

PEACE TO END PEACE

*The Trianon Peace Treaty
in quotations*

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THE TREATY OF TRIANON IN QUOTATIONS

(1995)

The British ratification of the Peace Treaty revisited

Warnings and Predictions by Viscount Rothermere

The origin of Hungary's multinational ideals

Quotation assembled by Yves de Daruvar

Personal convictions of John Flourney Montgomery

Clémenceau:

"The peace treaties are yet another means to continue war."

Bratianu

Prime Minister of Rumania in the Rumanian Parliament on 1st July, 1920:

"We cannot rest until we totally ruin the Hungarian people economically and militarily because while there is even a spark of vitality left in Hungary, we cannot feel secure."

Viscount Rothermere:

"The new boundaries had no justification, whether ethnographic, geographic or economic. They set up in Central Europe a permanent condition of inconvenience, friction and discontent which, if it is not remedied, must inevitably lead to another war."

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu:

"There was a saying at the beginning of the War that it was a war to end war. I think so far as the Central Empires are concerned, if I may parody that saying, that this is a peace to end peace."

Compiled by

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**THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATIONS
IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

Introduction

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 75 years ago, on the 4th June, 1920, when Hungary, under duress, signed the Treaty of Trianon (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.

At the time of the peace settlement the treatment meted out to Hungary was justified on the following grounds: **first**, that the idea of self-determination of all nations had to be adhered to; **second**, that the nation states established in place of the Habsburg Empire had to be economically viable; **third**, that boundaries in that part of Europe had to be militarily defensible **and lastly**, that the future stability of the area had to be assured as far as possible.

It seems, however, that the peacemakers used these principles only when they worked to the disadvantage of Hungary.

The doctrine of the self-determination of nations was only applied to make sure that as few non-Magyars were left to Hungary as possible. Many important regions were taken away from Hungary to assure the economic viability of the successor states, while no one cared if these losses permanently disrupted the Hungarian economy. Strategically defensible borders were drawn only where their establishment served as a justification for detaching additional Magyar populated regions from the country. The argument for the need to assure future stability in East Central Europe was adhered to only when it resulted in the further weakening and disarming of Hungary. At the same time the prospect of internal peace within the successor states was dangerously prejudiced by the inclusion of large Magyar and other minorities in each of them.

The Peace Treaty was imposed on the Hungarian people under conditions which, in fact, meant the continuation of the state of war. Indeed, as Clémenceau put it, "...*another means* to continue war". However, this type of war differed from the one the Peace Treaty terminated. For Hungary, the war ended with unconditional surrender. Then the second stage of war began by "*another means*". This second stage has been in force for 75 years with some variations. One third of the Hungarian nation lives almost as prisoners of war on their land of birth, which the successor states received as spoils of war, and they treat them accordingly. In order to perpetuate the splendid historical experience they regard the liquidation of their Hungarian minority populations as a patriotic commitment.

The quotations given in the following pages are only a small part of all that is available concerning this very unusual peace treaty. However, these quotations fully reveal the sort of settlement the Treaty of Trianon is, following which there can be no reconciliation even after 75 years.

The Hungarian Question in the British Parliament

Extracts from a book with the same title
published by Grant Richards, London in 1933.

In the Introduction

Roland E. L. Vaughan Williams K. C. writes:

This collection of speeches made in the House of Lords and the House of Commons at various times between 1919 and 1930 concerning Hungary has been delivered, and was published, with the object of helping public opinion to come to a just conclusion as to the Treaty of Trianon and its consequences.

No one will to-day seriously deny that the Treaty of Trianon violated the principle of self-determination. Three and a half million Hungarians were left outside Treaty Hungary, forming in several instances solid "blocks" immediately adjoining the new frontier. In recent years the principle of self-determination has fallen into some discredit, but it was the principle which the Allies invoked during the war and on which the peace treaties were avowedly based. It was applied rigorously whenever it told against Hungary, but subordinated to other considerations whenever it told inconveniently in favour of Hungary. Can it be said that the course actually taken has created a satisfactory state of things?

As a palliative to this violation of the doctrine of self-determination, the Minority Treaties were insisted on by the Great Powers at the Peace Conference. They were a condition of the transfer of territory to the Succession States. In the case of the territories detached from Hungary the racial "minorities" included not only Magyars but also Saxons and Swabians. All these races are today united in protesting that the Minority Treaties have failed to secure for them elementary justice.

I do not think any fair-minded person who has gone at all into the merits of the question will today deny that some **revision** of the Trianon Treaty is **imperative**, not only in the interest of peace and justice but also for the safety of Europe.

Viscount Bryce, House of Lords, December 16th, 1919:

The Paris Conference has been unfortunate in endeavouring to keep secret its proceedings from the peoples of the Allied countries. Had they been known, protests would have been heard from the peoples of at least some of the Allied countries, because some of the decisions which have been arrived at by the Paris Conference are likely to have unfortunate results.

There is a district in Eastern Transylvania, which I visited many years ago, inhabited by a branch of the Hungarian nation who have been established there more than a thousand years.

They are very simple, honest, mountain folk, living all by themselves, and having no Rumanian mixture. To take these people and subject them to the Rumanians, who are alien in religion, language and race, would be a grave injustice. I desire and hope that whenever the boundaries come to be limited the case of these particular Magyars will be carefully provided for, and that they will not be put under the Rumanian dominion. I have already observed that the Magyar population has reached a higher level than that of the Rumanian. The civilization of the Rumanian people and of Rumania is on a distinctly lower level than that of the civilization of the Magyars in Hungary, and therefore it would be a "come-down" for the population of Hungary to be ruled by those who would come as officials from a less educated and less advanced country such as Rumania.

