

# THE TREATY OF TRIANON

*A Hungarian dilemma  
becomes a vital issue*

## **THE TREATY OF TRIANON**

*A HUNGARIAN DILEMMA  
BECOMES A VITAL ISSUE*

(1990)

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

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

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

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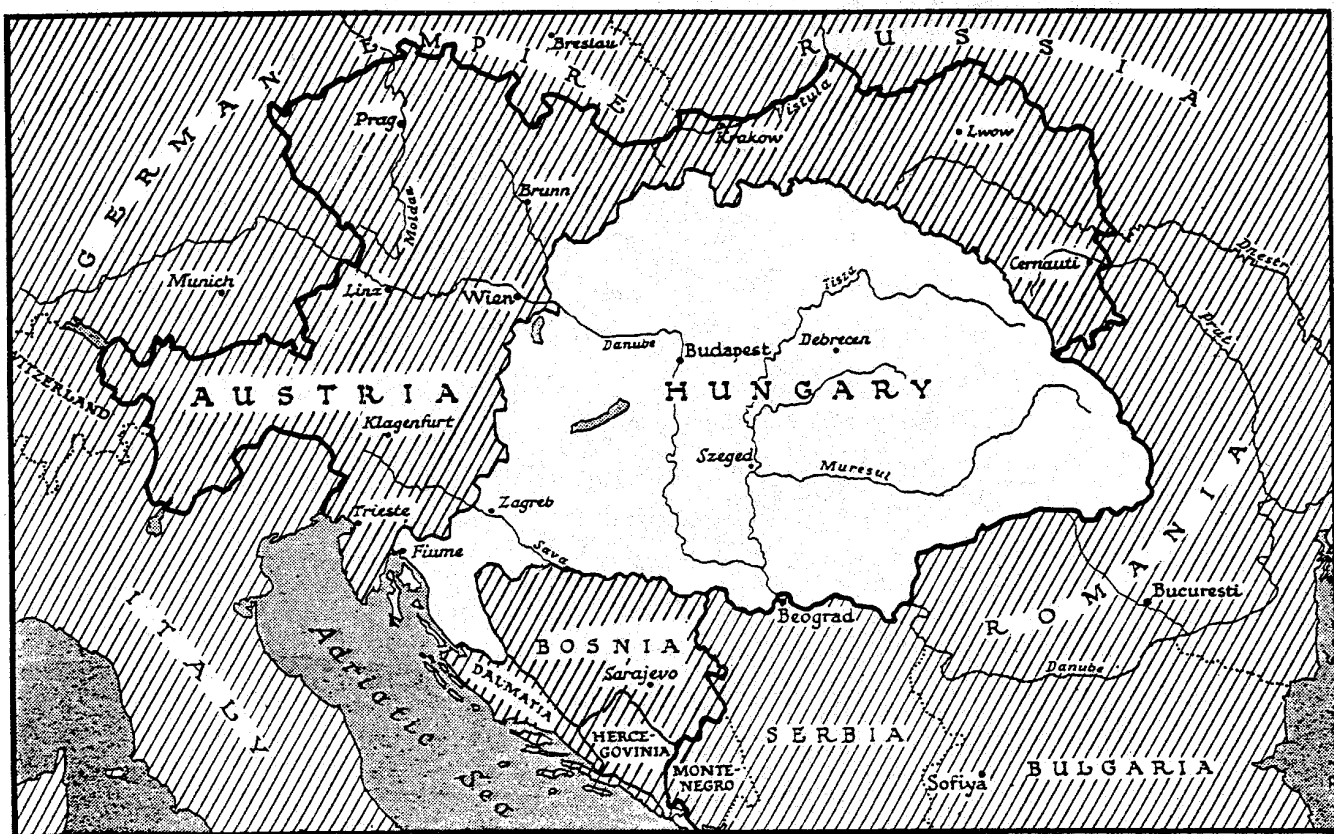
## Peace out of guns

