The Treaty of Trianon: History and Politics

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Members of the Romanian delegation at the Peace Conference (4 June 1917), on the Trocadero terrace.
Source: Muzeul de Istorie a Moldovei, inv. 2092/2.

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THE FIRST World War was a historic event that surpassed the imagination of all belligerents and of the entire world. Set in motion by precise imperialist calculations and power plays aimed at instituting a new power balance within the international system, the conflict that started in 1914 put an end to the illusion that scientific and technological developments would only be used in service of mankind's progress, that states and their leaders would conduct interactions intended only for peaceful relations. This war shocked the parties involved, as well as the civilian population from cities and villages, on account of the massive destruction of human life, of material resources and of the disruption of social relations on a global scale.

The Armistice of 1918 and the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920) did not proclaim the end of the war everywhere. They only meant the end of hostilities on the Western Front, while the battles on the Eastern Front between different states or socio-political groups reignited. Thus, right after the Treaty of Versailles was signed (28

June 1919), it was openly stated that the postwar peace treaties would not end the war, which would continue by other means.[1] In other words, the peace was going to be conditioned by the war, rather than replace it once different social relations were established. This perception was a consequence of the fact that the First World War had lasted for more than four years, that it had involved actors from states across all of the continents and that the political leaders had declared during all this time—mainly in order to manipulate the public opinion, and not because they so desired—that the peace was close, but one more effort from the soldiers and the civilian population was required. Indeed, during the hard war years, the illusion of peace was always present in the mind of ordinary soldiers, in that of their families and of the civilian population, the latter also involved in the war effort.

Peace also represented a strategic dimension for some belligerent nations (Germany, Austria-Hungary), as well as for non-belligerent actors (USA). As an example of this behavior we have Germany's failed endeavor from 1917, when the military command and the political leaders in Berlin tried to break the Anglo-French alliance and to delay the partnership between the USA and the Entente by proposing a separate peace to London.[2] On the other hand, another attempt made the same year by the same power, this time successful, was meant to create severe internal chaos in Russia, through Lenin's Bolshevik "bacillus" (according to Churchill), forcing Russia to sue for peace and thus weaken the Eastern Front, including through the fall of Romania, freeing up significant resources for the Central Powers to engage into a counter-offensive on the Western Front. What we underline here is the fact that this search for peaceful solutions was only of a military strategic nature, meant to ensure the continuation of the war, and above all to impose the peace conditions of the victors. This is why, to Great Britain's answer, transmitted through the Papal Nuncio Eugenio Pacelli (1917), stating that they could not give up their status as a Great Power, and notably as the greatest naval power, Germany replied that they were emphatically determined to progress into "a decisive battle between two worldviews, one German and one Anglo-Saxon," while the politicians in Berlin were firmly arguing that "the German future cannot rely on treaties, but on power and force."[3] After the fall of the Eastern Front, through the treaties made with Russia and Romania, Germany and Austria-Hungary concluded a "victors' peace." The two Powers devised a program of territorial and economic annexation, Germany gaining the Baltic area and the "Russian Poland," while Austria-Hungary received territories from Romania and Serbia, and also secured outlets to the Baltic and the Black Seas, grain and iron ores from Ukraine, cotton, grain and oil from the Caucasus and Romania, etc.[4] Therefore, a "victors' peace" between Germany and Austria-Hungary, a "peace" that aimed the continuation of the war, was envisaged in

1917–1918. This idea spread to other capitals of the states belonging to the former alliance of the Central Powers even after the signing of the peace treaties (1919–1920), and throughout the entire interwar period.

The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918 had the Great Powers who participated in the Peace Conference organized after the First World War concentrate their attention on Germany. This is why the inter-allied negotiations from the first part of 1919 had in view the conclusion of the peace treaty with Germany, while all the other states that had been part of the Central Powers were considered of secondary importance and somewhat separate from the arrangements regarding Germany. The topic of the postwar territorial reconfiguration in Central and Southeast Europe was of concern to the peace-makers from the perspective of the national self-determination principle, but they also needed to take into consideration the Bolshevik designs that sought to spread from Eastern to Western Europe.[5] It is noteworthy that at the end of the war, the leaders in Berlin, Vienna and Budapest often professed their adherence to Wilson's doctrine, thus becoming even more "Wilsonian" than the leaders of the Entente. Their aim was to obtain peace terms from the USA, being aware that the European Powers would treat them as defeated countries responsible for starting the war. Also, knowing that the treaty's stipulations could be enforced only in case of a coordinated pressure from France, Britain and the USA, Germany and Austria-Hungary tried to create dissensions within the Entente.