I do not believe that if a large population is taken away from Hungary and placed under the Rumanian Government that the Hungarians would tamely acquiesce in it. ...

**Lord Newton, House of Lords,
February 25th, 1920:**

I cannot refrain from pointing out that in some respects Hungary seems to have suffered more than any other country that participated in the War. It is proposed by the Treaty to diminish her territory by two-thirds; it is proposed to take away most of the big towns; the population will be reduced from something between 17 millions and 18 millions to little more than 7 millions. Hungary will lose nearly all its minerals and its ores, more than half its corn- and maize-producing districts; it will lose a great portion of the horse- and cattle-breeding districts; and worse than all, between 3 millions and 4 millions genuine Hungarian Magyars will be transferred to alien countries without having any chance whatever of pronouncing an opinion on the subject. I venture to think that of all the belligerents against whom we contended, Hungary is the one which should make the greatest appeal to our sympathy. Hungary never wanted war. ...

**Captain Elliot, House of Commons,
March 25th, 1920:**

These new boundaries which are being set up cannot stand, and in many cases they should not be allowed to stand. The only hope is that in this Treaty we have set up what no Treaty has had before — a permanent court of revision by which these things can be discussed in prudence and not in passion, in the cold light of reason and not in the light of burning roofs and burning stack-yards. The mere boundaries of Hungary are impossible. They are ridiculous. No such boundary has ever been seen in the world. ...

The Rumanian frontier includes a Magyar community which is planted right in the frontier of Hungary, a sort of Hungarian Ulster, and if you realise what would happen if you put Ulster under the rest of Ireland just now you would have a faint conception of what is happening in this community where you have a similar number of people put under a rule alien in religion and in culture. ...

**Lord Newton, House of Lords
March 30th, 1920:**

What has become of the question of so-called self-determination? Why should millions of civilised human beings be handed over like so many sheep or cattle without being allowed to express any opinion at all. Why should these people not be allowed a plebiscite as has been allowed in other cases?... But what makes the position almost intolerable for these unfortunate people is that they are surrounded by a ring of hostile States.

**Lord Montagu of Beaulieu,
House of Lords, March 30th, 1920:**

It was brought home to me very much that the old Austria-Hungary was a state of mixed and sometimes antagonistic races, but it had at any rate an economic unity. Now the four countries into which it has been divided have their own national flags and a new autonomy, whereas under the old system they were all one.

There was a saying at the beginning of the War that it was a *war to end war*. I think so far as the Central Empires are concerned, if I may parody that saying, that this is a *peace to end peace*. ...

**Lord Sydenham, House of Lords,
March 7th, 1921:**

My Lords, I agree with every word which has been uttered by the noble Lord (Newton). I regard the case of Hungary as one of several great tragedies of the Peace, the effects of which will endure when the War tragedies have passed away. After a territorial unity of, I think, nearly a thousand years Hungary has been suddenly deprived of two-thirds of her area, and outside that new Hungary is some of the best blood of Hungary, distributed arbitrarily among one new State and two States newly enlarged. I am certain that this people will never permanently submit to the alien rule under which they have been placed. It was stated, I think, by the Government that there would be a Commission of Inquiry which would delimitate finally the frontiers, and which would take into consideration racial distinctions. I do not know whether that has been done, but I feel certain that the map of Europe cannot possibly remain permanently as it now stands.

The Peace Conference seems only to have taken into account the economic necessities of the countries which it carved out of the map of Europe. Hungary is not only cut off from many of her finest sons, but deprived of territory necessary to her existence, and of some great railway centres which I believe to be her right. But that is not all that Hungary has suffered. As the noble Lord has pointed out, from March 21st to August 1st, 1919, Hungary was subjected to a most appalling Red Terror carried out by Bela Kun and his brother alikes. The outrages they committed, faithfully imitating their confederates in Russia, were shocking to the last degree; and the curious thing is, that we heard nothing of the Red Terror. But as soon as there was a revolt of Hungarians against these shocking atrocities, Europe and America were treated to a strong propaganda directed against the so-called White Terror. And that is why Hungary is friendless. I trace it entirely to the

very powerful and very expensive propaganda which was carried on. ...

Then followed the irruption of the Rumanians into Hungary. When they retired they carried off pretty nearly everything upon which they could lay their hands, and left a great many Hungarian farms absolutely devastated. ...

**Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy,
House of Commons, April 20th, 1921:**

If the framers of this Peace Treaty are so satisfied with its boundaries, it seems to me to be a very great mistake that they did not agree to adopt the plebiscite for its determination. If it is right to hold a plebiscite for Schleswig-Holstein or for the determination of the frontiers of Upper Silesia, it is equally right to hold one for the frontiers of Hungary.

I wish to point out to the House that this Peace Treaty which we are asked to pass this afternoon creates some half-dozen Alsace-Lorraines on the frontiers of Hungary, if the information we get is correct. If it is incorrect it could have been proved by a plebiscite, and I say one should have been held.