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

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

## A twenty million minority

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



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



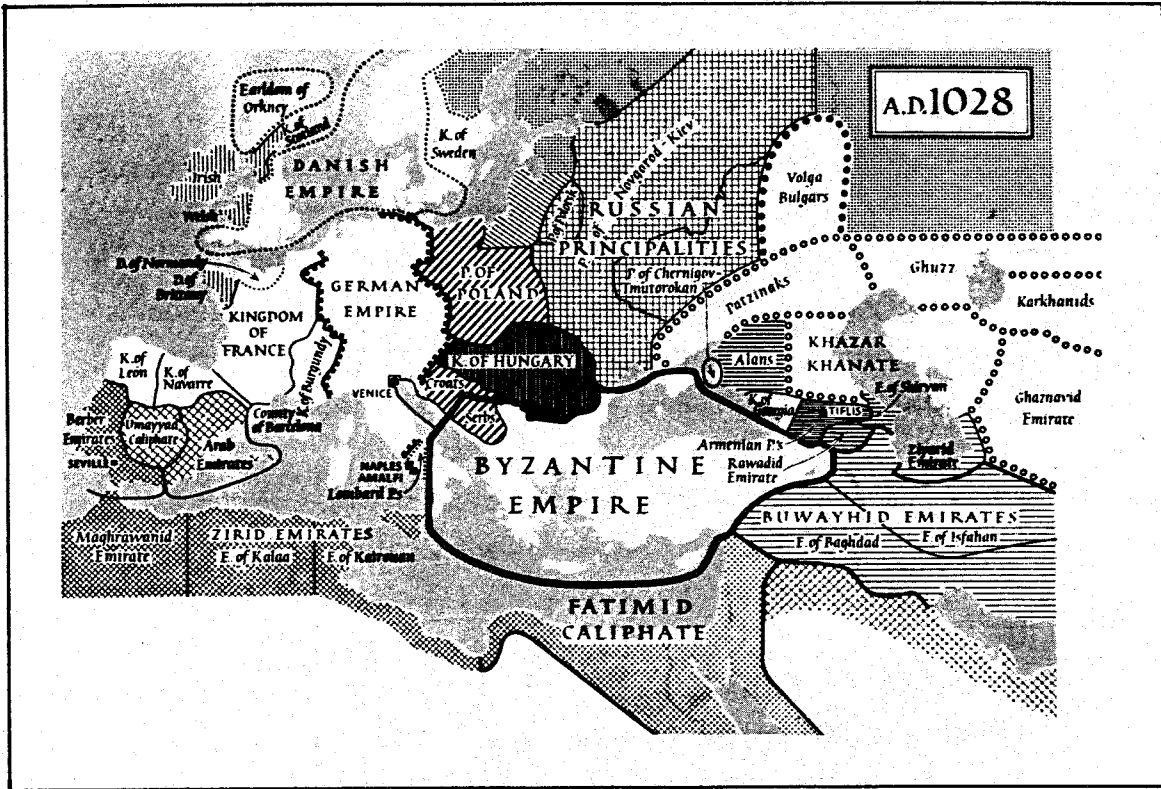
in changing the current borders. That solution is denied Hungary and we in this booklet would like to try to transcend it, because we accept that any kind of border change serves some interests and violates others. Presumably, in international politics it is simpler and more congenial to maintain the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

