



A DIFFERENT LOOK AT TRIANON. NARRATIONS, MEMORY, CONTEXTS

the conference celebrating the centenary of the Treaty of Trianon

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The conference will be held online.

ABSTRACTS

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The Treaty of Trianon and its later consequences in Hungarian fictional film
(*Traktat z Trianon i jego późniejsze konsekwencje w węgierskim filmie fabularnym*)

Historical motifs have marked their presence in Hungarian film almost since the very beginning, as a result of a succession of dramatic events affecting a generation after generation of Hungarians. Filmmakers drew upon the past whenever the opportunity arose. Sometimes it was revisiting the painful experiences of the past or accounting for painful memories. At other times it was a historical narrative never brought before an audience before, for political reasons. Lastly, at times it was the tide of the moment, such as the round anniversary of a historical event. The revolution of 1956, erased by Kádár from the collective memory, the years of Stalinist terror, the sensitive Jewish issue and recently the fates of former prisoners of war returning from the USSR have all found their place in Hungarian film. Is this also the case with topics relating to the 1920 Treaty of Trianon and its traumatizing provisions regarded as one of the most painful dates in Hungarian history? Neither the tragic experience handed down through generations nor the sense of injustice are going away. This text will attempt to answer the question of whether elements relating to Trianon and its consequences for the Hungarian state can be found in Hungarian film productions.

DR ARTUR JACH-CHRZAŚCZ

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The legal status of post-Trianon ethnic minorities
as a determinant in the activities of select political parties coming to power in Hungary after 1989
(*Status prawny potrianońskich węgierskich mniejszości narodowych*
jako determinant działalności wybranych partii politycznych sprawujących władzę na Węgrzech po 1989 roku)

The object of this presentation will be the motif of Trianon in the political rhetorics and programmes of select Hungarian political parties being key players in the shaping of the state's policy after the transformation. By way of introduction, the initial, shorter part of this work will explore the origins and evolution of this topic, followed by subsequent references to it until 1989 and eventually analysis of the approach taken by major political parties after the transformation. One of the key issues in the politics of the time was the necessity of working out good-neighbourhood treaties with the various adjacent states. The greatest diplomatic hurdles occurred during negotiation with countries inhabited by a large Hungarian diaspora. As the analysis conducted during the presentation will show, the consequences of the terms stipulated on 4 June 1920 in the Grand

Trianon château have continued to be a major driver in both external and internal policies of the successive decision-making centres in Budapest.

DR DOMINIK HÉJJ

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100 years of injustice, desolation and regret — Trianon in the press discourse of the 2010–2020 period
(100 lat niesprawiedliwości, samotności i żalu – Trianon w dyskursie prasowym w latach 2010–2020)

The centenary of the Trianon peace treaty or the ‘peace dictate’, as Trianon is spoken of in Hungary, is an opportune time to discuss the ways Trianon appears in Hungarian press discourse. I have been studying the latter for almost a decade, since even before the completion of my graduate studies.

In this open lecture I would like to highlight the dynamics of the discourse around Trianon surrounding its successive anniversaries: 90th (2010), 95th (2015), 99th (2019) and 100th (2020). My goal is also to identify the currents emerging in this debate when the talk is of the Hungarian sense of isolation and injustice, as well as increasing importance of historical resentment.

Holocaust or Trianon — which of the two events is a greater tragedy in Hungarian history? Should Hungary’s prime minister be thankful to Trianon for a mono-ethnic Hungary replacing the previous multicultural state? What is the Hungarians’ perception of their place in Europe and why do they see themselves as having been brought to near-extinction amid the sea of Slavdom surrounding them? How does the resentment felt over Trianon affect current politics?

These are only some of the currents which can be distilled from the press discourse and which I would like to discuss in my presentation.

DR EVA IRMANOVÁ

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Hungary and the Peace Treaty of Trianon (100 years since the signing)
(Maďarsko a trianonská mírová smlouva (100 let od jejího podepsání))

More than two years after the signature of the cease-fire with Germany, on 18 January 1919, a peace conference started, which was not only to put an end to the Great War but also prevent a conflict of similar scale from reoccurring in the future. Hungary, as a defeated state, was not invited to the conference. Its negotiation capacity was dealt a further blow by the lack of an organ dealing exclusively with the problem of Hungarian borders and other issues relating to that country. At the same time, the relatively protracted cease-fire meant prolongation of a state of affairs borne of violent solutions and military measures.

