separating the town

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<sup>77</sup> Kovács 2000, 241, 246-255; Váradi 1999, 145.

<sup>78</sup> Varga 1999, 115-117; Schmidt-Schweizer 1999, 127.

<sup>79</sup> Váradi 1999, 141-156.



violated the rights of the people because the natural capital of the area was severed from its surroundings. For Miltschinsky, Sopron did not mean a point to end the dispute or a solution; instead, it meant a future threat. The litany of injustice also includes the fact that the area inhabited by Germans was larger than the area given to Austria.<sup>80</sup>

Andrew F. Burghardt's book *Borderland*, published in the United States in 1962, underscores the power of this early research: "all subsequent Austrian writings on the plebiscite have been based on these arguments as first stated by Miltschinsky". Burghardt himself concentrates on disproving Miltschinsky's contemporary claims by stating that most of the population wanted to stay in Hungary regardless of the conditions. On the other hand, appealing to another early work, Sarah Wambaugh's research on plebiscites (1933), even he does not deny that the Sopron plebiscite circumstances contained unclear aspects.<sup>81</sup> In his basic research published in 1961 Guglia, for his part, appreciates the book of Miltschinsky, who was personally present at the plebiscite. From Guglia's point of view, the issue boils down to two factors: on the one hand, a peace dictated by the Allies, and on the other hand, the impact of the German people in the creation of Burgenland. While he views the trustworthiness of the plebiscite critically, he also presents the founding history of Burgenland in a positive spirit: the book is meant to celebrate Burgenland's fortieth anniversary.<sup>82</sup>

Ernest Traeger's *Die Volksabstimmung in Sopron*, published in Sopron in 1928, announces on its title page that the book is *aus den Tagen der Trauer, Zuversicht und Treue*. Traeger's German article was a translation of one part of the book *Sopron, Civitas Fidelissima*, published in Budapest in 1925 by *Sopronmegyei Kör* and compiled by Dr. Gustav Thirring. Unlike in Miltschinsky, the title page proudly portrays Hungary as the heir of Saint Stephen's Crown. The plebiscite is presented as an Allied operation on the one hand, and simultaneously as a show of the peoples' active role. Austria is portrayed as an unreliable breaker of historical unity. The cession of Western Hungary in August 1921 was seen emotionally within the context of Saint Stephen's Day. In Traeger's text the role of the Allied Generals' Commission in Sopron and the historical process of the autumn of 1921 are brought up through the operation of the Allies. Traeger additionally emphasizes the perspective of Hungarian resistance and the peoples' loyalty.<sup>83</sup> It can be argued that, in spite of the strong representation of national sentiment, the early histories describe the role of the Allies even more clearly than later works, when the research perspective has been largely governed by the contents of Central European national archives.

After the early interpretations, the key Burgenland/Western Hungary research projects relying on original sources are the works of Guglia (1961), László Fogarassy, and Katalin Sóos (Gulya).<sup>84</sup> The manuscript of a doctoral

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<sup>80</sup> Miltschinsky 1922, 1, 23, 116-126.

<sup>81</sup> Burghardt 1962, 183, 185.

<sup>82</sup> Guglia 1961, especially 5-6.

<sup>83</sup> Traeger 1928, passim.

<sup>84</sup> Especially Sóos 1971.

dissertation thesis in Bratislava in 1950 launches Fogarassy's long role as an author of Western Hungarian histories. A large share of Fogarassy's history of political events has been published in local historical periodicals.<sup>85</sup>

The conflict between right wing and left wing contextualizes many accounts and emerges through the role of the people. The history produced in communist Hungary, evident, for example, in Sóos's main work in 1971, provides a unique perspective. Also the Festschrift published by Austrian Social Democrats (SPÖ) and written by Oskar Helmer, *40 Jahre Burgenland. Ein Land Wählt die Freiheit*, emphasizes the right-left political juxtaposition. The book written in the international political context of 1961, in conditions of a divided Europe, begins with an introduction by SPÖ leadership portraying Burgenland as a bridge between East and West: a bridge of constructing peace between the blocs. The joining of Burgenland into Austria is explained by the will of the people (*Volk*) – regardless of language or nationality.<sup>86</sup>

Helmer emphasizes Social Democrat policy as the cultivator of the peoples' right of self-determination: according to him the people wanted the area to belong to Austria, but the right wing, the Christian Socials, disagreed. Austrian socialists relied, according to Helmer, on President Woodrow Wilson's programme, which was "a light in war-time darkness" ("*ein Lichtblick im Dunkel der Kriegszeit*"). The people, i.e. working class, embraced the ideas of liberating the peoples and self-determination. Helmer explains that appealing to Wilson was Austria's central motive for the definition of the state area. Secondly he emphasizes Austrian Social Democrats' preparedness to act in accord with the terms of the international community, although the Allies did in fact fail to respond to appeals for right of self-determination.<sup>87</sup>

Helmer's history of Burgenland is the History of Rennerian, Social Democratic Austria. Helmer places the Social Democrat Chancellor Karl Renner on a pedestal as a supporter of democratic borders although he fails to even mention the other prominent Social Democrat, Otto Bauer. Opposed to Renner's idea of republic were Hungarian Horthy's counter-revolution and Austrian Christian Socials.<sup>88</sup> While Hungary was prepared for terror and propaganda in Western Hungary, Austria acted, according to Helmer, to maintain order instead.<sup>89</sup> Helmer further links to the same Hungarian anti-democratic policy the attempts of "Karl Habsburg" to return to the throne as king of Hungary. He sees Sopron's plebiscite as "offering Ödenburg", a tragedy, and a plebiscite only inside quotation marks. In Helmer's book the Conference of Ambassadors, the international community, acted against Austria because, according to him, Hungarians got a licence to propagandize while it was banned from the Austrians.<sup>90</sup> Finally, in the book Burgenland gets to be constructed: the Socialist

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<sup>85</sup> See for example Fogarassy 1950, 1971, 1972, 1976, 1982 a-c, 1986, 1990 a-b, 1991, 1993.

<sup>86</sup> See Zitterman in Helmer 1961.

<sup>87</sup> Helmer 1961, 13-15.

<sup>88</sup> Helmer 1961, 19-22.

<sup>89</sup> Helmer 1961, 31-41.

<sup>90</sup> Helmer 1961, 43-54.

Party got a new field of operation for the time of the First Republic.<sup>91</sup> In a publication contemporary with Helmer's, Guglia's *Burgenland 40 years Festschrift*, politely comments on Helmer's book and its views criticising professional historians: according to Guglia the book is the work of a politician and contemporary observer.<sup>92</sup>

The differing tradition of Austrian and Hungarian interpretations has also invited comments about the neighbour's way of looking at history: the study *Burgenland vagy Nyugat-Magyarország? / Burgenland oder Westungarn*, published in both Hungarian and German by *Burgenlandi Magyar Kultúregyesület* in 1991, announces in its preface that the Burgenland Hungarians, *burgenländischer Ungarn* hope that Austrians too can see history "objectively". The point of departure for this perspective is explained to be the status of the Hungarian minority in Burgenland. The disputed issue that the Austrians should "understand better" is the Sopron plebiscite. According to the preface the objective historical truth is the Hungarian majority in the plebiscite and the non-objective claim for its part the claim of a rigged plebiscite. The text inquires whether it was not possible for a German to vote for Hungary in Sopron without deceit, while many Slovenes voted for Austria in Carinthia.<sup>93</sup>

### **Histories of regionality: from local patriotism to multidisciplinary surveys**

Although the nation state perspective has not disappeared from historical research, present-day researchers have challenged it. Contemporary researchers have paid attention particularly to Western Hungary's and Burgenland's regionality and identity. The researches have analysed the problem of regional or national identity in different historical contexts, and they have frequently applied the methodical solutions of microhistory. The idea of Western Hungary and Burgenland as a region between has been in the forefront of new studies which have looked, for example, at the impact of the national, mental, and regional border's proximity on the population's ways of thinking.<sup>94</sup>

Studies of regionality have focused on the dilemma of looking across the border and shared the desire to challenge the national and nation state perspective by emphasising the significance of the history of regionality for people's identity. In other words, new studies have stressed the idea of a regional historical layer in the construction of individual identity. Recent studies of Western Hungary have been interested in the joining of Hungarian state tradition to Austria and the question of the meaning of regionality in relation to state and national tradition. For example, Tom Gullberg has claimed that the Sopron plebiscite evidenced the de-emphasis of German nationality and the impact of Hungarian regional roots. He emphasizes the significance of

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<sup>91</sup> Helmer 1961, 57-65.

<sup>92</sup> Guglia 1961, 5.

<sup>93</sup> Szeberényi 1991, 162-163.

<sup>94</sup> Examples of this approach: Haslinger 2001; Heindl 1999; Weichhart 1999; Schmidt-Schweizer 1999; Váradi 1999; Varga 1999; Kovács 2000.

regionality also in his argument that the successful construction of Burgenland depended on the fact that it retained in its nature Western Hungarian aspects.<sup>95</sup>

Many historians explain that the increased interest in regional identity corresponds to global change since the late 1980s. The regional, national and supranational variants of identity have interested historians as they become pertinent to current situations. The focus on regionality reflects the situation of contemporary Europe and the question of “dimming” of borders of nation states raised by the European Union in 1990s. The region of the former Habsburg monarchy lends itself to comparisons both between different historical areas as well as with the present day: for many researchers, historical Central Europe and the European Union display parallel features such as regionality, border-crossing, and layered identity formations.<sup>96</sup> The changes of 1988-1992 in Europe undoubtedly made a space for this research trend. The research emphasising regionality has also trendily distanced itself from the older history of diplomacy and taken a multidisciplinary approach to the issue of border-crossing.<sup>97</sup>

In more traditional research, the perspective of province and region has also emerged. The construction of Burgenland as a part of Austria and its status as the youngest province has been visible in various “land knowledge” books, local history publications, and Festschriften. One such publication is the *Burgenländische Heimatblätter*, published since 1938. The *Soproni Szemle*, published since 1946, can be considered its Hungarian counterpart. The articles in publication series and Festschriften have not been limited to local patriotic homestead histories, however; a surprisingly number of articles on diplomatic history and on the political upper level have come into print through them.<sup>98</sup>

In the context of anniversary years, many publications have opened up micro-histories and memory data although they usually take a more traditional approach than the multidisciplinary projects of recent years. For example the compilations by Gruber and Horváth (1991), give voice to the Burgenland inhabitants through interviews.<sup>99</sup>

Researchers have also been interested in the political and economic impact of the 1918-1923 border change on the border region. For example Charlotte Heidrich (1982) illustrates the development of the region’s political culture in 1918-1933 and Burgenland’s stabilisation into a part of the First Austrian Republic from the perspective of the political activities of Greater Germany. Unger (1965), for his part, focuses on Christian Socials and Schlag (1969) as well as on the activities of Austria’s other political parties in the new province.

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<sup>95</sup> Gullberg 1999, 147, 175-177.

<sup>96</sup> Haslinger & Holz 2000, 15-16; The issue has been approached in Haslinger 1999 (ed.) and Tägil (ed.) 1999. In Finland the issue has been approached particularly by Finnish-Swedish research circles, e.g. Gullberg 2000.

<sup>97</sup> Haslinger 1999, 9-10.

<sup>98</sup> For example Fogarassy’s studies and Haas 1971.

<sup>99</sup> Horvath, Temmel, Mühlgasser and Harmat have contributed the Festschrift “Grenzfall. Burgenland 1921-1991.” ed. Elisabeth Deinhofer & Traude Horvath (Wien: Verlag Kanica 1991).

Historians have also viewed the political setting and construction of the new province from a perspective wider than that of the party level.<sup>100</sup> Until the 1990s the local perspective was viewed principally through an Austrian provincial point of view. New projects in the 1990s and after the turn of the millennium have included research into the region on the Hungarian side of the border.<sup>101</sup>

### **Attempts to explain the international context**

While new perspectives – non-traditional sources and non-national approaches – have emerged in regional histories, researches involving the international political dimension have relied on the traditional problem settings. Although earlier research brought up the “European aspect” of the question, genuine international political analysis illustrating the Allied perspective remains insufficient. While national interpretations emphasize the perspective of “right” or “wrong”, works belonging to the genre of diplomatic history have contemplated the meaning of Bolshevism, right-wing directions and German aspects in particular. In addition to power political perspectives, the earlier research has also centred on claims about the realization of national right to self-determination in the same way national history writing has done.

The first interpretations employing non-national perspectives are undoubtedly Sarah Wambaugh’s *Plebiscites since the World War*, published in 1933, and C.A. Macartney’s *Hungary and Her Successors*, published in 1937. For Wambaugh, who had worked as a technical expert for the Secretariat of the League of Nations and a professor of international law, the questions of post-war self-determination and the realization of democracy were crucial. For her the plebiscite represented an expression of applying self-determination while deciding on sovereignty.<sup>102</sup>

Wambaugh analyses the motives of Austria’s and Hungary’s border change using as her sources, for example, the memorandum of the Austrian peace delegation and the books of Miltschinsky and Traeger. She pays attention to the contradictory interpretations of the plebiscite. The unclear features both of the plebiscite and its result were, according to her, did not result from the Allies intentionally increasing Hungary’s authority while decreasing their own. Wambaugh considered the question of Burgenland still topical in 1933, when her book was published, as the question “still troubled the relation of Austria and Hungary”. She referred to the clash of Austrian “fascists” and “democrats” in 1927 which was connected to Hungarian irredentism.<sup>103</sup>

Macartney has discussed the question of Western Hungary from a wider historical perspective than Wambaugh – from the prehistory of the region to the situation in the 1930s. He also envisioned Western Hungary’s future political

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<sup>100</sup> Heidrich 1982; Schlag 1969 and 1971; Unger 1965. On economic conditions see Tirnitz 1992 and on political culture in Burgenland 1922-1926 see Widder 1996, 121-139.

<sup>101</sup> See studies edited by Haslinger 1999 and 2000.

<sup>102</sup> Wambaugh 1933, 3-4.

<sup>103</sup> Wambaugh 1933, 271-297.

development from the perspective of the late 1930s, foregrounding Germany's growing political role in Europe in future scenarios. In his book, Macartney appears to represent the Peace Conference's Wilsonian-liberal nation state policy wherein the borders were legitimized with the concept of nation on the discourse level. More accurately, he explains the question of Western Hungary through national right of self-determination and the ideals of the ethnic principle and economic-geographical viewpoints referring to the nation's viability. He takes as his central focus the idea of plebiscite as part of the evolutionary progress towards the nation state.

Delineating this evolution, Macartney starts from the circumstances of Burgenland's geography, history, and nationality. The border question started with the people and rose from the national level to the international context: the people's connections to Austria and their movement, albeit a modest one. He considers the organisation of the Sopron plebiscite a continuation of the people-centred process, a logical continuation to the Anglo-American ideology of the Peace Conference. In Macartney's view the issue was a reawakening of national awareness: an essentialist interpretation of the peoples' concealed awareness.

After the solution of the conflict, Macartney emphasizes Burgenland's integration both into a part of Austria ("new national life") and an independent province, a unified area. He also assesses the situation of minorities on both sides of the border. Macartney discusses the success of the border decision largely from an economic point of view and in accordance with the international situation, especially German politics. Finally the interpretation he made in 1937 implies that the peace treaty might "live": the decision concerning the area could keep pace with the changes in Europe's political power relations – in other words, with Germany's authority.<sup>104</sup>

Among the writers of the 1930s, the significance of Germany manifests itself also in Emmerich Falk's *Das Burgenland im Blickfeld tschechischer Grossherrschaftspläne*. The book, published in Germany in 1938, reflects the date of its creation and its surroundings in that the "threatening image" of Czechoslovakia is most obviously used to legitimize Germany's expansive politics. For example, the book extensively explores Czechoslovakia's "Slavic corridor scheme" in the area of Western Hungary.<sup>105</sup>

*The Treaty of St. Germain. A Documentary History of its Territorial and Political Clauses*<sup>106</sup> published by Nina Almond and Ralph Haswell Lutz in 1935 offered the English-speaking audience a perspective on the question of Western Hungary similar to those of Macartney and Wambaugh. In addition, H.W.V. Temperley's *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, published in England in 1921, offered an interpretation of the motives of the peace treaty decisions and their future effects while the border conflict was still going on. In Temperley's opinion it was not impossible to annex Western Hungary back into Hungary.

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<sup>104</sup> Maccartney 1937 (1968), 40-72.

<sup>105</sup> Falk 1938, passim.

<sup>106</sup> The anthology was published in the United States in the Hoover War Library Publications series.

He also contemplated opportunities for a plebiscite but considered it problematic that the border area population was forced to find a balance between white Hungary and red Vienna.<sup>107</sup>

After these early interpretations, American Jon D. Berlin, writing in the 1970s, provides the clearest perspective to come from outside central Europe. Berlin particularly emphasizes the importance in the decision-making process of professor Archibald Cary Coolidge's "fact-finding" commission, which the United States assigned to central Europe in 1919.<sup>108</sup> Berlin's work has been available to Central European researchers also. Katalin Sóos and Lajos Kerekes, writing in the context of "Eastern Bloc Hungary", make reference to him.

The question of Western Hungary is central in Kerekes's (1979) research on Austria's relations to its neighbours after the crumbling of the dual monarchy. Kerekes's objective has been to explain Austria's position as a part of international politics: thereby he has also been able to explain the question of Burgenland, portraying both as sharing the setting between communism and "counter-revolution". At the beginning of the book, he promises that discussing the international-level political actors opens up the process of the border dispute more fully than does sticking to local politics.<sup>109</sup> According to Kerekes, the question of Burgenland attracted international attention because it involved the Great Powers and the Paris Peace Conference, not because it effected people's lives. Referring to Berlin's research, he considers the American delegation and Coolidge's mission operating behind the border change to have been of utmost importance.<sup>110</sup>

For Kerekes's research, the international level primarily refers to Austria's neighbouring countries.<sup>111</sup> He gives the key decision-makers at the Peace Conference less attention and concentrates on the Little Entente countries, Germany's and Italy's separatist policy. For him the Burgenland process is thereby explained through policy on Central Europe's own level. For example, he recounts the progress of the question during 1921 on the Conference of Ambassador and the Peace Conference levels, using only Austrian, Hungarian, and German secondary sources.<sup>112</sup> In this way, speculations contained in diplomatic reports get converted into historical interpretations and ultimately become considered truths concerning the border dispute.

Kerekes, in a way, sketches the interaction between international and national politics. He takes as his ruling paradigm the encounter of political systems - communism, social democracy and "counter-revolution" embodied

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<sup>107</sup> Temperley 1921, 388.

<sup>108</sup> Berlin 1974, especially pages 186-188, 198-199, 206, 211-212; Berlin 1977, 71-79. Austrian historiography sees the work of Coolidge's commission as exemplary: "The United States was the only one to gather information from the area". This discourse implies that the United States was the only party basing the decision on "facts" - and thus strengthens the Austrian view of the justice of the decision. See e.g. Gruber 1991, 16-17.

<sup>109</sup> Kerekes 1979, 142.

<sup>110</sup> Kerekes 1979, 146.

<sup>111</sup> E.g. Andics (1985) shares this perspective.

<sup>112</sup> Kerekes 1979, 262-265.

in monarchist, Catholic, right-wing movements. The process thereby proceeds through right-left actions and as reactions to political power relations. His point of departure is interesting, but it is clearly governed by the central position of communism<sup>113</sup>: he explains the process of the question of Burgenland through the Allies' fear of communism. He explains the Peace Conference decision by referring to the Allies' notion of the dangers of Hungary's communism. This fear made the Allies unwilling to organize a plebiscite in Burgenland, unlike in Carinthia although they may also have wanted to avoid a precedent for organizing other plebiscites elsewhere as well. According to Kerekes, fear of communism also accounts for the Allies lack of haste in implementing the cession; ultimately their stalling gave them a motive to return the border after Hungary had turned counter-revolutionary, and Vienna was still red. A swift decision was thereby made in the summer of 1919, motivated by anti-communist sentiments: the two-year *hin und her* before the cession of the area was, according to Kerekes, explained by the fact that Hungary's counter-revolution had altered the situation, especially in France's bourgeois-monarchist circles.

The Allies were no longer in any hurry to transfer the area from white Hungary to Austria burdened by the red Vienna and the Anschluss threat. According to Kerekes, France in particular opposed the cession of Western Hungary and was prepared to revise the peace treaty. Still, he concludes that France did act in accordance with the policy set in the peace treaties.<sup>114</sup>

Kerekes links Catholicism and the right wing and sees them as central factors in political relations involving the border question: on the basis of Kerekes's research Catholicism seems to have influenced not only the mutual relations of Austria and Hungary but also the Burgenland policies of external actors – like Bavaria and the Vatican.<sup>115</sup> However, Kerekes's examples of the right wing's supranational actions remain unconnected details in the process of the question of Burgenland. The date of his writing probably explains the way he elevated them into part of the research since the struggle between the right and the left was a fitting research theme within the context of contemporary Hungarian society.

Kerekes emphasis on fears of communism beg the further question of whether historiography in the Cold War era interpreted communism as a greater threat than the decision-makers actually did in 1919. For example Charlotte Heidrich (1982) has summarized Berlin's and Kerekes's explanations for the border change and emphasized the significance of communism in the Allies' decision-making process. Béla Kun's power made impossible Allied support for Hungary, and it became possible for Austria to make territorial claims at the Peace Conference. The Allies' motive for changing the border was that Austria had to become as a buffer zone against Bolshevism, and Vienna

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<sup>113</sup> Also Kitchen has argued that Western Hungary was given to Austria "largely to weaken a Hungary still controlled by the communists". Kitchen 1994, 15.

<sup>114</sup> Kerekes 1979, 299, 301.

<sup>115</sup> Kerekes 1979, 255, 260-262.



had to be protected from communism. Heidrich further explains that the decision in Paris to give the area to Austria without a plebiscite was caused precisely by the communist regime.<sup>116</sup>

Communism is also Katalin Sóos's governing theme. Her monograph's (1971) main idea is to tie the history of the Western Hungarian process to other political events. She relates the border question to several main issues in European politics and the problematics of reorganising the Danube area. In spite of the goal and the name of the book, the level of Austria and Hungary is also emphasized in Sóos's history. She takes a critical approach towards Horthy, a right wing figure, and calls Western Hungary's revision strategy an "adventurous policy". According to Sóos, Western Hungary was Horthy's first practical application of revision. The date of the writing, Kádár's Hungarian context, most obviously influenced the analysis of the research topic. Like Kerekes, Sóos introduced ideologically suitable events contemporary to the border question, such as the boycott against Hungary organized by the international labour union movement.<sup>117</sup> Thus both Sóos and Kerekes link to the border dispute events and causes of interest to a socialist society but with little significance for the border dispute process itself.

In the same year Sóos's book came out, the fiftieth anniversary of the questions of Western Hungary and Burgenland, Austrian Eduard Hochenbichler published his study *Republik im Schatten der Monarchie – Das Burgenland, ein europäisches Problem*. In his research, Hochenbichler discusses the foreign policy of Austria's Christian Social Chancellor Johann Schober and emphasizes the level of central Europe in it: the question of Burgenland and Austria's relations with Czechoslovakia, the Little Entente, and Italy.<sup>118</sup> Hochenbichler's work describes the chronology of the border question in detail, especially during the latter part of 1921, relying on Austrian archival sources which also manifest the "European" aspect, and the role of the Allies. The Austrian national perspective nevertheless dominates because of the origin of the sources. Some of the material is left unanalysed and the source is presented to the reader as evidence: the book indeed contains several quotations and appendices from sources in the original form. Hochenbichler's book brings up the question of the possible failure of Austrian policy: did Schober make mistakes and lose Sopron to Hungary?<sup>119</sup> Hochenbichler's final comment about Schober is that he tried his best with the Allies and the neighbouring countries.<sup>120</sup>

Hungarian researcher Mária Ormos (1990) places the history of the Sopron plebiscite in a different context of Hungarian politics than the authors from the 1970s do. Research in the 1990s studies Horthy's era from perspectives other than a communist critique of the right wing. Also the theme of revision

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<sup>116</sup> Heidrich 1982, 25.

<sup>117</sup> Sóos 1971.

<sup>118</sup> Hochenbichler 1971, 7.

<sup>119</sup> Hochenbichler 1971, 26.

<sup>120</sup> Hochenbichler 1971, 116-117.

manifests itself differently than in earlier research, finding a context for the plebiscite in post-communist Hungary's reinvigorated debate about the history and justification of Hungary's borders. During the communist era, research on the inter-war revision policy, according to Anikó Kovács-Bertrand's dissertation, quieted into a forbidden theme: it did not suit the solidarity discourse of eastern European countries, i.e. Hungary and its neighbours during the division of Europe into blocs. Furthermore, revision was considered Horthy's "counter-revolutionary" Hungarian policy, and the aim was to steer clear of it after the Second World War.<sup>121</sup> The interpretations written about the question of Western Hungary and portraying "Horthy's adventurous policy" can be explained against this backdrop.<sup>122</sup>

In the post-communist context of the 1990s it has probably been easier to start emphasising the history of Sopron's success. In accordance with the name of the research, Ormos emphasizes the perspective of *az egyetlen magyar népszavazás* – the only Hungarian plebiscite. Its uniqueness and success is, according to Ormos, legitimized by the fact that the plebiscite was carried through peacefully, which sent a message about the validity of the result. The history of success also makes reference to General Ferrario of the Allied Generals' Commission: according to Ferrario, the Venice protocol saved the peace.<sup>123</sup>

Ormos aspires in her work to create a comprehensive history of the question of Western Hungary. She states that she extends her perspective from local history to the level of international diplomacy with the help of Italian and French sources.<sup>124</sup> At the same time Ormos also attempts to illustrate events on the local level and warns the reader about the labyrinthine nature of her writing. The research indeed contains a review of the Peace Conference phases, but, other than that, she limits the international perspective of her investigation to inter-state diplomatic games and fails to analyse the policy of the highest decision-maker level. Her detailed research also stresses the problematics of national and neighbour relations.<sup>125</sup>

From the Hungarian point of view, explaining the process of Western Hungary typically begins with a recounting of the great injustices Hungary suffered in the Treaty of Trianon. The narrative culminates with the victory reached in the Sopron plebiscite. It has been possible to discuss that victory while criticising Hungary, particularly Horthy's white Hungary of the 1920s. Such critique did not vanish after Kádár's power in Hungary ended; for example, Zsiga refers to it in his writings in the 1990s.<sup>126</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>121</sup> Kovács-Bertrand 1997, 9.

<sup>122</sup> E.g. Sóos 1971.

<sup>123</sup> Ormos 1990, 194, 197-198, 202.

<sup>124</sup> In addition to Ormos (1990), Irmtraut Lindeck-Pozza (1971) has also used Italian sources in her article in 1971. Jean Nouzille's (1987) writings tell history on the basis of French sources without analysing the actual French policy in terms of the question of Western Hungary.

<sup>125</sup> Ormos 1990, 8.

<sup>126</sup> Zsiga 1991 and 1993.

features of Zsiga's work resemble Ormos' interpretations. It can be thought that in addition to Ormos's *Civitas Fidellissima*, Zsiga's (1991, 1993) *Communitas Fidellissima* and histories of legitimist Hungary have been created during Hungary's post-communist era where Trianon's "disgraceful peace" was no longer a silenced topic in Hungarian discourse. At the same time evidence exists for a new kind of national perspective: the return of the importance of the people to histories of Western Hungary – with an emphasis on the plebiscite and the people's active role in it.

Research conducted outside Hungary has also discussed the perspectives of the people and right of self-determination. The most eager interpretation of this kind comes from John C. Swanson, who defines the plebiscite as a "Success story". In his article, Swanson regarded the settlement of the Burgenland question as an example of a peaceful solution, "an example of success that needs to be understood" as lesson for present, post Cold War ethnic conflicts. He however criticizes the fact that national level decision-makers decided on many of the questions instead of the local population.<sup>127</sup>

Burghardt (1962) also assessed the success of the right of self-determination in the case of Western Hungary. Although self-determination was realized only in part there, he concludes that the ideal "was largely satisfied" even though three parties were interested in the area. In Burghardt's opinion, however, the fact that decisions were made outside the area itself and particularly by the Allies worked against the principle of the self-determination.<sup>128</sup>

In addition to the perspectives of success and democracy, the 1990s introduced something else to Western Hungary research. Analyzing the peace treaties of the First World War became fashionable again when Europe's division into eastern and western blocks ended after 1989.<sup>129</sup> For example researches concerning Hungary's borders show features of a mode of thought where the current borders might be more favourable to Hungary. Simultaneously the researches approach Hungary's revision policy differently than during the Cold War.<sup>130</sup>

In spite of these changes, the question of Western Hungary in the discipline of the history of international relations and political history has calcified into the form it took in the beginning of the 1990s: Ormos's book from 1990, Romsics's Trianon interpretation from 2001 and Swanson's publications touching on the issue in the twenty-first century<sup>131</sup> are the last attempts to explain the political history of the border question. New Burgenland or Western Hungary research has concentrated on other periods in the history of the border

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<sup>127</sup> Swanson 2000, 1-2.

<sup>128</sup> Burghardt 1962, 188. In his articles, Tom Gullberg has compared Aland, Vorarlberg, Burgenland, and Carinthia from the perspective of applying the principle of self-determination. Gullberg 1991, 1999, 2000.

<sup>129</sup> E.g. Boulet 2000, 503-554.

<sup>130</sup> E.g. Ignác Romsics's study on British politics towards Hungary. Romsics I., 1996, *passim*.

<sup>131</sup> Swanson 2000 and 2001.

area, as well as on regionality and identity. These new, multidisciplinary researches often rely for historical knowledge on classics and the national perspective. This reliance on tradition has meant an over-emphasis on the national and the inter-state diplomacy levels and a corresponding de-emphasis on the international community's decision-making. Basing research on earlier themes has also meant that the chronological analysis of the border question and the milestones of the history of events have stabilized without finding a new way to discern and group these events into parts of a bigger arc of development.

#### **1.4 Political and ideological framework for post-war international relations**

In this study, the question of Western Hungary is considered as part of the construction of the peace process after the First World War. Because of this, it is essential that we recognize the trends of international politics that were effective during the Peace Conference and the execution of its rulings. The central question is: how did the political leaders interpret the structures of international politics and how did they use them in interaction with others? The central problem of the border disputes was also connected to the collision of idealism and realism: how did the right to national self-determination and power politics meet in the decision-making concerning national borders?

Thus, in the Peace Conference, different variations of how Eastern and Central Europe was to be reorganized competed.<sup>132</sup> In addition to the differing views of the victors and the defeated, the victorious camp consisted of individual political motives: not only were there different lines of international politics, but also differences of interpretation and argumentation within these lines. Both the doctrine of self-determination and the general tendency of power politics included different approaches and ways of acting.<sup>133</sup> The motives for moving the border between Austria and Hungary and the argumentation of the changes can be explained against this multifaceted background.

The historical image of the Peace Conference has been that from it were expected new policies and the breaking up of the old system, i.e. the authoritarian empires. The idea was that the new politics, diplomacy and the international system would serve the interests of both the parties that benefited from the war, and those who lost it. On the other hand, however, the Peace Conference has been criticized for not being successful in its reforms and for implementing old policies, which lead to the tottering of the peace settlement. In historical research, the Peace Conference has an image of failure, but there has been a tendency to try to understand "the wrong decisions" by taking into account the operational preconditions and conditions for the decision-making

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<sup>132</sup> Goldstein 1991, 241-242.

<sup>133</sup> See examples of such cases in Goldstein 1991, 241-242 and Macmillan 2002, 43-44.

of the Conference. A well-meaning progressiveness has been seen in the operations of the Conference.<sup>134</sup> The criticism has been alleviated by assessing that the 1919 peace settlement was at least in part based on the concept of national self-determination central to peace, as well as the drawing of the borders according to nations.<sup>135</sup>

The central thought and operation processes of international politics that affected the peace process can be placed in the context of the realism that represented the tradition of politics, and the idealism that was marketed as something novel. The continuity of politics was represented by the concepts of old diplomacy, *Realpolitik* aka power policy, balance of power and alliance policy. The progressive politics were represented by liberal and idealistic movements, the liberal internationalism and new diplomacy connected with national self-determination and the ideals of the League of Nations. They used as their arguments the concepts of democracy, nation and people.<sup>136</sup> Thus, the reorganisation of Central Europe was most likely about the interaction between realism and idealism, between power policy and liberal internationalism, between old and new diplomacy.

The operation of the Peace Conference was characterized by compensation and compromise, as the policies had to be fitted together. The peace settlement was created in polymorphic circumstances.<sup>137</sup> The Conference had the dual task of making a settlement to conquer the lost parties and, on the other hand, to create a functional international system.<sup>138</sup> To simplify, we can state that the Conference operated according to traditional power politics, making arguments according to the new politics such as national self-determination. National self-determination was a watchword<sup>139</sup> and super-ideology<sup>140</sup> for the state-territorial reorganization. Thereby, it was not a turn towards new diplomacy or simply a continuum; nor a victory of unambiguous idealistic policy over realism, or a mere promise of idealism. The best description of the situation is the overlapping of change and tradition, interaction between different political lines and the fact that they shared similarities in their ideologies. To quote Goldstein: "There were principles inherent in the old system which could assist the new," such as the idea of the balance of power.<sup>141</sup>

In the question of Western Hungary, the Allies took a stand on the territoriality of Austria and Hungary and its accommodation into the international community. In addition to political and economic development, the rearrangement of the state borders was part of the construction of the new inter-state system. Even though the building of the state was a central issue, the

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<sup>134</sup> Macmillan 2002, 497, 500.

<sup>135</sup> Nicholson 1998, 48.

<sup>136</sup> Liberal internationalism as application of idealism, see Brown 2001, 22-30, 224-229; For new diplomacy see Hamilton & Langhorne 1995, 136-147, 153-157.

<sup>137</sup> See for example Gullberg 2000, 9, 45; Macmillan 2002, 4-7.

<sup>138</sup> Archer 1995, 15.

<sup>139</sup> Macmillan 2002, 5.

<sup>140</sup> Gullberg 2000, 9.

<sup>141</sup> Goldstein 1991, 124-125.

territorial questions were also about the accommodation of the state into the international community: about how a functional and secure entity could be formed through the organisation of the states. In the case of Western Hungary, it was about the significance Central Europe had to the peace settlement. However, the Allies had varying ideas about what made a state secure for the international system and their own national advantage. Should the safety be secured by alliance politics or the internal structure of the state?<sup>142</sup> These differing views were possibly evident in the border discourse.

In any case, the decision-makers in the peace process, regardless of their international-political orientation, understood that a state was a central unit of international relations. Traditionally, it was precisely the realistic school that emphasized the state as unit of political activity. The function of the existence of the state was the prevention of political threats. According to the realism, the actions and interactions of states are constrained and directed by the operation of structural elements in the inter-state system. For realists, the reality begins with the existence of the state in a world of states and develops into the problem of guaranteeing this existence. National security is the primal goal of the state. Dominating inter-state relations are conflict and competition, and with the prospect of violence always present. The central activity of the state is the pursuit and exercise of power in order to preserve itself and its political identity.<sup>143</sup>

After the First World War, realism was challenged by the arguments of idealism. On the other hand, idealism also contained elements of a continuum, of realism. It was not unique to the tradition of international relations that the state was central to political activity; it was also a central unit in idealistic politics. The ideals of realism and idealism and the variations thereof drew, in this sense, from the same tradition. In addition, the isms were further linked by the fact that realism also pursued stability and peace on a theoretical level, albeit by means of balance of power.<sup>144</sup> Furthermore, employing balance of power in politics was not alien to the idealists, either: in British foreign policy, for instance, the traditional balance of power got a stronger foothold, when the public demanded compensation for the war and punishment for the enemy.<sup>145</sup> Democracy, popularity with the voters and the exposure of the politics to public criticism thus lead, for their part, to "non-democratic" international politics. With the liberal internationalists, as well as with president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, the national interest of the state and their own political standing governed the political aims. Like power politics, liberal and idealistic politics were a way to pursue national interests.<sup>146</sup> However, those interests, like

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<sup>142</sup> For principles of classic realism and the relation between foreign and domestic politics, see Nicholson 1998, 96-98.

<sup>143</sup> Reynolds 1992, 54-56; Brown 2001, 3-6.

<sup>144</sup> Nicholson 1998, 91-93.

<sup>145</sup> Goldstein 1991, 124-125.

<sup>146</sup> Thompson 2002, 249-251.

economic success, for example, were to be implemented, idealistically speaking, by means of peace and democracy.<sup>147</sup>

Against this political context, the state territory could also be justified simultaneously by the *nation* as well as the motives arising from the tradition of *Realpolitik*. After the First World War, the idea of the nation emerged as the foremost symbol in the interpretative system through which new states were to be legitimized. Both the leaders of states in the region of the former monarchy and the decision-makers of the Peace Conference based their politics, argumentation and rhetoric on the idea of the nation state.<sup>148</sup>

The post-First World War nation state ideology has been seen as part of the line of development that arose from enlightenment and romanticism.<sup>149</sup> "The nation" has been interpreted as a central means of legitimization of the modern state since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>150</sup>, but, on the other hand, as Gullberg claims, before the Paris Peace Conference no explicit link had ever been made between the nation and state-territorial organization, despite the fact that the 19<sup>th</sup> century European state-formation process had increasingly emphasized ethno-linguistic affinity.<sup>151</sup>

Even though a strong ideology based on ethno-nationalism has been associated with the peace process of the First World War, the territorial requirements were not necessarily inspired by it. Instead, connected with the realistic tradition of international relations, the strategic factors, natural resources, human resources and communication were emphasized.<sup>152</sup> These factors have been linked with elements that carry on its tradition of power politics or *Realpolitik*. On the other hand, they were also, potentially, arguments of the idealistically articulated politics that primarily emphasized the national right of self-determination. According to Evans, defining the borders according to the will and ethnicity of the people was limited, on one hand, by strategic reasons, but also the internal, historical borders of the former Habsburg Monarchy, which did not follow the ethnic-linguistic borders.<sup>153</sup>

The new network of states leaned on the idea of a people as well as the power-political vision. The decision making of the Peace Conference was balanced between different expectations and estimates, for example: How could the ethnic principle be applied to the Hungarians in a situation where its application meant shaking the political equilibrium?

In spite of the practical actions of the Peace Conference being based largely on power-political terms, the idea of a nation as the basis for a state was a strong argument and a sort of public, ideological umbrella for the Conference. Community, identity, nationality and ethnicity are complex concepts connected

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<sup>147</sup> Macmillan 2002, 93.

<sup>148</sup> Gullberg 2000, 23, 135.

<sup>149</sup> Evans 1992, 486-487; Haslinger & Holz 2000, 20.

<sup>150</sup> Haslinger & Holz 2000, 20.

<sup>151</sup> Gullberg 2000, 23.

<sup>152</sup> Johansson 1999, 2.

<sup>153</sup> Evans 1992, *passim*.

with the legitimacy of a state. According to the right of national self-determination, people have a right to their own state; in addition to this idea of democracy, the national self-determination implicates ethno-nationalistic ideas: an ethnic nation, ethnic people, has a right to a state.<sup>154</sup> Concepts associated with a nation legitimized the policies and were used as arguments both from the inside and from the outside, and on a national as well as international level.<sup>155</sup> Thus, nation states develop in a context of domestic and foreign relations. In other words, a nation state is born and develops in relation to other states: for example, a new state is often born following a conflict with an old state, a part of which it previously was.<sup>156</sup>

Nations have been used to legitimize states in many ways; by founding a state on the basis of a nation, or the other way around, by creating a nation to fit the state.<sup>157</sup> When it comes to the concept of a nation, attention has often been drawn to the ethnic separatism in multinational countries, but it is just as important to focus on the significance of a nation in the building of existing states.<sup>158</sup> The historical period dealing with the question of Western Hungary can be seen as the juncture between the two: the turning point between the national movements in the time of the multinational monarchy and the legitimization of the new states.

The central significance of the nation to a state is, in particular, that the national identity serves the governmental system – both the democratic and undemocratic ones.<sup>159</sup> In the policy of the Paris Peace Conference, however, the idea of the nation as the basis of the state was linked with democracy and self-determination. According to this thought, people have the right to govern themselves in a national community, and nations, for their part, in the international community. Thus, the nation state represented the bedrock of democracy in this historical phase, and the nation, people, legitimized the state and politics in two ways: by ethnicity and democracy.<sup>160</sup>

The question of Western Hungary can be interpreted as part of building the nation state system, which supported the prevailing political trends. Territoriality that is based on a people implies an idealistic nation state ideal and national right of self-determination, but a nation state as opposed to empires also fitted the realistic state ideal. For the liberal internationalists, the democratic nation state was a central unit of international cooperation as a democratic state based on the will of its people would operate in a democratic community, and would not exercise politics leading to war. The nation state, together with democracy, would prevent conflicts from arising.<sup>161</sup> The idea that

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<sup>154</sup> Johansson 1999, 12, 14.

<sup>155</sup> Johansson 1999, 3, 24-25.

<sup>156</sup> Paasi 1996, 82.

<sup>157</sup> Jönsson, Tägil & Törnqvist 2000, 81.

<sup>158</sup> Johansson 1999, 13, 21.

<sup>159</sup> Haslinger & Holz 2000, 19-21.

<sup>160</sup> Jönsson, Tägil & Törnqvist 2000, 84-85.

<sup>161</sup> Nicholson 1998, 19.



democratic states do not fight is linked to a later notion of democratic peace<sup>162</sup>. The central idea is that people do not want war and their safety is guaranteed when promoting democratic political systems, that is, liberal democratic, constitutional regimes, and the principle of national self-determination.<sup>163</sup> The nation, on which the state was based, did not refer to the subjects under monarchy, but nation in terms of democracy and self-determination.<sup>164</sup> This distinction in the definition of the word 'nation' has to be born in mind, because the idea of the nation has been used to not only legitimize democratic systems, but also dictatorial systems.<sup>165</sup>

According to Woodrow Wilson's concept of liberal internationalism in particular, the state was to be democratic: not revolutionary or authoritarian, but based on an ethnic nation through democracy. Liberal internationalism in the interpretation and organisation of international relations gained support in Great Britain and the United States, because they had suffered less concrete losses in the war than Europe's continental countries. The liberal tradition shunned the realistic anarchy model. In liberal internationalism, liberal political principles and traditions and the combinations of the two meet the management of the international system.<sup>166</sup> Liberal internationalism criticized the pre-war international system, authoritarian empires, and anarchy that led to secret diplomacy and federal politics. Instead, the idea was to operate internationally as a collective, i.e. so that both the domestic and international structures would guarantee peace.<sup>167</sup>

The significance of the international community in liberal internationalism does not, however, abolish the significance of the state. Internationalism promises to circumvent the contradiction between national independence and international security. It is a programme that combines national independence and international security. Therefore, a system of independent states is linked to a well-functioning international system.<sup>168</sup> Obviously, this ideal – not necessarily contradictory to realism – also emerged in the question of Western Hungary.

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<sup>162</sup> On the concept of democratic peace see Brown 2001, 83.

<sup>163</sup> Brown 2001, 23.

<sup>164</sup> Macmillan 2002, 93.

<sup>165</sup> Haslinger & Holz 2000, 21.

<sup>166</sup> Brown 2001, 22.

<sup>167</sup> Brown 2001, 22-23.

<sup>168</sup> Goldmann, 1994, 1.

## 2 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS POST-WAR POLICY- MAKER AND STATE-BUILDER

### 2.1 Old and New Diplomacy: Conferences and Organizations

The convergence of the new and traditional ways of thinking and acting in international relations can also be outlined through the concepts of new and old diplomacy. In spite of the idealist critique, the traditional, realistic approach to the international relations, *Realpolitik*, still seemed to be the central framework for the European politics after the First World War. Similarly, during 1918-1923, international relations were still conducted by "Old Diplomacy", although a new and more open diplomacy was emerging as an alternative approach. "New Diplomacy", like liberal internationalism, emphasized democracy and the reorganisation of the international community. In it crystallized the idea of a shift in international relations. The aim of new diplomacy was to transform the manners in which states interacted with each other from secret diplomacy into something more open and democratic. This did not mean changing diplomatic conventions as such, but making them public. Openness was democracy, according to which international relations could be controlled by publicity and parliamentary power. Part of the ideal of new and open diplomacy was the idea of an international organization: new tools, organizations, had to be created for the regulation of international politics. In other words, international issues had to be dealt with in an open forum, such as the League of Nations.<sup>169</sup> The idealistic politics of 1919 can be regarded as the first move in founding a world community.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Hamilton 1995, 136-138.

<sup>170</sup> Navari 2000, 2.

International assemblies were also part of the traditions of old diplomacy. New and old diplomacy – the diplomatic tradition and new ideals – were thus employed simultaneously, but were valued differently in different conferences and organizations. The question of Western Hungary was also on the table in international institutions that foregrounded varying political contents and ways of argumentation.

The highest authorities on the question of Western Hungary were the state level multilateral organizations of the Allies, the Peace Conference, the Conference of Ambassadors (CA)<sup>171</sup> and the League of Nations. The question of Western Hungary was brought up in the Paris Peace Conference between 1919-20. In the CA, it was on the table as a hindrance of carrying out the peace treaties, which was solved between 1920-21. The final border was sealed with the ruling of the League of Nations between 1922-23. The role of the League of Nations in defining the border between Austria and Hungary was based on the covering letter of the Treaty of Trianon, in which it was authorized to revalue the borders locally after the ratification. According to the covering letter, the Delimitation Commission could propose changes in the border. In the question of Western Hungary, the League of Nations represented the just decision-making of an international community that relied on the idealistic principles and the right of national self-determination.<sup>172</sup>

How did the actions taken by the Peace Conference, the Conference of Ambassadors and the League of Nations place themselves in the contexts of old and new diplomacy? During this new phase in the world politics, international conferences and organisations reflected a variety of applications in international relations; not only a change, but a continuum of diplomacy and politics. The international system that followed the First World War is regarded as a historical watershed, even though historical tradition can be seen to have influenced the post-war conference and organisational politics. The background of international organisation can be tracked back to the state system created by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and the development of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) in the 19th century. The post-First World War crisis and the evolution of organizations affected both the governmental (IGO) and non-governmental (INGO) levels. However, governmental level is a primary subject, when researching national borders as part of the peace process. For example, the Paris Peace Conference was primarily an intergovernmental meeting of heads of state and government, Foreign Ministers and their advisers.<sup>173</sup>

The Peace Conference can be considered the juncture between change and the traditions of politics and diplomacy. In other words, the phase in which the question of Western Hungary came up represented a potential convergence of radical change and continuum. From the anglo-saxon viewpoint in particular, the Peace Conference has been explained as having aimed at new politics and

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<sup>171</sup> Also called "Ambassadors' Conference".

<sup>172</sup> See chapter 6.4. on the covering letter of the Treaty of Trianon.

<sup>173</sup> For historical development of international organizations, see Archer 1995, 3-21.

diplomacy.<sup>174</sup> The creation of peace treaties and a new international system was connected with the ideals of new diplomacy: "open covenants of peace" and "open publicity" were central slogans. "Disappointment" has also featured in the historical image of the Peace Conference, with regard to its ability to apply new diplomacy. The press was not allowed to witness the sessions of the Supreme Council, only the insignificant plenary sessions. Moreover, the Council of Four, where the most important decisions were made, assembled away from the public eye.<sup>175</sup>

Nevertheless and in any case, publicity and public opinion were linked with national politics. Macmillan (2002) emphasizes the point of view according to which the rules of publicity and democracy regulated, for their part, the aims of the Allies in the peace negotiations. Public opinion and popularity among the voters, regulated the peace politics of the winning countries. Foreign policies were linked with public opinion and academic visions. This did not mean, however, that politics had become fundamentally more democratic or open, or that democracy had introduced a democratic content in decision-making, such as taking into account what the citizens wanted. Thus, publicity did not necessarily equal a democratic peace, but reflected the punishment thinking typical of power politics.<sup>176</sup> The introduction of the idea of democracy could therefore, paradoxically, even strengthen the power-political substance of politics. The image of the Peace Conference as a democratic world forum was particularly compatible with the peace politics of the Americans, but the conference politics of the British who were also considered more liberal, were in fact largely dependent on the punishment demands of English public opinion.<sup>177</sup>

The Peace Conference was not a solid organization whose actions were based on forethought, but was more prone to improvisation.<sup>178</sup> The Allies and the United States had varying views both about the aims of the Conference and the ways it should pursue them. At first the Supreme Council spent much time talking about procedures. Councils, commissions and sub-commissions were established and shaped at need while the Conference progressed. As Macmillan has described, there was an agenda of sorts but the Conference also dealt with issues as they came up. The Allies heard petitioners, "a procession that did not end until the Peace Conference itself." The French preferred a detailed agenda where the question of Germany was more important than the League of Nations, but Wilson and Lloyd George refused to accept the model France had suggested. Wilson preferred as little structure as possible - conversation instead of a formal Conference.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Macmillan 2002, 93-94.

<sup>175</sup> Hamilton & Langhorne 1995, 154-155.

<sup>176</sup> Macmillan 2002, 4-6.

<sup>177</sup> Macmillan 2002, 172-174.

<sup>178</sup> Gullberg 2000, 78-79.

<sup>179</sup> Macmillan 2002, 61-65.

The representatives of the Great Powers – David Lloyd George, Woodrow Wilson, Georges Clemenceau, Vittorio Orlando, and the Japanese representatives – gathered with their Foreign Ministers and aides in the Council of Ten, also called the Supreme Council<sup>180</sup>. The Supreme Council developed its own routine and had 1-3 daily meetings. The Plenary Sessions of the Peace Conference were of little importance in comparison. The Supreme Council has indeed been described as a world government.<sup>181</sup>

Towards the end of March 1919, the leadership of the Allies and the United States formed a forum of decision-makers still more confidential than the Supreme Council: the Council of Four. It was a discussion forum for Prime Ministers Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Orlando, and President Wilson, created to make decisions on the most important questions. The question of Western Hungary was not included in the agenda; instead, Hungarian communism was discussed at length in the spring of 1919. The idea underlying the Council of Four was to talk confidentially in the absence of Foreign Ministers and aides; the objective was to facilitate swifter decision-making. Wilson had always preferred small, informal groups, where he could speak freely and also change his mind. Initially the meetings were not recorded, but Clemenceau's interpreter, historian Paul Mantoux kept notes, as did the British secretary Sir Maurice Hankey later on. The Peace Conference also formed the Council of Five, where the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, Italy, France, the U.S.A., and Japan dealt with questions inherited from the Council of Four.<sup>182</sup> In addition to the Supreme Council, the question of Western Hungary emerged expressly in the Council of Five.

The fact that the question of Germany left all other questions – such as nationality issues of Central and Eastern Europe – in its shadow caused problems in the Peace Treaties and in the Conference's operation. While handling the peace treaties of Central and Eastern Europe, the Peace Conference operated on smaller resources and with less weight than it did preparing the German treaty. Although considered as complements to the German treaty, the peace treaties of Central Europe were drafted on a lower profile than the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>183</sup> This was particularly the case with the peace treaty of Hungary. Austria's peace treaty and the border questions – the question of Western Hungary among them – emerged for the first time in May 1919 at a point when the Peace Conference was still in full swing. Similarly the information gathering and background work concerning the border were carried out mainly during the active phase of the Conference and delegations, starting from January 1919.<sup>184</sup> Still, the Conference's "mistakes" and "deficiencies" as regards the question of Western Hungary can not be sufficiently explained by its emphasis on Germany.

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<sup>180</sup> Also called "Heads of Delegations", see FRUS PPC.

<sup>181</sup> Macmillan 2002, 61-65.

<sup>182</sup> Macmillan 2002, 281-282.

<sup>183</sup> Goldstein 1991, 277-278.

<sup>184</sup> For example Coolidge Commission in Vienna, see chapters 2.2. and 3.2.

The policy of the Peace Conference can be interpreted as an ambiguous field of political expressions, modes of thoughts and actions where the politics of new diplomacy and liberal internationalism encountered traditional diplomacy and Realpolitik. To quote Robbins (2005) there was “the dialogue” and “the interplay between principals and principles”.<sup>185</sup> The Paris Conference of Ambassadors (CA) enforcing the decisions of the Peace Conference adhered to the traditional operational modes of old diplomacy and international relations more unambiguously than did the Peace Conference.<sup>186</sup>

The CA was a central decision-maker in the question of Western Hungary, working on the question since its founding in the beginning of 1920. The CA’s task was the practical implementation of the new border between Austria and Hungary. The CA met until 1931. The question of Western Hungary coincided with the active phase of the CA’s operation, between 1920 and 1924. At that time the CA often had more influence in European politics than the League of Nations.<sup>187</sup> Indeed, the CA has been considered a rival to the League of Nations. The weakness of the latter has been justified partly by the existence of a rival organization.<sup>188</sup> The operation of the CA potentially overshadowed the task of the League of Nations in the question of Western Hungary. Subjecting the border question to the League of Nations, i.e. the idea of bringing national self-determination under the supervision of the international community, was arguably an important argument during the process.

During the years immediately following the peace treaty, several other questions – like the question of Albania – were assigned not to the League of Nations but to the CA or to more irregular gatherings of international leaders. The CA was a result of a decision taken by the Allies in July, 1919, to establish a permanent commission of their representatives for the interpretation of peace treaties. The Conference launched its operation formally on January 26, 1920. The operation consisted of the ambassadors meeting, usually once a week. The CA supervised various commissions which handled border delimitations, plebiscites, arms control, and reparations – in other words, orders of the Peace Conference. During the consideration of Western Hungary the president of the CA was Jules Cambon, the former General Secretary of the French Foreign Ministry. The CA created its own *esprit de corps*, and it became a kind of communication centre for questions related to peace treaties. The cooperation of the Allies in the Conference embraced traditional diplomatic methods. Its operation was supplemented by government meetings, inter-governmental reunions that handled the application of the peace settlement simultaneously with the CA.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Robbins 2005, 198-199.

<sup>186</sup> Heideking 1980, 591.

<sup>187</sup> Heideking 1980, 628. An early study on the CA, see Pink (1942). In the IR- and historical studies, the CA has been overshadowed by the League of Nations.

<sup>188</sup> Armstrong, Lloyd & Redmond 1996, 34-35.

<sup>189</sup> Hamilton & Langhorne 1995, 162-163.

The CA has been criticized for being a victors' organisation and a symbol for their war-time solidarity. Its points of departure deviated from the League of Nations' universal ideals. Just as in the Peace Conference, in the CA the Allies were not unanimous about Europe's development lines. The member nations disagreed particularly on the new borders in Central Europe.<sup>190</sup> The conference has also been called *la Grande Délimitatrice*, as its central function until 1923 was territorial reorganization. In addition to the border questions, the CA also implemented the peace treaties' military control aspect and handled questions of economy, finance, traffic and minorities. The CA's operational options were primarily diplomatic – the questions were being solved by the use of mediators and the drafting of ultimatums. There were only limited possibilities for the use of armed forces.<sup>191</sup> These methods and restrictions emerge while studying the CA's role in terms of the question of Western Hungary.

The governments used the CA as a protective shield they could assign difficult questions to.<sup>192</sup> On occasion the CA and other conferences also sidestepped difficult questions by forwarding them to the League of Nations. The League of Nations considered issues involving a potentially lengthy process, demanding neutrality, or potentially giving rise to conflicts even between the Great Powers. Border disputes and minority questions were such issues.<sup>193</sup>

The use of the League of Nations, the CA, and separate conferences as problem-solving bodies in the 1920s can be defined as a phase in international politics where new forms were experimented on and traditional diplomacy with its instruments was applied to the changed world-political circumstances.<sup>194</sup> Thereby the decision concerning the border between Austria and Hungary was potentially made by combining the era's different modes of thought and action.

Comparing or compartmentalising the CA and the League of Nations is not a straightforward task. Heideking has tied them into a part of the history of multilateral diplomacy after the First World War. In this division, the CA represented old diplomacy, the forum of the elite and old school diplomats, carrying on the tradition of covert cabinet diplomacy. As the heir of the Peace Conference, the CA continued this tradition leaning on the Allies' war-time cooperation. The League of Nations can also be considered a part of the tradition of diplomacy and international relations, although its image was first and foremost tinged by new diplomacy.<sup>195</sup> The League of Nations was more ideological than the pragmatic CA, which largely reflected the French views on the methods of international relations. The CA's task was to carry out the peace

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<sup>190</sup> Heideking 1979, 340-344.

<sup>191</sup> Heideking 1980, 603-614.

<sup>192</sup> Heideking 1980, 611.

<sup>193</sup> Armstrong, Lloyd & Redmond 1996, 37.

<sup>194</sup> Heideking 1980, 630.

<sup>195</sup> Armstrong, Lloyd & Redmond 1996, 34; Archer 1995, 16-19, 21-23; Heideking 1980, 591.

treaties, whereas the League of Nations' ideology involved the idea of collective security.<sup>196</sup> In sum, the relations between the League of Nations and the CA were both complex and multifaceted, and the two were equally capable of open rivalry as well as unproblematic cooperation. The League of Nations aimed at becoming a permanent organization whereas the CA was an extension of the Peace Conference. Nevertheless, the CA gained more influence, already having a finished set of operation modes created during the war, while the League of Nations was still in the process of finding its shape.<sup>197</sup> Conferences of ambassadors similar to the CA had existed earlier, and as an institution it leaned on tradition also in that respect.<sup>198</sup>

The CA's historical image as an agent in international relations has thus been a conservative one. Jürgen Heideking has researched the Conference, and he would nevertheless link the CA into a part of democratic political activity on the grounds that its member nations represented democratic Western states – with the exception of Mussolini's post-1922 Italy. Italy took the membership very seriously and often sided with the British against France in the CA. France for its part was responsible for the organization and leadership of the Conference. The United States was a rather passive member. The American opinions did influence the birth of the decision about the new border in 1919, but in the autumn of 1919, the United States withdrew from European politics and remained only an observer in the CA. It pulled out its representative, Hugh Wallace, in early 1921, but he nevertheless returned to the conference as an official observer.<sup>199</sup> Therefore the United States was only a marginal actor in the question of Western Hungary, at least from 1920 on. Of the Allies, Great Britain, France, and Italy participated in the international debate concerning Western Hungary throughout the process. Their dialogue could be seen after the Peace Conference in the CA's decisions about Western Hungary. The Italian allies' policy deviated from the mainstream, as could be seen especially in the autumn of 1921, when the country volunteered as mediator in the border dispute.

The importance of the Allied and Associated Powers in the debate concerning Western Hungary differed at different times. In the decision-making concerning Western Hungary, organizations adhering to different diplomatic traditions encountered each other; moreover, different national points of departure affected the peace process in various ways at different times. The foreign policy guidelines of the victorious Great Powers explain their roles in international decision-making and their attitudes towards Central European regional issues and raise questions about the forms in which Realpolitik and idealism manifested themselves in practical politics. In this sense, national politics forged international politics and served as background for peace regulations, a process that warrants discussion.

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<sup>196</sup> Heideking 1980, 589-593. On the Conference of Ambassadors, its roots and methods, also see Heideking 1979, 13-32, 344.

<sup>197</sup> Heideking 1979, 345-347.

<sup>198</sup> Heideking 1980, 604-605.

<sup>199</sup> Heideking 1979, 345.



## 2.2 New International Order in terms of Wilsonism

How did Austria, Hungary, and the peacemakers in Paris conceive a nation state and its spatiality? How did they define not only the image and identity but also the “Other” and “Otherness” of the nation-state?<sup>200</sup> What arguments and motives were used to legitimize or deny the country’s right to Western Hungary? The political framework of Allied and the United States as well as Austrian and Hungarian governments helps answer these questions.

In February 1919 in Vienna, Harvard University professor Archibald Gary Coolidge assigned Major Lawrence Martin, a geographer, to travel to the border region between Austria and Hungary and to familiarize himself with the local situation for the purpose of defining the new state border. Martin’s assignment was a part of the operation of the American information gathering commission led by Coolidge from Vienna in order to gain information for the reorganisation of Central Europe. The task was to strengthen the American idealistically oriented foreign policy’s authority and bargaining power at the Paris Peace Conference, where the new policy pursued by the United States encountered the European tradition of Realpolitik.

In the earlier research, the United States’ information gathering on Central European circumstances has been considered important in terms of the decision concerning Western Hungary. The mission led by professor Coolidge, who was in charge of information gathering in the Habsburg area, delivered its suggestions concerning the borders to the U.S. peace negotiators. In Coolidge’s biography and in the work of many researchers – largely based on Jon D. Berlin’s studies and American source material – the emphasis lies on the fact that at the Peace Conference the United States was the only participant familiar with the border question. Therefore the Americans contributed significantly in the creation of the new border.<sup>201</sup>

The activity of 1919 stemmed from the American war-time inquiries. In order to secure the United States’ position in the coming peace arrangements, Wilson asked Colonel Edward House in September 1919 to form a team of experts to look into the background information through which the United States could strengthen her negotiation powers and to find out what means she could use upon encountering the European allies. From the United States’ point of view, it was a question of winning not only the war but the peace as well, and the United States did not wish to remain dependent only on British and French information. This goal resulted in the founding of a reconnaissance organisation, “The Inquiry”. The operation was paid for from the President’s

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<sup>200</sup> For identity and Otherness, see Haslinger & Holz 2000, 16-25.

<sup>201</sup> Berlin 1974 and 1977; Heidrich 1982, 24-25; Kerekes 1979; Sóos 1971; Ormos 1990, 20, 28-30. : Ormos, who leans on French and Italian source material, does not emphasize the unique nature of Coolidge’s role, however; instead, she brings up the assessments of the British and the French.

funds and it operated on a low profile in New York. The group consisted mainly of geographers and historians.<sup>202</sup>

The task of the organization was to gather historical, geographical, ethnological, economic, and statistical data on questions that would emerge after the war. Professor Coolidge's area of responsibility in the group was East Europe's political problems. In June 1918 he left his post and moved to reconnaissance duties in Stockholm and Archangel. He returned in October 1918 to find "The Inquiry" largely reorganized. However, in November 1918 he was given the assignment to gather information on Central and Eastern Europe. The goal was to provide the United States delegation with information about the area's current circumstances and development prospects. In addition to statistics and maps, the delegation needed information based on eye-witness experiences for the Paris Peace Conference. The American agents were to keep an eye on the mood of the population and the direction of national policy. However, "The American Commission of Study" soon began to resemble diplomatic work.<sup>203</sup> The presence of an American organisation in Vienna received attention in Central Europe. The operation of the commission was not limited to silent research only; it received both private and official petitions from various parts of the old Habsburg domain. In the eyes of the locals, Coolidge was a link between the Paris Peace Conference and the governments of Austria and Hungary.<sup>204</sup>

The operation and research results of the Coolidge commission undoubtedly played a significant role in elevating the border question between Austria and Hungary into a topic of the Peace Conference in 1919. The reputation of the commission in the historical writings concerning the question of Western Hungary is based on the fact that it was the only systematic information gathering operation of the victors in the area of Western Hungary.<sup>205</sup> Furthermore, the activities of the Americans had concrete consequences: the reports, memoranda of Coolidge and Martin largely formed the basis for the discussions at the Peace Conference in the summer of 1919. The historical image of the United States vis-à-vis the border question is also based on the fact that the U.S. peace delegation and the British were the first ones to take up the future of Western Hungary in the Austrian peace negotiations. Coolidge had an impact on the Western Hungary discourse even after leaving Vienna. He participated in the Peace Conference in Paris for three months starting in late May, 1919. He was also active in the commission that defined the border between Austria and Hungary.<sup>206</sup>

Arno J. Mayer has described Coolidge as "conventional diplomat and political historian". To quote Mayer, "--- it is not surprising that House and others should have become impatient with his 'interminable dispatches dealing

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<sup>202</sup> Thompson 2002, 161; Coolidge 1932, 192.

<sup>203</sup> Coolidge 1932, 192-197.

<sup>204</sup> Coolidge 1932, 200-203.

<sup>205</sup> Berlin 1977, 76.

<sup>206</sup> Coolidge 1932, 217-218, 222.

almost exclusively with the history of the pragmatic sanction."<sup>207</sup> Nevertheless, Coolidge's points of departure and his interpretation of the legitimation of the borders can be seen as a part of the U.S. policy at the Peace Conference. The grounds presented by his commission can be contextualised as part of Wilson's political vision and idealistic rhetoric. What, then, were the options of Austria's political and territorial construction seen through American eyes? A political and social system leaning on the people and democracy was an unambiguous goal; but the definition of the territoriality of a political unit was more problematic. The task of the state area was to complement and ensure political security - but the problem was what to include in such state area geographically. How did the promise of prosperity and the people themselves figure into the state's territoriality?

And how did these views meet with the French, British, and Italian views about the future of Central Europe? According to Bell, "British policy tended to veer between power politics and idealism". Wilsonian idealism can be related to the British liberal tradition, but at the same time Great Britain demanded security by getting rid of the German fleet and colonies, and in this way the British attitudes resembled traditional power politics. The British, however, could construct their security and prosperity on their empire. In this sense Europe was less important for them than it was for France, the country that was determined to pursue European security by the methods of power politics, alliance policy, and old diplomacy. Both European Great Powers had an ambiguous attitude towards Wilson's policy: in addition to criticism, France considered it beneficial to aspire to the position of America's favourite ally. The British for their part considered the watchwords of self-determination and just peace as suited to their liberal tradition.<sup>208</sup>

In the histories dealing with the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson has often been debated in a heated manner. The achievements and mistakes of the Conference have been explained by the degree to which Wilsonism was followed or breached.<sup>209</sup> Like the European Great Powers, Wilsonism should be considered as a multi-faceted phenomenon - not merely an ideological counterpart to the traditions of international politics.

It is true that e.g. Thomas J. Knock's positively written biography of Wilson emphasizes Wilson's democracy and liberal internationalism against Realpolitik and alliance policy.<sup>210</sup> According to Knock, the ultimate objective of Wilson and the progressive wing of American internationalism was a lasting peace that would accommodate change and advance democratic institutions and social and economic justice.<sup>211</sup> Balance of power was now to be replaced by community of power: organized common peace.<sup>212</sup> To quote another classic

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<sup>207</sup> Mayer 1968, 716.

<sup>208</sup> Bell 1996, 113-116.

<sup>209</sup> Thompson 2002, 188.

<sup>210</sup> Knock 1992, 103.

<sup>211</sup> Knock 1992, 57.

<sup>212</sup> Knock 1992, 112.

interpretation on Wilson, Hecksher has stated that “--- with the formation of the new states of Central and Eastern Europe --- he perceived that an overarching body was essential to resolve their disputes and assure some kind of viable economic life.”<sup>213</sup>

In other words, the “Wilsonians” supposed that the new states required some “nursing towards economic and political independence”. In this sense, there was a need to create new forms of political authority and economic unity among the successor states. Furthermore, these states were to act within the international community: the League of Nations would have to keep the peace among the new states. On the other hand, Wilson expected the peoples to hope for democracy – it was not his obligation to root it by force. His policy nevertheless aimed at supporting democratic aspirations.<sup>214</sup> The stabilisation of borders was considered partly to ensure political stability and peace, which in turn could be secured by the area’s mutual cooperation and the League of Nations operation.<sup>215</sup> It may be argued that taking a stand on territorial questions was precisely a step away from the tradition of American policy, such as isolationism.<sup>216</sup>

According to the concept of liberal internationalism, the state was supposed to be democratic, not revolutionary or authoritative, but a state founded ethnically and democratically on the people. Such states would form a functioning whole. The objective of the U.S. Central European policy was indeed a stable liberal order among the new nations. A central theme in this policy was to moderate both right and left extremist tendencies. The goal, to quote N. Gordon Levin, a representative of the 1960s and 1970s American revisionist interpretation of international relations<sup>217</sup>, was “an American-inspired international order of rational commercial and political stability in which the moral and the material expansion of American liberal-capitalism could take place freely in a world at peace, if a viable centrist political-economy of liberal-nationalism and internationalism were to be constructed in Eastern Europe by the Paris Peace Conference.”<sup>218</sup>

Wilsonian politics, however, embraced some features of Realpolitik, even though American idealism has most often been presented as an opposite of the Realpolitik and alliance policy pursued by France. The United States acted as a Great Power in the context of traditional politics concentrating on confrontations and power relations, and was at the same time a kind of historical agency for transformation along the lines of liberal-internationalist ideology. Wilsonians shared to a limited extent the French concept of a band of pro-allied Eastern European states.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Hecksher 1991, 531.

<sup>214</sup> Thompson 2002, 169.

<sup>215</sup> Gardner 1984, 120; N. Gordon Levin, Jr. 1968, 185-187, 193.

<sup>216</sup> Thompson 2002, 164.

<sup>217</sup> Thompson 2002, 195.

<sup>218</sup> N. Gordon Levin, Jr. 1968, 180-184, 196-197.

<sup>219</sup> N. Gordon Levin, Jr. 1968, 184.

Even Wilson's politics can actually be interpreted as an application of Realpolitik. The arguments and methods just happened to differ from those of European politics. Security was sought primarily in different ways than it was by France and Great Britain, themselves being potentially vulnerable.<sup>220</sup> The idea of annexing Western Hungary to Austria can be regarded as a reflection of the prevailing situation and policy, which aimed to repel threats with the help of a liberal system rather than resort to military means.<sup>221</sup> This system was being built by setting the borders of states and by taking care of economy and democracy.

In sum, the nature of Wilson's policy can be analysed as idealism's relationship with realism: as a dialogue between the concept of national self-determination and security policy relying on power politics. As Gullberg has stated, "the doctrine of self-determination had become a leading principle in the peace process precisely through the traditional diplomatic games that Wilson wished to eradicate."<sup>222</sup> John A. Thompson (2002) has emphasized the pragmatism of Wilson's multi-faceted politics. Wilson responded to circumstances and followed the thinking of the American majority more than ideological dogma.<sup>223</sup> Wilson's idealistically articulated policy can in fact be defined as Realpolitik, because it aimed at its own interests with its liberal internationalism and democracy. Therefore, the policy of the United States cannot be adequately characterized as idealism opposed to Realpolitik.<sup>224</sup>

Although Wilson still rode with the reputation of his Fourteen Points and introduced himself as the leading figure of progressive internationalism during the 1919 peace treaties, he had already lost some of his domestic policy standing at the time. The Wilsonian rhetoric was nevertheless intact, and so was the enthusiasm in Europe.<sup>225</sup> The ideas he had introduced were reflected in the concepts Central Europe was being rebuilt on.<sup>226</sup> Wilson's rhetoric was actually more coherent than the contents of his politics. His principles were contradictory, and therefore his politics have subsequently been connected to quite different leaders of American politics. In addition to the problems between idealism and Realpolitik, there was an interesting tension between isolationism and attempts to break it. Wilson's key idea was that the United States would have to give up the policy of isolation in order to reform the international system, but at the same time the special nature of Americanness was to be extended elsewhere. He simultaneously reflected the trends of Americanness and persuaded others to join them.<sup>227</sup>

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220 N. Gordon Levin, Jr. 1968, 192-195.

221 Practical measures included improving the economic situation and providing food relief, for example.

222 Gullberg 2000, 191.

223 Thompson 2002, 249.

224 See for example Ruotsila 2003.

225 Knock 1992, 268.

226 Knock 1992, 57.

227 Thompson 2002, 249-252.

### 2.3 Building the French system of alliances

The years during which the question of Western Hungary was debated were an era of French power policy. France stressed the literal nature of the Treaty of Versailles. Security was sought through the nation's own strength and alliance policy. France was in favour of preserving the Allies' war-time community and in addition building security in Central and Eastern Europe through alliance policy. The direction changed in 1923 after the occupation of the Ruhr.<sup>228</sup> France's dominant role in the CA, a key organisation in terms of the question of Western Hungary, was quite obviously a reflection of a desire to maintain the war-time community and to assure adherence to the peace treaty system.

From the French point of view, France needed reparation for past losses and safety for the future. French politics are explained by human losses and economic losses in the World War, as well as the historical experience of the German threat. The French were convinced that they had played the major role in winning the war and been the major sufferers. Keeping this experience in mind, Clemenceau sought security through the methods of power politics and old diplomacy.<sup>229</sup> His point of departure in the peace negotiations was to combine France's future opportunities with revenge against Germany and at the same time to preserve the alliance between the other victorious powers. Therefore it was in the French political and economic interests to maintain the wartime tradition of co-operation. The continuation secured the French interests.<sup>230</sup>

The history of the Paris Peace Conference presents viewpoints emphasising how unprofitable the treaty was for France<sup>231</sup> on the one hand, and the fact that the French policy sabotaged the application of Wilsonism in Europe on the other. However, voices of a new policy could be heard in France: the left was prepared to accept the notion of collective security and variations of Wilsonism. The proponents of collective security were a divided group, however. Furthermore, the bulk of general opinion believed in *paix française*, the peace model represented by Clemenceau. A Parliament vote gave Clemenceau power to make decisions in the peace negotiations without consulting with the Parliament in preliminary stages. The socialist demand of openness remained in the minority.<sup>232</sup>

Clemenceau had no sympathies towards collective security or towards socialist or Wilsonist internationalists. However, France was not to withdraw in isolation – the nation needed others for support. International community for Clemenceau meant the wartime community, allies, and continuation of the victors' mutual support. The French interests could therefore be achieved

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<sup>228</sup> Hovi 2005, 46.

<sup>229</sup> Bell 1996, 115-116; Bernard & Dubief 1985, 78, 83.

<sup>230</sup> Bernard & Dubief 1985, 81.

<sup>231</sup> See for example Becker & Bernstein 1990, 145.

<sup>232</sup> Becker & Bernstein 1990, 139-141; Bernard & Dubief 1985, 83.

through combining France-centeredness and functioning within the community. The community required concessions during the negotiations and zigzagging and navigating among the Allies.<sup>233</sup>

However, the Peace Conference proved that the wartime community was not a united bloc. In the elections of 1919, public opinion reacted to the French peoples' discontent with the post-war life: the power was transferred until 1924 to Bloc National, which can be described as reactionary and nationalistic in nature. Bloc National tried to continue the wartime national communality in France, to support the national interests. Bloc National was not purely a right-wing party but included individuals from the centre groups and the centre-left representative, too.<sup>234</sup> The foreign policy of Bloc National, concentrating on Germany, aimed at full realization of the Treaty of Versailles. In Eastern and Central Europe this manifested itself as a search for allies and an attempt at economic expansion in support of the *barrier de l'est*, i.e. anti-German policy. At the same time, there was also a need to co-operate with Germany in terms of trade and economy.<sup>235</sup>

Nevertheless, the core idea of the French policy during the discussion of Western Hungary was to bar Germany with the alliance policy, the barrier policy. Repelling communism, the *cordon sanitaire* policy, was subjected to it.<sup>236</sup> France tried to strengthen its foreign political position by reliance on both its Western wartime allies and – in order to reinforce the alliance policy – Eastern European allies.<sup>237</sup> The alliance policy involved an agreement with Belgium, and a military agreement with Poland in 1921 and the creation of the Little Entente in 1921 with Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania. The alliances remained loose, however, as France only promised the allies political support, not military support. The economic activities – as part of the alliance politics – differed from the activities of the British and the Americans in that they came at the government's initiative.<sup>238</sup>

France pursued this German-centred Realpolitik in the decisions concerning the Danube area and thus, potentially, Western Hungary as well. From the Austrian point of view it was essential that the central French strategic objective was to reduce Germany territorially by means of allies and even by separatist movements. The most interesting aspects of France's post-war political plans concerning Central and Eastern Europe were the importance of Czechoslovakia as a barrier state and the attempt to make Hungary, on the losing side in the war, a part of France's political objectives. However, the research literature does not recognize France's initiative in the emergence of the question of Western Hungary; earlier research has also concerned the notion that France would have taken Hungary's side through its decisions during the

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<sup>233</sup> Bernard & Dubief 1985, 82-85.

<sup>234</sup> Becker & Bernstein 1990, 179-180.

<sup>235</sup> Becker & Bernstein 1990, 210-214.

<sup>236</sup> Hovi 1975, 146-147.

<sup>237</sup> Hovi 1975, 215-217.

<sup>238</sup> Becker & Bernstein 1990, 219-222.

implementation stage of the question in order to prevent Germany's growing influence in Central Europe<sup>239</sup>. This simplification claim can be questioned, however, studying the logic of France's Hungary policy in the way described by e.g. Hovi (1975) and in the light of original sources.

The security policy the United States and the British was promoted and articulated through new diplomacy and foreign political idealism relying on the liberal tradition continued while France relied on a visible alliance policy and Realpolitik based on geographical, demographic, economic, and military policy considerations.<sup>240</sup> Thus the governing trend, the key concept of national self-determination, was rather invisible in French politics. The national aspirations were subordinated to the primary ideas of Realpolitik. The French government was, however, willing to support nationalist aspirations, if they fitted in with its overall conception. As Hovi has defined, "In the same way, initiatives originating from the nationalities speeded up decisions, if they fitted in with the rest of the policy. Otherwise, however, neither nationalist initiatives nor the principle of nationalities had any significant effect."<sup>241</sup>

Immediately after the armistices, the French government does not seem to have bothered much about Austria or Hungary.<sup>242</sup> Instead, France was prepared to support Czechoslovakia politically and militarily.<sup>243</sup> In the attitude towards Hungary during the first phase of the question of Western Hungary in 1918-1919, the central features were the desire to resist Hungarian nationalism and the communism of 1919 since both threatened Hungary's neighbours and thereby the barrier system France had outlined for Central and Eastern Europe to remove the German threats. The French government regarded Hungarian attempts at rapprochement as tactical moves to obtain better terms, above all in territorial questions. The French Foreign Ministry did not hesitate to give its support to Hungary's neighbouring countries Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia, nor did the attitude towards Hungary change when Béla Kun rose to power. From the French viewpoint the suspicious factor was the nationalist aspect of Hungarian communism that could endanger the territories of the neighbouring countries. France's reaction to the Hungarian Bolshevik rule was thus directed more towards its possible strategic consequences than towards Bolshevism as such. In sum, the French policy was, to quote Hovi, "fundamentally aimed against Germany, and was linked with France's efforts to strengthen its allies in the Danube region." Accordingly, the Hungarian question emphasized the importance of the territorial unity and contacts between the barrier states.<sup>244</sup>

However, France's Hungary policy changed during the spring and summer of 1920. During this episode the intention was to tie Hungary into a

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<sup>239</sup> See for example Kerekes 1979, 299, 301.

<sup>240</sup> Hovi 1975, 215-217.

<sup>241</sup> Hovi 1975, 135.

<sup>242</sup> Hovi 1975, 156.

<sup>243</sup> Hovi 1975, 202.

<sup>244</sup> Hovi 1975, 196-202.



part of France's barrier policy, although Hungary was still pursuing a nationalist policy in relation to the peace treaty that was unfavourable for France's allies. The motive for the policy change was the fact that in the eyes of France Hungary looked like an opportunity to build the barrier policy due to the country's geographical location, as well as its economic and cultural standing. In Hungary France saw an opportunity to spread its economic and cultural influence instead of Germanism. At the same time, however, France continued to construct its foreign policy leaning on Hungary's enemies Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia, and supported the neighbouring countries' territorial goals at Hungary's expense. Similarly France maintained its fundamental attitude towards Hungary as a former suppressor and a defeated country. The primary goal was swift ratification of the peace treaty.

The French Ministry for Foreign Affairs rather clearly turned down Hungarian desires in both rearmament and border redress questions. Instead, a mutual understanding between France and Hungary was sought primarily in the economic sector. Moreover, the objective was cooperation not only between France and Hungary but more widely among the states in the Danube area. The goal of France was to turn the entire Danube area into a bloc to serve its barrier policy. The French government considered it possible to attempt to reconcile Hungary's differences with its neighbours, so that they would work together as one great economically and politically united region.<sup>245</sup>

Economic overtures toward Hungary were responsive to the Hungarians' expedient initiative<sup>246</sup>, although, on the one hand, those overtures were also limited by France's total policy evaluations and, on the other, by international and internal reactions caused by the extent of the initiative.<sup>247</sup> In the treaty Hungary proposed, Hungary would have gained territorial benefits from its neighbours with France's support, and France correspondingly would have gained political and economic benefits in Hungary. One of the terms was territorial concession from Western Hungary<sup>248</sup>. Instead, France concentrated in accordance with its overall policy on economic terms in the negotiations. In The French policy the strengthening of Little Entente countries proved to be a more desirable option than the attempt to integrate Austria and Hungary with the Little Entente countries in order to form a united bloc in the Danube area.<sup>249</sup>

After the actual negotiations between France and Hungary, France's attitude towards Hungary remained in essence unchanged. In the beginning of 1921, Prime and Foreign Minister Aristide Briand defined the French policy line towards the East Central Europe stating that the defeated countries would have to be convinced that peace treaties based on national goals must be fulfilled if East Central Europe were to be calmed as soon as possible. This policy did not, in Briand's opinion prevent adjusting the border sometime in the future among

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<sup>245</sup> Hovi 1984, 53-64.

<sup>246</sup> Also see Bariéty 1987, 75-83.

<sup>247</sup> Hovi 1984, 53-64, 85-86, 125.

<sup>248</sup> See for example map in Romsics I. 2001, 192.

<sup>249</sup> See especially Millerand's instructions (documents published in DDF) in chapter 6.5.

those concerned and for the common good. Before that, however, Hungary had to fulfil the terms of the peace treaty. Only in this way could the former enemy be taken into the French foreign policy system. Also at this point France favoured economic cooperation as the best way to normalize relations and did not warm up to Hungary's proposals of revision. In sum, France was ready to ease Hungary's peaceful recovery, but its primary policy was built on its allies, and the main goal was to fulfil the peace treaties.<sup>250</sup>

France's attitude towards Austria often appears in the literature from the Anschluss perspective. In connection to the question of Western Hungary we may well ask whether even an Austria separated from Germany actually had for France a similar barrier importance as Hungary.

## 2.4 Peace without conflicts - the British policy of compromise

What were the terms under which Great Britain related to the reorganisation of the Danube area, and more widely, the forming of post-war politics? In other words, how did the tradition of Realpolitik relate to the ideas of a new kind of Europe arising from the liberal tradition? In the British policy, three key schools can be identified: the balance of power, the New Europe movement, and imperial expansion. The policy of the British should indeed be considered even more versatile than pure Wilsonism or the Clemenceau line. To quote Goldstein: "An inevitable question which arises given the scope of British preparations for the Peace Conference is whether the British delegation arrived in Paris with an overall strategic view of the post-war world. The answer must be no. The empire's vast size, varied interests, and complex regional concerns could not allow one neat view to prevail. What did emerge was a set of basic principles which did not mutually contradict one another and which run right through British thinking on the post-war order."<sup>251</sup>

*New Europe* was a weekly periodical introduced by Robert William Seton-Watson and Czech leader Tomáš Masaryk in 1916. The central goal of the periodical was to campaign for the right to independence and self-determination for the small, oppressed, emergent nations in East Central Europe. Self-determination was a new term for independence as legitimated by the putative will of the people. The ideas of *New Europe* were meant to serve as a foundation of a new, post-war Europe formed of nation-states, independent peoples, instead of empires.<sup>252</sup> In Gullberg's opinion, the role of British liberal nationalists and the *New Europe* movement can be considered even more important than Wilson's role in post-war state-building. Gullberg justifies his view by claiming that the idea of dissolving the Habsburg Monarchy was

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<sup>250</sup> Hovi 1984, 114-115.

<sup>251</sup> Goldstein 1991, 229.

<sup>252</sup> Evans 2001, 5.

transferred to the Allies through London-based exile organizations and their *New Europe* contacts.<sup>253</sup>

In addition to the contacts, the British also had access to other data: handbooks, which were prepared under the direction of the Historical section of the FO and dealt with the history and present conditions in the Danube Valley. The British mission familiarized itself with the Habsburg region in 1919-1920, but in spite of the intelligence organization and use of experts in the acquisition of information for political decision-making<sup>254</sup>, Great Britain, unlike the Americans, failed to present systematic information about the Western Hungary situation at the Peace Conference. Nevertheless, the British delegation in Paris favoured the suggestion to move the border between Austria and Hungary to the benefit of Austria.<sup>255</sup> The initiative role of the British in the border question is explained through the nation's overall policy: a policy where elements of liberal nationalism and balance of power were intertwined. In this sense it is interesting to discuss the impact of the *New Europe*, personalized in the figure of Seton-Watson, on official state-level policy. However, this did not involve the encounter of two differing agents, the liberal movement and the old balance of power bastion, the Foreign Office; discussing the construction of the British policy shows that both the *New Europe* movement and the Foreign Office ultimately contained the same elements of both modes of thought, the policy of balance of power and liberal nationalist policy. The encounter of the Foreign Office tradition with *New Europe* ideals was complex: while their ways of thinking differed, the Foreign Office employed *New Europe* experts in information-gathering operations.<sup>256</sup>

After the outbreak of the First World War, Seton-Watson concluded that the Habsburg Monarchy and historic Hungary had to be dissolved and replaced by the system based on national and social justice instead of national dominance and oppression, i.e. by the conception of *New Europe*. *New Europe* was made up of independent states based on the principle of national self-determination as a new source of legitimacy: this principle would be honoured as far as possible in the definition of state borders.<sup>257</sup> The liberal internationalists as well as the *New Europe* still thought in terms of "Europe of States".<sup>258</sup>

The British government was in touch with the *New Europe* movement at an early stage and showed the movement some sympathy, but Realpolitik nevertheless dictated the policy it pursued towards Austria-Hungary during

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<sup>253</sup> Gullberg 2000, 69-70.

<sup>254</sup> See for example Evans 2001, 6.

<sup>255</sup> On Balfour's initiative see Secretary's notes of a meeting of Foreign Ministers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris on Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1919, at 4 p.m. ADAUBA/22

<sup>256</sup> Gullberg 2000, 64-65.

<sup>257</sup> Péter 2004, 676-677.

<sup>258</sup> Robbins 2005, 199. However, Robbins did not pay much attention to the state-centric dimension of liberal internationalism: to quote him, 'New Europe' would remain a 'Europe of states', though within a rather vague penumbra of 'internationalism'.

the war. While the Foreign Office employed the movement's experts – like Seton-Watson – in its service, its goals in relation to the dual monarchy still differed from those of the *New Europe*. Initially the FO's objective was to preserve the monarchy, not to develop nation states. Not until 1918 did the FO agree with the views of *New Europe* and commit itself to the policy of self-determination.<sup>259</sup> With Lloyd George's new government Seton-Watson had got his opportunity to influence the decision-makers more directly. Lloyd George led the British policy over the peace settlement during 1919-1920. Seton-Watson was posted at the Information Department Intelligence Bureau (DIIB)<sup>260</sup>, because the government needed his information. In fact there were several liberal nationalists in DIIB to provide the organization with information concerning Eastern and Central Europe for the purposes of war. The operation of DIIB and subsequently EPD (Department of Propaganda in Enemy Countries) where Seton-Watson and H. Wickham Steed reported directly to the Prime Minister had an impact on the FO's idea about dissolving the monarchy. National self-determination thus became a weapon for Realpolitik.<sup>261</sup>

The unofficial network that the Foreign Office consulted thereby laid foundations for the British policy of national self-determination.<sup>262</sup> The FO had kept its distance from the *New Europe* especially due to the movement's criticism of territorial claims in Italy. Furthermore, the sympathies of British diplomats towards Austria and Hungary initially proved stronger than the attention paid to the Slavic nations. To the foreign policy elite, Austria and Hungary represented the old Europe with which the elite had personal contacts.<sup>263</sup>

James Headlam-Morley's<sup>264</sup> memorandum of November 19 1918 on the European settlement that Goldstein has referred to explains the motives of the British. Although Great Britain had no territorial claims to press in Europe, East Europe – under which name the Danube area appeared in the FO's discourse – was still interesting. The British government agreed with the ideas of New Europe, but combined them with the balance of power policy. The balance of power policy and tradition was emphasized especially because of general opinion. In this sense Great Britain had to pursue the traditional British policy and to prevent a single nation's, such as Germany's, dominating position in Europe. New nation-states along the lines of *New Europe* would be such a weapon against Germany. At the same time, the balance of power would

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<sup>259</sup> Evans 2001, 5-6.

<sup>260</sup> Later the Political Information Department was founded under the FO's command.

<sup>261</sup> Gullberg 2000, 63-68.

<sup>262</sup> Gullberg 2000, 64. The British had a contact network of Habsburg monarchy's non-Germans and non-Hungarians, created by Seton-Watson and Steed, *The Times* correspondent. The most prominent agents were Czech leader Masaryk and exile organisations based in London with the help of liberals. The United States, France, and Italy had no corresponding unofficial informants.

<sup>263</sup> Evans 2001, 8.

<sup>264</sup> FO ja PID civil servant. He had an academic background.

protect these new countries. Thus balance of power policy wedded with the concept of national self-determination.<sup>265</sup>

The Foreign Office policy combined the balance of power ideology and the principle of self-determination, but Seton-Watson's own thinking also contained features from both approaches. During the Peace Conference and the decisions concerning Western Hungary Seton-Watson's thoughts favoured the balance of power approach. Actually the balance of power was not an alien thought to *New Europe* to begin with, as Seton-Watson emphasized maintaining order in Europe.<sup>266</sup>

So, the idealism of *New Europe* did not replace the preservation of the balance of power even in Seton-Watson's mind. He lobbied at the Peace Conference and presented his security policy ideas for example during the discussion about Hungarian communism and military actions. Seton-Watson mediated the picture that revolutionary Hungary posed a military threat to the neighbouring countries – in particular, to Czechoslovakia, and that the situation would also make it harder to stabilize Austria and lift the country to its feet. The Hungarian offensive had a wider impact on all of Central Europe: Austria might join it to adopt Bolshevism. Seton-Watson's policy mediates a picture of a need to stabilize new states and to stabilize normal circumstances in Central Europe.<sup>267</sup> The states of the new Europe had to be strong to provide stability. For this reason, geographic, economic, and strategic arguments were used in order to bolster the position of the new states. In these arguments, the principle of nationality was subordinated to the requirements of the balance of power.<sup>268</sup>

For this reason he defended – albeit with reservations – the peace treaties which were open to criticism. He stated in *New Europe* on October 16, 1919, that “as little as we admire the patchwork methods of the Paris Conference”, the hostilities were in any case over. The future objective was to secure the democratic settlement of Europe, the liquidation of the old secret diplomacy, and a middle course between the two evil extremes of reaction and Bolshevism.<sup>269</sup>

Seton-Watson's stand fits into the context of Western European liberal thinking where the perspective towards international relations was governed by the idea of the supremacy of political balance and stability. The small nations' nationalism and right of self-determination were subjected to it. László Péter (2004) considers Seton-Watson's attitude towards peace treaties and the reorganisation of Europe a good example of Western European liberalism's response to the nationalism of small nations. The characteristic trend was to choose sides with the society's democratic elements, although there was simultaneous disbelief in national right of self-determination. While founding new states and disputing about the borders, this balancing act between the

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<sup>265</sup> Goldstein 1991, 123-126.