Fear was a general feeling at the Versailles Conference, thus prolonging the psychological consequences of the Great War. Firstly, France was under the influence of a "historical" fear of a potential German retaliation, which determined, to a large extent, its attitude during the negotiations for the peace treaty with Germany. In its turn, Germany, even if it was the only surviving empire out of four, was dominated by the pride of being left with an almost intact economic potential, but scared that it would be treated as the main culprit for the outbreak of the war and for the damages produced to Europeans. In truth, the stipulations of the peace treaties (1919–1920) were the result of a compromise among "the Big Four/Five," who redesigned the European balance of power and the postwar international system. Most German leaders declared, even before the Treaty of Versailles was signed, that Germany would not adhere to its clauses and that its objective was to have it reviewed. This became obvious right since mid–1919. Austria, with its territory cut down and a destroyed economy, recognizing its responsibility in starting the war, complied with the demands introduced during the Peace Conference and immediately signed the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (10 September 1919). Even though the principle of self-determination was invoked, the plan of a union between Austria and Germany was rejected, Paris being completely unwilling to accept the growth of Germany as a

consequence of the war.[6] Budapest also tried to save its patrimony and the political elite, even if the Austro-Hungarian Empire had fallen apart right before the end of the war. Taking advantage of the context, Count Mihály Károlyi and his supporters, wearing aster flowers, tried to blame Vienna exclusively for the war and, following in the footsteps of Berlin, to make separate arrangements with the French or the Anglo-Saxons. Further complicating the situation in Central Europe, the Hungarians postponed the signing of the Peace Treaty as much as they could, hoping that Germany and/or Soviet Russia would react and disrupt the work of the Peace Conference.[7]

President Woodrow Wilson came to the European continent (1919) with the idea of helping eliminate the chaos and conflicts within the international system.[8] Most Europeans declared their support to Wilsonianism, but only a few truly embraced the ideas proposed by the US President, seeking to adapt them to the political mentality of the European capitals and mostly to the interests that the political leaders associated with specific states. As Gustave Le Bon said: "From the mentality of a people derives its conduct and, consequently, its history."[9] While President Wilson intended to send an optimistic message to the Europeans and the world about the future of international relations, the state of mind on the continent was, at the end of the First World War, rather traumatic, just as Le Bon estimated. As a bridge between the new and the old, from the perspective of diplomatic practices and international policies, the postwar peace treaties included elements for a reconfiguration of the power balance, but also for the development of cooperative relations between the victors and the defeated states, for the development of new types of political interactions between states, as well as of economic, financial, commercial ones, etc. All this would have requested a different attitude from the political leaders who were at the helm of the European states in the aftermath of the Peace Conference.

The history of European and international relations after the First World War presents us with governmental, partisan, and even individual behaviors that since the end of the conflagration have sought to prolong the state of conflict, to deepen the traumatic feelings of citizens or political groups, to generate radical political, nationalist, xenophobic, racist movements, etc. The political elite of Hungary also behaved in this fashion, as a manifestation of a vindictive spirit. In a very recent and extensive historiographical reconstruction of the first postwar years, Jean-Yves Le Naour found out that Budapest instilled the feeling of humiliation felt while signing the Treaty of Trianon (4 June 1920) into the long-term memory of the Hungarian population, as proof of the rejection of its territorial arrangements. This approach still continues today, according to the French historian, and his argument involves the "right-wing populist" Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who "flattered nationalism" with the decision (in 2012)

to turn 4 June into a so-called "Day of National Unity."[10] This was meant as a message from the nationalists in Budapest, who showed that they do not understand the historical developments that took place at the end of the First World War, nor those of the last century.