Czecho-Slovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia presented their demands to Hungary. The issue of the Hungarian borders first surfaced in the conference of 31st January in the context of the Romanian-Yugoslavian debate about the Banat. On 5 February, Czecho-Slovakia’s foreign minister, Edvard Beneš, presented to the Supreme Council the Czecho-Slovakian demands that were later to be expanded by subsequent written memoranda. The proposed borders allowed for the formation of several enclaves of Hungarian population within Czecho-Slovakia. The most important arguments supporting the proposed borders were economic, political and strategic considerations. After the presentation of the territorial claims against Hungary to the Supreme Council, they were discussed in the various individual commissions in which Wilson’s principles were modified. Ultimately, the Supreme Council defined the border among Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia and Romania on 13 June 1919.

In January 1919 a Hungarian delegation arrived in Paris to receive the terms of the peace treaty; a speech in defence of the Hungarian position was delivered by Albert Apponyi. The core idea was the full preservation of Hungary’s territorial integrity, which apriorically doomed Hungary’s negotiating position to failure. This

approach was later to become the precursor of the later policy of territorial revisionism constituting a priority for all Hungarian governments in the interwar period.

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Trianon and Carpathian Ruthenia

(*Trianon a Ruś Zakarpacka*)

The *de-facto* splintering of Austria-Hungary was a spontaneous domino effect resulting in the autumn of 1918 from a combination of multiple factors in which, in addition to the military defeat, the ethnic issues of a multi-ethnic state also played an important role. Formally, the dual monarchy was ‘buried’ by the Trianon peace treaty signed on 4 June 1920. The Treaty was concluded between Hungary as one of the two fallen empire’s two successor states and the Entente parties — United States (which never ratified it), United Kingdom, France, Italy, Japan, Romania, the SHS Kingdom (later Yugoslavia), Czecho-Slovakia and Poland (which also never ratified it). Our focus of interest will be not on the origin of the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire or on the course of the negotiations with the Magyars but on the place occupied in this elaborate tapestry by Carpathian (or ‘Transcarpathian’) Rus, which the circumstances had brought within Czecho-Slovakia’s borders.

Besides the obvious — that is the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy’s military defeat — factors culminating in the incorporation of that tiny country into the new republic were as follows:

- talks between the leader of the Czechs and Slovaks’ independence movement and the representatives of Carpatho-Ruthenian diaspora in the United States and the peculiar Scranton plebiscite;
- the desires of the majority of local non-Hungarian elites, which initially saw Carpathian Ruthenia’s place as part of a reborn, democratic Russia or, alternatively, after witnessing the triumph of the Bolsheviks, within Ukrainian statehood; part of them even imagined the country’s future as an autonomous entity within a democratic Hungary;
- the actions of Czecho-Slovakian diplomacy at the peace conference in Paris, downplaying the legionnaires’ participation in the fight against the Red Russia;
- the Bolshevik episode in Hungary in the form of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, disconcerting to the Entente, and the military defeat of that episode in Magyar history.

For Czecho-Slovakia holding that part of Ruthenia — logically referred to as ‘Subcarpathian’ rather than ‘Transcarpathian’ from the Czecho-Slovakian perspective — was of strategic importance and an element of the *raison d’état*. It allowed a corridor to allied Romania as part of the anti-Hungarian bloc later referred to as the Little Entente. It also separated two states the Republic was not on friendly terms with — Hungary and Poland.

When assuming sovereignty over a territory never before politically linked to Bohemian statehood, it was fitting to pay at least a nominal price. That was to be the promise of autonomy for Ruthenia, opportunely without narrowing down any details or timing. It was mentioned in the Treaty and in the Republic’s constitution. During the fight against the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the French commander, General Edmund Hénnoque, published a General Statute in which also he promised special administrative status along with a governing body called the Directory. The future leading entity was to be the Soim. Prague delayed that moment indefinitely, with idle talk of autonomy continuing on for a long time. In reality, centralism was being forced on the tiny backwards country. The only serious trace of Ruthenia’s allegedly special status in the ČSR was the office of the governor. The first incumbent was the leader of Carpatho-Ruthenian emigre circles in America, Grigorij Žatkovič (Gregory Ignatius Zhatkovich), who came to lead the short-lived Directory (until April 1920) as an ersatz of a subnational government. Prague, however, had no long-term game plan for Ruthenia.

