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THE IDEA OF GREAT HUNGARY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Abstract:

The idea of Great Hungary is an important element of the Hungarian nationalism. In my article I wanted to show the history of this idea. The concept of Great Hungary was born in the 16th century and it was main part of Hungarian politics since then. The concept was not nationalistic at first but it changed in the 19th century. After the Treaty of Trianon it was part of the Hungarian irredentist ideas. I show how the idea survived the decades of communism and how it arisen in the 90's but not as a political concept anymore. My goal was to demonstrate the connection between the idea of Great Hungary, and Hungarian nationalism and irredentism. The connection was not always evident. In the end I show in what kind of form the idea exists today. Also I show the current geopolitical situation of Hungary.

Key words: Hungary, Treaty of Trianon, Great Hungary, Saint Stephen's Hungary, The Holy Crown of Hungary, national identity.

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Introduction

The Treaty of Trianon is considered the greatest national tragedy of Hungary. The Trianon Treaty didn't bring just the change of borders but also had a huge effect on Hungary's foreign policy and on the mentality of the Hungarian society. The concept of Great Hungary is not just a subject of irredentism or an ideal picture of a golden era. The Great Hungary idea has deeply religious roots in Hungarian History. To understand today's approach of the question we have to look back in history. We have to observe the Hungarian society to see that the Trianon tragedy is living with the country still today. The idea of Great Hungary is rather alive in Hungarian society and not in politics however in Slovakia and Romania it was part of the political conversations in the recent years. The reason of this phenomenon will be revealed for us if we look into the politics of the 90's in Eastern Europe. We have to be aware of the difference between Great Hungary, as a concept of politically unified Carpathian Basin, and the nationalistic idea of uniting the Hungarian people. We also have to look at it from a wider perspective because Hungary and the countries of this area are mostly part of the European Union today.

The idea of the Kingdom of Hungary

The Kingdom of Hungary was created in the year 1000 by King Saint Stephen. As any other country in the Middle Ages, Hungary was rather an area of common laws and its land was ruled by common

political elite, the Hungarian nobility. It wasn't a national state of Hungarian people. The concept of the kingdom was written down by István Werbőczy in 1514. In his work called Tripartitum, he wrote down the Holy Crown studies (Szent Korona tan). It was an idea that was already popular before he wrote it down. It is connected to the Holy Crown of Hungary. According to the legend, Saint Michael the Archangel pursued Pope Sylvester to give a crown to the Hungarian emissary instead of the Polish one. From that time the Hungarian crown was considered to be holy. Of course this legend is not considered reliable by historians but it left a huge cultural impact on medieval Hungarian politics. In Hungarian history the crown had grown a unique role in politics. According to the Holy Crown studies the country itself was owned by the Holy Crown. While in other countries the royal jewelry are just a ceremonial objects of the coronation, in Hungary the Crown was the owner of the land of the country. One can rule the kingdom only by owning the Holy Crown. The study also stated the indivisibility of the country (Werbőczy1990). This thesis was put into a serious test during the Ottoman Wars. The country was ripped into 3 pieces and it was the land of almost constant war. The thesis itself made its effect. Even though the Ottoman Empire conquered most of Southern and Central Hungary, the country was still treated as the borders wouldn't have changed at all. The Hungarian nobility even managed to collect taxes from the Ottoman occupied area. It was proved that the political and religious

idea of the Lands of the Holy Crown can survive even when the bigger part of the country is occupied by an another state. After the Ottoman Wars the Habsburgs managed to take over the country. The relations between the Habsburg rulers and Hungary were mixed until 1722. In 1722 the Hungarian assembly accepted the so called 'Pragmatica Sanctio'. This act normalized the relations between the Habsburg lands and Hungary and also strengthened the integrity of the kingdom. The Habsburg rulers needed a coronation with the Holy Crown if they wanted to be accepted as King of Hungary by the nobility. The nobility swore loyalty to the 'King' and not to the 'Emperor'. (Pálffy 2010, chapter 10, p. 319; Zlinszky 2013, chapter 16, p 227-245).