NIALL FERGUSON echoes the dominant opinion in the contemporary historiographical interpretations when he claims that the old empires on the European continent were the architects of their own destruction[11] in the context of the First World War. And, with regard to Austria-Hungary, more recent research has confirmed an older conclusion, namely, that after 1867 Vienna was a "prisoner" of Budapest, especially in terms of the foreign policy orientation.[12] Of course, we must add immediately that the national movements in these multinational empires showed, through the decision to set up national states, the path these regions should follow. And Austria-Hungary was one of the powers that, following in Germany's footsteps, wanted the war in order to prove to the Europeans that it was capable of acting as a Great Power, as the French ambassador in Vienna stated. István Tisza, the prime minister in Budapest, noted the weaknesses of the empire and was not so much concerned with the fate of Vienna, but with the prospect of the national movements in Central Europe affecting Hungary. This is why the skilled Hungarian politician showed, in June 1914, a moderate attitude towards the appetite Vienna and Berlin had for war, being worried about a possible Romanian inroad in Transylvania. In the end, he subscribed to the decision of starting the war, thinking about strengthening the Hungarian power within the empire, and the public opinion of that time actually saw him as one of the main architects of the war.[13] Among the Romanians, István Tisza was perceived as the strongman of the empire, while Take Ionescu saw in the Budapest dignitary the agent that led Europe to an unprecedented carnage only so that "Magyarism might triumph."[14] This notion of the contribution and the responsibility of István Tisza, of the political elite in Budapest, for the outbreak of the First World War was quite widespread in the West as well. In an extensive postwar foreign policy treatise, the author noted Tisza's desire that Austria-Hungary should attack Serbia in order to solve the border issues in Southeast Europe in favor of the empire. The fervor of the Budapest leader was noticed even by the Emperor Franz Joseph, who acknowledged Tisza's involvement in "lighting the fire in the Balkans."[15] And Count Ottokar Czernin, Vienna's representative in Bucharest at the time of the conflict and the future foreign minister of Austria-Hungary, told Romanian officials how he saw the outcome of the war: "If we are victorious, we shall suppress Roumania. If we are beaten, Austria-Hungary will cease to exist."[16] Thus, the feigned innocence of the Hungarian political elite at the end of the war was

rather a self-preservation action amid a deluge of economic, social and political changes that were foreseen in Budapest as well. Hence, the utterly embarrassing performance of Count Albert Apponyi at the Peace Conference during the first half of 1920, when he tried to prove to the world leaders that he represented a civilized nation, while the nations of the ex-Austro-Hungarian Empire that claimed self-determination were inferior and unworthy of the designs proposed by the West.

Among the important transformations expected in Central Europe at the end of the war there was also the progress of democracy, which represented the way of the future, while theocracy was being repudiated as a thing of the past.[17] The oppressed nations of the Habsburg and the Russian Empires went for the establishment of their own nation states or joined other already existing nation states. This is how new states were built, such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, etc., or populations and territories with similar ethnic and historical characteristics were incorporated into states such as Romania. The establishment of the new nation states required, mainly, a special political and organizational effort. Even Austria, who found it difficult to discover a national identity in the Austrian constituency, managed to make its state a viable one, although the first postwar years brought about increased skepticism. Hungary was recognized by Emperor Charles I as an independent state at the end of 1918, this being a further proof that the Hungarian state did not exist at that time. But Budapest's political leaders refused to look towards the future, to build a nation state based on the concept of democracy, and preferred a return into a mythological past (even Horthy's entry into the Hungarian cities in 1919 was associated with Árpád's conquest). This way, the Hungarian political and intellectual elite prolonged the national identity crisis and refused to accept a projection of the future that would bring democratic substance to the new Hungarian state.[18] It is to this end that the entire internal and external political activity of Budapest was orchestrated even before the end of the conflagration and continued with increasing intensity during and after the Peace Conference. As long as Hungary was treated as a defeated state by the Peace Conference, it was obvious that the image of "conquerors" maintained by the postwar Hungarian propaganda only had a mythological substance. This is why nationalism and revisionism became keywords within the Hungarian nobility and military circles even before the Hungarian delegation left for Paris.[19] Even the Bolshevik adventure of 1919 was rather an attempt to blackmail the West with the threat of Soviet Russia, although the anarchy in the Hungarian territory allowed for this game to maintain the state of conflict in the area even longer and to give the Hungarian political elite another argument for invoking the danger lurking in the neighboring states. A careful observer of the region, R. V. Burks, even noted that this kind of tactic was adopted by the

Hungarian elite at the end of the Second World War as well. As the interests of Hungarian irredentism were paramount, an alliance with the Hungarian nationalists, even with the communists, proved to be a lasting possibility.[20] The option for an alliance with Nazism and fascism also proved viable. The same holds true today, with the illiberal system that Viktor Orbán proclaimed, not by accident, from Transylvania, and not from Budapest.