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The Hungarian minority's right to its language and culture in Transylvanian documents and legislation
(*Prawo węgierskiej mniejszości narodowej do języka i kultury w siedmiogrodzkich dokumentach i aktach prawnych*)

On 1 December 1918 in Gyulafehérvár, delegates to the National Assembly of Romanians from Transylvania, Banat and Hungary proclaimed the unification of their territories with the Romanian Kingdom. The fate of those eastern borderlands of historical Hungary was decided by 1228 delegates. Part of those insisted on unquestionable, absolute annexation, while others were inclined to follow more democratic standards of territorial demarcation. In order to comply with the latter group's demands a document was created, promising a broad range of rights to all ethnicities inhabiting former Hungarian territories. Those rights, however, were never given full effect. In years to come, the Hungarian minority was to be subjected to much persecution, and the state's policy was to achieve as broad and deep Romanianization of those areas as possible. Hungarians, on the other hand, put a great deal of effort in the preservation of their culture and language over the decades, and the desire for autonomy in Transylvania is alive to this day. The Szekler National Council's initiative called the *Cohesion policy for the equality of the regions and sustainability of the regional cultures*, submitted to the European Commission, could serve as an example here. The initiative was registered in May 2019, and declarations of support continue to arrive. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the time-limit for signatures has been extended and, according to the last arrangements, is to expire on 7 November 2020.

DR HAB. TADEUSZ KOPYŚ

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***Views of the Trianon in Hungarian intellectual and political circles
from the perspective of the centenary of its signing***
(*Ocena traktatu trianońskiego przez intelektualne i polityczne środowiska Węgier
z perspektywy stulecia podpisania traktatu*)

Gyulla Illyés, one of the most important luminaries of 20th century Hungarian literature and leader of the so-called people's writers, had also spoken on the issues of the Hungarian population in the neighbouring countries. That was more to defend the Hungarian ethnic minority than to claim back the territories lost in 1920. Another great Hungarian thinker, jurist, political scientist and minister in Imre Nagy's revolutionary government of 1956, István Bibó, warned that allowing the trauma and injustice arising from Trianon to go unhealed could diminish the respect for democratic principles in Hungarian society. Bibó claimed that a new, alternative historical picture had to be created for Hungary, not just the one grounded in a total rejection of the Treaty.¹ He was convinced that the matters of the injustice of the peace treaty and of Hungarian democracy had to be separated from each other.

Studies completed after 1989 by a group of young scientists commissioned by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences showed 85% of Hungarians to consider the Treaty of Trianon as the greatest tragedy in the country's history. As many as 77% of the respondents claimed that the country had never truly again stood on its feet after 1920. Nonetheless, the extremely strong emotional connection with the tragic treaty is linked to surprisingly little knowledge on the subject.

¹ István Bibó, *Az európai egysületről és békéről* [in:] Bibó: *Válogatott tanulmányok*. Vol. I, 1935–1944, Budapest, 1986, 507.

DR SRĐAN MIČIĆ

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Image of Hungarians in the Review "Narodna odbrana"

The aim of this work is to analyze image of Hungarians in the Review "Narodna odbrana" ("People's Defense"), which was published by the organization of the same name. Organization was founded in 1908 as a reaction of Serbian nation to the Austro-Hungarian Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Organization was revived in 1926, this time in significantly changed circumstances. Before the First World War Narodna odbrana was focused on defense of national identity and unity, while after 1926 its main task was to work on cultural unification of Yugoslav nation and cultural rapprochement between all South Slavs – Bulgarians included. The aim of this work is to analyze how organization did perceive Hungarians – not only foreign policy of their country in the wake of Italian's plans for the Balkans and Danubian Europe, but also their minority in northern part of Yugoslav state.

DR HAB. IBOLYA MURBER

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Post-imperial transformations in western Hungary 1918–1922
(*A posztimperiális átmenet Nyugat-Magyarországon 1918–1922*)

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the territorial reorganization of the Danube region created the framework for the shifting of the traditional Austro-Hungarian border. In the last two years of the war, society's confidence in its state sank because of the supply problems. After the war the border drawing process could last for years, as was the case with the Austro-Hungarian border, too. This long lasting territorial insecurity increased the loyalty crisis of the population. The basic question was, which state should one be loyal to?

In the treaties of Saint Germain (1919) and Trianon (1920) the territory was given to Austria. Nevertheless the official transfer of Burgenland/Western Hungary occurred more than one year later. There was no serious military escalation, though the Hungarian paramilitary was very active. A compromise was reached in the Treaty of Venice in October 1921. Austria got Burgenland with its German-speaking majority. Hungary was able to keep the largest city, Sopron/Ödenburg with a large German-speaking population after the referendum in Sopron.