<sup>266</sup> See for example Péter 2004, 657.

<sup>267</sup> Seton-Watson 1981, 372-374.

<sup>268</sup> Péter 2004, 677.

<sup>269</sup> Seton-Watson 1981, 380-381.

principle of nationality and the requirement of international stability became acute. The application of national self-determination was considered just from the point of view of all parties involved, but the borders created in this manner did not necessarily fulfil the security demands required by liberal thinking. Nor did ethnic-linguistic borders alone make a state viable.<sup>270</sup>

In his article on Seton-Watson's shifting views, László Péter has chosen Western Hungary as an example to illustrate Seton-Watson's thoughts on the application of the right of self-determination. One of Seton-Watson's principles on applying the complex concept was that in the cases of a mixed population the principle of nationality could be upheld through dividing the population equally on both sides of the border. According to Péter's claim, this division took place on the border of Austria and Hungary.<sup>271</sup> Be that as it may, in practice it was impossible to measure the definitions of borders as simply as that.

What kinds of motives gave rise to the idea that the balance of power and Realpolitik were necessary? After the World War the British still set as their goal to secure stability by preventing the hegemony of an individual power bloc in Continental Europe.<sup>272</sup> The basic setting of the policy was constructed on the view that the British policy had to deal with two Great Powers, Germany and Russia. Soviet Russia remained suspect in the policy, but the attitude towards Germany was controversial and more complex: the enemy country was to be tied into a part of post-war Europe despite its enemy status, in particular in terms of economy.<sup>273</sup> In the post-war circumstances, Britain's aim was a European system in which Germany would exist as an economic power in Continental Europe and a trading partner of Britain, but not as a world power, a threat to British Great Power status. After the war, the new states in Eastern Europe entered into British politics as a sphere for Britain's economic offensive against Germany. The plan to restrict Germany's political power included preventing Austria and Germany from uniting.<sup>274</sup>

Furthermore, the British had to place themselves in the victors' camp. The relations to France and the United States, the major power position, and opportunities of influence were central themes in this respect. The key concept in the construction of British foreign policy was a compromise: both the potentially more extensive 20<sup>th</sup> century British foreign policy trend of appeasement and withdrawal seemed to bring Britain's resources and responsibilities into balance. The basic setting of the policy pursuing balance between the various directions evidenced itself in British activities at the Peace Conference, although the interpretations vary on Britain's role and opportunities for influence. British policy positioned not only between two

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<sup>270</sup> Péter 2004, 677-679.

<sup>271</sup> Péter 2004, 676-677.

<sup>272</sup> Sundbäck 2000, 44. Also see Ferris 1989, 43, 92; Medlicott 1968, 2; Orde 1978, 6.

<sup>273</sup> Lee 1996, 5.

<sup>274</sup> Sundbäck 2000, 40, 42. Sundbäck has emphasized the meaning of trade and economic reasons in the British policy towards East- and Central Europe.

powers with more radical ideas, the Wilsonian Americans and punitive and demanding France, but it also had to listen to the voters and to pay attention to their stand of “make Germany pay”. Also in the FO the views on the policy to be conducted at the Peace Conference were divided: among the senior civil servants handling Eastern European affairs, for example, James Headlam-Morley was sympathetic towards Wilson while Sir Eyre Crowe’s sympathies were with France.<sup>275</sup>

In interpretations of history Great Britain has been presented both as a mediating party and a resolute follower of its own policy. Nevertheless, the policy contained elements of both attitudes. Therefore the policy of the British was characterized by a search for compromises and their achievement.<sup>276</sup>

The policy of compromises has been explained by stating that the British aimed to avoid the lengthening of unstable situations: e.g. situations that would have led to a threat of communism without compromises in the peace treaty system.<sup>277</sup> The construction of the peace system did not end with the treaties: order in Europe could be secured through collective security.<sup>278</sup>

Motives for this policy can be found from the attitude of the British towards their own position after the war and from the more extensive way of executing and formulating the foreign policy. The war had injured Great Britain less than France, and the country’s status in Europe had not weakened. In the long term, Britain’s position as a world major power was in decline, but immediately after the war Britain’s position was not particularly threatened, while France’s was. The British policy typically leaned on current problems and acting in time. Furthermore, appeasement and withdrawal over the long run were ways to pursue the country’s interests.<sup>279</sup> This policy is partly explained by the fact that Continental Europe was not the primary target of the British foreign policy. Unlike those of France, British priorities remained imperial rather than continental.<sup>280</sup> On the other hand, Europe was not insignificant to the British, and Great Britain was aware of the potential decline of its empire. As a consequence, compared with 1914 the significance of Europe had increased relative to that of the Empire. The awareness of the weakness led to a policy avoiding commitments to conflicts.<sup>281</sup>

The points of departure of the British policy formed an interesting basis for the discussion of the Western Hungary case. The question of Western Hungary was a part of the peace system and network of states searching for stability. It was potentially influenced by the British nationality policy and the balance of power dimension at the Peace Conference: the ideas of compromise, building the peace system through commitments, and avoidance of conflicts.

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<sup>275</sup> Reynolds 1995, 61, 116-117.

<sup>276</sup> Lee 1996, 129-135.

<sup>277</sup> Reynolds 1995, 117.

<sup>278</sup> Lee 1996, 135-137.

<sup>279</sup> Reynolds 1995, 61, 101, 108-109; Lee 135-137.

<sup>280</sup> Reynolds 1995, 116.

<sup>281</sup> Sundbäck 2000, 36.

## 2.5 Italy – from the margin to a decisive role

Italy's action in the question of Western Hungary has received attention in earlier research. Particularly Irmtraut Lindeck-Pozza (1971) and Mária Ormos (1990) have discussed the border dispute between Austria and Hungary with the emphasis on Italy. Ormos has charted the dispute's chronology through a study of Italian sources as well, but Lindeck-Pozza's focus has fallen expressly on the Italian policy as regards the question of Western Hungary. Italy has been an interesting curiosity in the history of the question of Western Hungary: the country was a part of the community gathering in Paris for the Peace Conference, but at the same time Italy acted emphatically independently. Italy pursued its own policy in the Conference and presented ideas on how Eastern and Central Europe ought to be reorganized. The ideas differed from those of the other Allies and the United States. In the background loomed Italy's self-image as a kind of successor state for the Dual Monarchy, and therefore Italy considered the reorganisation of the Danube area as also involving Italy in a direct way. In the eyes of Italy's political leadership the peace treaty system had a great impact on Italy's own national and territorial future.<sup>282</sup>

Italy's role, apart from a "successor state", as a victorious state and a new Great Power activated its policy in Central Europe. Italy's status among the European states changed as a result of the First World War. Before the war, Italy could be described as one of Europe's many active states, and at that a rather minor league player in the field of international relations. The war and the Peace Conference in Paris changed the situation. Italy ascended to the category of European Great Powers to join Great Britain and France after the collapse of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia.<sup>283</sup>

Its position among the victors and the Great Powers did not bring Italy as many benefits as the country had assumed. Although the country's position changed as a consequence of the war, Italy was a victor or a major power only inside quotation marks. Italy was disappointed in the benefits gained in the peace since it had hoped for more. The country had joined the war in 1915 on the side of the Allies, when the Treaty of London promised as compensation for joining the war areas from Southern Tyrol, the coast of Dalmatia, and Albania.<sup>284</sup> At the Peace Conference Italy also claimed Fiume, which it had occupied in the final phase of the war. Italy wanted to create an image of having been betrayed, when its demands went unheeded.<sup>285</sup>

Italy had entered the First World War with the decision of the conservative Antonio Salandra government and against Giovanni Giolitti's liberal majority in the Parliament. The third group, the "Democratic-Interventionists" consisting of radicals, republicans, and reformist socialists

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<sup>282</sup> Lindeck-Pozza 1971, 15.

<sup>283</sup> Malfer 1978, 11.

<sup>284</sup> See for example Kitchen 1994, 3, 131, 133.

<sup>285</sup> Morgan 1995, 28.



were in favour of war and seeking profit, but they aimed at a “more open type of government with mass participation and social, educational, and industrial progress”. The intrigues of these three political groups coloured the country’s wartime policy. Furthermore, the political field had grouped into Catholics, Socialists, and Nationalists. The Nationalists had expected the war to cement the Italians into a united community. In spite of shared war experienced, Italy, however, remained deeply divided after the war.<sup>286</sup>

Salandra’s government fell in June, 1916. It was followed by Paolo Boselli’s National Coalition including several representatives of the Democratic-Interventionists (one republican, two radicals, two reformist socialists, and also one Catholic). Among the members of the government, Foreign Minister Sidney Sonnino was a leading conservative liberal: he embodied Italy’s victorious war aims. In October, 1917, the power switched to Vittorio Orlando. Sonnino – an old-fashioned Italian liberal, who moved rightwards over the years<sup>287</sup> – stayed on as Foreign Minister and later participated in the Paris Peace Conference. The Democratic-Interventionists strengthened their grip on various political groups and allied with right-wing Liberals and Nationalists in the patriotic cause. In other words, the powers that had supported the war were now united. A new radical force, Fascio led by Benito Mussolini strengthened the position of the Democratic-Interventionists. At the same time the democratic elements in the group moved to the background.

Italy’s political leadership had a different attitude towards the nationality argument and the use of the right of self-determination principle in politics. In 1917, the Bolsheviks published the content of the 1917 Treaty of London, revealing that Italy’s war objectives extended beyond the Italian-speaking area. The Democratic-Interventionists’ counter-reaction to this revelation was to start emphasising point nine of Wilson’s Fourteen Points, according to which the borders of Italy were to follow the borders of nationality. They founded the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities by Austria-Hungary in Rome, including delegates from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania. The goal was national independence for them all. Italy’s later policy-making as the dual monarchy’s successor state can indeed be linked with the activities of the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities – in other words, with how Italy wished to influence the development of the former Habsburg Monarchy area. The operation of the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities should be seen as Italy’s contribution to Wilsonism: it is an example of the role of the nationality question in Italian politics.

Sonnino, however, refused to attend. He did not appreciate the idea of nationalities and did not want to see a strong Yugoslavia as Italy’s neighbour. He was still in favour of adhering to the Treaty of London. Orlando, however, had a different stand. He even supported the Czechs’ goals, because it was good propaganda against Austria-Hungary. In sum, at the end of the war it looked like Italy’s objective was policy of national liberation, but at the same

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<sup>286</sup> Clark 1996, 196-197, 199, 202.

<sup>287</sup> Macmillan 2002, 290.

time the dissident Sonnino was held on as Foreign Minister.<sup>288</sup> Sonnino considered the organization of international relations in terms of power politics from the nationalistic Italian perspective. According to him, states were motivated by “sacred egoism”. Primarily Sonnino wanted security for Italy. Macmillan compares Sonnino’s idea of the workings of the Peace Conference to the Congress of Vienna. Sonnino did not trust the talk about open diplomacy; instead, he favoured the dominance of conservative powers in Europe.<sup>289</sup>

Among the Allies, Italy represented a form of “Otherness”, “the Other”. Macmillan (2002) paints a picture of a political culture and leaders alien to France, Great Britain, and the United States. Italian politics were indeed considered bouncy and devoid of direction.<sup>290</sup> She describes Sonnino as a conservative nationalist fraternising with the Central Powers. Liberals, the group of republicans, socialists and nationalists Macmillan describes as a “strange mix” - who were obviously Democratic-Interventionists. In Macmillan’s interpretation Sonnino did not support Austria-Hungary’s wholesale destruction, but he did see alliance with the Allies as a way to gain territory for Italy.<sup>291</sup> Eventually Orlando and Sonnino came up with a strategy to minimize the power of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians - the power of future Yugoslavia.<sup>292</sup> The collapse of Austria-Hungary opened up areas for rivalry as France and Italy competed for influence in Eastern and Central Europe in terms of power politics. The primary issues were control of the Adriatic Sea and minimising the Yugoslavian impact. Italy responded to the self-determination discourse and justified the claims primarily with being Italian, but also forwarded its Realpolitik goals with strategic and historical arguments.<sup>293</sup>

In Paris Orlando and Sonnino demanded the full terms of the Treaty of London (Trent, Trieste, the South Tyrol to the Brenner, Istria and Northern Dalmatia). Most of the demands were actually granted, even though they ran counter to the idea of ethnic principle and Wilsonian politics. The question of Fiume (Rijeka) was, however the biggest problem, because it was not included in the areas defined in the Treaty of London. The population was mainly Italian, but from the economic point of view it was insignificant compared to the Adriatic port at Trieste. The question of Fiume revealed the differences among Italian politicians during the war: would Italy seek the control of the Adriatic in terms of Realpolitik, or did it want to “embrace the new democratic ideals and claim Fiume on national grounds”?<sup>294</sup> In this sense Italian politics seemed to become illogical- at least in the eyes of the other Allies.

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<sup>288</sup> Clark 1996, 197-198.

<sup>289</sup> Macmillan 2002, 291.

<sup>290</sup> Macmillan 2002, 196.

<sup>291</sup> Macmillan 2002, 291.

<sup>292</sup> Macmillan 2002, 293.

<sup>293</sup> Macmillan 2002, 298-300. For strategic arguments see especially: *Le problème militaire de l’Adriatique*. Allegato. 437. Sonnino á Clemenceau. Paris, le 8 Mars 1919. Sonnino 1975, 594-601.

<sup>294</sup> Clark 1996, 204-205.

Sonnino stressed the importance of the Adriatic as a whole, and Fiume was only a weapon to get it. Wilson's negative attitude towards Italian hopes led to a crisis among the Democratic - Interventionists, the end of Orlando's government, and the collapse of Wilsonian policies in Italy. Francesco Saverio Nitti, who emphasized the importance of economy and zigzagging with the Allies, became the next Prime Minister. Thereby the wartime community was also preserved in Italy. Giolitti finally succeeded Nitti in mid-1920 to 1921 and moved politically closer to Yugoslavia.<sup>295</sup>

The active years of the question of Western Hungary thus coincided with the years of fast change and the search for direction in Italian politics. The complex Italian domestic policy in 1919-1922 - the years of the Paris Peace Conference and the implementation of the peace system - was characterized by the confrontation of party politics and the traditional policy of individuals that characterized the operation of the Parliament.<sup>296</sup> The right and the left were unable to cooperate. The left-wing and nationalistic movements caused unrest. The problems thus reached deep into the society. In 1919-1920 a wave of strikes and left-wing unrest shook the Italian right wing. Benito Mussolini founded his first *Fascio di combattimento*. In 1921, members of his Fascist Party entered the Italian Parliament. In 1922 the political arena changed radically when Mussolini marched to Rome.<sup>297</sup> The domestic circumstances of the "Great Power" Italy during the post-war years thereby produced only a shaky foundation for its actions as a real Great Power. On the other hand the domestic wavering perhaps fed attempts to execute foreign policy in the manner of the Great Power. This also reflected on the question of Western Hungary.

In the years following the First World War Italy was active in those international policy questions where it was possible for the country to act like a Great Power. The question of Western Hungary as part of the reorganisation of the former Habsburg area was of interest for Italy. In terms of the question of Western Hungary Italy acted not only as a member of the Allies, but independently as well. The initiatives presented to the Allies, the exclamations, did not initially sound further than the meeting hall walls, but in 1921 Italy's independent Western Hungary policy, partly veering away from the Allied policy, gained sympathy among the victors. Italy had no direct interests in the border area between Austria and Hungary. For Italy it was *an sich* insignificant whether the area would belong to Austria or to Hungary - The Italian policy about the borderline was based on the question of which country's political development was more in need of Italy's intervention, or which of them would be of more use to Italy. At the Peace Conference Italy favoured keeping the border as it had been during the Dual Monarchy period, but in 1920 it promised Austria its support of the Treaty of Saint-Germain and thereby, indirectly, the concession of Western Hungary to Austria. However, Hungary became more

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<sup>295</sup> Clark 1996, 205-206.

<sup>296</sup> Morgan 1995, 17.

<sup>297</sup> Kitchen 1994, 133-137; Kramer 1968, 88-91.

important especially in 1921, and at that point Italian policy led primarily to the fulfilment of Hungary's interests in the question of Western Hungary.<sup>298</sup>

The crucial aspect for the Italians, however, was prohibiting the Slavic states from gaining control of the Western Hungarian area, Austria, or Hungary. The general guidelines of Italian foreign policy reveal the reasons for the interest in Western Hungary and more widely the Danube area. In the background there were border disputes between Italy and Yugoslavia. The situation resulted in a juxtaposition of Italy and the Slavic states.<sup>299</sup>

Italy also wished to control other exercises of power in central Europe: the possible cooperation between Austria and Hungary or active French operation in the area. Visions of Austria uniting with Germany, Danubian federation, or the restoration of Habsburg power were adverse to the Italian policy.<sup>300</sup> Austria and Hungary were important to Italy as barriers against the threatening images. Their slipping into cooperation with the Little Entente states, with France, or with each other could harm Italy's influence in the area. Austrian Carinthia was strategically important to Italy: the best option was that Carinthia belong to Austria, not Yugoslavia.<sup>301</sup> Marquis Pietro Paolo Tomasi della Torretta, who became Foreign Minister in July 1921, opposed the Slavs and could be counted among nationalists. However, it can be argued that della Torretta exerted influence earlier during the reign of democrat Foreign Ministers Francesco Nitti and Count Carlo Sforza, as he worked as Italy's ambassador to Vienna at the time.<sup>302</sup>

Lindeck-Pozza (1971) describes Italy's role in the question of Western Hungary as the role of a policeman and peace mediator of sorts: Italy's actions and intervention in the question were thereby a kind of order-maintaining activity. The idea of policing manifested itself for example in the early history of the question of Western Hungary, in one of the military incidents, the Fürstenfeld incident of July 1920, when Italian diplomacy considered its task to take control of the situation. At the same time Austria and even Hungary approached Italy asking for help. On the other hand Lindeck-Pozza also explains the Italian motives: the basic idea was that the Slavic states should not gain a foothold in Austria and Hungary as Italy needed them both as barriers against the Slavs' policy. This point of departure explains Italy's activities at the Peace Conference in 1919, when it vetoed the organization of a Slavic state-administered territory reaching from Czechoslovakia to the Adriatic (i.e. the Slavic corridor plan). Opposition to Slavs also explained Italy's simultaneous interest in Austria and in Hungary. The Hungary orientation peaked in the autumn of 1921 with the Venice protocol and the solution of the question of Western Hungary.<sup>303</sup> Lindeck-Pozza elevates the Italian policy to a role of peace

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<sup>298</sup> Malfer 1978, 67-68.

<sup>299</sup> Malfer 1978, 16, 33, 46.

<sup>300</sup> Malfer 1978, 13, 24, 32, 46.

<sup>301</sup> Malfer 1978, 11, 16.

<sup>302</sup> Malfer 1978, 16-17, 46.

<sup>303</sup> Lindeck-Pozza 1971, 16-25.

preserver: without the Venice protocol there would not have been a permanent peace.<sup>304</sup>

According to Nouzille (1987) Italy's initiative to mediate the dispute was the debut of Italy's active foreign policy in Central Europe and the Balkans.<sup>305</sup> Background for Italy's interest in Western Hungary can already be detected in November 1918 after the armistice, when Italy founded the armistice commission in Vienna and later a military embassy under the leadership of General Roberto Segré. In the legacy of Austria-Hungary Italy was interested in traffic connections, army material, and above all, art treasures. Italy was also the only Allied state to maintain its diplomatic connections and embassy in Hungary during Béla Kun's regime.<sup>306</sup>

Italy's post-war Central and Eastern Europe policy had two basic goals. First, they wanted to prevent the rise of Serbian power and in particular connections to other Slavic states, such as Czechoslovakia. In keeping with this goal Italy opposed the Slavic corridor plan at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and reacted to Czechoslovakia's relations with Austria in 1920. Italy's efforts to comment on and influence the question of Western Hungary were also based on this point of departure. The other basic political goal was to keep Austria, Hungary, and Romania as buffers against the Slavic states.<sup>307</sup> Later Italy's goal was to keep Austria outside the Little Entente and to support Hungary as opponent of it.<sup>308</sup>

Motives for Italy's eccentric activities in Western Hungary - as a member of the Allies, often "different" and initially ignored among them, and in its own view a successor state - were augmented by Italy's status as a small and new Great Power; in a way a margin, deviation, "Other", on the edge of the Allied community. The question of Western Hungary gave Italy an opportunity to intervene in the Danube area politics. Italy sought to secure its own position through the balance of power and alliance policy by barring the enemy and forming alliances against it. National moods also underlay Italy's activity. Bitterness created by the unfavourable peace, a spirit of revenge, and at the same time the feeling of strength fed by the country's new position. The question of Western Hungary offered Italy an issue that was by scale and by nature suited for it to wield its influence in international politics. Italy could participate without endangering its relations to other Great Powers.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Lindeck-Pozza 1971, 37.

<sup>305</sup> Nouzille 1987, 34.

<sup>306</sup> Lindeck-Pozza 1971, 15-16.

<sup>307</sup> Lindeck-Pozza 1971, 16.

<sup>308</sup> Lindeck-Pozza 1971, 19-23.

<sup>309</sup> Vares M. 1997, 115.

## 2.6 How to define the German post-Habsburg Austria?

In what national and political context did Austria and Hungary look at the question of Western Hungary? How did they, as rivals in the dispute, interpret and respond to the trends of international politics, national self-determination, and the search for security?

There are both similarities and differences in the political development of Austria and Hungary in the years following the First World War. According to Swanson, the common feature was the legitimization of the countries' positions by 1922. A common feature was also the zigzagging within the political context defined by the Allies and for example the society's reactions to the circumstances in the form of paramilitary groups.<sup>310</sup>

Despite the common points of departure and common state history, the centres of the former monarchy reacted to the new situation with different policies. The change from the old spatiality of state to "nation-state" was problematic for both of them - it is true that the problems manifested themselves differently. Applying the nation-state term to Austria and Hungary was not simple. Furthermore, the term was understood differently in Paris, in Vienna, and in Budapest. Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist (2000) argue that the nation-state represents "'a marriage of culture and politics'; it implies a congruence of the functional system of state institutions and the ethos or cultural system, embodying sentiments of community and solidarity that sustain the state. It rests on a normative nationalist principle, which holds that cultural unity between rules and ruled is mandatory." A nation-state has also been seen as a result of a development where the nation precedes the state and where the state reflects the national political ambitions.<sup>311</sup> The basis for the principle of national self-determination is linked with the idea of a nation-state. According to Johansson (1999), this form of nation consists of people who are distinguished by specific ethnic features, and each separate people has the right to its own state.<sup>312</sup>

This compatibility between the nation and the state presented a problem for Austria, unless the question was approached mechanistically-empirically in the light of population statistics. Austrian Member of Parliament from the 1990s, legal historian Wilhelm Brauneder has studied the founding of the First Austrian Republic and argued that among the old multinational monarchies the new Austria represented the purest form of "classic nation-state", because the majority of the Austrian population was German and the state was defined to be German.<sup>313</sup> On the other hand, the argumentation of the Provisional National Assembly in November 1918 can be interpreted rather as a German-Austrian interpretation on the ethnic principle and right of self-determination - as the

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<sup>310</sup> Swanson 2001, 333-338.

<sup>311</sup> Jönsson, Tägil & Törnqvist 2000, 81.

<sup>312</sup> Johansson 1999, 14.

<sup>313</sup> Brauneder 2000, 108-109.

discourse on united Germany.<sup>314</sup> Instead, Michael John's research emphasizing the complexity of Austrian identities and non-German populations in particular points out that historic Central Europe did not disappear without a trace in the 1920s. As a consequence of internal migration the personal background of many people was something other than "Deutschösterreich". The equation of multiculturalism and monoculturalism became a difficult one to solve in the new "nation-state".<sup>315</sup>

The question of Western Hungary – in Austrian terms Burgenland – coincided with the founding stage of the new Austria, when the heir to the monarchy searched for its place in the international community as well as its form, both geographically and socially. Austrian ambassador to London, Georg von Frankenstein, described in his biography the status differences between the old and new Austria; the imperial setting of the embassy in St. James, London, formed an opposite to the small state now residing in it and searching for economic support from the winning side.<sup>316</sup> After the break-up of the dual monarchy, Austria was declared German Austria (*Deutsch-Österreich*) on November 11, 1918, and a part of the German Republic. On October 21, 1918, the German-speaking representatives of the Dual Monarchy convened a Provisional National Assembly. Emperor Charles abdicated due to the pressure from this body. The idea was to gather the Germans of the former monarchy inside a common German state, appealing to the nationality principle. In the background we can discern the same arguments of the right of self-determination – "*Trend der Zeit*" – that the other peoples of the monarchy also employed.<sup>317</sup>

Another central argument was Austria's inability to survive without Germany, both because of Austria's material weakness and the identity-ideological wish to join Germany.<sup>318</sup> In both the Austrian and German peace treaties<sup>319</sup> the Anschluss was banned, however, and there were demands to omit the definition of the state being German from the name of the republic. The Anschluss was promoted first and foremost by Austrian Social Democrats and proponents of Greater Germany. The Christian Socials were the most sceptical party. They preferred to gaze into the past and find their ideals in the old monarchy. The idea of an independent Austria was alien when the new Austria began her state operation.<sup>320</sup> In the Austria of 1918, no significant political power stood for and believed in the independence and viability of the

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<sup>314</sup> For example: Konstituierende Nationalversammlung der deutschen Abgeordneten 21.Okt.1918. ADÖ/1/No 1; Provisorische Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich 30.Okt.1918. ADÖ/1/No 3.

<sup>315</sup> John 1999, 18, 21-24, 29-30, 41, 62-64.

<sup>316</sup> von Frankenstein 2005 (1934), 199-202.

<sup>317</sup> Provisorische Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich 12 Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/No 15; Gesetz über die Staats- und Regierungsform von Deutschösterreich 12 Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/No 15 A; Vocelka 2003, 271-273.

<sup>318</sup> Schausperger 1989, 229-300, 262; Kriechbaumer 2001, 165-166.

<sup>319</sup> Article 88 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain. A similar provision was included in the Treaty of Versailles.

<sup>320</sup> Bruckmüller 1996, 303.

Austrian state. Therefore the First Austrian Republic came into being “by force” under international political pressure and Austrian politicians’ pragmatic response to this situation. The First Republic of Austria has in fact been defined as a state created against the will of the Austrians: a state that nobody wanted.<sup>321</sup>

After the monarchy’s break-up Austria had no fixed state borders or political form. After November 1918 it was unclear for months whether the new state would orient itself towards a republic form or the rule of councils – like Hungary and Bavaria, briefly, in 1919. The Communists’ attempt to seize the power in April 1919 failed, however. During the question of Western Hungary and the founding of Burgenland province Austrians acted within the framework of republicanism and parliamentarianism<sup>322</sup>: an interesting aspect of the research shows how Austria appealed to its political culture, for example parliamentary decisions, in the border dispute. The search for political directions also involved definitions of territoriality in terms of areas near Austria and in a wider sense in terms of uniting with Germany. The German idea was the focus also in other territorial questions. The disappointments include Bohemia, which went to Czechoslovakia. Italy got the South Tyrol. The crisis spots were Carinthia and Western Hungary, out of which Burgenland was eventually formed. Belonging to Austria was not self-evident in Vorarlberg on the Swiss border, either.<sup>323</sup>

What has made being Austrian so problematic is its relationship to being German. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century far into the 20<sup>th</sup> the Austrians’ patriotic spirit was divided between Austrian and German nationalists. The division was a result of the social and governmental framework within which the nation formed and was constructed. During the monarchy Austrian Germans were “good Austrian patriots” and Germans in terms of culture. When the monarchy collapsed, the foundation of the identity had to be reassessed. An “Austrian” was no longer born as a result of social mobilisation; the concept became ethnic– as well as more problematic – in content after the foundation of the state identity crumbled. However, German and Austrian orientation continued to coexist in the First Republic.<sup>324</sup>

The central political groups during this phase were the Social Democratic Party (SDAP) and the Christian Social Party (CSP). Smaller agents included for example the Greater German party, the Communist Party and the National

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<sup>321</sup> See for example Pelinka 1998, 11; Szatmári 2000, 1361; Vocelka 2003, 275.

<sup>322</sup> On Austrian post-war political culture see especially Rumpler 1990, 5-12.

<sup>323</sup> Vocelka 2003, 273-275; On the question of Austrian borders see for example Brauneder 2000, 99-106.

<sup>324</sup> Pelinka 1998, 1; Haas 1995, 472, 477-478; Bruckmüller 1996, 385-386. The First Austrian Republic was founded in 1918 after the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy. Officially it ended in 1938 with the Anschluss, but actually the concept First Republic includes three time periods. These three phases of post-war Austria were the democratic republic era 1918-1933, dictatorship, 1933-1934, and Austrofascist “state of estates”, 1934-1938. Often it has been precisely the era of democracy and parliamentarism that has been understood as the First Republic(1918-1932-33). See for example Lewis 1990, 98.



Socialist party, the last of which did gain more followers in the 1930s.<sup>325</sup> The Social Democrats led the coalition government when the republic was being founded in 1918. They ended up in opposition in late 1920 and the Christian Social Party became the long-time chancellor party and later the core of the Austrofascist *Ständestaat*. However, the Social Democrats continued their prominent political activities, leading Vienna – the great capital of a small country – until 1934.<sup>326</sup>

The idea of a nation, which after the First World War was elevated into a symbol both in the external and internal legitimation process of new states, was problematic for Austria.<sup>327</sup> The problems resulted from the fact that on the theoretical level the country's policy looked across the borders in accordance to transnational ideologies. On a macro level analysis the development has been explained in the following manner: Austria's participation in the catholic-universalistic world and its core caused early state development but late construction of the nation.<sup>328</sup> Many definitions (nation-state, democracy) moved in the fringes of Western definitions and were different from those of the Allies and the United States, busy creating a new, post-Habsburg Austria in Paris in 1919. It is indeed interesting how the Allies and the United States, having shaped the new Austria within the international community, responded to Austria's interpretations of society and state – and how Austria presented its objectives to them.

It can be argued that both the left-wing and the right-wing traditions arose from the tradition of the Dual Monarchy. Social Democrats and Christian Socials alike based their ideology on transnational order. The Christian Socials leaned on a double identity: German culture connection and Austrian state connection. Catholic, Austrian, German, was their nationality principle. The Social Democrats' leading idea was transnational class ideology combined with German cultural heritage. Both orientations dichotomised the concepts of nation and state.<sup>329</sup>

According to John C. Swanson's interpretation, Austria nevertheless succeeded in the internal legitimation of the state, albeit not the external one. He explains that by 1922 an internally legitimate and functioning Austrian state had been created, but the position of the state was dependent on foreign policy: the League of Nations and the Western Powers. According to Swanson, the First Republic collapsed because Austria received no support from the West and ended up with Mussolini and Hitler.<sup>330</sup> The internal legitimation came in spite of a more problematic question: to what extent did the new state, territorial integrity, and state ideology gain legitimation in the minds of the masses – or fit into the programmes of the political leadership?<sup>331</sup> Identity and legitimacy have

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<sup>325</sup> Hanisch 1995, 491.

<sup>326</sup> Jelavich 1993, 151, 166, 180.

<sup>327</sup> Gullberg 2000, 23; Hobsbawm 1994, 145.

<sup>328</sup> Hanisch 1995, 1-3.

<sup>329</sup> Haas 1995, 472-476.

<sup>330</sup> Swanson 2001, 333-341.

<sup>331</sup> Gullberg 2000, 193.

indeed been considered dependent on one another. Collective identity, the unity of a nation, is important in terms of state unity. In other words, a national self-image is a tool for the legitimation of the state as it provides a tool for the system of government.<sup>332</sup>

Historical research has stressed the problematic nature of collective Austrian identity and the distinct nature of its development process. The identities were not unchanging and coherent in this case either. They can be formed – imagined – from different discourses, practices and positions crossing or even opposing each other.<sup>333</sup> The key question as regards Austria arises once again from the divided national identity – German or Austrian – and its variations: what kind of Austrian and what kind of German, *Deutschösterreich* or *Reichsdeutsch*?<sup>334</sup> Defining the state area was a part of the German question.

Furthermore the national and territorial identity in Austria can be said to have divided into as many as three identities: Austrian identity, German identity, and a local “Länder” identity.<sup>335</sup> The local identity represented the most ancient form of being Austrian, and its roots reached back to the time before state history.<sup>336</sup> The idea of appending the Western Hungarian areas to Austria as a distinct Burgenland province can probably be explained precisely through the tradition of the province structure. Peter Haslinger has delved into the problems concerning the provinces, and his view that federalising the state eventually turned the state’s disunity into a strength can be regarded as a kind of positive comment on the Austrian system of government.<sup>337</sup>

In terms of the question of Western Hungary – while building an Austrian Burgenland – the Social Democrats held political power until the autumn of 1920. The culmination of the border question in 1921 was handled in Austria under Christian Social rule. Appending Western Hungary to Austria fit both parties’ views about Austria’s new shape – regardless of politics, both naturally held on to the benefit gained from the peace treaty. In Hungary it was, however, expected that the Christian Socials would make concessions more easily to their Hungarian brethren than the Social Democrats.<sup>338</sup>

Austromarxism, the Austrian political theory and operational model of social democracy in the First Republic, can be defined as a combination of Marxism and Reformism. The unique feature of this ideology was the strong faith in realising revolution in circumstances of Realpolitik and democracy.<sup>339</sup> Austromarxism developed into “city hall socialism”, but it was radical in its rhetoric and also created a machinery of violence. The most prominent Social

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<sup>332</sup> Haslinger & Holz 2000, 19-21; Jönsson, Tägil & Törnqvist 2000, 80-81.

<sup>333</sup> Hall 2002, 39, 250.

<sup>334</sup> Hanisch 1995, 5-6.

<sup>335</sup> Szatmári 2000, 1375.

<sup>336</sup> Bruckmüller 1996, 385-386.

<sup>337</sup> Haslinger 2001, 106-107.

<sup>338</sup> See for example Hungarian memorandum in PDRFRH II. Masirevich to Bánffy 25 June 1921. PDRFRH/II/530; 27 June 1921. PDRFRH/II/534; 2 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/548; 11 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/576.

<sup>339</sup> Hannikainen 1998, 112.

Democrat figures in the First Republic were Foreign Minister Otto Bauer and Chancellor Karl Renner: Bauer represented the left, Renner the right angles of the party.<sup>340</sup>

The Christian Social Party had its root in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It had been formed as a petit bourgeois reaction against both modern capitalism and socialism, i.e. as a counter-reaction to the industrialized class society. The main ideological component was a romanticised, utopian nostalgia concerning the society's order of estates and political Catholicism. The Anschluss, joining Austria with Prussian Germany, was adverse to its Catholic-German state ideology. In the First Austrian Republic its central ideological leader was priest-politician Ignaz Seipel, who had become Chancellor for the first time in 1922. The Austrofascist dictatorship and the *Ständestaat* led by Dollfuss and Schuschnigg after his death in 1932 leaned partly on the Christian Social heritage.<sup>341</sup> Past and present, tradition and mythical new beginning developed into typical features in the writings of Christian Social thinkers between the wars.<sup>342</sup>

Both Austromarxism and Austrofascism reached into the past for legitimation. The tale of the nation and its originality, continuity and tradition – for example the myth about the founding of the nation – can be used as a representational strategy while constructing the identity and cohesion of the nation.<sup>343</sup> For the Austrian Christian Socials this mythical tradition, the historical justification for an ideal political image, seemed to be the Holy German-Roman Empire; a Catholic, old Austrian Austria. For the Social Democrats the corresponding myth was the Greater German revolution idea that leaned on the heritage of 1848 and the idea of a cultured German people.<sup>344</sup> The ideal of socialist – for Bauer, “democratic” – and united Germany got its concrete form in his Anschluss policy during his term in office as Foreign Minister. The cultural-linguistic nationality concept was linked with the idea of a connection to industrialized and socialist Germany.<sup>345</sup> However, the masses did not easily buy into the idea of a common Germany of workers sharing the same cultural-linguistic origin. For example the provincial plebiscites on joining Germany, Anschluss projects organized on the grass-root level, did not take place until after Bauer's foreign policy era and were more clearly projects of the right than the left wing.<sup>346</sup>

While Bauer's goals centered on Anschluss carried out in the spirit of the revolution and Greater Germany, Karl Renner's goal involved renovating the old nation: federalisation, realization of social reforms, and changing the

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<sup>340</sup> Madelthaler 1995, 185-194.

<sup>341</sup> Lewis 1990, 106-107; Stadinger, Müller & Steininger 1995, 169-170; Vares V. 1997, 112-121.

<sup>342</sup> Romsics G. 2006, 131-138.

<sup>343</sup> Hall 2002, 47-51.

<sup>344</sup> Kindermann 1999, 215; Hanisch 1995, 5.

<sup>345</sup> Alder 1983-1984, 101-105, 111-112.

<sup>346</sup> Haas 1995, 481-482; Bruckmüller 1996, 303-304.

Constitution.<sup>347</sup> Uniting the state and the people into a state-nation of Austria was not a primary goal either in Renner's thoughts on nationality. In his opinion the state could have had many layers, instead. Social and economic wholes could have been more extensive than political and ethnic wholes. Renner also suggested that individual choice was significant in the question of nationality: thereby, nationality would not be defined through place of birth or residence but through a personal choice. He sketched a multinational and federalist whole, "a state that was more than the people".<sup>348</sup> However, Bauer's policy gained more support among the party elite during the beginning of the state. Founding the state in October 1918, the programme of the Social Democrats led by Bauer was a vision of a socialist Germany.<sup>349</sup> On the other hand the Peace Conference was primarily influenced by Renner's more moderate voice. After the founding stage, the new Austria was created in the spirit of Renner's Realpolitik to meet the wishes of the Allies. As the Chancellor of the peace treaty era Renner has been regarded a pragmatic politician pursuing Realpolitik, a man who was quick to adapt and who reflected changing political trends.<sup>350</sup>

The setting of state, nation, and federalism sketched by Renner on the ideological level also appears to be present in the thinking of Christian Social Ignaz Seipel. His construction of Austria developed from an idea of Danubian federal state into an idea of independent Austria. The difference between the Christian Social and the Social Democratic programmes' attitude towards the concept of nation and its definition was the clearest in relation to the Anschluss. When the idea of a Danubian federal state – a version of modernized monarchy of sorts – proved unviable, Seipel accepted the idea of Austria as an independent unit. For him Austria was a Catholic, federalist state within the German cultural sphere. Catholicism and federalism (conservative provinces against the Red Vienna) aimed against socialism. Seipel did not believe in combining the people and the state; instead, he separated them from each other. The nation was a cultural unit while the state could be a larger whole.<sup>351</sup> In 1918 the Christian Socials were present in the German Austria built under Social Democrat leadership and defined as part of Germany. When the Christian Socials assumed government responsibility in 1920 and the state situation stabilized by 1922, the party's politics returned to their roots and the idea of a dual identity.<sup>352</sup>

The notion of Vienna as a political barometer could also be seen in foreign powers' assessments of Austria's development and offered a weapon for

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<sup>347</sup> Hannikainen 1998, 121-125.

<sup>348</sup> Loewenberg 1991, 36-37.

<sup>349</sup> Hannikainen 1998, 121-125.

<sup>350</sup> Loewenberg 1991, 48, 51, 55. The career and mentality of Renner, credited as the founder of both Austrian republics, have been interpreted as something typically Austrian: he adapted to the policies of the Allies, the national socialists, and Russia alike.

<sup>351</sup> Alder 1983-1984, 111-113.

<sup>352</sup> Haas 1995, 478-480.

political argumentation. This factor could be discerned in the discourse concerning Western Hungary, which often was contextualized in the Vienna discourse if only for the geographical proximity. Comparing the politics of Seipel and Bauer, Douglas Alder has described the situation with the metaphor “Vienna as the stage of an ideological drama”. In the Austria of the 1920s, the Social Democrats and Christian Socials, representing two groups of people and two dominant political camps, played the main roles. The differences between the two groups were paradigmatic: two programmes of ideal development for being Austrian.<sup>353</sup> Nevertheless, the idea of appending Western Hungary to Austria fitted the German Austria model that both parties represented.

Historical interpretations also link Austrian thinking with the development of the international community. For example, both Social Democrats and Christian Socials have been portrayed from the modern ideal perspective as precursors of Western internationalism and international cooperation: Renner, due to his world organization rhetoric, has been seen as a pioneer of the League of Nations and “future world organizations”. Christian Social conservatism for its part has been defined as a champion of European integration and pan-Europeanism.<sup>354</sup>

## 2.7 The politics of historical Hungary

### Changing politics, continuity of nationalism

As in the case of Austria, it has also been possible to describe post-1918 Hungary as a nation-state on the basis of the population register. After the changing of the borders, 90 % of the country’s population was now Hungarian.<sup>355</sup> This, however, was not the Hungarian elite’s ideal image of the relationship between the Hungarian state and nation. While German Austria’s goal in 1918-1919 was to gather together the Germans of the former monarchy, Hungary also wanted a larger state territory than the post-war situation allowed. The objective was to hold on to the former territory. In Hungary the question of Western Hungary also involved the question of an ideal Hungary. In the new post-1918 Hungary this ideal still remained the historic Greater Hungary. While the crucial question in Austria concerned the state territory of the German people and later the creation of Austrian life on the German basis, the corresponding Hungarian theme became the justification of historic Hungary’s state territory: how to bring the nation now outside the border back to the state. Both views combined historical justification with nation and state, but while the Austrian discourse constructed a state from German cultural

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<sup>353</sup> Alder 1983-1984, 99-103, 105-108.

<sup>354</sup> Loewenberg 1991, 37, 43-44; Kindermann 1999, 213, 225-226.

<sup>355</sup> Gerner 2004, 329.

heritage, in Hungary the point of departure for the historical justification was the historic nature of the state.<sup>356</sup>

In Hungarian history, the central point was the importance of the state. Therefore, Hungary can be defined in terms of a civic-territorial conception, which rests on loyalty to the state expressed in terms of citizenship rights and obligations. Thereby the state and Hungarian nationalism had a civic foundation instead of a cultural or ethnic one.<sup>357</sup> In the state-nation model citizens are included in the nation regardless of cultural particularities. It is important for the state that the citizens remain loyal. Nation-building within the framework of the state always has distinct political implications.<sup>358</sup> In the state-nation a citizen thereby has a right to the state, unlike a foreigner.<sup>359</sup>

The Hungarian historic state-nation went through a transition after the First World War, however. Hungary changed from a medium-range power of the Central European Habsburg world context into an independent small state in terms of both geography and international importance. The Hungarian thinking was now governed by an idea of losing and of losses. This history of the Treaty of Trianon, the problem of Hungarian state territory, has ruled several interpretations of history. The radically diminished Hungarian state territory was a central issue of official politics. To quote Kontler: "No political force entertaining hopes of success in Hungary could afford neglecting the issue of revision on its agenda in the inter-war period."<sup>360</sup> Political power changed frequently in the post-war circumstances. The national issue was characteristic for them all.

Hungary's territorial integrity was crucial for the Hungarian National Council organized by Count Mihály Károlyi on October 23, 1918, and his government formed on October 31. The new government was bourgeois-democratic by nature and characterized by readiness for reforms. The government leaned on intellectuals but was unable to get backing from the society's masses or the powers influencing the masses and was therefore unable to make the great changes. Towards the very end of his government, Károlyi tried to create connections with the Allies to preserve Hungary's state territory. Diplomatic links were created in Vienna and Bern, where Hungary had its only legations abroad. In domestic policy the government was confronted with the Party of National Unity, founded by Count István Bethlen in February 1919 and aimed at restoring the pre-war relations of power in Hungary. At the same time, the Communists were gaining influence in the left wing<sup>361</sup>. The party had been founded on November 24, 1918, under Béla Kun's lead. Károlyi's government fell after Kun's power got stronger. Hungary's historical borders

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<sup>356</sup> Swanson 2001, 9-10.

<sup>357</sup> Jönsson, Tägil & Törnqvist 2000, 80-82.

<sup>358</sup> Johansson 1999, 12-13.

<sup>359</sup> Krell 2004, 81.

<sup>360</sup> Kontler 2002, 326-327.

<sup>361</sup> The Hungarian Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party eventually became a single party, the Socialist Party of Hungary.

were also a part of Kun's policy<sup>362</sup>: he searched for legitimacy for his power with the argument of creating socialism within the borders of historic Hungary.

Kun's regime, the Revolutionary Governing Council, started on March 21, 1919. It stayed in power for four months with the strength of dictatorship and the national issue and did not crumble until an external threat supported the internal resistance, and Romanian troops marched into Budapest on August 1, 1919. After the short-lived government of Social Democrat Gyula Peidl, the new István Friedrich government, founded on August 6, moved towards a white Hungary. Although the change was from the Allied point of view a show of "normalization" following a revolution, Friedrich's government was not viable for peace negotiations in the eyes of the Allies, because it was nominated by Archduke Ferdinand and therefore represented the old policy image. The situation was observed by a mission sent by the Peace Conference under Sir George Clerk. Admiral Miklos Horthy's National Army came to Budapest on November 11, 1919, and, instead of solidifying liberal and social democrat power considered politically safer by the Allies, Hungary oriented towards Horthyian discourse emphasising the country's glorious past, Christian-national values in politics and the territories of Saint Stephen's crown. Eventually Friedrich's government was replaced on November 24, 1919, by Károly Huszár's government formed by members of the Christian National Unity Party, the conservative-agrarian Smallholders Party, Social Democrats, and Liberals. The Peace Conference recognized Huszár's government and invited the Hungarian delegation to peace negotiations on December 1, 1919.

After the January 1920 elections the political direction turned towards the Smallholders and Christian National Unity Party which had the support of the army and right-wing organizations. The new government was Sándor Simonyi-Semadam's coalition government. The policy's return to traditions strengthened, and republicanism lost to the monarchy trend, which however was not a united movement but divided into legitimists supporting Habsburgs and the so-called "free electors".<sup>363</sup>

Horthy had moved from the military to politics, and his political role was to be a regent of the monarchy. He simultaneously touched the anti-parliamentarian feelings of non-Jews and the young generation's longing for authoritarianism. According to Kontler, the Allies saw in him a strong soldier who would restore parliamentary rule and order in Hungary. The real political power between 1920 and 1921 belonged, however, to Prime Ministers Count Pál Teleki (July 19, 1920-April 13, 1921) and particularly Count István Bethlen (April 14, 1921-August 19, 1931). The two created Hungary's political outlook much more than Horthy did. They looked to the past and searched for a model from the Hungarian liberalism before 1867.<sup>364</sup> In Teleki's and Bethlen's policy the key word was consolidation. Controversially, in the post-1920 situation they

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<sup>362</sup> Gerner 2004, 339

<sup>363</sup> Kontler 2002, 328-344. For detailed description of early post-war Hungary and its international position, see for example Swanson 2001, 123-158, 189-215, 311-331.

<sup>364</sup> On Bethlen's political thinking see Romsics I. 1995, 12, 132, 148.

thought that liberalism was not helpful and it was to be controlled. Neither of them considered Hungary ready for democracy. Therefore they advocated “conservative democracy”, led by the aristocracy and the landed nobility. Teleki and Bethlen opposed both socialism and right-wing radicalism and were sceptical towards liberalism. Democracy meant only a mechanical majority principle. The politics also operated for the benefit of the Christian middle class against the Jews. The weapon to stabilize this administration was white terror.<sup>365</sup> The motives for the conservative consolidation policy were the experiences of the Trianon, Béla Kun, and Károlyi’s government’s failure – after all the shocks the goal was to stabilize the power.<sup>366</sup>

When Bethlen was defining his government’s policy before the Parliament in 1921, the problems of democracy were brought to the fore. The time of revolutions was over; now was the time of Christian politics. According to Bethlen this did not mean an opposing attitude towards freedom and democracy but a new orientation towards those two political slogans. This meant that Hungary’s culture was to be liberated and that democracy was not built for the masses; instead, the guarantee of democracy was in the hands of intellectuals.<sup>367</sup> However, in the question of Western Hungary, the “will of the people” was also manifested in terms of extra-parliamentarism.<sup>368</sup>

During the question of Western Hungary the tradition of historic Hungary became a visible part of domestic policy in the form of the Habsburg question and territorial revision. The question of the king became actual in the spring and autumn of 1921 when the former Habsburg ruler King Charles IV tried to return to power. At this point the Hungarian legitimism appear on the same chart as the Hungarian circles opposed to the ceding of Western Hungary: the second attempt to return to power happened in Western Hungary on October 21, 1921, when Charles landed in the area on an aeroplane.<sup>369</sup> Teleki, a legitimist, stepped aside as a consequence of the king’s return attempt, and Bethlen, who had separated himself from the legitimists, took over. Bethlen’s importance in the creation of Hungary’s political directions becomes clearly evident in the interpretations concerning his era in spite of the fact that in general presentations the era is commonly called Horthy’s era.<sup>370</sup>

The era identified with Horthy has naturally received different shades in the historical writings from the communist era and the post-communist era. The crucial question of the post-communist interpretations has been Hungary’s political course’s relationship to conservatism, authoritarianism, fascism, nazism, dictatorship, and democracy. While the phase of the question of Western Hungary coincides with the republic phase in Austria, in Hungary it coincides with fluctuations of the political extremes: Károlyi’s reign,

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<sup>365</sup> Kontler 2002, 345-346.

<sup>366</sup> Vares V. 2002, 25.

<sup>367</sup> Bethlen 2000 (1921), 121-122; Romsics I. 1990, 25.

<sup>368</sup> See chapters 7.6. and 11.2.

<sup>369</sup> Kontler 2002, 348.

<sup>370</sup> Hoensch 1996, 110-114.



experiences of the Communists and “white Hungary” and its undemocratic aspects. The political culture and image leaning on Hungarian history thereby potentially represented alienness and Otherness to the decision-makers at the Peace Conference. The weak position of the opponents of the authoritarian conservatism – socialists, extreme right, and liberalism – meant the insignificance of the Parliament and democratic institutions. For example, because of the election law, the government could never lose an election. The system reflected a desire to restrict democracy. The right to vote was not universal in the 1920s and the ballot was not secret in the countryside. It can be argued, however, that the suffrage and the ruling Christian National Unity Party were not the most essential features of the political system in Hungary. Instead, it was the traditional elite that counted. On the top political level the power of the elite meant that Horthy’s opinion was always crucial. The influence of the past in politics no doubt represented an alien culture in the eyes of the Allies and the United States.<sup>371</sup>

There could also be mythical images about Hungary – and information concerning the country’s circumstances could be incomplete in Paris.<sup>372</sup> Hungary’s image was also partly reflected in Clemenceau’s comment in a conversation in the Council of Four, bringing up the Hungarians’ role as a nation of soldiers. To quote Clemenceau: “I have said that the Austrians are poor warriors. But the Hungarians are fighters; they provide soldiers of the first quality.”<sup>373</sup> This notion later reflected on the thought about Hungary’s potential military threat in the question of Western Hungary – which indeed became one of Hungary’s ways of revision directed at Western Hungary.

According to Burghardt, who has explained the “fate” of Hungary in the context of the question of Western Hungary, the Allies considered Hungary to represent ‘the Other’: different language and different culture compared to other Europeans. Although Burghardt was a 1960s scholar and did not use a modern researcher’s stock vocabulary, it was a matter of seeing Hungary as ‘Other’. Hungary’s political culture was also alien to the war victors. Burghardt explains that Hungary’s stance as a “nation of aristocrats” did not appeal to the Peace Conference, democracy being one of the key concepts in the conference rhetoric. At the other political extreme, the communist take-over in Hungary in 1919 increased this animosity.<sup>374</sup> Kovács-Bertrand, for example, explains in her research on Hungary’s revision policy that among the prominent figures Seton-Watson had a negative impression of Hungary.<sup>375</sup> Nevertheless, while the politicians and diplomats on the official level regarded Hungary sceptically as

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<sup>371</sup> Vares V. 2002, 25-26.

<sup>372</sup> For example Clemenceau was on May, 7 1919 under the impression that Kun’s power was disintegrating. Conversation between President Wilson, and MM. Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando. May 7, 11 a.m. LXV/The Deliberations of the Council of Four/Vol. I.

<sup>373</sup> Conversation between President Wilson and MM. Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando, and several members of the Supreme War Council. May 15, 1919, 11 a.m. LXXX/The Deliberations of the Council of Four/Vol. II.

<sup>374</sup> Burghardt 1962, 166-167.

<sup>375</sup> Kovács-Bertrand 1997, 34-38.

'Other', the public opinion more easily accepted Hungary as an exotic Other, e.g. romantic scene of operets.<sup>376</sup>

On the other hand, the diplomatic actors represented the same pre-war world outside Hungary – not least in the neighbouring Austria, where the clash between the old and the new is illustrated for example by Chancellor Johann Schober. According to Hohenbichler (1971) Schober, who “tried to do his duty” as federal chancellor of the new state, felt allegiance to the old monarchy.<sup>377</sup> However, Austria’s image at the Peace Conference had more to do with the era’s own political phenomena than a threatening image of the return of the past. Also in the relations between Austria and Hungary there was – and not only because of the border dispute – alienation and some hostility, but at the same time the need for cooperation. During the question of Western Hungary, Hungary’s political culture was more undemocratic than that of Austria. Haslinger (1996) has explained this by suggesting that the importance of Social Democrats was different in politics. In both countries the party was finally silenced – later in Austria than in Hungary, though. Despite disagreements concerning political refugees and contradictions between Red Vienna and white Hungary, the countries needed to move closer to each other particularly for economic reasons. Both were also on the losing side of the war, so they were forced to search for their international position.<sup>378</sup> Balancing between national self-image and international position proved complicated for both.

### **Ideas of Hungarian state in pre-war past and post-war present**

After the Dual Monarchy lost the war and collapsed, the Hungarian elite leaned on the tradition and continued to identify itself and the state’s territoriality with the historic Hungarian state. What elements, then, made up the notion of historic Hungary’s legitimacy?

In Hungarian history the concepts of nation, nationality and state became problematic. A legacy from the Middle Ages, “Magyariness” meant both position and nationality for a long time. Feudal law had sharply distinguished between nobles and non-nobles, but made no distinction between Magyars and non-Magyars. The expression *nobilis Hungarus* could apply to any nobleman, while the term *Hungarus* could be applied to all native Hungarians.<sup>379</sup> The distinctiveness of the relationship between the people and the state was also affected by the state’s history as a divided state ruled by foreign rulers. Hungary had divided into three parts in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. When the division ended, the territories under Ottoman rule were annexed to the Habsburg territory. According to Romsics, the division of the Hungarian kingdom and the

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<sup>376</sup> Hunyadi 1987, 173.

<sup>377</sup> Hohenbichler 1971, 116.

<sup>378</sup> Haslinger 1996, 137-147.

<sup>379</sup> Romsics I. 2002, 85-86.

relationships of the three parts to the Habsburgs was the source of the debate on the relationship between state and nationhood.<sup>380</sup>

In addition to the state situation and the feudal heritage, the complexity of the relationship between the state and the nation was caused by the ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity of the Hungarian kingdom. The language became a part of the nationality question in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Federalisation was no longer a solution, as in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the interests of state-nation and assimilation came first. The year 1867 *Ausgleich* with Austria, the birth of dualism, made the nationality question Hungary's domestic affair. Citizens of Hungary formed, to quote Romsics, "one single political nation, the indivisible unitary Hungarian nation" – this was a modernized version of *natio hungarica*. The official language was exclusively Hungarian.<sup>381</sup> Magyarisation and "the history of subjecting other peoples" are connected to this homogenisation policy.<sup>382</sup> To quote Evans (1992), "they [the Hungarians] aimed, in other words, to extend the ethnic frontier until it met the territorial one".<sup>383</sup>

In the Dualist period substantial assimilation of former non-Magyars to Magyardom took place through urbanisation, as cities strongly bore the impress of a Hungarian state idea. Therefore, the towns were dominated by Magyariness while the periferia – such as parts of Western Hungarian countryside – remained still non-Magyar. The policy of assimilation cannot be separated from the ideology of the Hungarian elite: their goal was to make Hungary the Land of Hungarians, *Magyarország*. Conversely, on the Austrian side of the Empire, German elite justified its role in terms of German culture, not in terms of a German state.<sup>384</sup> Nevertheless, although assimilating non-Magyars to Magyariness linked to urbanisation, the historical experience of the periphery also contained an attempt at Magyarisation. In the history of Western Hungary this has been brought forward as the impetus for the Germans' Burgenland movement.<sup>385</sup>

The nationalism-related division into "Us" and "Them" in Hungary became bidirectional in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century: the Otherness contrary to Magyariness was represented both by Habsburg power and non-Magyariness. Hungarian nationalism developed into a national struggle directed against Vienna and on the other hand into the Hungarian state-nation's right over all the other nationalities inhabiting Hungarian turf. Constitutional nationalism strengthened after the *Ausgleich*. In other words, there were a Hungarian state-nation and the Kingdom of Hungary within the Dual Monarchy. Arguments for this policy included the Hungarian history, a millennium-long existence, and the Hungarians' ability to form a state.<sup>386</sup> As Robin Okey has pointed out,

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380 Romsics I. 2002, 87.

381 Romsics I. 2002, 90-91.

382 Romsics I. 2002, 98.

383 Evans 1992, 495.

384 Okey 2001, 312-313.

385 See especially Ernst 1985 (1970), Guglia 1961 and Gruber 1991.

386 Kovács-Bertrand 1997, 21.

history and geography interacted in the concept of an ideal Hungary: it was possible to define Hungary as a geographical whole that Hungarians had been able to hold on to in spite of foreign conquerors and rulers.<sup>387</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the ruling elite identified with the historic Hungarian state.<sup>388</sup> The elite, *dzentry*, “gentlemanly middle class” searched for its inspiration from history and found the role of Hungary’s noble leaders in the making of Hungary. It can be stated that the Dual Monarchy elite eventually ignored the presence of different nationalities. In politics, the Hungarian state idea took over.<sup>389</sup> The Hungarian version of liberalism for its part emphasized the state, the significance of which ascended above nationalities: it was the right of the people to develop freely, regardless of nationality.<sup>390</sup> The Hungarian nationalism debate in the 19<sup>th</sup> century indeed provided a reason to interpret Hungary as an “oppressor of nations” and the total opposite. For example, the nationality law of 1868 has also been interpreted as progressive and permissive – and according to Katus (1999), as historical background for European integration.<sup>391</sup>

Hungarian thinking was also defined in the post-1918 situation by an idea of Hungary’s historical greatness. Before the year 1914 Hungary had been a regional superpower that lost the superpower position in the post-war situation. The Treaty of Trianon gave birth to a historical-mythical concept into which could be channelled ideas of what kind of Hungary was legitimate.<sup>392</sup> After the First World War the Hungarian political elite as well as public opinion considered the loss of territory and people a historic accident and injustice or even crime against Hungary. The rejection of the new situation resulted in a policy aiming at revision of borders, restoring the old ones. In his publication *Justice of Hungary* (1928), the leader of the peace delegation Count Albert Apponyi stressed the cultural superiority and extraordinary political gift of Hungarians as civilizing forces in the region.<sup>393</sup> Also in the 1920s the ideal Hungary was being legitimized by superiority, with which the ruling elite still identified itself. The key was the sense of cultural superiority, the rulers’ self-image as civilized gentry with a mission no one else could fulfil. Civilization was therefore to be protected from internal as well as external political enemies: that is, non-Hungarian peoples.<sup>394</sup>

At the same time the revision goal was being argued on the grounds of the history of geography and multi-nationality: The “Saint Stephen State Concept” emphasized the peaceful coexistence of the various ethnic groups within Hungary, which was also a geographical and economic whole. For example according to Pál Teleki – a professional geographer – geography was the most

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<sup>387</sup> Okey 2001, 312.

<sup>388</sup> Gerner 2004, 312.

<sup>389</sup> Okey 2001, 314-315, 325, 327.

<sup>390</sup> Kovács-Bertrand 1997, 19; Katus 1999, 144.

<sup>391</sup> Katus 1999, 157.

<sup>392</sup> Gerner 2004, 399-400.

<sup>393</sup> Romsics I. 2002, 101.

<sup>394</sup> Vares V. 2002, 27.

important element in the nation building.<sup>395</sup> For Teleki, tradition as part of historic Hungary was an argument also in terms of Western Hungary: ethnic conditions lost to this argument.<sup>396</sup> The historical Hungarian territorial connection of the regions now left outside the borders thereby legitimized the revision. Interpreting the situation as a tragedy was likely to justify political activity. The dispersion of historic Hungary has been considered not only a symbolic but also a practical economic and ethnic tragedy for the Hungarians. As Romsics has commented in István Bethlen's biography (1999), there was not a single group, community, or political party in Hungarian society not demanding a revision.<sup>397</sup>

In post-war Hungary the Hungarian political elite maintained a Hungarocentric and nation-centric position.<sup>398</sup> How did they try to realize the old Hungarian territory in practice, within the context of such political culture? What chances did Hungary have to realize those border goals? After Kun's era The Hungarian foreign policy had no recognisable direction, apart from the primary objective – to revise new borders. The era can be characterized a time of searching in relation to neighbouring countries and war victors: seeking an ally in isolation for example from France. By the end of 1922 the situation had already stabilized, and Bethlen's policy took a direction that led to Hungary's membership in the League of Nations on January 31, 1923. In public, the foreign policy was to accept the terms of Trianon, the dethronement of the Habsburgs, and to maintain good relations with the Little Entente. The motive was to gain credit.<sup>399</sup> However, the revision policy continued – it merely manifested itself in different ways.<sup>400</sup>

Besides membership in the League of Nations, the Hungarian foreign political opportunities were very limited. According to Kontler the options were firstly to adapt to the new situation and to seek support through good relations, i.e. integration in the new international order and border modifications based on earning the goodwill of the Great Powers and détente with the neighbouring states. The other option was armed cooperation with the other defeated countries of the World War – in other words, reaching for the old equilibrium through old cooperation. Hungary's narrow foreign political elbow room has been explained as a result of the neighbouring countries' cooperation aimed against Hungary, the Little Entente.<sup>401</sup>

The modest elbow room of Hungary's international opportunities has also been explained in less straightforward manner. Miklós Zeidler has studied The Hungarian foreign policy's – largely also revision policy's – chances through

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<sup>395</sup> Romsics I. 2002, 101-102.

<sup>396</sup> Teleki 2000 (1921), 142.

<sup>397</sup> Romsics I. 1999, 176.

<sup>398</sup> On thinking of the Hungarian elite in the context of memoir literature, see especially Romsics, G. 2006, 53-100, 169-170.

<sup>399</sup> Romsics I. 1999, 191-192; Swanson 2001, 189, on creating stability see 333-338; Hoensch 1996, 116.

<sup>400</sup> Kovács-Bertrand 1997, *passim*.

<sup>401</sup> Kontler 2002, 354-355.

the concept of “elbow room in forced space” (*mozgástér a kényszerpályán*). Since the autumn of 1918, Hungary had full political independence, and a distinct Hungarian foreign policy came into being. Independent actions required formulating the infrastructure of foreign affairs administration and policy-making. One of the objectives was solving the revision problem. The fact that Sopron remained part of Hungary is an example of the history of successful revision policy, but other territorial claims had to be dropped in the politics of the 1920s – the revision claim was not abandoned, however, in the years between 1921 and 1927. The voice of the official policy calling for the return of the past did grow silent because of the international politics, the support Hungary needed from abroad.<sup>402</sup> In sum, the politics were characterized by balancing between the need for economic foreign support and the ambitions of the national policy.

The revision plans manifested themselves in a bolder form outside the official policy that had chosen the “will of people” as its slogan.<sup>403</sup> After the World War, several patriotic communities emerged in Hungary with the goal of protecting the home territories militarily. The development of these communities was a part of a larger European phenomenon instead of being merely a Hungarian curiosity. These communities were also capable of using propaganda. In Hungary the most important society in this sense was the *Magyarország területi épségének védelmi ligája* (TEVÉL). The objective of the association founded in 1918 was Hungary’s territorial integrity. A new active local organisation was the *Nyugat-Magyarországi Liga*, Western Hungarian League, which pursued significant activities compared to other local organisations. The communities also had connections to the most prominent politicians. In Western Hungary there was also one extreme right-wing organization, the *Magyar Országos Véderő Egyesület* (MOVE).<sup>404</sup>

The devastating impact of the Trianon defeat on the Hungarian experience – and the question of Western Hungary as part of it – could also be seen in street level symbols, for example the *Irrendenta* statues in Budapest: a group of four statues symbolising the four directions, erected in 1921.<sup>405</sup> However, in subsequent general presentations of Hungarian history the question of Western Hungary has been presented as a success due to the Sopron case, an exception in the wounded country’s history and a disappointment with Wilsonism and Realpolitik alike. The years of the question of Western Hungary dated to a time

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<sup>402</sup> Zeidler 2003, 167-170.

<sup>403</sup> Kovács-Bertrand 1997, 291.

<sup>404</sup> Kovács-Bertrand 1997, 50-54. The operations of these reflected for example in the case of Western Hungary on the picture about turmoil in the border region which the Allies also received. However, they had no direct links to the decision-maker level in Paris. Instead, the boundary between Hungarian government, improvised military constellations, and extremist organizations was vague – this has been discernible particularly in the speculations concerning the connections between the Hungarian Army and the irregular troops that operated in Western Hungary in the autumn of 1921. See for example Schlag 1970, 119; Schlag 1971, 2-3; Borus 1996, 50, 52-53; Swanson 2001, 337.

<sup>405</sup> Pótó 2003, 60-64.

before the creation of Hungary's international image during the League of Nations phase: the phase of a search for support and allies and a more open revision solution. In the problems of the territorial losses that became a part of the collective memory the question of Western Hungary became an exceptional one. Hungary managed to keep Sopron, which had been given to Austria, and to make use of the delimitation process in terms of border details. At the same time the very point of departure and the volume of the border question differed from other border disputes: the area had not been occupied, and the historic Vix ultimatum and the actions of General Jan Christian Smuts were never involved with it.

### 3 AUSTRIA AS PART OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN ORDER 1918–1919

#### 3.1 Raising the question: including German Western Hungary in the idea of German Austria

The new Austria was reshaped not only as a result of Austrian politics but also in an international context at the Peace Conference, where Austria was remade into a part of the successor state system. In the same way, the annexation of Burgenland to the Austrian Republic can be seen as a result of both national and international fields. On the Austrian side, the national policy concerning the state territory reflected the idea of German Austria. As Widder (1995) has stated, the background for Austrian Burgenland policy can be found in the “deutschnationale” interests connected to the creation of the “new German-Austria”.<sup>406</sup> The formation of the Austrian Republic in 1918 (*Deutsch-Österreich*) and defining Western Hungary as a part of it ought to be seen within the context of the German thinking in the former Habsburg Monarchy: the Germans of the multinational monarchy could form a state of their own.

In the first meeting of the Austrian Provisional National Assembly the key concepts were “*das deutsche Volk in Österreich*” and “*der selbständige deutschösterreichische Staat*”. In the declaration read at the meeting, the state based on the German nation thereby had the right to claim territories inhabited by Germans, the most important of them being Sudetenland. Thereby Austria would be based on a German people and the expression “*Bauern, Arbeiten und Bürgern*” served to strengthen the concept. Austria announced it resisted neighbouring countries’ claims to this German unity, but at the same time, however, it was also prepared to arrange the conditions of the Germans in ways other than mere sovereignty change: for example through agreements concerning passage to the Adriatic Sea. The concept “independent” meant that this new Austrian state should be a part of Germany: the Germans in Austria

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<sup>406</sup> Widder 1995, 632.



would have the right to decide their future. In Adler's statement the concept of nation was furthermore linked to democracy: Austria was a German state of German nation and people. In addition to universal suffrage for both men and women, a visible feature was a characteristically socialist rhetoric: a struggle for "the proletariat, democracy, and socialism".<sup>407</sup>

In the constitution and system of government established on November 12, German Austria was defined as a democratic republic and a part of the German Republic.<sup>408</sup> The precedence of being German was defined in accordance to Wilsonism. A note meant for Wilson stated that, in addition to the core Austria, also other German areas of the old monarchy were considered to belong to this German unity. The primary goals at this stage included Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. The plan was to confirm the annexations through a plebiscite to be organized in neutral circumstances.<sup>409</sup>

The idea was thereby to propose that the Austrian state territory was based on a voluntary union of a German people. The notion was a part of the democracy context: Renner stated on November 12, 1918, in the Provisional National Assembly that Austria acted as part of the international community and its democratic countries. The Austrian state territory was also based on democracy, i.e. the areas' voluntary joining into parts of Austria. In addition, apart from defining the state territory, the question also dealt with defining German Austria's national, economic, and cultural interests in the various areas. This also emerged in the question of Germans in Hungary: the state territory would include areas in the border district, and the other sphere of interests would include the Germans elsewhere on Hungarian turf.<sup>410</sup>

The annexation of Western Hungary to Austria was initially left in the shadow of the question concerning Czechoslovakia's old, German *Länder* areas. However, on November 18 the government (*Staatsrat*) decided to announce officially that the German-inhabited areas of Pressburg, Wieselburg, Ödenburg, and Eisenburg – in other words, Western Hungary – were also to be presented as part of German Austria at the Peace Conference. The area was defined as part of German Austria on geographical, economic, and national grounds. The key argument for Western Hungary was that the area was important for Vienna's supply of goods. The decision was legitimized by linking together the wishes and needs of the area's inhabitants: the *Staatsrat* responded positively to Western Hungarian Germans' national and economic Austria movement (*Anschlussbewegung*). The rhetoric pointed out that this was therefore a scheme

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<sup>407</sup> Konstituierende Nationalversammlung der deutschen Abgeordneten. Stenographisches Protokoll zur 1. Sitzung 21. Okt. 1918. ADÖ/1/1.

<sup>408</sup> Gesetz über die Staats- und Regierungsform von Deutschösterreich 12. Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/15 A; Staatssekretär für Äusseres Bauer an Präsident Wilson 13. Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/16.

<sup>409</sup> Provisorische Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich. Stenographischer Protokoll zur 2. Sitzung (Beschlussantrag und Debatte) 30. Okt. 1918. ADÖ/1/3.

<sup>410</sup> Provisorische Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich 12. Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/15.

rising from the people. The rhetorical means of the declaration was to welcome the area into part of German Austria.<sup>411</sup>

In sum, the state territory act of November 22, 1918, determined that the state of German Austria included the German areas that were represented in the *Staatsrat* as kingdoms, “*Königreichs*”, and lands, “*Länder*”.<sup>412</sup> The state declaration added that Western Hungary would also be presented as part of the state territory at the Peace Conference. The German areas elsewhere in Hungary were presented as parts of the “*nationaler Interessenbereich*”. This meant that they were not claimed as parts of the state territory, but the demand was that their German population should be guaranteed rights and connections to Austria.<sup>413</sup>

However, Austria’s claims made it necessary for the country to perform a balancing act with Hungary and the winning countries alike. The reason for this was that Austria was in need of foreign support particularly in terms of economy. Due to the poor food supply situation Austria had to balance demands and needs.<sup>414</sup> On the one hand the food supply shortage offered a grounds to claim more state territory, on the other hand the acute management of the shortage required maintaining relations with neighbouring countries and presenting only moderate claims. German Austria thereby prepared to confront Hungary’s protests. In this sense the *Staatsrat* decided that, in order to refute Hungary’s protests, the territorial claim would be presented in a way where the changing of the border would be executed in accordance with the right of self-determination. The population would get an opportunity to express their opinion. No promise of a direct plebiscite was given, however; instead, the *Staatsrat* interpreted that the deputation of the Western Hungarian farmers had already made the population’s point clear. The assumption was also that the food supply situation would serve to explain the Austrian motives to Hungary.<sup>415</sup>

The right of self-determination and the will of the people were thus not argued only with a plebiscite; also lesser evidence of the people’s hopes – like individual addresses or simply politicians’ assumptions – represented adherence to the self-determination principle.

At the same time that the Austrian politicians “answered the wish of the people” and welcomed Western Hungary Germans into Austria, Hungary’s countermeasures were the promises of autonomy offered by Károlyi’s government.<sup>416</sup> Hungary’s acceptance of the Austrian plans was not primary issue for Austria, however, despite the emergence of tensions and regional unrest. The most important issue for Austria was to get the question resolved at

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<sup>411</sup> Staatsrat. Beschlussprotokoll zur 36. Sitzung 18. Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/21.

<sup>412</sup> Gesetz über Umfang, Grenzen und Beziehungen des Staatsgebietes von Deutschösterreich 22. Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/26.

<sup>413</sup> Staatserklärung über Umfang, Grenzen und Beziehungen des Staatsgebietes von Deutschösterreich 22. Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/27.

<sup>414</sup> Staatsamt für Volksernährung an Staatssekretär für Äusseres Bauer 13. Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/18.

<sup>415</sup> Staatsrat. Beschlussprotokoll zur 42. Sitzung 22. Nov. 1918. ADÖ/1/28.

<sup>416</sup> See for example Gruber 1991, 14-15.

the Peace Conference. From the national Austrian point of view, the point of departure for annexing Western Hungary to Austria was the idea of German Austria. How was this idea presented to the Peace Conference? Bringing up the economic aspect and referring to the “choice of the people” as grounds for the border revision implied that Austria tried to meet the assumed policy of the Peace Conference. The question can be considered part of a larger problem that had to do with the legitimation of the Austrian state on the national and international level. The legitimacy of a state must not be established only in the domestic arena, but also in the external environment, in the international community.<sup>417</sup> So, Austria had to justify the principles of the new state on the domestic level where the crucial concept defining the state’s territoriality was the German aspect, but at the same time it had to explain the state and policy of the Austrian state to the international level decision-makers, for whom the idea of the Austrian Germans’ rights potentially had to be rationalized in a way that did not involve implications of Greater Germany.

Explaining the Austrian policy towards the Allies during the Peace Conference, Hans Haas (1989) has commented that by marketing its national interests with arguments suited to the Allies’ policy, Austria also got territorial gains at the Peace Conference.

The republic government considered its task to be maintenance of the bourgeois-democratic order established in 1918 with support from foreign relations. Improving the economic situation was essential for maintaining stability. In this sense, the Austrian foreign policy from the armistice (November 3, 1918), to the Treaty of Saint-Germain in September 1919, was determined by the goal of maintaining the society capable of survival.<sup>418</sup> Haas links this policy to the way Austria defined and justified its state territory to the Peace Conference.

With his interpretation Haas undeniably participates in the glorification of Renner’s social democratic republic: the explanation diluting the Anschluss policy and ignoring the contradictions reflects the Austrian post-1955 consensus and the political ideal during Austro-consensus. Despite the tone of “history of success” his interpretation represents a reliable picture of the level on which Austria and the policy of the Peace Conference met each other: what were the arguments that Austria used to gain at least some concessions in the otherwise unfavourable peace.

Haas explains that Austria reacted particularly to Wilson’s peace concept rather than to the power politics pursued by the European Allies. Unlike its domestic policy, Austrian foreign policy did not appeal to the German aspect but to the concept of right of self-determination and the fact that the new Austria was democratic, republic, and anti-communist. In order to receive support from the West, Austria had to prove being bourgeois-democratic, i.e. non-revolutionary. Austria also showed its acceptance of Central Europe’s new

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<sup>417</sup> Gullberg 2000, 191.

<sup>418</sup> Haas 1989, 11.

system of successor states.<sup>419</sup> On the other hand, it is possible to contextualize the Austrian arguments not only into Wilsonian idealism but also into realism and power politics. Nevertheless, the Austrian political development was observed in Paris from traditional power political viewpoints.

According to Haas the Allies for their part had two ways to influence Austria's political development: military intervention or economic-political policy. They chose the latter. Austria's appeal to develop the society corresponded to the Allies' policy. Great Britain and the United States were unwilling to consider intervention, while France and Italy for their part could have occupied the country during the critical stage in November 1918. Instead, this idea was also given up in 1919.<sup>420</sup>

Although the Allies grew restless due to the revolutionary unrest in Hungary and Bavaria between March and June 1919, they ultimately considered Austria relatively trustworthy in terms of politics. At least by June 1919 Austria was defined as politically reliable among the Allies. In many ways Austria was treated similarly to the successor states representing the winning side, as a new state "released" from war guilt. This repositioning took place for example in territorial questions. Austria's political reliability explained the positive territorial decisions Austria received in Burgenland, Carinthia, Southern Styria (Radkersburg), Bohemia and Moravia. Economic support could also be got from the Allies by evidencing a policy of independent and democratic Austria corresponding with the Allies' own policy.

In sum, Haas' interpretation stresses the relationship between Austria's social political development and foreign political line. He particularly emphasizes the way the Allies ultimately saw Austria as an anti-communist country. The fact that the Allies observed Austria's German politics and the Anschluss possibility appears less important to Haas. All the same, the essential aspect for the Allies as regards Austria was that the country's development followed a trend that was safe in terms of power politics: Austria had to orientate towards a policy that was opposed to revolution and to Greater Germany.<sup>421</sup>

### 3.2 American investigations into Western Hungary

How, then, did the objectives of the Great Powers reflect on an individual border question? What kind of framework did their policy and conceptions about Austria, its borders and political future create for the decision concerning Western Hungary? What was the information underlying their image of Austria during the critical stage? The decisions of the Peace Conference have been criticized for not being based on "correct information": the Allies were ill-

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<sup>419</sup> Haas 1989, 17-18.

<sup>420</sup> Haas 1989, 20-22.

<sup>421</sup> Haas 1989, 29-40.

informed and ignored the Central European questions.<sup>422</sup> However, it is more essential to discuss the Allies' views about Central Europe than to start "weighing" the truth.

The American reaction to the definition of the new Austria is particularly interesting vis-à-vis the question of Western Hungary. Jon Dale Berlin has been the central authority in the research dealing with Western Hungary. He has stated that among the Allies it was the United States that called for better treatment to Austria.<sup>423</sup> Professor Archibald Cary Coolidge's biography published in 1932 also claims that due to the reconnaissance work carried out by Coolidge Commission, the United States had the only delegation at the Paris Peace Conference actually familiar with the question, and the evidence the Americans presented was crucial for the decision-making. Coolidge had repeatedly recommended the concession of the area to Austria during his posting in Vienna, and he repeated his opinion when he attended the Paris Peace Conference himself in the summer of 1919.<sup>424</sup>

In Vienna, Coolidge concentrated on the problems of the new Austria. Undoubtedly he was well aware of the post-war shortage of food and energy.<sup>425</sup> Coolidge estimated that Austria was also fermenting politically in a mix of various alternatives for the future where the general opinion was susceptible to change. In his report to the United States peace delegation from Vienna on January 30, 1919, Coolidge pondered Austria's alternatives as a state: independence and alliance options, uniting with Germany, or founding a Danubian federal state. Coolidge's key criteria influencing his assessments of Austria's future alternatives as a state were nation, nationality, and factors indicating the country's viability as a state: economy and defence capability. Coolidge's estimations on Austria's future were also affected by his view about Austria's fragmentariness. The unity of the country was disturbed by the dominant power of the provinces and belonging to two "transnational" traditions, German and the Danube area based on monarchy. Coolidge argued that there was no desire to melt Vienna, the centre of the old Danube monarchy, into an insignificant part of Prussian Germany: strengthening Vienna meant strengthening Austria's independent future.<sup>426</sup>

In the Coolidge Commission, the area of Western Hungary was presumably considered a part of the Vienna project. Coolidge's interest in Western Hungary came from articles he read in Austrian newspapers. He interpreted both Austria's and Hungary's objectives in Western Hungary to be justified. In other words, both countries had a legitimate motive to claim the area: these motives were will of the people or ethnic circumstances. Hungary's autonomy model based on the will of the people and Austria's appeal to the

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<sup>422</sup> See for example Swanson 2001, 336.

<sup>423</sup> Berlin 1979, 76.

<sup>424</sup> Coolidge 1932, 226.

<sup>425</sup> Coolidge 1932, 198-200.

<sup>426</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, January 30, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

area's German population and economic contacts were in Coolidge's opinion suitable reasons for territorial claims. Towards the end of January, 1919, he assessed that leaving the border question between the two countries unresolved might seriously harm the countries' relationship, although the territory in question was not large. The border, which seemed to emerge from the peoples' point of departure, was significant in terms of stability and security.

In this even situation Coolidge found more factors to support Austria's arguments. Coolidge's interpretation of the Austrian discourse was that the people had shown their willingness to change their state nationality. A central reason for siding with Austria was that Western Hungary's own voice sounded pro-Austrian to him. He reached the conclusion that appending the area to Austria therefore seemed natural. First and foremost, the border change would be in harmony with the new political principles - in other words, the doctrine of national right of self-determination. In Coolidge's interpretation, the Austrian discourse corresponded to the Americans' own principles and the rhetoric of the peace policy.

At the same time the Hungarian policy also strove to adhere to Wilsonian principles. Coolidge reported to Paris that the Hungarians admitted the pro-Austrian mood in Western Hungary. Hungary explained the mood as only due to Hungary's "temporary tension", and the Western Hungarians were normally "loyal citizens of the Hungarian republic". According to Hungary's logic the population thereby wished to stay part of Hungary particularly if the national rights were to be recognized. However, there was a clear suspicion about Hungary in Coolidge's estimations of the chances of the country's legislation and the viability of the plan. For example a plebiscite under Hungary's rule seemed suspicious in the light of Hungary's historical image.<sup>427</sup>

As a source for his observations and his image of Hungary, Coolidge leaned on his five-day stay in Hungary in January, 1919. Coolidge's method was to "listen to people" - he did not specify who those people were. In addition to historical mistrust, Coolidge founded his opinion on problems related to economy and people: if the people was not heard or the economy would not function, the integrity of the state would be endangered. The peoples' historical right of state Hungary suggested - the Western Hungarians' historic right to belong to Hungary - was legitimate. The nation had the right to tradition.<sup>428</sup> Coolidge mediated the question of Western Hungary for the American negotiators in Paris on February 17, 1919, referring in particular to the will of the people in legitimising the border. The concept "will of the people" crystallized for him the nationality of the area's population, its will to

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<sup>427</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Budapest, January 19, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII; Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, January 29, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>428</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Budapest, January 16, 1919; January 19, 1919; January 19, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

belong to a certain state. It referred to economic conditions favourable to the nation. Economy was thereby made into a part of the national policy.<sup>429</sup>

Apart from his trip to Budapest, Coolidge pursued his investigations in the Commission's headquarters in Vienna, but he assigned his agents to investigate the nearby areas. When the question of Western Hungary continued to make headlines he sent Major Lawrence Martin, a professional geographer, to gather information not only about Western Hungary but also Ruthenia and the Klagenfurt area.<sup>430</sup>

Coolidge asked Martin to study the border between Austria and Hungary particularly from the geographical point of view.<sup>431</sup> Based on his investigations Martin indeed suggested changing the border in Western Hungary to Austria's gain. Martin's report, which Coolidge forwarded to the American Commission to Paris, did not match Coolidge's own plans point by point.<sup>432</sup> Unlike Coolidge, Martin linked the question of Bratislava's ownership to the future of Western Hungary. Furthermore, differing from Coolidge's view he believed in Western Hungary's importance in solving Austria's shortage of food supplies immediately. Martin interpreted the area to be a productive part of the former monarchy on the basis of information gained from professor Bruckner of the University of Vienna: according to Bruckner, 35-42 per cent of Vienna's and Lower Austria's (*Niederösterreich*) food supplies came from Western Hungary before the war.

Instead, Martin's ideas about the motives of the new border based on geography, the ethnicity of the people and the will of the people came closer to Coolidge's own views. In Martin's opinion, the ethnicity of the area – which he defined through language – or assessing the will of the population were not easy to determine. His investigations strengthened Coolidge's idea that both Hungary and Austria could appeal to the right of self-determination. Nation in the ethnic sense was largely assessed through language. However, the population could not necessarily be considered Austrian or Hungarian as such on the basis of language or sympathies. Apart from calling the area German West Hungary Martin also used the name *Heinzenland* and explained that the population also spoke "the *Heinzisch* language", which was "not pure German but somewhat dialect". Furthermore, he was not sure the extent to which the population had been magyarised. Martin did not recommend a plebiscite to solve the problem; instead, a neutral commission was to investigate the views of the population before the final drawing of the borderline.

Economy and geography in particular were at the same time central arguments for geographer Martin. Using those factors, he was able to weigh the situation between Austria and Hungary. The possibilities of economic

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<sup>429</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, February 17, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>430</sup> Coolidge 1932, 198, 225-226.

<sup>431</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, March 3, 1919. FRUS XII.

<sup>432</sup> Memorandum by Professor A.C. Coolidge. March 10 [1919]. The New Frontiers in Former Austria-Hungary. FRUS Vol. XII.

connections were therefore a key criterion for the borderline. They were further connected with geography and the nation: natural conditions, the population's trade connections, and food supply logistics. For example the traffic and natural conditions in the area of Western Hungary did not in his opinion support the idea of a Slavic corridor to provide passage between Czechoslovakia and the Southern Slavs. He also argued against the idea of the corridor claiming that the Serbo-Croat population was "friendly to Germans" and would be "equally as happy and comfortable under a German as under a Hungarian administration". The islets of Western Hungary's Hungarians he eventually explained as part of Austria on economic grounds as the Hungarian inhabitants could direct their economic relations to Austria together with the German population. The functioning of the economy can be seen as a part of American security-building.

In his recommendation for the border, Martin did not follow the administrative borders of the Hungarian comitats. Instead, he justified the new border with the formula of nation, economy, and geography. He combined the single arguments in such a way that together they strengthened the justification of the border. In other words, the agricultural products produced for Austria in Western Hungary's German areas with natural and existing transport facilities strongly indicated to Martin that the area belonged to Austria.<sup>433</sup> While the concept of natural border<sup>434</sup> is not explicitly used in Martin's memorandum, his presentation implies that the criterion for changing the Austrian-Hungarian border was the "natural" nature of the border, as Martin combined the traditional border tracking - natural conditions - to new criteria. To quote Martin:

"Nevertheless, as the ethno-linguistic boundary coincides fairly well with the base of the foothills, lying everywhere in the foothill slope, I have drawn my suggested line as fully as possible in relation to the minor topography and forests. I regard this proposed new international boundary as satisfactory in its combination of an ethnic-linguistic frontier, a geographical line of demarcation, a good military frontier, and a line which does not transgress any great laws in relation to economic factors."<sup>435</sup>

These criteria came together in Martin's justifications, and he used them to explain his evaluation which leaned on very different sources: different-aged maps from different quarters and their presentations of population and natural conditions. Assessing the population's languages and ethnicity, Martin trusted an ethnographical map (*Carte Ethnographique de la Hongrie*) made under Pál Teleki's lead that he had received in January, 1919. He also depended on Austrian Dr. Richard von Pfaundler's pamphlet *Die Zukunft des Deutschen in Westungarn* to deny the Slavs' rights for the area. He also trusted a military-geographical map of Central Europe made during the monarchy. Other sources

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<sup>433</sup> Major Lawrence Martin to Professor A.C. Coolidge. Vienna, February 28, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>434</sup> On the tradition of natural border, see Sahlin 1991, 34.

<sup>435</sup> Major Lawrence Martin to Professor A.C. Coolidge. Vienna, February 28, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.



varied from “scientific” statements and researches to evidence from ordinary citizens, e.g. the opinions of an “anonymous bookseller from Vienna”.<sup>436</sup>

Coolidge was more critical than Martin as regards the information gained from Western Hungary. He commented to the peace delegation that the material used by the commission and researchers was limited and that the population’s circumstances were open to various interpretations. It appears that genuine membership in a nationality was essential for Coolidge. The ethnic and linguistic structure of the area was complicated by the mobility of the population – day labourers crossing the border – and the body of civil servants that spoke a different language than the local population. It was also difficult to determine the national structure because according to Coolidge the statistics and statements could have been coloured by disputes between nationalities.<sup>437</sup>

Martin’s memorandum nevertheless provided the cornerstone for the presentation Coolidge made for the Peace Conference. Presenting the border question to the American delegation in March, 1919, Coolidge concentrated mainly on the area’s German nature. The issue was Western Hungary’s German population’s future, and it was a central theme in Austrian public debate. So, it was a theme that concerned the attention and interest of the nation. Coolidge reported to Paris about a mass meeting in Vienna on March 2, 1919, where the main points of emphasis were the role of nationality in the definition of borders and national right of self-determination. He also assessed that Hungary was equally capable of appealing to the same argument of right of self-determination. Solving the question of Western Hungary was according to Coolidge a question that the right of self-determination idea and a plebiscite could be applied to, but only under outside control. “ --- this is perhaps the sole case in this part of the world where both parties are bound by their declarations in favour of the principle of self-determination. In theory it could be easily applied were it not that neither of the two contestants can be trusted to control its operation.”<sup>438</sup>

Neither Austria nor Hungary could therefore be given the responsibility of organising an honest plebiscite. The situation could lead to “endless friction”. In his memorandum “The New Frontiers in Former Austria-Hungary” dated March 10, 1919, Coolidge introduced the issue more extensively and recommended the border suggested by Martin. Coolidge explained that the areas seemed more a part of Austria than of Hungary, albeit the best option would be to resolve the issue through a plebiscite. On the other hand he also resisted a plebiscite – again due to the fact that he had no faith in the reliability of the elections.