The choice of the postwar Hungarian political elite to put Miklós Horthy at the helm of Hungary was a clear message in favor of restoration. This choice was both politically and socially motivated. The ultra-conservative aristocracy, promoting its own interests under the guise of the Christian religious doctrine, exulting the tricolor flag that symbolized an aggressive nationalism and the crown of St. Stephen, as a metaphor for the mythologization of national history, was essential to both. In addition to this, there was also the trauma of the Treaty of Trianon, which inoculated the feeling of victimization and transferred the responsibility for the domestic political failures to foreigners. And the actions taken after 2012 by the Viktor Orbán government, to once again cast blame on the Treaty of Trianon, were accompanied by the overt rehabilitation of the personality and deeds of Horthy and his camarilla, by the propagation of the same political doctrine that had been dominant throughout the interwar period. This is today's headline of the extremist organizations in Hungary, with visible manifestations in the government political circles as well.

A particularity of the Peace Conference in 1919–1920, something that had never happened before, was the involvement of experts in the negotiation and decision-making process. An explanation for this procedure could be the fact that the peace arrangements concerned the entire international system, and not even the leaders of the Great Powers could master the full complexity of the global interdependencies, even when dealing with a clear-cut topic (the situation generated by the Banat issue became anecdotal in this regard, as Georges Clemenceau had to ask Minister Stephen Pichon for details because for him it was more difficult to find the former Habsburg province on the map than to put his finger on Mosul).[21] Even the Hungarian delegation to the Peace Conference was accompanied by a relatively large number of experts, led by Count Pál Teleki. In recent years, the quality and objectivity of this expertise has been fervently disputed. Not to mention that, at times, the work of those experts was rejected on account of false conclusions about the subsequent evolution of the local, regional and international events. It is not by chance that the tone of the recent debates is set by the "geopolitical science" of the East and its Western connections.[22] Also, in some recent works it is considered, echoing the position of the Hungarian elite in 1920, that only the Hungarian expertise tells the truth about the Hungarian affair. Other accounts, mainly French and British,[23]

are also questionable, seemingly trying to revive the Hungarian issue from the end of the First World War. And all this without the slightest historiographical and documentary support! Nonetheless, even the revisionist works of the last two decades have to recognize that the territorial settlements of the Treaty of Trianon proved to be the most resilient in time.[24] Even the experts who contributed to the drawing up of the postwar treaties following the Second World War agreed that no other option could have proven more viable for Hungary's borders.[25] In a very interesting work devoted to Hungary's borders in the 20th century, the historian Frank N. Schubert noted that the Treaty of Trianon was a favorite topic of Budapest, which maintained a state of conflict in Central Europe that did quite a lot of harm to the Hungarian people as well. While visiting Hungary after 1989, and for a more extensive stay after 2000, Schubert saw an intensification of the public discussions about Hungarians identifying themselves with the pre-Trianon space. He therefore predicted that this would become a persistent topic in the 21st century.[26] The same author pointed out that such concerns could reinforce the "nativist hyper-nationalist" movement that will lead to racism and xenophobia in Hungary, as well as to tense relations with the neighboring states.

Racial theories and social Darwinism did not appear in Hungary only at the end of the First World War. The Hungarian nobility thought themselves superior even to the Viennese aristocracy. At times, even the imperial family was considered inferior to some circles in Budapest. As the historian Marius Turda demonstrates, the postwar atmosphere favored the intensification of Hungarian nationalism. Attitudes of racial superiority became even more frequent in the process of redefining the ethnic identity of the Hungarians, with clear references to moral traits that did not find their place in the construction of the new world.[27] After 1867 it had become clear that the Hungarian aristocracy wanted to dominate more than just the empire's nations, although the Hungarians were not a majority even in the territory entrusted to them by the Court in Vienna. Their penchant for dominance was expressed at the Peace Conference (1920) by Count Apponyi, in the name of the Hungarian racial superiority. It was presented in the same manner during the "white terror" (1919–1920), when the nobility's reactionary units mobilized in order to "recapture the country" from the hands of Jews and foreigners. Starting to rebuild the country with such a dominant mentality, the same aristocracy found it difficult to accept that the Hungarians might become a minority in the neighboring states. Hence, the considerable revisionist reaction towards the Treaty of Trianon, combined with the territorial and financial aspects.