MGR ADRIENN NAGY

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Everyday life in the shade of the new borders and smuggling operations in the area of West Hungary
(*A nyugat-magyarországi lakosság mindennapjai a csempészet árnyékában*)

The paper will describe the activities of the inhabitants of the Austro-Hungarian border. It will discuss the way in which the interregional economy that had been developed over decades was subjected to the process of political separation of Austria and Hungary and in what way the two states having lost the war and previously co-operated within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy could regulate the cross-border social and business life that used to be so natural to the inhabitants. The mechanism of the smuggling operations designed and expanded since 1916 along with the associated social strategies will be highlighted.

DR HAB. ZOLTÁN NÉMETH, PROFESSOR OF UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

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The status of Hungarian literatures outside the borders of Hungary
(*A határon túli magyar irodalmak státusza*)

As a consequence of the Trianon treaty, Hungarian literature dispersed following the 1918–1920 period. The Hungarian literature of authors writing in the neighbouring states (Romania, Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia) followed a naming convention based on territory (e.g. the Hungarian literature of Slovenia, the Hungarian literature of Slovakia, the Hungarian literature of Transylvania, the Hungarian literature of Romania, and so on). In parallel, an awareness of the specificities of each such literature took shape. All this influenced the status of foreign Hungarian literature vis-à-vis Hungarian literature as a whole. Foreign Hungarian literature takes a different approach to many issues than the literature in the homeland does. This has contributed to the emergence of various types of theoretical and practical solutions. In this paper I will not only present the various literary conventions but also attempt to categorize their characteristic features.

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Hungary in the activities of the Croatian Ustaša movement in the 1930s
(*Węgry w aktywności chorwackiego ruchu ustaszcy w latach trzydziestych XX wieku*)

The purpose of this paper is to give a presentation of the various attempts at configuring the politico-military activities of the Ustaša movement versus Hungary's revisionist interests vis-à-vis the Yugoslavian state. The views and actions of the various individuals connected with the organization will be characterized on the basis of Yugoslavian (military intelligence) and Croatian sources. Goals and consequences (organizational and international) of the creation of training camps in Hungarian territory focusing around the borderside locality of Janka-Pusztá (Jankovac; 1931–1934).

From the perspective of Hungarian politics, the Yugoslavian state posed an obstacle to the reclamation of territories lost as a result of the military defeat in the Great War (1914–1918) and the terms of the peace treaty in Trianon on 4 June 1920. Individual circles within the political establishment and intelligence accentuated the need for supporting anti-Yugoslavian sabotage and terrorism activities. Although to Croatian separatists Hungary was a natural source of political and military support, the nature of the latter ultimately was to prove limited. On the one hand, the prevailing opinion in Hungarian circles was of the necessity of calm and peaceful relations with Yugoslavia, especially in the context of territorial disputes being the focus of Hungary's attention in its relations with Czecho-Slovakia and Romania. On the other hand, the lack of concrete support for Croatian separatism on the Hungarian side contributed to Ante Pavelić's movement's eventually coming almost totally under Italian control.

DR KINGA PIOTROWIAK-JUNKIERT

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The Jewish issue in Hungary after Trianon. Debate and literature
(*Kwestia żydowska na Węgrzech po Trianon. Debata i literatura*)

The Treaty of Trianon became entwined with the several-decade-long debate about Hungary's Jewish minority. The presentation shows the consequences the administrative and geopolitical arrangements had for the 'Jewish issue' at the Danube. The point of departure will be analysis of public statements and debate in the Hungarian press of the 1920s. The last part will be dedicated to the impact of that geopolitical situation on Miklósa Horthy's strategy for 'regaining Hungary'.

DR GERGELY ROMSICS

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Hungarian Foreign Policy Thinking in the Shadow of the Treaty of Trianon, 1919–1921