I wish particularly to draw the attention of hon. Members to one or two of the areas where real injustice has been done, and may I in doing so say that I share my hon. and gallant Friend's indignation at the action of the present Hungarian Government? All my sympathies are with the subject races emancipated from the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. But in drawing the frontiers we must not allow our prejudices and our sentiments, our likes for this people, our sympathy for that people or our dislike of other people to in any way mould our actions in laying down these new frontiers. I will first draw the attention of hon. Members to the case of the district of Pressburg (as Bratislava became capital of Slovakia) on the Danube and of Érsekújvár. This, as hon. Members may be aware, is territory predominantly inhabited by Magyars. It has been handed over to the new Czecho-Slovak State in order that it should have a riparian frontier on the Danube... I trust, too, that this historic State of Pressburg, with its normal Magyar population and old associations with Hungary, will not be handed over to alien rule. ...

There is another very bad irredenta in the Kassa—part of the northern frontier, partly composed of Magyars and partially of Slovaks. There is a solid block of 300,000 or 400,000 Magyars with a little interspersion of other races, who are mostly German. I think the Slovak frontier has been drawn too much in favour of the Czecho-Slovakian States, and I contend that a plebiscite should have been taken there. ...

The hon. Gentleman did admit that there seemed to be hardship to the Szeklers (Transylvanian Hungarians) in this matter. There you have an island with a Magyar population which has been incorporated in Rumania. I admit that the difficulties there are very great. There seem to me, however, to have been two alternatives which might have been followed. One was to run a corridor from Kolozsvár area and the other was to allow the Szeklers to remain in the Hungarian Kingdom. I admit there would have been great economic difficulties in doing that, but I think it would have been better if these unfortunate Szeklers could have been given autonomy. As my hon. and gallant Friend said, these unfortunate people have

been most harshly treated by the Rumanians. The University of Kolozsvár has been closed up, the professors driven away, and the students dispersed. ...

I think that a much larger measure of *autonomy* might have been given to the Magyar-inhabited regions in Transylvania. The district of Szatmár has been handed over, although I believe it is preeminantly Hungarian.

I do not want to spend any more time on these irredentas, except that I think a real case has been made out for a plebiscite. If a plebiscite is not taken, the Magyar people will always be discontented, and many thousands of people—I have seen the figure put at 3 million Magyars—will be groaning under the sense of injustice at being bartered away like so many cattle to alien rulers. ...

There is one further objection which I must take to the Treaty in justifying my vote against it. To realise these facts fully it is necessary to take a map of Hungary showing the railways, and to put on it a tracing showing the new boundaries; and also to take other maps showing the waterways and the roads and other communications, and put similar tracings on them, and, if possible, on other maps showing the physical features of the country—the mountains and so on. It will then be seen that the new frontiers completely cut across the whole economic life of the former Hungary... At these new frontiers there is all the paraphernalia of customs, prohibitions, anti-dumping regulations, and fiscal measures of all sorts, and trade is absolutely stopped. It was not sufficient to allow these people in their new territories complete fiscal freedom and to give them *carte blanche* to cut off the trade of their neighbours. They are injuring themselves and each other. I feel that those who drew up this Treaty paid too much attention to the political aspect and too little to the economic aspect: and this is not the only Treaty in which that difficulty is visible. ...

**Captain Elliot, House of Commons,
April 20th, 1921:**

Nothing surprises me more than the mood of the House of Commons this afternoon. We are doing a **great injustice**, and we are coolly going to shoulder our responsibilities on to the Paris Conference which committed sins in the heat of the War that we now propose to ratify in the cold light of reason. ... It fills me with fear and trembling to think that some day our destiny may be adjudicated on by such a tribunal as this which is to-day adjudicating on the destinies of Hungary. ...

The short discussion we are having this afternoon will probably end in the ratification of this instrument which is supposed to settle the destinies of Eastern Europe. It was said long ago, and it is as true to-day as ever it was, that nothing is ever settled unless it is settled right. This is one more nail in the coffin of that wicked policy of *self-determination* which has done so much harm throughout Europe in the past few years. It swept Europe like a blast of pestilence, and the end has not come yet. This idea of self-determination always seems to me to be urging a race which is getting on very well under one set of people to come out and subject itself to the rule of another set of people. Why speak of self-determination to the Serbs, the Rumanians and the other peoples in Hungary? These people came into Hungary to avoid the Turkish storm that was sweeping up from the South, breaking every State and

enslaving every State. The Serbs came into Hungary when the Serbian power had been broken at the great battle of Kossovo in 1389, and they came in as suppliants, crying, "Let us in or we perish." They were let in and given their religious freedom and allowed to live in this country, and now we say that because they have been allowed to live in peace they are to be allowed to set up customs barriers and seize the land of their benefactors. Could any injustice be more horrible? Could anything be more calculated to disturb the future of Eastern Europe than that we should sanction such a grave injustice as this? ...

By this Treaty we are flying in the face of the manifest facts of nature, which will come back on us in spite of all the Acts of Parliament that ever were passed. It is only a year and a half ago that I was in Hungary, in Budapest, during their General Election there. I was there the day the Peace Treaty terms came back from Paris, and I hope never to see such a sight again. There was every shop window with the Hungarian colours in it, and a great bow tied across them, every house flying a black flag, every street filled with processions, church bells ringing all day, knelling out what they regarded as the doom of their native country. Later on, in the course of his campaign, the Prime Minister of the day, Monsieur Huszár, addressed a great meeting on the subject of the Peace Treaty, which I attended, and his claims were so moderate, so straightforward and so eminently reasonable that I despair of ever hearing anything like them at a General Election addressed by a Prime Minister in this country of ours to-day. He said: "If these people are to be taken away from us, what we want are plebiscites. If they vote against us, we should have free trade, and we should have effective protection of minorities, and without these" he said "we shall never consent to this Treaty — no, no, never!" And it came roaring back to him from 15,000 men in the audience: "No, no, never!" ...