Even today, the revisionist historians consider that the principle of national self-determination was a mistake and the failure of the Versailles System was

caused by the insistence on creating nation states in Central Europe, entities that continued to have national minorities. However, the only solution was to recognize that the new state entities needed to incorporate a certain number of minorities.[28] Even the Powers that devised the territorial reconfigurations after the First World War knew that the self-determination principle could not be mechanically imposed. For this reason, along with other sensitivities and interests, they proposed a Minority Treaty that would bring solutions through the legal framework of the League of Nations. It is also indisputable that the situation of minorities in the Central European area was better than the one before the 1918. Even post–1920 Hungary became a national state with a remarkable ethnic homogeneity.[29] When Viktor Orbán was preparing to offer Hungarian citizenship to the Hungarians living in the neighboring states, an impressive volume (859 pages) on the issue of the Hungarian minority in the 20th century, written in English, was published in a well-known collection in Boulder, Colorado, under the patronage of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.[30] The main narrative was, of course, revisionist, recalling the illegal dismemberment of Hungary and the conspiracy theories that, reportedly, were at the basis of the arrangements in the Treaty of Trianon. The solution demanded even since the 1920 was the restoration of the pre–1918 status. Another topic related to the Hungarian minorities was that of their compliance with the post-Trianon situation and of the actions that influenced their development in the new social and cultural space. Without going into any further details, we will just note that the subject of the minorities was also raised by Budapest when demanding a revision of the Treaty of Trianon. Also, the situation of the Hungarian minorities from the neighboring states was repeatedly exaggerated, in order to enhance the feeling of trauma within the Hungarian nation, but also to generate internal disturbances within the already mentioned Central European states. Today, the subject of the Hungarian minorities, overshadowed as well by Trianon, plays a clear electoral role for the governing party and for other radical groups in Hungary. In the meantime, in some Hungarian political circles, questions about the legitimacy of the Budapest government are being raised.

We can agree with Margaret MacMillan that there are many similarities between the world of today and that of 100 years ago.[31] While analyzing the lessons learnt by the Europeans from the Great War, François Cochet considers that the loss of human life amongst the belligerents was the most traumatic. We believe that these sufferings were forgotten after only a decade. Proof to this is the fact that not more than two decades later the Europeans were capable of starting a new global conflagration that was even more catastrophic (we apologize for the comparison!) than the previous one. We can thus subscribe to the view stating that at the end of the First World War humankind had to

overcome many other "massive, polymorphic and deep"[32] traumas. The same applies to Hungary and the Treaty of Trianon, perceived by the Hungarian leaders of the time and those who came after 1989 as a "national catastrophe" and incorporated into the national identity.[33] This is also because the Hungarian political leaders lacked the political culture of the modern state. Alfred Fouillée indicated, immediately after the end of the war, how important it was for the new and old states to follow the path of reason and common sense in the construction or reconstruction of states.[34] However, this was not an option for the leaders in Budapest, who proposed and supported their own mythology about the state, with many elements of irrationality that precluded a rational contract between the citizen and the state. And, at the height of this perversion of reason, in order to support a state mythology that was difficult to validate through the doctrine of St. Stephen's Crown, political leaders and many Hungarian intellectuals accused the new nation-states in the area of transforming their national history into a myth. This was nothing more than the continuation of the actions of Budapest from the 19th century, meant to reject the national idea as a major factor of change in Europe, Central and Southeastern Europe included. A proof of the fact that they did not understand this is the persistent tension displayed after 1989, when they interpreted the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia as an opportunity for Hungary to escape the "Trianon dictatorship," and not as an extension of the same national idea that favored the creation of national states in the area at the end of the First World War. Hyperbolizing their own image in history, the Hungarians developed, as James Traub writes in *Foreign Policy*, a "Trianon syndrome" that almost borders on the pathological.[35] However, in this case as well we are ultimately dealing with the guilt complex of some political leaders who pursue only the principle of power, and not those of justice/legality and democracy. In a few years, when the Hungarians celebrate the 500th anniversary of another historical trauma, namely the Battle of Mohács (1526), they will probably have the strength to recognize that this was the end of the medieval Hungarian state which was never revived. The "millenary" celebrations of the late 19th century were only an expression of the frustration that the Habsburgs did not recognize the Hungarian statehood either. A Hungarian state reappeared only in the context of the reconfiguration of Central Europe at the end of the First World War. And the Treaty of Trianon was the international legal document that brought the new Hungarian state back into history. Ironically, even before the treaty was signed (4 June 1920), the political elite in Budapest, led by Horthy, repudiated that same legal act, maintaining the Arpadian delusion. Not even the painful experience of the Second World War brought to justice the Hungarian political elite, even if it had to humiliate itself for this before the most dangerous dictators.