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

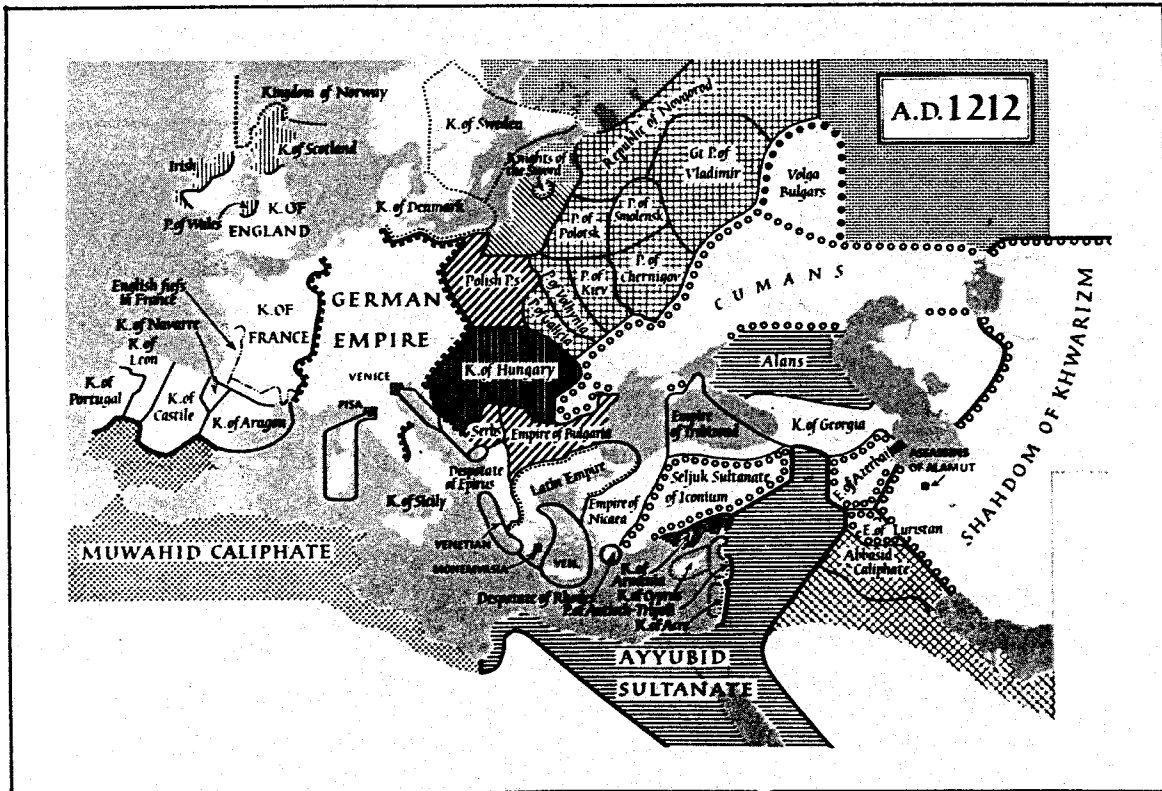
## War is not the right source of peace

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

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



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



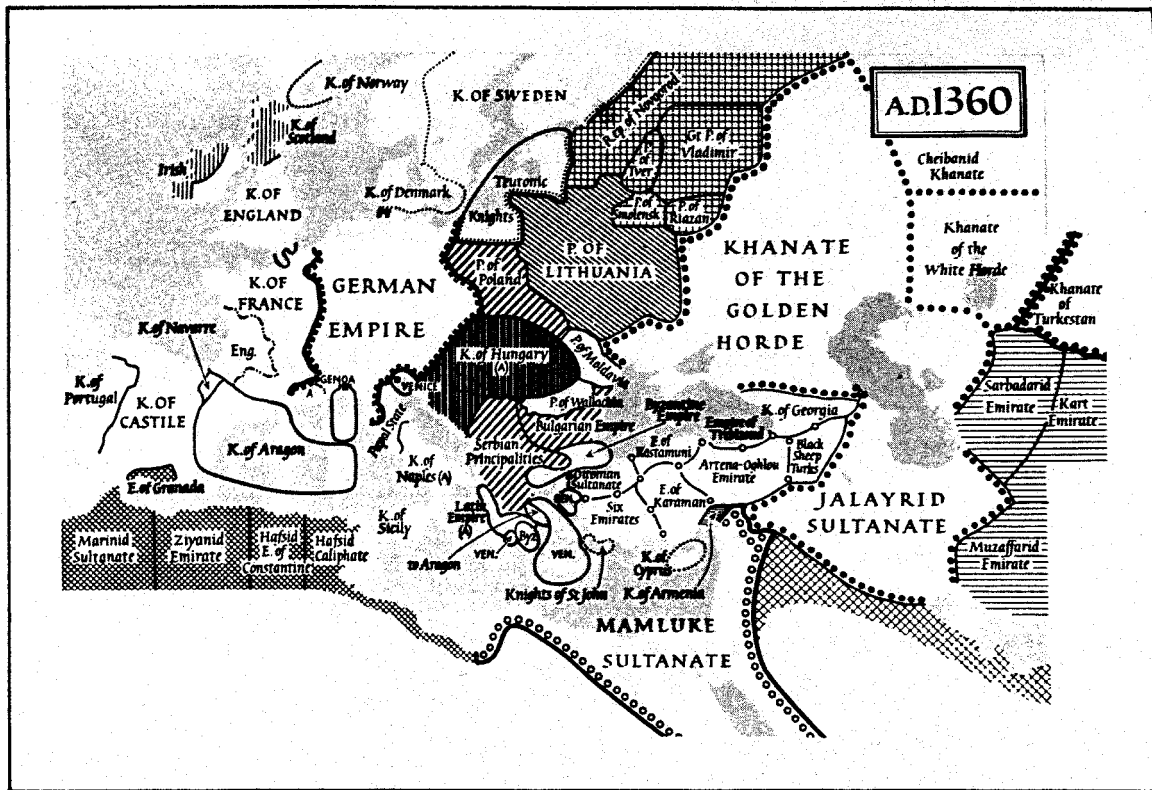
In the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the Kingdom of Hungary became an important power in Europe.  
 (Source: McElvedy 1961 Penguin Atlas of Medieval Europe)