Lord Newton, House of Lords, May 5th, 1921:

I have observed with some surprise that in another place the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs expressed the opinion that the Treaty was conceived in no spirit of anger or vengeance, and said that he hoped and believed the new Hungary had every prospect of a splendid and prosperous future. This expression rather reminds me of that of Lord Beaconsfield after the conclusion of the Treaty of Berlin. When Turkey had lost the greater portion of her European Provinces, Lord Beaconsfield congratulated Turkey of the concentrated form of territory which she was now about to enjoy. It seems to me that to congratulate the Hungarians, and to wish them a happy and prosperous future, is, in the present circumstances, as if you were to congratulate and wish a prosperous future to a man with whom you had been engaged in a desperate struggle, whose leg you had cut off, whose arm you had cut off, whom you had made bankrupt, and to whom you announced, in spite of that, that you intended in future to take from him further money if possible.

I am satisfied in my own mind that no spirit of anger or vengeance animated His Majesty's Government. I firmly believe that His Majesty's Government are well disposed towards the Hungarian. Nevertheless, the fact remains, and has

been pointed out by the noble Earl himself, that the population of the country has been reduced from 18 million to 7 million; that two-thirds of its territory has been taken away; that its economic prosperity, at all events for the present, has been, if not entirely destroyed, very seriously impaired; and that millions of Magyars and German-speaking Hungarians have been transferred, quite contrary to the principle of President Wilson —the principle of selfdetermination— to other countries, without being allowed to express any opinion on the question themselves. ...

Viscount Brice, House of Lords, May 5th, 1921:

My Lords, this Treaty is submitted to us as a *fait accompli*. It is too late to make any change in it, though I believe that if the country had known what was being done in Paris we should have been able to evoke public opinion and have prevented a Treaty like this from ever having been concluded. Unfortunately, the country was given no opportunity of knowing what was being done, and we are presented now with a Treaty which it is impossible to change. ... What in the world were the causes of the action which Paris took? A good many things have been revealed as to what was done by the Council of Four, and the Council of Ten; revelations which have been sometimes more interesting than discreet. But no one has carried any lamp into these dark corners in which the fate of Hungary was decided. We do not even know what Power it was that exerted its influence to bring about this Treaty, or from what motives it acted. ...

Hungary was surely entitled to some more respectful and sympathetic treatment. Hungary is one of the oldest kingdoms in Europe. ...

Let me again repeat that I am not aware of any foundation for the allegation that Hungary took a leading part in bringing about the War. That has been constantly stated, but upon no sufficient evidence. On the contrary, there is evidence to show that Count Tisza, in the consultations which were held before the outbreak of the War, when the ultimatum to Serbia was being considered, did his best to dissuade the strong action that was taken and did all that he could as one man, Prime Minister of Hungary, to prevent the War from being then suddenly entered upon. The truth was that it was a small and mischievous camarilla in Vienna, in close conjunction with the Germans, whom we have to thank for the War, and not the public opinion or the statesmen of Hungary. ...

I frankly welcome the hope that the noble Earl expressed that Hungary would still recover itself. I do not despair of Hungary. After all, that which makes the greatness of a country is the spirit of its people; and the spirit of the Hungarian people is not broken. But we cannot but fear that the provisions which are embodied in this Treaty will create a rankling sense of injustice, an anger, and a bitterness that will look for the first chance of redressing the wrongs that the Treaty inflicts. Unjust settlements seldom last. Can any one believe that the arrangements embodied in this Treaty are calculated to create peace? They are more likely to sow the seeds of future war, and that at a time when peace is the supreme need of the world.

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The Tragic Fate of Hungary

Extracts from a book under this title

published by Nemzetőr, Munich in 1974.

The author of the book is **Yves de Daruvar**, a noted Frenchman, the son of a Hungarian army officer and a French mother transplanted to and educated in France. He served this country in World War II and was made Knight Commander of the Legion of Honour, and Companion of the Order of Liberation.

In the Introduction to the original French Edition General Ingold, former Grand Chancellor of the Order of Liberation writes:

It is not for me to pronounce a comprehensive verdict on this brave, profoundly human and solidly documented book. I will therefore confine myself to the following brief remarks:

This book was written by a man dedicated to the upholding of noble causes — the more seemingly hopeless the better. Thus, at the age of 20, he fought from the Fezzan to Tripolitania and from Tunisia to Normandy under General Leclerc's orders... He shed his blood in the desert so that France may rise from the dead in victory; gravely injured, he suffered agonies for years. Today the youngster of 1940, his willpower and intellect forged by the exercise of high functions overseas in the meantime, is going to war once more. But this time he is carrying no arms. It is this book with which he proposes to fight for the honour of "mutilated" Hungary and, faithful to Leclerc's tradition, he attacks...

The passages referring to the mutilation of Hungary are deeply disturbing. They make us think.

As a veteran of World War I, I feel in duty bound to quote the words of George Roux whose name will turn up frequently on the pages of this book. "Having staked their liberty, if not their existence, fought for 4—5 years to the very limits of their endurance, and made enormous sacrifices, the victors did not feel inclined to show mercy", he wrote. No wonder that such resentment hit thousand-year old Hungary with its full weight. That this should have happened was no doubt an error and a crime. However, victors have rarely practiced clemency throughout the centuries.

May this book mark the beginning of a new era of understanding and forgiveness on the eve of inevitable conflicts.