E VEN IF not very many people are acquainted with the content of the Treaty of Trianon, Budapest wanted to make public worldwide, as much as possible, the topic of "Trianon 100." Attempts were also made to transmit the emotions of this political and propaganda program into the Romanian media.[36] Nonetheless, besides the persuasive message that came from the Hungarian press to the Hungarian readers, the Romanian media began to wonder more about the effects of the Treaty of Trianon on Romanians. In the context of the celebration of the Centenary of the Great Union of 1918, when the Romanian leaders and political parties did everything to praise the generation that built Greater Romania, the discussion on Trianon overshadowed the political narrative that only considered the role of the internal political action in the historical events that made possible the union between nation and state. An explanation was owed to the Romanian public, concerning the military and diplomatic action that was taken in defense of the internal actions of the union, as well as the importance of the international legal recognition of Romania's frontiers after 1918. Beyond the alarmist tone of the political and historiographical discourse in Hungary, the Romanian public opinion was notified on the political and cultural significance of the respective treaty for our country. We must highlight here the silence of the Romanian historiography on the subject of Trianon, because most historians did not want to get involved, not even in a scientific debate, as this served an obvious political purpose in Hungary. Moreover, for some historians this was a sort of self-censorship deriving from the memory of the early 1990s, when those who wrote about Hungarian revisionism were either vilified or accused, in the case of those who had published before 1989, of turning national history into a myth.

The public opinion in Romania was engaged even since the beginning of 1919 in the so-called "political resistance" initiated by Prime Minister I. I. C. Brătianu. We will not discuss here how the leader in Bucharest was opposed to the setting of the Peace Conference, to the manner in which Romania and other states in the Entente were treated, to the interpretation of the self-determination principle that he did not see as being in contradiction with Wilsonianism, and also to the manner in which the interests of Romania were treated in the settlements with Germany, Austria, Hungary, etc. All these subjects have been treated by Romanian historians, but also by renowned historiographers such as Keith Hitchins[37] and Sherman David Spector,[38] to which we can add a rich scientific bibliography on the interwar period. The manner in which the Great Powers solved the territorial issue of the Banat area also made Romania protest against the Treaty of Trianon.[39] This topic, but also others such as the war reparations, the treatment of the minorities, etc. generated political and histo-

riographical controversies in the interwar period, the dissatisfaction with the solutions proposed by the Allies for Central and Southeast Europe being repeatedly highlighted. For example, the diplomat Frederic C. Nanu pointed out that the disagreements between the Supreme Council and Romania's representatives intensified as the Bolshevik threat kept growing around the latter, and the Great Powers were incapable to find military resources of their own and send them to the new conflict areas—either Bessarabia or Transylvania—, and could also not come to an agreement on the new Hungarian regime. During this period, the Romanians in Transylvania were exposed to the aggressions of Béla Kun's groups, although in Alba Iulia (1 December 1918) they had decided in favor of self-determination and of the union with the Romanian Old Kingdom.[40] Nonetheless, both the Romanian government and the public opinion considered that once the Peace Conference had adopted a set of treaties, the attitude of the Romanian state should have observed the *pacta sunt servanda* principle. E. H. Carr, a renowned advocate of realism in international politics, considered that the principle of the sanctity of treaties was a sign of civilization that structured the international society through its respect for the international law. Besides the aspect of power within the system, it also featured a moral dimension.[41] This meant that any change in the treaties had to be peaceful, in order to maintain a balance in terms of power relations. Romania pursued this kind of foreign policy until the second half of the 1930s, when the revisionist states had already broken the balance of power, given the appeasement policy of the Great Powers that had to be guarantors of the Versailles system.

After the 1920s, but especially between 1938–1941 and 1944–1945, Budapest established a true cult of vengeance in the territories that were given to it by Nazi Germany or entrusted for temporary administration purposes by the Red Army. The borders of the communist states became part of a new imperial order, this time led from Moscow. A line of defense for the East against the West was built, but a wall was also erected in order to prevent the citizens from traveling between the different communist states.[42] The historical changes of 1989 restructured in singular fashion the system of European borders. The Central European states started a process of cooperation, including through the Visegrád Group, and proposed the elimination of territorial disputes that would help them accede to NATO, the EU and the Schengen Area. In 2004, when Hungary joined the EU, it accepted certain standards, including the ones related to border management, visas, data protection, etc. This was followed by the implementation of the Schengen acquis and it was believed that the divergent point of view related to the Treaty of Trianon would disappear. But, as it was seen in the case of the Slovak-Hungarian borders, the claims persist, and the Slovak side incriminated what was called the continuation of Hungarian irredentism.[43] In