In addition to the problematic plebiscite, he considered compensation another way to solve the territorial disputes. The compensation would be

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<sup>436</sup> Major Lawrence Martin to Professor A.C. Coolidge. Vienna, February 28, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>437</sup> Memorandum by Professor A.C. Coolidge. March 10 [1919]. The New Frontiers in Former Austria-Hungary. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>438</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, March 3, 1919. FRUS XII.

carried out according to the population circumstances: as compensation for lost populace, members of the people would be welcomed inside the border from elsewhere. The idea of fairness would not in his opinion be realized, however, if the population proved unwilling to make such compromises. Coolidge also commented on the basic problem of the peace system: how to relate to war-time enemies, and how to reconcile the contradiction between punishing and the "new start" in Central and Eastern European countries. Coolidge eventually decided to recommend the policy of forgiveness: "Nevertheless the nearer we can come to forgetting the past and to applying equal treatment to all, the better it will be and the firmer the foundation for the future."<sup>439</sup>

In sum, in Coolidge Commission the central idea concerning the definitions of borders and new states seemed to be a condition of connections and solidarity. The connections were the population's ethnic, linguistic, geographical, and economic connections. Coolidge's reports stressed that the nation and geography were strong indicators for border changes also in areas other than Western Hungary. They can be interpreted to have been a part of the natural connections idea. For example in the definition of Czechoslovakia's borders he thought attention had to be paid to the fact that the historical border would leave the population dissatisfied. The historical background of the border was thereby not a viable argument unless it contained the idea of the tradition of connections. Coolidge's core idea can be summarized into a thought of a natural and effortless border where the natural conditions and the people are connected. Geography, for example, reflected the preconditions for agriculture in the area. Opportunities for economic activity complemented the border of natural connections. The ideal border would respect traffic connections and the population's economic activities and reflect positively on the national economy. The border of natural connections was a viable border that honoured democratic ideals. Under these criteria, areas could be included in a certain state unit. However, Coolidge mentioned his awareness of the fact that politics would not allow for all these changes.<sup>440</sup>

Austria's unity and stability as an independent state appeared to be the goals of Coolidge commission. The separatism of the provinces and Hungarian Bolshevism threatened this development. Coolidge drew attention to the significance of stabilising the country through the peace treaty in his report dated April 7, 1919. He pointed out that peace will have "a tranquilizing and encouraging, and perhaps stimulating effect upon people here; for there is still to be found plenty of intelligence and good will, though perhaps not much

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<sup>439</sup> Memorandum by Professor A.C. Coolidge. The New Frontiers in Former Austria-Hungary. March 10 [1919]. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>440</sup> Memorandum by Professor A.C. Coolidge. March 10 [1919]. The New Frontiers in Former Austria-Hungary. FRUS Vol. XII.

enterprise".<sup>441</sup> An example of the separatism that could result in the reorganization of the German world was Vorarlberg's separatism.<sup>442</sup>

Evidently, Bolshevism was one of the influential arguments in Coolidge's interpretations after Béla Kun's rise to power. However, it should be noted that Americans had already previously, before the Hungarian communist rule, seen strong reasons to append Western Hungary into a part of Austria. Western Hungary's role in the construction of Austria's future was a part of the policy that strove to create Central European states that functioned well in terms of economy and politics. In particular, the incorporation was seen to fit the trend of national right of self-determination and the idea that incorporation legitimized through contacts served stability. The idea of nation was linked to explanations resembling Realpolitik. By the American assessments made in early 1919, Western Hungary seemed to be suited to the territorial and political construction of Austria: it seemed that an independent, republican Austria would stabilize as the form of the country.

The investigation results of the Coolidge commission were presented in the Paris Peace Conference meetings of the border commission in July 1919. Coolidge's own investigation commission's idea about incorporating Western Hungary into Austria was realized with British support, although the American version of the specific borderline was not realized as such.<sup>443</sup>

Coolidge himself left Europe to engage in science, and at times people confuse him with Calvin Coolidge, later President of the United States.<sup>444</sup>

### **3.3 Could Austria be independent? British and French views on the viability and territoriality of Austria**

In the summer of 1919 the views of Coolidge's mission were being weighed by European winning powers. In this sense it is interesting to discuss how Great Britain and France, the two major players at the Peace Conference, saw the situation in Central Europe. Unlike Italy, they were geographically and mentally far from the Danube area and observed the development of the area within the context of the Great Power policy. France and Great Britain did not acquire systematic information about Western Hungary's case in particular, but nevertheless, they had formed a general view on the Danube area. The French and British missions had contacts with the Austrian state leadership that also approached Allied representatives in Vienna to make Austria's wishes heard.<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>441</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, April 7, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>442</sup> For example Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, May 5, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>443</sup> See for example Rapport de la Commission. Annexe au Procès-Verbal No 4, Séance du 9 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/No 20059, NA.

<sup>444</sup> Coolidge 1932, 235.

<sup>445</sup> Ormos 1990, 19-20.

Information in the Handbook series gathered by the British foreign affairs administration was also a potential source of background information for views concerning Austria's and Hungary's future. In addition, the Political Intelligence Department (PID) was founded within the Foreign Office (FO) in 1918. Its object was to provide the government with up-to-date information on current issues, but it also provided information for the public audience.<sup>446</sup>

When the preparations for Austrian peace treaty began in May 1919, the delegation of Great Britain, in addition to the United States, took an active role as regards the question of Western Hungary. The British initiative and the preparedness of France to make border changes while the peace negotiations were progressing – although France had had a passive attitude to the border question in the early stage – can be explained by the two countries' general Central European policy, a part of which was determining the future of Austria. In May, 1919, the border between Austria and Hungary was not a key element in organising the successor states' future, but it was nevertheless a part of defining the new Austria. Like Coolidge Commission, Great Britain and France pondered the chances of Austria's existence on a more general level. On the other hand they still concentrated primarily on Austria's general development while Coolidge was already preparing detailed presentations about the area of Western Hungary. The British and French central arguments on Austria's territorial and political future involved the country's relations to Germany, other Central European countries, Bolshevism, and Vienna's position as a Central European centre. One question was also how to apply the principle of the right of self-determination to the German areas of the former monarchy.

From France's viewpoint which was based on Realpolitik and alliance policy, Austria was not the most important political target, however. Instead, France was primarily prepared to support Czechoslovakia politically and militarily. The political support was mainly directed towards territorial questions. This became apparent for example in the question of Bohemia: France wanted to prevent Austria and Germany from getting the area.<sup>447</sup> Although enlarging Austria's state territory was not in accordance with the basic line of the French policy, an increase of land from Hungary, an enemy state, to Austria did not seem impossible. Hypothetically, the border change did not contradict France's Central and Eastern European policy.

The trends in the British foreign policy – on the one hand power policy and on the other a security political alternative in the manner of the *New Europe* movement – reveal the motives and political strategies of the British in the question of Western Hungary. The idea of nation-state and its importance in security policy appeared in the FO estimations. In this sense the question of the new Austrian "nation-state" was a problematic issue at the time of the transition from Monarchy to Republic. In the Handbooks which were prepared under the direction of the Historical section of the FO it was notable that Austria lacked the hallmarks of a nation-state. According to the Handbooks the

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<sup>446</sup> Hamilton 1996, 199.

<sup>447</sup> Hovi 1975, 157-158.

attitude of the population, in other words their commitment to the state, was crucial in terms of the nation-state's future. This, however, was problematic in Austria's case, as the country had no common national spirit or awareness of nationality. On the other hand this meant in the positive sense that Austria's incorporation to Germany would not get unanimous backing from the population. To quote the description concerning the present conditions in Austria:

"Public opinion, in the sense in which it can be spoken of in other countries, can hardly be said to exist in Austria, which is not a country or a nation but 'an artificial state without racial or geographic unity'. The only universal bond of union is the relation between the peoples of the Habsburg dominions and the Imperial Government.---- The absence of the natural basis of nationality has made itself increasingly felt as a source of weakness in the Cis-Leithanian State since the constitution of 1867." <sup>448</sup>

Austria thereby appeared from the outset not like a state at all but an "unnatural" unit. Instead, judging by these investigations Hungary was a strong state and nation: "Hungarian Hungary" was considered the strongest Eastern European state.<sup>449</sup>

The question of Germany did not appear in the FO's observations only as the Anschluss question. From the point of view of the question of Western Hungary it is interesting how the British responded to the question of incorporating Germans from the former dual monarchy into Austria. In February, 1919, when dealing with the Austrian note concerning the right of self-determination of the Germans<sup>450</sup>, James Headlam-Morley wanted to pay critical attention to the idea of uniting the Germans of the old Monarchy, in other words, the question of Austrian border claims. He considered the German-national claims and applying the right of self-determination to contain contradictions between local population and state-level decisionmakers: was this a question of the areas' desire to join Austria, or an initiative of the Austrian government? Similarly he had suspected that there was a difference between the political elite and the people also as regards the question of the Anschluss. In other words the will of the local people was a justified ground, but the political initiative of German Austria to "invite" the areas to join Austria was not. Nevertheless, Austria's suggestion that the border decision ought to be made swiftly and that changes could be made on the borders with Italy and Yugoslavia met with the FO's approval. According to Headlam-Morley,

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<sup>448</sup> Austria. Present Conditions. General Observations p. 24-25. Handbooks prepared under the direction of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office No 1,2 and 3 (printed in March 1919). FO 373/1/3, NA.

<sup>449</sup> It is interesting that in the Handbooks the notions the Handbooks implied about state, people, and "virtues" emerged from what England represented. Hungary. Present Conditions. General Observations p. 54. Handbooks prepared under the direction of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office No 1,2 and 3 (printed in March 1919). FO 373/1/3, NA.

<sup>450</sup> Memorandum by Austrian Foreign Ministry to Swedish Embassy [in London] 25 Dec. 1918. Alströmer 27 January 1919 to the Foreign Office. FO 608/92222, NA.

opportunity should be given to the German population of the doubtful districts to make their wishes heard.<sup>451</sup>

The British and the French agreed with Coolidge's view that a fragmented Austria was a security risk. An Austria formed from provinces was to be kept united in order to make Central Europe's development acceptable to the Allies. The key concepts of the French evaluation were Austria's independence, viability, and internal structure such as the setting between the capital and the provinces. The French representative to Vienna Henri Allizé<sup>452</sup> feared that provinces (for example Tyrol, Salzburg, Upper Austria) would have "separatist" plans, i.e. seeking to become parts of Germany. This would lead to the dispersion of the "new Austrian state" – and thereby the collapse of the Central European constellation.<sup>453</sup>

Therefore the objective was the necessary stability of Austria's territoriality. The British military delegation in Vienna did not yet pay much attention to the importance of borders in the winter of 1919 while presenting the country's current political threats. Military attaché Colonel Thomas Cuninghame's military operations were considered more effective actions against Bolshevism than defining the borders would have been. Improving the economy would for its part prevent the Anschluss.<sup>454</sup> Towards the end of March the British War Office (WO) suggested that advantageous borders as an alternative to military actions would prevent political threats. The WO's suggestion concerning the ways to prevent "the threatened amalgamation of German-Austria with Germany" can be divided into two groups: first, a military solution where British troops could be sent to Austria, or second, the organization of economic and territorial conditions in Austria making sure Austria could "survive".<sup>455</sup>

In the FO the WO plan concerning the territorial questions aroused some criticism. The FO official Lewis Namier criticized the plan stating that there would be no guarantees against the Anschluss: a solution according to which all territorial questions would be arranged in favour of Austria did not imply that there were guarantees against the Anschluss.<sup>456</sup> The interpretations of the Foreign Office and the War Office culminated in two contradictory deductions: on the one hand territorial concession would help Austria to remain democratic and independent and stay apart from Bolshevism and German influence. On

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<sup>451</sup> Minute by Headlam-Morley 18 Feb. 1919. FO 608/9/2222, NA.

<sup>452</sup> Head of French Military Mission in Vienna 1918-1919.

<sup>453</sup> Allizé (Vienna) to Pichon (MFA, Paris) 18 May 1919. MAE/Archives Diplomatiques/A-Paix/Vol. 113, MFA.

<sup>454</sup> Cuninghame (Vienna) to DIM 28 Feb. 1919; DIM (Major-General Thwaites) to the Foreign Office (no date). FO 608/6/3877, NA.

<sup>455</sup> In this plan it was suggested that in certain parts of South-Tyrol, Bohemia and Pressburg [Bratislava] there should be a favourable solution for Austria. In South-Tyrol, Bozen and Meran should remain Austrian; in Bohemia, there should be "fair solution" of 'German' Bohemian question; Pressburg should no go to the "Czecho-Slavs" (sic), because it was "vital for river -way trade and communications of German Austria". Western Hungary was not mentioned among these points.

<sup>456</sup> WO 28 March 1919; Minute by L.B. Namier 4 Apr. 1919. FO/5445/43237, NA.

the other hand, if certain areas were connected with Austria, these parts could eventually be part of Germany.

Germany was thereby a primary political threat that defined the relationship to Austria. In terms of Bolshevism the major threat was the way it would de-stabilize the system of states. In this sense the French government seems to have taken the communist revolution in Hungary calmly, but it was far from delighted about the new government. Now there was a communist regime in the middle of France's eastern barrier and of the *cordon sanitaire* at the same time.<sup>457</sup> France's reaction to Béla Kun's communist government was directed more towards the possible strategic consequences than towards Bolshevism as such. In this sense France's main concern were the consequences which the Hungarian revolutionary government's active foreign policy might have for its neighbouring countries.<sup>458</sup>

Lord Acton's memorandum from Bern in April, 1919, offered a similar interpretation. If the relations and connections between the countries in the Danube area were not in the Allies' control, they could also present political dangers. Austria's significance in terms of Central Europe's political development was emphasized in the memorandum. According to Acton, Hungary's situation had an influence on Austria's potential revolutionism<sup>459</sup>; and if a Bolshevik revolution happened in Austria, it could spread from there to neighbouring countries like Italy and Czechoslovakia. Reorganizing the borders at this stage was not necessarily a recommendable alternative: according to Acton Hungary's borders were a topic not to be mentioned, as bringing them up would aggravate Hungary's communist regime.<sup>460</sup>

As in the American observations, it was also essential to the British and the French to observe Vienna's development. Vienna's situation was considered indicative of the political stability of all Austria and Central Europe. In his minute dated January 24, 1919, Headlam-Morley emphasized the importance of Vienna as a central European capital: the city would "maintain at least a shadow of its imperial state" and it would have political importance. Headlam-Morley stated that the Allied Powers had to show that they would not support the monarchists or the extreme right. Instead, they had to win the confidence of liberals and leftist, Social-Democrats, circles in Austria.<sup>461</sup>

The French evaluations also understood Vienna's development as indicative of the development of Central Europe. The city was still evaluated to be a strategically and historically important nodal point of Central European connections. Therefore it was also a potential political threat: as a point of connections it could for example operate as a centre for spreading Bolshevism.

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<sup>457</sup> Hovi 1975, 196, 198.

<sup>458</sup> Hovi 1975, 199-202.

<sup>459</sup> For Allied estimations of "the repercussion of the Hungarian Revolution on Austria" see Mayer 1968, 720-734.

<sup>460</sup> Lord Acton (Bern) 15 Apr. 1919 to Lord Curzon. Enclosure in No. 1 Memorandum. FO 371/3530/5448/62572, NA. Acton explained that the memorandum came from "reliable sources familiar with Austria and Hungary"

<sup>461</sup> Minute by Headlam-Morley 24 Jan. 1919. FO 608/9/(531).

Comparisons from history arose: the Turkish attack of 1683 was seen as a parallel to the Bolshevik threat of 1919.

Austria or Hungary were thereby not considered only separate parts of the Danube area; instead, the political attention appeared to concentrate on the territorial whole and the main focus on successor states classified as allies. Contemplating the position of Vienna seemed essential to the observers while considering the political situation of the neighbouring countries. Western Hungary's proximity to Vienna was interesting because the Austrian frontier region was seen as a support region for the Communists. The Austrian left wing had a strong position not only in Vienna but also on the Hungarian border. Two potential geographical "nests of Bolshevism" were the industrial city of Wiener Neustadt along the border and the capitol Vienna on the border region.<sup>462</sup> The arguments related to Vienna – Western Hungary as support or threat to European political stability – were thereby interesting also in this respect.

Defining the new Austria and its borders in the middle of threatening images was a challenge. The Foreign Office learned various official and unofficial Austrian and foreign views on what Austria's future in the state sense might be. When the Paris Peace Conference began, the FO and the British peace delegation received views about Austria's situation and future state visions particularly from Bern, which seemed to be a central channel for diplomatic information. Like the FO's own interpretations, this information seemed to emphasize the connection between Germany and Austria and especially the vulnerability of the idea of a purely Austrian political unit.

The dual monarchy's last Prime Minister Heinrich Lammasch was one of these informants. Lammasch had been professor of criminal justice and international justice in the University of Vienna, and he was a member of the last Emperor Charles' close circle.<sup>463</sup> His vision of Austria was different from that of the new government and especially Otto Bauer. Lammasch discussed the matter several times in Bern with the Allied diplomatic corps, where he acted "as representative of Austria at the Conference respecting the League of Nations". He, however, pointed out that the "real reason" for his coming to Bern was a desire to discuss Austria's future with the Allies. He said that Bauer had "built obstacles in his path".

Austrian government linked to Austria's ideal state territory the German areas of the monarchy and favoured uniting with Germany. Lammasch's vision on the contrary anchored to an idea about a Danubian state which the Germans of the former monarchy would join. Nevertheless, both Lammasch and the Austrian government wanted Western Hungary as a part of Austria's state territory. In Lammasch's opinion the Anschluss was an unnatural solution in terms of Austria's future. According to him, the Anschluss was easy to repel –

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<sup>462</sup> Le Chef d'Escadrons de Maleissye-Melun à M. Clemenceau, Président du Conseil, Ministre de la Guerre. Vienne 2.4. 1919. DDFHBC Vol. I/311; M. Allizé, Ministre de France à Vienne [to] M. Pichon, Ministre des Affaires étrangères. Vienne 2.4. 1919 DDFHBC Vol. I/312.

<sup>463</sup> Broucek 1997, 78, 213.



expressly the veto of the people, a plebiscite, would repel it by showing that the people disagreed with the politicians. Lammasch's recipe for the prevention of the Anschluss was a loose alliance, a federal state of sorts, including Upper and Lower Austria, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg, German portions of Styria and Carinthia, and German portions of Hungary. Lammasch also presented a vision of Vienna breaking with Austria and joining Germany. He thereby portrayed the socialist Vienna as an element that was apart from the rest of Austria and whose policy did not match the policy of the nation and the provinces. Despite the differences, the visions of Lammasch and the presiding government shared similar principles as the Austria of Lammasch and the new republican Austria were actually built from the same elements – in other words, the German provinces.<sup>464</sup>

Lammasch further explained his plan concerning an “Alpine Republic”, which the federal state he had sketched would be. Lammasch explained to Acton that “for giving more vitality to this new state and also for the purpose of paralysing the predominant influence of the socialist milieu of Vienna it would be necessary to unite with the strictly alpine regions of Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Salzburg, Upper and Lower Austria and the German (northern) parts of Styria and of Carinthia some other districts: 1. The Western districts of Hungary with an almost entire German population (Oldenburg (sic) or Sopron, Ungarish Altenburg, Wieselburg and Güns) with 262 660 German inhabitants. 2. The southern parts of Bohemia and Moravia 3. A part of Bavaria.” Like the Austrian government, he justified Austria's state territory and the appendices to be made through economy, with the help of which the political threats of Bolshevism and the Anschluss could be prevented.<sup>465</sup>

In the plans of Lammasch, Western Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and the southern parts of Bavaria would have been used to construct a non-Prussian, non-bolshevist, viable German state. The new areas would hold back revolutionary trends and the Anschluss in two ways: they would help the capital survive and on the other hand bring the state political balance by introducing Catholic countryside population to join the socialistically oriented great capital. In the grounds he presented the new Alpine Republic would also have served the policy of the Allies. With this new republic, the Allies would get better connections to the Danube area, and at the same time this new state would be a part of the zone against Germany and Bolshevism.<sup>466</sup>

Lammasch's arguments approached the prevailing trends among the Allies, but his lobbying attempt did not meet with sympathy at the Foreign Office. Instead, his private vision was considered unrealistic and fantastic and the idea concerning the Danubian Confederation groundless. Especially Lewis Namier had a sceptical image about Austria in April 1919. In his opinion, the

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<sup>464</sup> Memorandum by Lord Acton (Bern) 19 March 1919. Discussion between Lord Acton and Dr. Lammasch on 18 March 1919. FO 608/9/4979, NA.

<sup>465</sup> Lord Acton (Bern) 28 March 1919. FO 608/11/5873, NA.

<sup>466</sup> Lord Acton (Bern) 28 March 1919. Appendix: Lammasch to Acton: “New Alpine Republic”. FO 371/3530/5445/51195, NA.

Habsburg Monarchy had been controlled by Germany: if the Danubian Confederation would be formed, it also would be subject to Germany. He did not think Austria could survive alone as the country was too fragmented, had no raw materials and had a large capital to support. An independent Austria would therefore have been unviable. Controversially, only politically impossible options, a state resembling the old monarchy or uniting with Germany would in his opinion keep Austria alive. The politically acceptable Austria, i.e. an independent Austria, was unviable instead.<sup>467</sup>

The FO appeared to appreciate the assessments concerning Austria it received from Masaryk instead of Lammasch. Masaryk emphasized Austria's independence and Czechoslovakia's position as controller of the Danube area. According to him, it was possible that German Austria remain independent and outside Germany. He did not think the majority of Austrians were really in favour of the Anschluss. Masaryk stated that the possibility of keeping Austria independent seemed correct at present, but nevertheless the "ultimate political union" was not out of the question. In any case Austria could not be prevented from maintaining friendly relations with Germany. The danger level of this connection in the future depended on the dominance level of Prussianism in Germany. On the role of the Czechs in relation to Austria's independence Masaryk explained that the Czechoslovakian government could, with support from the Allies, influence Austria and prevent the Anschluss. It could wield influence through trade of raw materials and coal, as well as the minority question. The Czechs themselves needed free transport through Austria to Serbia, Italy and Switzerland and to Western Europe.<sup>468</sup>

It can be argued that Masaryk proposed a policy where Germany in her Prussian "enemy form" had to be disintegrated and where Austria as a German country would join a Czechoslovakia-led Central European circle and not Prussian Germany.

How, then, did the FO react to such policy? The reactions began to manifest a line stressing Austria's independence. In the Foreign Office the policy of Austria was formed through opposition to the Anschluss and Prussian Germany and a type of Great Power nationalism.<sup>469</sup> Headlam-Morley explained the independent Austria policy by commenting that from the point of view of

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<sup>467</sup> At the Foreign Office A.W.A. Leeper minuted that Vienna's separation did not seem realistic and the question of Bohemia and Bavaria was perfectly preposterous. The FO did not consider a confederation a likely solution: for example Crowe doubted that the Czechs and Yugoslavia had any detailed plans for one. Lewis Namier stated that professor Lammasch's statements were "at the best half true" and his schemes seemed "fantastic". Minute by Crowe 8 Apr. 1919. FO 708/9/6576, NA; Minute by A.W.A. Leeper 24 March 1919. FO 608/9/4979, NA; Minute by L.B. Namier 2 Apr. 1919 concerning a conversation between Lord Acton and Professor Lammasch on the subject of the future of German-Austria. FO 371/3529/5445/45905, NA.

<sup>468</sup> Gosling (Prague) to Rumbold (Bern) 12 March 1919; Rumbold to the FO 15 March 1919. FO 371/3529/5445/41554, NA.

<sup>469</sup> Leeper and Headlam-Morley formed an attitude towards the Anschluss that did not oppose the Anschluss to non-Prussian Germany but at the same time showed scepticism toward the possibility of a non-Prussian Germany. Minute by Leeper 17 March 1919; Minute by Headlam-Morley 18 March 1919. FO 608/9/9774, NA.

the balance of power small, multinational units were better than large, nationalistic state units. "Quite apart from the question of balance of power, we have had enough nationalism and we want the tide to begin flowing in the other direction." The general opinion and ethnic minorities were to be integrated to facilitate this development. National governments were thereby not to represent only the leading nationality's sphere of interests. On this grounds he preferred Austria not to unite with Germany. Headlam-Morley's minute can be interpreted to prefer from a viewpoint of balance of power a functioning central Europe, a unity or equality of states. The states' capacity for economic cooperation was important. In this way Austria could also remain independent.<sup>470</sup>

The line of the Foreign Office was to emphasize small states and cooperation - not, however, a situation where one state would take the reins.<sup>471</sup> In sum, in spite of Namier's sceptical attitude towards the chances of an independent Austria, in the FO discourse the idea of an independent Austria appeared as the most realistic alternative to prevent potential political threats. The FO got the picture that the idea of independent Austria was being constructed simultaneously at the Peace Conference. Therefore Austria's development had to be made favourable for independence.<sup>472</sup>

In addition to the definition of separateness presented in Germany's peace treaty, the British thought that Austria's political future was to be secured through economy, military actions, and definition of the state territory. The understanding of the importance of the state territory and people is interesting in terms of the question of Western Hungary: according to DMI Austria could be strengthened, in addition to military and economic support, by solving territorial questions to Austria's advantage. Areas from Southern Tyrol and Bohemia were to be ceded to Austria. Western Hungary was not mentioned in this memorandum, but according to it the nearby Pressburg was to be ceded to Austria, as it would be "vital for river-way trade and communications of 'German-Austria'".<sup>473</sup>

In April 1919, Austrian publicity also implied that Great Britain and France took a positive attitude towards alleviating Austria's peace terms. The Viennese newspaper *Reichspost* published an article saying that Colonel Cuninghame had on April 16, 1919, unofficially announced that Austria's peace terms would not be as severe as those of Germany. The paper claimed that the Allies had sympathies towards Austria and were ready for territorial

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<sup>470</sup> Headlam-Morley's minute became the foundation of the instructions the Foreign Office handed to the embassy in Prague. Minute by Headlam-Morley 18 March 1919. FO 608/9/9774, NA.

<sup>471</sup> Minute by Sir Eyre Crowe 19 March 1919; Balfour to Gosling (Prague) 27 March 1919. FO 608/9/9774, NA.

<sup>472</sup> See Crowe (British Delegation, Paris) 29 Apr. 1919. FO 608/9/8341, NA.

<sup>473</sup> Memorandum by Director of Military Intelligence (WO) to the FO 28 March 1919. FO 608/9/6318, NA. In the FO, measures were not considered necessary as regards Pressburg, related to Western Hungary: Pressburg had already been ordered to Czechoslovakia. Also see minute by Headlam-Morley 7 Apr. 1919. FO 608/9/6318, NA.

concessions in South Tyrol, Western Hungary, Bohemia, and Moravia. The Allies were also willing to provide economic support. According to a diplomatic source the article "caused a sensation in Vienna", but there were reactions also in Czechoslovakia. The FO received information that Czechoslovakia's government asked the FO for an explanation concerning Cuninghame's "statement", as the statement "was not of a friendly character".<sup>474</sup>

The FO announced that the statement was not valid and denied that it would represent British policy.<sup>475</sup> Cuninghame for his part explained that the statement was an interpretation of a discussion he had had on April 16 with Lieut Colonel Baron Viktor Seiller who was a liaison officer between the Austrian government and Entente missions and a Christian Social member of Austria's Parliament. The only area outside Austria's borders at the time Cuninghame admitted to having mentioned during the discussion was Western Hungary. Seiller himself had taken up the other German areas. Cuninghame for his part had warned Seiller about Bolshevik unrest and said that such action would "alienate the sympathy of the Entente towards Austria and destroy the final chance of preserving the economic safety of the country".<sup>476</sup>

When the time arrived to start preparing the Austrian peace treaty, the outset for the British policy was independent Austria which would be guaranteed first fundamentally through the German treaty and later through actions targeted towards Austria. The central aspect was the idea about Vienna's viability. The future decision on Western Hungary can be seen within the context of constructing an independent Austria: a part of the building of ideal Austria. In spite of the different views and antagonisms between the British, French, and American politics, their common policy aimed at the same objective as regards Austria: the preferred alternative was an independent Austria not connected to Germany and governed democratically - in other words, not by Bolsheviks. This meant balancing simultaneously between strengthening Austria, paying attention to the German population and at the same time restricting German influence. The debate on the question of Western Hungary at the Peace Conference thereby leaned on this point of departure shared by the key decision-makers, uniting the right of self-determination slogan to Realpolitik. It was in this way that German nationalist idea of a German Austria welcoming the Germans of the monarchy became a propitious alternative for the Allies.

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<sup>474</sup> Gosling (Prague) 20 May 1919. FO 371/3530/5445/79538, NA; Gosling (Prague) 24 May 1919; the FO to the Peace Conference. Enclosure: Reichspost (Vienna). FO 371/3530/5445/78814, NA.

<sup>475</sup> Gosling (Prague) to Mr. Stepanek 29 May 1919. FO 371/3530/5445/84579, NA.

<sup>476</sup> Cuninghame (Vienna) 31 May 1919 to the DMI (Paris). FO 371/3530/5445/85833, NA.

## 4 DEFINING THE NEW BORDER AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE 1919

### 4.1 Opening the discussion in Paris - "Pourquoi chancer l'ancienne frontière?"<sup>477</sup>

In a study of the discussion that began at the Peace Conference in May 1919 it is essential to look at how Western Hungary was located in the new Central European state system. How did the discussion about the border area find its place as part of the Peace Conference policy: legitimising a state system with different variants of security policy, the argument based on the nation or Realpolitik? How did Austria's national policy encounter the policies prevailing at the Peace Conference?

When the Paris Peace Conference was discussing the problem of Austrian state territory, the question of Western Hungary was included as part of independent Austria's development, and at the same time connected with a wider organisation of the Danube area. The border area between Austria and Hungary was first discussed in the context of the Czechoslovakian state as a territory for the "Slavic corridor". The Slavic corridor would geographically connect Northern and Southern Slavs. The corridor issue was taken up at the Peace Conference in February 1919, but the proposition of Tomáš Masaryk and Edvard Beneš did not materialize. The commission of Czechoslovakia vetoed the corridor plan on March 8, 1919, and it was removed from the agenda on March 25, 1919.<sup>478</sup>

In the discussion of the Council of Four - Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Sonnino - the question of Western Hungary did not emerge.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>477</sup> Lansing in the meeting of the Foreign Ministers 8 May 1919. Réunion des Ministres des Affaires Étrangères 8 Mai 1919. Conférence de la Paix. Recueil des Actes, Vol. 11, MAE.

<sup>478</sup> See for example Heidrich 1982, 22-23.

<sup>479</sup> Conversation between President Wilson, and MM. Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando, and Baron Sonnino. May 8, 1919, 11 a.m. LXVII/The Deliberations of the Council of Four/I/LXVII.

Instead, Austria came up principally in relation to how its position should be interpreted: did Austria represent the disintegrated monarchy, i.e. was it a part of former Austria-Hungary or a “former empire diminished”; an enemy state or a new state? Did Austria for example still retain the right to speak for the Germans in Bohemia? Furthermore, it was important to Clemenceau to stress that Austria was New Austria, not German Austria referring to the German context.<sup>480</sup>

While the Council of Four did not put the question of Western Hungary on its agenda, the negotiations between Foreign Ministers took it up instead. In the context of Austrian state-building the question of Western Hungary was first discussed in the meeting of Foreign Ministers on May 8, 1919. When the Italian representative Sonnino asked whether anything had been done about the border between Austria and Hungary, the British Foreign Minister Balfour was then the first participant to bring up the alternative of reconsidering the border of the old monarchy. The American delegate Robert Lansing considered the need to change the existing border doubtful. Balfour shared Lansing’s opinion in principle, but did not consider the question so simple, considering to the national and ethnic conditions in the area. He stated that the German population in Hungary might wish to join Austria.

After referring to the ethnic situation in Western Hungary, Balfour incorporated the question of the Austro-Hungarian border into the wide context of economic development in Austria and Hungary. It is possible that Balfour’s statement concerning Western Hungary was motivated by the British policy, which emphasized the economic viability of Austria. The economic question was, however, discussed no more, and no decision was made. Lansing anticipated certain economic questions which, unless the frontiers had been adjusted, might cause difficulties. He suggested the formation of commission to deal with the Austro-Hungarian border. In this way the Peace Conference would be prepared beforehand to deal with any proposal that might be made either by the Austrian or the Hungarian side. Lansing explained that the work of such a commission would prepare the Allies to face potential difficulties and to field questions raised by the Austrians or Hungarians. He pointed out that “--as the Allies had so often been unready to deal with emergencies when they arose, they should in this case take steps to be prepared in advance.”

Elevating Western Hungary into a part of the Conference agenda did not suit Sonnino’s policy. He opposed Lansing by stating that the Allies would only cause difficulties by establishing a commission and discussing the border change in advance. Accordingly, he did not want to encourage Austria and Hungary to act. Finally a decision was made to take no action unless the question was to be raised by Austria or Hungary.<sup>481</sup>

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<sup>480</sup> Conversation between President Wilson and MM. Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando. May 26, 1919, 4 p.m. The Deliberations of the Council of Four/Vol. II/XCVII.

<sup>481</sup> Secretary’s notes of a meeting of Foreign Ministers held in M. Pichon’s room at the Quai d’Orsay, Paris on Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1919, at 4 p.m. ADAUBA/22. According to Francis Déak (1942) it was not clear from which source Wilson and Balfour had

Italian policy differed from the policy of other Great Powers from the very beginning of the discussion on Western Hungary at the Peace Conference. Italy's interest in the border region between Austria and Hungary can be linked to its desire to prevent the region from winding up in the control of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.<sup>482</sup> Maintaining the current border and keeping it outside the discussion obviously seemed the safest option for Italy. In the meeting Sonnino referred to interests of international security, basing his argument on the insecure political situation in Central Europe: the border question would only cause needless trouble. His main reason against the alteration of the frontier was that that up to that point neither Austria nor Hungary had raised the question, and, accordingly, they were not present to ask for discussion concerning the border. Furthermore, Sonnino obviously tried to prevent the question from emerging by referring to the formalities and practices of the conference. As neither Austria nor Hungary had asked to reconsider the existing border, he could see no reason for setting a commission to work. Should either side desire an alteration, he would then be prepared to recommend examination by a commission.<sup>483</sup>

Despite the fact that neither Austria nor Hungary were not asked to comment on the border, the Allies received news that the border had become a problem and that Austria was interested in the region. The Austrian interests concerning Western Hungary were transmitted especially to the British and American peace negotiators. The basic idea underlying Austria's arguments appeared to be that a border change would solve the problem both in terms of power policy and the nationality principle. Moreover, according to a British report on May 11, Austrian Chancellor Renner not only championed Austrian interests towards Western Hungary but also claimed that an immediate Austrian intervention in Western Hungary would be politically advantageous. He asked for mandate from Entente to occupy Western Hungary "inhabited by Germans". In his claims Renner referred problems of political power and nationality. Raising the spectres of communism and civil war, he implied that the prevailing situation - threat of communist attacks in Vienna and Wiener Neustadt - threatened not only Austria, but international security as well.

Second, Renner emphasized the role of the German population in Western Hungary. He linked the ethnic grounds to the political grounds. Stating that German Austria would protect the Germans in Western Hungary, who were now under communist rule, Renner hoped that the mandate to occupy the area would be given soon. The German population in Western Hungary was in danger and therefore, their ethnic kin state, German Austria, should protect

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obtained information concerning the 'desire of German population of Western Hungary to be joined with Austria'. Déak 1942, 71. Obviously, the information was obtained from Allied representatives and Coolidge's mission.

<sup>482</sup> Lindeck-Pozza 1971, 16-17.

<sup>483</sup> Secretary's notes of a meeting of Foreign Ministers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris on Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1919, at 4 p.m. ADAUBA/22.

them. In sum, Renner stated that Austria would claim Western Hungary on national, ethnic and military grounds but also on economic grounds.<sup>484</sup>

Like the British, the American Commission soon became aware of the Austrian interests in Western Hungary. Renner had asked Coolidge to see him before his departure for Paris. The main subject Renner wished to discuss was the question of Western Hungary. In the Austrian rhetoric the threatened position of the Austrian state and nation was a central issue. Renner referred to the harsh German peace terms which, he claimed, caused a "painful impression" in Austria. Secondly, he argued that the Hungarian Bolshevik regime would not fall by itself, and the only recovery would require the intervention of foreign troops. He also emphasized the importance of the American Food Commission in Vienna.<sup>485</sup>

In addition to the contacts with Chancellor Renner, Coolidge had stayed in contact with the Austrian leading circles, who were lobbying the Austrian policy of "German Western Hungary" implying that the border area and accordingly, the Austrian state and nation itself, were in political danger. Furthermore, the situation would endanger the whole political constellation designed by the Allies. In addition to political visions, Austria's state leadership also explained to the Allies some concrete examples concerning the situation in the region. The concept of population, German people, as a legitimate factor for Austrian policy was emphasized in the Austrian rhetoric. The Austrians referred to the difficult conditions of the local population in Western Hungary and argued that they appealed for "urgent protection" against Hungarian propaganda and "fleeing troops".<sup>486</sup>

On May 11, Coolidge discussed the matter with Renner, who wanted to let the American mission know that the situation in Western Hungary was alarming. He emphasized the viewpoint of the local German population. The disorder caused by Hungarian troops - who were "living off" the local peasantry - might lead to revolts, in which case Austria would have to intervene. Coolidge in his turn reported to the American Commission that "The region (Western Hungary) is on the verge of civil war, Hungarian troops lived off the people and scattered them, peasantry are not likely to stand this much longer and they may rise in revolt - in which case Austria will have to intervene."

Renner had thereby shown that he opposed the same political threat as the Allies - communism. He also painted for Coolidge a picture of the immediate need for action by reminding Coolidge about the socialist dominance in the "Red industrial city" of Wiener Neustadt in the immediate vicinity of the Hungarian border.

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<sup>484</sup> Mr. Philpots (Vienna) to Balfour 11 May 1919. FO 608/9/9774, NA.

<sup>485</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, May 11, 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>486</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, May 9, 1919. ADAUBA/23.



Coolidge estimated that Austria was very desirous of acting – not on their own account, but with a mandate from the Allies. At the same time as Austria appealed for a mandate for occupation, it asked for a plebiscite in the region. These two measures to ensure the annexation of the region to Austria were intertwined. The Austrians claimed that political circumstances threatened the rights of the people and the ethnic group and justified an occupation and plebiscite. These measures would secure the rights of the people. In other words, the prevailing conditions were against the principle of self-determination.

Nevertheless, for Coolidge, the ethnic situation alone and economic contacts between the people in the border region gave rise to important arguments too. As Coolidge described the area and population, “this region is inhabited by a German population who, in spite of the political boundary line, has always been more closely connected to Vienna than to Budapest, and it is a territory on which Vienna is particularly dependent for food.” In sum, Renner’s arguments obviously converged Coolidge’s attitudes and corresponded with them. Coolidge stated in his memorandum to the American mission that it was desirable that “this German-speaking strip” should belong to Austria rather than to Hungary.

Renner paid attention to the moderate attitude of the Austrian government: it was concerned about the matter, but had not acted. The Austrian government acknowledged, however, that it would have to act in the case of a revolt. Coolidge got the impression that the Austrians were willing to solve the question with a plebiscite – i.e. to consult the population in question. He emphasized the ethnic structure of the region and the Austrian interests towards the “kinsmen”. Renner referred indirectly to the idea of German Austria – Germans of the former monarchy – while discussing the German population in Western Hungary, but he referred to the power political reasons too – in fact he argued in terms of Realpolitik more openly. He stated to Coolidge that his aim was to prevent revolutionary movements and disorder.

In sum, both Renner’s and Coolidge’s arguments linked the ideas of German nation and political hazards in the border area. Ethnic nationalism was represented in the context of power politics. Annexation would engage national self-determination and at the same time require military intervention. Both actions linked the ideas of the will of the people and nation. Power politics was thereby legitimized in terms of nationhood, and the needs of a nation were legitimized by referring to the political threats. On these grounds Coolidge recommended that the Western Hungarian territory be a part of Austria<sup>487</sup>

The American estimations of Austrian policy line and the conditions in Western Hungary were thus transmitted to Paris. President Wilson pointed out in the meeting of the Council of Ten on May 12 that the Austrians would raise the question and therefore, the Peace Conference would be called upon to “specify the frontier between Austria and Hungary in the Treaty with the

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<sup>487</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, May 11, 1919. ADAUBA/24.

former". He reminded that it had been decided to set up a commission to investigate the question. In the meeting no commission was nominated to decide the matter, however. The Italian representative, Baron Sonnino, who was again against discussing the border question, stated, that it would suffice to require Austria to recognize the independence of Hungary, and Hungary that of Austria, without raising the frontier question at all. Despite Wilson's statement, the meeting decided that the frontier of 1867 between Austria and Hungary would remain unchanged. If any difficulties arose regarding this frontier, the Allied and Associated Powers might, if necessary, arbitrate.<sup>488</sup>

Meanwhile the Peace Conference had laid the border question on the table and decided to wait for reactions from Austria or Hungary, the image of the necessity of a border change was further developed in Austria. The central idea was that the annexation of Western Hungary to Austria would benefit both Austria and the Allies. The active Austrian politics became known to the American mission, which played a significant role in transmitting the argumentation to the Peace Conference. Coolidge reported on May 15, that "the question of German West Hungary is still among the topics actively discussed here." He also observed that Austria and Hungary had expressed opposite attitudes toward border change as Béla Kun would not accept the territorial change. In this sense he referred to Otto Bauer's statement published in *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* and to the Hungarian response to that statement. According to Coolidge it was "clear that the Austrian government are not only anxious to obtain the West Hungarian territory but are following a consistent though cautious policy towards that end---". He also underscored the fact that Austria would occupy Western Hungary, if Hungary "were to fall into a state of anarchy".<sup>489</sup>

Coolidge gave the American commission reports which portrayed Austria and Hungary as battlegrounds of "capitalism and communism". His reports linked the problem of Western Hungary to the discourse on revolution and thereby the problematic spread of revolutionary spirit. Béla Kun's regime was represented as a threat for German Austria when it was acting in German West Hungary. Austria was instead represented as an opponent of Hungarian communism - i.e. the Austrian policy was implied to be in accordance with the policy of the victorious Allies.<sup>490</sup>

At the same time, Bauer commented to Kun on the Hungarian policy of holding on to Western Hungary, using the Communists' own rhetoric. Adherence to the idea of right of self-determination was expressed in a way where "in case that among the population of this comitat the majority of the working class and rural population actually stand by the Councils-Republic,

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<sup>488</sup> Secretary's notes of a conversation [Council of Ten] held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1919, at 4 p.m. ADAUBA/25.

<sup>489</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, May 15, 1919. Enclosure: 'The Question of West Hungary'. Translation of "Neues Wiener Tagblatt" No 133 15 May 1919. ADAUBA/29.

<sup>490</sup> For example Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna 13 May 1919. ADAUBA/26 and an undated telegram ADAUBA/27.

this majority will be given the opportunity to realize its desire.”<sup>491</sup> Obviously, this political rhetoric and Béla Kun’s politics had an equal grounding. In a speech Kun gave on May 5, 1919, when the new Government Council was opened in West Hungary, he stated that “Hungary was not against Austria but against Austrian capitalists who tried to steal West Hungary which would never be submitted to by Hungarian troops...”<sup>492</sup>

Coolidge interpreted the Austrian motives for these two different policy lines and observed contradictory aspects in Austrian relations towards the Hungarian communist regime. On the other hand, Austria needed co-operation and trade with Hungary, but at the same time, there was a need to keep distance to the communist regime and to argue for border change. In the meeting of Commissioners Plenipotentiaries on May 26, where the question of Austrian political future and its relations towards its neighbouring countries were widely discussed, he also referred to the question of Western Hungary. He stated that “with the Hungarians they [Austrians] were afraid to come to any open break because of the necessity of their pulling together, although they felt quite strongly about that small portion of West Hungary which they desired to have joined to German Austria...”<sup>493</sup> Coolidge also saw political dangers and political possibilities in Austria at the same time. In this sense he estimated that Austria could not stand the situation much longer, and therefore communism was attacking Austria too. On the other hand he considered the Austrian government politically reliable: the government would reject the communist revolution, and no danger of an immediate revolution existed. In his reports Coolidge let it be understood that Austria was reliable from the Allies’ point of view, but the Allies should protect it, as the situation might change if the present non-revolutionary government lost support.<sup>494</sup>

Coolidge’s impression of the Austrian situation was that it was “temporarily as good as could be expected, but as a permanent situation it would be extremely bad”. He emphasized the bad economic situation. In regard to the Austrian government, Coolidge stated once again that “it was as good as could be expected under the circumstances and if it were replaced by another government, that would undoubtedly be inferior to it”. The present government was “a proper one for the Allied and Associated Governments to make peace with”.

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<sup>491</sup> Oral reply of Dr. Bauer to the Hungarian Note 14 May 1919. Private telegram published in “Neues Wiener Tagblatt”. Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna, May 15, 1919. Enclosure: “The Question of West Hungary”. Translation of “Neues Wiener Tagblatt” No 133 15 May 1919. ADAUBA/29.

<sup>492</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna 21 May 1919. ADAUBA/30.

<sup>493</sup> Minutes of the Daily Meetings of the Commissioners Plenipotentiary. Monday, May 26, 1919. Present: Robert Lansing, Henry White, General Tasker Bliss, Christian A. Herter. ADAUBA/31.

<sup>494</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna 21 May 1919. ADAUBA/30.

He linked the question of Western Hungary to the wider question of Austrian viability and state building. Coolidge's statement, in fact, brings together under the umbrella concept of viability economic, political, national, and democratic elements – when put together, these elements strengthened Austria. He stated that in deciding the border between Austria and Hungary, the commission should take into account the claims of the Austrians “for a small portion of West Hungary which is the so-called Kitchen Garden of Vienna”. Moreover, in spite of dealing with the concepts of power politics, he stressed “natural” or human ties between Western Hungary and Austria. He argues that “this section, geographically and economically forms a part of the Austrian State, and also the population is very largely German and desires to be joined to Germany (sic)”.<sup>495</sup> It is possible that Coolidge considered Western Hungary an aid to strengthening Vienna, and thereby helping forward a united Austria. The Austrian state was not threatened merely by the Anschluss and Bolshevism but also by the country's internal structure. In this sense, Coolidge paid attention to the internal fragmentariness of the Austrian state. He estimated that there was “increasing disintegration of the Austrian provinces”. Vorarlberg provided, in his opinion, a most striking example.<sup>496</sup> Therefore, Austria also had to be strengthened against internal disintegration.

The future of Austria was on the American agenda again when an American member of the Reparation Commission, Major Royall Tyler, discussed the Austrian peace terms with General Slatin on May 31. Focusing on the Austrian point of view, Slatin had described “the financial aspect of Austria's catastrophe so hopeless---- that one who is not an expert can only pray for the best without attempting to understand what ought to be done”. His statement concerning the Austrian frontiers implied that he considered the borders significant for Austria's economic viability. Slatin based his position on two grounds: nation, i.e. German population, and economy. For example, he fretted about the fact that Czechoslovakia was gaining German areas in Moravia<sup>497</sup>.

Slatin also referred directly to the Western Hungary emphasising the region's German nature and economic importance for Vienna. As a result Tyler reported that “If the reports about the frontiers to be imposed on Austria were true, Vienna would be in a hopeless position, though if the country were treated fairly in the frontier matter, it would manage to live somehow.” The viability of Vienna thus implied the political viability of all Austria. This point seemed to

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<sup>495</sup> Minutes of the Daily Meetings of the Commissioners Plenipotentiary. Monday, May 26, 1919. Present: Robert Lansing, Henry White, General Tasker Bliss, Christian A. Herter. ADAUBA/31.

<sup>496</sup> Professor A.C. Coolidge to the Commission to Negotiate Peace. Vienna 14 May 1919. FRUS Vol. XII.

<sup>497</sup> In the memorandum concerning the discussion between Slatin and Tyrrel, Moravia was defined German and thus part of Austria stating that “--- parts of Moravia that are as German as Vienna itself”.

be important to Slatin: without an existing state of Austria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia would have a common frontier.<sup>498</sup>

The Austrians consulted by the American mission based their arguments on the idea of ethnicity as a legitimation for a state. Furthermore, they referred to the political dangers, especially Bolshevism. Western Hungary was linked to the ideal of new state system in Central Europe because it reinforced the construction of the Austrian state. In sum, in American reports transmitting both official and unofficial Austrian claims to the peace delegation, Western Hungary was represented not only in a national context as a German region but also in the international context indicating the stability of Central Europe.

This doubled context also appears in the discussion between Major Royall Tyler and Heindrich Lammasch, who tried to influence American as well British diplomacy. Like Slatin and the Austrian Minister in London, Baron Frankenstein, with whom Tyler had talked earlier, Dr. Lammasch said that the Austrian peace terms were “extremely hard” and “impossible of execution”. The question of Austria’s eastern frontier emerged – at least indirectly – as a possibility for compensation. Lammasch compared the peace negotiations to a trial where a “criminal” was allowed to speak in his own defence and was present at his own trial.<sup>499</sup> He implied that if Austria was treated better, the Allies would benefit from it. He referred to the frontiers of Austria and among them to Western Hungary, when he warned of the threat of Bolshevism: the territorial losses caused anxiety in Austria and thus threatened political and social disorder – eventually the danger of Bolshevism would emerge.

According to Tyler, the Austrian Delegation was “very apprehensive of the effect of the Terms on opinion in Austria”. Bolshevism provoked by despair was what he feared, despair caused mainly by the new frontiers. To quote him, “the giving of S. Tyrol to Italy was the worse case, on the whole, but there were others almost equally bad, such as S. Moravia and the Sudetenland”. The Western Hungarian region was 80 per cent German and “very necessary to Vienna, whose market it had always supplied with fresh produce.”<sup>500</sup> By compensating Austria with Western Hungary and supporting Vienna with its “Kitchen Garden”, the Austrian state could be saved from revolutions.

In spite of the emergence of the case of the Western Hungary in Paris, the question of a new Austro-Hungarian border remained open after the first discussions. No proposal to change the border appeared in the first peace terms to be presented to Austria on June 2, 1919.<sup>501</sup> Not surprisingly, the question of Western Hungary figured large in Austria’s reactions to the peace treaty. The

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<sup>498</sup> Memorandum by Major Royall Tyler to Joseph C. Grew. Paris 1 June 1919. ADAUBA/32.

<sup>499</sup> Lammasch suggested that there should be conversations and verbal communications instead of notes: in other words, it can be interpreted that he wanted to make sure the Austrians would have an opportunity to express their views.

<sup>500</sup> Memorandum by Major Royall Tyler to Joseph C. Grew. Paris 6 June 1919. ADAUBA/33.

<sup>501</sup> See for example Gruber 1991, 16.

question about the border between Austria and Hungary was primarily addressed only after the first draft for the peace treaty was finished.

## 4.2 Austria defends its right to Western Hungary

General presentations of Austrian history usually describe the Treaty of Saint-Germain as a dictated peace in which the arguments of the Austrian peace delegation had no influence. The peace delegation that came to Paris was confronted by prefabricated peace terms regulated by earlier conference decisions like the new states formed from the dual monarchy regions and the question of Germany. External factors also regulated the timetable and handling of the treaty. The Austrian delegation was kept waiting in Saint-Germain for three weeks. As Jelavich had pointed out in her overview on Austrian history, the Austrians were objects, not subjects. The instructions from the Austrian National Assembly were to prove useless. The delegation was allowed to make written objections, but the final document reflected changes in only inconsequential details. According to this interpretation, Austrians did not negotiate a peace treaty – they were simply handed the terms.<sup>502</sup>

Although the point of departure was a dictated peace, Austria's role at the Peace Conference has also been seen in a more positive light. Inviting Austria to Paris has been interpreted as a positive reaction towards Austria. Macmillan has referred to Wilson's statement that it was "a good idea to show" that the Allies supported Austria's democratic government by inviting them to Paris. The Conference did not invite a Hungarian delegation since there was a revolutionary communist government in Budapest, and, in addition, fighting had broken out between Hungary and its neighbours. Still, in this interpretation, the losing side came to hear the terms, not to negotiate them.<sup>503</sup> Haas refers to the same notion, but also sees the Austrians as political actors and agents, not only passive objects. In addition to Haas, for example, Swanson has explained that the Austrian republic was rewarded for an attitude that was positive towards the West and negative towards communism and the Habsburgs. Austria was an active party securing its position at the Peace Conference by shaping its future in the direction of the Allies. This embrace of the victors' policy can be interpreted as the country's attempt to legitimize its existence as a state in the international sphere.<sup>504</sup>

The border questions – territorial limits of a German state – were one of the most important issues to Austria. Since May, the Austrian political leadership continued their efforts to annex Western Hungary. In the context of international politics they argued in terms of power policy, referring especially to the Hungarian communism. Bauer believed that Austria could profit from

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<sup>502</sup> Jelavich 1993, 155; Temperley 1921, 390-392.

<sup>503</sup> Macmillan 2002, 257-258; Swanson 2001, 84.

<sup>504</sup> Haas 1989, 35-40; Swanson 2001, 84, 88, 93.

the unstable situation in Hungary, as a revolutionary Hungary was not legitimate in the eyes of the Allies.<sup>505</sup>

Otto Bauer considered the Austrian peace terms more severe than the German conditions. The treaty banned the Anschluss, gave Bohemian districts to Czechoslovakia, South Tyrol to Italy, and part of Carinthia and Lower Styria to Yugoslavia. Members of the Austrian government and the Austrian peace delegation met on June 3 in Feldkirch to discuss the draft.<sup>506</sup> As Hannikainen (2003) has summed up Bauer's thoughts, the reasons for Austrian inviability were the geopolitical, economic, financial and internal weakness. The borders defined by the draft treaty destroyed a natural economic – and German – area and thereby deepened the problems.<sup>507</sup>

The Austrian National Assembly discussed the peace terms on June 7, 1919. The minutes of the discussion were transmitted to the Allies in Paris – obviously as evidence of “the will of the people”, representing the idea of the will of the German nation. The arguments referred to the idea of self-determination, legitimatising the state territory by nation: the Germans in Western Hungary were willing to join German Austria. Furthermore, the Austrians stressed the viability of the nation and state. Renner emphasized the fact that the will of the people should be the most decisive factor when the borders were determined. He explained that a spontaneous idea of joining Austria had emerged especially among the German agricultural population in so called *Heinzenland* in Western Hungary, after the first Hungarian revolution led by Károlyi. His speech referenced the Czechs and Slovaks being joined to Czechoslovakia, and the peoples of Romania and Yugoslavia: Germans were to join German Austria.

The will of the people was closely linked to the concept of plebiscite. Renner noted that the future of the region had to be resolved through a plebiscite as the Austrian government did not wish to annex the region to Austria “by force” and to break the neighbourly relations between Austria and Hungary.<sup>508</sup> In a plebiscite, the people would express their will. The Austrian policy obviously wished to relay a message of its democratic nature. To quote Austrian claims transmitted by the American delegation: “Moreover you have passed over in discouraging silence the desire many times manifested by the German population of the districts of West Hungary to be allowed to have a plebiscite on the subject of its attachment to German Austria.”<sup>509</sup>

Western Hungary's natural belonging to Austria was justified through people, German nation, economic factors, geography, and history. At the same time these arguments were mutually dependent on each other – as in the assessments of the Coolidge's mission. The region's connections to Austria were

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<sup>505</sup> Swanson 2001, 97. Swanson had cited Bauer's note to Cnobloch on 27 May 1919.

<sup>506</sup> Swanson 2001, 105-106.

<sup>507</sup> Hannikainen 2003, 163.

<sup>508</sup> Austrian National Assembly. 7 June 1919 [translation]. FO 608/24/13113, NA.

<sup>509</sup> For example American Commission to Negotiate Peace to the Secretary of State. Paris June 13<sup>th</sup> 1919. ADAUBA/34.

“natural” and justified expressly on the basis of the nation. The nation argument, for its part, implied not only the ethnic structure of the population and its will, but also economic benefit. The economic interests were especially related to Vienna, as the region was in a reciprocal relationship with the capital as the natural market area for agriculture. The economic opportunities of Western Hungary also referred to Austria’s overall survivability, which would be improved by annexing the Western Hungarian agricultural areas to Austria’s state territory. In sum, the new border was legitimized through tradition and contemporary needs alike, keeping the focus on the concept of nation.<sup>510</sup> The Austrian policy towards Western Hungary, led by Renner, operated on the idea of an Austrian nation-state where Western Hungary would be included, although in other respects the Austrian debate was dominated by the question of Austria’s annexation to the German republic.

The notes the Austrian delegation delivered to the Peace Conference introduced these themes in greater detail. Austria’s reply dated June 10, 1919, particularly manifests the judicial point of view: the right to annex Western Hungary to Austria and the threatening images of what might happen if this was not done. In the perspective of justice, the parliamentary debate emphasized the themes of a historically justified, natural border legitimized through nation, serving Austria in terms of economy. The contradictions of applying the historical argument emerged particularly at the point where Renner criticized sticking to the historical boundaries in Bohemia and Moravia, while he at the same time considered the right to Western Hungary Austria’s historic right.<sup>511</sup>

The history argument could thus be used in two ways: it could be used to justify the claim for the region on “historical grounds” and to deny the opponent’s claim as “merely historical”. The historic nature of the border was a legitimate ground when it was based on nation and connections. The tradition of the administrative border for its part represented the historical aspect which was to be annulled and updated to suit the present.

Argumentation using history and tradition within the context of the idea of a natural border played a crucial role in the note of the Austrian delegation dated June 16, 1919. In other words, the border between Austria and Hungary had been only an administrative boundary within the empire, which in a sense diminished its “sanctity” and facilitated changing it to its “correct” natural form. The boundary of the old monarchy did not correspond to contemporary politics or economic circumstances. The reply wanted to introduce the old border as purely and “only” an administrative boundary, although it was simultaneously admitted that the Leitha River had been a geographically natural border.

“It is true that the Leitha has long formed the frontier between Hungary and Austria but, in consequence of the constitution of the Monarchy, that river has become no more than a purely administrative boundary line. This frontier lost all importance

<sup>510</sup> Austrian National Assembly. 7 June 1919 [translation]. FO 608/24/13113, NA.

<sup>511</sup> Renner to Clemenceau (Peace Conference) 10 June 1919. FO 608/20/12234, NA.



centuries ago, no less from the political and military than from the economic point of view. Now, it is to separate two States which have become strangers to each other!"<sup>512</sup>

It is interesting to compare Austria's line of argumentation with the tradition emphasising the natural aspect of determining boundaries. Did Austria at this point in fact present to the Peace Conference the idea of a natural border connected to new grounds leaning on the concept of nation? Austria did not only appeal traditionally to nature and geography; instead, the natural aspect was presented through population, economy, and history. In terms of the nation's interests, the suggested border change was legitimized by not only referring to the race and language but by explaining the economic-historical connections between "German West-Hungary and German-Austria".<sup>513</sup> The Austrian argument could be read politically correctly to find the idea of constructing German Austria, but not Greater Germany. These were combined into an idea of the interests of the nation and they implied the will of the nation on the basis of which - for example by organising a plebiscite - the change would be proved just. It could be argued that Austria's promotion of the new border arose from the old, "natural" ground, combined with the new aspect of nation.

The note declared Western Hungary to be a natural and justified part of Austria also through references to international examples related to the Allies.

"Let it for a moment be supposed that the frontier of France runs from Chantilly through Meaux to Melun and that of England through Canterbury, and let the question be asked whether, in these circumstances, Paris or London could live in perfect calm. Geography, history and economic life themselves point out the way which must be followed in order to surmount these difficulties."

Austria's argumentation also referred to the ideal of a system of secure states from the point of view of power politics. Austria wished to stress the strategic significance of the border: the old border strategically threatened Austria and at the same time all of Central Europe. To quote the Austrian note: "It should be noted, that this line is within long distance cannon-shot of Vienna - that is to say, forty-eight kilometres - and within gunshot of Wiener-Neustadt, while it is only one day's march from Graz!"<sup>514</sup>

The turn to power political argumentation and use of "threatening scenarios" as grounds can be seen in the note of the Austrian delegation dated June 18, 1919. Renner described a vision of an expanding wave of communism, which was spreading across the Hungarian frontiers and threatening Austria. The situation in Austria could easily flare up by causing anxiety among

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<sup>512</sup> General Secretary (Peace Conference) to the British Delegation 16 June 1919. Annex: Austrian Replies to Allied Terms 16 June 1919 (English translation). FO 608/20/13014, NA.

<sup>513</sup> General Secretary (Peace Conference) to the British Delegation 18 June 1919. Annex: Austrian Replies to Allied Terms 16 June 1919 (English translation). FO 608/20/13014, NA.

<sup>514</sup> General Secretary (Peace Conference) to the British Delegation 18 June 1919. Annex: Austrian Replies to Allied Terms 16 June 1919 (English translation). FO 608/20/13014, NA.

workers. To calm this situation, Chancellor Renner had made a proposal of closing the frontier between Austria and Hungary. According to the Austrian delegation:

“The first and most important one is the close proximity of the Hungarian frontier. The Hungarian government is practising its political and social methods practically at the very gates of Vienna. --- The industrial district of Wiener-Neustadt and its neighbourhood is only second in importance (to Vienna) as an economic centre; it comprises a proletariat of 30 000 workmen, the majority of whom have been condemned to unemployment for months past. This area is only 3 kilometres (sic) distant from Hungarian frontier and quite close to the Hungarian town of Oedenburg, the centre (sic) of the Bolshevik Government of Western Hungary. A large number of the inhabitants of Oedenburg and its’ neighbourhood worked during the war in the munitions factories of Wiener-Neustadt. --- Moreover, this frontier possesses no natural capacity for defence. This danger, with which we are threatened at any moment, while its importance for the whole of Europe cannot possibly be overlooked, has made us clearly understand the absolute necessity of uniting the German Austria. Otherwise, German Austria would be a prey to the adventurous enterprises of the adventurer Government of our neighbours.”<sup>515</sup>

The distance between Western Hungary and Budapest was argued to be short in terms of strategy and politics, but long in terms of trade and economy. Renner explained that the region of Western Hungary had been inhabited by Germans since the Middle Ages who had traded with Austrian cities. The Hungarian-speaking Budapest, on the contrary, had no need to import products from Western Hungary. Claims concerning the Western Hungary were, finally, legitimized by the idea of the will of the people. The border change was to be realized through the nation: historical and economic ties to Austria were explained ultimately through the interests of the people. Therefore the border question had to be solved through a plebiscite, according to the Austrian delegation.

“German-Austria has the right to claim these territories on geographical, national and economic grounds, but she does not aspire to any arbitrary annexation, and here, as in every other territorial question, merely submits her case to the nations so that they may freely dispose of it.”<sup>516</sup>

The case of Western Hungary received a positive response in the British foreign affairs administration. In the Foreign Office, Leeper considered the Austrian memorandum, on the whole moderate, but generally inadmissible except for the demand for a plebiscite in the Western Comitats. For it, he submitted there was “much to be said both on ethnical and actual political grounds”.<sup>517</sup>

The borders were not Austria’s only goal, however. Security, the need for which was based on threats dictated by Realpolitik, would be guaranteed not only by secure borders but also by international cooperation. In other words,

<sup>515</sup> Austrian Delegation to the Peace Conference 18 June 1919. FO 608/24/13062, NA.

<sup>516</sup> General Secretary (Peace Conference) to the British Delegation 18 June 1919. Annex: Austrian Replies to Allied Terms 16 June 1919 (English translation). FO 608/20/13014, NA.

<sup>517</sup> Minute by A.W.A. Leeper 20 June 1919. FO 608/20/13120, NA.

Austria apparently hoped to secure the Allies' support. To this end, Austrian envoy in Paris, Johann Eichhoff asked for the creation of an international commission to be presided by an American, English, French or Italian representative to discuss the Austrian economic situation. Territorial questions like Western Hungary, South Tyrol, and an opportunity for a plebiscite in Boehmerwalden and Znaim for instance were linked to this framework of problems. The Anschluss question was taken up as a social question. If benefits were granted to Austria, the social situation would clear up at once and "the wind would be taken out of the sails of the Pan-Germanists and Social Democrats who are now agitating annexation".<sup>518</sup>

In sum, the Austrian Delegation paid attention to the rights of the nation and state as well as to vulnerable situation in Austria caused by the hard conditions. The objective was to convince the Allies that Austria could not exist under these peace terms. Ruled by radical Social Democrats, Austria succeeded in creating a picture of reliable politics preventing revolution and presenting the German aspect as "harmless" right of self-determination. At the same time the argument managed to relate to Paris the picture of a new state in dire straits. Both reasons – reliability and weakness – were arguments for increasing the state territory.

### 4.3 Re-opening the discussion with the Peace Conference

How did Austria's appeal to its reliability on the one hand and its vulnerability on the other encounter the policy of the Paris Peace Conference? While the policy of the Conference was to punish the state that was guilty of war and had lost it, the goal was also to show support to positive development. A new Austria safe for the international community could therefore also be constructed in the spirit of "forgiveness". In the analysis of the Allies' policy as regards Western Hungary it should be considered what compensation and compromise mean in terms of reaching a solution that was satisfactory from the viewpoint of the general policy.

Apart from providing information to the Conference, the significance of Coolidge Commission and the U.S. delegation at this point was the introduction of the concession idea at the Peace Conference. According the Coolidge's biography (1932) "it was pretty generally admitted in Paris that the first draft was in many ways defective, but as to the extent to which concessions should be made to Austrians the several delegations differed".<sup>519</sup> In June, American representatives in Paris wrote a memorandum which reflected the American framework: a policy emphasising the idea called "safe for democracy"<sup>520</sup>. As the

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<sup>518</sup> American Commission to Negotiate Peace to the Secretary of State. Paris 21 June 1919. ADAUBA/39.

<sup>519</sup> Coolidge 1932, 222.

<sup>520</sup> E.g. Gardner 1984.

memorandum implied, this “security” would be maintained or established by meeting certain conditions for viability in Austria. To quote the American memorandum,

“--- The terms of the Austrian Treaty are more severe in themselves than the Terms of the German Treaty and the backs of the Austrians are much weaker than those of the Germans. -- Austria claims that deprived of access to the sea, natural resources, raw materials, food, and with her finances in a hopelessly bankrupt condition, the country will not be able to live. Without discussing the theoretical justice of these claims it is clear that the intimation in the last paragraph of the Austrian Reply that the peace terms will drive the country into Bolshevism presents a very real and a very serious danger with Vienna at the present time threatened by the Hungarian Bolshevist successes. It seems probable that the present Austrian government will have little interest in trying to maintain its hold over the situation, unless certain necessary and just concessions can be made to Austria---.”<sup>521</sup>

In addition to Bolshevism, an unwanted development would also be the annexation of Austria to Germany which according to the memorandum was in the cards unless the problems were solved. According to the American negotiators, the policy of concessions could prevent the threatening scenarios. Among the possible concessions were, firstly, territorial concessions including the “adoption of a plebiscite in the German districts of West Hungary”. Other concessions concerned the frontier between Austria and Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the rectification of the Treaty of London line in the Tyrol. Second, the economic conditions should be recognized: the memorandum emphasized the functioning economic system in the Danube region, which Austria’s current situation – Austria was “obliged to import large quantities of food and raw materials” – did not represent.<sup>522</sup>

The American estimations were more optimistic than those of the British regarding the border question, and at this point they paid no attention to the potential problems resulting from the change. Headlam-Morley, a member of the British delegation for his part commented in his memorandum dated June 27, 1919, that revising the border between Austria and Hungary would create problems. Thereby it would be difficult to realize the concession. Firstly, he considered the plebiscite a problematic way to decide a territorial question. According to him, the region’s right of self-determination was to be proved in some other way. Secondly, he also considered it certain that Hungary would protest the changing of the border and would appeal to the fact that Hungary had no representatives in Paris to negotiate the issue. He explained that “ When we come to deal with Hungary, the decision “in its present form will no doubt cause difficulty, for it will be represented, not without justice, that the conference has used the accident that Hungary has no official representative

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<sup>521</sup> Memorandum by A.C. Coolidge, Charles Seymour, Ellis Loring Dresel, Allen W. Dulles (undated, ca. 17-20 June 1919). The Austrian Treaty and the first Austrian Counter Reply. ADAUBA/36.

<sup>522</sup> Memorandum by A.C. Coolidge, Charles Seymour, Ellis Loring Dresel, Allen W. Dulles (undated, ca. 17-20 June 1919). The Austrian Treaty and the first Austrian Counter Reply. ADAUBA/36.

here to use the Hungarian territory for satisfying claims of all other states without any consideration as to the ultimate effect on Hungary".<sup>523</sup>

Taking its lead from the concrete examples offered by Martin's memorandum, the Americans saw that the new border represented a practical, economic, safe, and justified border. In addition to his earlier reports, Major Martin stated in his memorandum dated June 20, that the reasons for considering a new boundary between Austria and Hungary were 1) the area was "solidly German (*"Heinzisch"*) except for small sprachinseln of Serb-Croats"; 2) "Its exported food products are necessary for the alimentation of Vienna"; 3) The proposed new boundary was just as good from the point of view of economic and strategic geography as the old frontier. Martin estimated that the border change would not be problematic. He pointed out that the Germans were said "to earnestly desire to join Austria" and Austria was anxious to take them. Furthermore, he argued that "the Magyars would not fight to keep them. No one would be disappointed except the Magyars of the few mixed towns, as Oedenburg (Sopron)". According to Martin, Western Hungary was tied to Austria and the Vienna region in particular due to the Kitchen Garden argument. Additionally, he pointed out that changing the border was strategically important: the old border provided the Hungarians good military opportunities against Austria. Also the fact that no railway or canal would be broken by the new border spoke on behalf on an unproblematic border change. On this ground the American delegates proposed that the commission continue to handle the border question.<sup>524</sup>

The question of Western Hungary as part of Austria's peace terms emerged again on the decision-maker level of the Peace Conference when the Supreme Council decided on June 17, 1919, to deliver Austria's notes to a separate commission for study. (*La Commission de préparer la réponse aux notes autrichiennes sur les clauses territoriales/Commission Instructed to Prepare the Reply to the Austrian notes on the territorial clauses*).<sup>525</sup> The commission turned out to have crucial significance in the decision-making concerning the border because, after its session on July 3-10, 1919, it delivered the Supreme Council a draft of a plan organising the border. The commission further founded a sub-commission on July 5 to look into the border issues of Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. The work of the commission continued on August 12-14, 1919,

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<sup>523</sup> Memoranda by Mr. Headlam-Morley 27 June 1919. Memorandum on possible concessions to Austria. FO 608/20/13812, NA.

<sup>524</sup> A.C. Coolidge, Allen W. Dulles, Charles Seymour to the American Commission to negotiate Peace. Paris 20 June 1919. Enclosure: Memorandum by Major Lawrence Martin to Professor A.C. Coolidge. Paris 19 June 1919. ADAUBA/37.

<sup>525</sup> Its members were Coolidge (USA), Nicolson and Headlam-Morley (Great Britain), and Tardieu (France) presided as president. The tasks of the Italian representatives were divided: Stranieri (borders of Austria and Czechoslovakia), Vannutelli (borders of Austria and Hungary). Kawai and Adatchi represented Japan. Other members included: Leeper, Temperley (Great Britain), Dulles, Woolsey, Martin (USA), Laroche, Le Rond, de Martonne, Aubert (France), Castoldi, Mazzolini, Pergolani (Italy), and Kato from Japan.

after the new peace terms were presented, when it handled Austria's new notes reacting to the peace terms.<sup>526</sup>

The improvisational nature of the Peace Conference – founding and “forgetting” commissions and sub-commissions as the situations required – became obvious on July 1 when the Supreme Council met again to discuss Austria's peace treaty. The founding of the commission and the plans to study Austria's notes seemed to go unheeded. In the meeting of the Supreme Council the French representatives first stated that all the questions concerning Austria except the frontier between Austria and Yugo-Slavia were ready for the peace treaty. The British and the American representatives, however, reminded the group that the frontier between Austria and Hungary had to be considered too.<sup>527</sup>

This time, the idea of a new border was not left without attention. After the meeting the French Foreign Ministry paid attention to American proposals that it was very important to attach the “German districts” of Western Hungary to Austria as well as to react to Béla Kun's policy in Hungary.<sup>528</sup> The question of Western Hungary and Hungarian communism were thereby factors that could have an impact on Austria's development if they were addressed. Balfour also seemed to consider determining the state territory an important part of creating stability. Next day, on July 2, 1919, in the meeting of the Supreme Council Balfour again asked what the situation was concerning the border between Austria and Hungary. He pointed out that the borders of Austria and Hungary had to be defined as soon as possible. Finally the meeting agreed that the commission newly set up to answer the Austrian notes regarding frontiers should endeavour to report on the following day.<sup>529</sup>

The American delegation was aware of the British policy as a member of the British delegation had explained unofficially that the British supported the idea of “the union of West Hungary with Austria”. He had stated that the British delegation would “meet the Austrians along the following lines”: 1) early admittance into the League of Nations, if there was a stable government in Austria 2) granting the Austrian request that an Allied Commission be appointed to consider the economic and financial problems and to recommend such territorial alterations of the treaty as might appear necessary 3) granting certain of the Austrian demands as regards the present frontier between Moravia and lower Austria 4) supporting the union of West Hungary with Austria.<sup>530</sup> The new border between Austria and Hungary was thus a part of British policy towards Austria: it was one of the means by which the British

<sup>526</sup> Formation, Mandat et Travaux du Comité. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

<sup>527</sup> Réunion du Conseil Suprême 1 Juillet 1919. Conférence de la Paix. Recueil des Actes Vol. 11, MAE.

<sup>528</sup> [Memorandum concerning the meeting of the Supreme Council on 1 July 1919] Europe 1918-1940 Hongrie 45 Z 901-1 1919, MAE.

<sup>529</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Wednesday, July 2, 1919, at 3:30. FRUS PPC 1919 VII; ADAUBA/40.

<sup>530</sup> American Commission to Negotiate Peace. Memorandum No 440, Paris 5 July 1919. ADAUBA/42.

were prepared to support Austria in order to achieve their political goals in Central Europe. In this way the policies of the British and the Americans combined at the start of the commission's negotiations.

#### 4.4 "La question qui se présente est assez simple"<sup>531</sup>

In earlier research, references have been made to the commission's (*Commission Instructed to Prepare the Reply to the Austrian notes on the territorial clauses*) decision-making concerning Western Hungary, but analysing the process has mainly remained superficial.<sup>532</sup> The decision concerning the border between Austria and Hungary was nevertheless outlined precisely in this commission. The informants of the commission on whom the decision-making was built were Coolidge's mission and Czechoslovakian leaders Karel Kramář and Edvard Beneš. The Coolidge mission was ready when the commission began to address the question. Coolidge presented his investigations concerning the border between Austria and Hungary in the meeting of July 3, 1919. With the help of the information Coolidge had gathered the argumentation could concentrate on statistical facts that were considered just.

The question concerning the border between Austria and Hungary was a simple one according to Coolidge: Western Hungary should clearly belong to Austria. He presented three grounds for his claim: the structure of the region, i.e. its German population, economy, and military aspects, although " --- *Cette raison, toutefois, est un peu moins importante. Vienne se sent mal protégée contre toute attaque, surtout contre les menaces du péril bolchévique.*" Coolidge's central idea appeared to be that the city of Vienna had to be supported, if the goal was to guarantee Austria's national existence. The connections between Western Hungary and Vienna were thus emphasized.

In addition, Coolidge also argued with history in two respects: by downplaying the meaning of state history and by stressing the history of the nation as grounds for the border. As Coolidge explained, the old border between Austria and Hungary had come into being only through state activities, not as a consequence of natural circumstances. Western Hungary had moved into part of Hungary in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (sic), but it was still important in terms of Vienna's food supply. When history referred to people, the idea of history operated also as a "positive" argument for the border change: the basis was then the traditional connections between Western Hungary's inhabitants and Vienna. In sum, history arising from contacts bridging nations and borders was an argument worthy of support and leaning on history: an unnatural, political-historical border on the contrary was negative and represented

<sup>531</sup> Quotation: Coolidge. Procès-Verbal No 1. Séance du 3 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

<sup>532</sup> For refers to the work of the Commission see for example Macartney 1937 (1968), 53-54 and Ormos 1990, 30-35.

artificial history – a sort of imperial history that paid no heed to nature or nation.

In Coolidge's grounds the concept of nation did not refer only to the statistical German presence in the region, ethnicity, but also to the idea of right of self-determination. In this sense he also referred to the German movement promoting the annexation as the mouthpiece of the nation. As he expressed, in recent years the Austrians had begun to make claims for the region, albeit "rather half-heartedly". According to Coolidge's observations the population in the region was in favour of joining Austria. Therefore he presented the grounds for the border change from the viewpoint of the nation and the interests of democracy, the will of the people to join its own ethnic group. The security of the state was partly linked to this mode of thinking. Similarly to Coolidge's earlier memoranda and Austria's counter-proposal, the central point in the argument was, in addition to the German population, the food supply for Vienna, which was considered a key concern from the point of view of Austria's political future. Coolidge reported that during the war Hungary had made import to Austria more difficult, which had deteriorated Vienna's supply situation in particular.<sup>533</sup>

It is possible to contextualize Coolidge's grounds as democracy policy: the objective was to support Vienna's democratically oriented government and to adhere to the peoples' will. Nation, ethnic group, and democracy walked hand in hand with the concept of self-determination: the logic of the self-determination meant a common ethnic group wanted to determine itself a part of a nation belonging to the same state.

In the opinion of André Tardieu, the chairman of the commission, Coolidge had presented two issues: a question of principle and a question of fixing the border line. In the commission the question proved to be simpler on the level of principle than the level of remedy. The only party to oppose the need to change the border was the Italian delegation. From the perspective of The Italian policy, changing the sovereignty was unfavourable. First, Italy's representative Count Vannutelli Rey argued on "saving Hungary". He declared that the Italian delegation could not take new land areas from Hungary as "tremendous sacrifices had already been caused to Hungary". Therefore the peace treaty was to maintain the 1867 border between Austria and Hungary. According to him the problem of Western Hungary was traffic connections that could be arranged without changing the state border. The connections Vienna, Graz, and Wiener Neustadt needed to Western Hungary could be managed through international traffic arrangements. The Italian delegation did not share the belief that Hungary could threaten Austria militarily with the help of Western Hungary. Furthermore, Vannutelli Rey wanted to discard Coolidge's explanation about the German nature of the area by appealing to the multinationality in the region.<sup>534</sup> Vannutelli Rey's rhetoric thereby emphasized

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<sup>533</sup> Procès-Verbal No 1. Séance du 3 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

<sup>534</sup> Procès-Verbal No 1. Séance du 3 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.



the significance of the international community and treaties in the construction of an international system and hid the power policy motives.

The other delegations were prepared to accept the principle of changing the border. However, they came to no consensus on the detailed determination of the border line or the way to realize the territorial change. The British delegation proposed individual alterations to the border line Coolidge had suggested, desiring two changes: one for the benefit of Austria, another for the benefit of Hungary, and changing borders of the existing comitats slightly. Furthermore, a British representative suggested that Austria be given mandate to occupy the territory immediately in order to "avoid dangerous situations".<sup>535</sup> In Coolidge's opinion it would nevertheless have been better to follow the border of the comitat, because it was easy to determine. Tardieu for his part supported the British proposal, because the border proposed by Coolidge would leave a salient in the border line. Coolidge accepted this.

The commission decided to propose to the Supreme Council to change the border between Austria and Hungary and to make note of the border line change proposed by Great Britain. Additionally Italy's dissenting opinion was recorded in the decision. However, the Italian delegation declared it would accept the new border if the Supreme Council would accept the decision.<sup>536</sup>

In its report the commission justified the new border on the basis of the population, economy, natural conditions, and strategy - leaning quite obviously on information provided by Coolidge's mission. The clear majority of the population was determined to be German. The statistical information set the region's population at 350,000-400,000, out of which 332,000 were German and wanted seriously to join Austria. As the only exception the report mentioned the Hungarian population in the "mixed" Sopron. The ethnicity of the population and its desire to join its "nation-state" was thereby the argument. On economic grounds the report relied on statistics attempting to show that the region's food production was necessary for Vienna. The contacts between Western Hungary and Vienna were expressed through practical examples: the village products were being sold in Viennese markets. Changing the border for the benefit of Austria would actually benefit both parties, the Western Hungarians and the Viennese.

Thirdly, the old border was presented as strategically problematic because it gave Hungarians a chance to engage in military actions against Austria. Describing the situation in the border region served as evidence of the need for change: the vulnerability of Wiener Neustadt and the proximity to Vienna of strategically important areas made an attack against Austria possible unless the border was changed. The specific border line was justified by the fact that it did not sever essential connections but travelled through nature. It did not cut railroads or canals and went on top of forested hills and through the Hansag

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<sup>535</sup> Procès-Verbal No 1. Séance du 3 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

<sup>536</sup> Procès-Verbal No 1. Séance du 3 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

swamp region. In addition the commission suggested that Austria would get the region immediately due to the regions' unstable situation.<sup>537</sup>

Despite Italy's opposition, annexing Western Hungary to Austria now seemed unproblematic. Similarly, the alteration suggestions made in the early stages did not cause significant debate in the commission. British and American interest in the issue and the American "investigative work" the commission used underlay the decision. It can also be argued that Austria's stand, which did not veer far from the American information, was accepted in the commission. In this sense the Austrian politics succeeded in converging the Peace Conference's policy line.

#### **4.5 Czechoslovakia's importance reflects on the question of Western Hungary**

The details of the border line between Austria and Hungary nevertheless became a topic of debate again when the Czechoslovakian leadership announced their own interest in the border.<sup>538</sup> Thereby the debate on Western Hungary did not involve only Austria's and Hungary's state territory but also the system of Central European states in a wider sense. The peace treaties focused not on individual states but on the organization of the entire Central European area, regions of the former monarchy, and this fact affected the handling of the question of Western Hungary.

Simultaneously, new features entered the Peace Conference debate. In addition to the delegations of the United States, Great Britain, and Italy, the delegation of France also began to comment on the form of the border between Austria and Hungary. The question of Western Hungary began to seem like an important piece in the puzzle the purpose of which was to organize the Danube region in a way that agreed with France's own foreign policy. France directed its interest especially towards the determination of Czechoslovakia's state territory. The debate became distinctly power political when the role of Czechoslovakia emerged. The debate and decision-making thereby took on new aspects in the international political framework.

The mutually contradictory views of the major decision-makers at the Peace Conference – France, Great Britain, the United States, and Italy – on constructing Central Europe were more evident in connection to the question of Czechoslovakia than on the level of debate purely on Western Hungary's future. Czechoslovakia's function particularly in France's Central European policy emerged strongly. France's objectives concerning Czechoslovakia's state

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<sup>537</sup> Annexe au Procès-Verbal No 2. Projet de Rapport au Conseil Suprême; Annexe au Projet de Rapport. Description de la frontière entre l'Autriche et la Hongrie. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

<sup>538</sup> Unlike many others, Ormos (1991) and Romsics (2001) have brought up Czechoslovakia's attempt to influence the situation. Ormos 1990, 32-35; Romsics I. 2001, 156-157.

territory and traffic connections – in other words concerning a sort of space safeguarding Czechoslovakia's survival – also influenced the border between Austria and Hungary. France promoted its pro-Czechoslovakian policy with an argument about the viability of the country. Czechoslovakia had to be able to function as a buffer against Germany. This was a question not only of Czechoslovakia's state territory but also freedom of operation in a region that was not under Czechoslovakia's sovereignty. The significance of Czechoslovakia as a strategically important member of the anti-German barrier had strengthened even more with the question of Hungary. A financial agreement which defined the French military aid to Czechoslovakia was signed between France and Czechoslovakia on July 24.<sup>539</sup>

Thus Western Hungary was a part of the Central European jigsaw puzzle where the fitting of the pieces depended on the other pieces. Traffic connections were one key argument. They could be used to influence the viability of states. The system of states did not, however, spell the same things to all parties: while France relied on alliance policy and used the states as barriers against threats, the British and Americans argued more idealistically and emphasized the functionality of the international community. The policy of the Czechoslovakian leadership seemed, however, attractive to both parties.

On July 3, 1919, the Czechoslovakian Minister-President Karel Kramář and Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš addressed the Peace Conference in a note stating they wanted to bring out the Czechs' rights to Western Hungary and the political and economic importance of the region for the country. They justified the Czechs' rights to Western Hungary with the "Slavic nature of the region" and presented Western Hungary as a multi-faceted, multi-ethnic border region inhabited by several nationalities and in which several states had legitimate interests. They stated that "German Austria has no better right than we to this territory from the ethnographic point of view, since this territory is one-third inhabited by Slavs, one-third by Magyars and one-third by Germans". The question of the attribution of "this mixed territory", either to Austria or to Hungary, was "of very great importance to the Czecho-Slovak Republic". This approach challenged the notion that the question involved only Austria and Hungary. As one alternative they suggested the territory might be neutralized or put under the administration of the League of Nations, as several nationalities inhabited the region. This presentation, a variation of the Slavic corridor plan, implied that Czechoslovakia's interests were at the same time compatible to those of the Allies. If the future of Western Hungary was organized according to the interests of Czechoslovakia, it would eliminate the enemies' – obviously, Germany and Bolshevism – monopoly on the region.

The note's practical arguments were Western Hungary's traffic connections to the sea. They could not be controlled only by Austria or Hungary, because Czechoslovakia might wind up being excluded. The Czech leaders also argued that the region's ethnic circumstances in the Western Hungarian region made it part of Czechoslovakia's "sphere of interests".

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<sup>539</sup> Hovi 1975, 202-203.

Thereby ethnicity was used to justify a desire linked to Realpolitik, the functionality and security of a state among its neighbours.<sup>540</sup> Operating with railways and connections should for its part be seen against the background of Realpolitik.

Kramář and Beneš referred to the fact that Western Hungary's belonging to either Austria or Hungary would cause problems for Czechoslovakia – and thereby the system of the new Europe. It was an issue of general interest to Europe. In other words, securing Czechoslovakia's space would simultaneously secure the Allies' operating room in Europe. As regards Hungary, they appealed to the danger caused by Hungarian military actions: "the recent invasion of Slovakia by Magyars". This invasion had showed that Czechoslovakia's connection to its southern ally Yugoslavia and the Adriatic Sea, were important. As regards Austria, the danger was that this connection would drift into the German sphere of influence.<sup>541</sup>

Czechoslovakia's note thereby opened the debate on the border between Austria and Hungary from a new perspective. Particularly the French representatives, André Tardieu and Jules Laroche, expressed sympathy to the Czech leaders' grounds in the commission meeting on July 5, 1919. It could be said that the United States line, approaching the issue through Austria, now encountered France's political vision where Czechoslovakia held the main position.

Laroche expressed the Czechs' view that the decision the commission had made appeared unfavourable for Czechoslovakia's future. However, he formulated France's opinion in a way where the French acknowledged the importance of the border change and did not object to a change made for Austria's benefit. The question about the new border between Austria and Hungary nevertheless had to be linked to the question about the Czechs' traffic connections. According to Laroche, the problem could be solved by changing details of the border line: giving Western Hungary to Austria was not questioned.

France's arguments leaned obviously on balance of power. Laroche explained that Czechoslovakia should be left an option to use the connections between Bohemia and the Adriatic Sea on Austrian and Hungarian territory alike, because if Czechoslovakia drifted into a conflict with one of them, the other would remain. Austria with its German orientation presented a more essential threat against Czechoslovakia's interests than Hungary did. Particularly because of this threat the Czechs had to be left a chance for connection on the Hungarian side of the border.

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<sup>540</sup> Karol Kramar and Edward Benes (sic) to Clemenceau 3 July 1919. Procès-Verbal No 2. Séance du 5 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23; Karel Kramár and Edvard Benesh (sic) to Georges Clemenceau [translation] 3 July 1919. ADAUBA/41.

<sup>541</sup> Karol Kramar and Edward Benes (sic) to Clemenceau 3 July 1919. Procès-Verbal No 2. Séance du 5 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23, NA; Karel Kramár and Edvard Benesh (sic) to Georges Clemenceau [translation] 3 July 1919. ADAUBA/41.

“Nous créons une Autriche et nous faisons tout ce que nous pouvons pour la rendre viable; mais je crois que personne ici, ni personne en Europe, ne peut être assuré que cette Autriche sera réellement viable. Nous ne pouvons pas savoir si un jour elle ne se réunira pas soit à une Allemagne unie, soit à une Allemagne divisée.--- Si vous exposez à l’enclerclement allemand, vous verrez la République Tchéco-Slovaque graviter autour de l’Allemagne au lieu de graviter autour des Alliés et vous aurez ainsi compromis tous les résultats acquis par la paix.”<sup>542</sup>

This thinking was now linked to the border line stretching through Western Hungary and the traffic connections which assured the Czechs freedom of operation in Europe. In this way, the basic pattern of France’s alliance policy emerged within the context of Western Hungary. However, the commission failed to address the ideas presented by Beneš and Kramar about a League of Nations mandate and a neutral zone.<sup>543</sup> Apparently the goal was to deliver a positive reply to Czechoslovakia without upsetting the great plan to organize Central Europe: policy through states, where visions about the international community’s control did not fit.