Lyautey, Marshal of France, branded 1914—1918 "a fratricidal war". Enacted fifty years ago, Trianon remains to this day "a fratricidal peace".

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Another quarter of a century has elapsed since Daruvar's book was originally published. We have also arrived at the 75th anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon, and it is to be noted that by this time the historical events have made the drawing up of a programme for the Union of Europe timely. The one third of the 14 million Hungarian people of the Carpathian Basin who still live in captivity outside the state borders, hoped in 1989 that in the spirit of European Union, the persecution would cease and the people of East Central Europe would march finally together into an emerging United Europe in the spirit of reconciliation. Contrary to their hopes, the persecutions have flared up again. Now free of Moscow's control, boiling with intense nationalism, with almost eight

decades of experience, the successor states have set about to eliminate the ethnic Hungarians with revived enthusiasm.

Daruvar's book is a treasure-house of quotations, and we have selected only a few of them for this limited-edition booklet:

"Hungarian yoke"

"Up till 1830", admitted one of the Magyars' most rabid adversaries, "Hungary had been the El Dorado of national equality" (Helfert: «Die Checo-Slaven»). And indeed prior to that point in time, in itself only a rough indication, the linguistic and literary rebirth of Hungary's racial minorities, had been enacted within the boundaries of the historic kingdom, not among their racial brethren living outside those frontiers. This did not, however, prevent the neighbouring countries from benefiting by the generosity of Hungarian liberalism. Thus the culture of the various ethnic groups which over the centuries had come to Hungary as settlers or refugees was found to be flourishing more vigorously under the so-called "Hungarian yoke" than it did in its countries of origin, such as Rumania or Serbia. The best Slavonic and Rumanian philologists taught at the University of Buda where there were also printed and published the first literary and scientific works of Serb, Croat and Slovak authors. As for the first book ever to be printed in the Rumanian language it was published in 1544 under the patronage of a Hungarian prince — a remarkable achievement when one considers that the first Hungarian book was only printed in 1527. This random collection of a few facts suffices to refute the alleged oppression of historic Hungary's national minorities.

Extremist nationalism, unconditionally hostile to the survival of the Kingdom as ultimately to that of the entire Monarchy, had up to World War I been confined to a minute fraction of the middle classes among the national minorities.

War guilt

In fact, practically up to the beginning of the 19th century, Hungarians and non-Hungarians had lived together in perfect harmony.

It was quite clear that Austria-Hungary and Germany only wanted a limited war with Serbia, while France and Russia, as well as Serbia herself, were pushing for a generalised war which alone, in their view, could serve their interest and satisfy their ambitions. Hence Russia and France alone had, from the very beginning, envisaged and prepared for a general European war. Nothing could be more lapidary than *Fabre-Luce's* conclusion: "Austria's and Germany's acts made the war possible, those of the Entente rendered it unavoidable". Let it be added that although by now everyone agrees on regarding Hitler as a direct consequence of the first world war (Monseigneur Kaas, Archbishop of Trier used to say that Hitler was not born in Braunau but at Versailles) certain responsibilities for that war were much more far-reaching than is generally appreciated. Fortunately, myths woven entirely of falsehoods do not prove to be an enduring fabric, nor can truths be engineered and decreed as such merely by rights of victory over the vanquished. A fact of the gravest significance was, as *Henri Pozzi* so rightly reminds us, that "when the victors drew up the conditions of peace at Versailles, St. Germain

and Trianon, it was the axiom of Germany's guilt, and that of its ally, Austria-Hungary —the axiom of their sole and exclusive war-guilt— which served as moral justification for the victors' implacable decisions."... (*Henri Pozzi: Les Coupables*", Paris 1934).

Aggressors versus Defenders

"There can be no doubt that Hungary —or at any rate the overwhelming majority of the Hungarians— went to war in 1914 in the conviction of fighting for their just cause and with the aim only of preserving what had for a thousand years been recognized as their own. For years, the Hungarians had lived in the full knowledge of Serbia's intention to destroy the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, especially since the latter had annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was also generally known that Russia supported Serbia's aspirations to establishing a Greater Serbia based on the South-Slavonic areas of Austria-Hungary. Once it became evident that Russia had been privy to the Serb conspiracy which contrived the double murder at Sarajevo, their common purpose being to unleash a generalized war in the course of which they might conquer the Slav-inhabited territories of the Monarchy, Hungary resolved to go to war against Russia. Also, the Magyars had never been able to forget that Russia had been the cause of the failure of their war for freedom of 1848—1849, directed against the Habsburgs, and that the Russians had delivered their country to the vengeance of Austrian absolutism." (*Jules Altenburger: La Hongrie et la Première Guerre Mondiale, Budapest, 1919*).