The revival of the nation

In the late 18th century new ideologies emerged in Europe. Liberalism and nationalism found a very few supporters in Hungary that time. The relationship with the Habsburg dynasty was excellent. The Hungarian nobility even refused Napoleon's proposal to revolt against the Empire. Later in the 19th century Hungarian politics changed. From 1830 the Hungarian Reform Era had started. A new political movement appeared. It was a group of nobles who wanted to modernize the country to end the feudal era and create a modern state of citizens. Their leader was István Széchenyi. The other strong political movement was led by Lajos Kossuth. He was the most prominent liberal figure of the era. Széchenyi and Kossuth worked

together to create the Hungarian nation. They wanted to revive the national identity in Hungarians and assimilate the non-Hungarians. Their goal was to create the Hungarian nation as the only political nation of the country. Their intention was merely centralization and it was not driven by chauvinism. The idea was that every minority could get the chance to belong to the political nation but the minorities' ultimate goal was territorial autonomy. Anything that would have violated the country's territorial integrity was unacceptable for the Hungarian elite. Only Croats had a special status in the kingdom. Croatia was considered a semi-independent kingdom inside the country. Transylvania also had a special status but it was rather a separately governed Hungarian region while the Kingdom of Croatia was indeed led by Croats. One of the most critical point was passing the law about making Hungarian the official language of the country. The minorities strongly disagreed with it. The Habsburg leadership was afraid that the modernization will lead to national uprising so they tried to oppose the national movement as much as they can. When the political conflict had become an armed conflict the Habsburgs managed to convince the minorities to fight against the Hungarians. 1848 was the year of the Slovak uprising, the Romanian uprising in Transylvania and the Serbian uprising in Vojvodina. One of the most important general of the Habsburg army was Josip Jelačić the Ban of Croatia. On the other hand many people from the minorities were fighting on the Hungarian side. Many thousands of Slovaks

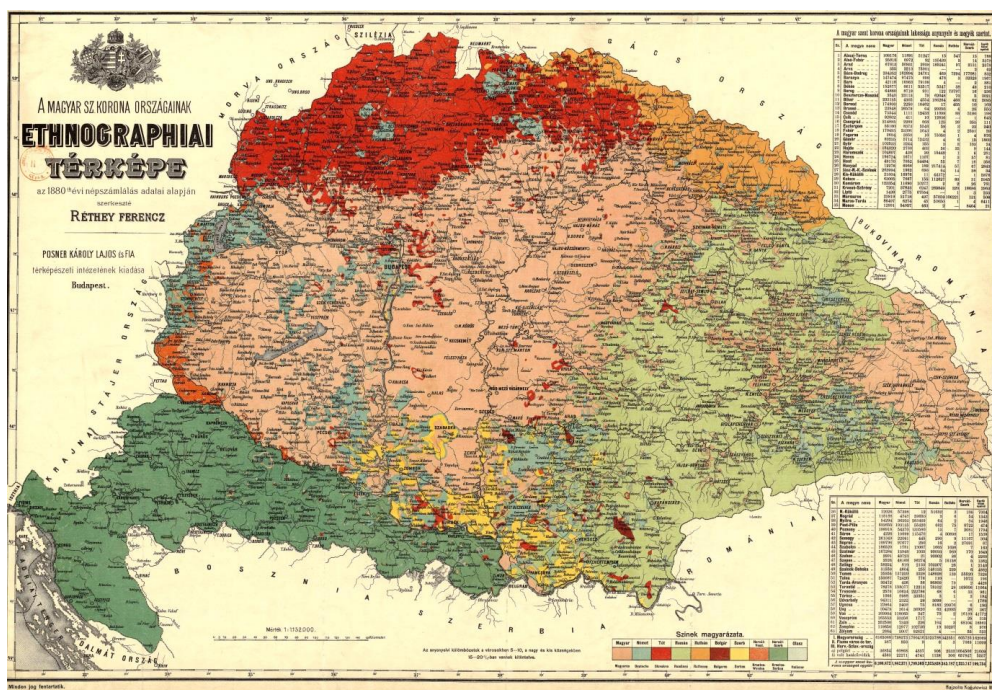
fought for Hungary, János Damjanich was a Serbian descendent General of the Hungarian Army, while General Károly Knézich's father was Croatian. These are just few examples of a common phenomenon. Their loyalty to the Kingdom of Hungary was stronger than their ethnical identity. As we see the idea of the Kingdom as a whole was still very strong in the middle of the 19th century. However the nationalism has appeared which led to conflicts in the Carpathian Basin. In 1848 the Czechs were also under Habsburg rule, Romanians and Serbians lived under Ottoman authority. The Hungarian lands were not subject of any major foreign irredentist movement. The Hungarian leadership realized that the Habsburgs use the minorities against them. Kossuth tried to make an agreement with the minorities but he would have never given up the political status of Hungarians inside the State or the territorial integrity of the country, so the negotiations failed. It was obvious for the Hungarian leaders that Saint Stephen's Hungary must remain intact and the Hungarian nation has to rule in the country of the Holy Crown. Many of the minorities accepted the kingdom's indivisibility. It was only the Hungarian nationalism and oppression of the assimilation that caused conflicts. (Gergely 2005, chapter VI-VII).