Although the French relied mainly on power politics and balance policy, they also used ethnic arguments in their reasoning. Referring to ethnicity could strengthen the Realpolitik goal. According to France’s representatives General Le Rond and Jules Laroche, it was possible to change the border to the advantage of Hungary, because there were also non-German elements in the region determined for Austria. Laroche commented that this change was also in accord with the policy of the Peace Conference and followed the ethnic principle. The commission obviously considered it important to find ethnic reasons for the changes, although the dimension of Realpolitik was strongly present. In this sense Realpolitik and ‘nation’ met as the ethnic principle legitimized the decision. As Laroche explained, no ethnic wrong would be done to Austria by making the border follow the railway. The British accepted the proposal of the French. The American delegation did not warm up to the French policy, because the organisation of traffic connections and sovereignty could be separated from each other.<sup>544</sup>

In other words, the Americans favoured building railways to match the prevailing circumstances rather than changing states to match the railways. In his memorandum dated July 6, concerning the Czechoslovakian question and the railway connection between Bratislava and the Adriatic, Major Martin predicted the American delegation would reject the Czech proposal. He argued this in two ways: that the original American plan was grounded on “a real ethnic boundary” and that there would not be problems with existing connections: “the railway junctions are so unimportant for Pressburg-Adriatic trade; the Czechoslovak railway traffic through Austria is so perfectly protected by the treaty.” Should problems arise, Martin suggested the “possibility for

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<sup>542</sup> Procès-Verbal No 2. Séance du 5 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

<sup>544</sup> The delegation was still prepared to return to the border line it had suggested in the first session of the commission. Procès-Verbal No 2. Séance du 5 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

Czechoslovakia and Hungary to build a new railway, if the treaty arrangement permitting the Czechs to run their own trains through Austria does not work well".<sup>545</sup>

The next issue to come up in the problems related to Czechoslovakia and Western Hungary was the Bratislava (Pressburg/Pozsonyi) area, which the commission addressed in the same session on July 5, 1919. The city, a part of the original idea of *Vierburgenland*<sup>546</sup>, had already been determined as part of Czechoslovakia by the Peace Conference. The question was that in addition to the city, Czechoslovakia would also be given the city's suburban area, in other words the harbour area of the Danube. This plan was justified by Danubian water traffic connections and strengthened by references to the area's ethnic nature. Argumentation about the Bratislava area and Danubian waterways can be compared to the railway debate where balance in Central Europe was the main motive. In the commission debate the surroundings of Bratislava were thereby linked to securing Czechoslovakia's position.

Particularly in the opinion of the French delegates, it was the most logical and just decision to give the area to the Czechoslovakia, who had emphasized the paradoxical nature of the planned border. The central argument was that Bratislava's importance lay precisely in the harbour area – the city area in itself did nothing to improve the Czechs' position. According to Tardieu, Czechoslovakia could be secluded from the German area without the Danube harbour: currently the area belonged to Hungary, but in the future – after the border between Austria and Hungary had been changed – it would belong to Austria and therefore fall within the German sphere of influence. Laroche's argument, for its part, aimed at justifying the territorial change on the basis of conference practices: the change was justified because already established borders had been changed afterwards elsewhere.<sup>547</sup>

Czechoslovakia's intervention in the question was linked to France's line, the most strongly opposed by Italy. Italy continued to pursue the former line and opposed concessions to the Slavs and the weakening of Hungary. Vannutelli Rey wanted to separate the question from the changing of state borders. In other words the objective was to limit the growth of the Slavic state territory. The Italian rhetoric thereby continued to refer to internationalism and national self-determination<sup>548</sup>, but the motives emerged from power policy.

The counter-arguments of the French appealed directly to political threats unless concessions were made to Czechoslovakia. The French representatives implied that the danger would not only come from dependence on Germany

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<sup>545</sup> Memorandum by Major Lawrence Martin to Professor A.C. Coolidge. Paris 6 July 1919. ADAUBA/43.

<sup>546</sup> See Odo Rötig's *Vierburgenland* plan, e.g. Macartney 1937 (1968), 41.

<sup>547</sup> Organising the Szeged area was the most central example of this.

<sup>548</sup> As his last point, Vannutelli Rey chose ethnicity and the national right of self-determination: Czechoslovakia could not make an ethnically just claim to Bratislava. According to him ceding an important area to one state against the wishes of the population it would have worked against the peace interests: the people might acquiesce to Czechoslovakia's forced command, but the "tolerance would run out in ten years".

but also dependence on Bolshevism. Finally Tardieu drew attention to the fact that the Allies were currently increasing the state territory of the enemy, Austria. The Czechs had to be supported instead of supporting the enemy and giving it a chance to show its cunning – moral reasons dominated, but psychological reasons played a role too:

*“Les Tchéco-Slovaques disent: la Bohême historique ressuscite et, dans la liquidation générale, qui allez-vous augmenter d’un territoire qu’elle n’a jamais eu? L’Autriche! L’Autriche qui porte la responsabilité initiale de la guerre!”<sup>549</sup>*

Tardieu’s argument leaned on the setting of monarchy and war, on the near past, with which he wanted to strengthen the acceptance of his view. Future potential threats joined reminders from past, the already realized “facts”, to construct an image of the old enemy threatening the future. Czechoslovakia had earned concessions because it had suffered in the past.<sup>550</sup>

Austria had also provided counter-proposals that urged changing the border between Austria and Czechoslovakia on the basis of the area’s German population, the old administrative border, economic factors, and Vienna’s security. The debate about the borders of Austria and Czechoslovakia also involved the question of Western Hungary. Western Hungary should therefore be seen as a part of organizing all of Austria in a manner suited to the Allies’ policy. Austrian claims did not suit France’s Central European policy in particular. In his counter-argument, Tardieu appealed to the Conference’s decision-making process where Czechoslovakia’s borders had already been decided: the state territory could no longer be diminished. Conversely, in Bratislava’s case the French argument had claimed that changes were still possible.

While French politics focused on Czechoslovakia, Coolidge stressed the relevance of Austria’s grounds. To him Austria’s viability was a part of the overall political objective. If the Allies’ goal was an Austria that was viable, “fed herself”, it was necessary to give it the areas that Vienna’s food supply depended on. Annexing the Bohemians could be justified on the same grounds as annexing Western Hungary. The French, however, put the question of Western Hungary in terms of its political importance in a different category than the borders of Czechoslovakia, because it involved the border between two losing parties, not between allies.

Seen from the French perspective, ethnic reasons alone could not determine a border of Realpolitik importance. In the case of Austria and Hungary, two enemy countries of secondary importance, the territory could instead be given to Austria on ethnic grounds. The case of Czechoslovakia was not as straightforward. When the interests of Austria and Czechoslovakia

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<sup>549</sup> Procès-Verbal No 2. Séance du 5 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

<sup>550</sup> In this situation Tardieu proposed the founding of a sub-commission to investigate ethnic, economic, and topographic factors. Members of the sub-commission were A.W. Dulles (USA), Nicolson (Great-Britain), General Le Rond (France), Count Vannutelli Rey (Italy and Kawai (Japan). Procès-Verbal No 2. Séance du 5 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

clashed, it was logical for France to take the Czechs' side. Comments regarding Vienna were according to Laroche valid in principle, but in his view Vienna was a degenerating centre on the basis of which the border need not be changed or the change be justified. Laroche suggested that everything possible be done to ensure Austria's viability, but not at the expense of allies' borders.<sup>551</sup> In this statement the border between Austria and Hungary was thereby "only" an ethnic arrangement whereas the border between Czechoslovakia and Austria had deeper meaning. Motives of Realpolitik were thus more salient than ethnic arrangements from the point of view of French politics.

It can be said, then, that addressing the border between Austria and Hungary in relation to the border of Czechoslovakia two views emerged on the motives of drawing the border line: mainly the American view that Austria was to be kept viable, and the French view that the party loyal to the Allies was to be rewarded and its power as an ally strengthened. The Italian policy veered towards Coolidge's line. It was advantageous for Italy to support Coolidge's stand as it was a lesser evil to cut up Hungary on Austria's behalf than to support the Slavs. The borders were thereby observed from a wide political perspective. The local grounds were "initial arguments" followed by more profound reasons, the power political and balance of power construction.

On changing the border between Austria and Hungary for the benefit of Austria, all others – the Americans, British, French, and Japanese – were unanimously in support of it with the exception of the opposing Italy.<sup>552</sup> The borders related to Czechoslovakia's role involved more problems than the borders related to Hungary while determining the state territory of Austria. Tardieu wanted to emphasize how important it was in his opinion to support an ally, Czechoslovakia, instead of an enemy state. Concessions had to be made to Czechoslovakia in Bratislava as compensation for Western Hungary. Bratislava thereby served as compensation for the fact that Western Hungary did not fall under Czechoslovakian control. As the motive for the Czechoslovakia-centred policy Tardieu stated that Europe's political balance had to be preserved and Czechoslovakia had to be kept separate from the influence of Germany and Russia. The concession was important from the point of view of favourable development.<sup>553</sup>

In sum, from the basis of the commission's work, the decision concerning Western Hungary involved the organization of Central Europe. From the point of view of the Allies, the system of Central European states was of central importance in terms of security. The mission of the state especially for France was to operate as a barrier and a balancing factor; for liberal internationalism its mission was to act as member of the community. What was common, however, was that Central Europe was being constructed primarily on states and

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<sup>551</sup> Procès-Verbal No 2. Séance du 5 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA. Laroche stated that Coolidge's expertise as regards Czechoslovakia was questionable due to Coolidge's Austria perspective.

<sup>552</sup> Procès-Verbal No 4. Séance du 9 Juillet 1919; Annexe au Procès-Verbal No 4. Rapport de la Commission. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

<sup>553</sup> Procès-Verbal No 3. Séance du 8 Juillet 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.



sovereignty, not international joint control, for example. Also, the same arguments – nation, economy, traffic, and strategy – fitted the various parties' body of concepts regardless of the political motives: those who sought security through people and those who executed a policy of barriers and balance of power.

#### **4.6 The Supreme Council and the Central European order: a compromise between the 'nation' ideology and Realpolitik**

The decision alternatives of the commission were next elevated to the handling of the Supreme Council.<sup>554</sup> The commission report stated that the American, British, French, and Japanese delegations were of the opinion that the Western parts of Hungary should be attached to Austria. The decision to change the border was justified with the help of the population (260,000 German inhabitants) and economic factors (40 per cent of Lower Austria's food supply). Furthermore, the new border line was, however, defined in order to leave one of the two railways<sup>555</sup> from Czechoslovakia to the Adriatic on the Hungarian side, "as the other railroad going from Pressburg south through Wiener-Neustadt is already in Austrian territory, and as the Czechoslovakian government requests that its two railroad outlets toward the Adriatic be not in the hands of a single state."

The report showed that the Italian delegation opposed the border changes and defining the border line in accordance to Czechoslovakia's wishes. Italian policy did not allow the Czechs to "dictate" the course of the development in Central Europe. The Italian delegation argued – in terms related to American claims – that ethnic, economic or military grounds did not call for change of sovereignty. The Italians also appealed to the "Hungarian sacrifices" and therefore opposed "every cession of territory from Hungary". The delegation proposed that the problems that were being used to justify the border change could be resolved by obligating Hungary to take care of the region's ethnic rights, military restrictions, and economic connections. Italy again attempted to show that a change of sovereignty was not necessary and proposed –

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<sup>554</sup> The debate shows that the upper level of the Peace Conference, the Supreme Council, and the work of the commissions proceeded at different paces. In addition, the question of the alteration of the border between Austria and Hungary was not part of the draft of the Austrian peace treaty, discussed in the meeting on June 7, 1919, as became apparent when Balfour observed that the old frontier between Austria and Hungary was still maintained in the draft. In the meeting of July 10, the commission report was on the agenda, however. Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Monday, July 7, 1919, at 3:30 p.m. FRUS PPC VII; ADAUBA/44.

<sup>555</sup> The railways from Bratislava to Agram by Szentjános, Csorna, and Nagy-Kanisza.

apparently as the last straw – organizing an international administration in the disputed region.<sup>556</sup>

At the Supreme Council, Western Hungary was thereby no longer drawn into the compromise debate. The level of interest in Western Hungary and in the situation as a problem of rearranging borders diminished or at least lost in importance to Czechoslovakia: the suburbs of Bratislava were no longer compensation to the Czechs for the unrealized Slavic corridor through Western Hungary but compensation for the losses on the border between Austria and Czechoslovakia. Obviously, the border between the losing parties, Austria and Hungary, did not constitute a problem. Instead, making geographically small alterations to the border of Czechoslovakia, a state important in terms of the Allies' policy, manifested more clearly the decision-makers' different views about dividing Central Europe's political space. Determining Czechoslovakia's state territory was thereby more political than the decision concerning Western Hungary. As for the defeated countries, Austria and Hungary, the issue at this point was "minimizing dangers", not joining them into active parts of the Central European system.

The new border between Austria and Hungary proposed by the commission was accepted in the Supreme Council without new speculations. As in the commission, the discussion in the Supreme Council concentrated on the border between Austria and Czechoslovakia, led by the French delegation.<sup>557</sup>

The most central argumentation at the Supreme Council, in addition to the idea of compromise, paid attention to contacts. This suited a policy aiming at a functioning and safe international system and international community of functional states. For example, Balfour argued for the commission's proposal concerning Bratislava by saying that a national, inter-state border could not divide a town in two as that would mean breaking a social and economic community. His justification emphasized local reasons: preserving the city unit and infrastructure – in other words, preserving the local operation space. Lansing's argumentation stressed population, compensation to the nation. Like Balfour, he argued for the functionality of the local community and the city unit. Unlike his British and American colleagues, Tardieu primarily referred to power politics: the potential Czech counter-measure and protest which would make Central Europe's situation more difficult.<sup>558</sup>

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<sup>556</sup> Report of the Commission Instructed to Prepare the Reply to the Austrian Notes on the Territorial Clauses. I Frontiers of Austria with Hungary. Appendix A to H.D. 4. FRUS PPC Vol. VII; ADAUBA/45.

<sup>557</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Thursday, July 10, 1919, at 3:30 p.m. FRUS PPC VII; ADAUBA/45.

<sup>558</sup> Tardieu set as a condition that, if a compromise between Bratislava and the border between Austria and Czechoslovakia did not materialise, the border line of June 2 would be restored. Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Friday, July 11, 1919, at 3:30 p.m. (H.D.5) FRUS PPC VII.

On July 20, 1919, Austria was handed the second draft for the peace treaty. In it, Western Hungary was determined part of Austria in the manner agreed on in the commission.<sup>559</sup> The decision meant different things to different Allied and Associated Powers. For example the U.S. delegation described the decision-making as “hearing out the Austrians”. From this perspective the changing of the border was explained primarily through the people and attention to national authority. The Realpolitik-related motives presented in the commission were left in the background in the Americans’ internal reporting.

“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 Jugo-Slav frontier fourteen miles northeast of Radkersburg..... The above alterations were made subsequent to the receipt and examination of notes from the Austrian delegation on the territorial clauses of the partial treaty handed to them June 2nd. The American delegation warmly supported the inclusion of the Germans of West Hungary in Austria, the French and British delegations concurred and so far as possible objections and reservations were overcome as regards rectification of the frontier between Czecho-Slovakia and Moravia...”<sup>560</sup>

Despite the different points of departure, American goals dovetailed with the goals of the European Allies and Austria. Making Western Hungary a part of Austria thereby suited differing political lines. In addition, the motives for the border changes already presented in earlier research – German population, the Kitchen Garden perspective, strategic reasons – reflected the Peace Conference’s objective to construct an independent Austria into a functional part of Central Europe with the help of Western Hungary. The new border was a part of a secure Europe. In the debate, the Austrian views concerning future Austria met the Peace Conference’s views. The idea of a viable state suited both those who looked primarily in the direction of Realpolitik and those who represented liberal trends.

#### **4.7 Discussing the Austrian proposals on plebiscite, occupation and final border line**

The handling of the border between Austria and Hungary returned to the Peace Conference in August, when Austria delivered her answer to the terms of July 20. Now the topics of the debate concerning Western Hungary were determining the border in detail and the way the region would be ceded: would the territorial addition be legitimized through a plebiscite or would the reaction to Hungary’s domestic situation be occupation of Western Hungary by Austria?

<sup>559</sup> On the draft see Berlin 1977, 77; Gruber 1991, 17; Swanson 2001, 107.

<sup>560</sup> American Commission to Negotiate Peace to the Secretary of State, Paris, July 17, 1919. ADAUBA/47.

Austria's answer to the peace terms on August 6, 1919, emphasized the importance of viability and referred to ethnicity, rights of people and citizens, and Austria's economic and political development. These arguments emerged not only on a general level but also in terms of the question of Western Hungary. Austria proposed in the counter-proposal that the border with Hungary would be changed particularly in the eastern part of the Moson (Wieselburg) comitat. Austria justified the territorial addition in terms of nation and its viability. The division of Moson into two parts was criticized as the comitat was a German whole and important in terms of Vienna's food supply and political stability. The counter-proposal also criticized the fact that the border was determined in accordance with Czechoslovakia's interests and argued that the Czechs' access to the sea via railroad could be arranged in ways other than changing the state border.<sup>561</sup>

Austria also commented on the manner in which the annexation would be realized. The counter-proposal and several other notes<sup>562</sup> also promoted a plebiscite in Western Hungary. Austria wished for an immediate plebiscite under the supervision of the Allies and in a larger area than the terms of July 20 determined for it. Austria appealed to the fact that the vote would realize a policy based on right of self-determination. The purpose of the claim for the plebiscite was quite obviously to represent the democracy prevailing in Austria and the fact that belonging to Austria was based on the will of the people. In this sense the counter-proposal implied that Austria was a new state "formed on the basis of Allied consideration" and leaning on the Allies' notions about nation, state, and European security. It can be interpreted that German Austria legitimized its existence and claims in two ways: through highlighting interlinked national interests and international interests. In the context of national interests the note represented the idea of right of self-determination by referring to the freedom of the nation and the German nation's right to stay together. Apart from justice, the question also involved the fact that the integrity of the German people and state was an economic, political, and social necessity. The Austrian state depended on the treaty of the Allies, and the state territory had to support the viability. The viability of German Austria was a necessity also from the point of view of Central Europe as a whole.<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> Austrian Counter Proposal 6 Aug. 1919. FO 608/22/17442/a, NA. Also see Berlin 1974, 226; Berlin 1977, 78; Karl Renner à Georges Clemenceau, St.Germain-en-Laye, le 6 Août 1919. ADAUBA/51. The Austrian delegation further sent the Conference a special note on August 11, 1919, emphasizing Moson's eastern part's importance to Austria with statistics illustrating food production. The German-Austrian Delegation to the General Secretary of the Peace Conference. St. Germain-en-Laye, August 11, 1919. ADAUBA/54.

<sup>562</sup> For example, Albert Halstead [U.S. High Commissioner in Vienna 1919-1920] to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, Vienna, July 23, 1919. ADAUBA/48; American Mission to Negotiate Peace to the Secretary of State, Paris, July 31, 1919. ADAUBA/49; Dr. Karl Renner to Georges Clemenceau, St.Germain-en-Laye, August 1, 1919, 1919. ADAUBA/50.

<sup>563</sup> Austrian Counter Proposal 6 Aug. 1919. FO 608/22/17442/a, NA; Karl Renner à Georges Clemenceau, St.Germain -en-Laye, le 6 Août 1919. ADAUBA/51.

The Austrian counter-proposals were discussed at the Peace Conference on August 12.-14. The first session of the commission was spent for the most part debating the problem of Moson county.<sup>564</sup> Coolidge noted in the meeting that annexing Western Hungary to Austria was no longer uncertain, because the importance of the region in terms of Vienna's food provisioning was undeniable and the population statistics furthermore proved that the majority of the population was German. The Peace Conference could still discuss the border line, he argued, since the border line presented on July 20 matched neither the hopes of Austria, the recommendations of the Coolidge Commission, nor American wishes. Coolidge's arguments emphasized local examples: Western Hungary's population and the food supply. He continued to observe the state future of the Western Hungarian region from an obviously Austria-centred angle and considered Czechoslovakia's impact on the definition of the border a negative aspect: when the issue of maintaining the Czechs' railway connection to the Adriatic Sea had emerged, the Conference had diminished the territory to be annexed to Austria. The Americans hoped for a re-evaluation of the border line "respecting the Czechs' claim for a railway".

The idea of compromise was brought up again in order to reconcile the differing views of the United States and France in particular. Tardieu suggested a balance between Austria's proposal and the earlier decision favouring Czechoslovakia. In his opinion, Austria could be given "a couple of milking cows and a patch of meadow" without giving her the railway. In this way attention would be paid both to railways and "humanitarian considerations".

*"Nous avons voulu laisser en territoire hongrois la ligne Presbourg-Csorna. Cependant, touché par l'argument du ravitaillement de Vienne, je serais disposé à concilier le point de vue ferroviaire et le point de vue humanitaire. On pourrait attribuer à l'Autriche quelques prairies permettant d'y mettre des vaches laitières."*

When the American delegation rejected the proposal, considering it impossible to change the border without cutting the railway, Tardieu proposed that the matter would be handed over to geographical experts.<sup>565</sup> The decision of the geographic sub-commission was closer to Austria's hopes than the commission's compromise policy, however, and the commission no longer wanted to take its decision into account in its meeting on August 13, 1919. In Tardieu's opinion, the decision of the sub-commission destroyed the arrangement reached in the region. The proposal was eventually vetoed by

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<sup>564</sup> Also see Berlin 1974, 227-228; Berlin 1977, 78.

<sup>565</sup> Procès-Verbal No 6. Séance du 12 Août 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA. The Italian delegation again opposed border changes. The Italian representative, Count Vannutelli Rey, justified his stand through the Peace Conference decision-making process: the border could no more be discussed, because the issue had already been decided. Coolidge defended to Vannutelli Rey the continuing need to address the issue by stating that Austria's reply had to be handled by the commission in any case.

appealing to the Peace Conference's organization and *modus operandi*; the issue had already been decided by the Supreme Council.<sup>566</sup>

The commission thus rejected Austria's counter proposals. The commission's argument combined the national and international interests. The national reasons presented to Austria can be summarized into two main arguments: ethnic people and viability of the nation-state. According to the commission, the border line presented on July 20 already closely represented the ethnographic frontier. The decision leaned on the principle of the nation, and exceptions to this principle were only made "by coercion" – for example in the case of Bratislava it had been necessary to ignore the ethnic principle to some extent. The commission also justified the Peace Conference line through the fact that the decision made in July had also been based on Western Hungarian agricultural products that were important for Vienna and Austria's other population centres.

Not only Austria's and Hungary's rights to the border region but to its importance to Czechoslovakia figured into determining the border line again. The decision strove to show that the border was significant also in the international sense, from the point of view of Central Europe as a whole. Therefore, due to the Czechoslovakian need for a railway it was impossible to give Austria territorial concessions in Moson/Wieselburg. Furthermore, the Czechoslovakia argument evidences the *Realpolitik* dimension of the decision-making motives and security policy. Especially the *Realpolitik*-oriented alliance policy of France included paying attention to Czechoslovakia as part of the Central European stability.<sup>567</sup>

The Peace Conference also rejected Austria's counter-proposals to realising the territorial change with the help of a plebiscite. In a meeting on August 12, 1919, the commission had unanimously opposed a plebiscite in Western Hungary. How did the decision-makers who were themselves operating with the concept of people turn down a plebiscite? There was indeed a call at the Peace Conference to come up with credible arguments that could be used to answer Austria. In Coolidge's opinion the reply to Austria should be that there was no opposition to the plebiscite as such, but the Allies lacked an organization to arrange one. Tardieu for his part explained that the plebiscite proposed by Austria would concern a larger area than the peace treaty terms had specified, and so would not work. In Headlam-Morley's opinion the plebiscite could not be applied in Western Hungary because there had never been one for example in Marburg either – where a plebiscite should in his opinion have been arranged.<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> Procès-Verbal No 7. Séance du 13 Août 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

<sup>567</sup> Procès-Verbal No 8. Séance du 14 Août 1919; Annexe: Observations et contre-propositions autrichiennes des conditions de paix; Annexe II: Extract de la «Réponse des Puissances aux remarques de la délégation Autrichienne sur les conditions de paix. Partie II Frontière de l'Autriche. FO 608/23/20059, NA; also see Berlin 1974, 227-228.

<sup>568</sup> Procès-Verbal No 6. Séance du 12 Août 1919. FO 608/23/20059, NA.

A plebiscite might result in a vote that broke the already accomplished order of state areas. It conformed neither to the practices nor resources of the Peace Conference, and might work against the Conferences' political goals. Ultimately the Conference turned down the plebiscite by arguing for the importance of safeguarding the umbrella ideology relying on the ethnicity and will of the people. The commission explained that the region clearly belonged to Austria in terms of its nature and national sentiment, as it was inhabited by a united German population. Therefore the Allies had no reason to arrange a plebiscite.<sup>569</sup> The statement corresponded to the statement Martin had delivered to Coolidge on August 7, 1919, according to which "the proposal for a plebiscite in all of German West Hungary should be denied, I believe, as it is certain to result in exactly the same transfer we propose by fiat, and will do it and restore peaceable conditions with less friction and delay."<sup>570</sup> In the meeting of the Heads of the Delegations on August 18, the plebiscite came under suspicion because Austria was thought to want to use it to extend its territorial claims beyond the annexation suggested in the peace treaty draft as well as to hope for a plebiscite, for example, in Styria.<sup>571</sup>

While realizing the territorial change without a plebiscite was the safest alternative for the Allies, the plebiscite had originally meant for Austria an ideologically suitable way to constitute a new state. The idea of listening to the people was also connected to more general debate on security. Justifying the border change by the will of the people came up in Austria's notes, which appealed to the instability of Western Hungary's situation and the need for the Allies' support. The notes could be interpreted as Austria's representation of leaning on the Allies in terms of policy and needing the support of the Great Powers against the unrest in Hungary.<sup>572</sup> New elements emerged in the Hungarian situation in August, 1919. The Hungarian communist government resigned on August 1, and the next day the government of Gyula Pedl and moderate Social Democratic politicians took office until a group of "counter-revolutionaries" demanded its resignation. On August 6, 1919, the new government, headed by István Friedrich, took power without international recognition. The internal conditions were unstable too, as there were three centres of power acting in Hungary. First, the Friedrich government not only opposed the communist regime but the democrats too. The revolutionary tribunals were replaced by counter-revolutionary ones. In addition to "white

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<sup>569</sup> Procès-Verbal No 8. Séance du 14 Août 1919; Annexe: Observations et contre-propositions autrichiennes des cobnditions de paix; Annexe II: Extract de la «Réponse des Puissances aux remarques de la délégation Autrichienne sur les conditions de paix. Partie II Frontière de l'Autriche. FO 608/23/20059, NA; also see Berlin 1974, 227-228.

<sup>570</sup> Major Lawrence Martin to Professor A.C. Coolidge, Paris, August 7, 1919. ADAUBA/52.

<sup>571</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Monday, August 18, 1919, at 3:30 p.m. ADAUBA/58.

<sup>572</sup> Renner (Austrian Delegation) Clemenceau (Peace Conference) 1 Aug. 1919; 14 Aug. 1919. FO 608/25/17835, NA.

terror” and government retaliation, the Romanian army, which had occupied Budapest and the north of Transdanubia and the National Army of admiral Miklos Horthy caused further unrest.<sup>573</sup>

Hungary’s political situation thereby continued to give Austria a reason to appeal to the Allies. The Austrian arguments concerning Western Hungary were contextualized by Hungary’s disorder: the constant turmoil in the border region threatened Austria and the region’s German population. Both Bolshevism and white Hungary could shake Austria’s stability and thereby the entire Central European peace system. The people’s safety was at stake. Austria had already complained about attacks on Western Hungarian Germans during the communist regime. Renner blamed Communists for harassing the population and emphasized the importance of the Allies’ control and intervention. In this way the Allies would get the sympathies of the Germans.<sup>574</sup> In a note dated August 14, Austria announced that Communists and anti-Communists, counter-revolutionaries, alike terrorized the Western Hungarian population. Austria complained for example about the actions of Hungary’s chauvinistic troops in Wieselburg, Ödenburg, and Eisenburg, areas in turmoil in the wake of communism.<sup>575</sup>

A plebiscite was not the only measure Austria proposed for the realization of the cession of territory. The Austrian National Assembly responded to the situation of occupied Hungary with an idea about giving the supervision in Western Hungary to Austrian police forces. The justification was Hungary’s restless situation: an Austrian system of protective police would supervise the region until a plebiscite would be arranged under neutral supervision.<sup>576</sup> Safeguarding the rights of the German population against “brutal Hungarians” was presented as the motive for the occupation. Austria again appealed to the Peace Conference by referring to the need to stabilize Central Europe: Renner promised in his note that under Austrian control the region would be pacified, the communist elements would be removed, and the economic and social development in Central Europe would stabilize.<sup>577</sup>

Henri Allizé, French representative in Vienna also considered Austria and Czechoslovakia better options than Romania as occupiers of the region.<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> Romsics I.1999, 108-110; Kontler 2002, 338-339.

<sup>574</sup> Renner (Austrian Delegation) Clemenceau (Peace Conference) 1 Aug. 1919. FO 608/25, NA.

<sup>575</sup> Renner (Austrian Delegation) Clemenceau (Peace Conference) 14 Aug. 1919. FO 608/25/17835, NA.

<sup>576</sup> Konstituierende Nationalversammlung für Deutschösterreich. Protokoll zur 24. Sitzung des Hauptausschusses. Wien, 8. August 1919. ADÖ/2/333; Baron Johann-Andreas Eichhoff to Georges Clemenceau. St.Germain-en-Laye 9 Aug. 1919. ADAUBA/53.

<sup>577</sup> Renner to Peace Conference 14 Aug. 1919 (No 73), 15 Aug. 1919 (No 74), 30 Aug. 1919 (No 78). FO 374/13, NA; ADAUBA/56, 57 and 61; Staatskanzler Renner an Präsident der Friedenskonferenz Clemenceau (Paris). Saint-Germain, 15. August 1919. ADÖ/2/336.

<sup>578</sup> French Representative [Henry Allizé] (Vienna) 12 Aug. 1919 to Quai d’Orsay (Transmitted to the FO). FO 608/11/17898, NA; Telegram from the French representative at Vienna 12 Aug. 1919. ADAUBA/55.



However, Austria's proposal about its occupation of the region and Hungary's and Romania's withdrawal did not receive sympathy from the Peace Conference. On August 18 the Supreme Council decided to ignore the Austrian proposals.<sup>579</sup> Giving Austria a mandate would have meant for the Allies a similar security risk as the plebiscite and make the situation even more complicated. Sticking to the practices determined on July 20 thereby seemed the safest choice from the perspective of the Peace Conference.

#### **4.8 Creating the basis - Saint-Germain and the existence of the Austrian state**

The new border between Austria and Hungary in its shape of July 20, 1919 and its realization without a plebiscite was accepted at the Peace Conference on August 25, 1919, when the Supreme Council addressed Austria's peace treaty. The Allies came to unanimous agreement about the border between Austria and Hungary.<sup>580</sup>

In general, the case of Western Hungary was a part of extensive grounds to be given to Austria. The central rhetorical argument and basic idea of the reply to Austria's counter-proposal was justice. The decision on the Austrian borders was justified by the will of the nation. According to the reply, the Allies respected the local rights. The breaking of Central Europe's old order had been "spontaneous" and local, rising from the region itself: it fell to the Allies to reorganize the new situation and prevent chaos in a just manner. In other words the Allies declared they were reconstructing circumstances that were the result of local politics. Justice prevailed because the decisions were based on ethnic and historical people and nation and "respect of centuries-old bonds". The Peace Conference was righting old wrongs. The deviations were only means to support the justified organization of the region, like in the case of the Czechoslovakian railway and Bratislava. According to the Allies, "the alteration concerning Bratislava was expressed to be a guarantee for Czechoslovakia to have an access to the sea. Accordingly, it was expressed to be a necessity to guarantee a railway both in Hungary and in Austria".

The image of justice was being created by stating that the Austrian borders were results of careful and just investigations where attention had been paid to historic, geographic, ethnic, economic, and political aspects. In terms of Western Hungary the Allies noted that the decision was justified because the people and the economy legitimized it. It was, according to the reply, "just to attach to Austria the districts of Western Hungary which are inhabited by a German

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<sup>579</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Monday, August 18, 1919, at 3:30 p.m. ADAUBA/58.

<sup>580</sup> Réunion des Chefs de Délégation des Cinq Grandes Puissances (HD 38) 25 Aug. 1919. Recueil... Vol. 16, MAE.

mass and the agricultural products of which form an important element in supplying Vienna and other centres." Economy was portrayed as a practical ground serving the people: as vegetable trade in the markets and as railway connections.

The concept of nation had different meanings depending on the area in question. In the case of Western Hungary the Peace Conference justified border decision on the basis of an ethnic nation, but used the concept of a historic nation to justify the Czechoslovakian border. In both cases, deviations from these principles were explained through economy, i.e. traffic connections.<sup>581</sup> The covering letter of the peace treaty presented further variations: in the case of Yugoslavia attention had been paid to the linguistic boundary. In Tyrol the ground for the border was "decades-long suffering of the people". Although every portion of the border was seemingly justified in a different way, the common link can be said to have been the idea of a state and its borders legitimized through nation. In the case of Tyrol the old idea of a natural frontier was also expressed directly as the border was justified by natural Alpine boundaries.<sup>582</sup>

This discourse did not involve Great Power policy. Instead, the peoples' practical interests and functionality of the economy on the micro level were emphasized. The arguments did not include preventing Bolshevism or the Anschluss. Turning down a plebiscite in Western Hungary was explained by the fact that the will of the people had already been taken into account when the Peace Conference decided on the borders, so a plebiscite was unnecessary. The Allies would not assume the responsibility of arranging it.<sup>583</sup>

«Les Puissances alliées et associées ont estimé qu'il était juste de rattacher à l'Autriche les districts de la Hongrie occidentale qui sont habités par une masse allemande et dont les produits agricoles forment un élément important du ravitaillement de Vienne et d'autres centres. Le tracé qu'elles ont établi et communiqué à la Délégation autrichienne le 20 juillet, suit de très près la limite ethnographique, notamment dans la région de Saint-Gothard. Toutefois, il reste en arrière de cette limite aux environs de Presbourg. Dans ce cas, les Puissances ont été préoccupées de garantir les accès de l'État Tchécoslovaque à la mer. Elles ont voulu, en conséquence que le grand marché de la Moravie, Presbourg, eût ses communications avec l'Adriatique assurées par territoire hongrois aussi bien que par territoire autrichien. Elles ont donc laissé en territoire hongrois la voie ferrée Cserna-

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<sup>581</sup> Reply of the Allied and Associated Powers to the Remarks of the Austrian Delegation of the Conditions of Peace. Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Monday, August 25, 1919, at 3:30 p.m. ADAUBA/59; Réunion des Chefs de Délégation des Cinq Grandes Puissances (HD 38) 25 Aug. 1919. Recueil... Vol. 16, MAE.

<sup>582</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Saturday, August 30, 1919, at 11 a.m. Appendix A: Draft Covering Letter. ADAUBA/60.

<sup>583</sup> Reply of the Allied and Associated Powers to the Remarks of the Austrian Delegation of the Conditions of Peace. Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Monday, August 25, 1919, at 3:30 p.m. ADAUBA/59; Réunion des Chefs de Délégation des Cinq Grandes Puissances (HD 38) 25 Aug. 1919. Recueil... Vol. 16, MAE.

Szentjanos-Hegyeshalem (sic) et jugé impossible de la couper pour faire droit à la revendication autrichienne sur le district de Wieselburg. A l'intérieur de la frontière ainsi fixée, la caractère ethnique et le sentiment national des populations recommandent trop nettement leur rattachement à l'Autriche pour que les Puissances alliées et associées croient nécessaire de recourir à un plébiscite ou, en tout cas, de participer à l'organisation et à la surveillance de cette consultation, si l'Autriche devait y procéder.»<sup>584</sup>

While preparing the covering letter for Austria's peace treaty this line became more precise, but the argumentation also included an aspect of power politics. The realist viewpoints manifested themselves in the "lasting peace of Central Europe" arguments. New borders guaranteed existence to the nation, and in this way anarchy or disputes of the population could be averted. According to the covering letter the new frontiers were "those which will best guarantee the existence of all the peoples concerned, included the Austrian, without exposing them to anarchy or internecine competition". In other words, states defined in this manner would guarantee the international-political order. The nation was thereby an essential part of the argumentation even when references were made to Realpolitik.

The idea of a nation state was central to these arguments. Gullberg has noted that this era was a turning point in that the nation emerged as the tool for state legitimation.<sup>585</sup> The Peace Conference's umbrella ideology was clearly discernible in this type of articulation. States were constructed in the treaty texts around the idea of nation and viability. General political motives were not expressed directly, but on the basis of the Conference's and victors' discussion it can be deduced that Western Hungary was considered a guarantee for Austria's non-revolutionary independence and democracy. The capital Vienna was taken further from revolution and strengthened in terms of economy. Realpolitik, alliance policy, and the ideas of liberal internationalism and right of self-determination could be combined in the discussion concerning Western Hungary.

The new Austrian state was thereby being constructed by annexing Western Hungarian districts to Austria. It was an issue of constructing Austria primarily independent of Germany and without revolution. On the other hand the idea about the problems involved with "supporting an enemy" and the need to support allies like Czechoslovakia had already emerged in the handling of the border between Austria and Hungary. In the covering letter of the peace treaty the objective was indeed to stress that the new Austrian republic could not withdraw from war guilt, because the responsibility for the war did not belong only to the government of the Dual Monarchy but also to the nation, German people, that the new Austria leaned on. The idea of nation thereby emerged also in the context of war. However, the Allies stated that they had no desire to make Austria's position more difficult, but instead to assist "its [Austria's] people to accommodate themselves to their new position and to

<sup>584</sup> Réunion des Chefs de Délégation des Cinq Grandes Puissances (HD 38) 25 Aug. 1919. Recueil... Vol. 16, MAE.

<sup>585</sup> Gullberg 2000, 23.

recover their prosperity, provided always it is not at the expense of the new States formed out of the late Empire." The treaty was presented as evidence of the Allies' "charity to feed Austria".<sup>586</sup> In Austria, the Treaty of Saint-Germain was, later during the question of Western Hungary, interpreted as a state treaty that had to be honoured as the foundation of the Austrian state. Austria wanted to interpret it as the Allies' guarantee to her.

The Treaty of Saint-Germain, the third draft of the peace treaty on June 2, and the terms declared on July 20, were given to the Austrian delegation on September 2, 1919, and signed on September 10, 1919. The Austrian National Assembly ratified the treaty on October 17, 1919, and it came into force on July 16, 1920.<sup>587</sup> The attitude of the Austrian political leadership on the peace treaty contained two elements: there was dissatisfaction, but at the same time the peace treaty could be appealed to in order to gain benefits. Adherence to the treaty became the foreign political guideline, not protests against it. The Austrian Foreign Ministry commented in its instructions to Eichhoff in Paris that the peace treaty did not fulfil the basic line of Austrian foreign policy, "the claim for justice", as it denied Germans' uniting, i.e. the Anschluss, and destroyed the traffic system between neighbouring countries. In spite of this, Austria chose to adhere to the treaty loyally.<sup>588</sup>

The policy of loyalty was thereby chosen as the foreign policy – in the case of Western Hungary Saint-Germain even became a tool for defence. Although the treaty was declared "negative" in the domestic political discussion, the foreign political line was to show acceptance to the new situation. Renner was most obviously forced to balance between domestic criticism and the Allies. In a parliamentary debate on November 21, 1919, the key criticism targeted Austria's economic weakness which was considered to result from the restrictions in the Treaty of Saint-Germain and from the fact that the idea of self-determination had been ignored in the case of Austria. The two were also interlinked when the Peace Conference was criticized for the mistakes that had taken place in Austria's reorganization. In the opinion of the proponents of the Anschluss the peace treaty prevented Austria from making an economically favourable and just solution. The Austria defined by the peace treaty represented for the Austrians themselves another, foreign Austria, as it had been created from the outside in Saint-Germain: it was an Austria of the Allies, one that did not fulfil the Austrians' hopes, as representative Gürtler stated in a Parliament session on November 21, 1919. Having created such an Austria, the

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<sup>586</sup> The Draft Covering Letter. H.D. 43 30 Aug. 1919. FO 374/28, NA; Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Saturday, August 30, 1919, at 11 a.m. Appendix A: Draft Covering Letter. ADAUBA/60.

<sup>587</sup> Swanson 2001, 107; Jelavich 1993, 155-156.

<sup>588</sup> Staatsamt für Äusseres an Bevollmächtigten Eichhoff (Paris). Instruktion. Wien, September 1919. ADÖ/3/363; also see Haas 1989, 11.

Allies were therefore obliged to promote Austria's viability through economic support.<sup>589</sup>

The peace treaty could also be presented positively, as Renner introduced it to the Parliament as a treaty providing benefits for Austria. His interpretation of Austrian foreign policy was that Saint-Germain as a state treaty formed a foreign political foundation. The objective of Renner's policy was to create international relations with the neighbouring countries, the Allies and the League of Nations and to make use of those relations.<sup>590</sup> According to him, ratifying the peace treaty launched a new phase in the Austrian foreign relations. His policy emphasized the fact that it had positive economic consequences: through good foreign relations it was possible to guarantee Austria's viability and to "alleviate the distress of the people". With good relations between states emerging from loyalty to the international treaty there would be economic concessions. The peace treaty was thereby presented as a treaty that stemmed from the needs of the nation and was therefore acceptable. The treaty's disappointing elements were additionally compensated for by territorial gains in Carinthia and Western Hungary: those areas had been given permission to join Austria.<sup>591</sup>

Underlining the Austrian peace treaty and the insecurity of Hungary's situation created a contradictory situation that made it possible to continue speculating on the question of Western Hungary. The Hungarian policy was considered threatening in a situation where the country was not a party in Saint-Germain and where it had not fulfilled its obligation to cede the region but pursued instead a policy which was seen to threaten Austria's right.<sup>592</sup> In Renner's opinion Hungary had to be shown that the Western Hungary border question had been decided by the Allies, not by Austrian expansion politics. The basis for the relations between the countries was the Treaty of Saint-Germain. As long as Hungary would refuse to recognize the Austrian borders as determined in the treaty – the future of Western Hungary as part of Austria – it would be difficult to create friendly relations between the countries. To quote Renner,

"Es muß durch den Gesandten immer und immer wieder wiederholt werden, daß der Weg nach Wien über St.Germain führt, daß Deutschösterreich so lange in wirklich freundschaftliche Beziehungen zu Ungarn nicht kommen kann, solange die ungarische Regierung sich nicht auf den Boden der in St.Germain gezogenen Grenzen stellt."<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> Konstituierende Nationalversammlung der Republik Österreich. Stenographisches Protokoll zur 40. Sitzung (Regierungserklärung und Debatte). Wien, 21. November 1919. ADÖ/3/385.

<sup>590</sup> Swanson 2001, 119-120.

<sup>591</sup> Konstituierende Nationalversammlung der Republik Österreich Protokoll zur 2. Sitzung des Ausschusses für Äusseres. Wien, 22. November 1919. ADÖ/3/387.

<sup>592</sup> Memorandum. Generalkonsul Rappaport. Wien, 22. Dezember 1919. ADÖ/3/402.

<sup>593</sup> Staatskanzler Renner am Gesandten Cnobloch (Budapest). Instruktion. Wien, 5 Oktober 1919. ADÖ/3/371.

## 5 MAINTAINING AUSTRIA, CONTROLLING HUNGARY (autumn 1919)

### 5.1 The interests of Austria and Hungary on a collision course

After the signing of the Treaty of Saint-Germain Austria's territoriality had been determined and the existence of the state was made more secure in the eyes of the Allies. The perspective of the Peace Conference in the question of Western Hungary turned towards Hungary when the preparations for Hungary's peace treaty became topical. At this point Hungary's role as a challenger of the new border emerged visibly, but at the same time Austria and its maintenance remained part of the Allies' policy. Both countries were thereby included on the Peace Conference agenda when the Allies were simultaneously preparing for the technical execution of Austria's peace treaty – the organization of the new border's delimitation and cession – and Hungary's still open peace treaty.

The realization of the new border was considered soon after the Treaty of Saint-Germain when the Supreme Council discussed the delimiting of the new frontier between Austria and Hungary on September 29, 1919. In the meeting, attention was paid to the fact that an independent commission should be set up for the delimitation. It was also noted that the border should be fixed upon the spot.<sup>594</sup> The specific delimitation process and marking the border can be seen as the first novelty after the First World War.<sup>595</sup>

Changing the border manifested itself also in a more political light than mere technical details. Austria underscored the border's security political importance in its notes, trying to show the Allies that Hungary was causing

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<sup>594</sup> "A Commission of five (or seven) persons, three (or five) of whom will be appointed by the principal Allied and Associated Powers, one by Hungary and one by Austria, will be set up fifteen days after the coming into force of the present Treaty, to settle on the spot the new frontier line---." Notes of a meeting of The Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Monday, September 29, 1919, at 10:30 a.m. FRUS PPC VIII; also see HD 63 Recueil... Vol. 18, MAE.

<sup>595</sup> Gullberg 2000, 2.

unrest in the border region. The background of the unrest lay in the change of rule after Béla Kun and the strengthening of new right-wing political powers.<sup>596</sup> In the autumn of 1919, Austria's state leadership complained to the Peace Conference, the Allies and the representatives of Romania about Hungary's military operations in Western Hungary. Western Hungary under Hungary's rule was portrayed as a danger zone – a potential space for monarchist agitation. Austria explained that such a situation was in contradiction to the fact that Western Hungary had been given to Austria for protection.<sup>597</sup> Rhetorically, the threatening image of communism gave way to the danger of white Hungary.

The Allies also urged that Hungary should pay attention to maintaining the stability of the border region in the middle of political turmoil. For example, The Interallied Military Mission in Budapest received a report from Austrian representative Baron Hans Cnobloch “to the effect that Hungarian officials are encroaching upon the territory assigned to German-Austria by the Peace Conference”. From the perspective of the Allies this was an issue of adherence to the peace treaty. Austria's complaints were responded to in this spirit. The Interallied Military Mission noted to Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count József Somssich on September 16, that the territory had been assigned to Austria and therefore, the Hungarian officials were not allowed to act within the territory “although it [Western Hungary] may have formerly been Hungarian, has now been definitely assigned to the German-Austrian Republic with whom a Treaty of Peace has been concluded by the Allied and Associated Powers”.<sup>598</sup>

Still, Austria kept delivering new complaints about Hungarian attacks and terrorism to the Allies.<sup>599</sup> Austria's complaints expressed a wish for a military Allied intervention in Western Hungary. An idea emerged about sending an Allied military commission to Sopron/Ödenburg. The plan was justified by the fact that Hungary had breached the spirit of the peace treaty and the rights of the German people. The Austrian government asked in several notes that Allied Officers be sent to Western Hungary to protect the population from the disturbances by Hungarian troops and “to supervise the conduct of the Hungarian troops at the time of the evacuation of the territory in question”. The inhabitants now wished to join their own state, i.e. Austria. Austria invoked the spirit of the peace treaty, commenting that the unrest could lead not only to renewed violence, but also to difficulties in the cession process, thereby creating

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<sup>596</sup> Ormos 1990, 38-39.

<sup>597</sup> Staatskanzler Renner an rumänischen Gesandten Diamandi. Memorandum. Wien, 23. November 1919. ADÖ/3/388B.

<sup>598</sup> The President of the Day of the Interallied Military Mission in Budapest, General Bandholtz, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich. Budapest, September 16, 1919. (3057/pol.) PDRDRH/I/17.

<sup>599</sup> For example on September 19, the Austrian delegation delivered to the Peace Conference a note complaining that a Hungarian detachment had, on September 6 attacked the village of Gols in the comitat of Wieselburg (Moson) in the region to be ceded. They also reported terrorism in Sopron. Austrian Delegation 17 Sept. 1919. FO 374/15/4, NA.

problems in terms of the peace treaty. Austria needed the Allies' protection to safeguard the treaty.<sup>600</sup>

Renner's intention was to associate Austria's interests with the Allies' interests and to remind the Allies that concentrating Hungarian troops on the frontier could endanger the order the Allies had created in Central Europe. He made an appeal for the Allies to execute the border decisions of Saint-Germain. The note explained that the troops harassing the population in Western Hungary consisted of an army of Hungarians, Austrians and Croat officers. The troops had been formed partly because the officers had lost their livelihood with the "collapse of militarism" of the Dual Monarchy. Renner warned that such a group could grow in a moment and constitute a threat to peace. Hungary's reactionary policy now presented a threat - while previously the political threat had come from Bolshevism. Renner implied that Hungary's domestic situation could potentially affect Austria's domestic order as well. The military situation in Western Hungary was intentionally presented as threatening precisely against this backdrop.

Renner hoped these arguments would prompt the Allies to respond to the events in Western Hungary:

*"Il ne rentre pas dans les attributions du Gouvernement autrichien de discuter l'influence que cette armée devra exercer sur la consolidation interne de la Hongrie. Mais le Gouvernement de la République d'Autriche pourra bien se faire l'interprète de son besoin urgent et de son vif intérêt à voir enfin surgir en Hongrie un régime légal et pacifique, s'éloignant tout autant du radicalisme social (bolchévisme) que d'une réaction monarchiste, militaire et antisémite."*<sup>601</sup>

As a reaction to the Austrian claims the British Foreign Office commented that Hungary's peace treaty was the key to solve the situation. As Adam noted in the FO, "an early peace with Hungary is a vital necessity".<sup>602</sup>

Hungary responded by emphasizing to the Allies the legitimacy and justification of its actions: in its opinion, it had full powers in the region. Somssich can be interpreted to have presented Hungary's rights with state sovereignty. According to him the territory still belonged to Hungary, whereby it continued to be under the control of Hungarian administration and state. He claimed that the actions of Hungarian officials were therefore justified and legal, although the region was controversial. Somssich referred to the armistice of Belgrade (November 13, 1918) and the fact that Saint-Germain did not bind Hungary. Only Hungary's peace treaty would determine Hungary's borders. He referred to Austria's peace treaty as if it had been only a proposal

<sup>600</sup> The note stated that the population of the region, which by the Treaty of Saint-Germain was attributed to Austria, had appealed through several deputations to the Government of the Austrian Republic. Mayrhauser (Chargé d'affaires of the Austrian Republic) to Clemenceau. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, September 17, 1919. Appendix G to HD 65. FRUS PPC VIII.

<sup>601</sup> Renner to Clemenceau (the President of the Peace Conference) 27 Sept. 1919. FO 374/15/16, NA; Renner (Austrian Peace Delegation) to Clemenceau 27 Sept. 1919. FO 371/3516/1193/138896, NA.

<sup>602</sup> Minute by Adam 11 Oct. 1919. FO 371/3516/1193/138896, NA.



concerning the future of the border: he described it a treaty that had not been ratified and that had been made without consulting Hungary.

In addition to legitimacy, Somssich justified the appropriateness of Hungary's actions through the will of the population. Honouring that will guaranteed a lasting peace. The peace would be shaken if the Hungarian administration withdrew from the region, abandoning the increasingly restless population that, due to economic and practical reasons, did not want to join Austria. Hungary announced its plan to act only in accordance with the peace interests and to be prepared to discuss the future of the region within their framework. In this situation it was preferable to arrange a plebiscite: the people itself could decide about its future under Allied supervision.<sup>603</sup> Furthermore, Hungary's way of influencing the Allies' image of Austria was to blame Austria for being responsible for the war.<sup>604</sup>

Hungary's interpretation that the border change decision did not touch Hungary failed to suit the Allies' policy, however. The Interallied Military Mission in Budapest commented that the new border should have already been taken into account. Hungarian troops were not to operate in the region designated to Austria. The Hungarian government was asked to immediately take the necessary measures to free the region from military formations, army depots or army establishments or recruiting. The Interallied Military Mission expressed a two-fold message: due to the condition of peace, military activities had to be stopped in a region ceded to Austria; secondly, that Saint-Germain's decision was already in effect and Hungary was to act accordingly.<sup>605</sup>

For the Allies a line conforming to the Saint-Germain decision was part of securing the peace system. Thereby they wanted to strengthen the execution of Austria's peace treaty and accepted Austria's appeal and decided to send military representatives to the disturbed region.<sup>606</sup>

## 5.2 Focusing on Austria or Hungary? Speculations about Austria's and Hungary's role in the peace system

It was characteristic to Austria's and Hungary's Western Hungary policy that both tried to appeal to the Allies by presenting themselves as loyal and the other party as "foreign" and "Other" and outright hostile towards the

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<sup>603</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich, to the Interallied Military Mission in Budapest. Budapest, le 1er octobre 1919. PDRFRH/I/21.

<sup>604</sup> For example, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich, to the Interallied Military Mission in Budapest. Budapest, le 30 septembre 1919. PDRFRH/I/20.

<sup>605</sup> The President of the Day of the Interallied Military Mission in Budapest, General Mombelli, to the Prime Minister, Mr. Huszár. Budapest, le 1er octobre 1919. PDRDRH/I/24.

<sup>606</sup> Notes of a meeting of The Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Thursday, October 2, 1919, at 10:30 a.m. FRUS PPC VIII.

international community. In order to define itself the national policy needed arguments about the enemy. While Austria had had the opportunity to justify the border change to the Allies during the peace negotiations in 1919, Hungary was offered the chance to politicize it after August 1919. In the situation where the question of Western Hungary was contemplated not only from the perspective of adhering to the Austrian treaty but also from the perspective of Hungary's unresolved peace treaty, Hungary was able to present its views about justified Hungarian state territory in the international community.

In Hungary's argumentation to the Allies, the justification for the old borders emerged on the one hand from the prevailing political situation and on the other from the historic background that could be legitimized through an interpretation of a Hungarian state-nation. First, Hungary defined itself as a peaceful element in Central Europe, operating outside revolutionary systems while its neighbours were in a state of disorder. Foreign Minister Somssich's note to the Interallied Military Mission in Budapest on October 14, 1919, complained about unrest in Serbia, Romania, and Austria. In these unstable states, into which a decision had been made to annex areas from Hungary, revolutionary activity was common place. Somssich argued that communism was taking hold in Austria and offered as proof the fact that Hungarian Communists had headed to Austria after Kun's system had crumbled. Second, according to Somssich the will of the nation spoke for Hungary's right to its historic state territory. In Somssich's view people with a friendly attitude towards Hungary - Slovaks, for example - suffered from their position outside Hungary. The people was thereby "state-loyal" to Hungary, regardless of ethnicity.<sup>607</sup>

Hungary also asked for benefits for its army on the grounds that what was good for Hungary was good for Europe. Hungary represented itself within the context of freedom and order. The rhetorical strategy consisted of linking the interests of the Peace Conference with those of Hungary by referring to the concepts of order and freedom and by summoning up politically threatening images like Bolshevism and Germany.<sup>608</sup>

Hungary's appeal received no sympathy from the French legation in Vienna—the delegation there had stayed loyal to the Vienna perspective and held discussions with Chancellor Renner. Allizé's report dated October 6, 1919, and also delivered to the Peace Conference, considered Austria a reliable element in Central Europe. The policy of Austria's state leadership worked for its part to verify this image. Chancellor Renner had told French Minister Allizé about his discussion with the Hungarian Foreign Minister Somssich. In Vienna, Somssich had sounded out opportunities to get support from Austria in the event the Hungarian government rejected the Allies' peace terms. He had announced in public that he would not accept a treaty breaching Hungary's

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<sup>607</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich, to the Interallied Military Mission in Budapest. Budapest, le 14 octobre 1919. PDRFRH/I/26.

<sup>608</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich, to the Interallied Military Mission in Budapest. Budapest, le 14 octobre 1919. PDRFRH/I/26.

integrity. In Renner's rhetoric, however, Austria was portrayed as being loyal to the peace treaty, in other words, to the system erected by the Allies. Renner thought that Hungary had to make a treaty with the Allies and prepare for "necessary territorial changes". Allizé judged that Hungary was vying for benefits in international politics. According to him Hungary had first tried to sow dissent among the Allies and thereby to gain benefits in the peace treaty, after which it had approached the neighbouring countries. The goal had been to reach a separate peace with them. Allizé defined Somssich's policy by saying that the Foreign Minister did not fully grasp the international situation. He also reported that Somssich had made clear to the Viennese press his dissatisfaction with about "Hungarian comitats".

Renner stressed to Allizé that Friedrich's government constituted a "grave danger" to the peaceful situation in Central Europe. Renner painted an image of the monarchy's restoration. It would also have an effect on Austria and the monarchists who resided there and would make the Austrian government's position more difficult, which in turn would lead to domestic trouble, put Austria's "stable" order in danger, and endanger the Central European system. With these arguments Renner asked the Allies to use their influence to form a new government in Hungary. The new government would consist of representatives of the peasantry and bourgeoisie, and the Allies would be able to make a peace treaty with it and calm Hungary's atmosphere. The basic thrust of Renner's argument pertained to the stability of the peace system. Renner asked France to act on behalf of this idea. According to Allizé, his answer to Renner was that France did not intervene in other countries' internal affairs, but he also expressed that France would favour a new kind of coalition government in Hungary. Allizé estimated that Renner's government would repel both communist and monarchist aspirations to power.<sup>609</sup>

Information concerning Western Hungary's unrest and its impact on international politics undoubtedly influenced the Supreme Council's discussions. Discussion about Western Hungary thereby took place within the context of topical questions in the general politics. A case in point came when the Supreme Council was studying the report dated November 9, 1919, sent from Budapest by Sir George Clerk, British representative of the Allied military commission in Budapest. The central question of Clerk's report was how to fit Hungary in the policy of the Allies. In the opinion of the British delegation, giving Western Hungary to Austria could have been linked with the withdrawal of Romanian troops. Underlying the British proposal were Austrian complaints concerning the situation in Western Hungary. The British interpreted that the situation in the border region forecast danger to the peace system. According to Clerk's evaluation "the pendulum has swung violently from left to right but is now beginning to come slowly towards centre". Hungary's situation had improved, but the Allied control was still necessary.

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<sup>609</sup> M. Allizé, Ministre de France à Vienne à M. Pichon, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères. Vienne, 6 octobre 1919. DDFHBC/II/83. The report was further sent on 8 Oct. 1919 to London, Bukarest and to the General Secretary of the Peace Conference.

Clerk's report also contemplated sending Allied officers or troops to Hungary: "While we are all here Hungarians will behave soberly."<sup>610</sup>

In the Supreme Council's reply note to Clerk the idea was once again to promote a controlled centre groups' policy in Hungary. Clerk had to stress to Hungary's state leadership the impossibility to returning to an unfavourable policy: the Allies would not tolerate a Habsburg restoration. Hungary's political and military situation had to be supervised in a way that suited the Allies. Due to a British request, a point referring to Western Hungary was added to the note to be delivered to the Allied commission in Budapest. The Supreme Council asked Clerk to announce to Hungary's military leadership that Hungary had to accept the borders determined by the Peace Conference, in other words to honour the Allies' decision.<sup>611</sup>

Sir Eyre Crowe again called attention to the question of Western Hungary in the meeting on November 13, 1919. He stressed the importance of alerting the Hungarian government about the absolute necessity of its troops evacuating Western Hungary.<sup>612</sup> The Allies saw the border determined by the Treaty of Saint-Germain as unaltered: the cure for Western Hungary's unrest was the realization of the peace treaty border and control of the Hungarian policy.

Preservation of Central Europe's overall system can be considered the framework for the decision of the Allies concerning Western Hungary. In terms of Austria, the guarantee of order at this stage was considered the "letter of the law" contained in the Treaty of Saint-Germain. As regards Hungary, it was crucial from the Allies' point of view to stabilize the country's politics to suit the interests of the Allies. Wider political threat scenarios were involved with the problems manifesting themselves in the border regions. Those problems manifested themselves in the relations between Austria and Hungary: how they influenced each other and how their policies would influence the general political objectives of the Allies.

The interpretations of the Allies' representatives in Central Europe reflect this framework. Like Austria, it was also necessary to make Hungary part of a suitable Central European development plan. For example General Hallier's report from Vienna on November 8, 1919, framed Western Hungary's situation in the context of threatening political images and in particular Austria's and Hungary's mutual relationship. He believed this image-making affected Western Hungary's situation, which in his opinion was in an unresolved state. He referred to a statement by Austria's state secretary of military affairs Dr. Deutsch that linked two political threats to Western Hungary's situation: communism and reactionism. According to Deutsch, the Communists used a

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<sup>610</sup> Telegram from Sir George Clerk, Budapest, to the Supreme Council, November 6/9, 1919. Appendix E to HD 90. FRUS PPC Vol. IX.

<sup>611</sup> Telegram from the Supreme Council to Sir George Clerk. Paris, November 12, 1919. Appendix A to HD 91. FRUS PPC IX.; also see Appendix A to No 21. DBFP/I and Le Conseil Suprême à Sir George Clerk, Représentant Spécial du Conseil Suprême à Budapest. DDFHBC/II/109.

<sup>612</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Thursday, November 13, 1919, at 10:30 a.m. FRUS PPC IX.

smokescreen of threatening images of monarchism to stir up the population. On the other hand Deutsch suggested that the monarchists were involved in similar activities against the government. The dangerous events in Hungary, he suggested, would also affect Austrian politics. Furthermore, the government reported that Vienna was an echo of Budapest and that threatening political images shook Austria.<sup>613</sup> On the basis of Renner's and Allizé's discussion Paris received a picture of Hungary as "disturber of the treaty" causing unrest in Western Hungary.<sup>614</sup>

Austria itself justified solving the question quickly by claiming that the realization of Saint-Germain borders was important from the point of view of Austria's integrity. The peace treaty meant a sacrifice for Austria, but it guaranteed the state's stability. In November-December Austria complained to the Peace Conference about the dangers threatening its borders – not only Western Hungarian turmoil but also the separatist schemes in Vorarlberg.<sup>615</sup>

The representatives of the Allies interpreted not only the policies of Austria and Hungary but each others' policies as well. On the legation level this became clear towards the end of 1919. The central theme of French reports of December 1919, was France's role in Central Europe: the idea that France had to control the region in order to keep it stable. As regards Austria, this meant that France closely watched its political development – its relationship to Germany and in this situation first and foremost to the neighbouring country Hungary and the policy prevailing there. For example the Austrian Christian Socials' sympathies towards Hungary's "Christian politics" were being contemplated: in terms of Western Hungary this meant that Allizé interpreted Austria's Christian Socials as reluctant supporters of the Treaty of Saint-Germain because they pursued a policy similar to the Hungarian one.<sup>616</sup>

According to Allizé, the idea of rapprochement between Austria and Hungary had gained a foothold among members of Austria's Christian Social Party. A sentiment of religious solidarity had manifested itself particularly as a consequence of disputes between Austria and Hungary. This rapprochement impacted on the question of Western Hungary, where Allizé believed Austrian Christian Socials sympathized with their Hungarian brethren in faith and policy. For Allizé Austria's Christian Socials therefore became potential enemies of the Saint-Germain system and Western Hungary's new border.<sup>617</sup>

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<sup>613</sup> General Hallier (Vienna) to the Min. de Guerre 8 Nov. 1919. A-Paix/Vol. 116, MAE.

<sup>614</sup> For example, Allizé (Vienna) to MAE 25 Nov. 1919. A-Paix/Vol. 116, MAE; Le Conseiller d'Ambassade Chargé par Intérim des Affaires de la Mission en Autriche (Vienna) to Pichon 21 Nov. 1919. A-Paix/Vol. 116, MAE.

<sup>615</sup> Eichhoff to the President of the Peace Conference 2 Dec. 1919. FO 374/15/65, NA; Staatsamt für Äusseres an Präsidenium der Friedenskonferenz 8 Paris). Note. Wien, 25. November 1919. ADÖ/3/390.

<sup>616</sup> See M. Allizé, *Ministre de France à Vienne, à M. Pichon, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*. Vienne, 14 décembre, 1919. DDFHBC/II/140; 20 décembre, 1919 DDFHBC/II/142; 26 décembre, 1919. DDFHBC/II/145.

<sup>617</sup> M. Allizé, *Ministre de France à Vienne, à M. Pichon, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*. Vienne, 20 décembre, 1919. DDFHBC/II/142.

The French diplomats' pro-Austrian view potentially suited the Supreme Council's plans for constructing the peace system. In the legation in Vienna Western Hungary was seen as a part of the comprehensive system leaning on peace treaties. The legation considered, among the Allies, Italy and Great Britain as potential threats to this policy. Therefore France had to control the Danube, traffic and trade, and thereby ensure order. The Danube meant a passage to the east, and the control of it had to suit France. In other words, France presented itself as guarantor of peace. Therefore Austria had to be kept in France's hold in order to preserve order in Central Europe. France's objective was an independent Austria whose political line would suit France. Austria was thereby a part of France's Central European policy which by no means opposed Austria or its interests in the question of Western Hungary. Instead, it opposed Greater Germany and restoration.<sup>618</sup> To quote Allizé:

*"L'influence française devrait devenir prédominante sur le Danube central, c'est à dire dans la République d'Autriche, parce que c'est à nous qu'il appartient de veiller au maintien du système politique que les Puissances alliées ont créé dans l'Europe Centrale pour arrêter l'essor du germanisme. Or, ce système politique qui se caractérise par le développement des deux États slaves du Nord et du Sud ne peut être consolidé que si nous possédons dans la République d'Autriche, et surtout à Vienne, une situation qui fasse de nous les régulateurs de la politique dans cette partie de l'Europe."*<sup>619</sup>

In terms of Western Hungary this relayed the message that at least the French in the region had no interests in changing the peace treaty or acting against Austria. The most important thing was to reach order in France's control. Too close a cooperation between Austria and Hungary did not suit this policy either. The expression of Gustav Gratz, Hungarian Minister in Vienna, that "an alliance between Austria and Hungary would balance powers in Central Europe" made Allizé respond by recommending elimination of Hungarian influence in Austria: in his rhetoric, this idea manifested itself as opposing Habsburgs.<sup>620</sup>

In sum, the diplomacy of the Allies resembled sailing through a sea of political threats: in 1919 Germany and communism and from then on Germany, reactionism, and revision of peace treaties. Particularly towards the end of 1919, diplomatic reports commenting on the discussion about Central Europe focused on monarchy and revision - the crumbling of the Danubian order. This concern was also discernible in comments about Western Hungary.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>618</sup> See M. Allizé, *Ministre de France à Vienne*, à M. Pichon, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*. Vienne, 14 décembre, 1919. DDFHBC/II/140; 20 décembre, 1919 DDFHBC/II/142; 26 décembre, 1919. DDFHBC/II/145.

<sup>619</sup> M. Allizé, *Ministre de France à Vienne*, à M. Pichon, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*. Vienne, 14 décembre, 1919. DDFHBC/II/140.

<sup>620</sup> M. Allizé, *Ministre de France à Vienne*, à M. Pichon, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*. Vienne, 20 décembre, 1919. DDFHBC/II/142.

<sup>621</sup> See for example M. Saint-Aulaire, *Ministre de France à Bucarest* à M. Pichon, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*, 28 octobre 1919. DDFHBC/II/94. He speculated the possibilities of Habsburg restoration and Anschluss and the political future of

The French diplomatic perspective on Central Europe was defined in this way also while assessing the Allies' common, organized operation in the region. The policies of France and Great Britain vis-à-vis Hungary were seen as opposites. For France the essential thing was the permanence of the balance of power system, and Great Britain was blamed for slipping from it. France was considered to act more purely and unselfishly, while in the criticism Austria and Central Europe meant for Great Britain only *comme merveilleux terrain d'expansion*, a tool and a means to realize benefits for itself. According to the criticism, Central Europe was for France an important part of the system, whereas Great Britain harnessed Austria and Central Europe only for purposes of trade.

In the French discourse France's own policy would be the best for the region. The United States – albeit withdrawn – represented a policy closest to France. Italy and Great Britain operated for selfish reasons instead. The British were considered to be at heart opposed to Austria. For them, Austria was “a dead horse”. Were Italian and British policy, contradictory to French policy, to prevail in Austria, the Slavic neighbours would suffer. Italy and Great Britain were presented as political players at the expense of Central Europe, whereas France's “favourable policy” was not “politicising”. Because Italy was weak and the United States was passive, the British had plenty of authority. Thereby only France was left to pursue advantageous policy in Central Europe, and only France could achieve balance in Central Europe.<sup>622</sup>

### 5.3 The Supreme Council and securing the Saint-Germain system

The views of France and Austria rose to the Peace Conference agenda when the Supreme Council addressed the notes from the French delegation and from Renner on December 16, 1919. Both argued with Austria's integrity and unity.

Renner wanted to secure economic support from the Allies. He represented the significance of the peace treaty to Austria and the Allies alike – should the treaty not be honoured or should Austria be forced to resign from it, conflicts would follow. The central idea was that the Austrian nation and the Allies were committed to the Treaty of Saint-Germain which defined the future of Austria, and thereby partly of Central Europe. Austria's democracy and loyalty to the Allies and the Allies' responsibility for Austria's future were emphasized: through the Treaty of Saint-Germain they had given Austria the

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Austria and Hungary basing his arguments on his observations which he had made during his stay in Budapest.

<sup>622</sup> M. Allizé, Ministre de France à Vienne, à M. Pichon, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères. Vienne, 26 décembre, 1919; Annexe à la dépêche No 403, Note de la délégation Française, Vienne, 19 décembre 1919. DDFHBC/II145. The note was written by Charron, who was a French delegate in the Reparations Commission, and it was addressed to the Sub-Commission of the Reparations Commission in Vienna and to the French Delegation of the Reparations Commission in Paris.

right to exist. As the Allies had determined Austria's shape in Saint-Germain, they had to support that shape. Renner emphasized the interdependence of the peace treaty and Austria's political future. His argument stressed the preconditions for the new democratic state's existence and connected that existence to the necessary needs of economy. Thus, he gave the treaty a distinctly positive weight. For example the fact that the borders set by the peace treaty left natural resources outside the country he understood as "unlucky natural conditions":

"In St. Germain our political future has been settled and our people, represented by the National Assembly, a body elected in general suffrage, has accepted with a majority of five-sixths of all men and women in Austria the terms of the St. Germain Treaty as a basis for their political existence and future, and thus adopted with confidence the system established in St. Germain. --- For unfortunately nature has denied to the territory awarded us by the Treaty of St. Germain any coal-field worth while mentioning."<sup>623</sup>

The note from the French delegation dealt with – as if in reaction to a voice heard from Austria – the "Dangers of the disintegration of Austria". This disintegration could be prevented through supporting the Austrian economy. The French note argued that "the deplorable situation now existing in Austria from an economic point of view favours all efforts towards disintegration instigated in the country by the pan-Germans who thus hope to annex the new State piece by piece by evading the provisions of the St. Germain and Versailles Treaties which prohibit the attachment of Austria to Germany." As examples, the note highlighted the question of Vorarlberg, the Limburg area, Tyrol, and Western Hungary, where the disruptive factor was considered to be the Hungarian claim for a plebiscite. The note argued for Austria with "these provisions were taken with a view to protecting European interests which exist more than ever and which should create a desire to favour the Austrian State by every means." The more and more problematic question of Western Hungary's political future was linked to the same problem field as the Anschluss, regional separatism, and the shaking of the peace treaty system.<sup>624</sup> The French delegation therefore saw adherence to the border decision as part of maintaining the system, while at the same time it emphasized the importance of improving Austria's economy to prevent the country from disintegrating. The basic idea of the French policy was to stop Austria's Anschluss to Germany.

Western Hungary was thereby handled within the context of all Austria's territorial unity. It was a part of Austria's construction and therefore also important to France. In this sense the French delegation's note concerning Vorarlberg's separatism also referred to Western Hungary. In Vorarlberg the initiative for separatism<sup>625</sup> was interpreted in the note as arising primarily from

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<sup>623</sup> Declaration by the Chancellor Austria (Renner). Appendix F to HD 111. FRUS PPC IX.

<sup>624</sup> Dangers of the Disintegration of Austria. Note from the French Delegation. Appendix E to HD 111. FRUS PPC IX.

<sup>625</sup> Landtag's discussion about union with Switzerland, December, 6, 1919.



the region and only secondarily from Swiss circles. In Western Hungary, instead, the agitation was considered to come primarily from abroad, from Hungary. Precisely the Hungarians' initiatives about a plebiscite represented external agitation in the eyes of the French. They saw, the idea of a plebiscite as a sign of an external threat of separatism that endangered the Austrian state territory determined by the Allies. To quote the French note: "The agents of the government of Budapest are circulating through the Comitats of Western Hungary, which were attributed to Austria, organising an agitation in favour of a plebiscite." The threat of Austria's disintegration was increased by the idea that the separatist ideology would spread further: to Salzburg, which would demand reunion with Bavaria and "a similar movement is growing in Northern Tyrol".

In order to prevent this development, the French delegation suggested that the Supreme Council transmit to Renner a declaration in which the Allied and Associated Powers stated that "they adhere, and will adhere, as far as concerns the territory of the Austrian Republic, to the frontiers which have been fixed by the Treaty of St. Germain". According to the French delegation, such a demonstration would strengthen the authority of the Austrian government in all the regions where separatist tendencies existed. The declaration was also considered a warning to foreign supporters of separatism.<sup>626</sup>

The war victor's attitude towards the loser – a Great Power's self-image as the political upper layer – shows clearly in the French diplomatic position. The French discourse supporting Austria presented Austria as an object and its state leadership as "children". "The young state" had a simple and well-meaning leader who assured the good will of Austria with respect to the execution of the Treaty of Saint Germain. Clemenceau stated he had no doubt that the Austrian government was confronted by serious difficulties, but that Paris would question its situation if Chancellor Renner failed to promise the provisioning of Vienna.

The French proposal was met with sympathy. France's expression of the Allies' policy to prevent the disintegration of Austria and thereby the Saint-Germain system became the meeting's decision. The economic aid that Renner had appealed for in his note also aimed at Austria's maintenance from the Allies' point of view. It appeared that in the Supreme Council's adherence to Saint-Germain would at this point suffice for maintenance. The reaction of the Supreme Council can be interpreted in two ways. In a sense the message was a "warning" also to Austria, to separatism reaching across the borders, to local thinking and Greater Germany ideas which did not fit inside the Saint-Germain borders. At the same time, the note supported the Rennerian Austria of the peace treaty.

Ultimately, the issue was establishing the roots of the Allies' French-type control into Central Europe. Power politics prevailed, but arguments related to the League of Nations and liberal internationalism were also a part of the

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<sup>626</sup> Vorarlberg Question. French Delegation to the Secretariat General of the Delegation of the United States of America 12 Dec. 1919. Appendix D to HD 111. FRUS PPC IX.

discourse in that the League of Nation's power of decision was invoked: separatism could not be accepted without permission from the international community.<sup>627</sup>

The Supreme Council discussed Western Hungary not only as part of other border questions but as a special dilemma influencing Austria's overall development. That the region was considered restless was important when the Peace Conference assessed Europe's state and the system of states. For example, on November 12, 1919, Austria complained that the troops of Horthy refused to evacuate the districts of Western Hungary assigned to Austria. The Austrian government asked to call to the attention of the Hungarian military authorities the necessity of agreeing to the territorial frontiers fixed by the Peace Conference as a preliminary to any measures of recognition or support.<sup>628</sup>

The Allies reacted to news about unrest by discussing the way to establish a machinery that would enact the cession. The Supreme Council had already decided on October 2 to send a commission of Allied officers to Western Hungary, but on December 30, 1919, the Italian representative Giacomo de Martino observed that the commission had never made the trip. He recommended the commission should indeed carry out the decision.<sup>629</sup> Next day, the Supreme Council decided to set up the commission.<sup>630</sup> Otherwise, as the French delegation argued, Hungarian publicity's "news" about treaty changes would take over. The difficult situation was referred to not only through the nation argument ('the German people of the region being disturbed') but also by stating that Hungary had organized activities to prevent the cession of territory. To quote the French delegation:

"A continuation of this situation may entail serious drawbacks, as it favours the spreading of false news in the Hungarian Press tending to pretend that the Entente has not made a final decision in the matter. This situation also encourages the development of propaganda in Hungary in favour of maintaining these comitats under Magyar sovereignty, and it has been announced in Budapest that a 'League of Western Hungary' to organize this propaganda has been formed. There are even reasons to indicate that the Hungarian Delegation may attempt to present a proposal to the Peace Conference asking for a revision of the Saint-Germain Treaty. If, on the contrary, the Interallied Military Mission were sent to the territories in question it would show that the Allied and Associated Powers do not intend to have the provisions of a Treaty, signed scarcely three months, brought up again for discussion."<sup>631</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers, held at M. Clemenceau's Residence, Paris, on Tuesday, December 16, 1919. (HD 111). FRUS PPC IX.

<sup>628</sup> Supreme Council 12 Nov. 1919. FO 608/25/20510.

<sup>629</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers, held in M. Pichon's Room, Quai d'Orsay, Paris, Tuesday, December 30, 1919 at 10:30 a.m. (HD 119). FRUS PPC IX.

<sup>630</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon's room at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Wednesday, December 31, 1919, at 10:30 a.m. FRUS PPC IX; No 49 DBFP/II.

<sup>631</sup> Note from the French delegation on the Situation in the Comitats of Western Hungary 30 Dec. 1919. Appendix K to HD 120. FRUS PPC IX; also see Appendix K to No 49. DBFP/II.

Allied attention turned not only to Austria but also to Hungary's future and influence of the question of Western Hungary. The key concern was to keep in check Hungary's attempts to change the border decided in Saint-Germain. According to French information, the cession of territory had become the target of a campaign in Hungary in the press, in gatherings, and in various allegorical posters. The Hungarian press claimed that the Allies had not yet said their last word on the question. Hungary's general opinion and the attitude represented in the publicity were opposed to the cession and thereby to the peace treaty.<sup>632</sup>

In 1919 the situation in Western Hungary was thus observed primarily through the meaning of the Treaty of Saint-Germain. The treaty system was a primary means to construct a new stability in Central Europe. At the same time this idea was also being questioned: would it be wiser, from security's point of view, also to take Hungary's situation into account? In any case, from the Allies' point of view both countries should be kept under control. The political line of the Allies and the Peace Conference can be understood with the help of Sir George Clerk's rather patronising view:

"I can only say that both Austria and Hungary long for strict Allied control, so long as it is designed to help them to live, and that the neighbouring States, our present Allies, need firm supervision and guidance to make them fit to enjoy the inheritance which has fallen to them through our sacrifice and effort."<sup>633</sup>

## 5.4 Updating the meaning of the new border

After the signing of the Saint-Germain peace treaty the border between Austria and Hungary was part of a system of agreements that could not be reopened. Therefore the decision concerning the border was also considered permanent at the Peace Conference. Nevertheless, the border was made into a conflict and a problem because the region was considered restless. In addition to decisions supporting Austria, some comments attacked the Saint-Germain peace treaty's decision about Western Hungary, arguing that heeding Hungary might guarantee the peace system.

From the end of 1919 on, British representatives in Central Europe considered the peace treaty's decision to be more problematic than French diplomacy and the Supreme Council thought. Among the British there were contradictory interpretations about annexing Western Hungary to Austria: the Foreign Office's interpretation on the importance of adhering to the peace treaty system differed from the legations' situation assessment according to which the peace treaty no longer served the prevailing circumstances. Furthermore, the

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<sup>632</sup> Le Général Graziani, Chef de la Mission Militaire Française à Budapest au Général Hallier, Chef de la Mission Militaire Française à Vienne. Budapest, 4 décembre 1919. DDFHBC/II/134; Hallier (Vienna) to the Min. de Guerre 31 Dec. 1919. A-Paix/Vol. 116, MAE.

<sup>633</sup> Sir G. Clerk 29 Nov. 1919. FO 371/3517/1193/157685, NA.

border change could be interpreted in the context of Realpolitik as a decision either increasing or shaking security.

Firstly, changing the border in the manner specified in the treaty could advantage British interests, i.e. by maintaining Austria's independence. On the other hand, changing the border to Austria's advantage meant taking a risk, i.e. increasing the territory within German sphere of influence. Others wondered whether the decision favouring Austria would harm Hungary's role in Central Europe. The future of the region appeared problematic also from the perspective emphasizing the importance of the nation. What did the population think, and on the other hand, what did the border ultimately mean locally and nationally? The British asked whether it was necessary, for the sake of the system's permanence, to stick to a decision whose consequences were ambiguous.

For example, in the FO Adam noted on December 3, 1919, that the Saint-Germain peace treaty's decision about the border between Austria and Hungary appeared simultaneously correct and questionable. According to Adam the decision began to seem questionable by the autumn of 1919, when circumstances had shifted. Nevertheless Austria had the right to claim the area which was assigned to it at the Peace Conference and which was important to Vienna. Austria had the right to turn down Hungary's proposals, such as those for a plebiscite.<sup>634</sup>

The British legation in Vienna also saw contradictions but still considered the peace treaty unchanged. High Commissioner Lindley observed that the motives for annexing the territory to Austria had weakened. The argument appealing to the right of self-determination in the peace treaty had, according to the legation, weakened because the opinion of the population had become pro-Hungarian after the communist regime fell. According to this perspective, the opinion of the population was influenced more by the immediate political situation and by economic factors than by belonging to a given ethnic group. Another contradiction he saw was the fact that the region was still under Hungarian rule although it had been determined part of Austria in the peace treaty. Thirdly, he explained the fact that the situation had become more complicated by referring to Austria's domestic political situation. The question of Western Hungary had become a part of international politics where Christian Socials and Social Democrats had become antagonists. Like his French colleague Allizé, he estimated that the pro-Hungarian Christian Socials were more passive than the Social Democrats in regard to Western Hungary. Although Lindley acknowledged that the situation and settings had changed on the national level, he concluded that changing the peace treaty was nevertheless out of the question: it would have created a different problem.<sup>635</sup>

Unlike Lindley and Adam, military attaché Colonel Thomas Cuninghame argued in his report dated February 9, 1920, that annexing Western Hungary to Austria was an actually adverse move. He used as his grounds Austria's

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<sup>634</sup> Minute by Adam 3 Dec. 1919. FO 371/3517/1193/157588, NA.

<sup>635</sup> Lindley (Vienna) to the FO 27 Nov. 1919. FO 371/3517/1193/157588, NA.

“difficult situation”: there was no point annexing areas to a state already in trouble. The situation would lead to the Anschluss, and Western Hungary would eventually become part of Germany. It was not favourable to extend the territory of the German region, as its future was uncertain:

“From the political point of view the extension of Austrian territory should be considered with reference to the anticipated future of the Republic. It cannot be denied that there is grave danger of the country falling some day into the hands of Germany, whether territorially as a whole or piecemeal province by province. In the former case the acquisition of Western Hungary would only extend the final boundaries of Germany to the east. If, therefore, there is no definite plan to extract Austria from the overwhelming difficulties of the moment, there is no reason to add to a territory whose present is so miserable and whose future is so uncertain.”<sup>636</sup>

Cuninghame did not have faith in the view that Western Hungary would be an important “Kitchen Garden” for Vienna. He thought the economic grounds were incomplete and insufficient to justify a border change, although he did not completely refute their importance. In his opinion, the fact that the region had already had tight connections with Vienna and Wiener Neustadt during the monarchy spoke for the perspective of the connections. The region’s significance in terms of Austria’s economy would therefore not spell an unambiguous improvement. If, for example, the refining of sugar were in the future to take place on the Austrian side of the border, the cultivation of sugar beets would still remain in Hungary. Secondly, tension between Austria and Hungary might hamper the cereal import from Hungary. Such consequences would also increase the political and economic tension in the Danube region.

Cuninghame’s review referred to two political dimensions: the popular opinion and the internal tension in the Danube region. In addition he brought up the impact the Austrian main parties’ politics had on the relations between Austria and Hungary. First, cooperation between Austrian Social Democrats and the Czechs would create tension between them and Hungary. Second, Austria’s Christian Socials and Hungary’s right-wing reactionary government wished to avoid conflicts. In other words he considered the territorial question politically outdated, as the policies of Austria and Hungary had begun to move closer to each other. Similarly, Hungarian officials in Western Hungary had changed their attitude towards Hungarian government since the fall of communism and were no longer as sympathetic towards Austria. However, Cuninghame did not associate the political change with the change in popular opinion: according to him, the population was in favour of joining Austria whereas the Hungarian official machinery supported remaining part of Hungary. Cuninghame supported a plebiscite in principle, but it had to be realized under certain conditions which would prevent cheating. He suspected Hungarian officials and presented Hungarians as cunning forgers of election results.

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<sup>636</sup> Cuninghame (Vienna) to Lindley 9 Feb. 1920 [Appendix to Lindley’s report 10 Feb. 1920]. FO 371/3519/1193/178489, NA.

However, Cuninghame considered “objective reasons” like economy and Europe’s political future more important motives than the population’s opinion. Cuninghame regarded Western Hungary as a Transdanubian area where an alliance between Austria and Czechoslovakia and their operational space in Western Hungary, common exploitation of the area, would spell danger for Hungary and thereby implicitly for the balance in the area. Cuninghame thereby compared the arguments presented at the Peace Conference with the current situation. Through this comparison he eventually reached the interpretation that changing the border would not be beneficial and could cause disorder. It no longer suited the policy of the British and the Allies. According to Cuninghame the territorial change would therefore actually not be very favourable from the point of view of general politics. Consequently, Cuninghame recommended that the area should not be annexed to Austria.<sup>637</sup>

Lindley for his part commented on Cuninghame’s view to the Foreign Office and stated that in his own opinion the peace treaty had to be put into effect as regards Western Hungary. As his grounds he still used the arguments dating from 1919 although Cuninghame had challenged them: “The territorial limits of Austria are so drawn that the most modest addition of agricultural land is of value to her – more especially of agricultural land in the vicinity of Vienna.” The second argument concerned the German factor. Adding Western Hungary to Austria’s state contained both a hazard and an opportunity for an independent Austria. First, he noted in the vein of Cuninghame that the addition of territory would be a risk. On the other hand the district could in his opinion also stabilize Austria: as the district was German, it would hardly turn irredentist as part of Austria.<sup>638</sup>

Sticking to the peace system that had already been agreed on was the most important thing to the Foreign Office, however. Although the importance of the border in itself could diminish in the eyes of the FO, the importance of the peace treaty still held major importance from the general political viewpoint. The FO often ignored Cuninghame’s and occasionally also Lindley’s suggestions about a “new situation” referring to the needlessness of border change in the prevailing situation and reiterated the principle that the treaties and the new order should be put into effect. In spite of doubts, the FO’s stand, while preparing Hungary’s peace treaty, was that Hungary could not expect the decision to be changed. As Adam had stated in his notes on February 6, 1920, the Allied and Associated Powers had signed the treaty with Austria – though not that with Hungary – by which the counties of Western Hungary were given to Austria. Hungary could not expect any change of policy.<sup>639</sup>

For the political objectives of the British it was more essential to avoid opening the old questions again than to modify the decisions to match the current security views. Therefore Hungary’s peace treaty was to be consistent

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<sup>637</sup> Cuninghame (Vienna) to Lindley 9 Feb. 1920 [Appendix to Lindley’s report 10 Feb. 1920]. FO 371/3519/1193/178489, NA.

<sup>638</sup> Lindley (Vienna) 10 Feb. 1920. FO 371/3519/1193/178489, NA.

<sup>639</sup> Minute by Adam 6 Feb. 1920. FO 371/3518/1193/176412, NA.

with the Austrian treaty. Commenting on Cuninghame's report, Adam noted that propaganda should not be encouraged from either party.<sup>640</sup> Nevertheless, in spite of a rather clear line adhering to the principle of the peace treaty, the question was branded as problematic in the FO discourse.

Americans also presented an updated interpretation of the situation. When the Peace Conference was preparing to address Hungary's peace treaty, the voice of America had already grown silent in terms of Western Hungary. The Great Power's role at the Peace Conference marginalized as it withdrew from active organisation of European policy. Nevertheless, in American mission in Vienna Arthur Wood DuBois discussed in his memorandum on December 1, 1919, the question of Western Hungary. He focused on the complicated question of the wishes of the population in the area. As in various other reports and memoranda concerning the public opinion and the wishes of the Western Hungarians, he speculated that evaluating the people's wishes would be difficult.

DuBois based his arguments on the results of his trip on November 28.-30, 1919 through the disputed area: a "Major Martin styled-expedition" to the disputed area in order to find out the opinions and points of view of the local people in regard to the annexation to Austria, and to "learn what foundation there exists for the Hungarian agitation which disclaims a desire on the part of the population of West Hungary to join Austria". DuBois's method was to interview local farmers, notaries, mayors, and workmen in both Austrian and Hungarian towns and villages on the border area. He visited not only the disputed area but a wider border region, including already Austrian areas. The Austrian Foreign Ministry was especially desirous to get information of the sentiment of the people in southern part of Western Hungary and in the area east of Neusiedler/Fertő lake. DuBois did not, however, investigate these areas, but nevertheless he estimated that the population in those sections was "as friendly to Austria as those in the sections visited".

The ethnographical character of the area, the German majority<sup>641</sup> and conditions of the German population under Hungarian rule were important factors to DuBois when evaluating the conditions and "the rate of self-determination" in the area. The inhabitants were seen at the same time as objects and subjects: DuBois asked what the population wanted and how they were treated under "foreign" rule. As a result he stated that it was not necessarily a question of experienced direct Hungarian oppression, but of dissatisfaction concerning the German educational facilities and the country's progress. Accordingly, the population had no definite opinion in regard to the annexation problem. DuBois estimated that the local people for the most part lacked any patriotic affection for either Austria or Hungary. Instead they had strong family and cultural ties. The population was religious and conservative and not friendly to Bolshevism or to present political conditions in Austria.

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<sup>640</sup> Minute by Adam 18 Feb. 1920. FO 371/3519/1193/178489, NA.

<sup>641</sup> DuBois used the Hungarian official census of 1910.

DuBois thus expressed that the population in the border region looked in both directions without much sentiment for either Austria or Hungary. The economy also moved to both directions. People were concerned about which way the scales would tilt, even minutely. DuBois concluded that as the majority of the population had no definite opinion and was easily swayed by temporary conditions or agitation and propaganda, the people could easily become "objects". He argued that most people looked first to their prosperity and did not know how a frontier between them and Hungary would influence them, but instead they opposed a customs barrier between them and Austria.

DuBois thereby appeared to emphasize the peoples' view about the freedom of its own nationality and economic interests. As the Germans in the region had not been Magyarised, it was better for them to join Austria rather than Hungary, particularly while there were no guarantees about autonomy under Hungary's rule. On the other hand the officials and clericals were for the most part in favour of remaining with Hungary.