post-communist Hungary, transforming the public history and memory into a political subject was an opportunity used by the right-wing and far-right political groups to raise, even within the Schengen Area, territorial claims to the territories associated with Hungary before Trianon.[44] But even if, in the end, the Western Hungarian border had to reflect the integrated Schengen concept with Austria, Slovenia, and Slovakia, this country continued to insist, in the east and the southeast, on the connection between the Ukrainian-Hungarian, Serbian-Hungarian, Romanian-Hungarian borders and on the question of the Hungarian minorities. Hence the frequent references to the Treaty of Trianon, which led to differences in terms of political and even social and economic approaches and attitudes between Hungary and the aforementioned neighboring states.

It has become more and more obvious that Romania has been the target of the current "Trianon 100" episode initiated in Budapest. In the last decade, Hungarian leaders have traveled to Transylvania more than ever before, sending almost every time messages insulting the majority population of this province of Romania, as well as Romanian national history. Identifying a tendency towards laxity in the state institutions during the post-accession stage of Romania (thus after 2004–2007), the lack of consistent internal and foreign policy initiatives, a state of mind directed in Bucharest only towards survival, and no appetite for a developmental competition, Viktor Orbán and his supporters in Hungary and Romania kept sending contentious messages meant to give Hungarians the feeling that the humiliation suffered by Hungary after the First World War, and especially the treatment to which it was subjected by the Great Powers, in 1919–1920, had been avenged. Many Western observers have recognized the neo-Horthyst orientation embraced by Budapest also when it came to "surrounding" Romania with "landmarks" set by a Great Power that dared modify the border with a neighboring state. This is a method that Horthy also practiced between 1936 and 1940. As recent sociological studies show, this policy of Budapest generates a reaction that can turn into a boomerang both for the Hungarian population in Transylvania, but also for the Romanian citizens. This by no means reflects the spirit of the countries' membership to NATO and the EU, organizations that promote cooperation and that Hungary has overtly defied in recent years. But if Romania continues to plead for the "spiritualization of the borders" with Hungary, Budapest only wants to take advantage of this in order to ease its Trianon-related historical trauma. This way, it will waste another chance for a balanced reconstruction of the relations between the two countries and peoples, at a time when the entire Central European region needs to reset the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

And then, once the damage is done, it will be useless to cry out "Trianon, Trianon!" It is better to listen to the voice of historian D. Prodan, who, in the

last year of his life (1992), expressed his concern regarding the cultivation of an atmosphere of conflict between the Hungarians and the Romanians:

> *There is still enough room in the world for all of us to live peacefully together. We are the largest and the most homogenous people in Southeastern Europe, which makes us feel optimistic about the future. But, to pave the roade ahead, one must not mystify the past. On the contrary. Is it not much wiser to accept the verdict of history and reach an agreement?*[45]

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Notes

1. Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 141.
2. Pierre Miquel, *1918: De la grande peur à la victoire* (Paris: Tallandier, 2018), 24–30.
3. Ibid., 30.
4. Ibid., 38.
5. J. M. Roberts, ed., *Europe in the 20th Century*, vol. 2, *1914–25* (New York: Taplinger; London: Macdonald, 1971), 235.
6. Walter Greinert, ed., *Austria between Wars: Dream and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1987), 6.
7. Jean-Yves Le Naour, *1919–1921: Sortir de la guerre* (Paris: Perrin, 2010), 315–319.
8. Daniel Yergin, *La Paix saccagée: Les origines de la guerre froide et la division de l'Europe* (Paris: Complexe, 1990), 12.
9. Gustave Le Bon, *Enseignements psychologiques de la guerre européenne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1916), 2.
10. Le Naour, 313.
11. Ferguson, 184.
12. Antoine Marès and Alain Soubigou, *L'Europe centrale dans l'Europe de XXe siècle* (Paris: Ellipses, 2017), 36.
13. Ibid., 48.
14. Take Jonescu, *Some Personal Impressions*, with an introduction by Viscount Bryce, O. M. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company Publishers, 1920), 122.
15. Émile Bourgeois, *Manuel historique de politique étrangère*, vol. 4, *La politique mondiale (1878–1919): Empires et nations*, 3rd edition (Paris: Belin, 1932), 617.
16. Jonescu, 100.
17. Marès and Soubigou, 59.
18. Catherine Horel, *Amiralul Horthy, regentul Ungariei*, trans. Lia Decei (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2019), 106.
19. Ibid., 120.
20. R. V. Burks, *The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976), 158.