Post-Trianon Hungarian foreign policy discourse was characterized by the centrality of the question of territorial revision and the partial reconstitution of the old Kingdom of Hungary. At the same time, research has often overlooked the "pre-canonical" 1919–1921, when there existed a genuine plurality in approaches that could evolve due to the relatively weak and heterogeneous governments that came before the decade-long premiership of Count István Bethlen (1921–1931). This paper surveys the various currents of foreign policy thinking in the country during the pre-consolidation phase of the Horthy-era, and identifies four large currents. Idealists promoted revisionism through the League of Nations and within the framework of a future peaceful collective security system. Associated with increasingly marginal parties of the Left, the strength of Social Democratic and Catholic trade unions did lend them a measure of influence, at least for a time. Moderate liberals or "Grotians" also considered the League of Nations the most promising avenue for revision, but remained wary about the remainders of power politics that could obstruct progress towards a just and peaceful Europe. Pre-war pacifists converged in the Society for Foreign Policy, which enjoyed a short-lived prominence in 1920–21, but eventually failed to shape mainstream discourse in their image. Realists made up the two major groups of the foreign policy elite: trained diplomats of the Dualist states and older politicians tended to promote a reintegration of Hungary into Europe so that it could build a coalition of supportive great powers – notably Germany and the United Kingdom - to achieve the revision of the peace terms. The ultrarealists, former officers and White revolutionaries, also looked to Germany, but not to its Weimar government: building plans for a counterhegemonic rebellion that would upset the prevailing balance of power, they believed that only a radical path of militarism held out the promise of reversing the terms of the peace. In 1921–23, this plurality was severely curtailed by Prime Minister Bethlen: he made the leftist alternative largely irrelevant politically, co-opted moderate liberals to back his programme of co-operative Realpolitik and partly marginalized, partly integrated the far right militarists, as well. Interestingly, while Bethlen was very successful tactically, ultimately, his foreign policy failed to produce long-term dividends for the cause of revisionism.

MGR ANDRZEJ SADECKI

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The irredentists. Revisionist organizations and their role in Hungary's remembrance politics a century after Trianon
(*Niepogodzeni. Organizacje rewizjonistyczne i ich rola w węgierskiej polityce pamięci sto lat po traktacie z Trianon*)

Although a hundred years have passed since the signing of the Treaty of Trianon, revisionist narratives calling for the restoration of the borders of 'Great Hungary' continue to be present in Hungarian political discourse. They are advanced by a number of organizations (such as Trianon Társaság or Magyarok Világszövetsége) aiming to solidify the memory of the injustice and harm done by the loss of territories previously held by Hungary. In the aspects of membership count and presence in the public space those organizations could be viewed as relatively marginal in importance, though they provide a significant support base for the far right (formerly Jobbik and now Mi Hazánk), and sometimes their initiatives penetrate mainstream politics.

This paper relies on studies conducted on the eve of the centenary of the Treaty of Trianon (1st semester of 2020), including participative observation of more than a dozen events organized by revisionist organizations, and analysis of public materials available in either material or electronic form (such as brochures or video records). The goal is to show both the methods and forms of operation of such organizations, as well as to offer a characterization of the message propagated by them. The paper also attempts to answer the question of the potential of the revisionist movement and its perspectives for continued functioning after the anniversary year.

DR JÚLIA VALLASEK

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***"The line drawn on the map." Modalities of constructing the memory of Trianon
in the space-practices of the Hungarian inter-war novel***

The treaties of Paris and the political changes brought by them marked a special state of in-betweenness for those citizens who entered under new political rule. While their homeland as a physical space continued to represent a safe, well-known place, its context changed, and the change asked for new interpretations. The "domestication" of this space required the negotiation of new sets of values, and new identities.

My research presents the way the communicative memory describes the political changes brought by the year 1920 in a set of Hungarian novels written in the two decades following the peace treaties. The focus of the research is on the life-strategies, conflicts and decisions presented through the protagonists, and the way these are reflected in the spatial practices presented in the novels.

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One day – 4 June 2020
(*Egy nap – 2020. június 4.*)

The triumphant Hungarian nationalism of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, simultaneously characterized by various types of problems arising from irredentist and separatist movements, the millennial celebrations of 1896, and the idea of a Great Hungary, took an altogether different direction after the conclusion of the Trianon peace treaty. Following the shock brought about by the fall of historical Hungary, nationalist ideas separated into several currents and Hungarians were frozen in a sense of injustice. Not only did they stand in opposition the emerging nationalisms in the neighbouring countries, they were also splintered internally. Trianon — whether openly or in a veiled way — determined the Hungarian community's thinking through the major part of the 20th century. The trauma could never since fully be healed. It has until this day remained a basic determinant of Hungarian identity and ideologico-political point of reference. The centenary of signing the Treaty clearly reflects this situation. In one of his books about the popularization of nationalist ideas, Michael Billig noted the current state of the British national idea, analysing press articles from a randomly selected day. In my paper, by contrast, I selected a very special day — the hundredth anniversary of the signature of the Treaty. Analysis of press articles and television records of the day shows not only the place today's Hungarian Trianon discourse is at and the currents found in it but also helps understand the foundations of Hungarian nationalism in the 21st century. The meaning of this singular day was all the more highlighted concerning that in the pandemic period open-air public celebrations were restricted and a large part of the debate took place in the media.

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