The Hungarian War of Independence was eventually lost in 1849, but the minorities couldn't achieve any of their goals. According to the popular phrase 'the minorities' award was the same as what Hungarians got for punishment'. After 1849 a strongly oppressive

system was established by the Habsburgs in Hungary. After that in 1867 the Hungarian elite get a chance to make a compromise with the Habsburgs. The other option was proposed by Lajos Kossuth. He wanted to create the Danube Federation. It would have been a federative republican state with the nations of the Empire (Pajkossy 2006, p. 434-437). Later many proposals were created to solve the ethnical problems in the kingdom. In 1867 the Hungarian elite had to choose between making an agreement with the Habsburg dynasty or with the minorities. The Hungarian elite led by Ferenc Deák chose the Habsburgs, but Lajos Kossuth had doubts about the Compromise. In his famous Cassandra letters he claimed that the Habsburg monarchy will inevitably fail and Hungary will fail with it (Pajkossy 2006, p. 460-466).

From 1867 to 1914 it was one of the most prosperous era in the history of Hungary and simultaneously it was very difficult period for the minorities in the country. They couldn't achieve any of their goals from 1848 but most of the Hungarian goals from 1848 prevailed. The Hungarian Elite was supported by the Habsburgs so they could work on the assimilation of the minorities. The conflicts were more intense in these decades. During the second part of the 19th century the map of Europe changed. Kingdom of Romania was established from the two Romanian principalities. The two main subjects of Romanian irredentism were Bessarabia and Transylvania. They were even

Fig. 1. Ethnic differentiation of the Lands of the Holy Crown according to F. Rétthey (1880)



Source: Wikipedia

approaching the Central Powers in hope of gaining Bessarabia but later they joined the World War I sided with the Entente. The culturally and economically developed Transylvania was seen as the most precious desire. Serbia was a newly formed state in the 19th century which immediately got in conflict with Austria-Hungary. Their main target was Bosnia, but it was obvious that they have claims for Vojvodina. Among Slovaks the Czechoslovakism was spreading. Because of the oppression of the Hungarian state many of the minorities turned to ideas that implied the dissolution of the Empire,

and also the dissolution of the Kingdom of Hungary. (Gergely 2005,chapter VIII-XII; Tóth 2001, p. 50-58).