After discussing the question in the context of nation and population, DuBois finally brought up strategic reasons according to which the old border would be unsatisfactory from Austria's perspective and the new one only slightly strategically disadvantageous to Hungary. Here he linked the interests of the state with the border change. Satisfaction of the people reflected the state's functioning. Thus DuBois had concluded that the decision of the Peace Conference should be abided by, but if for other reasons the question was reopened, the decision should rest upon a plebiscite.<sup>642</sup>

In spite of these updated evaluations, the policy of the official international decision-makers did not question annexing the territory of Western Hungary to Austria. The focal point of the policy was guaranteeing the peace system by means of adherence to the Austrian treaty and guiding Hungary towards a policy that suited the peace system. In practice this meant for Western Hungary that the Peace Conference commenced preliminary measures to secure the border change and kept an eye on Hungarian unrest.

## 5.5 Discussing a revision on Austro-Hungarian level

While the Peace Conference decision-makers discussed how to organize the peace system and whether security would be reached through sticking to the peace treaty border or modifying the decision to match the prevailing conditions, Hungary tried to propose to Austria alternative ways to resolve the problem of the new border. In other words, Hungary sought a bilateral solution with Austria - a solution, where Hungary could keep Western Hungary. According to Ormos (1990) Hungary did not succeed in keeping Western Hungary at the Peace Conference because the country did not invest enough;

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<sup>642</sup> Memorandum by Mr. A.W. DuBois. Sentiment in German West Hungary in Regard to Annexation to Austria. Vienna, December 1, 1919. FRUS XII.



this ineffectiveness resulted from the fact that Hungary believed it could negotiate the issue with Austria.<sup>643</sup>

The Hungarian Minister in Vienna, Gustav Gratz discussed with Renner on January 31, 1920, the possibility of settling the question of Western Hungary by a friendly arrangement before the peace treaty would create “a fait accompli”. Hungary proposed to Austria to arrange a plebiscite in Western Hungary. If the plebiscite resulted in Hungary’s victory, Hungary would make some assurances to Austria. First, a limitation on Hungarian troops stationed in Western Hungary. Second, autonomy for the German speaking population, and third, a preferential customs arrangement between Western Hungary and Austria. According to Gratz these advantages would guarantee Austria the same benefits as the border change would have guaranteed, because Austria desired the annexation for strategic and economic reasons and for considerations of national policy. In other words Hungary claimed that the Germans could be Germans, the military threat would abate, and the economy would be arranged without moving the state border.<sup>644</sup>

When Renner answered Hungary’s proposal, he also appealed to the good of the local population and German nation, its rights to decide its future. According to him, what was best for the people would not be realized in the way Hungary proposed. He turned down Gratz’s proposal by asserting that democracy could not thrive in restless Western Hungary – the impartiality of the plebiscite could become reality only after Austria had occupied the area. He also argued that the plebiscite could democratically proceed only with the approval of Austria’s National Assembly. Renner claimed that there was “such terror in Western Hungary that a plebiscite would be an empty gesture no matter what guarantees were provided for it”. Austria’s interpretation of democracy and right of self-determination was also represented by his argument that Western Hungary would be made a province in its own right: in a sense his province grounds challenged the benefits Gratz had promised the region.<sup>645</sup>

In sum, while Austria supported the realization of the plebiscite and compensation only after Austria had taken control of Western Hungary, the Hungarian Foreign Ministry stated that it could under no circumstances enter into negotiations concerning evacuation before the ratification of the peace treaty.<sup>646</sup> The positions of the Austrian and Hungarian state leaderships were far from each other. On the diplomatic level Austria attempted to balance between good relations and its own interests. In Vienna Minister Ippen pointed out to Gratz that the Austrian government was in a difficult position because it

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<sup>643</sup> Ormos 1990, 58.

<sup>644</sup> The Minister of Hungary in Vienna, Dr. Gratz, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich. Vienna, 1 Feb. 1920. PDRFRH/I/113.

<sup>645</sup> The Minister of Hungary in Vienna, Dr. Gratz, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich. Vienna, 8 Feb. 1920. PDRFRH/I/120; 9 Feb. 1920. PDRFRH/I/122; 11 Feb. 1920. PDRFRH/I/124.

<sup>646</sup> The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich, to the Minister of Hungary in Vienna, Dr. G. Ratz. Budapest, 10 Feb. 1920. PDRFRH/I/122.

could not accept the plan outlined in the note and at the same time, it feared that rejecting it would further aggravate relations with Hungary.<sup>647</sup>

Austria's National Assembly turned down Hungary's proposal on February 19, 1920. When Renner presented the question to the National Assembly, he appealed to the significance of the peace treaty to the international system and the nation alike. He explained that the question touched a wider sphere than just Austria and Hungary, as the Treaty of Saint-Germain was not made between Austria and Hungary but created by the Allies as a part of the international system. Renner presented the decision concerning the border as the advantage of the nation and local people, both Austrians and the inhabitants of Western Hungary. Their rights were intertwined. West Hungarians had the right to belong to a German state, Austria. Therefore Austria did not base its right to Western Hungary on military power or power politics but on justice rising from the people and the fact that the region was justifiably a part of Austria on the basis of Saint-Germain's state treaty. To quote Renner,

“Wir wollen nichts sein als ein freier, deutscher, nationaler Staat. Die Gebiete von Deutschwestungarn gehören zu den geschlossenen deutschen Sprachgebieten.”

Renner appealed to the Hungarian nation to understand the right of the German nation and the Austrians' national motive to include the district into its own state. He claimed that Hungary's "right" to Western Hungary was based only on dynastic policy, whereas Austria's historic right to Western Hungary was based on the nation. In other words Austria intended to "liberate the area" and to execute the right of self-determination. This liberation would be realized in two ways: provincial *Land* – position as part of Austria and a plebiscite. Thereby *Land* could decide about its future. The plebiscite and organizing the region's future could not be decided by Vienna and Budapest, but by the region's population. According to Otto Bauer, the right of self-determination would not be realized through Austria's and Hungary's negotiations but through a connection between the Burgenland population and Vienna – a proper tool for that was *Landesregierung*, the Provincial Government to be organized in Sopron. Renner finally noted that in spite of party differences the National Assembly was unanimous in turning down Hungary's proposal.<sup>648</sup>

In sum, the role of the nation in the state and its territoriality can be seen as the centre of Austrian national argumentation. In this sense Renner emphasized in the official reply on February 19, 1920, to Gratz and to Millerand on February 22, 1920, the importance of common history and the importance of German character in the region. The transfer of the border was legitimized through German history of the area and with the will of the nation. Renner

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<sup>647</sup> The Minister of Hungary in Vienna, Dr. Gratz, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich. Vienna, 17 Feb. 1920. PDRFRH/I/134.

<sup>648</sup> Konstituierende Nationalversammlung der Republik Österreich. Stenographisches Protokoll zur. 62. Sitzung (Anfrage, Anfragebeantwortung, Debatte). Wien, 19. Februar 1920. ADÖ/3/430.

explained that the economy was not as salient a ground for a border than the nation: the “fate of Heidebauerns and Heanzens” could not be an object of traded political compensations. Hungary’s proposal was presented as a “cheap” trade at the expense of the nation. Austria, on the contrary, would honour the nation – local German people – by giving the district the status of an Austrian province. Autonomy as part of Austria would allow the area to function better than as part of Hungary, because Austria was a federalist state and the provinces would have independent power.

Austria wanted to show Hungary that Western Hungary was a legitimate part of Austria: it belonged to the idea of Austria acknowledged by the Allies. “Natural belonging” was being argued by defining the region as “Western Hungary’s German areas” which belonged to Austria also historically: the area had only temporarily belonged to Hungary for 300 years. The note also referred to the fact that the Allies had “acknowledged these matters” in the Treaty of Saint-Germain. The old border was contradictory to national, economic, historic, and geographic factors. Saint-Germain was a basis for Austria and guaranteed by Supreme Council.

When Hungary had proposed that changing the border was unnecessary from the viewpoint of contacts, Austria replied that changing the border did not serve merely Austrian interests. On the contrary, Hungary could also benefit from the border change; the territory to go to Austria would function as a link between the countries due to free traffic and close economic relations. The area was a natural part of Austria, and the old border disturbed this naturalness. In addition a border change would guarantee the rights of the population. Austria’s desire was to send a message about a policy honouring the nation by promising the national identity and easy trafficking “conditions in the spirit of the times” in Western Hungary. Additionally, Austria was marketing its policy through references to a plebiscite and to the region’s autonomy. In addition, Hungary would benefit since the change would stop the activities disturbing the Germans, and in this way Hungary would for its part assist the realisation of a vision honouring the nation.<sup>649</sup>

“The interest of the nation” was thereby a key element. The Austrian government emphasized also in its other notes to the Allies the desire of Western Hungary’s population to join Austria and part from the unstable Hungary. In these notes the turmoil in Western Hungary was a central ground supporting the nation argument. The notes described attacks on individual people in Western Hungary<sup>650</sup> and attempted to show Hungary’s

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<sup>649</sup> Staatskanzler Renner an ungarischen Gesandten Gratz. Wien, 19. Februar 1920. ADÖ/3/431; see English translation: Johann Andreas Eichhoff to Alexandre Millerand, Paris 22 Feb. 1920. Enclosure: Renner to Hungarian legation at Vienna 20 Feb. 1920 (sic). ADAUBA/144; also see The Chancellor of Austria, Dr. Renner, to the Minister of Hungary in Vienna, Dr. Gratz. Wien, am 19. Ferbruar 1920. PDRFRH/I/139.

<sup>650</sup> For example harassment of pro-Austrian population in Győr (Raab), Szombathely (Steinamanger), and Sopron (Ödenburg). Eichhoff used the German names. The examples used were arrests without a trial, bad conditions, harassment at schools,

untrustworthiness through definitions of national character traits such as “the hot-headed character of the Magyars”. On January 31, 1920, the Austrian government pleaded with the Allies to intervene and to stop the pogroms in question by executing the Treaty of Saint-Germain in Western Hungary without waiting for the ratification. In other words the government asked that Hungary should evacuate the area before the peace treaty came into effect. In addition to this, the note contained references to economic and strategic reasons on the basis of which the area had been ordered to Austria.<sup>651</sup>

The question of Western Hungary was thereby linked to a part of Austria’s and Central Europe’s political future both through Realpolitik and an ideology stressing the significance of the nation. The anarchy rampant in Western Hungary had to be vanquished in order to secure order in the region. In Austria’s complaints, the offences against the people were thereby a manifestation of Hungary’s threat to Austria’s territorial legitimacy and the rights of the nation. In Eichhoff’s note dated February 4, 1920, the Allies were requested to supervise the cession operation and calm the region’s restlessness.<sup>652</sup>

Both Hungary’s proposal of a plebiscite and Austria’s proposal of occupation before the peace treaties came into effect aroused suspicions at least in the British Foreign Office. Arranging a plebiscite before the ratification of the peace treaties could have caused a reaction where other regions would also have claimed a plebiscite. The Foreign Office did not want to unwind the total package of the peace treaties.<sup>653</sup> Securing the system was not yet complete as regards Hungary.

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and assault and battery. In other words, the population was claimed to suffer “for their conviction”.

<sup>651</sup> Johann Andreas Eichhoff to Alexandre Millerand. Paris, 31 Jan. 1920. ADAUBA/131; Bevollmächtigter Eichhoff an Präsident der Botschafterkonferenz Millerand (Paris). Paris, 31. Januar 1920. ADÖ/3/424; Eichhoff to the President of the Conference of Ambassadors 31 Jan. 1920. FO 374/15/84, NA.

<sup>652</sup> Eichhoff to the President of the Conference of Ambassadors 4 Feb. 1920. FO 374/15/87, NA; Johann Andreas Eichhoff to Alexandre Millerand. Paris, 4 Feb. 1920. ADAUBA/133.

<sup>653</sup> Lindley (Vienna) 14 Feb. 1920; Minutes by Leeper 17 Feb. 1920 and Adam 18 Feb. 1920. FO 371/3519/1193/178874, NA; FO to Lindley (Vienna) 21 Feb. 1920. FO 371/3519/1193/179582, NA. On February 17, 1920, Lindley had transmitted information about what the Austrian press was writing: according to the arguments in the press it was impossible for Austria to refuse the plebiscite, as a plebiscite adhered to democratic principles.

## 6 POLITICS OF THE HUNGARIAN PEACE TREATY

### 6.1 From enemy to part of the treaty system – preparing the Hungarian peace treaty

In Hungarian history, the Treaty of Trianon, addressed by the Peace Conference in January 1920, and signed on June 4, 1920, carries the image of a shameful peace. In the case of Western Hungary this image of shameful peace has been complicated by an apparently contradictory memory and myth about Hungary's political success and the just international policy.<sup>654</sup> The central feature leading to the different interpretations has been the problematic nature of the encounter between Hungary, the war victors and new neighbouring countries.

Margaret MacMillan explains Hungary's road to "the fate of Trianon" partly by the fact that the Allies regarded Hungary as "Other", a non-European state and society.<sup>655</sup> Removing the features of Hungary's political "Otherness" was a central precondition for the launch of the peace treaty process. The Allies waited observantly for a time when Hungary could be safely tied to the peace treaty system. They observed Hungary's state leadership, the nature of the government and the end of the occupation. Once the political circumstances had stabilized, a peace treaty had to be signed with Hungary, and the country's development had to be tied into the Allies' general policy of minimising Germany's power and honouring Central Europe's new system of states.

This basic idea emerged in the discussions of the Supreme Council and the reports it addressed. The first steps were taken on November 20, 1919, when Sir Eyre Crowe called attention to Sir George Clerk's reports discussing Hungarian development. According to Clerk, Hungary showed few signs of political improvement. The situation in Budapest indicated that a coalition government

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<sup>654</sup> See for example interpretations by Ormos 1990 and Swanson 2000.

<sup>655</sup> Macmillan 2002, 265-268.

was in the process of formation.<sup>656</sup> In the meeting of the Supreme Council on December 1, 1919, Clerk presented his report concerning Hungarian internal politics. His report reflected the idea according to which nation and people formed the basis for a state. According to him, the Hungarian government was now “really representative of Hungarian opinion”. He thought the Hungarian government had also realized that they had to co-operate with the Allies.

Allied control, for example the presence of the Interallied Military Mission in Budapest<sup>657</sup>, and the chance for information gathering had to be maintained despite positive developments. Clerk supposed that this would give the Hungarians a high opinion of the Allies’ sense of justice during the transition from the old Hungary to the new one. Politically, the Allied Powers wanted to see the new Hungary on a favourable political course: detached from the German character and “old chauvinism and extreme policy”. Territorially the new Hungary was preliminarily defined by the existence of the enlarged or newly established neighbouring states. The transition from a large united state into a separate state spelled, according to Clerk, a problem particularly in terms of economy and traffic. He pointed out that “if Hungary did not constitute a unit from the ethnographic point of view, it undoubtedly did constitute one from geographical and economic points of view”. To quote Clerk,

“they realize that though they can claim, with justice, to be a great and civilized race, they allowed their foreign policy to be controlled in another, and to them a foreign, capital, and largely by reason of that now find themselves deprived of large territories where, whatever their political behaviour towards their non-Magyar fellow nationals, they had built up a culture and civilisation which, it is difficult to deny, stands far higher than that of the neighbouring States, whose conduct has been in many respect deplorable.”<sup>658</sup>

Making Hungary a part of a new Central and Eastern European system of states did not at this stage mean changing the state territory in a direction advantageous to Hungary, however. Clerk’s report evidences a certain liberalist internationalist attitude towards the problems of Hungary and the nearby territories: conflicts would be prevented through international cooperation instead of changing the borders. From the viewpoint of the question of Western Hungary the essential feature was that according to Clerk there was no reason to reassess border questions, as the borders had already formed. Changing the state territory was not to him a way to avoid problems in Central and Eastern Europe. The right course of action involved inter-state cooperation, economic aid and Allied control of the region. State territory and economic territory were not the same thing in his thinking. At the same time his report revealed a view whereby states as such were insignificant compared to preventing unfavourable

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<sup>656</sup> Telegram from Sir George Clerk to the Supreme Council. Budapest, 17 Nov. 1920. Appendix A to No 27. DBFP/II/27.

<sup>657</sup> For example, Mission of Allied Generals or the Allied High Commissioners should be charged with the duty.

<sup>658</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon’s Room, Quai d’Orsay, Paris, on Thursday, November 20, 1919, at 10:00 a.m. DBFP/II.

political development. An understanding between states was more important – for example an understanding between Hungary and the Allies concerning Hungary’s state territory and especially the field of economic development.<sup>659</sup>

Clerk argued that Hungary needed the Allies. The economic as well as political situation of Hungary, “like that of Austria” was “desperate”, unless the Allies could see their way to giving it financial aid. The Hungarian new territorial limit, the territory which remained Hungarian “could furnish, for example, no indispensable raw materials”. The Allies, for their part, needed a stable Hungary as a part of the peace system. Both Austria and Hungary had to be removed from potential German sphere of influence.

“They [Hungarians] were beginning to realize the error they had committed, the responsibility for which, moreover, they were now placing on Austrian policy. They hoped that the Allies would help them and give them a chance to prove their good will, otherwise, following Austria, they would have to lean towards Germany.”<sup>660</sup>

Clerk’s interpretation about Hungary’s situation alerted the Peace Conference of Hungary’s significance as part of the peace system: supporting and guiding Hungary to correct policy without changing earlier commitments. On the basis of the report, the Supreme Council decided to invite Hungary to receive the peace terms.<sup>661</sup>

The discussion about Hungary’s peace treaty began after the Peace Conference had changed its form. While preparing Hungary’s peace treaty the Peace Conference was organizationally less concentrated than in 1919 as by the end of 1919 the Peace Conference was winding down. Wilson was back in the United States and the American role diminished.<sup>662</sup> Furthermore, the peace system was being operated on several arenas. Lloyd George suggested in the meeting of Foreign Ministers on January 1, 1920, that there should be a Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which would examine questions relative to the peace treaty with Hungary and all questions of detail, and on the other hand a Council of Heads of Governments that would examine only the larger questions of general policy. Lloyd George’s proposal was accepted.<sup>663</sup> Finally, in the

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<sup>659</sup> George R. Clerk 29 Nov. 1919. Appendix A to No 33. DBFP/II/33.

<sup>660</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon’s room, Quai d’Orsay, Paris, on Thursday, November 20, 1919, at 10:00 a.m. DBFP/II.

<sup>661</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of the Delegations of the Five Great Powers held in M. Pichon’s room, Quai d’Orsay, Paris, on Monday, December 1, 1919, at 10:30 a.m.; Clemenceau to General Bandholtz (Budapest) 1 Dec. 1919. Appendix B to No 33. DBFP/II/33.

<sup>662</sup> As Macmillan explains, Wilson went back trying to get the League of Nations approved by the Congress, and to quote Romsics (1999), “the United States had withdrawn from the Peace Conference at the end of 1919 in protest at its repeated and blatant disregard for the declared principles and thus did not play any part in these talks”. Macmillan 2002, 276; Romsics I. 1999, 118.

<sup>663</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs [sic], held at the Quai d’Orsay, Paris, on Saturday, January 10, 1920, at 11:30 a.m. DBFP/II/54.

execution of the peace treaties the Paris-based Allied diplomats' Conference of Ambassadors ascended to a central position.<sup>664</sup>

## 6.2 Representing the basis for Hungarian state - Apponyi's Hungary

Hungary's national line concerning its own state territory and definition encountered the Allies' policy and caused a reaction from the Allies in early 1920 when the Hungarian delegation arrived at Paris led by Count Apponyi.<sup>665</sup> The position of Hungary's peace delegation can be read in a speech Apponyi gave to the Supreme Council on January 16, 1920. Most of the speech described the legitimacy of Hungary's historic state territory. The central themes included the nation, right of self-determination, and Realpolitik, which were in mutual relationship with each other. Apponyi emphasized Hungary's role in the international community as well as the rights of Hungarians: Hungary's participation and will to stabilize Europe and the nation's right to Hungarian territory. Apponyi argued that the state of Hungary was legitimate to the nation as a historic whole, and as such it also served Europe's stability. Ethnicity or nationality did not centrally determine the Hungarian nation, as those factors did in Austria. The nation shared a culture and a history rather than a race and had the right to be subject to the Hungarian state and to live within the territory of historic Hungary. This territory was defined by nature and geography. The whole was an economically viable unit where the people, sharing a common mentality, could act and work for economic prosperity. In other words Apponyi presented the nation as a cultural and civilisational whole, not an ethnic group in the racial sense. Self-determination meant that this people had the right to live in the state of Hungary and that this opinion could be measured through a plebiscite. According to him, this self-determination could not be measured through racial statistics.

Apponyi's Hungary and Magyariness was based on the idea of state-nation in the tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>666</sup>. That historic Hungary had repelled threats to Europe and, according to Apponyi, been a key element in maintaining European stability. In this way, Apponyi presented an alternative interpretation of the right of national self-determination and a nation-state with a Realpolitik mission.

According to Apponyi, Hungary adhered to the same principles and aimed at the same goal as the Allied powers - Europe's peace and stability. He appealed to the importance of the peace treaty not only as a punishment, but also as a reconstructive strategy: were Hungary accepted into the treaty, it would participate in the work of peace, because it represented the same moral

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<sup>664</sup> Heideking 1979, 19.

<sup>665</sup> Romsics I. 2001 (Trianoni...), 183.

<sup>666</sup> See Romsics I. 2002, 90-91.



forces as the Allies. Now, however, the peace treaty unjustly made Hungary seem the sole party responsible for the war. The existence of the country had thereby been questioned by the harsh peace terms. The legal foundation for Hungary's existence was the historic state territory legitimized through the cultured nation loyal to it and the country's task of helping maintain European stability. Whether the population of the historic Hungary wished to join their racial brothers or stay Hungarian citizens had to be ascertained through asking their opinion – in this way Hungary laid its foundations on the will and rights of the nation. Either the national assembly representing the nation or a plebiscite could be used to determine the will of the people. Of these two, Hungary preferred the latter, because the Hungarian Parliament would be incomplete, the inhabitants of the occupied territory lacking representation.

Furthermore, Apponyi interlinked the concepts of nation and power policy. He saw Hungary as part of Western civilisation, unlike its neighbours. He referred to the political and cultural achievements in Italy, France and England. Hungary, belonging to the same group of "Us", had had the task of acting as a barrier and protecting Christianity. This also was an argument for historic Hungary. Historic Hungary was a geographically and culturally functioning unit with the strength to fulfil its Realpolitik mission. In spite of the state-nation tradition Apponyi indeed referred to the idea of nation-state. Hungary was a state based on the nation, not racially but historic-culturally. The nation thereby constructed the state in Hungarian rhetoric too.<sup>667</sup>

Hungary's state territory was legitimized also by contrast to Austria. Hungary's reply note explained that Austria and Hungary could not be compared because their state structures were different. Therefore the principles of Austria's peace treaty could not be applied to Hungary. Austria was described a feudally built state that had never had a national integrity. Slicing districts off from it was justified since the state was fragmented to begin with. Hungary's territory, on the contrary, was a united whole from which it was impossible to separate areas. Instead, in Hungary dynastic interests had never been able to override the national viewpoint. In this way, preserving Hungary's integrity also made sense economically. According to the note, Austria had pursued an expansionist policy and had furthermore treated Hungary like a colony. Hungary had remained agrarian while Austria had industrialized. Customs policy had promoted this development. In other words the note implied that Hungary would not develop in terms of economy, if it were to be divided in the new situation after the "oppression" was over.<sup>668</sup>

This claim of the lack of history in Austria based on the nation can also be seen in the Hungarian argument concerning Western Hungary. In its note on

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<sup>667</sup> Notes of a Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Principal Powers, held in M. Pichon's room, Quai d'Orsay, Paris, on Friday, January 16, 1920, at 2:30 p.m. DBFP/II/75.

<sup>668</sup> Note II. Note de presentation. Neuilly, le 14 janvier 1920. Annexe 40 «Les principes du traité de paix avec l'Autriche ne peuvent point être appliqués à la Hongrie». Les négociations de la paix hongroise. Compte rendu sur travaux de la délégation de paix de Hongrie à Neuilly s/s de janvier à mars 1920. Tome I (1920).

Western Hungary the delegation concentrated on proving that Austria had no rights to the region on the basis of history, economy, or the national self-determination. Since the Hungarian argument referred to the nation as an historic and cultural Hungarian unit rather than an ethnic group Apponyi's delegation characterized Austria's central argument, Western Hungary's German character, as a misinterpretation. The point of departure for the Hungarian claims was the Middle Ages, the situation between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century in the Western Hungarian border region. Hungary stated that the majority of the ancient population had been Slavic and that the region belonged to the sphere of influence of the Hungarian crown. The region had become Habsburgian only through a dynastic arrangement. The Germans in the region had no political organization prior to this; the region was more orientated towards the Hungarian crown.

Secondly the note described the population as "non-Austrian": Western Hungary Germans, or *Héanze* were "*ni Styrien, ni Autricien*". Their culture (songs, customs, language) was not Austrian. In addition, according to Hungary's note, the nationality argument presented by Austria was based on Greater Germany and its agitation, not to the region's own supposedly German character. The population had always been loyal to the Hungarian fatherland – for a millennium – and did not want to change its fatherland. No irrendentism had emerged in the region apart from the time of Bolshevism during 1919 when the decision to annex the region to Austria was being made. In the new, prevailing political circumstances the population orientated more towards "Christian Hungary than socialist Austria".

In sum, Apponyi's idea of a Hungarian nation and an historic Hungary formed the central grounds for his argument concerning Western Hungary. He also complained that no plebiscite had been involved in the annexation of the region to Austria and the Peace Conference had given the region to Austria without asking the opinion of the people. Austria's claim was presented as a "purely egoistical" aspiration to power, serving the policy of Greater Germany. Hungary's notes also refuted as tools of German power policy agitation the economic arguments Austria had presented. Apponyi argued that Western Hungary was economically more important to Hungary than to Vienna and Lower Austria. It was not possible to change a state border on the basis of the Kitchen Garden argument. Thereby the border could not be justified by provisioning or agriculture, as the economic networks included a greater area than that between Western Hungary and Vienna. Threatening the Allies' peace system, Hungary claimed that, if provisioning were a sufficient ground for border changes, Hungary could itself legitimately incorporate Transylvanian territories.

Finally Hungary's note explained that annexing Western Hungary to Austria would deteriorate the conditions in Western Hungary and provide only marginal benefit to Austria. The industry in Western Hungary would suffer if the border was moved: as a part of Austria the region's industry would have no raw materials, i.e. coal. The trade would suffer as the railway connections

would be broken. Particularly the city of Sopron and its surroundings would suffer if the sovereignty changed. Instead of a benefit, Western Hungary would become an economic burden to Austria. Even though Hungary could not use ethnicity as an argument against making Western Hungary part of Austria, it could use ethnicity to support the economic argument. The region's sugar production was interestingly linked to nationality: according to the note, the factories were located in Hungarian areas.

According to the Hungarian delegation, Western Hungary would languish as part of Austria, its annexation begin a move against history, geography, economy, and the rights and will of the people. Austria was an "enemy": historically - particularly in 1848 - Austria had caused suffering for Hungary and quenched Hungary's freedom through "Tsarism". Territorial cession would be a historic injustice, a reward for an imperial oppressor and a state presently orientated towards Greater Germany. Hungary's notes thereby referred to hostilities not only from the past but also from the present: a Realpolitik threat, i.e. Germany. On these grounds the Hungarian delegation proposed changing the Treaty of Saint-Germain or, if the Peace Conference so desired, arranging a plebiscite.<sup>669</sup>

### 6.3 Reinvestigating or safeguarding the new Hungarian borders?

How, then, did Hungary's arguments fit together with the policy of the Allies? A central question while discussing the question of Western Hungary was how the Peace Conference saw Hungary as a part of the peace system. There were present at the same time two general opinions towards the Hungarian treaty: first, some voiced a strong tendency to avoid reopening the question. They argued that the new borders were safe for Realpolitik and at the same time fair for nations since they respected the system of neighbouring successor states. Others, however, showed a willingness to apply national self-determination in the context of Hungary and tended to emphasize the role of Hungary in the peace process.

The Allies' points of departure for the formulation of the peace treaty have been considered negative towards Hungary from the outset. To quote Macmillan,

"The Hungarian's appeals were futile. The Allies remained suspicious of Hungary.---  
-- If the British and the Americans were cool, the French were actively hostile. French policy was determined by its twin goals of blocking Russian Bolshevism and

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<sup>669</sup> Note XV Concernant la Hongrie Occidentale. Neuilly, le 26 janvier 1920. Extrait de la Note XV; Annexe 1, Mémoire prouvant que les preuves historiques des prétentions émises par l'Autriche-Allemande sur les parties de langue allemande de la Hongrie Occidentale sont sans fondement; Annexe 3, Mémoire sur la situation économique de la Hongrie Occidentale. Les négociations de la paix hongroise. Compte rendu sur travaux de la délégation de paix de Hongrie à Neuilly s/s de janvier à mars 1920. Tome I (1920).

building up counter-balances to Germany, in this case Hungary's neighbours Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia. Only the Italians were sympathetic, simply because they hoped to use Hungary against Yugoslavia. That both Czechoslovakia and Rumania were able to present their demands as Allies did not help Hungary either."<sup>670</sup>

On the other hand, research on Trianon has shown that initially the Allies had planned for more favourable borders for Hungary after the war. France and Italy had opposed the Western Hungarian Slavic corridor plan, for instance; the Americans and British had also initially planned borders more favourable for Hungary. As Romsics comments, these original borders would have honoured the ethnic line. The change in opinions and policy has been explained by Hungary's neighbours' "greed", which made them change their stand.<sup>671</sup>

The Allies' different views concerning the Hungarian treaty surfaced as soon as discussion began on the principles of the decision-making. The Hungarian peace treaty was discussed in the First Conference of London on February 12-April 10, 1920. After receiving the Hungarian reply the Conference first discussed the decision-making on February 25, 1920. Was the peace treaty simply a series of problematic details needing to be solved, or was about more profound changes, about scrutinising the central principles of the treaty? The British delegates wanted to discuss questions concerning principles<sup>672</sup>, but the French delegation, however, thought this suggestion would reopen the principles of the peace treaties. Instead, the conference must maintain the decisions which it had already taken and therefore, there was no need to discuss the Hungarian treaty. Consequently, there remained only minor questions of detail, which should be referred directly to the Conference of Ambassadors. Lloyd George recommended, however, that the London Conference would examine the Hungarian proposals; not taking "such action would leave the impression of injustice which would rankle in the minds of the Hungarian people". Discussing questions of principles did not automatically mean changing the peace treaty for Lloyd George either. Rather, it was a way to prove the fairness of the negotiations. Instead, it was not a question of altering or not altering the territorial clauses but an investigation of the counter-proposals. Therefore, it was finally agreed that the Hungarian reply should be studied by the Foreign Ministers.<sup>673</sup>

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<sup>670</sup> Macmillan 2002, 267.

<sup>671</sup> Romsics I. 1999, 117.

<sup>672</sup> Lord Curzon suggested that larger questions of principle - economic and territorial questions - should be decided by the Conference, and the minor questions of detail should be referred to the Conference of Ambassadors, where those matters had already been studied. According to Curzon, the Conference of Amabassadors in Paris could not act as a decisionmaker or evaluate the principles, because it hardly possessed the authority to deal with the broader questions of principle. On the other hand, the questions of detail would best be dealt with in Paris, as the experts were there and as the details would take a long time to work out.

<sup>673</sup> British Secretary's Notes of and Allied Conference held at 10, Downing Street, London, S.W.I, on Wednesday, February 25, 1920, at 11.30 a.m. DBFP/VII/26. The questions of principle relating to frontiers and finance should be submitted to and decided by the conference and other matters of detail should be referred to Paris

How did the Peace Conference come to terms with the various points raised by the Hungarian case? How did the Hungarian variation of the national right of self-determination, for example, fit the Peace Conference's points of departure? How could the Conference balance the setting of Hungary's right to state territory against promises made to the successor states as it weighed Hungary's and its neighbours' importance for Central Europe's peace? Obviously, the French delegation contextualized Hungary's arguments as a threat of revisionism and dangers to Realpolitik. Lloyd George<sup>674</sup>, conversely, discussed it within the framework of right of self-determination and justified taking notice of Hungary with the reminder that even Germany's opinion had been taken into account during decision-making about its future.

Legitimizing state territory through an ethnic and self-determining nation joined with arguments about the goals of Realpolitik. While Lloyd George focused on information from an ethnological map which showed the number of Hungarians outside the new Hungarian borders, general secretary in French Ministry for Foreign Affairs Philippe Berthelot, in his turn, claimed that these statistics were unreliable. According to him "Hungary had been built up of denationalized peoples. The original inhabitants of the country were natives and not Magyar. ---After all, what were the Magyars?" He thus questioned the legitimacy of the Hungarian state and territory in the form it was argued by the Hungarians referring to the problem of the Hungarian nation. By doing this he obviously tried to legitimate the existence of the neighbouring new nation-states. Secondly, Berthelot claimed that the Peace Conference and the experts, especially "American professors", had already examined the new borders, thus enlisting the Americans as proponents of French Realpolitik. He also referred to the prestige of President Wilson: what would the President say if the results of this expert investigation were altered? Berthelot argued that the Peace Conference was already committed to the borders, had made a promise, and this was the policy France pursued. Therefore the French government was prepared to accept changes only in small details and opposed any reopening of the question in principle.

At first Italian and British politics were, however, more responsive to the Hungarian concept of nation. Italy's representative Nitti, for his part, emphasized the need to study the situation, because great numbers of the Hungarian population were now being left outside the borders. The concept of justice for Hungary got emphasized as Nitti argued Hungary's importance as part of European policy. To quote Nitti: "every member of the council would

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(CA). The Conference decided that the documentary evidence of the reply should be divided into groups, which should be studied and decided in different organisations of the peace conference. The reply should be studied by the Foreign Ministers, and that the questions of principle relating to frontiers and finance should be submitted to, and decided by the conference; other matters of detail being referred to the Conference of Ambassadors for decision.

<sup>674</sup> On March 3, Lloyd George further emphasized the importance of the reinvestigation of the Hungarian treaty. He seemed to emphasize the role of Hungary in the construction of peace in Central Europe. The Italian representative Nitti also argued that the Hungarian peace conditions should be reconsidered.

admit that Hungary and Austria presented exceedingly difficult problems. They would also admit that Austria must be allowed to exist and that Hungary must have justice." Nitti further explained the meaning of Hungary in the political constellation of Europe. He argued that Hungary "afforded the only real resistance to Bolshevism". A crushed Hungary would mean "the fall of the last fortifications against Bolshevism". Contrary to Berthelot's argument concerning the Hungarian nation, Nitti also explained that Hungary was indeed a 1000-year-old national entity despite the fact that earlier he had stated that it was difficult to define nationalities. Therefore, according to the Italian policy, the Hungarian counter-proposals should be taken into consideration – both on the grounds of nation and on the grounds of prevailing political conditions.

As an answer to Berthelot's arguments concerning Hungarian nation and state, Lloyd George claimed that a mixture of ethnic groups was not a problem and on the contrary, this was a rule and not an exception: the concept of nation was more complex than that and could not be used as an argument here in the way Berthelot had presented it. According to him there were only two pure nationalities in Europe, one in Brittany and one in Wales. That "every other European nation consisted of a mixture of peoples", did not prevent the existence of a national feeling, he explained. The people in Hungary had "Magyar consciousness". This feeling – not pure race – was a decisive factor and should be taken into consideration – "any other policy would be wrong and lead to fatal consequences".

Lloyd George further specified his line concerning modifications and emphasized the principal right of looking at injustices also from Hungary's perspective instead of only from the neighbouring countries' perspectives. Berthelot accepted the principle of examination but not the principle of modifications. In the meeting it was thereby possible to make a decision despite the differences: the documents received from the Hungarian government would be referred to the Foreign Ministers, who would subject them "to fair and conscientious examination in order to arrive at a just settlement."<sup>675</sup>

Western Hungary did not emerge as a separate question in the London meeting apart from memoranda discussing the various regions. In them, Western Hungary was mentioned as an example of the treaty system as a whole.

In spite of the acceptance of the procedure, The French foreign policy leadership did not like the stand of Nitti and Lloyd George, considering it a threat for French politics in Central Europe. This became evident from Foreign Minister Millerand's instructions to Paul Cambon, France's ambassador in London, on March 4, 1920. Millerand paid attention to Western Hungary too. The question of Western Hungary was for France played the same part in maintaining the peace system as did the borders of Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. At the same time, however, France considered the importance

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<sup>675</sup> British Secretary's Notes of an Allied Conference, held at 10, Downing Street, London, S.W. I, on Wednesday, March 3, 1920, at 3.30 p.m. DBFP/VII/46.

of the question of Western Hungary and Austria differently, as the issue did not concern an ally of France. In The French policy Austria was instead a state that should be kept independent from the perspective of the policy of balance. In Western Hungary the issue was not meddling with state territory promised to an ally but meddling with the treaty system. Millerand agreed that the case of Western Hungary could be reassessed in the peace treaty, all the time suspecting that the British would not be prepared to change the decision anyway. He reached this conclusion by noting the way Derby had discussed the issue at the Conference of Ambassadors. Millerand explained that it was difficult to change even this part of the treaty, because changing it could potentially have indicated other territorial problems. He explained the difficulties by stating that the region had been given to Austria not only on ethnic grounds but also as compensation: it was a compensation for other losses. This compensation could not be taken back without endangering the entire system of borders.<sup>676</sup>

In the next Supreme Council meeting the British policy seemed to suit more closely French strategy. Leeper's memorandum, which the Supreme Council discussed on March 8, 1920, concentrated on questions related to Hungary's state territory. According to Leeper, Hungary's proposal meant complete revision of peace and state territory.

Leeper suggested that the Hungarian demand concerning the territorial integrity of Hungary should be denied. He based his argument on the lack of the idea of the unity of the Hungarian nation and on the concept of self-determination – and interpreted these concepts in a different way than the Hungarian peace politicians. In this sense he referred to the desire of people to form independent governments (e.g. Czechoslovakia) or to join with “their Rumanian and Jugo-Slav brethren in the neighbouring kingdoms”. This desire had already been fulfilled by the Allied Powers in 1918 before the end of the war and before the armistice. These nations were finally in arms against the monarchy on the side of the Allied Powers and had declared that they had broken with Hungary in their National Assemblies. He interpreted these acts as the will of the nations.

Secondly, he claimed that Hungary was not a cultural unit either. The language, national churches and historic traditions of the non-Magyar nations had been intact: they were, after all, not Magyarised in spite of the attempts of the Hungarian government. He maintained that Hungary was indeed a geographic and economic unit with some force. He, however, turned down the suggestion that the geographic argument was stronger than that of self-determination. The power of the geographic argument did not suffice to determine a state's territoriality without the argument of self-determination. In a way, Hungary had to be convinced that it was not a natural economic unit.

Leeper suggested that the Hungarian proposal concerning the plebiscite in the ceded territories could be denied by emphasising the impossibility of

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<sup>676</sup> M. Millerand, *Ministre des Affaires étrangères*, à M. Paul Cambon, *Ambassade de France à Londres*. Paris, 4 Mars 1920. DDF/I/201.

carrying out such an enormous operation. National Assemblies of the neighbouring states were a symbol of the will of the people and thus offered an argument for the application of the idea of national self-determination. To Hungary's complaint concerning the nationality conditions in the border region towns, Leeper counter-argued that these regions contained many Hungarians in the midst of non-Hungarian local populations because of administrative reasons.

In his memorandum Leeper also discussed the border between Austria and Hungary. Western Hungary was one additional argument in favour of keeping Hungary's peace treaty intact: if the territorial terms of the treaty were touched, the change would create problems for maintaining Austria's peace treaty and thereby for the entire system of peace treaties. Adding Austria and Western Hungary to the problematic issue of Hungary's borders extended the scope of the problem as Hungary's peace treaty concerned not only Hungary or the new neighbours, but also the stabilisation of the former enemy nation, Austria.

Furthermore, Western Hungary was for Leeper an example of a territorial decision that had already been accepted and that Hungary sought to change.

"Under the Treaty of St.Germain the German parts of West Hungary were assigned to Austria and that Treaty has not only been signed by the Allied Powers as well as by Austria, but has been ratified by the latter. The Hungarian government are refusing to evacuate their troops from this province (sic) in spite of the protests of the Austrian government, and demand that a plebiscite should be held there. The Austrian government are perfectly willing to grant a plebiscite eventually, but insist that the Hungarians should first of all carry out the Treaty which the Allied Powers on their part as well as Austria have promised to fulfil."

Leeper thus suggested that if the Supreme Council was, after all, ready to reconsider the borders, the changes could only be made with the consent and co-operation of these states: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania. Problems would, however, emerge. To carry out these changes with their co-operation would take "an exceedingly long time", and in the meantime the Hungarian demands would eventually be raised very high: should the question of frontiers really be re-opened, the Hungarian peace treaty would be delayed. Leeper warned that the effect on the peace would be fatal. Therefore he suggested that any minor injustices there might exist in the Hungarian peace treaty could be remedied only after the treaty had been signed and peace restored.

With this reasoning Leeper indirectly framed the issue of Western Hungary as a "minor problem or minor injustice". Leeper suggested that this policy would be carried out so that the demarcation commissions could be sent out to survey the new frontiers. The commissions would report on the matter to the League of Nations which might later on, at the request of either the parties interested, use its "good offices to negotiate frontier rectifications in the interests of both sides. This assurance might, if desired, be given to the



Hungarian government."<sup>677</sup> Using the League of Nations in the delimitation phase therefore represented a democratic policy instead of a plebiscite.

Berthelot also paid attention to the frontier between Austria and Hungary, since Hungary had put forward claims pertaining to it even though the treaty with Austria had already been signed. He argued that the details of the Austrian peace treaty, as well as its sheer existence, provided reasons not to open the Hungarian treaty anymore. Opening the Hungarian treaty would necessitate opening the Austrian treaty, too: "How, then, could that treaty now be revised?" The threat was becoming an increasingly difficult situation in Central Europe and a threat to the peace system as a whole.

The attitude model proposed by Leeper was accepted on the level of principle. The discussion was dominated by a strong tendency for preserving the peace treaty in principle, but on the other hand the possibility of revision without altering the major lines was also being discussed.

The setting of the question of Western Hungary – Austria's and Hungary's mutual contacts in spite of the differing views and discussing a plebiscite – could offer a cognitive point of departure for the solution of other border problems: "levelling them out" without danger to the treaty system. The idea of inter-state treaties on borders could thereby compensate for losses dictated by peace treaties and level out the organisation of the peace system in Europe.

The Allied reply to Hungary, Leeper's suggested, should stress the fact that the basis of the treaty was unchangeable, but that details might still be negotiable. Concerning the details of the borders, Hungary could be told that the international community was prepared to correct local flaws, if any were found in the treaty. Therefore, as a conclusion Leeper suggested that the details of the border disputes might finally be settled alternatively by consulting the League of Nations and Delimitation Commissions. Preservation in principle was considered important from the viewpoint of the surrounding countries' policies: from the point of view of their general political importance it was better not to reopen questions concerning state territories. On the other hand particularly the British circles emphasized the political importance of self-determination: if self-determination materialized, the likelihood of conflicts also diminished. The League of Nations, a new opportunity for international politics, thereby represented an escape route from the problems of Realpolitik.

Berthelot was also willing to accept that Hungary be given the option of closer application of self-determination at a later stage. At any rate, he thought that it would be better to keep "our Allies and friends on our side rather than to try and please our enemies". It was still, however, in Italy's best interests to support Hungary. In this sense Scialoja's and Nitti's arguments seemed to be based on the idea of Hungary's rights. They argued that it was only fair to reconsider some details of the frontier.

The decision to include the possibility to reconsider Hungarian borders in this sense, at the local level, was formulated at the meeting by Curzon.

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<sup>677</sup> A.W.A Leeper, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1920. Memorandum by the Foreign Office on the Hungarian Peace Treaty. Supreme Council. DBFP/VII/54.

Hungary's rights would not be ignored, and at the same time the peace system would retain its principle. The changes would occur on the delimitation level and therefore be local.

"Would it not be possible to provide that if these commissions found after due enquiry on the spot, that in certain areas injustice had been done and modifications were required, they should be at liberty to report their conclusions to the League of Nations? It might further be provided that if the League of Nations was then asked by either party to do so, it could undertake to use its good offices to rectify the frontier amicably at the places where modifications were considered desirable."<sup>678</sup>

The *modus operandi* proposed by Curzon contained two elements of the "new international policy": delimitation of borders and the League of Nations' role therein. Berthelot, who praised the move as "an ingenious suggestion", wanted to set limits for the changes, to define the role and capability of the delimitation commissions and the League of Nations in "the re-examining delimitating process". He thought that the Delimitation Commission should be given authority only to indicate specific points on this frontier where they considered that modification was desirable. The League of Nations should be invited only to adjudicate on these specific points.<sup>679</sup> The French and British views thereby moved closer to each other in terms of the border question. Through Curzon's presentation Berthelot interpreted that the British policy did not aim at revision of the Hungarian treaty.<sup>680</sup>

The discussion concerning Hungary's peace treaty as a whole was later to influence the question of Western Hungary, precisely on the basis of the decision taken in this meeting, the possibilities of delimitation. During the preparation of the Treaty of Trianon, the issue of Western Hungary made problems concerning Hungary's state territory appear larger. Solving Hungary's problems would involve not only Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, but, because of Western Hungary, Austria as well. The conclusion was that the annexation of Western Hungary to Austria could not be reconsidered because doing so would reopen the basis for Austria's stabilization and the Treaty of Saint-Germain. Furthermore, it would have created a precedent for other questions concerning Hungary.

At the time the Hungarian peace treaty was being prepared, the United States was no longer actively participating in the Peace Conference, but it is true that American policy slogans from Paris in 1919 still proved useful in the Supreme Council. The American stand regarding the treaty is nevertheless transmitted through the comments of the diplomatic corps, the Department of

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<sup>678</sup> British Secretary's Notes of a Conference of Ambassadors and Foreign Ministers, held in Lord Curzon's Room at the British Foreign Office, Whitehall, London, S.W. I, on Monday, March 8, 1920, at 4.30 p.m. DBFP/VII/54.

<sup>679</sup> British Secretary's Notes of a Conference of Ambassadors and Foreign Ministers, held in Lord Curzon's Room at the British Foreign Office, Whitehall, London, S.W. I, on Monday, March 8, 1920, at 4.30 p.m. DBFP/VII/54.

<sup>680</sup> M. Berthelot, Directeur des Affaires politiques et commerciales, à M. Millerand, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, de la part de M. Berthelot. Londres, 9 mars 1920, 13 h. 40. DDF/I/223.

State, and the CA discussions. In the opinion of the Department of State the decision on Hungary's borders and in particular the decision concerning the way to re-examine them was correct. The possibility of reassessments was presented as positive, but at the same time the decision not to revise the treaties was welcomed. The Americans apparently saw the possibility of re-considering the border areas as more important than the Europeans did.<sup>681</sup>

#### **6.4 Combining the fulfilment of the treaties and the demonstration of the self-determination – the covering letter**

It was important in terms of the development of the question of Western Hungary that the decision about delimitation be included in the letter covering the Treaty of Trianon. The possibility of re-examining Hungary's borders locally became the central argument in Hungary's revision policy, particularly in 1921. The covering letter presented a compromise between the Allies' different lines. There are various interpretations about the history of its birth and its meaning especially in Hungarian historical writing. One interesting theme has been France's role in defining delimitation, as well as the contacts between France and Hungary, and the Hungarian interpretation of the letter. Ádám (1993) has explained that the French Foreign Minister Maurice Paléologue tried to make the covering letter look to the Hungarians like the French government was behind it, although, according to Ádám, France had opposed it. Although Millerand did not sign the covering letter in his role as the French Prime Minister but as a representative of the Allies, Hungarian government linked the letter to French government.<sup>682</sup> Romsics (2001) has noted that the activities of the British rather than the French were behind it.<sup>683</sup> However, the articulation of the covering letter evidences an input of both.

Lord Derby brought up the passage in the peace treaty concerning Hungary's borders in the CA's meeting on March 31, 1920. The first task for the CA was to decide whether the possibility of local territorial changes connected to the delimitation should be defined in the peace treaty proper, or whether it would be expressed in the covering letter. Derby himself thought that the decision "must not figure in the actual text of the treaty, but in the covering letter to the Hungarian government." The French government was also in favour of expressing the decision only in the covering letter. The government considered it important that the peace treaty contain no detours to change decisions about borders and thereby alter the peace treaty itself. For this reason the French also emphasized the determination and limitation of the border commissions' powers. According to Laroche, alterations in the peace treaty

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<sup>681</sup> Department of State (Colby) to the American Embassy, Paris (Hugh C. Wallace). Washington, March 25, 1920. ADAUBA/165.

<sup>682</sup> Ádám 1993, 61-62.

<sup>683</sup> Romsics I. 2001, 188.

could result in border changes that would be significant from the Allies' point of view, and therefore dangerous, for example on the Yugoslavian border where Hungary could present credible grounds for changes.<sup>684</sup>

Minimising border changes in the delimitation was important especially to France. In his instructions to Ambassador Paul Cambon in London, Millerand presented Great Britain and Italy as being potentially opposed to The French policy. Particularly Italy was thought to support not only local modifications but a right to more extensive rectification and the inclusion of the delimitation definition in the actual peace treaty. Similarly, the British were interpreted as veering towards a more comprehensive possibility for frontier changes than the line France pursued, as British representatives in the Supreme Council and the CA had wanted alongside the Delimitation Commission to give Hungary and its neighbours an opportunity to propose territorial changes to the League of Nations. Because The French policy was to restrict the possibility of modifications, its objective was to articulate a covering letter that would limit the modification as exactly as possible to the Delimitation Commission only. The fact that the text appeared in the covering letter and not the treaty was crucially important, because the covering letter would not be as binding as the treaty.<sup>685</sup>

In sum, the British saw injustices in the borders, but the treaty that had already been accomplished had to be preserved. The covering letter obviously offered a chance for peaceful compromise. France, for its part, sensed restlessness in the situation, and therefore the treaty had to be kept in effect. Both countries saw potential problems within the post-war system.

The draft for the covering letter was transmitted on April 4, 1920, by the Peace Conference to the *Direction politique et commerciale*.<sup>686</sup> The final text of the covering letter was transmitted to the Hungarian delegation on May 6, 1920. The actual peace terms were announced to be unchanged, but the covering letter's explanation was that "paying attention to various interests" could leave some room for local re-examinations of the border line in connection to the delimitation. The role of the Delimitation Commission as initiator was crucial, as France had hoped it would be. Having detected flaws in the border line, the Delimitation Commission could report them to the League of Nations. The League of Nations then could, if one of the parties so requested, offer to revise the original agreement under the same conditions the border commission had proposed. The role of the neighbouring countries was limited to the effect that they could only request the League of Nations to realize the corrections proposed by the commission.

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<sup>684</sup> Notes of a meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors held at the Quai d'Orsay, Wednesday, March 31, 1920, at 19:30 a.m. ADAUBA/167.

<sup>685</sup> M. Millerand, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, à M. Paul Cambon, Ambassadeur de France à Londres. Paris, 31 mars 1920, 23 h.35. DDF/vol. I/315.

<sup>686</sup> See the footnote no 2. M. Millerand, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, à M. Paul Cambon, Ambassadeur de France à Londres. Paris, 31 mars 1920, 23 h.35. DDF/I/315.

On the general level the covering letter justified the orders in the peace treaty on the basis of the past – Hungary’s war guilt – and the future – Hungary’s role as a part of stable Europe. It concentrated on explaining the grounds of the state territory through the idea of justice. In that justice, the central aspect was the will of the people – not ethnicity in itself. The covering letter explained that the ethnographic conditions in Central Europe made a matching of political frontiers with ethnographic frontiers impossible. Therefore the Allied and Associated Powers had, despite their goodwill, been unable to influence the fact that some of the Hungarian population had been left on the territory of another state. A plebiscite as a means of determining borders was explained as correct but unnecessary, since the nations had had the chance to express its will in October and November 1918 when the new states had been founded. The border changes thereby already leaned on the will of the people, so there was no need for a plebiscite. The covering letter also rejected as illusory proposals for autonomy. Such proposals did not change the historic reality that Hungary had oppressed nations. In this case history did not represent justice; instead, the will of the nation had been to get out of the historic space.

Thereby the covering letter implied that Hungary’s peace treaty adhered to the doctrine of right of self-determination. From the viewpoint of the question of Western Hungary, the most interesting part of the covering letter, the question of delimitation, was justified by pointing out that the goals of peace could contradict local interests. In other words, local injustices could have been left in the borders for the sake of a greater good: peace in Europe. Thus, ethnic and economic factors could in places be problematic in relation to an ideal border leaning on the national self-determination, i.e. the peace treaty’s “justified border”. The covering letter explained local border changes could be made during the delimitation process for this reason.<sup>687</sup>

In sum, from the war victors’ point of view Hungary was to fit into the total system of the successor states in terms of policy and economy as regards the state territory. Hungary’s peace treaty was for the Allies a part of a system of treaties by which Europe’s states were organized after the First World War. The question of Western Hungary appeared in the preparations for Hungary’s peace treaty as one element of the whole: unlike in the summer of 1919 during Austria’s peace negotiations, no detailed discussion took place and the decision was not seriously evaluated on a Peace Conference level, although such ideas were suggested among the Allies’ own diplomacy. Instead, the question emerged in the Conference discussion as an example of the problems involved with reopening the treaty system. For Western Hungary the peace treaty of Trianon was a repetition of the treaty of Saint-Germain. The question was obviously secondary to Hungary’s other territorial questions, but at the same time it furthered the Allies’ goals: both the need to stick to the already accomplished system and the opportunity to consult the borders again on the

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<sup>687</sup> M. Millerand, Président de la Conférence de la Paix, au président de la Délégation hongroise. Lettre d’envoi du Traité de Paix entre les Puissances alliées et associées et la Hongrie. Paris, 6 mai 1920. DDF/I/445.

local level. The question of the border between Austria and Hungary became important to the Allies because upholding in Hungary's peace treaty the arrangements preordained in the Austrian treaty moved the losing state of Austria into the camp of the successor states.

For the Allies the essential question while preparing the Treaty of Trianon and during the executive CA stage was how to adhere to the peace treaty system as well as to effect cooperation between states. The covering letter can be viewed as an example of "new" policy, where alleviating the treaty and involving local measures and international cooperation (the League of Nations) in the decision-making would pacify the situation and prevent conflicts in the future.

Later the juxtaposition of the covering letter's idea about local agreements and re-examinations with the notion of the peace treaty's permanence set the stage for the discussion on Western Hungary: how to realize the peace system and how to react to the prevailing images which threatened to shake the stability of all Europe as the border question drifted into a crisis.

## 6.5 Question of French activities in Central Europe: trading with Western Hungary?

Apart from the question of France's role in the preparation of the covering letter, negotiations between France and Hungary as a phenomenon paralleling the Peace Conference have received attention in literature concerning The Hungarian foreign policy.<sup>688</sup> France's Central European policy in 1920, when Hungary's peace treaty was being formulated, was constructed primarily on the basis of a system of successor states formed from Hungary's neighbouring countries. The question of Western Hungary also fit into a part of this policy.

In 1920 France paid attention to Hungary's role in its power political *barrier de l'est* thinking. At the same time as France stuck to the peace system and the interests of its barrier states against the interests of Hungary, it looked for Hungarian support for this very system. The means to enact this policy were economic, but from Hungary's perspective, however, the question was gaining territorial concessions with the help of France. The question of Western Hungary was linked to the negotiations between France and Hungary as a part of Hungary's other territorial questions.<sup>689</sup> Previously the question of Western Hungary had emerged in French policy in connection to Czechoslovakia and Austria.

The logic of the French policy vis-à-vis Hungary was actually similar to its policy vis-à-vis Austria: how to control the losing parties of the war. Austria as an independent state separate from Germany was an essential element in the

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<sup>688</sup> The French-Hungarian economic contacts have been emphasized especially by Juhász 1979. More up-to-date interpretation, see Romsics I. 2001, 191-203.

<sup>689</sup> See the map in Romsics I. 2001, 192.

French policy in 1920, when the peace system relying on treaties was still incomplete. This could be seen also in the comments about Western Hungary. France's diplomatic representatives in Central Europe and the Foreign Ministry in Paris saw that Austria's independence could be realized through the execution of the Treaty of Saint-Germain. The Hungarian treaty had to be based on treaties and promises previously made to other successor states since changing the Hungarian treaty in terms of Western Hungary would have meant changing the Austrian treaty as well.

As in the autumn of 1919, Allizé, in January, 1920, still defined for France a central role in the construction of Austria. In this project, France took the Treaty of Saint-Germain as the point of departure, and used economic means to reach its goals. In Allizé's opinion, only the French policy could work for Austria's viability. In spite of problems he considered Austria a potentially reliable state. In his opinion, Austria could be the centre for mutual cooperation between the successor states - Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia. This cooperation would work against Germany. The threat from Germany could be thwarted by supporting the new, independent Austria and by strengthening the Western influence in the heart of Central Europe, like in Vienna.<sup>690</sup>

In Paris the Foreign Ministry's reaction to Allizé's views was clearly positive. Millerand commented on January 4, 1920, that France should notify the Austrian Chancellor that Austria's independence was essential to France and the Allies. On the other hand, linking Austria to Germany through a pan-Germanic policy would represent a policy opposed to France's interests.<sup>691</sup> Millerand outlined the French policy further on May 5, 1920. He now gave Vienna's legation led by Lefèvre-Pontalis instructions to consider Austria a small state whose viability was in the hands of outsiders. Therefore France supported Austria's economic conditions. Millerand explained that Austria's neighbours had to be persuaded to follow a policy along the French line. According to him, influence or hostility from abroad threatened Austria. Czechoslovakia was still ruled by obviously hostile images inherited from the Habsburg era and would not help Austria. Germany aimed at incorporating Austria into itself. Hungary could be a potential help to Austria. But Austria's role would require the Allies' control, because failing that, Austrian policy could start sliding back in Germany's direction. Austria had to be turned away from Berlin in terms of economy and culture alike. France also had to react to the fact that Italy pursued an egoistic policy towards Austria and aspired to increasing its influence in Austria.

France considered essential the channelling of the cooperation between Central European countries for its own benefit. The idea the British had expressed in Trianon negotiations about economic cooperation, expanding the states' economic space as a safeguard for peace, was not far from the French

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<sup>690</sup> Note de M. Allizé sur la politique de la France en Autriche. Paris, 26 janvier 1920. DDF/ I/52.

<sup>691</sup> M. Millerand, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, à M. Allizé, Chargé de Mission à Vienne. Paris, 4 avril 1920. DDF/I/337.

policy. Be that as it may, the High Commissioner Lefèvre-Pontalis had to influence both the other Allied representatives and the “little allies” – Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Poland – so that they would support Austria’s independence. France had to make them see that resentment rising from history belonged to the past now that they had gained national independence. The task of the Central European allies was thereby also to pursue a pro-French policy through Austria.<sup>692</sup>

Czechoslovakia and Austria nevertheless played a different role in the French foreign policy: the task of one was to act in Central Europe and the task of the other was to remain independent, controlled. The task of them both was to abide by these roles to stop the formation of a political threat – Greater Germany. As Berthelot instructed Clément-Simon, Minister of France in Prague, on January 2, 1920, prior to Renner’s trip to Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovakia’s task was for its part to support Austria’s viability. This viability would be realized through the successor states’ mutual cooperation so that Austria would not seek for support from Germany and cause Bohemia to be “surrounded” by German influences. The Minister had to act so that the old hostility between Austria and Hungary would not rear its ugly head but the relationship would improve. Berthelot explained to the Minister that he had to convince the Czechoslovakian leadership that France’s friendly policy towards Austria did not spell hostility towards the allies. He was to tell Beneš that Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia had to work as tutors of sorts to Austria.<sup>693</sup>

On the other hand, in spite of encouraging the Czechoslovakian leadership to establish relations with Austria and to “guard” Austria in order to enforce its viability, the French policy did not allow the Czechs to intervene militarily. Underlying this logic was the idea that an intervention by a country that did not belong to the Allies – a party of the peace treaty – would be a sign of the system’s instability and could result in a conflict. Military actions could collapse the peace treaty system. In the case of Western Hungary, the French Foreign Ministry reacted in this sense towards rumours of movements of Czech troops in Western Hungary in the region of Bratislava.<sup>694</sup>

The French view on Austria’s state territory and the strategy concerning it can also be derived from France’s barrier policy of limiting Germany’s power. The issue was not always taking Austria’s side in territorial questions; the perspective depended on who it was advantageous to support within the alliance policy context. Millerand urged Lefèvre-Pontalis to pay attention to two Austrian territorial questions: Vorarlberg and Klagenfurt. In the case of Vorarlberg the issue was the necessity to prevent the region’s separatism, which

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<sup>692</sup> M. Millerand, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*, à M. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Ministre Plénipotentiaire, Haut-Commissaire de la République française à Vienne*. Paris, 5 mai 1920. DDF/I/439.

<sup>693</sup> M. Clément-Simon, *Ministre de France à Prague*, à M. Clemenceau, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères par intérim*. Prague, 11 janvier 1920, 1 h. 40. DDF/I/2.

<sup>694</sup> M. Millerand, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*, aux *Représentants diplomatiques français à Prague, Londres, Rome et Vienne*. Paris, 18 février 1920, 16 h.30. DDF/I/134.



would have threatened the integrity of the Austrian state and possibly fragmented it into a part of Germany. In the case of Klagenfurt, the advantageous policy represented a part of the Treaty of Saint-Germain which France considered favourable from the perspective of the Slavic states: Klagenfurt's future, unlike that of Vorarlberg, was not to be part of Austria and its integrity and independence; instead, the region was seen as a part of Yugoslavia's future. In terms of a plebiscite, France's sympathies were on the side of Yugoslavia.<sup>695</sup>

In the same manner as Austria was a part of the system and could be harnessed to the French policy through economy, Hungary could also be tied to it. In this way there would be no contradiction at all between Trianon's enemy policy and the agreement between France and Hungary that has become a historical myth: at the same time as Hungary was placed into a part of the Central European system of states founded in 1918-1919 through a "territorially punishing" peace treaty, it was also taken into a part of the French policy within the context of a "rewarding" policy. Hungary, whose state territory would have been stabilized through the treaty and whose neighbours' situation would have thereby stabilized as well, was simultaneously located in a part of the system by inviting it to become an economic "ally". As the French used promises of concessions to the peace treaty as the "carrot" of this policy, this political phase could have earned the reputation of "betrayal" in Hungarian historical writing.<sup>696</sup>

On March 6, 1920, Millerand gave High Commissioner Jean Doucet in Budapest instructions on the French policy towards Hungary. In the instructions, the foundations of the legation's activities were the peace terms the Supreme Council had determined as final. Hungarian government had to be made to understand that the peace terms and their realisation were not negotiable. France had to try to pursue this policy in a way that would gain the other Allies' support for it. Cooperation was necessary "pour la consolidation de la paix". The policy thereby had to be pursued in harmony with the representatives of the other Allies but at the same time not endanger France's own interests. In addition to preserving the cooperation with the Allies and securing France's interests, Millerand listed the safeguarding of Hungary's neighbouring countries as the principle of France's Central European policy.

The internal politics were not without importance: Millerand presented the republic form of government as the safest alternative to prevent aggressive Hungarian nationalism and to safeguard the neighbouring countries. If Hungary remained a monarchy, it would have to be its domestic affair: Habsburg restoration and the return of the old system to Central Europe had to be prevented. A political union in Central Europe was a threatening image, but economic cooperation between Central European countries and making trading

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<sup>695</sup> M. Millerand, *Ministre des Affaires Étrangères*, à M. Lefèvre-Pontalis, *Ministre Plénipotentiaire*, Haut-Commissaire de la République française à Vienne. Paris, 5 mai 1920. DDF/I/439.

<sup>696</sup> Romsics I. 1999, 119-121; Swanson 2001, 189-215.

easier was advantageous from France's viewpoint. France's authority and presence in Hungary was preferable also in the sense that it could alienate Hungary from Germany's authority through spreading French culture: its presence in Hungary would be protection against Germany – as in the case of Austria, both “*sur le terrain intellectuel*”, “*sur le terrain économique*” and “*sur le terrain politique*” were important when the goal was a system benefiting France.<sup>697</sup>

From Hungary's perspective the negotiations appeared to be an attempt to revise an unfavourable peace treaty, and they have also been interpreted so later on. The territory of Western Hungary was a part of Hungary's territorial change demands which it proposed to France as compensation for economic benefits to be given to France. France for its part presented the negotiations as economic negotiations and an opportunity for economic cooperation between France and the neighbouring countries; at the same time it proposed support to Hungary for cooperation with the neighbouring countries in a way allowed for by the *lettre d'envoi*, the covering letter. In Hungary's territorial modification proposal to France, Western Hungary was presented as a plebiscite region similar to Banat region.<sup>698</sup>

For the Hungarian state leadership the negotiations with France led to an obviously long-lasting belief that France would support revision in Western Hungary. This belief could be seen particularly in the increasingly feverish Hungarian stalling policy of 1921, looking for a way to prevent the territory's cession to Austria. However, France continued to act within the context of the Allies' organizations.

## 6.6 Reactions towards conflicting national policy in the border area

From the beginning of 1920 and especially during 1921, the significant decisions concerning Western Hungary were made in Paris at the Conference of Ambassadors (CA), because the realization of the peace treaty was carried out under its rule. From the autumn of 1920 to the spring of 1921, the Conference concentrated on the practical clearing of the cession and preparations for its organization. Naturally, the CA appeared to continue the maintenance of the peace treaty system, preparing for the practical realisation of the peace treaty, but at the same time it reacted to the prevailing circumstances. Its reaction has been interpreted as “overstepping the powers” and politicising.<sup>699</sup>

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<sup>697</sup> M. Millerand, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, à M. Doulcet, Haut-Commissaire français en Hongrie. Paris, 6 mars 1920. DDF/I/211. Doulcet was nominated on 8.1.1920. Maurice Fouchet followed him in the same year.

<sup>698</sup> See the map in Romsics I. 2001, 192 and in PDRFRH/I.

<sup>699</sup> Heideking 1979, 153.

The Conference of Ambassadors continued the Supreme Council's tasks to realize the peace treaties in January 1920. To the CA, the question of Western Hungary was at this point, before the completion of Hungary's peace treaty, a part of the realization of Austria's peace treaty. The first discussions mainly involved the Allies' role in the process. The CA carried out the measures that the Supreme Council had launched to cede Western Hungary to Austria.

The CA decided in its meeting on February 2, 1920, to send the Interallied Military Commission to Sopron immediately.<sup>700</sup> The decision reflected both the Allied and Austrian interest. Obviously, the CA's aim was to maintain political balance and the system created in the Austrian peace treaty. The motives for setting up the commission were based on the unrest caused by Hungarians.<sup>701</sup> The decision also reflected the Italian viewpoints on Central European politics. Italy's representative Count Lelio Bonin Longare was eager to start a discussion concerning Czech influence over Austrian politics and armed operations in Western Hungary. His motives were most obviously based on the negotiations between Austria and Czechoslovakia in the beginning of 1920. Bonin Longare proposed that in this situation it would be wisest to send an Allied commission to the region so that Austria would not need to accept military aid from Czechoslovakia. In this way the Czechs would gain no foothold in Western Hungary.<sup>702</sup>

Bonin Longare also noted that the concentration of Czech troops and their potential strength in numbers broke the terms of the peace treaty of Saint-Germain and endangered peace in the region. The CA eventually decided to send a request to Prague to verify the movements of Czechoslovak troops on the frontier of the Hungarian comitats and to inform the Czechoslovak government that the Allies would not allow the challenging of Saint-Germain's decisions.<sup>703</sup>

The Austrian government was satisfied with the Allies' decision to send a military commission to Sopron. However, the government wished to mention that, in the Hungarian environment and influenced by Hungarian officers, the mission would receive a biased picture of the situation. For example, Renner wrote on February 13 to the Foreign Ministry that it had come to his attention that the Hungarians had feted the representatives of the commission

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<sup>700</sup> In the background were the Supreme Council's decisions on October 2, 1919, and December 31, 1919, to set up the commission. The commission was also called Interallied Military Commission of Sopron/Ödenburg or Interallied Commission of Sopron/Ödenburg.

<sup>701</sup> See for example Note from the French delegation on the Situation in the Comitats of Western Hungary 30 Dec. 1919. Appendix K to HD 120. FRUS PPC IX; also see Appendix K to No 49. DBFP/II.

<sup>702</sup> Notes of a meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors held at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, Monday, February 2, 1920, at 11 a.m. No 132 ADAUBA; Conference of Ambassadors 2 Feb. 1920 No 10 C.A. 3 (II). FO 374/17B, NA.

<sup>703</sup> CA 11 14 Feb. 1920. FO 893/1, NA; Notes of a meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors held at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, Saturday, February 14, 1920, at 4:30 p.m. ADAUBA/137.

abundantly.<sup>704</sup> The Austrian government asked for permission to send a number of Austrian representatives to the commission so that Austria would get a chance to comment on the claims Hungarian officers made in Sopron and thereby to increase the commission's impartiality. The significance of the people as a political motive strengthening the argument, because Austria claimed the local population had become upset because Allied officers were under Hungarian authority.<sup>705</sup>

The Conference decided to agree to the request of the Austrian delegation. Especially Jules Cambon and Laroche defended the Austrian views. Laroche emphasized the importance of impartiality and wanted to underscore the Allies' duty to abide by the Treaty of Saint-Germain. The territorial advantage Austria had gained was not to be made more difficult. According to him there could be problems ahead, as the Hungarian peace negotiations were not yet over and the Hungarians actively advocating their causes:

"The question is indeed urgent. We must not allow our impartiality to be doubted. The Hungarians are in Paris, and are making every effort to bring once more into question the Treaty of Saint-Germain; further, that which has been done was prompted by a sentiment of justice towards Austria: we were to give her compensation for other territories which have been taken from her; the least that we can do to-day is to cause the inquiry to be of a character of incontestable impartiality."<sup>706</sup>

The defence of Austria was most obviously related to the idea that the peace treaty, including Hungary's redrawn borders, would succeed.

Hungarian government was quick to react to Austria's request. Hungary's peace delegation presented Millerand with notes, asking to send their own representatives to the commission to guarantee impartiality. Apponyi's notes appealed to impartiality and the reactions of the people:

" --- A Commission despatched to a foreign country would not be familiar with all the circumstances and would in particular, be unable to form an impartial opinion if its intercourse with the population in question was carried on with the assistance of only one of the interested parties. That circumstance would, moreover, exercise considerable influence on the manifestations of the population; and the result of an inquiry conducted under like conditions would be without any conclusive value."<sup>707</sup>

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<sup>704</sup> Staatskanzler Renner an Staatsamt für Äusseres. Wien, 13. Februar 1920. ADÖ/3/427.

<sup>705</sup> CA12 Appendix I Eichhoff to Cambon 15 Feb. 1920. FO 893/1, NA; Johann Andreas Eichhoff to Jules Cambon, President of the Conference of Ambassadors, Paris, February 15, 1920. Appendix I. ADAUBA/139. Also see Staatskanzler Renner an Generalkonsul Halstead, Gesandten Allizé, Hochkommissar Lindley und Gesandten Torretta. Wien, 14. Februar 1920. ADÖ/3/428.

<sup>706</sup> CA 12. 17 Feb. 1920. FO893/1, NA. Also see Notes of a meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors held at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, Tuesday, February 17, at 4 p.m.. ADAUBA/139.

<sup>707</sup> CA 14 Appendix B Apponyi to Millerand 18 Feb. 1920; Appendix C Apponyi to Millerand 21 Feb.1920. FO 893/2, NA; The English quotation: Note from the Hungarian Delegation regarding the adjunction of Magyar Delegates to the Allied Commission sent to the Comitats of Western Hungary. Count Albert Apponyi to Alexandre Millerand February 18, 1920 Appendix B ADAUBA/146.

The policy of impartiality and objectivity France presented in the CA did not indicate a wish to change the peace treaties, however. The border of Saint-Germain was still binding for the French. In Cambon's opinion the Hungarians should nevertheless be granted permission to send their representatives to the commission in the spirit of equality. He made the same reference as Apponyi's note: Hungarian authority had up to now been "only" unofficial. The commission had the licence to mingle with anybody unofficially, but as Austria had their representatives, Hungary also should have them. Therefore, the Conference decided that the Hungarian government "should be authorized to attach two delegates to the Interallied Military Commission despatched to the Comitats of Western Hungary."<sup>708</sup>

The CA received further information and claims concerning the restless situation in Western Hungary. Despite the active participation of the British, the CA was unwilling to intervene before gaining further information.<sup>709</sup>

In April, the Austrian delegation again referred to the Hungarians' influence in Sopron's commission. According to Austria, the mission of the commission did not materialize – it had not protected the population of Hungary from abuses by Hungarian officials and military troops. Therefore the Allies were losing their credibility in terms of the peace treaties. The note claimed that an anonymous representative of the commission had commented that a change in the peace treaty to Hungary's advantage was not an impossible thought. The Austrian notes' characteristic feature of appealing to the dissatisfaction of the people was emphasized here as well. Hungarian government was claimed to charge pro-Austrian inhabitants with treason and to arrest them for it. The note asked whether it was right that people adhering to the peace treaty were treated like this: was it a crime to adhere to the peace treaty, and was it right that the adherence resulted in loss of freedom? On these grounds the Austrian government requested that the CA publish the commission's official instructions and the Peace Conference decision about Western Hungary, which would put a stop to outlaw actions. The Allies should also guarantee that the population's political and economic interests were not disturbed. In addition, the commission's Austrian members should be guaranteed a communication channel to the local people and the Austrian government.<sup>710</sup>

To refer to the threat of communism – a threat representing Realpolitik – was, for its part, Hungary's way at this stage to appeal to the Allies. Hungary claimed that Austrian Communists were acting in the frontier area and Austria was leaning towards the extreme left. The Hungarian delegation, asking the

<sup>708</sup> CA 14 25 Feb.1920. FO 893/2, NA; Notes of a meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors held at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, Wednesday, February 25, 1920, at 10:30 a.m. ADAUBA/146. The English quotation bases on the ADAUBA document.

<sup>709</sup> British Embassy (Derby) March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1920. Appendix 1. ADAUBA/151; Notes of a meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors held at the Quai d'Orsay, Paris, Thursday, March 4, 1920, at 10:30 a.m. ADAUBA/151.

<sup>710</sup> Eichhoff to the President of the Conference of Ambassadors 14 Apr.1920. FO 374/15/116, NA; Bevollmächtigter Eichhoff an Präsident der Botschafter Millerand (Paris). Paris, 14. April 1920. ADO/3/440.

attention of the CA, claimed that the communist propaganda was becoming more intense in Western Hungary too. The border districts were “flooded with communist pamphlets”.<sup>711</sup>

In early June 1920, Austrian government for its part requested that the Allies take measures guaranteeing the cession of Western Hungary. Their complaints appealed to the claim that Hungarian government hindered the realization of the Treaty of Saint-Germain. First, the Austrian government complained to the Allies that Hungarian’s patrolling on the border caused difficulties and that, until the cession took place, the region would be ripe for conflicts. Eichhoff claimed that the Hungarians were organising military activities on the border district. Austrians had also been recruited – by the Hungarian frontier service. In other words Eichhoff implied that Hungary did not honour Austria’s state territory and thereby its obligation to cede the region. The note also referred to the mood of the population: in order to soothe the population, the Allies needed to act on behalf of the cession.<sup>712</sup>

Austria proposed that all territorial arrangements related to Hungary’s peace treaty be linked to each other: Hungary would get the areas to be ceded to it, like Pécs from Yugoslavia, only after it had ceded Western Hungary to Austria. In the note dated June 2, 1920, the Austrians again emphasized the urgent nature of the matter by stating that annexing Western Hungary to Austria was important to Austria in terms of politics and economy and implicitly so to the Allies, too.<sup>713</sup> The objective was to remind the Allies that uniting Western Hungary with Austria was advantageous from the Allies’ viewpoint as well: the Hungarian policy caused unrest and weakened Austria’s condition – which again endangered the peace system.

Concrete facts about the border district unrest formed the basis for Austria’s central argument when it asked for support from the Allies.<sup>714</sup> Eichhoff again commented in his note to Millerand on June 18, 1920, that Hungary opposed the Allies, while Austria was on their side. A concrete example used was the reception of Colonel Antal Lehár’s division in Sopron, which was described in the note as “a political manifestation”. The operation of Lehár’s troops and Hungarian manifestations spoke according to Austria about the Hungarians’ desire to strengthen the city’s position as part of Hungary rather than prepare for the cession.<sup>715</sup>

Between July and September 1920, the Austrian government still complained about Hungarians’ attacks against Austrian citizens and demanded that Hungary take action to prevent turmoil. Additionally, Hungary had to

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<sup>711</sup> The Chargé d’Affaires of the Hungarian Delegation to Alexandre Millerand. Versailles, May 13, 1920. ADAUBA/169.

<sup>712</sup> Johann Andreas Eichhoff to Alexander Millerand, Paris, June 1, 1920. ADAUBA/170.

<sup>713</sup> Eichhoff to the President of the Conference of Ambassadors 2 June 1920. FO 374/15/137, NA.

<sup>714</sup> Eichhoff to the President of the Conference of Ambassadors 5 June 1920. FO 374/15/148, NA.

<sup>715</sup> Johann Andreas Eichhoff to Alexandre Millerand, Paris, June 18, 1920. ADAUBA/175.

show a favourable attitude towards evacuating the region. The strikes were explained as offences not only against Austria but the Allies as well. The Austrian government requested that the Allies protect its territory and nation – in other words, to make sure the cession took place.<sup>716</sup>

The Austrian notes thereby referred to increasing military tension in the region if the treaty would not come into force soon and if the cession did not take place rapidly. It can be interpreted that Eichhoff appealed to the Allies' policy leaning on treaties. Hungary's eagerness to use military force and Austria's weakness acted as arguments for the Allies' support of Austria. The danger to Austria's existence was thereby a reason to hasten the execution of the peace treaty.

The disturbances of the summer of 1920 also included a boycott organized in Austria against Hungary, which in Western Hungary affected the border traffic between Austria and Hungary. The boycott was targeted at Hungary's right-wing policy. The key accusation against Hungary was the white terror it pursued. The background force of the boycott was the international labour movement. Thereby it did not remain an issue between Austria and Hungary alone but aroused discussion in wider circles through the international labour union organization. The international labour union movement had already paid attention to Hungary in early spring of 1920. A meeting held in London on May 10, 1920, decided to take action against Hungary's white terror.<sup>717</sup> In terms of the question of Western Hungary, the boycott mainly reflected the mood of the population: the halted border traffic had the greatest impact on the trade of agricultural products and thereby Western Hungarian peasants and the labour that could not get from Western Hungary to their workplaces in Austria.<sup>718</sup> The boycott gave the Hungarian government a reason to accuse Austria of propaganda in Western Hungary.<sup>719</sup>

In sum, the arguments brought up on the diplomatic and national level were often directed to concrete political threats - the central themes of both realism and idealism, e.g. restlessness of the people - whereas in the CA the argumentation centred on how to bring the peace treaty into force. The CA's original task of making practical preparations took the Conference's main attention at this point, and Austria's complaints about incidents or demands for

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<sup>716</sup> According to Austrian claims, an armed Hungarian group of 800 men had on July 29-30 attacked Styria in Fürstenfeld. For example: Dr. Karl Renner to Albert Halstead. Department for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria (translation) Vienna, July 30, 1920. ADAUBA/189; Le Plenipotentiaire de la République d'Autriche (Eichhoff) à son Excellence Monsieur Alexandre Millerand, Président du Conseil des Ambassadeurs, Paris, le 3 Août 1920. ADAUBA/190. Austria also complained about incidents that had taken place in Hartberg, Ödenburg (Sopron), and Prellenkirchen in Austria. They were described in the notes as military strikes with a connection to Hungarian government. Johann Andreas Eichhoff to Alexandre Millerand, Paris, September 15, 1920. No 198 ADAUBA; Délégation de la République d'Autriche à son Excellence Monsieur Alexandre Millerand, Président du Conseil des Ambassadeurs Paris, le 7 Août 1920 ADAUBA/191.

<sup>717</sup> Sóos 1971, 75.

<sup>718</sup> Pölöskei 1980, 117-118.

<sup>719</sup> Teleki to Villani (Sopron) 6 July 1920. PDRDRH/I/424.

hastening the process went unheeded in Paris. The CA's objective was nevertheless not to prolong the process, and in this sense it was also ready to accept for example the Austrian proposal concerning the role of the Austrians and Hungarians in Sopron.

Circumstances in Western Hungary and the situation where the Treaty of Saint-Germain was in force but that of Trianon was not resulted in a situation open to many kinds of interpretations to which particularly the British reacted in the CA. The view the Foreign Office had formed of the situation in Western Hungary was based on information arriving from British diplomats in Austria. According to that information Hungary was more reluctant than ever to cede Western Hungary to Austria.<sup>720</sup> Towards the end of the summer of 1920, there were strong demands in Austria to ratify the Peace Treaty of Trianon. The British paid attention, for example, to Otto Bauer's demand. According to him, the delay in putting the peace treaty into force was a danger not only to Hungary's neighbours but also to Hungary itself.<sup>721</sup>

However, the Foreign Office did not blame Hungary alone for the increasingly difficult situation, because in the CA's opinion Austria's state leadership was also hindering the normalization of the region through careless words. One such case was considered to be Renner's speech to the National Assembly in August 1920, where he said that there could have been much in common between Austria and Hungary. However, good relations were not possible due to the question of Burgenland. In Renner's opinion "the fiery Hungarian mentality" colliding with "the composed Austrian mentality" prevented the question from being solved.<sup>722</sup>

Heideking (1979) combines the Western Hungarian situation into one motive: for the British desire to get the Hungarian peace treaty in force as soon as possible. The uncompleted Hungarian treaty prevented the realization of the treaty of Saint-Germain, and the peace system in Central and Eastern Europe was still unfinished.<sup>723</sup> The case of Western Hungary was an example of an open question which threatened the realization of entire treaty system.

While the British called for strong measures against Hungary, France and Italy appeared to pursue a different line to bring the Hungarian treaty into force. The British policy was to demand that Hungary ratify the peace treaty as soon as possible, whereas the French attempted to reach the same goal through a "friendly policy" - in other words, by using more moderate rhetoric to bring Hungary to a policy in harmony with the Allies. The need for friendliness was explained by commenting that Hungary's domestic situation could otherwise waver and have a negative impact on the international system. The shaking of the Hungarian government would ultimately have affected the treaty system itself.

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<sup>720</sup> Bridgeman (Vienna) to FO 23 Aug. 1920. FO 404/2/33, NA.

<sup>721</sup> Bridgeman (Vienna) to FO 30 Aug. 1920. FO 404/2/35, NA.

<sup>722</sup> Bridgeman (Vienna) to FO 23 Aug. 1920. FO 404/2/33, NA; Minute by Cadogan 1 Sept. 1920. FO 371/4649/C 5059/2455/3, NA.

<sup>723</sup> Heideking 1979, 160-161.



Neither did Italy's and France's representatives support Derby's proposal that Hungarian government be pressed to act to cede Western Hungary before the Treaty of Trianon in its entirety was ratified and realized. In addition to the security motive, Derby brought up the impending Austrian parliamentary elections, when representatives of the new province were to be available. Derby's statement reflected the idea that the Allies should not disturb the elections. They should, on the contrary, support democratic procedures. The CA eventually decided to ask Hungary to ratify the treaty in friendly and vigorous terms at the earliest possible moment.<sup>724</sup>

After this Derby told the Foreign Office that he assumed there would be problems as regards Western Hungary, because it would be difficult to get Hungary to evacuate Western Hungary without using another territorial question as a sanction: Hungary was unlikely to cede Burgenland to Austria before it had gotten Baranya in Southern Hungary, i.e. the Pécs area, back from Yugoslavia.<sup>725</sup> In Whitehall Alexander Cadogan had previously had the opinion that the question of Baranya served to halt the progress of Burgenland's cession process.<sup>726</sup> On September 29, Derby proposed to the Ambassadors that Hungary should regain Baranya only after ceding Western Hungary to Austria, However Cambon and Count Bonin Longare disagreed with him and wanted both cessions to take place simultaneously.<sup>727</sup>

The CA addressed the ratification of the peace treaty in its meeting on October 23, 1920. If the ratification were not done by November 11, Hungarian representatives would have to leave the various commissions they were members of.<sup>728</sup> The Hungarians' reactions to the ratifying day, for their part, symbolized the development of the question of Western Hungary: a way out from a shameful peace.<sup>729</sup>

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<sup>724</sup> CA 74 21 Sept. 1920. FO 893/7, NA; Notes of a meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors held at Quai d'Orsay, Paris, Tuesday, October 5, 1920, at 10:30 a.m. ADAUBA/199. Ambassador Wallace of the United States did not wish to announce his opinion before consulting his government. However, the decision was made regardless of him, which was a common procedure.

<sup>725</sup> Derby (Paris) to FO 21 Sept. 1920. DBFP/XII/224.

<sup>726</sup> Minute by Cadogan 1 Sept. 1920. FO 371/4649/C 5059/2455/3, NA.

<sup>727</sup> CA 75 29 Sept. 1920; CA 77 5 Oct. 1920. FO 893/7, NA. Also see Heideking 1979, 165 and FO to Derby 23 Sept. 1920. DBFP/XII/227.

<sup>728</sup> Notes of a meeting of the Conference of Ambassadors held at Quai d'Orsay, Paris, Saturday, October 23, 1920, at 10:30 a.m. ADAUBA/203.

<sup>729</sup> Romsics I. 2001, 217.

## 7 NATIONAL CHALLENGES TO THE PEACE SYSTEM (December 1920-August 1921)

### 7.1 Defining the Allied role in Western Hungary

In the autumn of 1920, the CA addressed the Allies' role in the cession process. The interesting aspect in the process is the way the national level could influence the CA's decision-making: the procedure the CA decided to assign to the cession of Western Hungary in December 1920. At this stage the central role as a national agent was held by Austria, to whom the realization of the peace treaty meant an advantage in terms of Western Hungary. It was essential for Austria to make certain that the cession of Western Hungary would succeed. To this end it needed the Allies' support: it now asked the Allies not only to speed up the operation but also to secure the success of the operation through practical arrangements – also military ones. The motive for The Austrian policy was the threat it considered Hungary to constitute.

The Austrian Foreign Ministry considered the Hungarian ratification a new phase in the question of Western Hungary, although the Ministry simultaneously estimated that there were several circles in Hungary pursuing activities against the cession and trying to persuade Austria to join an agreement advantageous to Hungary. For this reason it was important to Austria to convince the Allies that the border change had to take place under Allied control. In practice this meant the Allies' military presence in the process and the founding of a commission in the region.<sup>730</sup>

Austria appealed to the CA with references to a “new Austria” which it could not defend by itself. Therefore it needed military support from the Allies. Austria justified the Allies' responsibility for the new Austria and Western Hungary's annexation to it by arguing that the Allies were a party in the peace treaties. At the same time the intention was to show that the Treaty of Saint-

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<sup>730</sup> Bundesministerium für Äusseres an Gesandten Eichhoff (Paris), Cnobloch (Budapest) und Legationssekretär Hauenschild (Ödenburg). Wien, 17. November 1920. ADÖ/3/483.

Germain was not dependent on Hungary. The task of the Allies was also justified by saying that it would safeguard the population's interests and property. The Allies' protection was required at the time of the evacuation and during the installation of the Austrian authorities. It was, according to the Austrian note, necessary to send into the region a detachment of officers of the Allied and Associated Powers, so that "an efficacious supervision of the actions of the retiring troops and authorities could be exercised, as well as to forestall any abuses or outbreaks tending to menace order and security". Therefore the Austrian government asked that the Interallied Military Commission, after the necessary Allied officers have been assigned to it, to conduct the administration of the region. In other words, in addition to showing military strength, the Allies would also administrate the area. The Austrian government argued that this procedure was adhered to international law. Furthermore, the aim was to appeal to the importance of "a better understanding between the different States organized in Central Europe consequent to the Peace Treaties".<sup>731</sup>

In the Austrian National Assembly Western Hungary was still seen as an element in the justified uniting of the German people to Austria. Justice meant paying attention to the peace treaty and the League of Nation's points of departure. New Chancellor Michael Mayr's opening speech made clear the grounds for the border change in the international community which recognized the rights of the German people. The peace treaty was still the foundation of Austrian foreign policy.<sup>732</sup> The replacement of the Social Democrat Renner by a Christian Social Mayr had not changed Austria's official political line, although the change in political leadership did tinge Hungarian interpretations of history and the Allies' diplomatic reports which portray the Christian Socials as reluctant to annex areas even to Christian Austria at the expense of "fellow Christian" Hungary.<sup>733</sup>

The claim about Hungary's unwillingness to cede the region to Austria became Austria's key argument. To quote the Austrian claim, "public opinion in Hungary still largely cherishes the hope of obtaining concessions in Western Hungary by opposing, as long as possible, the transfer of the territories in question". Austrians also accused the Hungarian leadership. According to Eichhoff's note in late November, armed resistance by Hungary was possible, because the nationalist-minded Count Sigray was Western Hungary's Governing Commissioner. The note also stated that Jakob Bleyer, Hungarian Minister for National Minorities, had commented to the press that "all the elements concerned are agreed on the principle that the fate of Western Hungary shall not be decided without the population being consulted". Hungary was thereby portrayed as an agent vulnerable to agitation in terms of the question. To quote Eichhoff,

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<sup>731</sup> Memorandum by the Austrian Delegation to the CA 13 Nov. 1920. Appendix M, CA 97. FO 893/9, NA.

<sup>732</sup> Nationalrat der Republik Österreich. Stenographisches Protokoll zur 4. Sitzung (Regierungserklärung und Debatte). Wien, 23. November 1920. ADÖ/3/485.

<sup>733</sup> Especially Helmer (1961) emphasizes in his "political" history the differences between political parties.