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

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

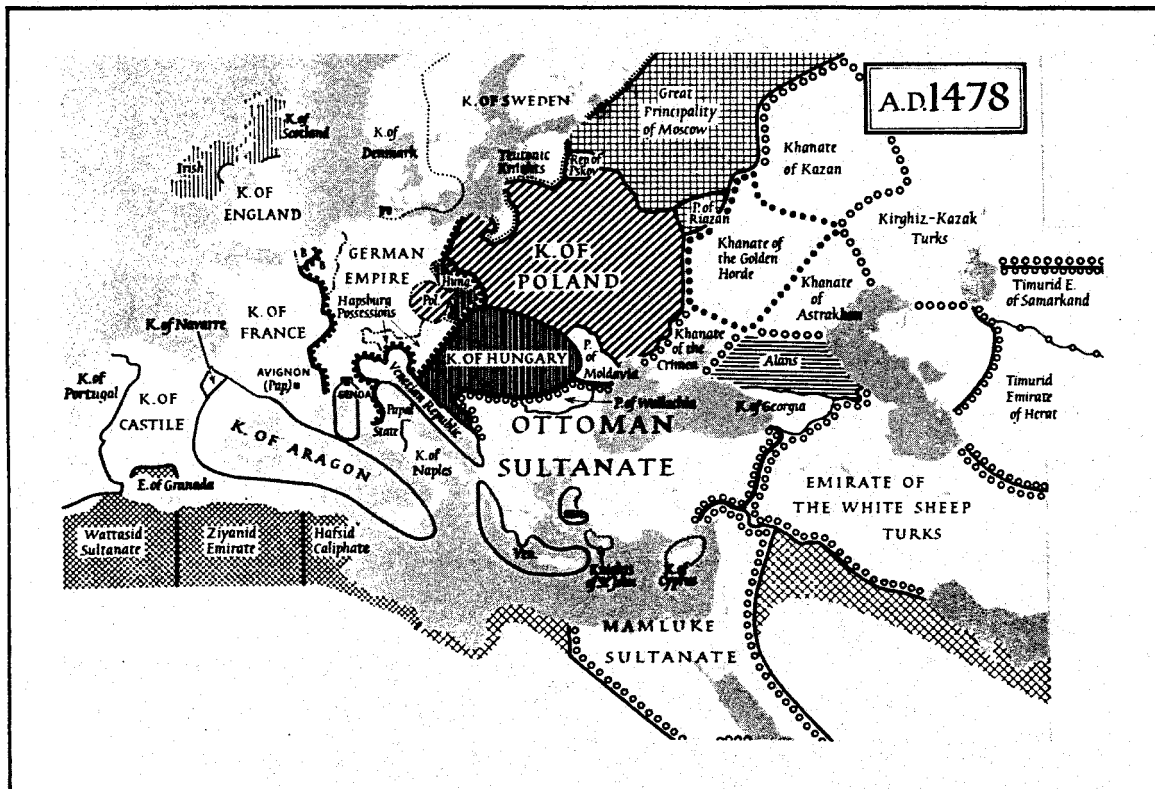
## The fate of minorities as an index of democracy

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



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

( Source: McElvedy 1961 Penguin Atlas of Medieval Europe )



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

( Source: McElvedy 1961 Penguin Atlas of Medieval Europe )