21. Le Naour, 492.
22. See Svetlana Suveica, "Between Science, Politics and Propaganda: Emmanuel de Martonne and the Debates on the Status of Bessarabia (1919–1920)," *Cahiers du Monde russe* 58, 4 (2017): 589–614.
23. Horel, 132–133.
24. Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War*, foreword by Richard Holbrooke (London: John Murray, 2001), 278; see also Roberts, 253.
25. Ignác Romsics, ed., *Wartime American Plans for a New Hungary: Documents form the U.S. Department of State, 1942–1944* (Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs; Highland Lakes, New Jersey: Atlantic Research and Publications; New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 45.
26. Frank N. Schubert, *Hungarian Borderlands: From the Habsburg Empire to the Axis Alliance, the Warsaw Pact, and the European Union* (London–New York: Continuum, 2011), 40. At the beginning of the 1990s, the historian D. Prodan thus voiced those opinions:

    *It was only much later that the Treaty of Trianon sanctioned the rectification of a history of peoples' subjugation, a history of **spoliation**, of appropriating another people's work for one's own benefit and to another people's detriment, by placing it in the service of one's own culture and thus damaging another people's culture. On the contrary, the treaty did them more then "justice": it allowed them to keep everything they had taken by force. Moreover, they received in the bargain the country's capital with its riches, a capital that is more than a province, everybody's creation. And now, instead of admitting that they were robbers, they are complaining that they are **deprived** of their possessions, that a spectacular historical injustice was done to them. But they were deprived of their spoils, in reality, by the final liberation for such a long time and to such an extent that now they think they are being deprived of **their** property.*

    David Prodan, *Transylvania and again Transylvania: A Historical Exposé*, 2nd edition, English version revised by Virgil Stanciu (Cluj-Napoca: Fundaţia Culturală Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 1996), 206.
27. Marius Turda, *Ideea de superioritate naţională în Imperiul Austro-Ungar (1880–1918)*, trans. Attila Varga, foreword by Sorin Mitu (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2016), 160.
28. Ferguson, 164.
29. Le Naour, 318.
30. See Nándor Bárdi, Csilla Fedinec, and László Szarka, eds., *Minority Hungarian Communities in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Brian McLean (Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs; Highland Lakes, New Jersey: Atlantic Research and Publications; New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
31. MacMillan, 3.
32. François Cochet, *Idées reçues sur la Première Guerre mondiale*, 3rd edition, rev. and enl. (Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu, 2018), 139.
33. Le Naour, 320.

34. Alfred Fouillée, *La Science sociale contemporaine*, 6th edition (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1922), 17–18.
35. James Traub, "Hungary's 500-Year-Old Victim Complex," *Foreign Policy*, 28 October 2015.
36. See *Dilema veche* (Bucharest) 717, 16–22 November 2017.
37. Keith Hitchins, *Ion I. C. Brătianu: Romania* (London: Haus Publishing, 2011).
38. Sherman David Spector, *Romania at the Paris Peace Conference: A Study of the Diplomacy of Ioan I. C. Brătianu* (Iaşi: The Romanian Cultural Foundation, The Center for Romanian Studies, 1995).
39. Bourgeois, 757.
40. Frederic C. Nanu, *Politica externă a României 1919–1933* , trans. Liliana Roşca and Emanuela Ungureanu, eds. V. Fl. Dobrinescu and Ion Pătroiu (Iaşi: Institutul European, 1993), 71.
41. Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 222–223.
42. Schubert, 51.
43. Ibid., 133–134.
44. Ibid., 145.
45. Prodan, 9.

Abstract
The Treaty of Trianon: History and Politics

The history of European and international relations after the First World War presents us with governmental, partisan, and even individual behaviors that since the end of the conflagration have sought to prolong the state of conflict, to deepen the traumatic feelings of citizens or political groups, to generate radical political, nationalist, xenophobic, racist movements, etc. The political elite of Hungary also behaved in this fashion, as a manifestation of a vindictive spirit, prolonging the national identity crisis and refusing to accept a projection of the future that would bring democratic substance to the new Hungarian state. The actions taken after 2012 by the Viktor Orbán government, to once again cast blame on the Treaty of Trianon, were accompanied by the overt rehabilitation of the personality and deeds of Horthy and his camarilla, by the propagation of the same political doctrine that had been dominant throughout the interwar period.

Keywords
Paris Peace Conference, Treaty of Trianon, revisionism, Hungary, Transylvania