“The Magyar temperament, certain false ideas spread by the Press, as well as the declarations of irresponsible politicians, might, in fact, arouse in public opinion a dangerous effervescence, compromising the prestige of their own state, and exercising a regrettable influence on the political situation during the period which will follow the definitive settlement of this question.”

Therefore the Austrian government asked the CA to hasten the investiture of the Interallied Military Commission of Ödenburg/Sopron with all powers necessary for the administration of the territories attributed to Austria. In this way the Allies would cement their control and Hungary would “finally come to understand” that the question of Western Hungary was concluded. These actions would be for the best even for Hungary itself: its chauvinistic elements would be put in order and the populist politicising would be prevented.

Austria suggested the organization of the commission would be similar to that of the Plebiscite Commissions. It would be able to protect the population against the Hungarian troops by the creation of a gendarmerie and police force composed of nationals of the territories in question. The Austrian note argued for this organisation and policy by further emphasizing the meaning of stability in European politics:

“Such a solution would be not only to the interest of Austria but still more that of Hungary; it would reduce to a minimum the friction and dissensions between the two neighbouring States; it would certainly be in accord with the intentions of the Powers tending to support all measures likely to remove matters of conflict and to facilitate the return of a peaceful state of mind in the countries convulsed by the World War.”<sup>734</sup>

On December 15, 1920, the CA addressed Austria’s requests and proposal according to which Hungary would cede Western Hungary first to the Allies, who would then forward it to Austria. Cambon, who presented the matter, referred to history: according to him, similar procedures had been adopted often in the history of diplomacy. He claimed this method would “humour their self-respect”. At the same time as this type of method realized the area’s cession with the help of the third party’s authority, it actually meant only a formal or symbolic authority in the sense that the responsibility of the mediator was minimized. To quote Cambon: “There will be supervision but there must not be administration”. Even the supervision was to be limited to mere sending of officers instead of actual troops to the area. Especially Bonin Longare was opposed to sending troops. In his opinion sending officers as reinforcements on the spot was sufficient. It was decided that the Western Hungary “should be handed over to the Principal Allied Powers who will immediately transfer them to Austria through the Interallied Commission of Ödenburg, reinforced for this purpose by a number of Allied officers”.<sup>735</sup>

Still requesting the Allies’ military presence, Austria chose for its means of argumentation political threats potentially of interest to the Allies, such as

<sup>734</sup> Johann Andreas Eichhoff to Jules Cambon, Paris, November 27, 1920. ADAUBA/205.

<sup>735</sup> CA 97 15 Dec. 1920. FO 893/9. Cambon mentioned as his example the cession of Venice from Austria to Italy through emperor Napoleon III.

communism. Therefore the Allies should have control over both the Hungarian troops and the population. If the Allies were unable to maintain order and to realize the border change, the consequence could be that peace and order would be endangered.<sup>736</sup>

Finally, the CA decided to use the Allies as mediators of the cession in the manner Austria had hoped for – although it is true that Austria's other hopes were met only in part. The decision was justified by the peace treaties that had been prepared as bilateral treaties between the Allies, Austria, and Hungary. The Allies had been a party in both Saint-Germain and Trianon, while Austria and Hungary had no part in each others' treaties. Using a mediator naturally followed from this situation. The other reason to be referred to were the risks involved in the cession process. In sum, the area would first be transferred by Hungary to the principal Allied Powers and then immediately to Austria. This double transfer would take place under the supervision and through the intermediary of the Interallied Military Commission in Sopron. The CA recommended a very brief interval (less than 24 hours). The Commission was also informed of the adding of the Allied officers in order to strengthen its authority. The responsibilities of the Allied Powers would, however, remain "those of simple supervision and will never become powers of administration."<sup>737</sup>

## 7.2 Policy of local negotiations

The decision on the method of Western Hungary's cession and the discussion that followed between Austria, Hungary, and the CA can be seen as an encounter of the victorious Powers and the defeated countries' policies. The international decision-maker of the peace process, the Conference of Ambassadors, began to react to the Austrian and Hungarian politics in the spirit of compromise at the same time it emphasized the permanence of the peace treaty. From the CA's point of view the central question was now the policy of the peace treaties' execution: how did the principle of adherence to the treaties agree with a local level conflict between Austria and Hungary which the Allies had no means to solve on the basis of the peace treaties? Was the only thing left to realize the treaties in a way that was best from the peace system's perspective? Was a compromise between local, national perspectives and the realization of the peace treaty possible – especially, as the issue involved the border between two losing states belonging to the second political division?

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<sup>736</sup> Johann Andreas Eichhoff to Jules Cambon, Paris, December 23, 1920. ADAUBA/211.

<sup>737</sup> Instructions for the Interallied Commission of Oedenburg, December 23, 1920. The Secretariat General of the Ambassadors to the Commission of Allied Diplomatic Representatives, Budapest. December 27, 1920. ADAUBA/213. The Allied Representatives in Budapest received the information concerning the Allied mediatory role also already on 16 Dec. See Séance Pleniére des Hautes Commissaires et Généraux Alliés, Budapest, le 16 Décembre 1920. ADAUBA/209.

The new topic of discussion now was the covering letter of Hungary's peace treaty. While Austria's argument in the question of Western Hungary was adherence to the Treaty of Saint-Germain, the corresponding defensive weapon for Hungary was the covering letter's definition of the possibility to modify the border in connection to the delimitation. Discussion about applying the covering letter and the role of national level negotiations to solve the problem were related to the execution method of the peace treaty.

In the executive stage of the question of Western Hungary the CA functioned not only as the peace treaty's technical executive organ but also as a rather independent community of decision-makers with the power to make changes to the original treaties. The decisions it made during 1921 caused a change in the original border line determined by the peace treaties. The CA has been interpreted to have become politicized in connection with the question of Western Hungary rather than focusing on its original "technical and non-political task" and to have evolved a more powerful position for itself than the governments of the Allies had originally assigned to it. Its more independent and stronger position probably resulted from the role it assumed in the Klagenfurt conflict - the dispute between Yugoslavia and Austria on South Carinthia.<sup>738</sup>

In the question of how Austria and Hungary could affect the Allies' decision, the scales began to tip in Hungary's favour during 1921. While Austria had for its part been able to influence the Peace Conference's decision of annexing the territory to Austria and defining the Allies' role in the cession process, Hungary's influence started to emerge, at the latest, in the beginning of 1921 - although it is true that, according to Swanson, Hungary had learned to play with France particularly during the course of 1920.<sup>739</sup> According to Sóos (1992) Hungarian governments had three alternatives as regards Western Hungary between 1920 and 1921: the population could demand autonomy through resistance, Hungarian government could influence the policy of the Austrian government, and thirdly Hungary could negotiate with Austria.<sup>740</sup> Hungary's attempts to influence the policy of the peace process were soon visible as reactions to the CA's decision concerning the cession procedure, but according to Schlag the decisions made in the question of Western Hungary were favourable to Austria still in the spring of 1921.<sup>741</sup>

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<sup>738</sup> Heideking 1979, 153.

<sup>739</sup> Swanson 2001, 336. Swanson emphasizes the bolshevism argumentation in terms of which Austria "may have done a better job". However, the issue was not merely using bolshevism as a weapon.

<sup>740</sup> Sóos 1992, 33. Katalin Sóos has adopted a critical attitude towards Horthy's Hungary and bases her claim largely on the left-wing - right-wing perspective. The target of the criticism has been the unrealistic and foolhardy "secret diplomacy" and "adventurer policy" of Horthy's regime. According to Sóos, there was reason to criticise the policy because it was not based on the real economic and political importance of the region. In spite of this, Western Hungary had an important role in the revision policy.

<sup>741</sup> Schlag 1971, 2, 22.

In its meeting of January 17, the CA discussed the responses of the Austrian and Hungarian government to the decision on the cession method to be used in Western Hungary. In their responses the two countries presented their wishes concerning the border question more extensively: Austria by requesting military protection against Hungary's revision policy and Hungary by proposing the realization of the rights promised to it by the peace treaty's covering letter. The CA discussed especially the Hungarian note, because the Hungarians had protested the decision that the comitats should be ceded to the Allied Powers who would immediately transfer them to Austria.

Hungarian government founded its argumentation on the interpretation of the covering letter. It presented to CA the most favourable interpretation from Hungary's point of view concerning the possibility of border changes in connection to the delimitation. In Hungary's opinion the possibility of border changes provided by the covering letter could be realized before the realisation of the rest of the peace treaty. Hungarians justified their position by asserting that the flaws in the border line were already clear. It assured the Conference that application of the covering letter would not postpone the execution of the treaty. In addition, Hungarian delegation wanted to link the covering letter with the negotiations between Austria and Hungary: in this way it proposed to the Allies a local level solution that would be based on the possibility of re-examining the borders on the local level provided by the covering letter. According to the Hungarian delegation, the decision taken by the conference would, however, make future negotiations between Austria and Hungary impossible

French representative René Massigli, who presented the Hungarian claims, saw the case in quite another way. According to him Austria and Hungary could negotiate about the disputes without realising the covering letter. This being the case, he did not support the Hungarian proposal concerning the application of the covering letter but recommended the idea of bilateral negotiations between Austria and Hungary. According to Massigli, such negotiations were quite within the spirit of the covering letter, which provided for a friendly arrangement regarding portions of the frontier. If such a friendly arrangement could be concluded before the coming into force of the treaty, it would simplify things, making unnecessary the transfer to Austria of those towns and districts which, by agreement with Hungary, it was prepared to return latter. He thus proposed that the Conference should in no way prevent negotiations between Austria and Hungary and that Austria might be asked to hasten them. In this way, a national solution would serve the peace system. Keeping the covering letter out of the discussion was advantageous since its application would have created a precedent for more difficult border questions. In Massigli's opinion it would have been dangerous if the covering letter had been allowed to postpone the peace treaty. He warned that other states like Yugoslavia could evoke such a precedent.

Massigli's proposal became the Conference's common policy. The other participants did not warm up to Hungary's proposal concerning the realization

of the covering letter either. Instead, the Conference took a positive attitude towards the idea of cooperation between the countries. It was rather unanimously of the opinion that the arguments in Hungary's note were valid and that it was desirable that Hungary and Austria could reach a friendly agreement regarding the transfer of Western Hungary. On the other hand, the Ambassadors saw within the Hungarian policy features potentially damaging to the peace treaty system. The British Ambassador in Paris, Lord Hardinge stated that even though the Hungarian note contained sound arguments, the legal side must not be forgotten; but if a direct understanding between Austria and Hungary could be reached, that was all the Conference could ask for. Cambon in fact suggested – although he found the tone of Hungary's demands unpleasant – that the conference state in the answering note its keen interest in an agreement between Austria and Hungary.

At the same time the CA's principle was that the peace treaty would not be reopened, because in that case the new Central European system would not be realized. Hungarian government had to be assured that the covering letter of the Treaty of Trianon did not have the effect of delaying the coming into force of the treaty. This addition met with the wishes of Italy's and France's representatives in particular. Massigli and Bonin Longare also brought up Austria's share in the matter: Austria could protest against the Hungarian claims. To prevent this, the Austrians had to be urged to hasten the negotiations to avoid Hungary's demands.<sup>742</sup> Furthermore Hungarian government was to give Western Hungary's officials instructions not to disturb the population or to urge the population to make complaints. Austria was told that its complaints about the situation in Western Hungary would be addressed.<sup>743</sup> In other words, the Conference decided to strike a balance between the disputing parties.

The negotiations planned between Austria and Hungary can be interpreted to have represented the same line as the covering letter, although the issue was not the application of the letter. Only local corrections could be reached through the negotiations, not changes to the peace treaty. Particularly the French and the Italians considered it important to specify the function of the covering letter, but at the same time they emphasized their desire for the success of Austria's and Hungary's negotiations. In other words, a border change accomplished peacefully already before the delimitation and application of the peace treaty's covering letter provided the most advantageous solution from the point of view of stabilising the peace system – instead, applying the covering letter could have created a precedent for contesting other borders.

Additionally it can be interpreted that the negotiation request presented to Austria and Hungary was the CA's means of answering the policy of both parties: Austria's complaints and Hungary's covering letter request. By allowing the national level negotiations which Hungary proposed, the CA most

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<sup>742</sup> CA 102 17 Jan. 1921. FO 893/10, NA; also see CA 102 17 Jan. 1921 FO 374/17B/636, NA.

<sup>743</sup> Cambon (CA) to Eichhoff 22 Jan. 1921 and to Praznovsky 27 Jan. 1921. Europe Autriche 87, MAE.



likely wanted to achieve a situation where the Allies did not have to answer Austria's wish concerning the Allied military intervention and at the same time it could turn down Hungary's request to apply the covering letter. The Allied policy directed a potential conflict towards negotiations and diplomacy. Such policy was obviously considered possible in the case of Western Hungary: a solution resembling a compromise was possible when dealing with a question like Western Hungary, where the border line as such was no longer significant in 1921. Instead, the essential aspect was probably the realization of the peace treaty as part of the goals of the Allies' general policy. According to this mode of thought, peaceful relations between Austria and Hungary – organizing negotiations – would prevent the emergence of conflicts and a reopening of the system. Therefore local agreements both echoed the spirit of Realpolitik and served as applications of the self-determination trend.

In terms of Hungary's goals, the CA decision about starting negotiations between Austria and Hungary meant that Hungary's objective to persuade Austria to negotiate about the new border was legitimized. Although the points of departure the CA had determined for the negotiations between Austria and Hungary emphasized the permanence of the peace treaty, Hungary still attempted to expand the negotiation basis towards more extensive border changes in Western Hungary. In order to realize its hopes for revision, Hungary considered it needed not only Austria's acceptance but Allied support as well – this meant using the Allies as mediators in the negotiations.<sup>744</sup>

The most important mediator candidate for Hungary was Italy. However, Italian Minister in Budapest Prince Castagneto announced that Prime Minister Torretta found the negotiation terms proposed by Hungary unsuitable<sup>745</sup>. Hungarian government was also interested in France's role in furthering the negotiations.<sup>746</sup> On the other hand the diplomatic speculations were concerned that French mediation would be opposed by Italy.<sup>747</sup> Nevertheless, France and Italy seemed to be the most potential supporters as they both were more involved in Eastern and Central European politics than the more distant British.

As a backup plan for the negotiations, Hungary still considered appealing to the CA. Its first attempt would nevertheless be to try and persuade Austria to accept the negotiation line Hungary hoped for.<sup>748</sup> Hungarian government indeed strove to the last moment to gain points of departure advantageous to it in the negotiations. It wanted to stress the mutual understanding between Austria and Hungary which the CA was unable to fully comprehend. In Vienna, Masirevich told Mayr: "As we understand each other's troubles better than the CA which lacks feeling in this respect and treats us as one of many."<sup>749</sup>

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<sup>744</sup> Gratz to Masirevich 31 Jan. 1921. PDRFRH/II/72.

<sup>745</sup> Memorandum of the Foreign Minister Gratz about his conversation with Italian High Commissioner, Prince Castagneto. Budapest 31 March 1921. PDRFRH/II/73.

<sup>746</sup> This becomes evident for example in Masirevich's report from Vienna on February 2, 1921. Masirevich (Vienna) to Gratz 2 Feb. 1921. PDRFRH/II/87.

<sup>747</sup> Gratz to Praznovsky 5 Feb. 1921. PDRFRH/II/95.

<sup>748</sup> Gratz to Masirevich 5 Feb. 1921. PDRFRH/II/94.

<sup>749</sup> Masirevich to Gratz 5 March 1921. PDRFRH/II/188.

The faith of Hungarian diplomacy in the support of France was not extinguished either, because it was believed that France's own policy was more advantageous to Hungary than that of the CA. In Paris, Hungarian representative Praznovszky made arguments about Western Hungary's pan-Germanic agitation and the German threat, lines of reasoning thought to appeal to France. On the basis of a conversation he had had with Cambon, Praznovszky concluded that the CA's attitude to applying the covering letter was contrary to the intentions of the French, although Cambon had stated that the Hungarian interpretation was exaggerated. Praznovszky further concluded that the policy of Czechoslovakia had influenced the CA policy.<sup>750</sup> The CA could be useful for Hungary's objectives at least in that Hungary could buy itself some time while the CA was addressing Hungary's protests.<sup>751</sup>

The idea of France's support emerged again when it seemed that the CA policy regarding the covering letter remained unchanged and even presented more obstacles to Hungary's objectives.<sup>752</sup> The CA stand on the interpretation and application of the covering letter got more specific when the CA decided on February 24, 1921, that negotiations between Austria and Hungary and their result were not to change the foundation of the peace treaty. On this point, the decision-makers were unanimous. The CA could allow safe national level policy as long as the Allies maintained an unofficial role as initiators and kept the negotiations separate from official processes, i.e. the peace treaty and the covering letter. Not surprisingly, France and Italy were eager to control the application of the covering letter – as it was potentially dangerous for their power political visions. The French line at the conference was that unless an agreement was reached in the negotiations, the peace treaty would be executed in its original form. The covering letter could not yet at this stage be applied. In Bonin Longare's opinion the Hungarian government attached too much importance to the covering letter.<sup>753</sup>

In other words, the conference wanted to secure a solution that was peaceful and minimized the role of the Allies and would for its part realize the peace order. The bilateral negotiations between Austria and Hungary, attempted during the spring and summer of 1921, did not produce results, however, and the views of the countries remained drastically different. Hungary continued its attempts to get foreign support from France and Italy.<sup>754</sup>

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<sup>750</sup> Praznovsky to Gratz 5 March 1921. PDRFRH/II/189.

<sup>751</sup> Praznovsky to Gratz 9 March 1921. PDRFRH/II/205.

<sup>752</sup> Bánffy to Praznovsky 25 Apr. 1921. PDRFRH/II/369.

<sup>753</sup> CA 107 24 Feb. 1921. FO 893/10, NA. Also see CA 107 (VIII) FO 374/17B/712, NA. On 10 March Cambon stated again at the meeting of the CA that the covering letter would not change the new border. CA 109 10 March 1921 FO 893/10, NA.

<sup>754</sup> Ormos 1990, 78-100. Ormos focuses on the Hungarian diplomatic efforts.

### 7.3 Austro-Hungarian ways to persuade the Allied policy

It can be said that on both the international decision-maker level and on the national level, the parties concentrated in the spring of 1921 mainly on Realpolitik while pursuing their own interests in the question of Western Hungary. Although placing Austria and Hungary around the common negotiations table in a sense implied the idea of “local right of self-determination”, its ultimate goal was to secure the system of peace treaties. Austria and Hungary, for their part, also attempted to pursue their own interests in ways other than negotiating bilaterally.

Both Austria and Hungary attempted to appeal to the decision-makers of the peace process by bringing up topical political themes. A threat of the return to the past, the question of monarchism in Hungary, emerged when the former King Charles tried to return to Hungary in April 1921. The Habsburg question, running parallel to the question of Western Hungary and emerging from the same political situation, has also interested those who have studied Western Hungary.<sup>755</sup> Charles’ attempts to return in April and October 1921 have interested researchers in the context of Western Hungary, because the Hungarian military leadership in the disputed region included prominent legitimists, supporters of the Habsburg family, and the return attempts took place in the territory of Western Hungary.<sup>756</sup>

However, it is possible to look at the question of monarchism and the process of Western Hungary from the viewpoint of international politics as parallel phenomena which did not have a direct impact on the Allies’ decision about the cession. The question of monarchism appeared to the CA especially in the spring of 1921 as a potential cause for unrest among other elements causing unrest. Charles’ return attempt does not, in fact, seem to have affected the CA’s actions as regards Western Hungary.

The Habsburg question appeared in the comments on the diplomatic level and the level of Central European politics, however. It offered to Austria, who did not get involved in the question of Hungarian monarchism, a chance to create an image of Hungary as a threat to the peace process.

With that image it could justify the need for Allied military presence in Western Hungary. The Hungarian monarchism was thereby one of Austria’s arguments for the Allies’ military support. On April 19, 1921, Eichhoff delivered to the CA a note where the Austrian government requested from the Allies an immediate execution of the peace treaties vis-à-vis Western Hungary. The note expressed the wish that the Allies would send troops to Western Hungary from Upper Silesia. It justified the request by stating that the region, which in theory was already a part of Austria, was in the possession of the Hungarian kingdom,

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<sup>755</sup> See for example Heideking 1979, 159-164, 167-169, 175-176; Gruber 1991, 30-31; Detailed description on Karl’s second attempt in October 1921 see Hochenbichler 1971, 33-52.

<sup>756</sup> Zsiga 1989, 80-85, 98.

and was ruled by Hungarian legitimists, Count Sigray and Colonel Lehár, whose intentions were to prevent the cession of the territory to Austria. The latest events in Hungary had thereby shown “also to the Allies”, that measures had to be taken to execute Trianon.<sup>757</sup>

Great Britain paid attention to the danger described in Austria’s note stating that the groups supporting Habsburg restoration might prevent the cession of Western Hungary. In the opinion of the British, it was important to emphasize to Hungarian government the necessity to adhere to the cession process in Western Hungary. It was important to follow the process in order to repel politically threatening images. In addition, Hungarian government had to be told in strong terms that Western Hungary must not become a question between Hungary and the other successor states. In practice, this meant the Little Entente countries’ intervention in Hungary. The British also thought it should be made clear that the negotiations between Austria and Hungary must not prevent the execution of the transfer.<sup>758</sup>

The national and regional policy must not gain the upper hand in terms of the Allies’ decisions. Individual threatening images were ignored in the CA discussions, but the British presentation resulted in a decision to urge Hungarian government to maintain order in Western Hungary. Restoration and the Little Entente themes were handled in the context of Western Hungary as general unrest which must be countered by honouring the decisions made about the cession process.<sup>759</sup>

While Austria could make use of the Habsburg question to argue against Hungary in relation to the question of Western Hungary, Hungary could make use of the corresponding weapon of the threatening image of the Anschluss. On May 14, 1921, Minister Masirevich interpreted in Vienna that the solution to Western Hungary’s situation did not depend on the negotiations between Austria and Hungary but rather on whether Hungarian government would receive support from France. It was possible to appeal to France by referring to the German threat. Hungary had found this argument topical again, due to Austria’s local Anschluss votes. The negotiations between Austria and Hungary were not useless either. They were able to buy more time for the important international-political solutions expected from France.<sup>760</sup> In the opinion of Foreign Minister Miklós Bánffy, the significance of the negotiations also lay in the fact that they had a positive influence on public opinion in Hungary.<sup>761</sup> The Hungarian strategy was to make arguments against Austria actually directed to France and at the same time to buy time by negotiating with Austria.

Hungarian diplomacy tried to link the question of Western Hungary not only to Austria’s suspiciousness but also to wide unrest in Central Europe.

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<sup>757</sup> Eichhoff to the CA 19 Apr. 1921. Annexe T CA 118. FO 893/11, NA.

<sup>758</sup> British Embassy (Paris) to the CA: Memorandum 18 May 1921. Annexe C CA 121. FO 893/11, NA.

<sup>759</sup> CA 121 20 May 1921. FO 893/11, NA.

<sup>760</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 14 May 1921. PDRFRH/II/407.

<sup>761</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 14 May 1921. PDRFRH/II/409.

Speculations concerning the Little Entente's intervention against Austria's Anschluss policy were a part of this thinking. The Little Entente was thereby connected in the diplomatic evaluations not only to the monarchy problem but to the German problem as well. According to Praznovszky, Hungary should also join the Little Entente's front against the Anschluss, as the Anschluss movement provided Hungary a chance to improve its image in the eyes of France. In Praznovszky's speculations emerged also the goal of preventing Hungary's Slavic neighbours' possible aspirations in Western Hungary. To quote Praznovszky:

"According to reliable information, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia are preparing a military demonstration against Austria because of the Anschluss movement. This demonstration may spread to Western Hungary. This might be avoided, if the Hungarian government were also to protest against the annexation and organize a military demonstration in Western Hungary in agreement with the Czechs and Yugoslavs; thereby it would become more difficult for the latter to motivate their demand for a corridor. It would be desirable to secure ourselves diplomatically in advance and especially to obtain the assent of the Great Powers. French circles are somewhat impressed by the annexation movement and it is not impossible that by the above proposal we could convince the French government of the propriety of our behaviour especially if we threatened that otherwise we should not be able to resist German influence."<sup>762</sup>

Praznovszky brought up the issue in Paris in a conversation with Emmanuel Peretti from the French Foreign Ministry. While Peretti answered that Hungary's cooperation with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia would make a good impression, he did not consider it necessary to give any guarantees concerning the request, because the Slavic corridor in Western Hungary was a discarded alternative in any case.<sup>763</sup> Thus, Hungary's goal to benefit from the Anschluss threat did not seem to succeed, but Bánffy told Praznovszky to continue to foreground it anyway.<sup>764</sup> Praznovszky had tried to appeal to the French Foreign Ministry in another way as well. He emphasized both the national and international political dangers if the peace treaty was to be executed in spite of the Hungarian resistance. He had told Peretti that CA decision had caused an "impossible" situation that was difficult even for the Allies themselves. Peretti had answered to Praznovszky that the CA only saw the legal aspect of things and ignored the political aspect. To this Praznovszky commented that, in keeping the peace, legal aspects meant nothing; only political actions were important.<sup>765</sup>

Hungary's diplomacy obviously interpreted French rhetoric to its own advantage and believed France to have more authority than the CA. Later, while Praznovszky presented Hungary's plans in the French Foreign Office, Peretti repeated the CA's line and emphasized the necessity of "trying to reach an agreement with Austria; this would in any case facilitate the solution of the

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<sup>762</sup> Praznovsky to Bánffy 2 June 1921. PDRFRH/II/470.

<sup>763</sup> Praznovsky to Bánffy 4 June 1921. PDRFRH/II/473.

<sup>764</sup> Bánffy to Praznovsky 5 June 1921. PDRFRH/II/474.

<sup>765</sup> Praznovsky to Bánffy 4 June 1921. PDRFRH/II/473.

problem of Western Hungary for the Allied Powers as well". Peretti pointed out, however, that the question did not depend only upon France so he could not promise anything definite. Praznovszky interpreted Peretti to mean that hastening the transfer of Western Hungary did not serve France's interests but that he could not see a way out. Praznovszky claimed, however, that it was not impossible to change the peace treaty's decision concerning Western Hungary. He answered Peretti that if the Allied Powers had sufficient discernment to see that their interests were identical to those of Hungary, he would be able to guarantee "not one, but ten ways of delaying the settlement for a few years".<sup>766</sup>

Hungary also expected Austria to see Hungary's advantage as identical with that of the international community. Masirevich expected that, when the Christian Social Johann Schober became the new Chancellor, Austria's and Hungary's relations would improve.<sup>767</sup> He proposed to Schober that Austria and Hungary would come to an "amicable agreement", which meant that the parties would ask the Allies not to hasten the transfer process until the two countries had come to an agreement between themselves, "or not at least exhausted our efforts to achieve such an agreement".<sup>768</sup> Schober did not react in the way Hungary had hoped<sup>769</sup>, but Masirevich nevertheless asked for an "amicable agreement" from Schober again on July 11.<sup>770</sup>

The "amicable agreement" between Austria and Hungary had become a part of the Hungarian policy, although the most important solutions would be reached with the help of the Allies. Austria's underdog policy, for its part, concentrated on defence against Hungary and appeals to the Allies. The situation devolved into competition between states in accordance with power policy.

#### 7.4 Fixing the procedure of the transfer

In spite of the opportunity given to negotiations between Austria and Hungary, the CA's operation was characterized by completing the peace treaty, organizing the transfer process and deciding on its principles: for example on how to fit together contradictory decisions. It was also a question about specifying the Allies' role after the decision made at the turn of the year: what was involved was how to present the operation that was considered politically necessary to the parties in a legal way.

After the decision (December 15, 1920) concerning the procedure of the transfer, the Conference of Ambassadors decided on March 22, 1921, to set up a committee to address the transfer plan created by the Interallied Military

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<sup>766</sup> Praznovsky to Bánffy 24 June 1921. PDRFRH/II/527.

<sup>767</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 25 June 1921. PDRFRH/II/530.

<sup>768</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 27 June 1921. PDRFRH/II/534.

<sup>769</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 2 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/548.

<sup>770</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 11 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/576.

Commission of Sopron.<sup>771</sup> The Conference accepted on May 7 the *plan de transfer*.<sup>772</sup> The Allies would have been represented by the Commission, which would have been strengthened with a certain number of Allied officers. The plan suggested a limit to the Allied officers' administrative duties. The tasks of the Allied officers would not include civilian administration or police duties; they would only witness the transfer of power. Therefore it was possible to reduce the number of Allied officers participating in the operation.<sup>773</sup>

It was characteristic of the CA to be reluctant to engage Allied military forces. The decision the CA originally made in December 1920 to transfer the region first from Hungary to the Allies and then from them to Austria was based on an understanding of Hungary's potential revision attempts and protests. The very existence of this procedure was considered a guarantee for security. In this sense the General Secretary of the Conference of Ambassadors pointed out, that this kind of protocol was accepted in order to avoid possible difficulties which could arise in Hungary because of the unique character of the situation. The procedure could also be considered problematic. The CA had to pay attention to the controversy caused by different orders. Therefore, the contradiction between the transfer dictated by Trianon and the transfer procedure determined by the CA had to be solved.<sup>774</sup>

The peace treaties only stipulated operations between Austria and Hungary, not the role of the Allies. Finally the CA decided to use Allied Generals as mediators, i.e. planners and signatories.<sup>775</sup> The CA justified the transfer process by referring to its practicality and to the fact that its formality would guarantee the realization of the peace treaty - the decision of the CA had only simplified the execution of the peace treaty. Thereby it was possible to smooth over the contradictory nature of the CA decision vis-à-vis the text of the peace treaty.<sup>776</sup>

The CA faced the challenge of aligning decisions made at various times and coordinating the flow of information between various Allies in different instances. Another problem was that the British, the French, and the Italians largely dominated decision-making in the CA - other member countries like Japan were often left in the background. As a result, the wording of the decision specified that Generals from three countries would sign in the name of the Allied and Associated Powers in the CA.<sup>777</sup>

It can be said that the operation of the CA repeated the Peace Conference's way of improvising the decision-making process. The organizations themselves

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<sup>771</sup> CA 111 22 March 1921. FO 893/10, NA.

<sup>772</sup> CA 118 7 May 1921. FO 893/11, NA.

<sup>773</sup> Rapport au sujet du plan de transfert des Comitats Occidentaux Hongrois établi par la Commission Militaire Interalliée de Sopron 16 Apr. 1921. Annexe S CA 118. FO 893/11, NA.

<sup>774</sup> Note du Secrétariat Général de la Conférence des Ambassadeurs 3 June 1921. Annexe F CA 125. FO 893/11, NA.

<sup>775</sup> CA 126 15 June 1921. FO 893/12, NA.

<sup>776</sup> CA 125 8 June 1921. FO 893/11, NA.

<sup>777</sup> CA 128 29 June 1921; CA 130 6 July 1921. FO 893/12, NA.

created their own operational models while the activities progressed. In the question of Western Hungary the context of the decision-making evolved within the process, and in contradictory situations, new practices were created. Therefore national politics could potentially affect the process in contradictory situations. The local level was thereby an actor and an object in the changing situation. It was essential for the Allies to retain their own authority, but at the same time to adopt as small a practical role in the process as possible. In sum, the CA wanted to keep the Allies' role in the transfer process strictly formal, avoiding administrative duties, police tasks, and military presence. The purpose of the formal presence was to act as political safeguard and to prevent the protests the transfer might cause.

## 7.5 From Hungarian diplomatic efforts to armed operations

Hungary's political leadership was aware that the Allies were already organizing the transfer. Nevertheless, the government continued its efforts to reach a solution through negotiations with Austria.<sup>778</sup> Also, Hungary still wanted to influence the Allies and to postpone the execution of the border change the CA was preparing. In the Hungarian politics the Austrian-Hungarian negotiations and appeals to support from the Allies were actually interlinked: the negotiations between the neighbouring countries could not only result in a solution, but they would also buy time for the border change with the help of the Allies. In this sense, the Hungarian government tried to explain in its note to the CA on July 14, 1921, that the transfer of Western Hungary should not be executed just yet, because Austria and Hungary could still negotiate.<sup>779</sup>

Hungary still hoped to influence the Allies' decisions particularly through France<sup>780</sup>, but also saw Italy as a potential supporter.<sup>781</sup> Hungary pursued this policy both towards the CA and individual governments – precisely in the differences between the Allies Hungary saw an opportunity to forward its own goals. Praznovszky saw “complete discord among the representatives of the Great Powers”, and thought it possible to use that discord to Hungary's advantage. Praznovszky did not, however, see the development only in a positive light from the Hungarian point of view. In his opinion the situation was made worse by the fact that Austria opposed Hungary. Therefore it was still essential to buy time for negotiations, to get the CA to postpone the border change due to the negotiations, thereby to prolong the negotiations between

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<sup>778</sup> The Commission of Allied Generals in Budapest (General Hamelin) to the Prime Minister Count Bethlen 22 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/617. On the July 5<sup>th</sup> CA informed Praznovszky about the procedure of the transfer. On July 12<sup>th</sup> CA gave instructions to Hungary about the signing of the protocol of the transfer

<sup>779</sup> Praznovsky to Cambon (CA) 14 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/588.

<sup>780</sup> Bánffy to Praznovsky 17 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/593.

<sup>781</sup> Ormos 1990, 96.



Austria and Hungary, and create a chance for the success of the revision policy.<sup>782</sup>

Buying time for the revision was still an essential part of the Hungarian politics. It did not appear to be easy, though, as even the French representatives were now making comments unfavourable to Hungary and were aware of the Hungarian goals. For example Maurice Fouchet estimated in July that Hungarian government had serious political reasons to slow down the transfer process and to buy more time. He concluded that the Hungarian troops in Western Hungary were there to resist the transfer.<sup>783</sup>

Peretti had tried to explain that France was not able to support Hungary: it could not act like a patron of Hungary. As Iván Praznovsky, the Hungarian representative in Paris, reported "he [Peretti] blamed the Hungarian government for not having put this forward in London as convincingly as in Paris. 'France alone would not be able to carry out her intentions and they could not agitate in our interests.'" Praznovszky next approached the embassies of Italy and Great Britain in Paris. Neither of them promised to support Hungary's plea to delay the transfer. In the Italian embassy in Paris Vannutelli Rey referred to Austria's earlier problems and made no promises. Charge of Affairs Sir Milne Cheetham informed Praznovszky in the British embassy that he had strict instructions from his government according to which the territory would become Austrian *de jure* and the situation could not be altered.<sup>784</sup> Hungary's hopes to assemble Allied support and its negotiations with Austria seemed to crumble at the same time. In Vienna, Masirevich no longer believed in the possibility of negotiations, but he still hoped for progress with the help of Christian Socials.<sup>785</sup>

Another means to forward Hungarian goals was to propose as the basis for negotiations a border change concerning only Sopron. Was Sopron a gateway to the ownership of all Western Hungary, or was it a compromise? The Hungarian policy originally aimed to keep Western Hungary a part of Hungary. According to Haslinger this objective was abandoned in the summer of 1921, and the Hungarian diplomacy began to resign itself to the idea that Hungary could only prevent the transfer of Sopron and its surroundings to Austria.<sup>786</sup> However, this resignation did not mean that the Hungarian government had abandoned their original aim to gain the whole area of Western Hungary. According to the Hungarian memoranda, Sopron was merely a "gateway" to Western Hungary: a good ground for the negotiations. In the summer of 1921 Hungary still aimed to keep the whole area.

Masirevich, however, recommended to Bánffy in July 1921 that the basis of these negotiations should not be too harsh: otherwise the Austrian National

<sup>782</sup> Praznovsky to Bánffy 21 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/612.

<sup>783</sup> Fouchet (Budapest) to MAE 15 July 1921. Europe Autriche 87, MAE.

<sup>784</sup> Praznovsky to Bánffy 22 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/621.

<sup>785</sup> Chargé des Affaires Edl to Bánffy 23 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/631; Masirevich to Bánffy 27 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/650; Masirevich to Bánffy 30 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/660.

<sup>786</sup> Haslinger 1993, 25.

Assembly would not accept the proposed basis. Therefore he suggested that the basis of negotiations should be outlined in the way which would retain especially Sopron<sup>787</sup> for Hungary. In this way the basis would represent “both a material and a moral success”. From the area now removed from the proposal, attempts could nevertheless be made to get compensations by appealing to ethnic circumstances as the negotiations proceeded. Masirevich had understood that Schober and Seipel, the leading Christian Socials, needed about three weeks to propose the groundwork and win over the leaders of the political parties for this basis of negotiations. Hungary should also accept these moderate points of departure to facilitate negotiations.<sup>788</sup> According to Bánffy the basis for the negotiations could have been more advantageous, however.<sup>789</sup>

Nevertheless, Seipel and Schober rejected the proposal made by Masirevich. They appealed to the transfer procedure determined by the Allies. Seipel implied that the negotiations between Austria and Hungary were to agree with the Allies’ plans.<sup>790</sup> Schober also emphasized adherence to the CA procedure as a precondition for bilateral solutions and proposed to Hungarian representative Edl that the whole territory would first be transferred to Austria; only after that would negotiations about Sopron and about other questions become possible.<sup>791</sup>

In this situation it seemed probable that the Hungarian government could not avoid the transfer of the territory. In addition to the restriction involving Sopron, the Hungarian Foreign Ministry tried to persuade Austria with the help of economic questions. Bánffy instructed Masirevich on August 3 that if Austria showed ill will or bad faith during the negotiations, Masirevich should take up for discussion the question of compensation for state properties in Western Hungary and “to declare to the Austrian government that we shall insist on such compensation in pursuance of our rights as guaranteed by the Peace Treaty”. According to Bánffy Austria must not be shown that Hungary would give up its revision plans and be prepared to negotiate about evacuation.<sup>792</sup> To quote Bánffy,

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<sup>787</sup> According to Masirevich, the basis of the negotiations was the following line: north-west of Féltony, through the Lake Fertó, Medgyes, a half-circle around Sopron, then a line starting at the hill Kreuzerwald and running parallel at a distance of 5-6-km westwards to the Trianon line and rejoining the latter at Pinkamindszent. Without the salient in the triangle Glashütten – Felső – Pinkaóvár.

<sup>788</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 14 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/583. Also Edl reported to Bánffy that Sopron was now the basis of the negotiations. The political leadership in both countries seemed to appeal in public opinion and in this sense this aim was “reasonable”. Edl to Bánffy 21 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/611.

<sup>789</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 18 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/596. In the documentary collection there is a note added by the editor of the collection, Dr. Ujváry: “No document concerning this agreement [between Gratz and Seipel] would be found in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”

<sup>790</sup> Chargé des Affaires Edl to Bánffy 23 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/631; Masirevich to Bánffy 27 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/650; Masirevich to Bánffy 30 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/660.

<sup>791</sup> Chargé des Affaires Edl to Bánffy 22 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/618.

<sup>792</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 3 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/668.

“We consider it necessary to make this declaration because the Hungarian government will in all likelihood be compelled, for reasons of internal politics, should an agreement not be reached with the Austrian government, to refuse the surrender of Western Hungary. The territory would then be surrendered only if we are forced to do so by an ultimatum of the Allied Powers.”<sup>793</sup>

The policies of Austria and Hungary did not, however, coincide, when Gratz and Schober discussed the question of the possible delay. Gratz analysed the likelihood of “the disastrous effect on Austro-Hungarian relations of a failure to reach an agreement”, but Schober referred to the difficulties resulting from the Austrian parliamentary situation.<sup>794</sup>

When the transfer approached, Hungary forwarded a non-diplomatic alternative. The Hungarian Foreign Ministry learned on August 6 that the plan for the transfer would be executed if there were no Austro-Hungarian agreement before the time of the transfer. The Allied Powers wanted an answer by August 19. The Interallied Military Commission in Sopron also declared that Western Hungary had formed a part of Austria since July 26.<sup>795</sup> When the negotiations focusing on their different alternatives – territorial division or economic questions – no longer seemed realistic, Hungary chose armed resistance and legitimized it with the threat of socialism Austria caused. Firstly, on August 12 Bánffy asked Masirevich to inform Schober that because of the restlessness of the population of Sopron and because of the movements of workmen’s battalions, Hungary was forced to strengthen its gendarmerie. This strengthening would continue until the arrival of Austrian gendarmerie. Bánffy also reported to Praznovszky in Paris about “Austrian socialist troops”.<sup>796</sup>

Unlike the Foreign Ministry, the Hungarian legation in Vienna was cautious in the August situation. It did not propose strong measures, but on the contrary a rather modest policy vis-à-vis Western Hungary, such as applying for border compensation only after the transfer operation. Masirevich estimated that Hungary’s resistance could result in an Allied intervention. Hungary could hope for compensation, for as long as Schober “worked for Hungary there is at least some hope that a part of the territory will be returned to Hungary”. Instead, it proved difficult to get the Austrian National Assembly and the parties to back up Hungary’s view.<sup>797</sup>

Bánffy also did not trust that the economic or territorial claims<sup>798</sup> would be accepted particularly in the Austrian National Assembly’s Foreign Affairs Commission.<sup>799</sup> He also drew attention to the Hungarian public opinion: “the bitterness of public opinion increases steadily and the position of the Hungarian

<sup>793</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 8 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/675.

<sup>794</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 3 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/669.

<sup>795</sup> Baron Villani to Bánffy 6 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/1921.

<sup>796</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 12 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/700; Bánffy to Villani 16 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/717; Bánffy to Masirevich 18 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II.

<sup>797</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 14 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/707 and 708.

<sup>798</sup> Hungarian demands: payment of state properties, compensation for banknotes, share of Government debts and war loans and territorial concessions: Sopron and the “necessary strip of territory around Sopron”.

<sup>799</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 15 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/712.

government is becoming correspondingly more difficult." In this situation Bánffy proposed that the Hungarian government should make a new proposition which seemed to be a compromise between armed resistance and diplomacy: Sopron and its surroundings should remain Hungarian until the Austro-Hungarian negotiations concluded. Using the plebiscite as a way to appeal was brought up as well. In this way the rhetoric of self-determination was also used in the policy of ultimatums.

The second condition should be that the Hungarian civil service should remain in Western Hungary. If the Austrian government would not accept this condition, there would be another way out: "as a last resort, we would agree to a plebiscite in the territory claimed by us." Bánffy also confidentially stated that the plebiscite as a solution was only acceptable if the plebiscite area were out of Austrian control.<sup>800</sup> The plans were not greeted with sympathy in Austria, however. On August 26, 1921, Hungarian government received confirmation that the Austrian Foreign Affairs Committee refused to cede Sopron to Hungary.<sup>801</sup>

The national authority now moved to direct actions instead of diplomacy. Hungarian government realized it could not prevent the transfer of Western Hungary through negotiations. Armed activities and unrest in the region now seemed the most viable alternative from the Hungarian viewpoint. Baron Frigyes Villani, the Hungarian representative in Sopron asserted that unrest in the region after the transfer would only serve Hungary's interests. However, the "disturbances" should be such that they would remain under the control of Hungarian government in order to be "useful". To quote Villani:

"Although it is desirable that here should be some disturbance in the territory to be occupied by the Austrians after our withdrawal, it is to be feared that the movement would [become] entirely independent of our influence."<sup>802</sup>

The international politics also gave elbow room for the Hungarian actions. The Allies obviously made decisions which allowed Hungary to realize its plans. Especially the territorial question of Baranya<sup>803</sup> on the Yugoslavian border could be linked to the question of Western Hungary, and as early as July it became another means for Hungary to influence the situation. Baranya was in Yugoslavia's possession and it was to be ceded to Hungary. As Romsics has noted, the region of Pécs, Baranya, was in addition to Western Hungary the only region where disturbances arose while the Trianon borders were being drawn – otherwise the Treaty of Trianon came into force on the borders without incident.<sup>804</sup> The idea was that Hungary would cede Western Hungary to Austria only after it had gotten Baranya from Yugoslavia. In this sense Bánffy instructed Count Sigray, the Commissioner General of the Hungarian

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<sup>800</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 18 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/730.

<sup>801</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 26 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/773.

<sup>802</sup> Villani to Bánffy 23 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/758.

<sup>803</sup> On Baranya dispute, see Tihany 1978.

<sup>804</sup> Romsics I.1999, 124.

government for Western Hungary, to sign the protocol of transfer “naturally only on the condition that we receive adequate and satisfactory guarantees for the evacuation of the county of Baranya”.<sup>805</sup>

It was crucial from the viewpoint of linking the questions of Baranya and Western Hungary that the representatives of the Allies in Budapest support the transfer of Baranya before that of Western Hungary. The Hungarian Foreign Minister proposed it to the Allied delegations in Budapest. Hungary’s central argument for the procedure was that Hungary’s public opinion had to be calmed and the position of the government secured because of the new loss. Getting Baranya would alleviate the reactions caused by the loss of Western Hungary.<sup>806</sup> The same maintenance of national and thereby wider order could also be seen in the motive of the Allies when they accepted that the transfer of Baranya should precede the transfer of Western Hungary. However, changing the processes’ schedules was also considered problematic. For example the CA’s British representative Hardinge admitted that with it the CA lost its main weapon to pressure Hungary in terms of the question of Western Hungary.<sup>807</sup> The agreement about Baranya became part of the CA policy, its reaction to the prevailing circumstances in order to execute the peace treaty in practice.

Buying time, concessions, and local solutions were typical policy not only for Hungary but for the CA as well as it reacted to the situation between Austria and Hungary when the transfer approached. The CA’s means to realize the transfer was to tailor the schedule to the prevailing situation. In practise, this meant that the Allies reacted to the Hungarian policy. Largely due to French recommendations, the CA eventually gave the transfer process more time on July 23, 1921. In the CA, the British had most actively demanded early transfer and adherence to the peace treaty. The French motive was obviously a desire to avoid the difficulties discerned in the Hungarian policy. The French Foreign Ministry implied that the French policy which was ready to balance the letter of the schedules and the Hungarian demands, would eventually solve the contradictions. Thereby Western Hungary would be Austrian territory on July 27, but due to practical reasons not until August 27. The reason for the additional month was that according to the Allied Generals positioned in Sopron the transfer was not possible in practice before August 18. The French government had considered an even longer postponement necessary, because the negotiations between Austria and Hungary were still under way.

The basis of the negotiations was still the peace treaty – in other words, the goal of the negotiations could not be cancelling the cession of Western Hungary. Despite British opposition, Cambon succeeded in convincing the CA to postpone the transfer in the way the French hoped. Berthelot commented to the French legation in Budapest that the manner and actions of the British

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<sup>805</sup> Bánffy to the Commissioner General of the Hungarian government for Western Hungary, Count Sigray 26 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/634.

<sup>806</sup> Pour la CA, de la part de la Conférence des Représentants Diplomatiques Alliés 28 July 1921. Europe Autriche 87, MAE.

<sup>807</sup> Hardinge (Paris) 5 Aug. 1921. FO 371/5758/C 15885/477/3, NA.

representative had been provocative.<sup>808</sup> The French policy thereby corresponded in principle to Hungary's hopes and postponement policy, although France's primary motive was to prevent large-scale revisions, not to answer Hungary's territory claims directly. From France's viewpoint the goal was most obviously shunning large conflicts by being more flexible vis-à-vis the "less important" disputes of the losing parties.

As reaction to the CA decision, the Austrian government expressed on July 30, 1921 its dissatisfaction concerning the execution of the Treaty of Trianon and the postponement of Western Hungary's transfer date. Eichhoff's note appealed to the authority of the peace treaties: Austria's and Hungary's negotiations concerning local arrangements should not change the order of the peace treaty. In other words, the postponement was in contradiction to the Treaties of Saint-Germain and Trianon.<sup>809</sup> The Austrian perspective was transmitted to France through the French diplomats' attitude as well: the French legation in Vienna was not in favour of the postponement, against the recommendations of the Foreign Ministry.<sup>810</sup> The information from the Budapest legation corresponded more closely to the policy adopted by the Foreign Ministry, although the arguments on the Foreign Ministry and the CA level lacked typical diplomatic allusions to specified political threats like the Western Hungarian "Carlists", i.e. pro-restoration advocates.<sup>811</sup>

Towards the end of August the French nevertheless got the picture that Austria did not consider a negotiated solution with Hungary possible.<sup>812</sup> In the beginning of September 1921 the assessments of Vienna High Commissioner Pierre Antoine Lefèvre-Pontalis widened the spectrum of threatening images. According to Lefèvre-Pontalis's Viennese perspective, Hungarian patriotism threatened peace in Central Europe: it fed the policy of restoration and pan-Germans alike.<sup>813</sup> It can be discerned that the compromise policy France pursued in the CA concerning Hungary's demands was based on its conception about repelling disturbances threatening the peace system. However, this policy gave Hungary an opportunity to cope with the difficult situation.

## 7.6 Transfer interrupted

Practical preparations for the transfer commenced when the Allies' military representatives, the Generals' commission, travelled on July 27, 1921, to Sopron

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<sup>808</sup> Berthelot to Haute Commissaire (Budapest), Ministre Française (Vienna) 23 July 1921. Europe Autriche 87, MAE.

<sup>809</sup> CA 135 30 July 1921; Annexe A Eichhoff to CA 27 July 1921. FO 893/12, NA.

<sup>810</sup> Pontalis (Vienna) to MAE 25 July 1921. Europe Autriche 87, MAE.

<sup>811</sup> Comitats de Hongrie. Fouchet (Budapest) 5 Aug. 1921. Europe Autriche 88, MAE ; Fouchet (Budapest) to MAE 25 July 1921. Europe Autriche 87, MAE.

<sup>812</sup> Fouchet (Budapest) 20 Aug. 1921 and 9 Sept. 1921. Europe Autriche 88, MAE.

<sup>813</sup> Lefèvre-Pontalis (Vienna) 5 Sept. 1921, 7 Sept. 1921 and 9 Sept. 1921. Europe Autriche 88, MAE.

to strengthen the situation of the Interallied Military Commission positioned there. The group of Allied Generals included Italy's Carlo Antonio Ferrario, France's Jules Camille Hamelin, Great Britain's Reginald Gorton, and 240 Allied officers and staff.<sup>814</sup> The transfer plan was announced on August 1, 1921, in Sopron.<sup>815</sup> As planned, the Generals and the Austrian representative Robert Davy and Hungarian representative Count Antal Sigray met in Sopron on August 6. According to transfer plan, on August 17, thirty allied officers would arrive and the Hungarian troops would leave on August 21-26.<sup>816</sup> In the operation Western Hungary was divided into three zones (A, B and C or I, II and III). The Delimitation Commission launched its operation in Graz on July 28, 1921.<sup>817</sup>

The progress of the transfer operation was interrupted very soon when Hungary declared to have interrupted the evacuation. Zone A had been evacuated, but Hungary still held Zone B including Sopron.<sup>818</sup> Since Hungary's diplomatic attempts to prevent the cession of Western Hungary had failed, it tried another tactic. The goal of the Allies, executing the transfer, failed as well. Balancing national authority and execution of the peace treaty had not resulted in the transfer. Austria, whose policy had been to adhere to the line of the peace treaties, had not gotten what it wanted either.

Hungarian Prime Minister István Bethlen introduced his government's decision concerning the cession dated August 28, 1921. Romsics (1990) has listed Bethlen's three alternatives to prevent the cession of Western Hungary. According to Bethlen, Hungary's alternatives were firstly to continue negotiating with Austria and to win the Allies over to Hungary's side. This alternative would result in a compromise solution. In the case of Austrian resistance, Hungary would take armed action. The third alternative – declaring Western Hungarian autonomy – would be used if the Allies and the Little Entente resisted Hungary militarily.<sup>819</sup> In a note to the Allied representatives in Budapest Bethlen referred to both key arguments of Hungary's Western Hungary policy: interrupting the transfer of Baranya and maintaining negotiations between Austria and Hungary.<sup>820</sup> The autonomy alternative was never included in the foreign political argumentation, however. Furthermore, Foreign Minister Bánffy gave Hungarian diplomats instructions to justify the Hungarian government's actions by claiming that it had to interrupt the transfer to get economic and other guarantees – in other words, the negotiations between Austria and Hungary were still unfinished. At the same time the

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<sup>814</sup> Heideking 1979, 169.

<sup>815</sup> Plan for the transfer of Western Hungary, established by the Interallied Military Mission in Sopron 1<sup>st</sup> August 1921. PDRFRH/II/662.

<sup>816</sup> Bánffy to Sigray and Villani 28 July 1921. PDRFRH/II/653.

<sup>817</sup> For technical details see Rapport No 1. Commission de Délimitation de la frontière entre l'Autriche et la Hongrie. Exécution des Intructions complémentaires pour les Commissions de Délimitation de Hongrie, en date du 6 juin 1921. K 296Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922 NPA, ÖStA.

<sup>818</sup> Romsics I. 2001, 222.

<sup>819</sup> Romsics I. 1990, 248.

<sup>820</sup> Bethlen to Fouchet, Hohler and Castagneto 28 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/779.

foreign powers should be told about the delay in Baranya, and that all of Western Hungary was militarily evacuated and there were Hungarian gendarmers left only on Zone II (also called Zone B).<sup>821</sup>

The Allies reacted to the crisis situation by confirming that it would be advantageous to Austria to reach a compromise with Hungary although there would be no bargaining on the principles of the peace treaty. In this sense the Allied missions in Budapest proposed that the Austrian government agree to Hungary's terms.<sup>822</sup> The CA's policy was also to combine the execution of the peace treaty with the calming down of the local situation. In the CA's opinion Austria should show its willingness to agree with Hungary about economic and other questions caused by the transfer as soon as Western Hungary had been surrendered to it.<sup>823</sup>

Hungary's armed resistance probably came as no surprise to the Allies. Alexander Cadogan<sup>824</sup> commented that in the Foreign Office it had been clear Hungary would resist the cession. The delay in the Trianon ratification had given Hungary time to plan for the resistance.<sup>825</sup> However, this was not only a matter of Hungary's army operations as so-called irregular troops were also acting in the region. The relationship between the irregulars and the government has been considered ambiguous.

Military operations on the border region were actually not a new phenomenon. According to Josef Borus (1996) who has researched the irregulars, the Western Hungarian population was being prompted to rise in resistance as early as Béla Kun's era. The actions with a bearing on the question of Western Hungary emerged only after Kun's era, however. Hungary's goal was armed resistance very early on. In the beginning of 1921, observations about armed activities on the border region increased.<sup>826</sup> Austria also had a plan: preparations for the transfer had been made in June 1921, when *Verwaltungsstelle für das Burgenland* was established.<sup>827</sup>

Hungarian resistance stemming from "the people", the irregular bands and their leaders, have been linked to a project of Hungarian right-wing and particularly pro-Habsburg legitimists.<sup>828</sup> Schlag explains the troops were right-wing radicals. He distinguishes them from the mainstream of Hungarian politicians who according to him believed in a diplomatic solution. On the contrary, the radical circles had been preparing for the operation for months before the August events.<sup>829</sup> Also according to Borus, Bethlen's government put its faith in diplomatic actions, but Sigray spoke for strengthening the Western

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<sup>821</sup> Bánffy to Hungarian Diplomatic Missions abroad 28 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/783; Bánffy to Masirevich 29 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/784.

<sup>822</sup> See for example Hohler (Budapest) 30 Aug. 1921. FO 371/5759/C 17624/477/3, NA.

<sup>823</sup> Hardinge (Paris) 31 Aug. 1921. DBFP/XXI/298 (footnote).

<sup>824</sup> Later Permanent Under Secretary, 1938-1946.

<sup>825</sup> Minute by Cadogan 7 Sept. 1921. FO 371/5759/C 177064/477/3, NA.

<sup>826</sup> Borus 1996, 49-50.

<sup>827</sup> Gruber 1991, 23.

<sup>828</sup> See for example Borus 1996, 50; Schlag 1971, 2; Schlag 1970, 119.

<sup>829</sup> Schlag 1871, 2-3.



Hungarian troops.<sup>830</sup> On the other hand the memoranda of Hungarian diplomats manifested the official level's faith in armed operations.<sup>831</sup> The intention was also to get foreign support for the resistance, but ultimately the most viable choice was to mobilise the local population. In this sense it served Hungary to enlist Austria's and Bavaria's right-wing circles in the cause. When this plan failed, the objective was to organize the Western Hungarians to support the resistance.<sup>832</sup>

Hungarian nationalism also manifested itself rather directly in the foreign policy rhetoric as the crisis emerged. Although the resistance of the local population was a politically correct argument, the presence of activist troops from outside the region in a sense manifested all Hungary's solidarity with Western Hungary. As Schlag has commented, the intention was to show the world Hungarians loyalty to its borders. According to his research, the irregular troops came mainly from elsewhere in Hungary and included former officers, nationalist students, "fanatical nationalists" and people from refugee camps. For example, the supporters of the irregular troop leaders Pal Prónay and Iván Héjjas were a motley crew. Various troops also differed significantly from each other; some could be classified as bandits.<sup>833</sup> In Hungary there were actually many private armed forces at the time of the border dispute. They were linked to different political groups. Western Hungary's irregulars took their place as part of the Hungarian armed forces but also fit into the context of a larger phenomenon – the manifestation of paramilitary groups in Central and Eastern Europe during the inter-war era.<sup>834</sup> In post-war circumstances attempts to construct states and territoriality did not remain a state level affair only.

The Hungarian government's role in the operations of Western Hungary's irregular troops poses an interesting question. In spite of interpretative differences, the central observation has been that the Hungarian foreign policy benefited from the situation the troops caused. According to Romsics (2001) the Hungarian government's motive for the transfer interruption was to retain even a part of Western Hungary. The most prominent leaders of the irregulars in the region were Colonel Pál Prónay<sup>835</sup>, who considered himself a "genuine" nationalist, Iván Héjjas, and István Friedrich, who were under the command of Bethlen's trusted man, Zsigmond Perépatok. In foreign policy circles, Bethlen complained about the irregulars' operations, and claimed they had no

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<sup>830</sup> Borus 1996, 52-53.

<sup>831</sup> See for example Villani to Bánffy 23 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/III/758; Masirevich to Bánffy 14 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/III/708.

<sup>832</sup> Schlag 1970, 119.

<sup>833</sup> Schlag 1971, 2-3.

<sup>834</sup> Swanson 2001, 337. In Austria, however, it was only in late 1920's, when the role of paramilitary groups became evident.

<sup>835</sup> On Prónay's politics and discourse of his writings, see especially Romsics G. 2006, 97. More traditional historical analysis on Prónay, see Fogarassy 1986, *passim*; 1990, *passim*. Also see *Personália VII* 202 (147 doboz) Prónay Pál: Nyugat-Magyarországi szerepléséről 1922-1936, HTL.; 973. fond 2 ő.e. Prónay Pál. I rész: Ellenforradalmi naplójegyzeteim 1918-1921; II rész: tótpronai és blatniczai Prónay Pál alezredes naplójegyzetei 1921-1922, PIL.

connection to the government.<sup>836</sup> For example, Bethlen denied to Bánffy that Hungarian government had a connection to troops active in Western Hungary. He supported his claim by stating that the government had “as far as possible prevented suspicious characters from travelling to Western Hungary”.<sup>837</sup>

Bethlen’s strategy, which was based both on diplomacy as well as on armed activities, has been considered a successful policy, but also a gamble. In the opinion of Sóos (1992) the government that claimed that the irregulars were operating without the government’s authorization and decided to evacuate the regular troops was nevertheless involved in an adventurous plan whose goal was to keep Western Hungary with the help of the irregulars and thereby to get concessions from the Allies.<sup>838</sup> In Sóos’s earlier interpretation, Bethlen opposed the irregulars mainly because they were legitimists. His concerns about the troops arose, not from the way the Allies or Austria reacted to them, but from their political loyalties.<sup>839</sup>

Nevertheless, the irregular troops gave Hungarian government a ground to claim that the nation rejected the cession. The explanations from Budapest stressed the active role and strong national feeling of the population. When explaining the new situation – the attacks of Hungarian armed bands – the Hungarian government implied that it was the people, the nation who were voluntarily fighting in Western Hungary, not the Hungarian army. The population itself was engaged in armed resistance.<sup>840</sup> This “popular movement” was further described in the report of Western Hungary’s General Governor. Irregular troops began, according to the report, to appear in the region here and there at the same time as the army and gendarmerie withdrew on August 28, 1921. The troops resisted the progress of the Austrians. They got stronger day by day. Their goal was to encourage the local inhabitants to oppose the Austrians and to vanquish the Austrian troops that had entered the area. The government’s command to restrict the activities did not reach the troops, and therefore the government could do nothing.<sup>841</sup>

The Hungarian policy now included using the unrest as leverage in negotiations between Austria and Hungary. In this sense Bethlen proposed to Austrian representative in Budapest, Baron Hans Cnobloch the use of a mediator to create an agreement between Austria and Hungary or, otherwise Western Hungary’s situation would remain unchanged as long as the negotiations failed to reach a result.<sup>842</sup>

Hungary also claimed that the Austrians were responsible for the unrest and there was no way for Hungary to act. Bánffy blamed the Austrian

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<sup>836</sup> Romsics I., 2001, 222-223.

<sup>837</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 31 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/798.

<sup>838</sup> Sóos 1992, 36.

<sup>839</sup> Sóos 1971, 143. Also Fouchet estimated that Bánffy was playing double game and “betrayed” Allied diplomats. Ablonczy 2000, 1168.

<sup>840</sup> Bánffy to Hungarian Diplomatic Missions abroad 29 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/785.

<sup>841</sup> Összefoglalás. A Nyugatmagyarországi Főkörménybiztosság működéséről. 1921.VII./24-1922./I/10. TGY 2071, HTL.

<sup>842</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 31 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/798.

government for “the short-sighted, perfidious and hypocritical policy”, which made a satisfactory settlement of the question of Western Hungary impossible. In Bánffy’s opinion the strong Hungarian national feeling did not allow for friendly relations with Austria before the question of Western Hungary had been resolved. Hungarian nationalism and the desire to prevent the fragmentation of historic Hungary appeared as a virtue in the Foreign Ministry’s instructions as well as Hungary’s weapon in the border question: “Knowing the strong national feeling inherent in the Hungarian character, I cannot understand how anybody could believe that friendly relations could be established between the two countries without first settling this question in a manner satisfactory to us.”<sup>843</sup>

The report of Western Hungary’s General Governor also used the “bitterness of the people” and Austria’s wrong policy to explain the reactions of Hungarian government and the Hungarians. The bitterness the people had shown in mass meetings around Hungary against the unjust fate of their state territory had caused the interruption of the transfer. Hungarians also felt bitterness toward Austria because of the war and the past. The people of Austria could not withdraw from responsibility. The Austrians were considered simultaneously to be on the socialists’ leash and to cherish their “imperialist” legacy. No circles in Austria were trying to prevent this “robbery”.<sup>844</sup> In these ways, Hungarian policy characteristically referred to the nation and its resistance precisely through these protests, rather than, for example, through the functioning Parliament or ethnicity. The will of the people was manifested by extra-parliamentarism.

According to Bánffy, the Allies were aware of Hungary’s strong nationalism; they must find a solution to satisfy Hungary or face the shaking of the peace order. Nevertheless, the Allies did not necessarily consider nationalism a virtue only nor a legitimate authorization for the unrest: the Hungarian Foreign Ministry received information that pursuing a revision line would be interpreted negatively in the League of Nations – non-fulfilment of international obligations.<sup>845</sup>

How, then, did the Allies respond to the situation? Allied representatives in Budapest pointed out to Bethlen on August 29 that the Hungarian troops must be evacuated from Western Hungary. The agreement between Austria and Hungary would be reached after that. The Allied Powers also stated Serbian troops had already evacuated Baranya.<sup>846</sup> In his reply Bánffy obviously referred to the “will of people” and explained that the troops operating in Western Hungary had no connection to the government; instead, the operations

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<sup>843</sup> Bánffy to Masirevich 31 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/799.

<sup>844</sup> Összefoglalás. A Nyugatmagyarországi Főkormánybiztosság működéséről. 1921.VII./24-1922./I/10. TGY 2071, HTL.

<sup>845</sup> Parcher (Bern) to Bánffy 31 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/805; Masirevich to Bánffy 2 Sept. 1921 PDRFRH/III/814. K 63 KUM 475, MOL.

<sup>846</sup> The Allied Missions in Budapest to Bethlen 29 Aug. 1921. PDRFRH/II/786.

were activities of “patriotic Western Hungarians”.<sup>847</sup> In Paris Praznovzsky for his part intentionally emphasized the moral aspect of the events: it was no wonder that the people resisted the loss it had experienced. To quote him:

“ ---- it was impossible to make the Hungarian government responsible for events which happened in territories evacuated by us. We had predicted that the population of Western Hungary would resist, and we should not be astonished if this happened now, because to lose one’s fatherland and to become Austrian to-day, when this means famine and the loss of property, was sufficient reason for an insurrection.---”

However, it appears that Laroche did not react to Praznovzsky’s moral soliloquy; he had commented that it was not possible to change the CA’s decisions and that the CA would not act in favour of Hungary.<sup>848</sup> As before, the French Foreign Ministry in a way portrayed the CA as an organization independent of the Allies’ governments over which Foreign Ministries had no authority – the role of the Conference was to deal with unpleasant tasks and leave diplomacy for the governments.

The creation of an ultimatum demanding Hungary evacuate was naturally assigned to the CA, the executor of the peace treaties, not to individual governments. On September 10, 1921, the CA decided to declare to the Hungarian government that the CA considered it responsible for the troops acting in Western Hungary. Hungarian government had to continue evacuating the area.<sup>849</sup> On September 22, 1921, the CA presented another ultimatum, demanding Hungary withdraw from the area within 10 days of receiving the note. If Hungary failed to do so, the Allies would take action – the type of action was not specified in more detail, however. According to the ultimatum Austria and Hungary could continue their negotiations after the cession.<sup>850</sup> The Allies’ policy thereby continued in the old vein: combining the authority of the peace treaties and the Allies with a promise of a local solution. In sum, the international decision-maker combined in the problem-solving politics the authority of the international community and the promises of the ‘rights’ of the local, national level.

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<sup>847</sup> Bánffy to the Representants of the Principal Allied Powers in Budapest Sept. 10 1921. PDRFRH/III/892. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>848</sup> Praznovsky to Bánffy 13 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/881. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>849</sup> CA 137 10 Sept. 1921. FO 374/17B/1943, NA.

<sup>850</sup> CA 138 22 Sept. 1921. FO 374/17B/1057, NA.

## **8 SOLVING THE PROBLEM BETWEEN CHANGING CONDITIONS AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE PEACE TREATIES**

### **8.1 Creating the basis for a new compromise in autumn 1921 - discussions on the neighbour state level**

Outside the Ambassadors' meeting room, the national policy searched own solutions to the problem. While the CA stuck to the peace treaty line, the Hungarian policy for its part tried even after the CA ultimatum to get more out of local level discussions than the Allies promised. Largely through Hungary's activity, the situation resulted in a search for new compromise: to combine the Allied demands and national policy with new negotiations presided over by a mediator. The process where the solution to the question of Western Hungary was assigned to an outside mediator – the so-called “mediating competition” or “mediating question” – can be seen as a continuation of the negotiation process which had been prominent since early 1921. Both Czechoslovakia's Prime Minister Beneš and Italy's Foreign Minister Torretta were willing to act as mediator, thus influencing Central European politics. Hungary tried to gain a favourable foundation for the negotiations with them. The motives of the mediator candidates focused along Realpolitik lines and a desire to increase their own authority in Central Europe. At the same time, their intention were naturally to prevent competitors – from Italy's viewpoint Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia<sup>851</sup> – from gaining authority in the question of Western Hungary. Hungary's own authority for its part manifested itself in its initiative to look for a mediator and to outline the basis for negotiations.

In research literature the discussion between diplomats and ministers on the mediator question has been analysed mainly from the perspective of the “mediator competition” between Torretta and Beneš. This discussion is related

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<sup>851</sup> Ormos 1990, 122; Masirevich (Vienna) 4 Sept.1921. PDRFRH/III/830. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

to a research perspective where not only the national level but the politics between the neighbouring states have caught the researchers' attention.<sup>852</sup> Secondly, various interpretations have arisen regarding who took the initiative in the process. For example, according to Swanson the initiatives came mainly from Beneš and Torretta while Ádám has argued that the Hungarian government was the initiator.<sup>853</sup> Hungary can indeed be seen as the active party in that it planned the proposal for the negotiation basis. Nevertheless, the process evidences active politics from the directions of Hungary, Italy, and Czechoslovakia alike.

Italy's role in the process of Western Hungary became central when the Hungarian Minister Masirevich talked, on September 4, 1921, in Vienna with the Italian Minister Augusto Biancheri about Western Hungary in general and Czechoslovakia's role in the development of the situation in particular. Biancheri announced his preparedness to help to find a solution to the question of Western Hungary.<sup>854</sup> The initiative of Hungarian government became clearer when, on September 11, it transmitted its proposal "for the settlement of the question of Western Hungary" to the Italian Minister in Budapest, Prince Castagneto. In Hungary's proposal the need for a solution through negotiations was justified by stating that in a situation where "it was impossible to protect Hungary's legal interests", it was not possible to cede Western Hungary to Austria. The proposal explained the unrest in Western Hungary as stemming from the region's population, among whom Austria was unable to maintain order. Furthermore Hungary explained that it had reacted to Austria's unwillingness to negotiate about economic questions.

Hungarian government proposed that in order to reach a solution Western Hungary should immediately be transferred to the Allies, under whose control the future of the region would be resolved through a plebiscite or in some other suitable manner. If the area question would not be resolved, Hungarian government kept to its proposal dated August 4, 1921: division of the area into an active and a passive area in terms of economy. Furthermore, the Allies should allow the Hungarian civilian administration and gendarmerie to stay on in the area between Line A and the Trianon line to avoid disturbances until the area question was solved and until the economic questions had been decided in principle, to be supplemented later.<sup>855</sup> After the meeting Masirevich assessed that the Italian policy looked promising from Hungary's viewpoint, because the policy aimed at preventing Slavic states' authority in Western Hungary.<sup>856</sup>

Italy and Hungary continued to lay the foundation for the negotiations in Budapest. In the initial stage, Hungary's territorial claims were restricted to Sopron. Bánffy informed Castagneto that the foundation for the negotiations on

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<sup>852</sup> See especially Hochenbichler 1971, *passim*.

<sup>853</sup> Swanson 2001, 272-273; Ádám 1993, 148-149.

<sup>854</sup> Masirevich (Vienna) 4 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/830. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>855</sup> Proposal of the Hungarian government for the settlement of the question of Western Hungary, transmitted to the Minister of Italy in Budapest, Prince Castagneto, September 11<sup>th</sup> 1921. PDRFRH/III/866. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>856</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 11 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/869. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

Western Hungary was Sopron's belonging to Hungary. Both of them noted that claiming only Sopron was less than Hungary had originally wanted. Therefore Hungary's ultimate goal was to keep a larger area than Sopron. According to Bánffy's memorandum, Italy was indeed prepared to give more extensive support. In practice this meant that Italy would help Hungary gain area benefits during the delimitation of the border. Castagneto asked if Hungary was willing - if requested - to evacuate Western Hungary up to the Trianon frontiers against a written guarantee by the Italian government that Sopron would be returned to Hungary and that the Trianon frontiers in that region would be modified in favour of Hungary by the Delimitation Commission.<sup>857</sup> Referring to more extensive border changes could have been Italy's means to persuade Hungary into an agreement about only Sopron for a start, because Sopron as a target of compromise seemed like a way to approach Austria.

On this basis at least Italy and Hungary reached an agreement about the foundation for future negotiations. Mária Ormos calls the agreement between the countries a compromise.<sup>858</sup> For Italy, acting as a mediator seemed to be a way to approach Hungary and incorporate it into Italy's own policy. At the same time Italy could elevate itself into a Great Power position through active participation in the peace process. For example, the discussion between Bánffy and Castagneto evidenced the fact that both thought they could make use of and get through the process in the most profitable way. Italy would promote Hungary's international standing by supporting its membership application to the League of Nations. Bánffy for his part wanted to guarantee Hungary an advantageous process with the Allies' authority. Obviously it was also ideal for Hungary that Austria's role in the transfer was minimized. In this sense Bánffy hoped that Austria's *Volkswehr* would not enter the area, as it would "cause unrest among the population and prevent a peaceful transfer".<sup>859</sup>

The agreement between Italy and Hungary was further specified so that according to the agreement Hungary would cede the area to Austria, but Sopron would be returned to Hungary in at most eight days after the transfer operation. After that, the Delimitation Commission would determine borders that were good in terms of ethnicity and economy. Through Castagneto's initiative economic questions were left out from the plan: according to him, economic relations could be addressed separately.<sup>860</sup>

How, then, to market the plan to Austria and the CA? The plan was to combine the policies of the CA and Hungary in the demands. In this sense Praznovszky concluded that Hungarian government had to show its loyalty and to negotiate a solution with the Allies as mediators. The resistance of the Western Hungarians could be used as a weapon in the negotiations. Thereby the Allies could be persuaded to support returning the area. Hungary's state leadership thought the operations of the irregulars in Western Hungary could

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<sup>857</sup> Memorandum by Bánffy 15 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/887. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>858</sup> Ormos 1990, 131.

<sup>859</sup> Memorandum by Bánffy 15 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/887. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>860</sup> Memorandum by Bánffy 16 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/900. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

make the Allies search for a new solution and accept one advantageous to Hungary, while Hungary could simultaneously show it had worked in cooperation with the Allies.<sup>861</sup>

The national level could thereby influence the decision-makers in two, perhaps contradictory, ways: with armed threat and behaviour showing loyalty on the diplomatic level.

Hungarian Foreign Ministry was probably also under the impression that countries others than Italy were prepared to make compromises in the border line in order to resolve the conflict.<sup>862</sup> No other members of the CA were sought for the mediating task, however; in addition to Italy, Czech proposal was another concrete proposal for the foundation of new negotiations. Czechoslovakian Prime Minister Beneš also proposed that the foundation of the negotiations would be Sopron and its surroundings as part of Hungary and that the Delimitation Commission would inquire whether other changes could also be made to Hungary's advantage.<sup>863</sup> The essential difference between his and Italy's proposal was that Beneš's proposal emphasized Central Europe's own decision-maker level. Count László Szapáryn, an unofficial Hungarian representative in Prague, reported that in a conversation in Bratislava on September 23, Beneš commented that the Allies could not accomplish a solution; instead, it would be reached on Central Europe's own level.<sup>864</sup>

However, features in Beneš's policy also appeared to limit Hungary's revision goals. When Bánffy and Beneš discussed the Czechs' offer of mediation in Brünn (Brno) on September 26, Beneš emphasized adherence to the Allies' policy. Beneš stressed that he was unable to act on the question of Western Hungary without the Allies' consent. Furthermore, the plebiscite did not seem to suit the Czechs' policy: in this sense Beneš claimed that the idea of plebiscites "is to-day, as a whole, discarded notion". Hungary's objectives were also limited by the fact that Beneš was not prepared for more extensive border changes than Sopron and the revisions of the Delimitation Commission. Bánffy wrote in his memorandum that their, Bánffy's and Szapáry's, impression was that Beneš was sincerely endeavouring to bring about an agreement, but that he was afraid officially to accept the role of mediator until he had secured the formal consent of the Allies.<sup>865</sup>

<sup>861</sup> Praznovsky to Bánffy 17 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/903. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>862</sup> Villani assessed that the Generals' Commission's French representative General Hamelin would support an agreement between Austria and Hungary with the help on an international commission. Villani to Bánffy 22 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/931. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>863</sup> Offer of Benes (sic) to mediate, transferred through Count Szapáry to Bánffy 21 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/926 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>864</sup> Memorandum of the unofficial representative of the Hungarian government, Count Szapáry, on his interview with the Czecho-Slovak Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Benes (sic), concerning Czech mediation in the question of Western Hungary. PDRFRH/III/942. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>865</sup> Szapáry and Bánffy explained to Beneš that the border line which Hungary had proposed to Austria on August 4 would create the basis for the border proposal. Notes of Bánffy, concerning conversations with Benes, Brünn 26 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/969. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.



The Czechoslovak government explained its own view about the mediator question in its note to the CA on September 28, 1921. That note emphasized Czechoslovakia's intentions to abide by the CA line. The peace treaty was to be executed immediately and Hungary was to accept the CA ultimatum. Beneš also stressed Hungary's initiative. Czechoslovakia's note to the CA highlighted Beneš's view that Czechoslovakia would act only with the consent of those involved. Bánffy for his part had claimed that Hungarian government could not do anything about the troops in the area until an agreement had been reached with Austria. Eventually Beneš and Bánffy had agreed to a solution that stressed the crucial evacuation for the area by October 4, but also called for a preliminary agreement between Austria and Hungary. If this proposal lead to nothing, Czechoslovakia would adhere to the CA order.<sup>866</sup>

From Hungary's viewpoint Beneš's significance in terms of the mediator question came from the fact that with his help it would be easier to get Austria to agree on the foundation for the negotiations. Secondly, negotiations with the Czechs were considered to buy more time for Hungary to have the CA accept the foundation for negotiations presided over by a mediator before the evacuation date the CA had determined. It was hoped that Beneš would "use his influence with the Allied Powers to have the ultimatum suspended until the conclusion of his action."<sup>867</sup>

The Hungarian view that Austria could be persuaded to accept the foundation for the negotiations with the help of Beneš was exaggerated, however. The Austrian National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee turned down both Beneš and Torretta and announced it favoured bilateral negotiations. Nor did the Committee favour a concession on the part of Austria. Its comments on Hungarian government were that the government's situation was unstable, it had a connection to the irregular troops, and the ability of the Hungarian government to disarm them seemed doubtful. Schober however suggested a trade to which Masirevich reacted sceptically: Hungary would get Sopron and Austria would get German areas from the Trianon border.<sup>868</sup>

In this contest of power politics, Austria assumed a defensive position in the autumn of 1921. While the CA's decisions concerning the question of Western Hungary made in early 1921 were along the lines of Austrian views about securing the peace treaty, Austria's chances had been considered very small by the end of September.<sup>869</sup> From then on the developments surrounding the question of Western Hungary and its mediation became for Austria a history of losses - "Schober's mistakes".<sup>870</sup>

Hungary, for its part, performed actively on behalf of both countries. As result of the process the Hungarian delegation declared on September 26 to the

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<sup>866</sup> Note of the Czechoslovakian Government to the Conference of Ambassadors 28 Sept. 1921. Annexe C CA 140. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>867</sup> Bánffy to Praznovszky 24 Sept.1921. PDRFRH/III/947; Bánffy to Matuska (Prague) Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> 1921.PDRFRH/III/950. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>868</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 24 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/956. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>869</sup> Schlag 1971, 2, 22.

<sup>870</sup> Hochenbichler 1971, 26.

CA that both Torretta and Beneš had made an offer of mediation and that Schober had accepted the offer of Beneš. Thus Praznovszky could observe that the foundation for the negotiations was accepted by both Austria and Hungary, so there was no obstacle to choose one or the other as mediator.<sup>871</sup>

Beneš's actions apparently inspired Italy to make its offer.<sup>872</sup> On September 27, 1921, Italy made Austria and Hungary an official offer of mediation.<sup>873</sup> After Italy's offer Bánffy asked Hungarian legation in Prague to announce that Hungary would accept Italy's mediation instead of Beneš and advised them to appeal to the fact that Hungary had better "obey" the Allies.<sup>874</sup> Thus the offer of Beneš lost to that of Italy.<sup>875</sup>

Hungary presented to the CA the idea of new negotiations presided over by a mediator. In the Conference the British Ambassador Hardinge considered the Hungarian note satisfactory. He remarked that it seemed that the Hungarian government hoped to reach an agreement and was at the same time prepared to accept the CA's demands. The CA would then accept the decision reached by these negotiations. For Hardinge the identity of the mediator was not essential; instead, he suggested that the Conference should support all efforts to try to mediate the question.<sup>876</sup>

The Conference informed the Hungarian government that it did not see any objection to solutions reached by mediation if the Austrian government would accept such solutions. The Conference, however, made clear that its note dated September 22 had to be abided by. In other words, the cession had to be executed regardless of the opportunity for negotiations. If Austria and Hungary reached an agreement in the negotiations, it would be realized after the execution of the peace treaty.

In this way, introducing a mediator did not change the CA's view about the primary importance of executing the peace treaty. The CA also expected

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<sup>871</sup> Praznovszky to the CA (Cambon), 26 Sept. 1921. Annexe A CA 139. FO 893/13, NA; also see PDRFRH/III/971 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>872</sup> After Beneš's proposal became public, Biancheri claimed to Masirevich in Vienna that the Czech offer would create an unfavourable impression in Rome and cause further complications. Masirevich explained that the Hungarian government had already turned down the offer. Masirevich to Bánffy 24 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/957 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>873</sup> Italian offer of mediation between Hungary and Austria 27 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/975 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>874</sup> Bánffy to Acting Representant of Hungarian government in Prague, Matuska 27 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/976 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>875</sup> CA 140 2 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA. In the CA on October 2, Laroche announced that Beneš had voluntarily withdrawn when he received the news about Italy's mediator role. The French government assessed that, in order for negotiations presided over by a mediator to succeed, there should be only one offer of mediation. In Laroche's opinion the CA should nevertheless "express its gratitude to Beneš" and state that Italy's offer had been accepted only in order to reach a peaceful situation swiftly. Bonin Longare thought that Italy's and Czechoslovakia's offers to solve the situation were not of equal importance, because he claimed that Beneš's offer was only a suggestion by Szapáry who was not in the government but a "personne non autorisée".

<sup>876</sup> CA 139 28 Sept. 1021 FO 893/13, NA.

Hungarian government to create conditions favourable for the cession. In practice this meant cleansing the area of irregular troops by October 4.<sup>877</sup>

In the CA, removing the troops was not considered a simple task, but at the same time the Allies did not want to participate militarily in the evacuation and the elimination of the irregular troops.<sup>878</sup> Therefore the Allies could not promise Austria on behalf of Hungary that the area would be free of insurgents. This being the case, Hardinge thought that the CA had to demand that Hungarian government do everything in its power to stop the activities of the troops especially in “the moral sense”: Hungary’s military power in the area was not to increase by evacuating the irregular troops. The question was pertinent because British information claimed Hungary to have started recruiting armed forces against the peace treaty.<sup>879</sup>

Hungary’s operation in the crisis situation clearly represented power politics: it highlighted the competition between countries and the threat of the use of force. Referring to the delimitation process promised by the covering letter – the promise of the right of self-determination – can be seen as one ground in legitimizing this policy in the international community. The CA’s strategy to contend with Hungary’s power political operations was still the same as at the beginning of 1921: tying local agreements into a part of the peace system’s permanence.

## 8.2 Combining the policy of mediation with the CA policy: compromises between national and international politics

The concept *Doppelspiel*, double game, has been used to describe the Italian policy of continuing to act in the CA with the other Allies while simultaneously pursuing its own policy with Hungary outside the Conference.<sup>880</sup> In the CA discussions Torretta’s actions could nevertheless be presented as a part of the CA policy instead of its opposite. Eventually Austria’s and Hungary’s negotiations with the help of a mediator were actually tied to the CA’s own

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<sup>877</sup> The Conference of Ambassadors (Cambon) to Praznovsky 28 Sept. 1921. Annexe E CA 139. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>878</sup> Although the CA did not want an Allied military operation in Western Hungary, the Versailles military committee had already assessed the Allies’ chances to resist Hungary’s military actions if Hungary failed to accept the CA’s demands. The point of comparison used was the Allied troops in Upper Silesia. According to the report the British were not prepared to assign “even one man” to operations in the area. Instead, France and Japan planned to send troops to the transfer operation. Avis du Comité Militaire Allié de Versailles au sujet des mesures militaires à envisager pour assurer l’évacuation des Comitats Occidentaux. General Weygand (Le Général de Division Chef d’État-Major, Comité Militaire Allié de Versailles) to Marshall Foch and the CA (Cambon) 24 Sept. 1921. Annexe D CA 139. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>879</sup> Hardinge had just received news from the British representative of the Control Commission and through General Weygand that Hungarian government was recruiting new people to arms. CA 139 28 Sept. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>880</sup> Lindeck-Pozza 1971, 34.

line. The situation was comparable to the earlier negotiations of 1921 alongside which the CA was preparing the technical execution of the cession and the goal was an agreement between Austria and Hungary, not changing the peace treaty.

The interesting feature in Italy's Paris Ambassador's note to the CA on September 27, 1921, is how Torretta is introduced mainly as a *mediator*, guarantor of the negotiation offer, not as an active *maker* of the offer. According to the note Bánffy had presented the foundation for the negotiations to Torretta and asked him to guarantee that the offer would be realized. The foundations for the negotiations Italy presented to the CA were nevertheless not as radical as Hungary had expected. The note did not mention the opportunity of border rectifications, apart from Sopron. It also announced that Austria had accepted the negotiations, their foundations, and a plebiscite as a means to solve the problem, and that such a solution would not violate the CA decisions.<sup>881</sup>

Torretta's memorandum to the CA dated September 30, 1921, continued to analyse the goals of Austria and Hungary and Torretta's attitude towards them. Austria demanded the immediate and entire evacuation of the whole Burgenland, which the Hungarian government announced it would accept under certain conditions. The Austrian government also demanded reparations for its losses. Hungary declared to be prepared to normal reparations caused by the transfer, but not for the damage caused by insurgents. Torretta suggested that a court of arbitration should decide the issue. Hungarian government announced it could not assume responsibility for the armed troops in the area and furthermore demanded a general pardon for the troops. In Torretta's opinion a general pardon was acceptable, but on the other hand he thought Hungary could not be released from responsibility for the irregular troops that had operated with the government's blessing. Therefore the government itself had to disperse the troops.

Neither did Torretta favour Hungary's demand that the Austrian army should not be allowed to participate in the occupation of Western Hungary – Hungary had demanded that the concession would be executed as a police and gendarmerie operation. In Torretta's opinion Austria's manner to realize the occupation of the area could not be restricted. Also he did not accept Hungary's proposal that Hungarian officials remain in the area even after the transfer, because the Hungarian officials would act on behalf of Hungary's interests, and the Austrian government would not accept such a procedure. Torretta thought that the Interallied Military Commission should decide what kind of military forces would be used to supervise the evacuated area.

The central part of Torretta's offer of mediation involved the solution of Sopron's future with the help of a plebiscite. According to Torretta's memorandum the plebiscite area would be determined in the negotiations. The point of departure was Austria's and Hungary's disagreement in the matter: Austria proposed a plebiscite only in the city of Sopron while Hungary demanded a plebiscite that would also cover the surrounding areas. Hungary

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<sup>881</sup> Italian Ambassador to the CA 27 Sept. 1921. Annexe C CA 139. FO 893/13, NA.

furthermore demanded that the plebiscite should be organized first in the city, only then in the countryside, because the countryside was likely to “vote for Austria”. It proposed that the plebiscite should be organized eight days after the evacuation. Torretta did not have a ready opinion about this, although he was willing to favour Hungary’s view – the Generals’ Commission would decide the final date. Hungary had also demanded border recriminations in other parts of Western Hungary. However, Torretta commented that it was dangerous to reopen that question in these negotiations and suggested categorically refusing the request, especially while it was a wish and not an actual condition for the acceptance of the offer of mediation.<sup>882</sup>

Once Italy’s mediator role had been accepted, the CA had to discuss the deadline it had itself determined as both Italy’s offer and the view of the Generals’ Commission differed from the original cession schedule determined by the CA. The question was related to the idea that Austria was expected to refuse to sign the assignment document, citing the Hungarian troops’ continued presence in the area. The Allies concluded that, after Hungary’s signature and the Hungarian government’s withdrawal from Western Hungary, the area belonged to Austria even if insurgents still operated there.<sup>883</sup>

Great Britain took the position that Austria and Hungary should abide by both the original CA ultimatum and the foundation for the negotiations accepted now. In the CA note addressed to Hungarian government on September 28 it had already been determined that the negotiations must not prevent the transfer, in other words the CA ultimatum once more. The CA could not change this policy at the last minute. Adhering to the original ultimatum was also justified by stating that an already executed transfer would serve as a motivating factor in future negotiations and make the countries reach an agreement swiftly. In sum, in the British interpretation the mediator negotiations were most likely interpreted as a continuation of the CA note – like the earlier negotiations, support for the CA’s own policy.

The British warned that moving the transfer date and continuing the Allied presence thereby endangered the peace process. As long as the process remained unfinished, the Allies bore the responsibility, and the Generals in Sopron did not have sufficient authorisation in case of problems. After the cession Austria would be responsible for the area, not the Allies. If Austria could not manage the task, the matter could be discussed in the future negotiations to be organized with Italy’s help.<sup>884</sup>

Seen from this angle the problem was not only the operation of Hungarian insurgents but Austria’s resistance as well. The impact of national, local level policy on the process of Western Hungary could thereby be seen in both countries: both were presented as the responsible party. The intention of the British was equally to present demands to Hungary and Austria. Hungary was

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<sup>882</sup> Memorandum by Marquis della Torretta 30 Sept. 1921; CA 140 2 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>883</sup> CA 140 2 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>884</sup> Note by the British government 2 Oct. 1921. Annexe H CA 140. FO 893/13, NA.

to give up the area by the determined date and Austria had to accept the transfer document and agree to take the area under its control. It was an issue of abiding by the peace treaties. The British argued for the authority of the peace treaties while pressing the disputing parties.<sup>885</sup>

However, the CA also heard different views about the cession process schedule and its significance: whether the peace treaty would be realized through strict adherence to the decisions or through applying its execution in practice according to prevailing conditions. Unlike British diplomats, the Allied Generals proposed a process that would secure “flexibility”. The Allied Generals in Sopron informed the CA that the transfer intended for October 3 would not succeed. They supported this conclusion by stating that there were still irregular troops in the area to be ceded and their presence would make Austria refuse to sign. In other words the Generals considered it a problem that signatures to the transfer document were necessary before the real pacification of the area.<sup>886</sup> On the other hand, some in the military circles blamed the problems on Hungary’s claim that it could do nothing to the irregular troops. Delaying the transfer was believed to cause disadvantages.<sup>887</sup>

In addition to contradicting assessments of the situation and the search for the best *modus operandi*, the problems of the Allies included finding their own military role. The CA, the Allied Generals, and the Allied missions in Budapest were of different opinion in this matter. While the CA was unwilling to tie Allied troops to the question of Western Hungary, the diplomatic representatives of the Allies in Budapest thought the situation in the region required Allied military presence. The view of the ambassadors was that Hungarian government would evacuate its troops before the deadline on October 3 but that the irregular bands would still remain there. Therefore it was to be expected that the Allies would confront difficulties during the time of the transfer through them from Hungary to Austria. The Allied Generals in Sopron thereby required military assistance.<sup>888</sup>

Furthermore, the Allies had to resolve their attitude about when Western Hungary could be considered evacuated and ceded to Austria. The central question was the significance of Austria’s signature – a measure perhaps unavailable should Austria refuse to occupy the restless area. The Allies might very well find themselves responsible for the area if Hungary’s signature removed the area from Hungary’s responsibility and Austria refused to sign the transfer document and take the area under its control. The diplomats proposed that the CA should demand Austria to sign the transfer document by the determined time (October 3), after which it would bear legal responsibility for

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<sup>885</sup> Memorandum by the British Ambassade in Paris 30 Sept. 1921. Annexe A CA 140. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>886</sup> The Allied Generals (Ferrario) Sopron 27 Sept. 1921 CA 140. Fo 893/13, NA.