Lies and exalted ideas

The treaties of 1919—1920 were in large measure the product of "the environment in which they had been concluded", as *Georges Roux* so admirably explained between the two wars. (*Georges Roux: Reviser les traités? Paris 1931*). Here is the gist of what he stated, confirming and supplementing our affirmation on the subject:

"Having staked their very existence or their liberty, fought 4 to 5 years throwing in their last ounce of strength and made immense sacrifices, the victors —exasperated and resentful to the extreme— did not feel inclined to exercise fairness, moderation and leniency. To keep the morale of their belligerents at the requisite peak of tension, the government had recourse to an intensive propaganda of lies. ... The distortion of truth became the law of self-preservation and hatred a sacred emotion. ... Justifications of morality and idealistic aims were fabricated out of nothing in order to electrify one's own people and demoralize the adversary's. Also, the shining image of a peace concept, motivated not by egoism but exalted ideas, began increasingly to be bandied about. The American intervention accentuated that trend, stamping the struggle with the hallmark of disinterestedness and evangelical principles. ... It was in that kind of atmosphere that the Allied and Associated Powers were facing, late in 1918, the collapse of the Central Empires. ... Victory came all of a sudden and almost unexpectedly. After a long row of failure upon failure, the Allies were ill-prepared for their triumph which consequently went to their heads. And the need to act quickly left them little time for reflection. Within a few months, still in a drunken haze of success, peace was made and a new Europe constructed

without any deeper preparation of thought but with unlimited discretionary powers. ... The misuse of victory —continues *Georges Roux*— although a mistake in the political sense is an allurements hard to avoid. Germany had not been able to escape from it either in 1871. ... Moreover the victorious powers were tied, hands and feet, by covenants earlier concluded between themselves or with their small auxiliaries. ...

Ignorance extraordinary

"The great empires of peace did not have a first notion of the geography, ethnography or history of the peoples and countries whose fate they had to decide. Wilson, for example, kept muddling up *Slovaks* and *Slovenes*. Nor was Lloyd George any better informed. As for Clémenceau, all has long ago been stated about his stupendous ignorance concerning all things not pertaining to a certain romantic view of French history or French domestic politics." (*Henri Pozzi: Les Coupables, Paris 1934*).

Games of grab

"Czech, Rumanian and Serb diplomats doled out around the green baize table of Trianon heaps of the most superficial, erroneous and tendentious information, distorting facts, engineering statistics and faking the will of the populations concerned in remarkably bad faith. Their task, in the performance of which no one excelled more than *Edouard Benes*, was facilitated by the shameful mediocrity of the Western negotiators. ... They simply conceded everything they had been asked for. ... And all the while Mr. Benes continued dishing up the grossest historic, geographical and ethnological absurdities in his quiet, smiling manner, often contradicting himself, without anyone at the Conference daring to object for fear that his crass ignorance might be found out. ... A marvellous game of grab, indeed." ... (*Gabriel Gobron: La Hongrie mystérieuse, Paris 1933*).

"The Peace Treaty of Trianon was born in an environment particularly ill-suited to the creation of wise and enduring constructions. The great allied statesmen called upon to play the role of arbitrators knew little of those far-away regions of Eastern Europe with which they had to deal. So they left the job to the young claimants themselves, placing their confidence in those gallant Serbs, in the Rumanians, the spoilt adoptive children of France, and chiefly in two Czechs whose influence was considerable at the time the peace treaties were being drafted — Messrs Benes and Masaryk. ... Friendly connections at the highest level in the allied camp enabled them to help themselves, and their associates, handsomely to the good things they craved." (*Georges Roux: Reviser les traités? Paris 1931*).

"Out of a hotch-potch of fakes and forgeries, out of a chaos of falsehoods was woven the Treaty of Trianon, lined with a map of absurdities, and the Hungarian plenipotentiaries, unable to make their protest heard, cooped up at the Château de Madrid under police surveillance, with all their communications with the outside world heavily censored, were forced to sign it without any discussion, the swords of our worn-out diplomats pointed at them". (*Georges Desbons: La Hongrie après le Traité de Trianon, Paris 1933*).

Falsehoods and fabrications

One could go on proliferating quotations of that kind indefinitely. *David Lloyd George* himself pronounced the verdict in a speech at the Guildhall in London, on October 7, 1928, when he admitted that the entire documentation they had been provided with by "some of their allies" during the peace negotiations was a bundle of falsehoods and fabrications. They had made their decisions on the basis of fakes. "That terrible accusation which has never been answered —wrote *Henri Pozzi*— also spells out the responsibility of the allied negotiators. How could it be that they should not have noticed soon the procedures employed by the representatives of Prague, Bucharest and Belgrade, in order to subvert their good faith with those fancy statistics, fake petitions, tricks and lies which made Trianon one of the worst iniquities in diplomatic history." (*Henri Pozzi: La Guerre revient, Paris 1933*).

Creation of artificial states

So many crushing testimonials of levity, thoughtlessness, ignorance and indeed scandalous bias on the part of the Western delegates to the Peace Conference leave one speechless. At least they ought to have mistrusted that morbid hunger for territorial gain so openly displayed by the small successor states, instead of encouraging the brazen greed with which, over and above the "liberation" of their own racial brethren, they went all out to capture great numbers of Magyar hostages, too. In that they mutually cooperated, for it was obvious that the greater the number of accomplices in hostility surrounding her, the more easily could Hungary be gagged. The success of their joint action was so stupendous that it has been said —however incredible it may sound— that even *Benes* felt rather frightened when confronted with its sum total. It explains at any rate why the frontiers drawn at Trianon did hardly ever coincide with ethnographic boundaries and did in fact deliberately cut into massive Hungarian populations. If one is to believe the rapporteur of the Trianon Treaty, the French politician *Charles Daniélou*, in the ultimate resort the victors did not so much want to "punish" Hungary than rather to satisfy the demands of the successor states, "with the result that there were allowed to subsist among the peoples of Danubian Europe frictions of discontent hard to smooth over". In other words, instead of restoring and consolidating good understanding between those countries, in the higher interest of Europe as a whole, their quarrels had been further embittered by arbitrary dissections, rendering impossible for a long time that kind of collaboration between the Hungarians and their neighbours which had always prevailed to the 19th century. Territories wrenched from Hungary had been turned into ready coinage with which to pay the price of alliances contracted during the war. To quote *Henri Pozzi* once more: "The question at Trianon was not who was right; the question was who should be declared right in the interest of the victors." ...

This was confirmed by a Member of the British House of Commons, *Sir Robert Gower*, who recalled that "the Czechoslovak Republic was recognized by the Entente Powers in advance during the summer of 1918. On the other hand secret treaties had been concluded prior to the armistice. The one signed on August 18, 1916, had promised the Rumanians, in

addition to Transylvania, a considerable portion of the Great Hungarian Plain. In the course of one of its meetings, held in June 1918, the Supreme Council of the Entente, decided to set up a state for the Southern Slavs as one of the war aims to be achieved. However, that decision could only be put into practice by dismembering Hungary. A country had thus been condemned without ever being heard." (*Sir Robert Gower: La Révision du Traité de Trianon, Paris 1937*).

In that way secret treaties had decided about the partition of Hungary long before the Peace Conference. And *Clémenceau* declared not less cynically: "The peace treaties are yet another means to continue the war".

At Trianon the Hungarian delegation had been fully prepared, in view of the circumstances, to comply with frontiers to be determined by plebiscites, organized under impartial international supervision and thereafter to establish new relationships with Hungary's neighbours on an equitable basis. But Hungary's plea was sternly rejected. "It is difficult to understand —wrote *Sir Robert Gower*— why Hungary's claim, based as it was on President Wilson's own principle, was rejected. The thesis that popular consultation properly speaking had been rendered superfluous by the clearly expressed will of the various nationalities just does not stand up to scrutiny, and it certainly does not justify the severing of three and a half million Hungarians from the mother country." (*Sir Robert Gower: La Révision du Traité de Trianon, Paris 1937*).

As to why, really, the populations concerned were not granted the right of speaking up for themselves, *André Tardieu* —who was to become twice Prime Minister of the Third Republic between the wars— reveals the truth bluntly in his book entitled *La Paix* (Peace) in the following terms: "We had to choose between organizing plebiscites or creating Czechoslovakia!"

André Tardieu, on assuming his functions as chairman of the Committee called upon to settle the fate of Austria-Hungary, declared bluntly: "No pity must be shown to Hungary!" —echoing incidentally *General Franchet d'Esperey's* brutal outburst to *Michael Károlyi*: "Your country shall pay and atone." ...

Such was the frame of mind of the leaders of France at that time. "All counter-proposals, all protests —adds *Henri Pozzi*— were met by the inexorable opposition of *André Tardieu*". And he goes on: "The Trianon Peace Conference will appear on the record of history well informed as the handiwork of *André Tardieu*. Hiding behind *Clémenceau* and *Wilson* he did all. ... Today we are able to take the true measure of the immense mistake which he caused the victorious allies to commit at Trianon, actuated by blind hatred, by his ruthless concern for ensuring the fullness of loot to the Czech and Serb Slavs as well as their Rumanian associates, the loot which they craved and the possession of which he —their collaborator and paid hireling of many years' standing— had guaranteed them." (*Henri Pozzi: Les Coupables, Paris 1934*).

French opponents of Trianon

For the sake of historic truth and in fairness to France there existed at the time which is the object of these recollections another school of thought. It represented quite obviously the best of the intellectual and moral forces of the country, but it

was unable to prevail against the others and impose its views upon them. But at least it raised a great number of voices. *Gabriel Gobron*, in his book already often quoted on these pages, passed some of them in review:

"Trianon? A peace of ignorance, —declared *Gabriel Hanotaux*.— A peace of cruel imagination, according to *Senator de Monzie*. A peace disorganizing Europe, said *Monsieur Lanail*. A peace which the fathers of the glorious dead for the fatherland could not have had the courage to ratify, admitted *Monsieur de Lamarzelle*. An imperfect peace, emphasized *Aristide Briand*. And why not add to that rosary of sad assessments the word of *Paul Doumer*, President of the Senate: 'Poor Hungary to which we've been so unjust...'

A year went by, —continues *Gabriel Gobron*— before the powers in control plucked up sufficient courage to present the criminal Treaty of Trianon to the French Parliament for ratification. For it the French negotiators had been at least as responsible as their Allied colleagues. When confronted by Czech trickery they could have examined objectively the Hungarian objections formulated by *Count Albert Apponyi*. But nothing of that kind was done because those responsible did not wish to do so. Yet, being embarrassed by their own negativism they held out fallacious promises of rectification and revision for a vague future. Such was *Millerand's* ill-famed covering letter which was merely heaping insult upon injury. And as to the attempts at whitewashing the French negotiators and Parliamentarians, if they were not guilty, how could be made sense of some of the protestations? Such as *Lamarzelle*, *Paul Boncour*, *Charles Daniélou*, *Anatole de Monzie*, *Charles Tisseyre*, *Aristide Briand* etc. **Trianon was a criminal act**; there is no other term to describe adequately the most wicked of all wartime treaties, imposed amid the vapours of blood, the haze of gunpowder, the exaltation of victory and the 'Schadenfreude' derived from torturing the vanquished. This was the generosity of France for you! Torchbearer of civilization indeed! Her so-called policy of greatness, humaneness and readiness to sacrifice, etc. ... to quote only the most pompous and hackneyed clichés of the French professional politicians' vocabulary! ... What monstrously pitiful unawareness! ... Because to us the name of France is inseparable from the notion of JUSTICE" —concludes *Gabriel Gobron*— "Let us ask forgiveness of a Hungary impoverished and aggrieved because of the ills which our elders and betters have inflicted upon her!" ... (*Gabriel Gobron: La Hongrie mystérieuse, Paris 1933*).