<sup>887</sup> Comité Militaire Allié de Versailles, Marchal Foch to the CA: Notes of Weygand (P.O. le Général de Division Chef d’État Major) 29 Sept. 1921 Annexe D CA 140. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>888</sup> The Allied Diplomatic Representatives in Budapest (Fouchet) 30 Sept. 1921. Annexe E CA 140. FO 893/13, NA.

the area. The responsibility could not be assigned to the Allies, because their authority had to be protected. Therefore Austria had to accept judicial power even if the physical control of the area had not been realized.<sup>889</sup>

Otherwise the role of the Allies in the cession procedure could be lengthened and made more difficult – and their authority could suffer if they were to confront the Hungarian irregulars. The point of emphasis was that Austria's signature meant a juridical act which would free the Allies from a responsibility they were unwilling to assume. The most essential issues seemed to be that the Allies' responsibility for the situation in the area would become as limited as possible.

Unwillingness to turn the question of Western Hungary into an Allied military operation undoubtedly resulted in the CA's objective to bring the peace treaty into force in Western Hungary by combining the policy of demands with the idea of negotiations. In sum, the goal was to execute the peace treaty, to maintain the Allies' authority, and to eliminate conflicts. The roles of Austria and Hungary were thereby seen both as threats and as preconditions for the realization of the peace system. Unrest could be prevented by fitting international politics to the local situation, but at the same time the national level had to accept the decision-makers' demands.<sup>890</sup>

In sum, the CA's own policy, sticking to the ultimatum, was preserved at the same time as a new solution alternative created by Italy emerged. Thus the CA did not have to bargain on its authority. An interesting aspect of the mediation process is that the policy of an individual member of the CA became a part of the international community's policy. Italy itself could combine its own objectives in the Danube region and to present itself as an actor among the traditional Great Powers.

The primary concern for the CA was that the matter would not be delayed and that the transfer schedule created by the CA itself would be followed. Interpreting the situation from the juridical perspective, the CA could back out of any military responsibility. The CA continued to work toward minimizing the Allies' own share in the process and preventing the emergence of a situation where the area would become the Allies' responsibility. The meaning of the Generals' presence was thereby defined only as a moral gesture. The Generals had no administrative task, as Western Hungary had judicially been under Austria's rule ever since the execution of Trianon.<sup>891</sup> The CA used this fact to explain its decision to Austria: the area had formally been Austria's since Trianon came into force on July 26, 1921. Refusing to sign would not help Austria at all.<sup>892</sup>

Minimizing the Allies' administration and supervision responsibilities in the transfer process of Western Hungary did not succeed in practice in the way

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<sup>889</sup> The Allied Diplomatic Representatives in Budapest (Fouchet) to the CA 30 Sept. 1921. Annexe I CA 140. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>890</sup> CA 140 2 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>891</sup> The CA to the Allied Diplomatic Representatives in Budapest 2 Oct. 1921. Annexe K CA 140. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>892</sup> The CA to Austrian Minister in Paris 1 Oct. 1921. Annexe L CA 140. FO 893/13, NA.

the CA had intended. Sticking to the CA ultimatum schedule failed as well. Austria's resistance became a problem. The Allied Generals announced to the CA that Hungary's army had withdrawn from Western Hungary and Hungary had signed the transfer document. Therefore the requirements of the CA note dated September 22 were fulfilled. The Generals commented to the CA that their departure from Sopron would create difficulties and endanger the safety of the population. Therefore they had decided to remain in Sopron and to ask from General Hegedüs a Hungarian gendarme battalion to help them.

To sum up the situation, although Austria had refused to take the area under its control for now, it was considered to be judicially responsible for it. At the same time, the military control remained with Hungary. In other words, Hungary had gained a position as the Allies' "assistant", but their rule in the area was explained to have expired.<sup>893</sup> The Allies justified the recruitment of the Hungarian gendarme battalion by stating that the irregular bands which were interpreted as political threats had tried to get to Sopron on October 3. The bands were categorized into three groups: the legitimist troops; the patriotic troops of irredentist communities; and bands of bandits.<sup>894</sup> With these groups active in the area, the unrest could pose a threat both of restoration and of revision. The Allied missions in Budapest implied that they supported the Generals' decision, although it was contrary to the CA decision. They defined the task of the Hungarian gendarmes serving under the Generals as "representatives of the Allies' power", in the manner of an international force.<sup>895</sup>

Local disturbances and national activities thereby influenced the decision of the international community representatives. Controversially, the operations of the irregulars in Western Hungary gave Hungarian government an opportunity to keep its own troops in Sopron. The Hungarian gendarmes "protecting the Generals" were thus combined with the interests of the Allies. Nevertheless, the decisions came not so much as intentional support for Hungary but as a way to balance terms of the border question, where the most primary concern was not the border itself but the stability of the system. As for Austria, the balancing act meant, to quote Cambon, a means to get the "passive and slow Austria" to accept the CA's terms.<sup>896</sup>

Austria explained to the CA that it had not signed the transfer document and taken control over Western Hungary because, in Austria's opinion, Hungary had not yet fulfilled the cession demand since there were Hungarian troops in the area still. The CA had to demand that Hungary evacuate the area completely. According to the Austrian government, the Treaty of Trianon was not yet executed by Hungary. Under these conditions Austria's sovereignty in

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<sup>893</sup> The Allied Generals to the CA 3 Oct. 1921. Annexe E, and 5 Oct. 1921 Annexe G CA 141. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>894</sup> The Allied Generals to the CA 5 Oct. 1921. Annexe G CA 141. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>895</sup> The Allied Diplomatic Representatives to the CA 3 Oct. 1921. Annexe F CA 141. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>896</sup> CA 141 8 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.



Western Hungary was illusory, and it was not possible for Austria to sign.<sup>897</sup> Finally, the CA decided to wait for the result of the negotiations mediated by Italy and to keep the Generals in Sopron until the results.<sup>898</sup>

On the basis of the Allies' argumentation it can be asked whether the irregular bands meant to the CA mainly a factor threatening the safety of the Allies' representatives. The notes of Generals and diplomats alone implied that among the Allies this was indeed ultimately the issue. The bands were a security risk, not an actual threat to the peace treaty. Therefore a government level signature, the formal transfer of the area to Austria, would have removed the risk of revision.<sup>899</sup> On the other hand the categorisation of the groups by the Generals implied that they were also considered a political threat.

The prevailing conditions eventually proved stronger than the force of the CA ultimatum. Evacuation of Western Hungary and signing the transfer document were postponed, against the CA's original plan, to a time following the negotiations presided over by the mediator. It can be discussed whether this turn of events meant for Italy that the importance of the negotiation solution it organized would increase as well as its own importance. Further it can be asked whether the negotiations at this point offered the CA a safe way to avoid making crucial decisions. The process could be lengthened, because a new phase of negotiations awaited in Venice.

### 8.3 The Venice protocol becomes part of the peace system

Bethlen, Bánffy and Schober came to Venice on October 10, 1921, to negotiate a solution to the question of Western Hungary. The negotiations presided over by Torretta started the next day.<sup>900</sup> The result of the negotiations, the Venice protocol dated October 13, 1921, largely adhered to Torretta's mediation proposal and created a new basis for the transfer process of Western Hungary. According to the agreement, Hungary was to evacuate even the irregular troops from Western Hungary and to cede the entire area to Austria. Hungary was also to make the population of the area remain peaceful and to obey all Allies' orders so that Austria could take over the area. Austria for its part was to accept a plebiscite in Sopron and two nearby villages. Western Hungary in its entirety, including Sopron, would first be ceded to Austria, and the plebiscite would decide Sopron's final ownership. If Sopron was returned to Hungary, Hungary was to guarantee Austria railway connections to Sopron. The plebiscite would be organized eight days after the Allies had confirmed that the situation in

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<sup>897</sup> Eichhoff to the CA 5 Oct. 1921. Annexe H and I CA 141. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>898</sup> CA 141 8 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>899</sup> CA 141 8 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>900</sup> A detailed description of the negotiations, see Ormos 1990, 154-163.

Western Hungary was pacified. "Pacification" meant that Austria had been able to take the area over after the Hungarian evacuation.<sup>901</sup>

The creation of the agreement, which provided an opportunity to revise the border line determined by the peace treaty, can be considered a "success" for Hungary's and Italy's national policies; an opportunity for entities outside the central Great Powers to influence international decision-making. The agreement met Hungary's aspirations to turn down the unfavourable peace treaty and Italy's goal to strengthen its role in European politics. Hungarian historiography indeed presents the issue as a history of Hungarian success. For example Tibor Zsiga (1991) explains the Venice protocol as a victory for the Hungarian government's strategy - a successful policy which eventually led to membership in the League of Nations. In other words, Hungarian nationalism, armed resistance and diplomacy towards the winning side have been seen as successful policy.<sup>902</sup> The "history of success" of Bethlen's policy appears also in Romsics's (2001) writing as the first victory after a defeated peace. He explains the success of the Hungarian policy through the incoherent policy of the Allies, leaving the national level some authority. The Hungarian government could identify and capitalize on that situation. The promise to evacuate the troops resulted in benefits to Hungary. According to Romsics, diplomatic means alone would not have brought about a solution.<sup>903</sup> Ormos (1990) also considers the action of the irregulars important, but "Hungary's victory" can according to her be explained by the Allies' fear of the Anschluss and the Slavic corridor.<sup>904</sup>

Regardless of whether the Allies' actions were motivated by these threatening images belonging to diplomacy's stock of arguments, the point of departure for the acceptance of the Venice protocol was undoubtedly a desire to prevent the conflict from expanding and a desire to reach a solution. From the viewpoint of the Allies the national level policy represented in the context of the Venice protocol a way to solve the problems of the peace treaty without forceful Allied intervention. For the Great Powers' policy, national authority was thereby not only a risk but an opportunity as well.

In the CA the Venice protocol was accepted as the Allies' line in the solution to the border dispute.<sup>905</sup> The acceptance of the agreement in Austria was not so simple, however. Schober explained to Austrian diplomats his motives for accepting Torretta's offer by appealing to the fact that Torretta had acted in the name of the Allies and that Austria would have been denied benefits if it had refused to agree. The question of whether Austria would get, for example, economic concessions and credit through accepting the

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<sup>901</sup> Protocole signé à Venise le 13 Octobre 1921 relatif au règlement de la question de la Hongrie Occidentale, see e.g. FO 404/4/IV/20, NA ; Hochenbichler 1971, 22-25.

<sup>902</sup> Zsiga 1991, 303-304.

<sup>903</sup> Romsics 2001, 223-225.

<sup>904</sup> Ormos 1990, 163-164.

<sup>905</sup> CA 147 27 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

compromise was nevertheless left unresolved.<sup>906</sup> Since Schober, as Chancellor and a negotiator of the Venice protocol, was taking Austria towards an “unfavourable agreement”, his role has been an object of criticism in the historical interpretations.<sup>907</sup> On the other hand, his acceptance of the solution has been understood as an attitude-wise positive spirit. According to Lindeck-Pozza (1971) focusing on Italian politics, Schober chose the “road of peace” paved by Italy when he accepted the Venice protocol.<sup>908</sup>

For Italy and Hungary the Venice protocol meant a chance to make use of political cooperation in the future. Hungarian government indeed approached Italy soon after the negotiations in order to get concessions to Trianon’s military orders.<sup>909</sup> The Italian motives for mediating the agreement – in addition to the psychological and symbolic importance of authority – had to do with the concrete pursuit of interests in Central Europe. Even during the negotiations Italy approached Hungary seeking for economic cooperation and bargaining Hungary against Slavic states.<sup>910</sup>

In the CA, Italy naturally presented the agreement as the Allies’ common interest. Italy wished to convince the CA that the new agreement was not contradictory to the peace treaties or the CA decision, although it did change, for example, the deadlines set by the CA. The note from Italy’s Paris embassy explained that Western Hungary was to be ceded to Austria three weeks later than the CA ultimatum had demanded, as calming the disturbances in the area and making the practical arrangements for the transfer took more time. Austria could not take over the area sooner, in the timeframe determined in the CA note. In addition the note appealed to the fact that General Ferrario, observing the situation from the Sopron perspective, had supported the postponement.

Against Hungary’s hopes, the Venice protocol did not comment on border changes to be made later on the basis of the covering letter. Hungary had demanded quick delimitation of the border, but Torretta and the Austrian representatives in Venice had not accepted the demand. However, as a compromise, Torretta had agreed to inform the Allies that the Delimitation Commissions’ schedule should be speeded up. The work of the Delimitation Commission could not be concluded, however, before the execution of the Venice protocol, i.e. the evacuation of Burgenland and its transfer to Austria.<sup>911</sup>

The solution to the Western Hungary dispute defined in the Venice protocol was adopted as the Allies’ line in the CA meeting on October 27, 1921.

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<sup>906</sup> Bundeskanzler Schober an Gesandte Eichhoff (Paris), Frankenstein (London), Kwiatkowski (Rom), Hoffinger (Belgrad), Cnobloch (Budapest) und Storck (Bukarest). Wien, 14 Oktober 1921. ADÖ/4/587.

<sup>907</sup> Hochenbichler 1971, 26. Hochenbichler claims that in Venice Schober began to make his first errors in the question of Burgenland. (“Hier in Venedig beginnt Schober die ersten Fehler in der Burgenlandfrage zu machen.”)

<sup>908</sup> Lindeck-Pozza 1971, 37.

<sup>909</sup> Kánya to Nemes (Rome) 15/16 Oct. 1921. PDRFRH/III/1067 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>910</sup> Notes of the conversation between Bethlen, Bánffy, Torretta and Castagneto. Venice 13 Oct. 1921. PDRFRH/III/1057 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>911</sup> Italian Ambassador (Paris) to the CA 19 Oct. 1921. Annexe A CA 147. FO 893/13, NA.

The agreement was accepted without dissenting voices although it changed the CA's own transfer project. It was seen as a means to solve the border dispute and to prevent the conflict from getting more serious. The CA line seemed to be to present the Venice protocol as a solution to the problem of the peace treaty and the execution of the border change. In other words the Venice protocol did not appear in the CA discussions as a "problem" or a contradiction vis-à-vis the peace treaties. A compromise solution in the execution of the peace treaty obviously looked like a better alternative than a strict adherence to the border line of Saint-Germain and Trianon, which could have caused potential conflicts. This meant realizing the peace order so that the border defined as ideal in 1919 could be realized in 1921 with an eye toward the current political situation. The direction of the border line itself was no longer the essential question; the important thing now was to create the border as safely as possible.

#### 8.4 Problematising the new solution

The execution of the peace treaty now meant the execution of the Venice protocol. At the same time, all parties defined – in spite of their different goals – the Venice protocol as a treaty comparable to a peace treaty. After the acceptance of the Venice protocol the next problem was how to execute it: what to do if the agreement was not followed or if there were loopholes in it?<sup>912</sup> In what ways could the Venice protocol be interpreted, and how did current political issues reflect on discussions about it? How would the reactions of Austria and Hungary, changes in Central Europe's political situation, and potential conflicts affect the authority of and adherence to the Venice protocol?

The political issues the national actors brought up while trying to influence the situation after the Venice protocol were related to earlier themes: restoration, reactionarism, threat of revision, and the role of Germany. First, while the Venice protocol solved the problems in Western Hungary, extreme phenomena of the Hungarian policy continued – such as the question of monarchy and extreme nationalist activism. The second attempt of Hungary's former king Charles to return as Hungary's ruler in the autumn of 1921 occurred contemporaneously with the aftermath of the Venice protocol and was linked to the border question in terms of time, space, and actors.

As it had during Charles' first attempt to return, Austria again used the threat of Habsburg restoration as a rhetorical tool to strengthen its own position in Western Hungary. This strategy surfaces in Eichhoff's note to the CA dated October 26, 1921, referring to guaranteeing Austria's existence and honouring the Treaty of Saint-Germain. Eichhoff made no direct references to Western Hungary's situation in the note; instead the subtext obviously evidenced Austria's anti-restoration policy and the fact that a restoration could destroy

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<sup>912</sup> CA 147 27 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

Austrian state territory and political existence. To avoid these dangers, Austria needed support from the Allies.<sup>913</sup>

Austria's argument did not affect the CA's decision-making concerning Western Hungary, however. In the same session the CA accepted the Venice protocol, it also commented that the crisis caused by Charles's return attempt would not affect the process decided on for Western Hungary. According to Laroche no political reason could break the solution at hand, which would put an end to a dispute that had proved to be so difficult. His comment can not be interpreted to mean he would have considered these two questions as separate phenomena or the king's return attempt as harmless: he simply would not endanger the settlement of Western Hungary's border by making it contingent upon the question of restoration.<sup>914</sup>

The essential issue for France was, instead, how Czechoslovakia would react to the Venice protocol and to the return attempt of the king. While CA policy refused to relate the question of monarchism and Western Hungary, the Czechoslovakian political leadership took the opposite position. Their politics united the question of the Habsburgs and the question of Western Hungary. Beneš argued that the Venice protocol was unacceptable if Hungary failed to prevent the return of the Habsburgs. Beneš had declared that "the possibility of this second attempt and the proportions of the danger could not have arisen without the tolerance, and even financial and material support, supplied by the Hungarian government to the bands in Western Hungary".<sup>915</sup> Hungarian legation in Vienna concluded Austrian political games underlay Beneš's suspicion: Masirevich claimed that the Czech agitation against Venice "naturally has its repercussion on certain Austrian politicians who would gladly use this opportunity to challenge the concessions we obtained in Venice".<sup>916</sup> In the CA Laroche thought that, in order to pacify the situation, Czechoslovakia had to be convinced that the Hungarian government would remain loyal to the Allies concerning the king issue.<sup>917</sup>

France's role as a member of the CA and the Allied community on the one hand and a pursuer of its own Central European policy on the other manifested itself also in its comments on the Habsburg question and Western Hungary. As a defender of the Venice protocol and at the same time an ally of Czechoslovakia, who was sceptical about the agreement, France had to strike a delicate policy balance. The instructions Peretti de la Rocca delivered to French diplomats on October 29, 1921, characterized France as having quickly influenced other Allies in terms of declaring the decline of the Habsburgs. Peretti explained that the CA had not wanted to change its decision about accepting the Venice protocol because its goal was to realize the peace treaty in

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<sup>913</sup> Eichhoff to the CA 26 Oct. 1921 Annexe C CA 147. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>914</sup> CA 147 27 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>915</sup> Tahy (Prague) to Bánffy 23 Oct. 1921. PDRFRH/III/1109; 24 Oct. 1921 PDRFRH/III/1116; 25 Oct. 1921 PDRFRH/III/1136 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>916</sup> Masirevich to Bánffy 29 Oct. 1921. PDRFRH/III/1176 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>917</sup> CA 147 27 Oct. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

its entirety. Postponing the plebiscite was not topical either, in spite of the restlessness caused by the restoration attempt, because according to Peretti “there would be delays in any case” while the area was being pacified. Beneš had to be convinced about France’s friendly attitude, but he also had to be shown the difficulties and the fact that public caution was necessary: it would be a disadvantage if the public opinion were to discern a difference between the opinions of France and the Allies. Otherwise, France would find itself in a difficult position between Czechoslovakia and the Allies. If that were the case, it would be impossible for France to act usefully for the Little Entente in the future.<sup>918</sup>

The British FO for its part implied to the Hungarians the central importance of fluent cooperation between Central European countries – without Italy’s authority – and uprooting from the political debate issues like the Habsburg question and the Anschluss problems.<sup>919</sup> Great Britain’s embassy in Paris also commented to the CA that the recent events would not affect the validity of the Venice protocol. They proposed that the Allies inform the Austrian government that the execution of the Venice protocol should not be delayed due to political events – the return attempt of the king – that were unconnected with Western Hungary. The British did, however, pay attention to the Austrian argument concerning the influence of public opinion on the position of the Austrian government.<sup>920</sup>

The reaction of the Allied Generals operating in Sopron to the king’s return attempt is interesting because they observed the situation in a narrower context – i.e. only from the perspective of the border question rather than through the Allies’ general policy. Agreeing with CA policy, the Generals thought the Habsburg question would not affect the Western Hungarian process. They were two separate political problems. The essential difference between the Generals and the Ambassadors was the attitude towards the possibilities of the restoration, its success and consequences. From the Generals’ perspective, the return of the king seemed at this point to be proceeding, since all military authorities of Sopron had been subjected to the king<sup>921</sup>. Finally, it seemed most important to the Generals that the border question be resolved, regardless of how the Hungarian government evolved. From their point of view, it was thereby essential that a new Hungarian government formed as a result of Charles’s return would see the question of Western Hungary to its conclusion.<sup>922</sup>

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<sup>918</sup> Peretti de la Rocca to the French representatives abroad 29 Oct. 1921. Europe Autriche 91, MAE.

<sup>919</sup> Hedry (London) to Bánffy 2 Nov. 1921. PDRFRH/III/1237 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>920</sup> The British Ambassador (Paris) to the CA 1 Nov. 1921. CA 151 Annexe T. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>921</sup> For example, Major Gyula Ostenburg’s battalion followed the king to Budapest.

<sup>922</sup> The note presented a list of key ministers in the new Habsburg government. Gorton de la part des Commission des Généraux Alliés à Oedenburg, pour la Conférence des Ambassadeurs. 22 Oct. 1921 Annexe B CA 146. FO 893/13, NA.

The situation estimations all transmitted the same picture: the Habsburg question would not change the process concerning the territorial change or cause a serious conflict. The Generals announced that Hungary's sitting Government was in control of the situation. They did not see the Hungarian government as the source of "Carlist" unrest and Western Hungarian turmoil. Similarly they estimated they themselves were safe in spite of the unrest. The Hungarian government was considered reliable in regard to enacting the Venice protocol and realising the plebiscite. The troops that had entered Sopron were characterized as harmless and non-Carlist; on the contrary, they had arrived "to prevent a return of royalist elements".<sup>923</sup>

Just as the CA declined to include in its agenda the Habsburg question or the operation of Hungarian irregulars, it also avoided a discussion of the free state of Lajta-Banság (Leitha-Banat) founded in Western Hungary. Historical interpretations on Western Hungary place the new "state" as one of the local historical elements that illustrated Hungary's struggle with an extreme right-wing. Like the problem of irregulars and the question of monarchism, this state experiment took its place as one of Hungary's domestic political disputes.

Even before the Venice protocol, when the CA demands were the only terms delivered to Hungary to date, the Hungarian military circles chose declaring the Lajta-Banság area independent as their means to resist the cession. Colonel Pál Prónay, the leader of the Hungarian insurgents, launched this plan on October 4, 1921, and declared a part of Western Hungary independent in Felsőőr. Lajta-Banság was declared to be the new state's name.<sup>924</sup> During its brief existence, the state developed its own symbols. Bethlen did not subscribe to Prónay's project<sup>925</sup>, but the state continued its existence for a month before the Hungarian government discontinued it on November 4, 1921. This "adventure" has become part of the Western Hungarian historical peculiarities.<sup>926</sup> According to Schlag's interpretation, the Hungarian government benefited from keeping Prónay and the insurgents active and controlling the area to be ceded at the same time as the government could show it had adhered to the Allies' orders.<sup>927</sup> The founding of the state can be seen as an interesting phenomenon in an era of transition after the First World War. In a situation where new units were being built to replace old state entities, there was room even for experiments like Lajta-Banság.

Austria's suspicion concerning the success of the transfer process shook the execution of the Venice protocol more than did Hungarian political experimentation. Austria's state leadership interpreted the Venice protocol in the manner of the CA in the context of the peace treaty - in other words, the agreement was used in politics as a point of departure comparable to a peace treaty. Austria explained to the CA that its policy abided by the Allies and the

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<sup>923</sup> Ferrario to the CA 22 Oct. 1921. Annexe B CA 147. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>924</sup> Schlag 1970, 20-21.

<sup>925</sup> Romsics 1990, 251.

<sup>926</sup> On history of Lajta-Banság, see Zsiga 1989, 129-149.

<sup>927</sup> Schlag 1970, 20-22.

peace treaty system. This policy dictated that the disappointment and suspicion concerning the Venice protocol be channelled into protests against the agreement's faulty execution, not against its existence. In other words, the Austrian government announced that it would not breach the agreement but refused its "incorrect interpretation". In practice Austria's protests took the form of the country's Parliament postponing the ratification of the treaty. In postponing the ratification of the agreement, Austria claimed that the new treaty had to receive acceptance in accordance to democracy and parliamentarism.

Austria's criticism was directed against the arrangements of the plebiscite, which it considered unfavourable for itself. According to Eichhoff's note of November 5, the unfair realisation of the Venice protocol contradicted the terms Austria had agreed to when it accepted Torretta's offer of mediation. The rhetoric criticized the execution of the treaty by showing it to be unfair from the point of view of the state and the rights of the nation alike. Moreover, the international treaty was being executed before its ratification. To rectify the situation, the Allies had to support Austria in the execution of the Venice protocol and to respect the rights of an individual state. As it had earlier during the Western Hungarian process, Austria argued that the internal political balance in the country should have a wider influence on the system of the international community. Therefore it would be necessary to gain favourable conditions for the ratification. Secondly, it was the duty of the international community to wait for Austria's ratification before putting the Venice protocol into force. The authority of the peace treaty was shown by indicating that, if the Venice protocol and the plebiscite were executed incorrectly, they would contradict to the peace treaty itself.

For these reasons, Austria threatened to cancel the agreement: the treaty would be breached, if it was executed against the rights of state and the nation. Austria based its critique on the fact that the Generals in Sopron had started to execute the Venice protocol without waiting for the ratification and further negotiations with Austria. Instead, they had ignored Austria's protests and hopes for negotiations about an impartial plebiscite. Austria especially criticized the proposal according to which Hungarian troops could be sent to the plebiscite area for supervision duties. The Generals, for their part, explained to Austria that they were acting under the CA and would not negotiate directly with Austria. Austria, for its part, claimed that without negotiations about how to organize the plebiscite it would be difficult to get the Austrian National Assembly's consent to "the Government's sacrifice that it had made when signing the Venice protocol". If the ratification did not succeed, Austria could not commit to the results of a plebiscite gained "through coercion".<sup>928</sup>

Eichhoff's notes explained the Austrian criticism further by referencing the opinion of the people which affected the government's position. In other words Austria appealed to democracy, parliamentarism and political stability. Eichhoff hoped the CA would issue an official declaration calming the public

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<sup>928</sup> Eichhoff to the CA 5 Nov. 1921. Annexe P CA 151. FO 893/13, NA.



opinion in Austria, after which it would be easier for the government to ratify the treaty. Schober had gone through a lot of pains to get the Foreign Affairs Committee to vote on the “Venice sacrifice”. In its vote the Committee had only promised to accept the Venice protocol on the condition that Austria would negotiate further with Hungary about the execution of the agreement. Austria hoped that the CA would honour the existing peace treaties and a key principle of human rights according to which an international treaty could not be executed without ratification.<sup>929</sup>

The Austrian claims also made the Hungarian government the scapegoat. Schober claimed that both Hungary and the Allies had bypassed Austria’s rights. He gave two explanations for Austria’s chosen policy: firstly, the terms of the Venice protocol had not yet been fulfilled, because Hungary had not responded to Austria’s hopes and Austria could thereby not ratify the treaty yet. Secondly, a problem was caused by the fact that the Venice protocol was already being executed and a plebiscite was being organized, although Austria’s National Assembly had not yet ratified the treaty. This situation put Austria in a *fait accompli* situation, because its interests were at stake. Schober argued that Austria’s political stability as well as the whole Venice protocol were in danger. Charles’ attempt to return had given Hungary a pretext which “perhaps was not such an unwelcome opportunity for Hungary at all” – and which provided an opportunity to stay quiet about further negotiations.<sup>930</sup>

In sum, Austria appealed to legality, the expressed will of the Allies, that had to be honoured. It did not launch a direct rhetorical attack against the CA. Instead, it sought to influence the Allies by blaming them for the faulty execution of the plebiscite determined in the agreement. The CA was urged to pay attention to Hungary’s responsibility. The Austrians understood the Allies as having the responsibility to guide Hungary to adhere to the Venice protocol legally, “in the manner of Austria”. The Allies were also to order the Generals to act legally. The issue at hand was executing the peace treaty. Austria implied that the peace treaty’s existence was based, apart from the mandate from the nation, on Allied actions. The note also made the appeal that if the situation was not handled like appropriately, the territorial integrity of an independent state would be breached.<sup>931</sup> Faulty execution of the Venice protocol presented a threat to both national and international interests. In addition to this, faulty execution was in contradiction with both power politics and idealism. This mode of thought complemented an Austrian statement explaining that a situation unfavourable for Austria could make the peace process more difficult and hinder the work of other organizations involved in stabilizing the peace.<sup>932</sup>

<sup>929</sup> Aide-Mémoire 7 Nov. 1921 Annexe Q CA 151; Eichhoff to the CA 8 Nov. 1921 Annexe R CA 151. FO 893/13/NA. The instructions given to the Austrian legation in Rome reflected also Schober’s policy line: Schober to Kwiatkowski (Rome) 6 Nov. 1921 AdR NPA Ungarn 9/8, ÖStA; also see ADÖ/4/590.

<sup>930</sup> Schober to Kwiatkowski (Rome) 6 Nov. 1921 AdR NPA Ungarn 9/8, ÖStA; also see ADÖ/4/590.

<sup>931</sup> Eichhoff to the CA 8 Nov. 1921. Annexe R CA 151. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>932</sup> Chargeraud (le Président de la Commission du Régime des Eaux) to the CA 25 Oct. 1921 Paris. Annexe S CA 151. FO 893/13, NA.

## **9 EXECUTION OF THE NEW AGREEMENT**

### **9.1 Question of Allied involvement and the position of Hungarian and Austrian forces: local or international operation?**

Not only the competing neighbours, Austria and Hungary, but also the international authorities, the Allies also held different opinions about how to execute the Venice protocol and the plebiscite, particularly on the schedule for the process and the role of the Allies in it. The question about the responsibility and role of the victors' community was still topical. The views of the Generals' Commission in Sopron especially differed from the CA's comments. The major difference was that the Generals wished to adapt the process to the prevailing conditions rather than follow the Venice protocol to the letter. The best way to guarantee the international stability seemed different from the Sopron horizon than that from the Paris perspective.

This difference of opinion was highlighted on November 5, 1921, when General Hamelin reported to the CA about the situation in Western Hungary and presented the Generals' proposal for how to execute the plebiscite. Contrary to the CA's wishes, the conditions required, according to the Generals, a military investment and flexibility as regards the timetable. The Generals' reasoning reflected Western Hungary's local conditions, which were not completely pacified. Hungarian irregulars had returned to the area although Hungary had issued the evacuation declaration on October 18. While the Generals estimated that Charles's attempt to return held only small importance for the border dispute, they used it to explain the continuing restlessness. The interruption of the pacification process came as a consequence of the king's attempt to return.

The Generals' views about sending Allied soldiers to the region and modifying the schedule were primarily based on estimations of the policy of the Hungarians. Allied troops were needed first and foremost to repel renewed attacks by the insurgents. The attacks would spell difficulties not only for the

credibility of the plebiscite but also for the success of the entire transfer operation. The activities of the Hungarians were crucial in terms of the operation's success although the irregular troops were not considered to act under the Hungarian government. The Generals assessed that the change of sovereignty would proceed peacefully if the area went to Hungary on the basis of the plebiscite. Should Austria get the area, the Hungarian troops already placed there would hardly make way for Austria and would furthermore create new bands of insurgents. Somewhat surprisingly, the Generals assumed that, in addition to Austria, Hungary also hoped the Allies would send military into the region. Hungary hoped for troops to complete the evacuation, Austria to guarantee a peaceful occupation.

In addition to the unrest, other reasons also affected the schedule. According to the Generals, the eight-day interlude between the pacification and the plebiscite was insufficient to prepare the electoral lists and to organize the plebiscite. Should the preparations not succeed within eight days, the Generals had to have the authority to postpone the plebiscite. On the basis of these arguments, they divided the execution of the Venice protocol into the following stages: evacuation, pacification, Austrian occupation, preparations of the plebiscite, execution of the plebiscite and finally transfer of the territory.<sup>933</sup>

The Generals' policy emphasized the strong role of the Allies. A swift operation without a strong presence of the Allies did not seem realistic to the Generals. According to Hamelin, the CA was to refuse Hungary's "fallacious offers". In other words the Allies could not trust Hungary to withdraw from Western Hungary by November 6, 1921. Hamelin thought the Hungarian government aspired to two goals: Sopron's return to Hungary and speeding up the arrangements for the plebiscite. Hungary's interests would be realized if it could control the situation and make arrangements for and supervise the election after the Allies had left. The Generals thought this outcome could be averted through strong Allied presence. A situation dominated by Hungary could make Austria refuse to take over Western Hungary in the manner specified by the Venice protocol and annul the plebiscite result. In sum, Hamelin explained that the military presence of the Allies would guarantee the realization of the agreement. He implied that this was a question of securing the situation, not a combat operation.

However, the views of the Generals' Commission clashed with the views of the CA. From the viewpoint of the CA, the crucial thing was to execute the border change quickly with as little military investment as possible from the

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<sup>933</sup> Commission des Généraux Alliés de Sopron (Ferrario), Procès-Verbaux, 30 Oct., 1921. Annexe A ; Minutes of Proceedings 5 Nov. 1921 FO 893/13/CA 150, NA. Detailed transfer plan: 13 Oct. 1921 the Venice protocol, 5 Nov. CA's instructions and beginning of the evacuation, 15. Nov. the arrival of the first two regiments to Austria; 20 Nov. three Allied regiments arrive at Sopron, 27 Nov. finishing the evacuation and Austrian occupation, 5 Dec. plebiscite in Sopron, 8 Dec. plebiscite in surrounding communes, 10 Dec. announcing the results, 18 Dec. Austrian or Hungarian occupation, 20 Dec. departure of Allied troops if the area remain Hungarian, 30 Dec. departure of Allied troops if the area remain Austrian, 1 Jan. 1922 Departure of the Generals.

Allies. In the CA, Hardinge asserted that there was no reason why the plebiscite should not take place immediately. He argued that in an area of 70,000 inhabitants it was possible to hold a plebiscite in eight days on the basis of existing election lists. Instead of extensive troops, the CA was prepared to send officers to the area. The CA decided to ask the governments to send 30 Allied officers to supervise the plebiscite. All operations related to the plebiscite were to be concluded and the transfer to be executed by January 1, 1922.<sup>934</sup>

The British in particular wanted to minimize the risk that the process of transfer and the plebiscite might grow into a military operation engaging large numbers of troops. In the session of the CA on November 9, 1921, Hardinge announced that the British government would accept the Venice protocol on the condition that British troops would not be expected to supervise the plebiscite. The British were also absolutely adverse to sending Hungarian troops into Western Hungary. Hardinge declared he had always supported the evacuation of the irregular troops from the area without armed operations. The essential thing was to realize the transfer of power formally, on the signature level. Hardinge's view undoubtedly had an impact on the fact that the CA decided to ask the Austrian government to ratify Venice protocol in twelve days.<sup>935</sup>

However, the CA's wish concerning immediate ratification of the Venice protocol met with opposition in Austria. Eichhoff's note on November 17, 1921, implied that nothing less than sending Allied troops into the region would guarantee that Austria would ratify the agreement. The Venice protocol concerned Austria's national territory, and due to domestic political reasons it had been impossible to bring the difficult question to the Parliament to be accepted.<sup>936</sup> Austria justified a strong role for the Allies in the transfer process through the threat created by Hungarian authority, propaganda, and armed resistance. Referring to the Venice protocol, Eichhoff stated that Austria considered it necessary for the election's freedom, impartiality and neutrality that there would be no Hungarian troops in the election area and that the Allies supervise the area. The task of the Allied troops, officers, and gendarmes would be to secure the election and to prevent terrorism and agitation.<sup>937</sup>

The different attitudes of Austria and Hungary towards the Venice protocol were clearly visible in their comments. The Generals interpreted the situation to be that the Hungarian policy was to aspire to an immediate plebiscite, while the Austrian government was ready to ratify the Venice protocol only after it had been convinced that there would be no Hungarian troops in the area to supervise the plebiscite. Similarly, the Generals continued to demand Allied troops. In the note it was stated that because the CA refused to send any Allied troops to the area, the Generals still assumed that "the sincerity of the plebiscite could not be assured and the transfer could not be

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<sup>934</sup> CA 150 5 Nov. 1921 FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>935</sup> CA 151 9 Nov. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>936</sup> Eichhoff to CA 17 Nov. 1921. Annexe K CA 153. FO 893/14/NA.

<sup>937</sup> Eichhoff to CA 17 Nov. 1921. Annexe L CA 153. FO 893/14/NA.

effected peacefully". Consequently, the question of Burgenland would stay open endangering the peace in Central Europe.

Observations about the problems in national level politics undoubtedly fed the Generals' view that more time and more troops were necessary to complete the process. The Generals announced on November 15 the modalities of the plebiscite and started to prepare the operation. Two days later they informed the CA that Austrian troops had started to occupy Burgenland, but were acting slowly.<sup>938</sup> Austria complained about Hungary's propagandistic policy, but, not surprisingly, the Austrians were accused of carrying out propaganda campaigns too. According to Eichhoff's note, the Hungarians had accused Austria of "*dictature militaire, fonctionnaires communistes, endommagement du téléphone et les voies ferrées, taxes sur le bétail*". This had caused "exasperation of the population".<sup>939</sup> The Allied missions in Budapest paid attention to the Austrian propaganda as well and asked the CA to use its influence to convince the Austrian government to give up its campaign since it would disturb the operations of the plebiscite.<sup>940</sup> The Generals' Commission, for its part, commented that Austria's resistance and passivity had caused disturbances in the area to be handed over and in the re-establishment of communications and public administration. These claims implied that the Austrians were acting not only against the Allied authority, but against the rights of the local people.<sup>941</sup>

On November 23, 1921, the CA reacted not only to the definition of the Allies' modus operandi but also to the roles of Austria and Hungary: both were told not to use propaganda.<sup>942</sup> The intention was to avoid any visible partiality in the comments.<sup>943</sup> The Conference tried to avoid any delays or an escalation of the conflict through its policy of constraint and minimizing the Allies' own activity.

Both Hungary and Austria were thereby observed as disturbers of the Venice protocol. The Allies considered the propaganda, Hungarian military activities, and Austria's delay policy as threats. Yet, despite the criticism, in some ways the policies of both countries paralleled the Allies' own views: the attitude of the Hungarian government corresponded to the CA's interpretations, while Austria's arguments mirrored the Generals' Commission's views. The interpretations of the CA in Paris and the Allied operations in Budapest and Sopron illustrated these convergences.

The Generals' analysis of the local situation conflicted with the way the CA wanted to see the peace treaty executed. This difference of perspective focused on the need for Allied military power in the transfer process and highlighted the difficulties of Austria's and Hungary's police sharing in the supervision of the area. The Hungarian Foreign Minister had proposed

<sup>938</sup> Ferrario to CA 17 Nov. 1921. Annexe H CA 153. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>939</sup> Eichhoff to CA 19 Nov. 1921. Annexe M CA 153. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>940</sup> Doulcet to CA 14 Nov. 1921. Annexe B CA 153. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>941</sup> Allied Generals to CA 19 Nov. 1921. Annexe I CA 153. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>942</sup> CA 153 23 Nov. 1921. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>943</sup> CA to the Allied Generals 23 Nov. 1921. Annexe N CA 153; CA to the Allied Ministers in Vienna and Budapest. Annexe O CA 153. FO 893/14, NA.

Austrian and Hungarian troops for this task. Allied diplomats in Budapest commented to the CA that consenting to this plan would be the most beneficial option for the Allies, and the matter could go forward. At the same time they warned that Austria would object to the presence of Hungarian troops.<sup>944</sup>

The CA reacted to the proposal in the spirit of compromise: by accepting the presence of Austrian and Hungarian troops and sending a limited number of Allied troops. Bonin Longare was especially against sending both Austrian and Hungarian troops. Instead, he favoured the idea of using Allied troops. His main arguments referred to the authority of the CA. Second, he expressed concern that the peaceful conditions could be endangered if the Hungarian and Austrian troops failed to cooperate. The Austrian policy could also rock the process. He wanted to avoid all such measures which would offer a pretext for Austria to refuse to ratify the Venice protocol or criticize the plebiscite as partial. The Italian motives were undoubtedly related to a wish to control the development of the situation.

The idea of using local armed forces and police in the operation was accepted by the other CA representatives, however. Hardinge proposed that the Conference should explain to the Generals and the Allied Ministers in Vienna and Budapest that, because it was "impossible" to send any Allied troops, a mixed Austro-Hungarian force would work if it took orders from the Generals. The troops would supervise the polling stations and assist the police. However, the numbers of troops would be as limited as possible.<sup>945</sup>

The CA nevertheless decided to send Allied troops as well. The Allies could detach contingents from Upper Silesia for this purpose. The Conference accepted this proposal in spite of the British' reluctance to send their own troops and decided to recruit from Upper Silesia two companies, 450 men, to keep order during the plebiscite. The Allies' contingent would consist of 200 Frenchmen, 200 Italians, and 50 British.<sup>946</sup> In addition to the promise of Allied military presence, Austria's criticism was to be silenced also by ignoring the Austrian claims. In this sense, the Conference accepted Laroche's suggestion that the plebiscite would be executed regardless of Austria's opinion and regardless of whether Austria would ratify the agreement or not.<sup>947</sup>

Austria responded to the situation by accepting the ratification of the Venice protocol in the Parliament. The purpose of the Austrian reply to the CA was to prove that the acceptance was based on the scenario where an impartial election would be guaranteed by the Allies' presence and the Hungarians' withdrawal eight days before the plebiscite.<sup>948</sup>

However, the CA policy did not satisfy the Generals' Commission. It continued to demand more troops to guarantee the plebiscite by referring to

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<sup>944</sup> Allied Diplomatic Representatives (Doulcet) in Budapest to CA 22 Nov. 1921. Annexe H CA 154. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>945</sup> CA to the Allied Generals 23 Nov. 1921. Annexe N CA 153; CA to the Allied Ministers in Vienna and Budapest. Annexe O CA 153. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>946</sup> CA 155 2 Dec. 1921. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>947</sup> CA 154 25 Nov. 1921. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>948</sup> Eichhoff to CA 1 Dec. 1921. Annexe C CA 155. FO 893/14, NA.

“German propaganda and threat of communism” in Western Hungary. According to the Generals, the “thrilling nationalism” of the Hungarian partisans operating in the plebiscite area would cause combat unless Allied troops kept the peace. As before, they maintained that, if the plebiscite was favourable for Austria, the Generals would not be able to assure the transfer without difficulties: should Hungary lose the game, protests and disorder would erupt. The Generals thus demanded 1,500 men instead of the scheduled 450. There should also be 500 gendarmes, who might be Italian.<sup>949</sup> The CA, however, maintained that the responsibility of the Allied Generals should be reduced as much as possible.<sup>950</sup> The debate between the CA and the Generals on the military role of the Allies concluded with a compromise: the Allies sent troops, but in limited numbers.

The international decision-makers argued for national level responsibility in the carrying out of the necessary tasks and for a restriction on international operations. Austria’s and Hungary’s responsibility for the process was for the CA an argument against the need for more Allied troops. In sum, the Venice protocol did not directly specify the scope of the supervision task, but even considering the opposing arguments adherence to the agreement had central priority. It was essential to the CA that the Venice protocol was interpreted precisely and that schedules were adhered to, whereas the Generals wanted to work in accord with the spirit, rather than the letter, of the agreement by insuring the local conditions necessary for the execution of the treaty.

## 9.2 Controversial interpretations on the conditions of the plebiscite

In addition to the Allies’ military role, the central CA concern was the date of the plebiscite. The discussion concerning the date once again revealed various interpretations of the Venice protocol and the conditions prevailing in Western Hungary. Despite the varying arguments, the parties emphasized they would abide by the Venice protocol. Austria stressed that the agreement necessitated Western Hungary’s pacification and proposed postponement of the plebiscite; Hungary for its part applied the agreement in a way most favourable for itself and proposed a quick plebiscite and a precisely eight-day-long interlude between evacuation and the voting day. On December 3, 1921, Hungary attempted to show to the CA that the conditions were suitable for the plebiscite and demanded the Conference request from the Generals’ Commission an immediate declaration to the effect that Western Hungary had been pacified. Laroche, who had talked with Masirevich, however, answered that he doubted strongly if the Conference would give these kinds of instructions to the

<sup>949</sup> Allied Generals to CA/Chef Mission à Guerre 3 Dec. 1921. Annexe B CA 156. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>950</sup> CA 156 6, 7 and 8 Dec. 1921. FO 893/14, NA.

Generals because it was the Generals who made the decisions concerning the pacification.<sup>951</sup>

The Generals' Commission in Sopron was not prepared to determine the plebiscite date at this point, however, although the Austrian troops had finished without any incidents the occupation of "Burgenland" which they started on November 13, 1921, and the pacification was now accomplished. In the Generals' opinion the date could not be determined before the Allied officers arrived in the area to support the Generals or before the local conditions were stable.<sup>952</sup> The viewpoint of the Generals, in harmony with the prevailing conditions, differed from the CA line from the start. The question of sending military was thereby linked to the question of the plebiscite date. For the CA, the execution without delay seemed to best guarantee the peace system. In this sense they constantly favoured rapid schedules.

The need for Allied troops was a crucial argument particularly for the Generals' Commission and for Austria. The Italian policy in the CA, on the other hand, responded to the Hungarian attempts to influence the procedure. While Italy had supported military Allied participation in the process, it also argued that the troops should not affect the planned schedule. In other words the arrival of the Allied officers could not determine the pacification and plebiscite dates, because any extension would endanger the execution of the Venice protocol. The CA eventually agreed with Italy's stand. The Conference decided to inform the Generals that the deadline which was defined by the Venice protocol should be strictly respected and the plebiscite should begin no later than December 13, 1921.<sup>953</sup> The Allied troops were due to arrive on December 9.<sup>954</sup>

Speculations on the plebiscite date continued with Austria's last-ditch attempts to postpone the voting. Austria's ground was the presence of Hungarian troops in the election area on the eve of the voting day. According to Austria, Hungary's authority contradicted the impartiality of the plebiscite and consequently also the peace treaty and Austria's rights.

On December 9, 1921 Schober instructed Eichhoff to appeal to the CA to postpone the plebiscite in a way where one week would pass from the withdrawal of the Hungarian troops (December 12) before the plebiscite.<sup>955</sup> Schober also approached the legations of Great Britain, Italy, and France using a rhetoric that highlighted the notions of justice, freedom, and legality. The Austrian National Assembly had accepted the Venice protocol on November 29 on the condition that the CA would guarantee the impartiality and freedom of

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<sup>951</sup> Laroche to CA 3 Dec. 1921. Annexe C CA 156. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>952</sup> Allied Generals to CA 4 Dec. Annexe D CA 156. FO 893/14, NA; on Austrian occupation see the map by Zsiga 1989, 161. On reasons to postpone the plebiscite, also see Hamelin Budapest 6 Dec. 1921. Annexe E CA 156. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>953</sup> At first the date was December 14, 1921.

<sup>954</sup> CA 156 7 Dec. 1921. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>955</sup> Schober to Eichhoff Dec. 9 1921. 5596/St. Germain 24/Westungarn 3/ 01/AdR, NPA; Bundeskanzler Schober an Gesandter Eichhoff (Paris), Wien, 9. Dezember 1921. ADÖ/4/613.



the plebiscite. These conditions would not be met if the vote took place only 48 hours after the withdrawal of Hungary's troops, because Hungary's activities in the area would still influence the election result. Austria thereby demanded the plebiscite to be postponed until December 18, 1921. Furthermore, Schober argued for the postponement by noting that the President of Austria had not yet ratified the agreement. Secondly, the note referred to the international politics: it repeated Austria's significance in terms of Central Europe's pacification and balance. Austria seemed to refer to the Allied responsibilities repeatedly: it was the Allies' duty to protect Austria because realizing Austria's rights would also serve the interests of the international community.<sup>956</sup>

The final date of the plebiscite was a topic of speculation to the eleventh hour as the views of the different parties on a suitable date differed. The central question, to which Austria later returned, was whether the CA would allow the postponement of the election to December 18, as Austria had hoped. The CA minutes do not mention changing the date – the Ambassadors held their next meeting only after the election.<sup>957</sup> The source of information about the date is thereby based on the Austrian interpretations and on the French reports. The theme has appeared in literature as a communication error.

The French Prime Minister Aristide Briand's instructions of December 11, 1921, which were a reaction to information delivered by French representatives in Vienna and Budapest, paid attention to the fact that the Generals' Commission had not supported postponement of the plebiscite until December 18.<sup>958</sup> As a reaction to Austria's appeal the French War Ministry also announced to Hamelin that the Ministry was amazed that the Generals had declared pacification although disturbances still erupted in the area. The War Ministry informed Hamelin that the CA now asked the Generals to postpone the election until December 18 due to technical reasons. The key motive for the change of the voting date was a desire to take from Austria "a cause for protest considered valid" and thereby to secure the execution of the peace treaty. According to the French information the plebiscite date could not be changed, however, if Hungary forced an adherence to the Venice protocol.<sup>959</sup>

<sup>956</sup> Schober to Lefevre, Orsini and Keeling. Vienne, le 13 décembre 1921. 7221/1B K 815 NPA Liasse Ungarn 9/10, ÖStA. Heim also addressed a note on the matter to the Generals' Commission on December 13.

Heim to Allied Generals 13 Dec.1921 P.A. 172 6em Parti du Rapport du Général Hamelin sur transfert de la Hongrie Occidentale et annexes. Europe Autriche No 93 z. 88-9 Comitats de Hongrie 1922 15.2.-30.6., MAE.

<sup>957</sup> The CA minutes do not mention the discussion of December 12, 1921, because the decision was made outside the meeting. Heideking (1979), who depends in his research on CA sources, does not mention the discussion on changing the date. He nevertheless mentions Austria's attempts to postpone the plebiscite by referring to Austria's later note addressed on December 16, 1921, and to Hochenbichler and Wambaugh as he mentions that Austria's last attempts did not succeed. Heideking 1979, 180.

<sup>958</sup> Briand Paris 11.Dec. 1921 6em Parti du Rapport du Général Hamelin sur le transfert de la Hongrie Occidentale et annexes. Piecè Annexe (P.A.) 169. Europe Autriche No 93 z. 88-9 Comitats de Hongrie 1922 15.2.-30.6., MAE.

<sup>959</sup> M. le Ministre de la Guerre to Général Hamelin à Sopron Paris 12.Dec. 1921. Europe Autriche 92 z. 88-9 Comitats de Hongrie, MAE; 6em Parti du Rapport du Général

Hamelin also stated that, as reported to him personally, the fact that the Italian officers arrived late at Sopron provided a useful motive for postponing the voting day or at least the postponement could have been unofficially legitimized by it. Hamelin was asked to work in person in order to get the date changed. According to him, the British in the CA also favoured the postponement of the voting day.<sup>960</sup>

On December 12, 1921, Eichhoff reported that Cambon's opinion concerning the change was unclear and he had no opportunity to discuss the matter with the CA or the Generals' Commission.<sup>961</sup> Schober, for his part, had learned the previous day from a "reliable source" that the Generals' Commission did not consider it possible to conclude the preparations for the plebiscite before December 18, 1921. Schober concluded that it agreed with Austria's state leadership about when to hold the vote. Eichhoff, for his part, confirmed on December 12, 1921, that the Commission would send a telegraph message concerning the postponement of the vote.<sup>962</sup>

Guglia's research (1961) describes the situation more positively from Austria's point of view than does the original source. According to Guglia, Eichhoff had an opportunity to meet with Cambon on December 12. Cambon had asked Eichhoff personally and without binding promises whether the latter could assume responsibility if the plebiscite were held on December 18. Eichhoff answered that Austria would not question the legality of the plebiscite. After this, Eichhoff announced to Vienna that the CA would give the Generals' Commission its assent to postpone the plebiscite. It is true that the final decision would be left to the Commission. However, the Hungarian government rejected the postponement, and the Generals did not know about the decision made in the name of the CA.<sup>963</sup>

Meanwhile, while Austria was demanding postponement of the plebiscite, Hungary was concerned that a delay would threaten Hungary's advantage and might lead to an execution of the Venice protocol unfavourable to Hungary. Masirevich approached the French Foreign Ministry once more with these concerns. Laroche had, however, pointed out that the plebiscite could not be held sooner because the Allied troops could not reach Western Hungary any sooner. He had emphasized that the plebiscite should be held in an absolutely correct manner. He wondered why the Hungarians were in such a hurry. In Hungarian legation in Paris Woracziczky responded that this was not the first

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Hamelin sur le transfert de la Hongrie Occidentale et annexes. Pièce Annexe (P.A.) 173, Europe Autriche No 93 z. 88-9 Comitats de Hongrie 1922 15.2.-30.6., MAE.

<sup>960</sup> 6em Parti du Rapport du Général Hamelin sur le transfert de la Hongrie Occidentale et annexes. Annexe (P.A.) 173, Europe Autriche No 93 z. 88-9 Comitats de Hongrie 1922 15.2.-30.6., MAE.

<sup>961</sup> Eichhoff to BAA 12 Dec. 1921. 6601/St.Germain 24/Westungarn 3/1/AdR NPA, ÖStA.

<sup>962</sup> Schober to Eichhoff 11 Dec. 1921; Eichhoff to BAA 12 Dec. 1921. 6618/St.Germain 24/Westungarn 3/01/AdR NPA, ÖStA.

<sup>963</sup> Guglia 1961, 63-64.

time the interruption of an agreement had had an unfavourably impact on the position of Hungary.<sup>964</sup>

Speculations about the postponement of the voting day had no impact on the final date, however. On December 13, the Generals' Commission announced that there had been no incidents to disturb the preparations for the vote. The propaganda had in principle been interrupted, but it could not be completely removed, and, contrary to the Austrian claims, there were only minor mistakes in the election lists. The impartiality would be guaranteed by communal police under the Allies' command.<sup>965</sup> Thereby the plebiscite would be organized, in accordance with the CA decision, in Sopron on December 14, 1921, and in Brennbergbánya the next day. In other villages the plebiscite would be organized on December 16, 1921.<sup>966</sup> On December 16, the Generals' Commission explained that it could not start modifying the Venice protocol and its line of conduct based on earlier CA instructions concerning the date of the plebiscite.<sup>967</sup>

An Austrian memorandum, dated December 19, 1921, explained that the CA had told Eichhoff after its meeting on December 12, 1921, that it would authorize the Generals' Commission to postpone the plebiscite due to technical reasons. However, Austria soon received information that the CA had set a condition for the date change. Italian Minister delivered this information to Schober in Vienna. The Minister stated that the CA authorized the Generals to postpone the plebiscite to December 18 on the condition that Hungary would accept the later date. According to Cnobloch there was no such condition, however, although the Hungarian government had discussed the issue. Since the plebiscite had, nevertheless already been held on December 14, the President of Austria could not ratify the agreement. "The plebiscite, which was the ideal instrument of the democratic right of self-determination" had turned into a caricature of democracy. For this reason, Austria decided not to participate in the plebiscite and to commit itself only to the peace treaty.<sup>968</sup>

For Austria the determining and realization, against its wishes, of the plebiscite on December 14 represented only one argument in its protest policy, however. Austria also contested the reliability of the election lists: who in the Sopron area were considered to have the right to the application of self-determination. According to the definition prepared by the Generals' Commission on November 5, 1921, the Generals prepared the lists with representatives from Austria and Hungary. The regulations had been influenced by the Article of the Treaty of Saint-Germain concerning the

<sup>964</sup> Woracziczky to Bánffy 12 Dec. 1921. PDRFRH/III/1410 K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>965</sup> Telegramme (signé: Ferrario) Budapest 13 Dec. 1921. Annexe K CA 157. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>966</sup> Fogarassy 1976, 171.

<sup>967</sup> Ferrario to Foch and CA 16 Dec. 1921. 6em Parti du Rapport du Général Hamelin sur le transfert de la Hongrie Occidentale et annexes. Annexe (P.A.) 173, Europe Autriche No 93 z. 88-9 Comitats de Hongrie 1922 15.2.-30.6., MAE.

<sup>968</sup> Memorandum. Nichtteilnahme Oesterreichs and der Volksabstimmung in Oedenbuerg. Wien 19 Dezember 1921 7485/1B K 815 AdR, Ungarn 9/10, NPA, ÖStA; Memorandum der Bundesregierung. Wien, 19. Dezember 1921. ADÖ/ 4/625.

Klagenfurt plebiscite. According to the Generals' plan, the franchise would be given to all Sopron area inhabitants regardless of gender who had had their 21st birthday by January 1, 1921, and who had not lost their civilian or political rights. The biggest question seemed to involve the role of place of birth and permanent residence - who was a real resident in the Sopron area.

The Generals justified their regulations by referring to the nature of Sopron as the administrative town: the majority of Sopron inhabitants were officials and workers. If only native-born people were allowed to vote, the town would not be represented. Therefore, they enfranchised people who had moved to the plebiscite area before January 1, 1918; the most senior officials and the native-born inhabitants.

The Generals' proposal can be seen as a compromise between two wishes based on national interests. One of the questions concerned native-born inhabitants who had emigrated from the area. The Generals' report explained that restricting the franchise of the émigrés would avoid disruptive movement into the area and avoid the difficulties created by trying to prove the voting rights of people who had, for example, moved to Austria as refugees or to other parts of Hungary.<sup>969</sup> The CA gave the Commission relatively free rein to prepare the election lists.

Austria stood to benefit from enfranchising only those who had lived in the area for a long time - 10 years, thereby limiting the proportion of Hungarians who had moved to the area more recently. Hungary, on the contrary, wanted to give voting right to those living in the area only one year. According to Hamelin, the goal of the Hungarian government was to guarantee franchise to the majority of Sopron inhabitants: officials of Hungarian origin who had not lived long in the area.<sup>970</sup>

The obviously contested nature of the election lists fuelled Austria's plebiscite criticism that manifested itself soon after the vote.

### 9.3 How to cope with the controversies of the plebiscite?

In reference to the question of Western Hungary, the idea of plebiscite first appeared as a slogan for self-determination and as one of the keywords of idealism. In autumn 1921, the plebiscite represented a solution for the political problems: a way to solve a power political and security problem.

The plebiscite resulted in a victory for Hungary, most clearly in the town of Sopron where 18,994 were entitled to vote. There, out of the 17,298 voters, 12,327 voted for Hungary and 4,620 for Austria with 351 ballots declared void. In the surrounding countryside, however, Austria won a slight majority in most of the communes with total vote of 3,607 for Austria and 3,007 for Hungary. In

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<sup>969</sup> Projet d'organisation du plebiscite dans le territoire de Sopron; Observations. Annexe C CA 150. FO 893/13, NA; CA 150 5 Nov. 1921 FO 893/13, NA.

<sup>970</sup> CA 150 5 Nov. 1921. FO 893/13, NA.

the overall results, 15, 334 (65.1%) voted for Hungary, and 8,227 (34.9 %) for Austria.<sup>971</sup>

Researchers have explained the results of the plebiscite in many ways – by referring to Sopron’s ties to Hungary, by the nature of the town as an Hungarian administrative centre, and by the area’s German voters’ commitment to Magyariness. Ethnicity or language have not been seen as decisive factors – although the majority of Sopron inhabitants were precisely Hungarian.

Burghardt, who criticized the Austrian contestation of the plebiscite in his book published in 1962, presents seven explanations for Hungary’s victory in the plebiscite. Sopron was a strongly Magyarised town inhabited by Hungarian administrative machinery and educated elite, where, in 1920, more Hungarians than Germans lived. Sopron’s public opinion supported an autonomy to be built inside Hungary rather than Austria. Sopron was thereby a Hungarian political centre. The Hungarians managed to reach the Sopron inhabitants with their arguments: Hungary was a strong nation which had defeated the Communists, unlike Vienna. Austria was considered militarily and politically weak – according to Burghardt the countryside population shared this observation. Furthermore, according to him the Germanness of the countryside population orientated towards a feeling of Swabian origin rather than Austrianness. Finally Burghardt explains the result by individuals’ “general reluctance to change their circumstances” and Hungarian nationalism. The Hungarians knew how to appeal to “the noblest patriotic sentiments of the people”.<sup>972</sup>

While for Burghardt Magyariness as a motive concentrates on “loyalty to the state”, Gullberg has brought up the voters’ loyalty to the Hungarian region. In Gullberg’s explanation German voters also adhered to their own, local Western Hungarian identity regardless of ethnicity.<sup>973</sup>

Most interpretations have approached the plebiscite results from a national perspective, either Austrian or Hungarian. The process disappointed Austria in terms of voting date, the Allies’ role, and election lists – these points made up the contemporary actors’ central arguments while Austria tried to hold on to a favourable interpretation of the peace treaty and the Venice protocol. In Austrian historiography the lost election resulted in interpretations about the suspiciousness of the plebiscite, whereas, the Hungarian interpretations have seen the plebiscite and its results as a successful policy and manifestation of justice. The first Austrian interpretations brought up Hungarians’ threatening behaviour against German voters and misuse of franchise. Explaining the plebiscite result partly with “shady” voting conditions reflected the contemporary actors’ views about the realization of the plebiscite

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<sup>971</sup> French Military Mission in Budapest to CA 18 Dec.1921. Annexe E CA 158. FO 893/14, NA; Wambaugh 1933, 291-292. The rural communes were Sopron Bánfalva (Wandorf), Fertőboz (Holling), Balf (Wolfs), Fertőrákos (Kroisbach), Ágfalva (Agendorf), Harka (Harkau), Kópháza (Kohlendorf), Nagy-Czenk (Zinkendorf).

<sup>972</sup> Burghardt 1962, 185-187.

<sup>973</sup> Gullberg 1999, 150-151.

against Austria's interests – in other words, against the Venice protocol. Contemporary texts repeat the claims about the suspicious nature of the plebiscite and the injustice that resulted from it, but references to “injustice” also appear in later times.<sup>974</sup>

Depending on the perspective, the various texts narrate a history of success or a history of suspiciousness: Hungarian accounts of success have opposed the classically suspicious Austrian accounts. Local historical texts as well as research discussing the issue from the perspective of diplomatic history focus on the peoples' loyalty to Hungary. Hungarian scholars' research and in particular Swanson's article “Success story” (2000)<sup>975</sup> emphasize the importance of the plebiscite in the positive sense and the exemplary nature of Sopron in the border decisions of post-war Central and Eastern Europe – especially in contrast to Hungary's large territorial losses elsewhere. Kerekes (1979) also assesses that the solution reached through the Sopron plebiscites as success from the ethnic and economic viewpoints, as it respected the relationship between ethnicity and economy.<sup>976</sup> Positive interpretations in recent historiography have also seen Sopron's plebiscite as an example of a new international system, the application of self-determination.<sup>977</sup>

In the interpretation of the contemporary actors, the suspicions surrounding the plebiscite were the central Austrian argument against the election process. The debate following the plebiscite also focused on interpretations of the Venice protocol. The Austrian policy was still to show that the Venice protocol had not been executed correctly. Austria did not accept the plebiscite and proposed that it be declared void, because its organization had contradicted the agreement: the voting took place at the wrong time and under circumstances allowing for Hungarian influence to compromise its outcome. Eichhoff's note on December 14, 1921, appealed not only to the CA “decision” to postpone the plebiscite until December 18 in order to allow the eight-day interlude between the pacification of the area and the plebiscite, but also to legitimacy. Not only was the role of the Austrian National Assembly, but the authority of the President of Austria used as an argument. As the President Hainisch had not yet ratified the agreement, the Republic of Austria had not legally participated in the vote on December 14. The Allies acted against the peace treaty and the new Republic of Austria by organizing an incorrect plebiscite.<sup>978</sup>

Austria thereby presented itself as betrayed, a political victim. Chancellor Schober had told French High Commissioner Lefèvre-Pontalis that he had “appreciated the CA decision to allow the Generals to postpone the plebiscite by a few days in order to realize the conditions determined in the Venice

<sup>974</sup> Haslinger 2001, 108. Haslinger refers to Miltschinsky 1922.

<sup>975</sup> Swanson 2000; On Hungarian interpretations see for example Ormos 1990, 197-202 and Romsics I. 2001, 226.

<sup>976</sup> Kerekes 1979, 338.

<sup>977</sup> On history of application of the idea of self-determination in Post-Habsburg-area, see Gullberg 2000.

<sup>978</sup> Eichhoff to CA 14 Dec. 1921. Annexe L CA 157. FO 893/14, NA.

protocol". He blamed the Generals' Commission for not following the CA line and instead organizing the plebiscite under conditions which favoured Hungary.<sup>979</sup>

Austria's protests against the plebiscite initially received sympathy in the CA. In Laroche's opinion Austria's demands and criticism were justified. He indeed inquired why the Generals had declared the area peaceful before the Hungarian troops had left. The condition set by Austria for the plebiscite – that prior to it the Hungarian troops, both regulars and irregulars, were to withdraw and be replaced by Allied troops – had not been met. He also remarked the Austrian claim on the ratification.

The CA next took up the topic of how to react to Austrian's protests in the politically safest way. The installation of the peace system depended at this stage on Austria. As Sir Milne Cheetham pointed out, the Allies would go through less trouble if Austria won the plebiscite. However, Cheetham considered Hungary's victory more likely. Thereby he expected Austria to question the validity of the vote. In Laroche's opinion it was impossible to predict the overall result. There was no doubt that the Hungarian administrative town would vote for Hungary, but he estimated that the countryside surrounding it was pro-Austrian. In this situation Cheetham presented three alternatives for CA action. The treaties of Saint-Germain and Trianon could justify all the alternatives because the treaties lent themselves to various interpretations and, therefore, could support a range of arguments. With ambiguity which was equally useful, the Venice protocol could be presented as part of the peace treaty or as separate from the treaty and therefore it was a document that could be declared void.

The two first alternatives presented by Cheetham defined the Venice protocol as an integral part of the peace treaty. First, while the Venice protocol was interpreted as an integral part of the peace treaty, it could nevertheless be ignored as Austria had not ratified it and had not committed to it. Therefore the CA could assign Sopron to Hungary on the basis of "general political interests" instead of the Venice protocol. This alternative would endanger the Treaty of Saint-Germain, however, because the realization of the Venice protocol had been understood as the condition for the execution of Saint-Germain. Cheetham's second, more logical and simple alternative approached Austria's own stand instead. Austria demanded a new plebiscite because the previous one had been organized without Austria's ratification of the agreement. The third alternative Cheetham presented stressed the relative insignificance of the Venice protocol compared to the peace treaty. The Venice protocol could be declared void, and Austria and Hungary could negotiate a new solution with the Allies' mediation. This alternative appeared to be the most unfavourable from the viewpoint of the CA, and especially Italy.

Cambon argued that the CA should not give Sopron to Hungary, but that the annulment of the Venice protocol was unnecessary as well. In his opinion the CA should wait for the final results of the plebiscite before making its

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<sup>979</sup> Pontalis to CA 15 Dec. 1921. Annexe M CA 157. FO 893/14, NA.

decision. However, Laroche and Cheetham thought the CA should reach a decision on the line of conduct, because otherwise the Generals and the Allied troops would depart while the CA was still looking into the Austrian protests. Cheetham's proposed alternative for a reorganized plebiscite was for the CA the most viable alternative, to say the least, and the CA decided to tell the Generals that it would accept the principle of a new plebiscite should the turnout of eligible voters be low enough to declare the first plebiscite void.<sup>980</sup>

Austria repeated its protest concerning the plebiscite date to the CA on December 20, 1921. The arguments complemented the points of departure of the first note. The note appealed to the spirit of the peace treaty and to the rights guaranteed therein as well as to the fact that the objective was to organize a free and impartial election.<sup>981</sup> The Austrian government continued this pattern of thought. The principal argument to the CA was that accepting the plebiscite and its *modus operandi* had breached the treaties. Austrian claims concentrated on the question of ratification, appealing to the fact that an international treaty concerning state territory had to fulfil the criteria of human rights and constitutional rights: ratification by a head of state and validity of the treaty once it had been officially declared. The Sopron plebiscite had fulfilled neither criteria. This fact alone sufficed to prove the illegitimacy of the plebiscite.

Furthermore, according to the mode of thought Austria had presented, the plebiscite had in fact breached the Allies own orders, to which Austria had been loyal. In this sense Austria questioned both its moral and judicial obligation to abide by the Venice protocol and to modify the peace treaty. In other words, as the CA had guaranteed the voting conditions, the Austrian government could not accept a plebiscite executed against the CA decisions. The Austrian government thereby declared that only the peace treaty could regulate the conditions of operation, as the Venice protocol was not in force.<sup>982</sup>

The Austrian national policy thereby explained it was operating in adherence to the terms of international politics: Austria was abiding by the Allies' policy in its refusal to accept the plebiscite. Hungary also constructed its actions as execution of the Allies' policy. Hungary attempted to show its policy to be correct and Austria's complaints not to be only inappropriate but also against the treaties by appealing to the spirit of the Venice protocol and safety interests expressed by the Allies. The Venice protocol was an argument the intention of which was to show that Hungary - unlike Austria - had abided by the Allies' decisions and the spirit of the peace treaties. Hungary thereby argued that its policy adhered to the Allies' line while the Austrian policy opposed it.

Counter to the Austrian interpretation, Hungary asserted that the circumstances had been in accordance with the spirit of the agreement. A note dated December 17, 1921, stated that Austria and Hungary had committed

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<sup>980</sup> CA 157 16 Dec. 1921. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>981</sup> Eichhoff to CA 20 Dec. 1921. Annexe I CA 158. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>982</sup> Memoire [by the Austrian government] to CA 20 Dec. 1921. Annexe J CA 158. FO 893/14, NA.



themselves in the Venice protocol to accept the voting result. Austria's attitude showed that it "breached the agreement". The Hungarians used this perspective to answer Austria's protests concerning the presence of Hungarian troops, the plebiscite date, and election lists.

According to the Hungarian interpretation, the Generals had been prepared to postpone the voting day only to accommodate Austria's unilateral request and without the CA's instructions. As for the election lists, Hungary tried to show the lists had been prepared impartially. The Generals had reported to the CA that the commission responsible for overseeing the issue had found no faults in the election lists. Moreover, the Hungarian government wanted to silence Austria's protests by explaining that actually the Hungarians had had more to protest about that lists than did the Austrians.

The multifaceted process of the plebiscite and the evacuation most obviously provided chances to interpret the situation in many ways, either to adhere to the Venice protocol or not to adhere to it. The Hungarian government answered the question concerning the Hungarian troops' presence by explaining that the presence of the troops did not violate the Venice protocol or Austria's own wishes and that the task of the troops had been to secure the area instead of calling on Allied troops. For example, Hungary referred to the slow progress of the Austrian occupation.<sup>983</sup> The notes to the CA claimed that Schober had not demanded the evacuation of Hungarian troops from the plebiscite area before the vote but, instead, during the vote. Besides, the Venice protocol did not require complete evacuation of Hungarian troops. Hungary strove to show that the Generals had guaranteed an impartial administration by October 3. Furthermore, the Hungarian government claimed that the presence of the Hungarian army had been necessary in order to maintain order in the border region.

Hungary also argued that, as the Austrian National Assembly did not ratify the Venice protocol until November 30, it had no right to demand the presence of the Allies in the area before that date. At the same time, the note used the very fact that the Austrian National Assembly had at last ratified the agreement to argue against Austria's right to protest. The Hungarian government wanted to note that the Austrian government had committed itself to the Venice protocol because the National Assembly had ratified it. Ratification by the President of Austria was unnecessary. The Hungarian government proposed to the CA that protests based on the presidential ratification question were "proof of Austria's deceit and intention to sabotage the CA".<sup>984</sup>

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<sup>983</sup> The insurgents had withdrawn from Western Hungary by November 6, and the Generals had the right to declare the area pacified then in the spirit of Venice. The Generals waited until November 10 before asking Austria to take over the area. Optimally, the operation should have taken only a few days, but in practice it dragged on until November 30. The generals also delayed their pacification announcement until December 3. The Hungarian government "deduced" that Austria wanted to find a pretext to destroy the plebiscite.

<sup>984</sup> Woracziczky to CA 17 Dec. 1921. Annexe G CA 158; Woracziczky to CA 20 Dec. 1921. Annexe H CA 158. FO 893/14, NA.

## 9.4 Reaching acceptance of the voting results

In the following session of the CA on December 21, 1921, the result of the plebiscite was already clear, and the Allies' operational alternatives became even clearer. The alternative of a new plebiscite was buried for good. The result was delivered by the French military mission in Budapest. The mission eventually opposed the Austrian protests and proposed in its note to the CA on December 18 that Austria's complaint concerning the plebiscite date did not merit investigation and that the appeal should be turned down.<sup>985</sup>

Presumably, the unambiguous plebiscite result gave the CA a clear reason to stop weighing various counter-arguments and developing new solutions. The CA understood the plebiscite result as a clear argument against the Austrian protests and no longer took them seriously. Due to the Austrian criticism and complaints, the country got the image of a "renegade" in the eyes of the Allies. According to Bonin Longare, the plebiscite had been extremely clear. The strength of the majority in his opinion proved that the operation had been unproblematic. He warned that there would be difficulties ahead if the CA would listen to "Austria's unjustified complaints".

Hardinge also considered Austria's complaints groundless and mere last minute attempts to influence the CA.<sup>986</sup> He had also directly communicated his opinion to Eichhoff when the latter had wanted to discuss correcting the vote. According to Eichhoff, Hardinge had been particularly remote and unfriendly. Hardinge told Eichhoff the plebiscite had abided by the Venice protocol and the Generals had known when the area was pacified. He was also bitter about Austria's ratification policy. A new plebiscite would change nothing. The British Ambassador also referred to the communication error as a reason for the problem. According to Eichhoff, Hardinge also said that the CA would have allowed a delay until December 18, but that information had reached the Generals too late.<sup>987</sup>

Laroche also considered it best to close the books on Austria's activities and to declare to the Austrian government that it could not legitimately remain uncommitted to the Venice protocol. The CA decided to confirm the plebiscite result and to order the Generals to prepare for the cession eight days after the official declaration. The CA informed Austria that it was officially to accept the plebiscite result before the cession. The next stage was the question of the cession's practical execution by the Generals' Commission. The machinery of the plebiscite operation was to be dismantled, and the intention was to conclude the Allies' presence in Sopron.<sup>988</sup>

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<sup>985</sup> French Military Mission (Budapest) to CA 18 Dec. 1921. Annexe E CA 158. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>986</sup> CA 158 21 Dec. 1921. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>987</sup> Eichhoff (Paris) 21. Dezember 1921. 7446/1B NPA AdR, ÖStA.

<sup>988</sup> CA 158 21 Dec. 1921. FO 893/14, NA.

The Austrian policy had to come into terms with the loss. Eichhoff considered the CA's reply to Austria insulting.<sup>989</sup> In Budapest the Austrian Minister Cnobloch agreed and determined that Austria's opponent in the border question was not only Hungary but the Great Powers as well.<sup>990</sup>

Schober claimed that the Austrian government could get in trouble with the Parliament and general public opinion if the CA demanded from it new sacrifices. At the very least, the sacrifices had to be presented in a way that would not invite difficulties. Referring once again to judicial arguments, to Austria's political stability, and to the political importance of the people, the comments reiterated criticisms concerning the execution of the Venice protocol especially as regards the realization of self-determination: according to Austria, the agreement's central aspects – freedom of vote and impartiality of the election – had not been fulfilled.<sup>991</sup>

Austria's protests had no practical significance. On December 24 the Generals declared the plebiscite result and set the cession date as January 1, 1922.<sup>992</sup> Nevertheless, a decision was made to reply to Austria's wish about pacifying the national politics, although Cambon thought Eichhoff was being exaggeratedly sensitive. Laroche suggested that the CA inform Austria it had investigated the complaints but determined that it was impossible to annul the decision. In his opinion, the note should refer neither to arguments concerning the procedure nor to the plebiscite result. However, the CA followed Bonin Longare's proposal and decided to add to the note a statement that the CA, unlike Schober claimed, had performed all the measures to make the plebiscite impartial and free. Therefore Austria was instructed to sign the Sopron transfer document.<sup>993</sup>

In reply to the CA note, Schober announced that he accepted the plebiscite and its result. The Austrian government wanted to register its suspicions once again and underscore the conditional nature of its acceptance: Austria accepted the plebiscite and its results to honour the Allies and on the condition that in future negotiations Hungary would compensate Austria for this "sacrifice". The government could not justify its actions to the Parliament and general opinion without a promise of compensation from Hungary. Austria hoped the Allies would use their influence in Budapest so that Austria's "moderate and legitimate" wish would meet with sympathy there.<sup>994</sup>

Austria's dissatisfaction and the unfinished status of the process in the country's administrative machinery could nevertheless be seen in the fact that

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<sup>989</sup> CA 159 28 Dec. 1921. FO 374/17B/1234, NA.

<sup>990</sup> Cnobloch Budapest, am 17. Dezember 1921 an das Bundesministerium Für Aeusseres (Politische Sektion 7384/1B AdR NPA K 815 Liasse Ungarn 9/10 ÖstA.

<sup>991</sup> Schober's statement was transmitted to CA by the French legation in Vienna. French legation (Vienna) to CA 26 Dec. 1921. Annexe G CA 159. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>992</sup> Twenty-four officers who had belonged to the election committee would depart on December 29 after their fees and indemnities had been paid. As the day following the cession would be a holiday, the Generals and senior officers would leave on January 3. Allied Generals (Ferrario) to CA 25 Dec. 1921. Annexe E CA 159. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>993</sup> CA 159 28 Dec. 1921. FO 893/14, NA.

<sup>994</sup> French legation (Vienna) to the CA 31 Dec. 1921. Annexe E CA 160. FO 893/14, NA.

only the representatives of Hungary and the Allies attended the transfer ceremony in Sopron on January 1, 1922. Austria had refused to sign the transfer document on the agreed date but was prepared to sign it later.<sup>995</sup> President Michael Hainisch had instead signed the ratification treaty of the Venice protocol on December 28, 1921. Austria finally acknowledged the plebiscite result in February 1922.<sup>996</sup> The CA asked Austria to accept the transfer document in its session on January 6. The CA also decided to invite the Austrian and Hungarian governments to settle all financial questions concerning the transfer and advised that negotiations be carried out in a way defined by the Venice protocol. However, the CA showed no more willingness to organize more extensive bilateral negotiations. From the Allies' point of view, the border question was settled. The closing of the process would be punctuated by the Generals' departure from Sopron in January.<sup>997</sup>

In sum, while national-level histories have interpreted the plebiscite either as negatively speculative or on the contrary as a history of success, the line pursued by the CA in the autumn crisis and its solution can be summed up as a policy of execution without delays. Research on the CA level does not support the Allies' perspective of the plebiscite and the Venice process as a "history of partiality" - favouring Hungary at the expense of Austria or deliberate anti-Austrianism. Instead, the operation of the CA aimed at effortless and safe execution of the process - in this process the decisions have often been interpreted as favourable for Hungary and unfavourable for Austria. The execution of the process aimed at formal enactment of the peace treaty and left room for Hungary's active operation. The Venice process initially came as a reaction to the Hungarian policy and its problems with the execution. Thereby Hungary, at the expense of Austria, did take centre stage in the play of national power politics in the autumn of 1921.

Fragmented information and interpretative variations of the Venice protocol did surround the border change process and opened the way for a wide variety of portrayals of the Sopron plebiscite. From the viewpoint of the Allies the plebiscite was a means to facilitate the border change. Realpolitik figured more prominently into the decision-making during the execution phase than it had in the summer of 1919 when the question of Western Hungary was being decided. The "space" of Austria and Hungary, the border itself, was not a crucial question for the Allies, unless it endangered the peace treaty: the key factor was the permanence of the treaty system. From the Allies' point of view, executing the peace treaty without further conflicts remained the essential project. The Venice protocol and the Sopron plebiscite provided solutions to the

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<sup>995</sup> Fogarassy 1976, 175-176.

<sup>996</sup> Guglia 1961, 66.

<sup>997</sup> The departure was punctuated on January 16, 1922, at the latest. The Generals' Commission in fact departed on January 8, 1922. CA 160 6 Jan. 1922. FO 893/14, NA. CA discussed in this meeting the cost of the plebiscite and the Generals Commission as well as the organisation of the plebiscite. It was decided to share the costs between Austria and Hungary: the costs before 27 Aug. 1921 would be paid by Austria. Consequently, Hungary had to pay the cost after 27 Aug. 1921. Also see Dujmovits 1995, 12.

execution phase problems. The foundation for the determination of the border line was primarily the preservation of international stability, no longer the construction of the nation-state in secure terms or the investigation of local conditions.

The CA based its general policy not on conscious support of Austria or Hungary but on a comprehensive solution. Both countries presented problems in terms of that solution. The CA emphasized Hungary's significance, however, at Austria's expense since the perceived danger of conflict from Hungary's direction defined the solutions more than Austria's "passive" resistance. The authority of Hungary's national policy and the Allies' view concerning Hungary's role in the stabilization of Central Europe were thereby the central factors. In this sense an Austrian victory in the plebiscite would have been problematic because it would have left Hungary in a position of resistance. On the other hand, Austrian protests spoke to the heart of the peace treaty system and an Austrian victory in the plebiscite would have silenced the protests concerning the interpretations of the Venice protocol the CA found so difficult. All in all, the process indeed reveals much not only about the different variations of applying self-determination but also about the power political game that determined the development of the situation.

## 10 POLICY OF DELIMITATION 1922-1923 - FOCUSING ON LOCAL CONDITIONS

### 10.1 Continuation of national goals

In the Hungarian genre of historical studies on Western Hungary, Sóos and Romsics, among others, have brought up the Sopron plebiscite as an example of a successful solution that should have been realized elsewhere as well. The success of the border resolution resulted from the compromise reached in Venice and the fact that the border formed around an ethnic boundary. Sóos's text explains the history of success and stability and the exemplary status of the border resolution by the fact that the border between the two countries became stable and Hungary no longer demanded revisions to it. In the long run, the border between Austrian and Hungary, indeed, turned out to be stable in comparison to other borders, so, for some, the Sopron decision has become symbolically valuable.<sup>998</sup> However, the history of stability can be questioned. If historians emphasize only stability along with the fact that Austria accepted the new situation and Hungary did not target Western Hungary for serious revision, the continuing of Hungary's revision policy after the Sopron process, especially in 1922, may go unnoticed.

Peter Haslinger's (1993, 1994, 1996) research on Hungarian revisionism in Burgenland between 1922 and 1932 shows the true face of the policy on both governmental and non-governmental levels. The Western Hungarian movements demanding revision became a part of Hungarian inter-war revision ideology and manifested themselves especially in the late 1920s. Bethlén, for his part, avoided the revision theme in international connections since Hungary's hopes for revision at the beginning of the 1930s remained internationally secluded national themes.<sup>999</sup> Anikó Kovács-Bertrand has also brought up the continuity of the revision policy in her detailed research on revision

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<sup>998</sup> Romsics I. 1999, 125; Sóos 1992, 41.

<sup>999</sup> Haslinger 1994, 14, 18-19, 31-34. On Austro-Hungarian relations and Burgenland 1922-1926, see also Bellér 1975.

propaganda on all Hungarian borders. Although in the 1920s Hungary kept a low profile for its revision strategies on the official foreign policy front and stressed international politics, in the domestic public arena it more openly espoused the revision line.<sup>1000</sup>

The fact that irregular armed bands still operated in the border region also kept the border dispute active. As Fogarassy (1976) has explained, nationalist Hungarian circles did not approve of Western Hungary's assignment to Austria.<sup>1001</sup> The history written by Zsiga (1991, 1993), explains that the continuum of the 1921 situation manifests itself precisely as the Hungarian legitimist right-wing actions reflected in Western Hungary during 1922.<sup>1002</sup> The revision objective of the official Hungarian policy also emerged during the delimitation stage of the new border during 1922-1923. In sum, although the actual conflict threatening the execution of the peace treaty and the stabilization of Central Europe ended in adherence to the Venice protocol on January 1, 1922, the border question still continued to exist on the international, national, and local levels until 1923.

The Hungarian goals concerning Western Hungary did not disappear with the return of Sopron. Jean Nouzille has noted in his article on the chronology of the question of Western Hungary that the successful politics in Western Hungary meant the first positive manifestation of Hungarian revisionism as Hungary got the Allies to accept modification of a border determined in the peace treaty and to organize a plebiscite. This limited success encouraged Hungary to return to aspire to a Hungary with Hungarian majority.<sup>1003</sup>

While Hungarian policy continued its revision line at least covertly, Austria continued to stick to the Saint-Germain borders. It began to construct the new area into Burgenland province, a part of Austria.<sup>1004</sup> At the same time in Hungary, opportunities for modifications were still considered possible. The perspectives of Austria and Hungary thus remained oppositional - neither country, however, had the authority to make final decisions. The Conference of Ambassadors and the League of Nations did, and their decision-making forums were simultaneously involved in the process in 1922-1923: the CA as the deliverer of League of Nations tasks and acceptor of the procedures, as well as the nominator of the Delimitation Commission.<sup>1005</sup> The League of Nations for its part received the authority to decide the border. In addition to the cooperation between the organizations, another interesting notion at this point was the relatively active roles and participation of Austria and Hungary in the delimitation.

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<sup>1000</sup> Kovács Bertrand 1997, 291; On revision policy also see Haslinger 1993 and 1994, *passim*; Haslinger 1996, 99-117.

<sup>1001</sup> Fogarassy 1976, 178.

<sup>1002</sup> Zsiga 1991, *passim*.

<sup>1003</sup> Nouzille 1987, 34.

<sup>1004</sup> On the creation of the new province see especially Heidrich 1982 and Haslinger 2001.

<sup>1005</sup> For example, this can be seen when the procedure and formalities were discussed. An example: CA 223 27 July 1923. FO 893/22, NA.

The question concerning the basis of the delimitation dominated the discussion between Austria and Hungary until May 1922. The Delimitation Commission nominated by the CA was to specify the border determined in the peace treaties. The first meeting of the commission was held in Graz on July 27, 1921. The changes occurring in the autumn of 1921 interrupted the commission's work, however. Due of technical reasons, the CA had already in 1920 and 1921 divided the border area into three sections: Section A (I) covered the Moson comitat, B (II) Sopron, and C (III) Vas.<sup>1006</sup>

The handling of the question of Western Hungary changed shape in the delimitation stage. Both Austria and Hungary simultaneously presented their demands about the border to the international community. In their arguments, both returned to the local and national grounds they had used at the Peace Conference. The international decision-makers could simultaneously and freshly compare the arguments of both countries concerning the local conditions. Decision-making now largely proceeded on the basis of memoranda and reports: the discussions, for example, common at the Peace Conference and the CA occurred only infrequently in the League of Nations.

Some elements in the process remained constant, however. Hungary depended on the Trianon covering letter in its demands and the goal of extensive revision lived on. In this sense, delimitation and the application of the covering letter related to it, from Hungary's viewpoint, forwarded the goal to get a more radical correction to the new border in Western Hungary. Even during the planning stages of the mediated negotiations, the Hungarian government had considered the possibilities of changing the border beyond Sopron. For example, in September 1921 the Hungarian government had wanted to make sure the CA understood the delimitation "correctly", in other words, that it might be of help in regaining the lost areas. The government wanted to guarantee that the CA and the commissions interpreted the covering letter in the same way.<sup>1007</sup>

In Praznovszky's opinion, the CA and particularly Great Britain had adopted attitudes very unfavourable for Hungary.<sup>1008</sup> The support of Italy seemed more promising in the eyes of the Hungarians. Bethlen and Bánffy had during the Venice protocol negotiations discussed with Torretta the possibilities for Italy's support of Hungary in the Delimitation Commission if Austria were to oppose border changes. According to the Hungarian memorandum, Torretta agreed that he would instruct the Italian member of the commission to support Hungary and would use his influence to persuade the other Allies to give similar instructions to their representatives. Furthermore, he would hasten the completion of the work of the commission. According to the Hungarian notes,

<sup>1006</sup> 702. Austro-Hungarian Frontier. League of Nations. Council/19th Session/p:v:6 (1). Minutes of the Sixth Meeting (Public) held on July 19<sup>th</sup> 1922. FO 371/8330, NA. French minutes see for example *La frontière austro-hongroise*. K 296 Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922 NPA, ÖStA.

<sup>1007</sup> Praznovszky to Cambon (CA) 29 Sept. 1921. PDRFRH/III/1000. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>1008</sup> Praznovszky to Bánffy 1 Oct. 1921. PDRFRH/III/1010. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.