May we refer at this juncture to some French contemporary opinions, expressed more elaborately than the preceding statements. Take for example, *Senator de Monzie*:

"The psychologists of history will never understand why the French politicians of our day were so dead set against Hungary alone, risking to transfer her remains to those very powers which we always pretended to look upon as a future menace. What Neronian madness pushes us to starting irredentist movements, as though we wished deliberately to maintain endemic seats of fire around a people which we loathe so much that we throw it as fuel for recurring incendiary flames to feed on? ... By what aberration of the mind did the same men who had been trumpeting all over the world the sanctity of rational and national rights, deprive the Magyars of towns

the entire population of which —apart from a very few exceptions— spoke Hungarian, and indeed was Hungarian by origin, heart and culture? Why, indeed why?" (*Charles Tisseyre: Une erreur diplomatique: La Hongrie mutilée, Paris 1922*).

Where Hungary stood and why?

Charles Tisseyre, Member of the Chamber of Deputies, had this to say:

"It needed all the bad faith of some to join forces with the ignorance of others in order to cut to pieces, on account of some imaginary oppressiveness, that marvellous entity which was ancient Hungary. That nation, which had lived the reality of administrative and political unity for 10 centuries and which by virtue of its geographical conformation represented an economic entity was torn to shreds under the pretext of consisting of disparate nationalities. And by so doing what have they achieved?"

They have created three new countries inhabited by a mixture of races even more disparate than that of Hungary had been.

They destroyed the political and economic unity of a strong and sound country so as to build from its fragments new states whose unity is much more fragile. ...

Hungary attributes to France, not unjustly, the responsibility for the errors and injustices from which she suffers. This state of affairs must not be allowed to last forever. Why did France allow all this to happen?... This Treaty is our handiwork. Thanks to a policy of blunder, contradictory to long historic experience, we have alienated a nation which everything ought to attract to France. ...

The Hungarians were the faithful and loyal allies of the Germans during the late war? All right, do not let us forget that. However, are we entitled to blame the Hungarians for having become Germany's allies? Didn't we push them by favouring as much as we have done the growth of Pan Slavism in the countries of Austria-Hungary? ...

Now Trianon has thrust Hungary into Germany's arms once more. ...

Was it thinkable that Hungary could afford not to go to war on Austria's side? We all know today what attitude *Count Tisza* had adopted in the Crown Council in Vienna, held on the morrow of the Sarajevo murders.

As for the Hungarians, their war was not directed against France: they fought against the Russians and Serbs who threatened them. ...

Throughout the war French subjects were enabled to live in Budapest as free individuals, subject to no coercion, free to speak their language — and the theatres in Budapest continued producing French plays. ... And need one to add that the outbreak of *Count Michael Károlyi's* revolution was accompanied by the cry 'Long live France'? That we wished to punish Hungary for having participated in the war, is something that may be discussed. But why treat her more harshly than Germany or Austria? The Hungarians have not been able to get a jot of justice out of France. No wonder that as time went by, they have come to regard France as the sole source of all the ills which have befallen Hungary since Trianon. ...

The French press excels especially by its anti-Magyar ravings. ...

In Hungary you get the impression that every one of their misfortunes comes from France. ...

After all this you ask yourself if you are awake or dreaming; what could have been the incentive of those who built that monument of insanity which is Trianon?" (*Charles Tisseyre: Une erreur diplomatique: La Hongrie mutilée*).

Grave consequences of Trianon

"The monumental error of the treaties of 1919—1920 consisted in having led to results diametrically opposed to the aims pursued. They did in fact surrender Central Europe to the Germans, only to have it handed over subsequently to the Russians, since it is quite clear today that the treaties in question favoured those two imperialisms much more than would have the preservation of an Austria-Hungary remodelled by the Allies. The Germans would have found it much more difficult to exercise their influence in Slovakia, Croatia and Transylvania than they actually did if those regions had remained united with Hungary. The "Drang nach Osten" was made much easier to realize than it would have been, had it found blocking its forward march a Hungary still in the possession of her essential pride and power, traditionally averse to both Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism."

(End of quotations from Daruvar's book).

The destruction of Central Europe's political unity has created a power vacuum in this "Marchland" region. The fragmentation of the states has prevented the formation of a strong buffer-zone between the rival eastern and western powers and there is little chance today that the present states of the region will ever reach a state of sincere cooperation.

For centuries the domination of these Marchlands has been the key to European supremacy. This is why the First World War was followed by the second one: frustrated in their attempts to extend their influence over the region, both Russia and Germany used the between-wars period to extend their influence over the countries of Central Europe. Both powers had suffered defeat at the end of World War I. It would have been opportune therefore to establish a strong independent zone here to hold both powers at bay. Unfortunately, the Trianon Treaty had fragmented the area and had set the nations against each other, instead of uniting them. Germany was the first to move. Gradually Germany coerced the small nations into her camp: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia-Croatia, Hungary in 1938—41 whilst the only state to resist, Poland was conquered in 1939 (in concert with Russia).

The other rival power, Soviet Russia, began its conquest by the occupation of Poland, followed by the annexation of the Baltic states (1940) and the attack on Finland (1939—40). When the German—Russian conflict turned into a Russian advance, the Soviet extended its domination over most of Central Europe.