Torretta declared that, if the border line suggested by Hungary on August 4, 1921<sup>1009</sup>, did not exceed the jurisdiction of the Delimitation Commission, he would take up the position as above stated, that Hungary should obtain that border. The Hungarian notes of the conversation mentioned that “it is to be noted that Torretta repeated the above statements and declarations three times”.<sup>1010</sup>

The Venice protocol did not, however, imply that Italy would support Hungary’s revision plans. The protocol only stated that Italy’s Foreign Minister would take the necessary measures to persuade the CA to hasten the start of the border commissions’ work.<sup>1011</sup> Hungary appealed to this discussion later, however, when it was dissatisfied with Italy’s contribution to the delimitation process. Nemes, the Hungarian Minister in Rome, pointed out “how important it was that he [Torretta] should use his influence to have the other members of the mission also instructed in the same way”. Torretta stated he could only instruct the Italian member in the commission and answered “somewhat evasively” that the members of the Delimitation Commission could not go beyond the original instructions.<sup>1012</sup>

The Austrians saw that Hungarians wanted to bring up the territorial question more extensively than the detailed delimitation called for.<sup>1013</sup> The demands were too large for Austria, and it requested the CA to support adherence to the line of the peace treaties. Neugebauer, the Delimitation Commission’s Austrian member, turned down the Hungarian policy<sup>1014</sup> and emphasized the importance of the Peace Conference and CA decisions. He also stressed the fact that the delimitation corrected only the flaws detected by the Commission.<sup>1015</sup>

The Delimitation Commission had also paid attention to the countries’ differing perspectives. Austria’s arguments were juridical and related to adherence to the peace treaties and their spirit. Hungary for its part appealed to economy, traffic connections, and ethnicity on the basis of statistics and maps. The Hungarians emphasized ethnicity particularly in its demands concerning Zone B (II).<sup>1016</sup> The border changes Hungary proposed in the Sopron area and

<sup>1009</sup> See for example map in Zsiga 1993, 16.

<sup>1010</sup> “Notes on a secret agreement” (sic) between Bethlen, Bánffy and Torretta “concerning the frontier delimitation in Western Hungary”. Venice October 13<sup>th</sup> 1921. PDRFRH/III/1056. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>1011</sup> Protocol of Venice October 13<sup>th</sup> 1921. PDRFRH/III/1055. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>1012</sup> Nemes to Bánffy 22 Oct. 1921. PDRFRH/III/1106. K 63 KÜM 475, MOL.

<sup>1013</sup> See for example Bundeskanzleramt Feb. 2 1922 to BMAA K 295 Liasse Österreich 9/V 1921; Cnobloch Budapest 7 March 1922. K 295 NPA Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922, ÖStA.

<sup>1014</sup> By turning down Hungary’s new demands, Austria also wanted to make a comment about the decision-making process, which the CA nevertheless stated to be in accordance to the treaties. CA 171 25 March 1922. FO 893/16, NA.

<sup>1015</sup> Neugebauer Sopron 30 Jan. 1922; Neugebauer Sopron 24 Feb. 1922. K 295 NPA Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922, ÖStA.

<sup>1016</sup> Proposition au sujet de la rectification de la II. Section de la ligne de frontière établie par les Traités de Trianon et de Saint-Germain entre l’Autriche et la Hongrie, dans sa partie traversant le comitat de Vas.; Proposition au sujet de la rectification de la III. Section de la ligne de frontière établie par les Traités de Trianon et de Saint-Germain

Brennberg mining district were particularly strongly opposed by Austria.<sup>1017</sup> Other central changes Hungary raised concerned Pamhagen, Léka, and the Pinka region. The Delimitation Commission decided to address them but turned down the case of Szent-Gothard (St. Gotthard). The area could not become part of Hungary because of its Germanness and “Austrophilic” mood. In the opinion of the Commission Hungary should all in all limit its demands to the Zone B.<sup>1018</sup> As the first step of the delimitation, ethnicity and the will of the people seemed to be the central issues in implementing this task.

On May 31, 1922, the CA decided to deliver the commission’s preliminary report to the League of Nations.<sup>1019</sup> The methods indeed resembled the work of Coolidge Commission in 1919. The Delimitation Commission - consisting of British, French, Italian, and Japanese representatives, together with Austrian and Hungarian Commissioners - made a study on the ground in March 1922 and considered the Austrian and Hungarian proposals as well. The investigation methods of the Commission were illustrated by the June 6, 1922, report on the Pamhagen area: the Commission based its view on discussing Austria’s and Hungary’s arguments, hearing both countries’ experts, and on visits and interviews in the area itself.<sup>1020</sup>

First, the League of Nations faced the problems of the procedure. The principles for and legal foundation of the delimitation were presented in the League of Nations Secretary General’s memorandum dated June 29, 1922.<sup>1021</sup> In the session of the League of Nations Council on July 19, 1922, Paul Hymans<sup>1022</sup> explained that the CA had charged the Council with deciding whether the proposals made by the Delimitation Commission could be executed. At this point the League of Nations had to decide whether it accepted this procedure and how Austria’s and Hungary’s interests were included in the process. The problem was that, as a member of the League, Austria was already represented in the Council, but the Hungarian representative had to be invited separately.

As in the reports, the Austrian and Hungarian representatives referred to the rights of a state and a nation. The ideas of the people and international justice were united in both the Austrian and Hungarian arguments. The economic viewpoints were linked to these grounds in terms of viability- it can be said that there was a question of “national economics”. References to the

entre l’Autriche et la Hongrie. Commission de Délimitation de la Frontière entre l’Autriche et la Hongrie. Délégation Hongroise. K 478/2 cs./15, MOL. Also see Träger, Ernst, La Hongrie Occidentale. K 478/2cs./14, MOL.

<sup>1017</sup> Eichhoff to CA 15 May 1922. Annexe P CA 179. FO 893/17, NA.

<sup>1018</sup> Jocard (Commission de Délimitation de la Frontière entre l’Autriche et la Hongrie) Sopron 25 March 1922. Annexe G CA 179. FO 893/ 17, NA.

<sup>1019</sup> CA 179 31 May 1922. FO 893/17, NA.

<sup>1020</sup> Rapport No 1. Commission de Délimitation de la Frontière entre l’Autriche et la Hongrie. Exécution des Intructions Complémentaires pour les Commissions de Délimitation de Hongrie, en date du 6 juin 1921. K 296 Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922 NPA, ÖstA.

<sup>1021</sup> The Delimitation of the frontiers between Hungary and the adjoining states. Position of the Question. Memorandum by the Secretary General. League of Nations Geneva, June 29th 1922. K 478/2cs./17, MOL.

<sup>1022</sup> President of General Assembly of League of Nations.

economic conditions clearly originated from the topical international discussions. In the session, the Austrian representative Pflügl wanted to pay attention to whether the principles of the peace treaties were being honoured. To resist the change, Austria's referred to the sacrifices the people had already made - "the Austrian people unanimously felt that her sacrifices had reached a limit" - and to the question of Austria's economic future made topical by the 1922 Geneva negotiations. To quote Pflügl, "Austria had already consented to considerable sacrifices in signing the Venice protocol, and the modification of the frontier now proposed would seriously compromise her economic future".<sup>1023</sup> Direct power political expressions were, however, excluded. Pflügl asserted to the Austrian Foreign Ministry that Austria should not start by "exhausting" the political arguments but concentrate first on local conditions while parrying Hungary's arguments. In this sense the argument touched the areas of economy, communications, and population.<sup>1024</sup>

In the opinion of the Hungarian representatives the issue involved not only Hungary's proposals about the border but also the Delimitation Commission's views about border changes, which Austria was compelled to accept. Villani explained the Hungarian motives for the border change through the "welfare of the people" argument - its motive was not "territorial considerations" but the well-being of the people. He also explained that the Commission had ultimately taken into account only a part of Hungary's original wishes. Hungary justified the viability of its demands also by claiming that from Austria's point of view the territorial loss would be small both in terms of acreage and population. The population was mixed, and the share of the border was only 50 kilometres out of the 300. Furthermore, according to Villani the population had demonstrated in favour of Austria only because officials had coerced them. Finally, Villani explained that the experts had an economic motive to change the border to Hungary's advantage.

It can be said that the national level tried to create an 'Us' feeling which would connect them with the international decision makers. In other words, both Austria and Hungary referred to the authority of the Allies and appealed to Allied interests in their rhetoric: Austria's main argument was the stability of the peace treaty while Hungary emphasized the powers of the Delimitation Commission.

Obviously, Austria and Hungary adopted totally different positions. Hymans proposed that the handling of the matter be postponed and the Council be given time to investigate the situation. It was agreed that the Secretariat, under the direction of Hymans, should study the question with the assistance of the technical representatives of the two countries concerned and

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<sup>1023</sup> 702. Austro-Hungarian Frontier. League of Nations. Council/19th Session/p:v:6 (1). Minutes of the Sixth Meeting (Public) held on July 19<sup>th</sup> 1922. FO 371/8330, NA. French minutes see for example La frontière austro-hongroise. K 296 Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922 NPA, ÖStA.

<sup>1024</sup> Pflügl Genf, am 29. Juli 1922 an das Bundesministerium fuer Aeusseres. K 296 Liasse österreich 9/V NPA, ÖStA.

that the subject should be placed upon the agenda of the next session of the Council.<sup>1025</sup>

## 10.2 The ideas of compensation and connections - redrawing the border line

On July 29, the Council of the League of Nations agreed to render a decision on the proposals of the Delimitation Commission. Austria and Hungary also agreed to accept its decision. The study was reported to the League of Nations by Hymans on August 23, 1922. The proposed modifications related to three districts in Western Hungary/Burgenland: Pamhagen, Liebing, and Pinka Valley. The total population of these areas was 11,000-12,000, out of which Pinka had 7,000 and the other two areas 2,000 each.<sup>1026</sup> These districts were proposed to become part of Hungary, against Austria's wishes. Austria did not ask for any modification - instead, as in earlier notes to the CA, it suggested that all the provisions of the peace treaty should be maintained.

The arguments presented by Austria and Hungary were indeed influential. The Hyman's report reflected them in many ways. In this way the national politics converged with the international decision making.

Hymans's report explained Austria's negative stand on the border changes by referring to the "sacrifices" Austria had already made in the Venice protocol - accepting the agreement and the plebiscite represented Austria's wishes to abide by the Allies' orders and to build neighbour relations with Hungary. At the same time Austria had hoped that other parts of the border would have stayed as they were. From Austria's point of view, the modifications should have engaged a "spirit of conciliation" while, instead, Hungary had maintained a "threatening attitude". Austria claimed the new borders would require more sacrifice as Austria would lose more and more agricultural areas as the consequence of the changes. Hymans also reported that for Austria the "populations of the same origin" argument was still strong and that the Austrian administration had been working in the region since beginning of 1922 without protests. His report credited Austria for these attempts to build the province and state and maintained that its actions in this area strengthened its claim on it. The League of Nations agreed with Austria's

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<sup>1025</sup> 702. Austro-Hungarian Frontier. League of Nations. Council/19th Session/p:v:6 (1). Minutes of the Sixth Meeting (Public) held on July 19<sup>th</sup> 1922. FO 371/8330, NA. French minutes see for example *La frontière austro-hongroise*. K 296 Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922 NPA, ÖStA.

<sup>1026</sup> 768. Question of the Frontier between Austria and Hungary. No 8051 League of Nations. 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Council. Provisional Minutes of the Ninth Meeting (Public) held at Geneva on Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1922 at 3.30 p.m. FO 371/8931, NA.

argument that the border changes would hinder the reconstruction of Austria.<sup>1027</sup>

Hymans's report explained that the Austrian claim on the Pamhagen area grew primarily from the area's German population and its desire to be a part of Austria. Secondly, Austria had proposed the applying of the natural boundary leaning on the area's water traffic. As for Liebing and Lockenhaus, Austria refused the border change on economic and linguistic grounds and asserted that the change would contradict the wishes of the people. The advantages of the economy to the area's people were additionally a key argument: the Germans' economy would be ruined, if the area became a part of Hungary because the people would be left without practicable communications.

Hungary, for its part, justified its right to the area by citing historical possessions of the nobility, particularly the Esterházy lands. According to Hymans's report, the agreement to be made concerning the border traffic would solve this problem. Austria countered by referring to natural boundaries and geography: if the border were changed for the benefit of Hungary, the unity of the Pinka area would be broken. As a detail related to nature, Austria claimed that as result of the border change the railway running in the valley would have to be moved to the mountains. Austria also claimed that, even though the majority of this area's inhabitants were Croats, more Germans lived there than Hungarians. A practical example – the importance of the area's agricultural production for Austria – attested to the border's great significance to Austria: the disputed area was important, not only locally, but also to all of Burgenland province and the Austrian state.<sup>1028</sup> Its benefit to the people, province, and state thereby rested on "non-political" practical grounds.

In spite of the Austrian arguments for maintaining the borders unchanged, the Delimitation Commission nevertheless considered Hungary's views and its own observations advantageous to Hungary. While Austria defended its right to keep the peace treaty border in force for the sake of Sopron's "sacrifice" and the interests of the state, Hungary founded its corresponding general political grounds on the losses it had sustained as a results of the Treaty of Trianon and the consequent threat to the stability of the state. On the general level Hungary had justified its right to border changes by stating it had had to make sacrifices on its other borders. Applying the covering letter in Western Hungary would therefore compensate for the peace treaty that was "the most crushing treaty of modern times". Hungary also argued that it had received similar concessions only on the Serbian border. The "sacrifices" were now considered grounds for a beneficial border change: the war losses were now expressed as "sacrifices" and as a reason for territorial gains.

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<sup>1027</sup> League of Nations. *Austro-Hungarian Frontier Question . Report by M. Hymans (Translation)*. Geneva, August 23th (sic), 1922. K 296/Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922/3066/1B, NPA.

<sup>1028</sup> Summary of the observations of the Austrian representative criticizing the proposals of the Delimitation Commission. League of Nations. *Austro-Hungarian Frontier Question . Report by M. Hymans (Translation)*. Geneva, August 23th (sic), 1922. K 296/Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922/3066/1B, NPA.

Hungary also appealed to its political stability. According to Hungary, the political situation would not be endangered by the border change in Austria as much as that in Hungary – the general opinion had concentrated elsewhere in Austria. Here Hungary could indirectly refer to the Anschluss aspects. Furthermore, Austria's demand about keeping the border intact could be resisted by stating that Western Hungary's agriculture did ultimately not have very much significance as the region could only feed itself.<sup>1029</sup>

Opposed to each other were Austria's arguments defending "an area that had already accustomed to the new situation" and Hungary's opinion that the old connections were still important. Tradition formed a cornerstone of Hungary's position. For example, at the same time as Austria was building a province unit from Burgenland, Hungary used the names of the old comitats and spoke of "Burgenland's disunity" which would legitimize Hungary's right to keep changing the border. To quote the Hungarian Delegation of the Delimitation Commission, "*L'unité du Burgenland imagine comme province indépendante, est donc détruite*".<sup>1030</sup>

Hungary continued to defend its promotion of extensive border changes, only a part of which were realized in the Delimitation Commission's proposal – albeit in Hungary's favour. In Pamhagen the central argument was the hydrotechnical system, in Liebing and the Pinka Valley their dependence on Hungary's Köszeg and Szombathely from the economic and educational point of view. Water traffic and other connections in the border region would not run smoothly, according to Hungary, by virtue of mere traffic agreements: Hungary claimed it was "more than doubtful whether a Commission could ensure agreement and peaceful co-operation between States in which unfortunately mutual confidence is lacking". In other words, an agreement concerning the channel area would not remove the problems; the entire region had to belong to Hungary.

Austria reacted to these claims from economic, administrative and technical standpoints. Liebing's and Pinka Valley's dependence on Köszeg and Szombathely according to Austria's claims had already diminished: the economic life "has automatically adapted itself to the new conditions, which in no way prevent the continuance of an active trade on both sides, such as will, no doubt, be maintained after the establishment of the final frontier". Austria also appealed that the population of these communes did not speak Hungarian. While Hungary appealed to the small scale of the border change, Austria considered it large scale compared to the Sopron area. Austria also denied having coerced the population and that the area would not be important to Austria's food provisioning. The deepest rift between the countries, however,

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<sup>1029</sup> League of Nations. Austro-Hungarian Frontier Question . Report by M. Hymans (Translation). Geneva, August 23th (sic), 1922. K 296/Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922/3066/1B, NPA.

<sup>1030</sup> Proposition au sujet de la rectification de la ligne de frontière établie par les Traités de Trianon et de Saint-Germain entre l'Autriche et la Hongrie, dans sa parti traversant le Comitat de Sopron. Commission de Délimitation de la Frontière entre l'Autriche et la Hongrie. Délégation Hongroise. K 478/2 cs./14, MOL.

remained the question of the channel area and the border traffic: there each opponent blamed the other for a directly hostile attitude.<sup>1031</sup>

The League of Nations can be said to have reacted to these different and contradicting claims through compromise. The Council of the League of Nations began addressing Hymans's report on September 13, 1922. In the session, Oppenheimer as the Austrian and Villani as the Hungarian representatives presented the opinions of their countries about the border. According to Hymans "the interests at stake were relatively unimportant", but "seemed to be able to rouse great feeling".<sup>1032</sup> The decision, that differed partly from the Delimitation Council proposal, was presented in the session of September 19. According to the Council the Commission's proposal to assign Pamhagen to Hungary because of the waterways was not a sufficient argument, as the traffic could be organized through an agreement between the countries – the creation of which the League of Nations could not influence, however. The central ground for the Council's decision seemed to be Pamhagen's German-speaking population and the Council's impression that the area's standing as part of Austria satisfied the inhabitants. In other areas the League of Nations justified its decision through infrastructure, traffic, and energy maintenance. The motives were thereby presented as practical functionality.

In Liebing, Leka (Lockenhaus), and Pinka Valley, villages were assigned both to Austria and to Hungary. The Council thought that Hungary should keep the communal woods and water supply belonging to the town of Köszeg. It justified the decision also by economic ties between Liebingin, Rattersdorf, and Köszeg. Austria for its part got Hammer and Leka. In the Pinka Valley the Council considered it problematic to draw the border line. The foundations for the border change were the wishes of the Szombathely and Pornóapati areas: the northern part with an electric power station which was linked up with Hungarian centres would be important to Hungary. To Austria the Council assigned communes situated on the main road following the valley south of Pornóapati. The Council emphasized in its final statement that Austria and Hungary had to agree on the border region's traffic connections and economic relations.<sup>1033</sup>

<sup>1031</sup> Summary of the observations of the delegate of the Hungarian government to meet the objections raised against the conclusions of the Delimitation Commission; Observations by the Austrian Delegate of the Summary submitted by the Hungarian Delegate. League of Nations. Austro-Hungarian Frontier Question. Report by M. Hymans (Translation). Geneva, August 23th (sic), 1922. K 296/Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922/3066/1B, NPA.

<sup>1032</sup> 768. Question of the Frontier between Austria and Hungary. No 8051 League of Nations. 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Council. Provisional Minutes of the Ninth Meeting (Public) held at Geneva on Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1922 at 3.30 p.m. FO 371/8931, NA.

<sup>1033</sup> Csem could also not be assigned to Hungary because of the railway connecting Rechnitz and Samfalva. Equally, Felső-Also-Beled and at this stage Szentpeterfa as well were claimed to be parts of Austria due to communications. Thereby Austria got the entire length of the road from Németh-Lövő to Pokolfalu. League of Nations. Frontier between Austria and Hungary. Decision recommended by the Council. K 296 Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922, NPA, ÖStA; Société des Nations. Frontière entre l'Autriche et la Hongrie. Décision recommandé par le Conseil. 478/2cs./17, MOL.

The changes were advantageous from Austria's point of view, and in the session Oppenheimer expressed his satisfaction about the fact that the Council had taken into account Austria's arguments about Pamhagen; however, he apologized that this had not been the case in Leka (Liebing) and the Pinka Valley. The representatives of both countries announced nevertheless that they would accept the decision in the manner agreed beforehand.<sup>1034</sup>

Obviously, the opportunity for compromises and compensation spelled for the League of Nations a road to stabilization of the situation. The solution can be seen as a continuum to the policy of safely executing the peace treaties. The continuum can also be seen in the arguments, although they were more related to local functionality than lofty slogans of self-determination: the importance of local conditions was justified with the ethnicity and opinions of the people and the significance of economy, geography, agriculture, connections, and nature. Direct use of politically threatening images was strikingly absent from the discussion.

In sum, the League of Nations decided to return ten villages to Hungary but left more on the Austrian territory than Hymans's report and the Delimitation Commission had proposed. The CA accepted the League of Nations decision on October 21, 1922.<sup>1035</sup>

On the national level, however, Austria still wanted to influence the shape of the future border. Austria, having been the underdog in the crisis of 1921, experienced the changes in its ability to influence outcomes in more positive light again. Immediately after the League of Nations decision, Austrian representative Oppenheimer, in his report to the Foreign Ministry, contemplated Austria's opportunities of influence. He was relatively satisfied with them, especially as he had been able to discuss the Austrian views with Hymans on September 2, 1922. Furthermore, Austrian diplomats in Paris, London, and Rome might be able to exert positive influence in the future. According to Oppenheimer it had been wise of Austria to accept the League of Nations decision at this time because the country needed support from the Great Powers, for example, in terms of its credit problem. Concessions benefiting Austria gave, in his opinion, hope of further changes, and he looked forward to local changes in the Commission in the future.<sup>1036</sup> Already in July,

<sup>1034</sup> 778. Frontier between Austria and Hungary. No 8061 League of Nations. Twenty-first Session of the Council. 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting (Public) Held on Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1922, at 4.30 p.m. FO 371/ 8931, NA.

<sup>1035</sup> In Section A Pamhagen, B Lockenhaus (Léka) and Hammer (Hámortó) were left to Austria, whereas from B Liebing (Rendek) and Rattersdorf (Rótfalva) were returned to Hungary. In Section C, Schachendorf, Schandorf, Deutsch-Schützen, Prostrum (Szentpéterfa), and Moschendorf (Nagyaroslak) went to Austria while Nagy- and Kiszarda (Gross- and Kleinnahring), Felső- Alsócsatár (Ober- and Unterschilding), Németerkesztes, ja Magyarakeresztes (Deutsch- and Ungarisch-Grossdorf), Horváthlövö (Kroatisch-Schützen), and Pornóapáti were assigned to Hungary. Gruber 1991, 37-41; Detailed description especially on the Hungarian point of view see Zsiga 1993, passim. Dujmovits 1995, 12-14. Schlag (1984) and Fogarassy (1976) have also described the border delimitation process thoroughly in their articles.

<sup>1036</sup> Oppenheimer Genf, am 19. September 1922 and das Bundesministerium für Aeusseres Wien. K 296 Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922 NPA, ÖStA.



Pflügl had estimated that, for example, the views of Great Britain's and France's representatives in the League of Nations were favourable toward Austria.<sup>1037</sup>

The concrete delimitation to make changes to the border started towards the end of 1922. Although the Austrian representatives were satisfied with their chances to have some influence, the border determined on September 19 was not met with unreserved satisfaction. In the Austrian Foreign Ministry the earlier changes were seen as unfavourable both for Austria and for Hungary.<sup>1038</sup>

The changes of the delimitation were again a compromise for both Austria and Hungary. Local changes occurred in all sections<sup>1039</sup>. The decision was made on November 22, 1922, and the CA confirmed the change on January 27, 1923. The change was executed on March 10, 1923. Eight communes from Pinkatal were ceded to Hungary on the basis of their being Hungarian, and Luising was assigned to Austria on January 10, 1923. The final delimitation of the border ended in January 1923. In 1923 Austria also got Bonisdorf that had belonged to Yugoslavia since 1919.

The precise border line was executed during 1923, and the Delimitation Commission held its last session on August 2, 1924. Hungary gained from the delimitation process a total of 381 square kilometer.<sup>1040</sup> For economic reasons, local arrangements to the border region conditions were yet to be carried out in 1923-1924, but the border line remained unchanged. The prominent economic arguments involved the Brennberg mines and the border region sugar industry. Austria and Hungary discussed the question of Brennberg until 1925.<sup>1041</sup> The decisions of the Delimitation Commission dealt with the future of production plants and the commuting of the border region inhabitants. Austria was, for example, obligated to take care of the Szombathelyi area water system despite the border.<sup>1042</sup>

<sup>1037</sup> Pflügl London July 22 1922. 2524/1B No 313 K 296 Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922 NPA, ÖStA.

<sup>1038</sup> Antrag an den Ministerrat Wien, am 18 November 1922. K 296 Liasse Österreich 9/V 1922 NPA, ÖStA.

<sup>1039</sup> In Sector A, der Einserkanal and "Mexiko-Pusztá" and Esterházys' land were assigned to Hungary while Austria got peasant areas in Pamhagen and Apetlon. Austria was not satisfied with Sector B after the September decision and wanted to change Ólmodi (Bleigraben) and Szentpéterfa (Prostrum). Liebing (Rendek) and Rattersdorf (Rótfalva) were for their part re-assigned to Austria due to their Austrian nature.

<sup>1040</sup> Gruber 1991, 37-41; Haslinger 1994, 61-62. Detailed description especially on the Hungarian point of view see Zsiga 1993, passim. Dujmovits 1995, 12-14. Also see Schlag 1984, passim. and Fogarassy 1976, passim.

<sup>1041</sup> See for example Memorandum über die Rohzuckerfabriken und Zuckerraffinerien Ungarns. 4424 HMK. K 478/1cs./11, MOL; Protocole Juridique concernant l'exploitation des mines de Brennberg. Complément à la décision de la Commission prise dans sa séance du 12 Décembre 1922. Commission de Délimitation de la Frontière entre l'Autriche et la Hongrie. 7730/pol. K 478/1cs./5, MOL; Miniszterelnökség [Bethlen] to Dr. Szögyeny György (HMK) August 8 1924. 5871 M.E. II, 7719 sz./HMK; Kanya to Bethlen Budapest March 3 1925. 3903/pol. 1924. K 478/1 cs. Határmegállapító központi iroda. Általános iratok, MOL.

<sup>1042</sup> Commission de Délimitation de la Frontière entre l'Autriche et la Hongrie. Protocole Juridique. Sopron, le 10 Octobre 1923 K 478/1cs./3; Protocole Juridique No 4. Sopron le 2 Juillet 1924. 7611 sz.; Protocole Juridique No 6. Sopron le 2 Juillet 1924.

Changing the borders and the ownership of villages has given rise to local historical and local patriotic interpretations: the Hungarian Parliament gave the town of Sopron the name *Civitas Fidelissima* ("most faithful town") because of the plebiscite result<sup>1043</sup>, Szentpeterfa returned to Hungary has also been called *Communitas Fidellissima*. Local histories emphasize, at least indirectly, the role of the Hungarian people in the definition of the border and the devotion it showed in celebrating the returned border areas.<sup>1044</sup> Also Déak (1942) represented the population as "most loyal of the minority groups" in Old Hungary.<sup>1045</sup> The Austrian histories had emphasized the local perspective of the villages too.<sup>1046</sup> The history of positive uniqueness has, however, often been close to Hungarian interpretations: using the plebiscite and the covering letter were from Hungary's point of view advantageous applications of the right of national self-determination in the service of Realpolitik. On the other hand, the encounter of idealism and Realpolitik in 1919 had also been favourable for Austria. This success has served as the point of departure for Burgenland's positive *Entstehungsgeschichte*: a narrative of Austria's victory and growth of a new province.

Although historical studies have often interpreted the border process as excellent and the Sopron plebiscite as positive, others have considered the new border problematic because it severed economic and communication connections.<sup>1047</sup> To quote the classic text of Burghardt: "The eastern boundary of Burgenland is one of the strangest boundaries in existence. It manages to cut trade areas, lines of transportation, system of communications, and to ignore strategic considerations with a consistency that is astounding."<sup>1048</sup> Walter Dujmovits' (1995) criticism of the border foregrounds particularly the Vas region's geographic "unnaturalness" and the fact that the border broke a cultural-economic entity. According to Dujmovits this "unnaturalness" could be seen especially during the Cold War era when the Iron Curtain prevented natural intercommunication.<sup>1049</sup>

The history of stability more easily relates to the stabilising of the border in an international sense than on the national level. After the stabilisation – Sopron's reputation as *Civitas Fidellissima*, construction of Burgenland province and delimitation – possibilities for change still remained in the development of the border region. The border's legitimation moved from an international-level success to a local-level problem, however.

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7650 sz.; Protocole Juridique No 9. Sopron le 23 Juillet 1924.; Protocole Juridique No 10 Sopron le 23 juillet 1924. 7692 sz. K 478/1 cs., MOL.

<sup>1043</sup> Romsics I. 1999, 125. Mária Ormos (1991) has titled her book on the history of question of Sopron and Western Hungary as «Civitas Fidelissima».

<sup>1044</sup> Zsiga 1991, passim.; Zsiga, 1993, passim.

<sup>1045</sup> Déak 1942, 71.

<sup>1046</sup> For example Prickler 1963.

<sup>1047</sup> Gruber 1991, 41. On the image of "success story" see especially Swanson 2000.

<sup>1048</sup> Burghardt 1962, 190.

<sup>1049</sup> Dujmovits 1995, 13-14.

Stabilizing the Burgenland province as part of Austria also involved the choice of the administration centre. The choice was not simple, as the region did not have a self-evident provincial capital town after Sopron was assigned to Hungary. From the Austrian perspective the new border was problematic also due to this reason. In December 1921 Austria had established Burgenland's temporary province administration in Wiener Neustadt in Lower Austria.<sup>1050</sup> Eventually Eisenstadt became the most important alternative due to its historical status. It became the province capital on April 30, 1925. Administrative infrastructure had to be constructed in the town. In spite of the decision, discussion about the capital continued throughout the 1920s.<sup>1051</sup>

Speculations about the border between Austria and Hungary continued on local, national, and Central European non-governmental-levels into the 1930s. However, after the delimitation the border disappeared from the peace process and the Great Powers' political agenda. Later musings of the victorious Powers about the new border as regards Western Hungary and Burgenland were limited to Lord Rothermere's action in 1927.<sup>1052</sup> Power politics affected Burgenland next during Austria's Anschluss. Soviet occupation after the Second World War actually affected both sides of the border. The border region became simultaneously the Cold War frontier and one of Europe's standard-of-living-borders. The "Sopron picnic" of 1989 again brought Sopron back into international headlines. Each era has reacted to the history of the formation of the new border in 1918-1923 or to the problems of the border region and added its own new interpretations.

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<sup>1050</sup> Schlag 1986, 224.

<sup>1051</sup> Seedoch 1986, 222; Schlag 1986, 226-228.

<sup>1052</sup> See for example Romsics I. 1999, 193.

## 11 CONCLUSION

This thesis focuses, first, on the ways the major lines of international politics reflected on the question of Western Hungary (Chapter 11.1) Secondly, the work discusses how different political directions and actors met and converged while making the border decision and executing it (Chapter 11.2) Furthermore, the discussion foregrounds the arguments presented during the process and the way those arguments strengthened each other rather than operated separately. The way the notions of *nation* as *ethnicity*, as a manifestation of *democracy*, and as an argument for *natural connections* related to traffic and economic structures figures importantly in this research as does the use of threatening *political images* - such as the spreading of German power or Bolshevism - in combination with the rhetoric involving the nation and natural connections.

### 11.1 Continuity and change in the international policy-making towards Western Hungary

The border region between Austria and Hungary, the current Austrian Burgenland province and the western part of Hungary, became a topic of discussion at a time when the foundations of the meanings and definitional grounds of state borders began to change. After the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, the re-evaluation of the border between the monarchy's former main parties figured into the reorganization of the states to replace the empire. In the new situation, Austria, Hungary, and the wider international community alike all had their own views on ideal new borders.

Both the continuity of the principles of international relations and the emergence of new trends come into play in the question of Western Hungary. One interesting feature in the peace process after the First World War follows from the juxtaposition of traditional power politics with the new phenomena of liberal internationalism and a view of states that emphasized the nation. In other words: the two ideas of a state - one understanding the state as a power

political actor and the other legitimizing it by reference to the idea of the nation – encountered each other in the redistribution of power and territory in Central and Eastern Europe.

The views of Austria, Hungary, and the international decision-makers concerning the reorganization of Central Europe naturally also reflected on the question of Western Hungary. The idea of German Austria confronted the Hungarian state-nation ideology; further, national-level policy confronted the Allies' and the United States' views of a safe state system.

Also in the question of Western Hungary, the victorious side of the war looked at the overall picture: the border between the states was not merely a bilateral question. The drawing of the border and the territory of the states were linked to general political questions relevant to the war victors and considerations of the political situations in other successor states apart from Austria and Hungary.

Viewed in this light, the question of Western Hungary takes its place as a part of the history of Europe's national and communal construction, not merely as a narrative of national loss or gain. It illustrates the organization of the Central European whole instead of the history of an individual nation.

While international political trends impacted on the Western Hungarian process, that process also involved unique features which potentially caused the decision-makers to act differently than they did in cases involving major questions with a bearing on the overall policy. To this border dispute between two defeated countries of the war, the Allies could apply different methods than they could to politically more sensitive questions between the victors and the defeated – for example, between Austria and Czechoslovakia or Hungary and Romania. The unique nature of the process manifested itself particularly during the execution stage of the peace treaties in that the prevailing conditions were taken into account in the decisions; crises on the local and national level could be addressed by delegating some of the problem-solving authority to the local level. In contradictory situations it was possible to act in accordance to the policy of concessions and to avoid, for example, the military commitment that the Conference of Ambassadors wanted to avoid. The concrete responsibility of the Allies in the cession process developed, not from strong military presence, but from a symbolic intermediary into the role of reluctant supervision.

The unique nature of the question of Western Hungary also provided opportunities for major policy's smaller actors, Italy in particular, to show their authority. Similarly, France, a Great Power, could act in the spirit of compromise in this "minor border question". It was indeed possible to apply "politically dangerous" methods to the question of Western Hungary. These methods could not, however, be allowed to evolve into a dangerous precedent which might open up other border questions. It was essential, then, for the peace process decision-makers to emphasize the permanence of the peace treaties in spite of their concession policy.

The *modus operandi* the Allied and Associated Powers adopted in the peace process, based on reacting to the situations, made their responsive

flexibility possible. In contradictory situations new practices were adopted, and they influenced the creation of the border. The improvisational nature of the Paris Peace Conference manifested itself in the context of the question of Western Hungary, for example, as it founded commissions or listened to the political leadership of Czechoslovakia. During the execution stage, for example, the CA organized an observation instance in Sopron and authorized national level solutions like the bilateral negotiations between Austria and Hungary in 1921, responding to the situations without reference to previously created organizational patterns. This "policy of delegation" of the CA eventually resulted in the Venice protocol and the Sopron plebiscite. The motive for delegating operational opportunities to the national level was undoubtedly also the fact that the Allies wanted to minimize their own involvement in the crisis. However, the national power to make decisions had to be maintained within the framework given by the Allies. In sum, the decision concerning Western Hungary was realized through integrating Austria's and Hungary's national authority into a part of the victorious Great Power's policy decision-making.

The final border between Austria and Hungary resulted not only from an encounter of national and international policies but also from a compromise policy between realism and idealism. The Peace Conference took as its point of departure in 1919 an understanding of Western Hungary and the German population inhabiting the region as part of a safe Austria. Realpolitik and the idealism of the people perspective worked side by side and intertwined, supporting each other: idealism mainly served the goals of Realpolitik in the search for security and stability in the post-war conditions. The state and its borders – the territory of the state – and its viability were essential to both ways of framing international relations. Viability was constructed either on democracy in adherence to the idealistic trend, or on the tradition of strength and balance: undermining the hegemony of the enemy.

The Great Powers represented different political directions during various phases of the question of Western Hungary. The active phase of the American policy, liberal and idealistic in its image, had a significant influence on the emergence of the border question in Paris in the spring of 1919. The Vienna-based Coolidge Commission acted at the Peace Conference as the chief expert on Western Hungarian circumstances. The operation of the Commission provides a practical example of the United States' active phase of on European policy. The American impact could no longer be seen during the preparations of the Treaty of Trianon, however. The British version of the self-determination doctrine similarly emerged while preparing Austria's peace treaty and continued in the preparations for Trianon. The British views reflected on the question of Western Hungary as an active and positive attitude towards making Western Hungary a part of Austria in 1919 and, indirectly, as presenting ideas for the covering letter of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920.

Paralleling Anglo-American views, giving Western Hungary to Austria also suited France, whose policy was strongly shaped by the ideas of the Realpolitik. In the French foreign policy, the question of Western Hungary

coincided with France's alliance policy, which manifested itself particularly in the comments supporting Czechoslovakia and harnessing Hungary to France's Danube region policy. French policy sought to guarantee stability and especially to prevent Germany's potential hegemony in the Danube region. In order to reach these goals, France responded to the local conditions in Western Hungary in a way easily interpreted as pro-Hungarian during the latter half of 1921. The basic idea, the maintenance of the peace system, did not vanish, however, as France began to favour local authority in the solution of the border dispute: delegating the issue to the national level was a part of guaranteeing stability and furthermore, a way to bind a potential ally.

Italy's views about Western Hungary often differed from the policies of the Peace Conference's "stronger" Great Powers. Italy's national policy, either articulating itself idealistically or in terms of Realpolitik, depending on the situation, stayed on its own course, often opposing the international community throughout the process. In the autumn 1921 the Italian policy was nevertheless adopted as the community's common policy with the Venice protocol and the question of mediation. Italy's role in the process differed from the roles of other Great Powers in that it not only acted as a decision-maker at the Peace Conference but also participated and territorially gained in the reorganization of the former Habsburg monarchy.

In sum, it was characteristic of the question of Western Hungary that the impact of different political directions and different Great Powers - i.e. different perspectives - changed throughout the various phases of the process. The change in the Allies' perspective also manifested itself in the shifting focus from Austria-centeredness to Hungary-centeredness. First, the key factor was Austria's stability. At the same time, Czechoslovakia's significance for the system emerged. During 1920 the focus shifted primarily to Hungary's significance in the peace system.

The policy chosen by the Allies was, on the other hand, considered impartial. From national perspective, however, the decisions were also "unfair". Furthermore, Hungary and Austria as political actors were seen differently from the Paris perspective. Austria was considered a weak and needing support while Hungary was seen as a potentially expansionist power that had to be first made a part of the peace system through a policy of peace treaty sanctions. After that, the means to repel the expansionist threat was to take Hungary along in the decision-making in terms of policy of concessions.

The decision-making illustrated the trends of international policy: the encounter of the peace treaty permanence with a policy that responded to prevailing threats. During the execution phase of the question of Western Hungary, the Conference of Ambassadors, on the one hand, fostered an image of itself as a purely non-political executive organ of the peace treaty, but on the other hand its decisions changing the original treaty, have been seen as politicising. The most important of these decisions was the Venice protocol of October 1921. Also the organization of Western Hungary's cession process during 1921, for example the allowance of additional time for the Austro-

Hungarian negotiations that Hungary had hoped for, can be seen, depending on the perspective, either as a concession solution supporting the peace or as an indirect or even direct support to Hungary at Austria's expense. In other words, the execution organ working for the permanence of the peace treaty also applied the peace treaty and reacted to political winds.

The League of Nations was created during the same time as the question of Western Hungary was being decided. It emerged as a provider of both arguments and models when the disputing parties appealed to "idealistic" solutions on contested issues. The suggestions to use the League of Nations to solve the problems related to the right of self-determination represented a new aspect in international politics. This trend of liberal internationalism, communality between nations, had an impact on the question of Western Hungary. The policy of international cooperation emerged especially during the delimitation phase of the border during 1922 and 1923: liberal internationalism was being applied in the joint Delimitation Commission of the Allies, Austria, and Hungary and by including the League of Nations as the supreme decision-maker.

Also a novelty at this stage was that the Conference of Ambassadors and the League of Nations, considered rivals, worked side by side in terms of the question of Western Hungary. The task of the CA was to execute the peace system while the League of Nations for its part focused on the option of local border changes. While the CA continued the wartime allies' cooperation, the League existed on the basis of the wider international community. It is also interesting that during the delimitation Austria and Hungary were involved – unlike in the peace negotiations – in the international decision-making and shared similar points of departure in their memoranda and arguments.

Alongside the liberal internationalism tone of the delimitation phase, the major political framework of the question of Western Hungary can be divided into two other tonal phases. First came the encounter of motives and arguments relying on Realpolitik and self-determination during the peace treaty discussions between 1919 and 1920. Second, during the execution phase, Realpolitik, the permanence of the treaty system, determined the tone. To realize that goal the means became, especially in 1921, methods of self-determination – local level negotiations and the plebiscite. In the delimitation process the Realpolitik discussion remained in the background and the argumentation primarily involved local circumstances and natural connections of the people.

Research has concentrated primarily on the governmental level of the international relations, i.e. the level where the final decisions were being made. Activities outside this official level or at its fringes – for example the Lajta Banság movement and the actions of Hungarian irregular troops in the autumn of 1921 or Lammasch's lobbying attempt in Bern in 1919 – aimed at influencing this decision-making level. No doubt, they signalled to the decision-makers the realities of the period of transition and the threatening images arising from the prevailing circumstances. However, contacts and decision-making concentrated



on official channels and the national and international levels: the decision-makers of international politics might observe the unofficial activities, the “voices of the people”, but did not elevate them into negotiating partners.

## **11.2 National and international political options come together in the question of Western Hungary**

### **Possibilities to apply new ideas, maintaining the traditional power politics - defining the new border in 1919**

The role of national and international authority in the redefinition of borders introduced by Evans (1992) can be applied also to the case of Western Hungary, where the focus lay first on constructing Austria and then on constructing Hungary. At the Peace Conference stage in the summer of 1919 the question of Western Hungary can be seen within the context of decision-making concerning the state-building of new Austria. Both national and international decision-makers discussed and contributed to this state-building.

Austria's approach to the Peace Conference reflected the political emphasis points presented by the victorious Powers: the country's stability, democracy, ethnic principle, the importance of self-determination, and economic and strategic factors. Its approach also matched the views of Coolidge Commission which had observed the situation.

In terms of Realpolitik, the Western Hungary policy of the Allies was governed by two ideas while the Treaty of Saint-Germain was being formulated. First, the idea of independent Austria included the notions of anti-Anschluss, anti-bolshevism, a viable whole based on a German population. Here two visions of the future opposed one another: independent Austria versus Anschluss-oriented German Austria. In other words, the issue at stake was organizing the German elements in Europe after the empires had crumbled: organization into states opposed to anarchy, revolutions, and large-scale nationalism. Annexing Western Hungary to Austria no doubt served the idea of independent Austria because the region was considered to strengthen the country - at the same time it can be said that justice was being done to the idea of “German Austria” by annexing a German region to Austria.

Second, the intention at the Peace Conference was to create a border between the states that would guarantee a Central Europe safe for the Allies. Especially from the point of view of France's alliance policy, this intention necessitated taking into account Czechoslovakia's interests and survivability - its ability to function as a barrier and a cordon sanitaire state. In details related to Czechoslovakia's borders, Realpolitik played a more essential role than in principle giving Western Hungary to Austria. The specific route of the border between Austria and Hungary was thereby influenced by the vision of the

Western Hungarian territory as part of a Central European whole, where for example the “Czechs’ traffic connection to the sea” was a key argument.

From the point of view of Central Europe’s future, the German argument ultimately had more weight than Bolshevism in spite of Hungary’s communist phase in 1919. The historical emphasis on the significance of communism in connection to the question of Western Hungary can probably be traced more accurately to the researchers’ own Cold War-era context. On the other hand, while the primary intention of the border change was not the barring of Bolshevism, the revolutionary regime’s power in Hungary during the Peace Conference undeniably influenced the decision-making in Austria’s favour. Hungary was not present in Paris to express its arguments, and furthermore, it appeared to the Allied and Associated Powers as a threat – not only because of the communist regime. The Allies’ sceptical stance towards Hungary or the future of Western Hungary in fact remained the same after Béla Kun’s power ended in August 1919. In other words, the goal of constructing Hungary as a part of the new Central Europe, its role in the peace system, did not emerge during the drafting of the Austrian treaty. Czechoslovakia’s presence in Paris was actually stronger than Hungary’s, although the latter was one of the border parties.

Assigning Western Hungary to Austria was not the primary solution to Austrian or Hungarian political problems, seen from the Paris perspective. Rather, the border change suited the policy of avoiding problems. In other words, evoking the ethnic principle did not clash with “hard” political objectives. At the Peace Conference, Western Hungary was regarded as a contribution to Austria’s positive development, strengthening its legitimacy and sovereignty. The question of Austria for its part involved the idea about the political significance of Vienna, located “at the gates” of Hungary. The positive development of the capital was indeed one argument used to support the border change: assigning Western Hungary to Austria separated it from the “dangerous” border and supported it in the “Kitchen Garden” sense – in other words, maintaining its viability.

It can be said that annexing Western Hungary to Austria was an issue of a politically feasible border change that suited both the traditional Realpolitik views and the more idealistic and liberal policies emphasizing the people. It suited the idea of constructing Austria into an independent, viable unit and was thereby a part of the German question in particular. It was a politically possible border decision between two defeated nations. It would have been more difficult to touch the borders of Czechoslovakia, than to reform the border between the defeated parties of the war.

### **Policy of concessions vs. authority of the peace system – the significance of the execution policy**

Hungarian national policy first encountered the policy of the victorious Powers during the autumn of 1919 when preparations began for Hungary’s peace treaty. In other words, Hungary’s revision policy encountered the Allies’ policy

relying on peace treaties. The line of the Allies was that the cession of Western Hungary had to be executed in accordance to the Treaty of Saint-Germain, and the decision had to be reiterated in Hungary's peace treaty. The treaty to be signed with Hungary was important to the Allies since through it they would secure the Central European system: the system of states created through them would become stabilized.

While preparing Hungary's peace treaty, the question of Western Hungary manifested itself as one element of the whole: no detailed discussion about it, in the manner of Austria's peace treaty process, took place, and the Peace Conference did not seriously reassess its position, although private assessments did occur, for example in the memorandum of the British Colonel Cuninghame. Instead, the question emerged in the Conference discussions as an example of the problems related to opening up the treaty system.

The tone of the discussion was the same at the CA, where the decision concerning the border was interpreted to be permanent and measures were taken to execute it, in spite of some doubting voices. At the same time, from the point of view of the peace system and the trend of the national self-determination, the Peace Conference considered an obvious necessity to leave open a possibility for the realization of the self-determination and its application to Hungary. This necessity resulted in the addition to the Trianon covering letter the article concerning the possibility of local border revisions during the delimitation process with approval from the League of Nations.

In the execution of the border change, the contradictions between the interests of the local level and the international community that had created the peace system were thereby eventually solved through a policy of concessions whose points of departure emerged in the idea of "softening up the treaty" presented in the covering letter. Paradoxically, the Allies' fear of revision resulted in revision. Nevertheless, in the policy of execution the self-determination aspect was most likely meant to serve the goals of Realpolitik.

Realpolitik dominated policy-making motives during the execution phase: determining what was possible for the Allies to do when the security policy was potentially threatened - when national policy appeared to require an answer from the Allies' policy. The solutions supporting Realpolitik emphasized national level, local level, and the right of self-determination - applying the covering letter, national-level negotiations, plebiscite.

At the same time as these directions of international politics encountered each other, two different perspectives also met in the application of the covering letter. The Hungarian interpretation that the covering letter made the extensive reassessment of the borders possible even before the delimitation stage confronted the CA's more moderate and slower-paced interpretation.

The covering letter provided the first opening for Hungary to influence the question of Western Hungary. It became the central part of Hungary's revision policy targeted at Western Hungary in the beginning of 1921. The idea of compensation and local agreements was realized first by the CA's mandate for negotiations between Austria and Hungary, starting in the spring of 1921.

The opportunity given to a local level agreement represented one aspect of the execution policy for the Allies: minimizing conflicts as well as the Allies' own role in the process. In the Venice protocol, accomplished in October 1921 through Italy's mediation, the Allies' policy continued to link a national level solution with the realization of the interests of the international community.

The Venice protocol of October 1921, the Sopron plebiscite in December 1921, and the border changes during 1922 and 1923 represented conflicts between the policy of execution and the permanence of the peace treaties while simultaneously reacting to prevailing circumstances. Local Hungarian activities in Western Hungary as well as Hungary's national strategies especially influenced decisions on that level.

The fact that the Allies' policy of compromises and concessions seemed to serve Hungary's interests is explained by the fact that concessions were considered a means to avoid the possibility of revision conflicts. Another explanation is that the borderline as such was no longer an issue for the Allies during the execution stage – whereas the policy of adherence to the system was, engaging questions not only of security but also of the Allies' prestige. In addition, the delegation of authority to the national and local levels was also explained by the Allies' reluctance to commit their own resources to the border question.

The “epilogue-like” border changes in Western Hungary during 1922 and 1923 represented from the Hungarian perspective a continuation of 1921 policy. The Venice protocol, the plebiscite and the return of Sopron were not the endpoint of the Hungarian policy; instead, in early 1922 Hungary appealed again to the covering letter and the delimitation opportunities. Western Hungary was not Hungary's only revision target, but what made it unique was that it was the only one where Hungary got concessions to the Treaty of Trianon. In addition to the plebiscite, Western Hungary also represented a unique example during the delimitation stage: the covering letter provided similar benefits only along the Serbian border.

In sum, the covering letter of the Treaty of Trianon no doubt provided room for the idea of change, the trend of self-determination, and the roles of the national and international community in the question of Western Hungary. The possibilities given to Austria and Hungary to negotiate local solutions represented, at least outwardly, a policy focused on the people and on self-determination. Allied motives were first and foremost security aspects: obviously, delegating authority to the national level and using the plebiscite as a solution improved the preconditions for the permanence of the peace system in the eyes of the Allies. For the ends of security, Great Power politics enlisted the means of idealism as tools of Realpolitik. The peace treaty was thereby realized with the help of compromise in Western Hungary. Due to the compromise perspective, the border question can also be understood during the execution stage as an illustrating interaction between the national and the international levels and “competing” political directions.

### The use of “nation” and power political issues as arguments

In order to reach their political goals, Austria and Hungary in particular used arguments emphasising the legitimacy of their own claims and denouncing as the illegitimate claims of the opponent. This oppositional rhetoric consolidated and strengthened each group's internal coherence. For example, Hungary turned Austria's German national arguments into a threat by appealing to the danger of Anschluss. It described Austria as “hostile” and “other”, alien to the Allies' anti-socialist policy by referring to “Red Vienna”. Austria, for its part, characterized Hungarian unrest – whether resulting from communist agitation or the Habsburg question – as a threat against the people that negated Hungarian claims to Western Hungary.

Furthermore, each side legitimized its own policy on national and international levels by asserting the alien nature of the opponent's policy. For example, the Czechoslovakian leadership implied that the Central European level was better informed about the situation in the region than the decision-makers in Paris were. The Allies could also regard each other as representatives of “wrong policy”, and for example France emphasized in the peace negotiations that “advantage given to the enemy” required compensation to the Allies.

All in all, on the decision-maker level the philosophy of “Us against Them” involved how to integrate the enemy and the Other into a policy suited to the “us” group. The policy of the former enemy could be controlled either through peace treaty sanctions or by inviting the former enemy to participate in the decision-making. In the question of Western Hungary this strategy could be seen both in Saint-Germain's decision to give the region to Austria and later in the policy of execution allowing concessions on the local level without breaking the peace treaty.

Earlier research has often presented the grounds for changing the border as an unconnected list. However, the reasons for the border change came together to form a chain or an entity: the motives and arguments were interlinked and simultaneously served different political directions although the emphasis on points did vary – from construction of independent Austria to a mode of thought that saw Hungary as a potential cause of threat and turmoil.

All in all, the perspective was governed by the idea of natural connections and contacts based on nation. Hungary's western comitats for their part were seen to have significance in the construction of new Austria. The German nature of the region suited a policy where the successor states were being legitimized through the nation argument; the economic and strategic importance of the region was more directly linked to motives of Realpolitik, but it was also presented as a relevant motive in the idealistic policy. Compared with Western Hungary, direct power political argumentation manifested itself more clearly in the context of the Czechoslovakian borders.

Arguments of Realpolitik were linked to the contemporary situation through traditional threatening images. The arguments related to the prevailing circumstances between 1918 and 1921 were the elimination of the German

threat and the threat of Bolshevism; threatening images related to the history and the return to tradition involved border revision and restoration of the Habsburg monarchy.

Using individual threatening images as grounds for the Allies' decision-making remained in the background after the Treaty of Saint-Germain, however. It was replaced by a process in which the national and diplomatic levels used these arguments as rhetorical tools in attempts to show their own policy to be more legitimate than that of their opponents. Austria and Hungary both used threatening images to present each other as dangers to the Allies' policy, local populations, and national and regional interests. Thereby the opposing party represented a multi-faceted kind of Otherness. The Allied legations in Vienna and Budapest often adopted the same slogans although they no longer had a part in the discussion at the CA or the League of Nations.

During the delimitation in 1922-1923, the Great Powers' political arguments were obviously intentionally replaced by local arguments emphasising natural connections, which represented a return to the situation in 1919.

The Peace Conference's nation-centred umbrella ideology, its all-covering discourse, is clearly visible in the process of Western Hungary. The argument of the nation, nevertheless, took various forms, the importance of the nation in politics appearing as arguments about the ethnicity, historical status, and authority of the people. Statistical information helped to prove ethnicity. Measuring the opinions of the people was more problematic and had to be extrapolated from polls and assumptions. The opinion of the people, for example, was often assumed to correlate with ethnicity, and addresses or popular meetings were considered to directly state the will of the local population.

The question about the will of the local population and how upper-level political decision-makers could "correctly" take it into account has sometimes been problematized: some have considered it a problem that decisions were made on behalf of the local population from outside Western Hungary itself. In other words, the assumptions concerning the will of the people were made on the national or the international level. More essential in this research, however, has been the fact that both idealistic arguments emphasising democracy and Realpolitik arguments made use of the people as a strong cohesive element. Arguments concerning geography, traffic, trade, and safety, for example, were linked to and fortified by reference to the notion of the people.

The nation was a central concept, but a very flexible one as well: various actors interpreted it differently: for example, the notion of the nation used to legitimize making Western Hungary a part of Austria stressed ethnic and cultural Germanness, whereas Hungary claimed that the Western Hungarians belonged to Hungary's historical state nation. Furthermore, for Austria, paying attention to the nation and people meant more than considering the rights of the local people; Austria also emphasized the Parliament and its democratic representation. In the Hungarian policy the will of the Hungarian people,

“democracy”, manifested itself instead in the irregulars and the plebiscite. Public opinion represented a potential threat to the Hungarian government. Therefore the people had to be listened to not only because of its rights but also to ensure Hungary’s stability. For Hungary the people – ‘Hungarian nation’ – became, in a sense, an activist and even extra-parliamentary force while Austrian conceptions of the people cast it as a victim to be protected from this extra-parliamentarianism.

Nevertheless, historical interpretations, both from the Austrian and the Hungarian perspectives, have appealed to the activity of the people in legitimizing their right to Western Hungary: popular interpretations of history have seen in region’s German national movement as well as in Hungary’s irregular troops the impact of the people on the process of determining the future of Western Hungary.

Although the delimitation process of 1922-1923, taking place primarily on the national and international levels, decided the future of the region, the historical interpretations have had the courage to bring up the “authority” of local village communities. For example the *Communitas Fidellissima*<sup>1053</sup> histories have discussed the local level’s loyalty to the “fatherland”: the loyalty of the border region people to the state to which the village was finally returned.

In the case of Western Hungary, interactions between various political trends and actors achieved a suitable organization of the “spatiality” of the old Central European empires. The notion of the nation belonged not only to New Europe or Wilsonism; it made a useful argument for the French Realpolitik and alliance policy as well. Correspondingly, even liberal internationalism, like realism, relied on the state as the unit of the international community. National policy was able to influence community policy – in other words, the defeated parties, far from resigning themselves to dictated peace treaties, were able to influence international politics – a fact that makes the question of Western Hungary a unique one for Austria and Hungary alike.

The metaphors used at the Peace Conference – “Kitchen Garden of Vienna”; “give them a couple of cows and some meadows”; “self-determination of Heidebauern” – can be linked with Realpolitik’s metaphors concerning the dangers of communism as *virus rouge* or “Prussianism”. In other words, views about the local circumstances strengthened an image of Western Hungary’s significance as part of a political whole. The creation of a new state border and the change of Western Hungary’s state context served the security goals of the political upper level despite their differing political perspectives and motives: security constructed with the help of nation and democracy or equally powerful states suitable as allies and “buffers”. As a consequence of the process, the border between Austria and Hungary became quite stable, seen from the perspective of the victorious Great Powers. On the national, local, and individual levels, however, the experiences were more varied.

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<sup>1053</sup> On the question of Szentpéterfa see Zsiga 1991 and 1993.

## YHTEENVETO (Finnish Summary)

### Länsi-Unkarin/Burgenlandin kysymys 1918–1923. Aluekysymys kansallisen ja kansainvälisen politiikan kontekstissa

#### Tutkimuskysymys ja konteksti: rajan määrittely murrosvaiheessa

Valtioiden, alueiden ja niitä erottavien rajojen järjestelmä on vuorovaikutuksessa kunkin aikakauden ominaispiirteiden kanssa. Rajat ovat kansainvälisen hallinnan välineitä, identiteettien rakennetekijöitä tai haastajia. Itävallan ja Unkarin rajasta vuosina 1918–1923 käyty kiista eli Länsi-Unkarin/Burgenlandin kysymys kontekstoitui ensimmäisen maailmansodan jälkeisen kansainvälisen järjestelmän vaatimuksiin. Sotaa ja keski- ja itäeurooppalaisten imperiumien hajoamista seurasi poliittisen ja alueellisen organisoimisen murros ja uudelleenarviointi. Muutosprosessi kosketti niin kansainvälistä yhteisöä kuin kansallisia ja alueellisia yksiköitä. Prosessille oli leimallista useiden eri intressien, eri poliittisten linjojen ja käytäntöjen vuorovaikutus.

Itävallan ja Unkarin välinen raja-alue, nykyinen Burgenlandin maakunta Itävallassa ja läntinen osa Unkaria, nousi keskustelun kohteeksi aikana, jolloin valtiollisten rajojen merkitykset ja määräytymisperusteet alkoivat muuttua. Uudessa tilanteessa sekä Itävallassa, Unkarilla että laajemmalla kansainvälisellä yhteisöllä oli omat näkemyksensä ihanteellisista uusista rajoista.

Länsi-Unkarin kysymyksen erikoispiirteenä on pidetty sitä, että kysymyksessä oli kahden sodan hävinneen maan välinen raja; alue, jota ei ollut miehitetty ja joka ei ollut noussut merkittäväksi kansallisuusliikkeen teemaksi Itävalta-Unkarin kaksoismonarkian aikana. Tälle raja-alueelle vedetty – lopullisen muotonsa vuonna 1923 saanut – valtiollinen raja merkitsi pitkään eräänlaista Euroopan sisäistä poliittista rajaa: se on erottanut poliittisia järjestelmiä ja liittoutumia alueella, joka ennen vuotta 1918 oli osa Habsburgien monarkiaa. Samalla tällä raja-alueella on kuitenkin katsottu kulttuuri- ja talouskontakteissa myös valtiollisen rajan yli – 1990-luvulta lähtien yhä enenevässä määrin vuotta 1918 edeltäneen tilanteen tavoin.

Vuosina 1918–1923 Länsi-Unkarin alueen tulevaisuuden ratkaiseminen oli elementti Tonavan alueen uudelleenjärjestämisessä. Kiista ei koskenut ainoastaan Itävaltaa ja Unkaria, vaan se oli osa liittoutuneiden johtamaa ensimmäisen maailmansodan rauhanprosessia ja osa laajaa Keski-Euroopan murrosvaihetta. Länsi-Unkarin kysymys oli siten monitahoinen prosessi, jonka on katsottu nousseen sekä Itävallan ja Unkarin sisäisestä kehityksestä että kansainväliseltä pohjalta. Jo rajakiistan tapahtumahistorialliset käännteet viittaavat kansainvälisen ja kansallisen politiikan vuorovaikutukseen läpi koko prosessin.

Itävallan väliaikainen kansalliskokous julisti marraskuussa 1918 saksalaisenemmistöisen Länsi-Unkarin (”Deutsch-West-Ungarn”) osaksi Saksalaista Itävaltaa (Deutschösterreich). Tämä alue oli ollut osa Unkaria vuodesta 907 lähtien. Alueen liittäminen Itävaltaan oli osa Unkarin saksalaisten sekä Wienistä käsin johdettujen kansallisuusliikkeiden ohjelmia, mutta niiden merkitystä on



pidetty kuitenkin vähäisenä. Pariisin rauhankonferenssissa erityisesti Yhdysvallat ja Iso-Britannia kannattivat rajan muuttamista Itävallan hyväksi, ja syyskuussa 1919 Saint-Germainin rauhansopimuksessa Länsi-Unkari määriteltiin osaksi Itävaltaa. Päätös toistui Trianonin rauhansopimuksessa 1920, mutta Unkari vastusti muutosta. Se yritti muuttaa päätöstä diplomaattisin keinoin Itävallan ja liittoutuneiden – sekä yksittäisten hallitusten että rauhansopimusta toimeenpanneen Pariisin suurlähettiläiden konferenssin – avulla, mutta turvautui lopulta aseelliseen vastarintaan. Syksyn 1921 kriisi ratkesi Italian välityksellä laaditussa Venetsian sopimuksessa ja Sopronissa järjestetyssä kansäänestyksessä. Länsi-Unkari liitettiin osaksi Itävaltaa lukuun ottamatta Sopronia, joka päätyi kansanäänestyksessä Unkarille. Vuosina 1922–23 rajaan tehtiin vielä Kansainliiton päätöksellä paikallisia muutoksia Trianonin rauhansopimuksen saatekirjeen määritelmän mukaan.

Rajasta tehtyihin päätöksiin vaikuttivat useat samanaikaiset ilmiöt ja toimijat ja heidän motiivinsa ja argumenttinsa. Näille motiiveille ja argumenteille pyritään tässä tutkimuksessa löytämään yhteinen, selittävä konteksti rauhankonferenssin kokonaispolitiikasta. Itävallan ja Unkarin välisen rajan muuttamisen syyt heijastelevat rauhankonferenssin ja suurvaltojen laajoja poliittisia tavoitteita. Näin selitettynä Länsi-Unkarin kysymys voidaan nähdä osana Euroopan valtiollisen ja yhteisöllisen rakentamisen historiaa eikä vain Itävallan ja Unkarin kansallisina voittoina tai tappioina.

Tavoitteena on pohtia *kansallisen ja kansainvälisen politiikan kohtaamista* Länsi-Unkarin tapauksen selittäjänä: miten kansainvälinen politiikka vaikutti tähän rauhanjärjestelmän osaan ja toisaalta millainen rooli oli paikallisella, Itävallan ja Unkarin kansallisella politiikalla? Tutkittaessa kansallisen ja kansainvälisen vuorovaikutusta keskeisiä kysymyksiä ovat kysymys uuden Itävallan rakentamisesta monarkian hajottua (1918–1919) sekä kysymys Unkarin revisiotavoitteiden ja liittoutuneiden rauhanjärjestelmän toimeenpanon välisestä ristiriidasta (1920–1923). Tällöin tutkimuksen huomion kohteena on Unkarin rauhansopimuksessa määritellyn territoriaalisuuden problemaattisuus.

Länsi-Unkarin kysymyksessä näkyi sekä kansainvälisten suhteiden periaatteiden jatkuvuus että uusien trendien esiintulo. Ensimmäisen maailmansodan jälkeisessä rauhanprosessissa on kiinnostavaa se, miten *realistinen* käsitys kansainvälisistä suhteista, perinteinen reaalipolitiikka, ja uutuudet, liberaali internationalismi ja kollektiivista turvallisuutta ja kansan merkitystä korostava *idealistinen* näkemys, asettuivat vastakkain. Toisin sanoen miten kaksi näkemystä, joista toisessa valtio oli voimapolitiittinen toimija ja joista toisen mukaan valtio legitimoitiin kansalla, kohtasivat prosessissa, jossa Keski- ja Itä-Euroopan valta ja territoriaalisuus jaettiin uudelleen? Miten kansan, demokratian ja etnisyyden ihanteet kohtasivat strategiset intressit? Kyse on poliittisten suuntien kohtaamisen, niiden tulkintaerojen ja yhtymäkohtienkin tarkastelusta.

Liittoutuneiden reaalipolitiikan ja realismin kannalta kiinnostavat aiheet ja uhkakuvat nousivat sekä menneisyydestä että vallitsevista oloista. Saksan suurvalta-aseman, Habsburgien restauraation ja vanhojen rajojen revision pelko edusti politiikan jatkumoa – bolshevismien uhka taas oli uusi tema politiikassa.

Nämä pelot linkittyivät myös idealistisen, uuden politiikan korostamaan demokratian ihanteeseen. Sekä autoritäärisyyden että vallankumouksellisuuden nähtiin uhkaavan demokratiaa. Kansa rooli politiikassa näkyi vielä selvemmin etnisen kansan ja sen itsemääräämisoikeuden ihanteissa. Kansan käsite ymmärrettiin ja sitä käytettiin kuitenkin eri tavoin. Mitä etnisyydellä ja itsemääräämisoikeudella tarkoitettiin ja mikä sen funktio oli – vahvistava argumentti reaali poliittisille päätöksille vai osa ideologiaa? Kansa oli monista tulkinnoista huolimatta trendikäs argumentti politiikassa.

### **Kansainvälisen keskustelun tutkiminen**

Tässä tutkimuksessa kansainvälisten suhteiden problematiikkaa käsitellään pääasiassa valtio- ja hallitustason toimijoiden ja organisaatioiden tasolla, erityisesti Pariisin rauhankonferenssissa, sen perillisorganisaatiossa suurlähettiläiden konferenssissa ja lopuksi myös Kansainliitossa. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selittää politiikan makrotason, päättäjätason, usein ristiriitaisilta näyttäviä ja monisyisiä motiiveja, jotka vaikuttivat rajaa koskeviin päätöksiin. Tarkoitus on siten sekä tarkastella rajan perustelua, argumentaatiota, että kontekstoida rajapäätös taustalla oleviin motiiveihin. Aikaisemmissa tutkimuksissa rajan muuttamisen perusteet on esitetty usein toisistaan irrallisina ja luettelon tapaan. Rajamuutoksen syyt voidaan kuitenkin nivoa kokonaisuudeksi: motiivit ja argumentit linkittyivät toisiinsa ja olivat samalla eri politiikan suuntien palveluksessa, vaikka painotukset vaihtelivatkin.

Historioitsijan kulttuurinen horisontti määrittelee näkökulmaa, josta hän lähestyy tutkimuskohdettaan. Myös Länsi-Unkarin ja Burgenlandin historiaa on kerrottu ja selitetty useista eri näkökulmista. Tutkijoiden yhteiskunnallisen kontekstin lisäksi jo itse rajaprosessin monitahoisuus on antanut aikaisemmille tutkimuksille mahdollisuuden avoimen poliittisiin tai jopa populistisiin painotuksiin. Näkökulmaksi on usein valikoitunut kansallinen tai keskieurooppalainen perspektiivi, mutta viime aikoina myös paikallisempi alueellinen näkökulma.

Aikaisemmissa tutkimuksissa Länsi-Unkarin kysymyksen kansainvälisyyttä on lähestytty usein kansallisesta ja toisen käden perspektiivistä kuten lähettiläsraporteista käsin tai eräänlaisen historiaperinteen, kaanonin muodostaneiden aikaisempien tutkimusten varassa. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkoitus on ollut sen sijaan nojata kansainvälistä keskustelua avaaviin ensikäden lähteisiin, joihin aikaisempi tutkimus on kiinnittänyt vain vähän huomiota. Näin ollen päälähteitä ovat Pariisin rauhankonferenssia, suurlähettiläiden konferenssia ja Kansainliittoa koskevat arkistolähteet.

Tämän virallisen tason ulkopuolella tai sen rajamailla harjoitettu toiminta – epäviralliset lobbausyritykset tai siviilien aseellinen vastarinta – viesti päättäjille epäilemättä murrosvaiheesta ja poliittisista uhkakuvista. Kontaktit ja päätöksenteko keskittyivät kuitenkin kansallisen ja kansainvälisen tason virallisiin kanaviin. Kansainvälisen politiikan päättäjätaso saattoi kyllä tarkkailla epävirallista toimintaa, ”kansan ääntä”, mutta ei kuitenkaan nostanut sitä tahoksi, jonka kanssa neuvoteltiin.

## Kansallisen ja kansainvälisen politiikan suuntausten kohtaaminen

Voidaan sanoa, että lopullinen Itävallan ja Unkarin välinen raja oli tulos paitsi kansallisen ja kansainvälisen politiikan kohtaamisesta, myös seurausta reaalipolitiikan ja idealismin välisestä kompromissipolitiikasta. Reaalipolitiikka ja idealismin osana sovellettu kansa-näkökulma vaikuttivat rinnakkain ja limittäin. Ne ammensivat toisistaan pääasiassa niin, että idealismi palveli reaalipoliittisia päämääriä, kun sodanjälkeisissä oloissa tavoiteltiin turvallisuutta ja vakautta. Valtio ja sen rajat – toisin sanoen valtion tila – ja elinkelpoisuus olivat olennaisia näille molemmille kansainvälisten suhteiden pääsuunnille. Elinkelpoisuus rakentui joko idealistisen trendin mukaan kansan eli etnisyyden ja demokratian varaan tai realistisen perinteen mukaan vahvuuden ja tasapainon, vihollisen hegemonian torjumisen varaan.

Pariisin rauhankonferenssin lähtökohtana vuonna 1919 oli Länsi-Unkarin ja siellä asuvan saksalaisen väestön näkeminen osana turvallista Itävaltaa. Liittoutuneiden tavoitteena oli itsenäinen, elinkelpoinen, saksalaiseen väestöön perustuva Itävalta, joka pystyi torjumaan liittymisen Saksaan, Anschlussin, ja bolševismiin. Länsi-Unkarin liittäminen Itävaltaan palveli epäilemättä tätä tavoitetta, koska uuden alueen arvioitiin vahvistavan Itävallan kansallisvaltion rakentamista.

Toiseksi rauhankonferenssissa oli tarkoitus vetää maiden välille sellainen rajalinja, joka takasi liittoutuneille turvallisen Keski-Euroopan. Tähän liittyi etenkin Ranskan liittopolitiikan kannalta kysymys Tshekkoslovakian intressien ja elinkelpoisuuden huomioimisesta. Reaalipolitiikka olikin olennaisempaa Tshekkoslovakian rajoihin ja kulkuyhteyksiin liittyvissä detaljeissa kuin periaatteessa antaa Länsi-Unkarin alue Itävallalle.

Itävallan vaikutusvalta rauhankonferenssissa 1919 perustui sen esiintymiseen suurvaltojen kannalta luotettavana valtiona. Itävallan rauhankonferenssille suunnatun argumentaation voi nähdä reflektoineen voittajien poliittisia korostuksia: maan vakautta, demokratiaa, etnisen prinssiipin ja kansallisen itsemääräämisoikeuden merkitystä sekä taloudellisia ja strategisia syitä.

Voidaan sanoa, että Länsi-Unkarin liittämisessä Itävaltaan kyse oli poliittisesti mahdollisesta rajamuutoksesta, joka sopi sekä traditionaaliseen reaalipolitiikkaan että kansaa korostavan idealistisemmän ja liberaalimman politiikan näkemyksiin. Rauhankonferenssin päätöksentekijöiden näkökulmia hallitsi ajatus luonnollisista yhteyksistä ja kansaan pohjautuvista kontakteista. Länsi-Unkarin saksalaisuus sopi politiikkaan, jossa seuraajavaltioita legitimoitiin kansa-argumentilla. Alueen taloudellinen ja strateginen merkitys liittyivät suoremmin reaalipoliittisiin motiiveihin, mutta nekin esitettiin kansalle relevantteina motiiveina – eräänlaisena ”kansan taloutena” tai paikallisen, länsiunkarilaisen väestön turvallisuutena. Näiden argumenttien ketju kertoi päättäjille alueen luonnollisista yhteyksistä Itävaltaan. Traditionaalinen luonnollisen rajan käsite linkittyi näin uusiin argumentteihin ja motiiveihin.

Unkarin kansallinen politiikka kohtasi voittajien politiikan syksystä 1919 lähtien, jolloin rauhankonferenssi alkoi valmistautua Unkarin rauhansopimuk-

seen. Toisin sanoen Unkarin vanhojen rajojen palauttamiseen tähtäävä revisiopolitiikka kohtasi liittoutuneiden rauhansopimuksiin nojaavan politiikan, jonka mukaan kysymystä ei enää avattaisi. Liittoutuneiden tavoitteena oli vakauttaa Keski-Euroopan uusien valtioiden järjestelmä.

Liittoutuneet pitivät kuitenkin tarpeellisenä soveltaa itsemääräämisoikeuden ja kansallisten oikeuksien trendiä myös Unkarin rajoilla. Trianonin rauhansopimuksen saatekirjeessä annettiin mahdollisuus Unkarin rajojen paikalliseen muuttamiseen kansainvälisen rajakomission aloitteesta ja Kansainliiton hyväksynnällä. Saatekirjeen voi nähdä ensimmäisenä vaiheena Länsi-Unkarin kysymyksessä kohti unkarilaisten vaikutusmahdollisuuksia. Siitä tuli Unkarin Länsi-Unkariin kohdistuneen revisiopolitiikan keskeinen argumentti vuoden 1921 alussa.

Rajamuutoksen toimeenpanossa ilmenneet ristiriidat kansallisen tason ja rauhanjärjestelmän laatineen kansainvälisen yhteisön välillä päädyttiin ratkaisemaan myönnytysten politiikalla, jonka lähtökohdat olivat potentiaalisesti saatekirjeen ”sopimuksen pehmentämisen” ideassa. Kompensaatio ja paikallinen sopiminen olivat liittoutuneille osa toimeenpanon politiikkaa. Esimerkiksi Italian välityksellä lokakuussa 1921 aikaansaatu Venetsian sopimus voidaan nähdä jatkumona politiikalle, jossa liittoutuneet olivat valmiita liittämään kansallisen tason ratkaisut osaksi kansainvälisen yhteisön intressien toteuttamista. Näin myös Sopronin kansanäänestys joulukuussa 1921 ja vuosien 1922–23 rajamuutokset voidaan selittää toimeenpanon politiikalla, joka argumentoi rauhansopimusten pysyvyydellä, mutta reagoi samalla vallitseviin olosuhteisiin.

Politiikan perusmotiivina toimeenpanon vaiheessa oli reaali-politiikka: mitä liittoutuneiden oli mahdollista tehdä, kun turvallisuuspolitiikka oli potentiaalisesti uhattuna - toisin sanoen kun kansallinen politiikka näytti vaativan vastausta liittoutuneiden politiikalta. Ratkaisuna oli se, että kansallista ja paikallista itsemääräämisoikeutta korostavia ratkaisuja – saatekirjeen soveltamista, kansallisen tason neuvotteluja ja kansanäänestystä – käytettiin tukemaan liittoutuneiden reaali-politiikkaa.

Se, että liittoutuneiden politiikka näytti myötäilevän tällä kompromissien ja myönnytysten politiikalla Unkarin intressejä selittyy sillä, että myönnytykset nähtiin keinona torjua revisiokonfliktin mahdollisuus. Toinen selitys on se, ettei rajalinja sinänsä ollut enää toimeenpanovaiheessa (1921–1923) olennainen liittoutuneille – järjestelmän vakauttaminen sen sijaan oli. Muutokset selitettiin toteutettavaksi rauhansopimuksen hengessä. Kyseessä oli paitsi turvallisuusnäkökohta myös liittoutuneiden arvovaltakysymys. Lisäksi kansallinen ja paikallinen valta selittyi myös liittoutuneiden haluttomuudella sitoa omia voimiaan rajakysymykseen.

Itävallalle ja Unkarille annetut mahdollisuudet paikallisiin ratkaisuihin edustivat kansa-keskistä itsemääräämisoikeuden politiikkaa vähintään ulko-kuoreltaan. Motiivina oli ennen kaikkea turvallisuus: kansalliselle tasolle annettu valta – esimerkiksi kansanäänestyksen käyttäminen ratkaisuna – lisäsi liittoutuneiden arvioissa edellytyksiä rauhanjärjestelmän pysyvyydelle. Turvallisuutta tavoiteltaessa idealismin keinot otettiin reaali-politiikan aseiksi. Uuden

rajan toimeenpanoa voidaankin kompromissinäkökulman takia selittää kansallisen ja kansainvälisen tason sekä ”kilpailevien” poliittisten suuntien vuorovaiikutuksella.

Länsi-Unkarin kysymyksen aikana muotoutunut Kansainliitto esiintyi argumenttina tai sen tehtäviin vedottiin, kun osapuolet vetosivat idealistisiin ratkaisumalleihin kiistakysymyksissä. Kansainliiton käyttäminen itsemääräämisoikeuden ongelmien ratkaisemisessa edusti kansainvälisessä politiikassa uutuutta. Liberaalin internationalismin trendi, valtioiden välinen yhteisöllisyys, heijastui näin Länsi-Unkarin kysymykseenkin. Kansainvälisen yhteistyön politiikka näkyi erityisesti rajan delimitaatiossa eli rajankäynnissä vuosina 1922–23: liberaalia internationalismia sovellettiin liittoutuneiden, Itävallan ja Unkarin yhteisessä delimitaatiokomissiossa sekä Kansainliiton ottamisella mukaan ylimmäksi päättäjäksi. On myös kiinnostavaa, että Itävalta ja Unkari olivat delimitaatiossa – toisin kuin rauhansopimuksissa tai syksyn 1921 kriisivaiheessa – keskenään samalla viivalla muistioineen ja argumentteineen.

Vaikka kansainvälisen politiikan trendit vaikuttivat Länsi-Unkarin prosessiin, samalla kysymyksessä oli myös omintakeisia piirteitä, jotka saivat päättäjät toimimaan potentiaalisesti eri tavoin kuin suurissa Euroopan kokonaispolitiikkaan vaikuttavissa kysymyksissä. Kyseessä oli kahden häviäjän välinen aluekiista, johon liittoutuneet saattoivat soveltaa toisenlaisia menetelmiä kuin poliittisesti arempiin voittajien ja häviäjien – esimerkiksi Itävallan ja Tšekkoslovakiain tai Unkarin ja Romanian – välisiin kysymyksiin. Tämä näkyi erityisesti rauhansopimusten toimeenpanovaiheessa (1920–1923) siinä, että Länsi-Unkarin kysymyksen ratkaisussa reagoitiin vallitseviin olosuhteisiin; paikallistasolla nähtyihin kriiseihin voitiin vastata delegeoimalla ristiriitojen ratkaisemista kansalliselle tasolle. Ristiriitatilanteissa pystyttiin toimimaan myönnytysten politiikan mukaan ja välttämään esimerkiksi sotilaallinen sitoutuminen, johon liittoutuneet suhtautuivat penseästi.

Länsi-Unkarin kysymyksen omintakeisuus antoi mahdollisuuden myös suurvaltapolitiikan pienemmille toimijoille, erityisesti Italialle, osoittaa vaikutusvaltaansa. Samoin suurvaltakategoriaan kuuluvan maan, Ranskan, oli mahdollista toimia kompromissinomaisesti ”vähäisemmässä rajakysymyksessä”. Länsi-Unkarin kysymykseen olikin mahdollista soveltaa ”poliittisesti vaarallisia” menetelmiä. Kysymys ei kuitenkaan saanut muodostua vaaralliseksi ennakkotapaukseksi muiden rajakysymysten avaamiselle. Tästä syystä rauhanprosessin päättäjät korostivat myönnytyspolitiikasta huolimatta rauhansopimusten pysyvyyttä.

Kansalliselle tasolle annettujen toimintamahdollisuuksien motiivina oli epäilemättä myös se, että liittoutuneet halusivat pitää oman sitoutumisensa kriisiin minimaalisena. Kansallisen päätösvallan oli kuitenkin toimittava liittoutuneiden antamissa kehyksissä. Länsi-Unkaria koskeva päätös toteutettiin integroimalla Itävallan ja Unkarin kansallinen vaikutusvalta osaksi voittajien suurvaltapolitiikan päätöksentekoa.

Länsi-Unkarin kysymykselle oli tyypillistä, että eri suurvaltojen ja politiikan suuntien vaikutus vaihteli prosessin eri vaiheissa. Liittoutuneiden tarkaste-

lukulman muuttuminen näkyi myös Itävalta-keskisyyden muuttumisessa Unkari-keskisyydeksi. Keskeistä oli ensin Itävallan vakaus. Fokus siirtyi primäärisesti vuoden 1920 aikana Unkarin merkitykseen rauhanjärjestelmässä. Itävalta ja Unkari poliittisina toimijoina nähtiin lisäksi eri tavoin Pariisin perspektiivistä: Itävallan imagona oli heikkous, jonka takia maata oli tuettava; Unkari puolestaan nähtiin potentiaalisesti ekspansiivisena voimana, joka ensin pyrittiin sovitamaan osaksi rauhanjärjestelmää rauhansopimusten sanktioiden politiikalla. Sen jälkeen keinona torjua uhkat oli ottaa Unkari mukaan päätöksentekoon. Kaiken kaikkiaan päättäjätasolla kyse oli siitä, miten vihollinen ja ”toinen” saatiin integroitua me-ryhmän mieleiseen politiikkaan. Entisen vihollisen politiikka voitiin ottaa kontrolliin joko rauhansopimuksen sanktioilla tai ottamalla entinen vihollinen osaksi ratkaisun tekemistä.

### **‘Kansa’ ja reaalipolitiikka argumentaatioissa**

Poliittisten tavoitteiden saavuttamiseksi erityisesti Itävalta ja Unkari maalasivat argumentaatioissaan kuvan paitsi omien vaatimustensa legitimiudesta myös kuvan kilpailijan ei-legitiimeistä, pahaenteisista vaatimuksista. Unkari esitti Itävallan saksalaiskansalliset argumentit Anschluss-politiikkaa heijastelevaksi suursaksalaisuudeksi. Itävalta osoitettiin vihamieliseksi, vieraaksi, liittoutuneiden linjalle myös sosialismiin viittaavalla ”punainen Wien”-argumentilla. Itävallalle puolestaan Unkarin levottomuus – tarkoitti se sitten kommunismia tai kuningaskysymystä – ja uhkaavuus kansaa kohtaan olivat keinoja osoittaa Unkarin olevan väärä omistaja Länsi-Unkarille.

Poliittisten uhkakuvien käyttö retoriikan välineinä liittyi Itävallan ja Unkarin yrityksiin esittää toinen uhkana liittoutuneiden politiikalle, kansallisille ja alueellisille intresseille tai esimerkiksi paikalliselle väestölle. Vastapuoli edusti siten toiseutta potentiaalisesti useaa tahoja kohtaan.

Rauhankonferenssin kansaa korostava sateenvarjo-ideologia, ”pääargumentaatio”, näkyi selvästi Länsi-Unkarin prosessissa. Kysymys paikallisen väestön tahdosta ja sen ”oikeasta” huomioimisesta politiikan ylätason päätöksenteossa on joskus problematisoitu aikaisemmissa tutkimuksissa. Niissä on nähty ongelmallisena, että paikallisen väestön puolesta päätettiin muualla kuin itse Länsi-Unkarissa. Toisin sanoen oletukset kansan tahdosta tehtiin kansallisella tai kansainvälisellä tasolla. Olennaisempaa tässä tutkimuksessa oli kuitenkin noteerata se, että kansa oli vahva kokoava argumentti niin idealistisille, demokratiaa korostaville suuntauksille kuin myös reaalipolitiikalle.

Kansan käytöstä argumenttina oli kuitenkin eri variaatioita. Kansan merkitys politiikassa ilmeni argumentteina kansan etnisyydestä, historiallisuudesta ja sen päätäntävällästä. Se yhdistettiin myös argumentteihin maantieteestä, liikenteestä, kaupasta ja turvallisuudesta. Kansa oli keskeinen, mutta erisisältöinen eri toimijoille: esimerkiksi kansa, jolla Länsi-Unkari legitimoitiin osaksi Itävaltaa, tarkoitti etnistä ja kulttuurista saksalaista kansaa. Unkarissa puolestaan länsiunkarilaiset selitettiin osaksi historiallista Unkarin valtiokansaa. Lisäksi Itävallalla kansan huomioiminen oli paitsi saksalaisen, paikallisen kansan oikeuksien huomioonottamista, myös kansanvaltaa edustavan parlamentin koros-

tamista. Unkarin politiikassa kansan tahto, "kansanvalta", esiintyi sen sijaan viittauksena kansan levottomuuteen, jos sen oikeus kuulua Unkarin valtioon ei toteutuisi. Voidaankin sanoa, että Unkarille kansa oli aktivistinen ja jopa ulkoparlamentaarinen toimija; sen sijaan Itävallan käsitteistössä kansa oli uhri, jota oli suojeltava tältä ulkoparlamentarismilta.

Länsi-Unkarin tapauksen kautta Keski-Euroopan entisen imperiumin tilan järjestäminen uudella tavalla voidaan nähdä eri politiikan trendien ja vaikutteiden kohtaamisena ja vuorovaikutuksena. 'Kansa' ei kuulunut vain englantilaisen *New European* tai amerikkalaisen wilsonismin käsitteistöön, vaan sopi myös ranskalaisen reaali- ja liittopolitiikan argumentiksi. Vastaavasti liberaali internationalismi nojasi realismiin tavoin valtioon kansainvälisen yhteisön yksikkönä. Länsi-Unkarin kysymyksessä kansallinen politiikka pystyi vaikuttamaan yhteisön politiikkaan. Häviäjävaltioiden roolina oli paitsi alistua sanelurauhansopimuksiin myös vaikuttaa kansainvälisiin päätöksiin. Tämä on tehnyt Länsi-Unkarin kysymyksen ainutlaatuiseksi sekä Itävallalle että Unkarille.

Uuden rajan syntyminen ja Länsi-Unkarin alueen valtiollisen kontekstin muuttuminen merkitsi politiikan ylätasolle primääristi turvallisuuspoliittista ratkaisua eri poliittisista motiiveista huolimatta: kansan ja demokratian tai tasavahvojen liittolaisiksi ja "suojamuureiksi" kelpaavien valtioiden avulla rakennettavaa turvallisuutta. Prosessin seurauksena Itävallan ja Unkarin välinen raja asettui voittajien perspektiivistä varsin vakaaksi – kansallisella, paikallisella ja yksilötasolla rajakokemukset ovat olleet kuitenkin alttiimpia muutoksille.

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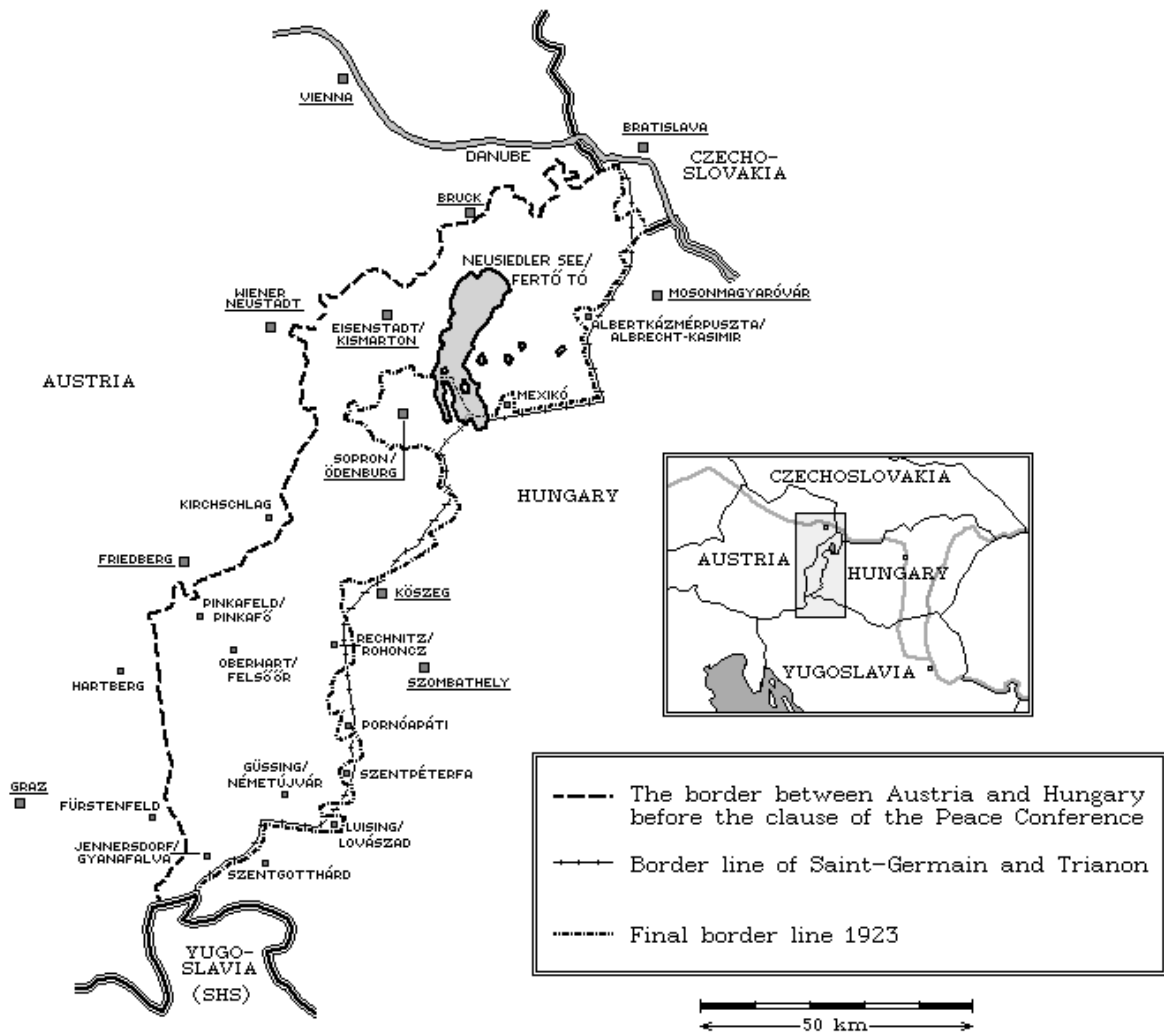
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