Franz Ferdinand was famously hostile to Hungarians. He would rather be inclined to support the Slavic population of the Empire. Hungary joined the World War I for the assassination of him. Hungary supported the war even though the country had no goal to achieve. The annexation of Bosnia only meant that the number of South Slavs had increased inside the Empire, so the importance of Hungarians had been reduced. When Hungary joined the war the people was not aware of the fact that this could mean the end of Saint Stephen's Kingdom (Gergely 2005, chapter XIV).

The Treaty of Trianon

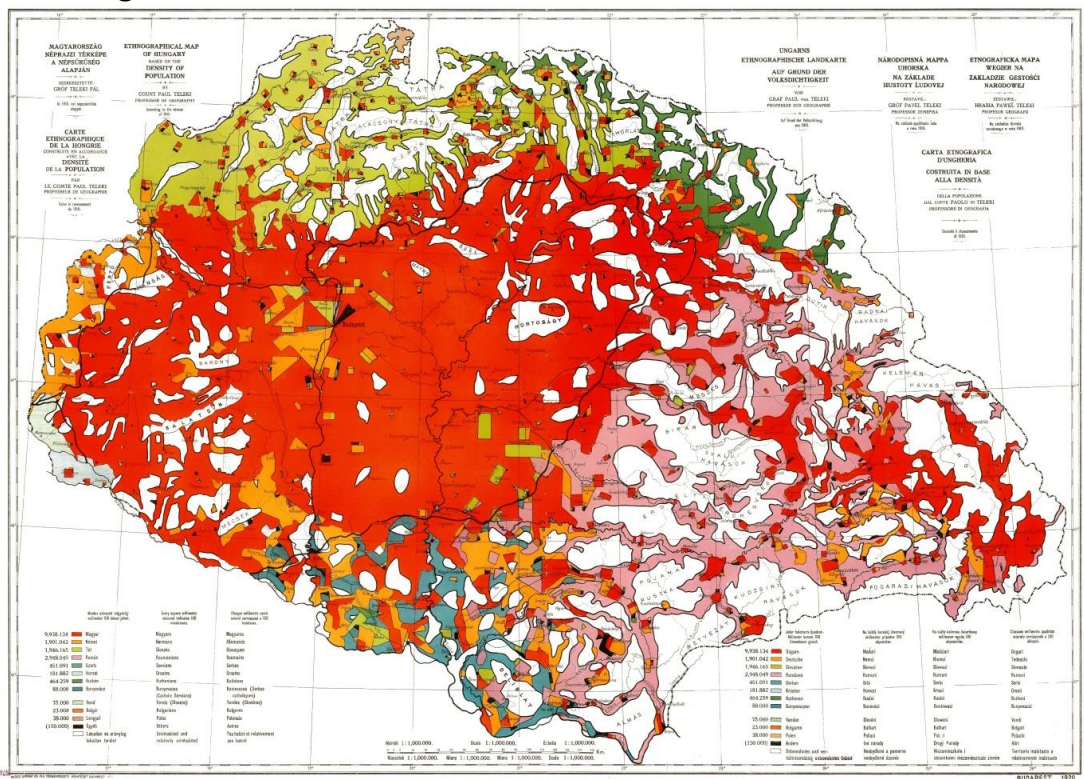
The highly unfavorable results of the Great War were a real shock for the Hungarian nation. Not just the Lands of the Holy crown were lost but also purely Hungarian inhabited lands were occupied by foreign armies. Czechoslovakia occupied northern Hungary, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes with the support of France attacked from the South, while Romania, also with French support, occupied Transylvania. The nation was deeply divided politically. The year of 1919 was probably the most eventful and dramatic year in Hungarian history. After the civil war period Miklós Horthy managed to take control of the country. He was accepted internationally as a legitimate leader. Hungary was ready to sign the peace treaty after the

lost war. The integrity of the Saint Stephen's Kingdom was obviously not possible anymore. The Hungarian delegation's goal was only to keep all the Hungarian inhabited lands. In Transylvania the Hungarian population was typically living in the cities, so they occupied a far smaller area than the Romanian population who mostly lived in the countryside. To show the population density, Pál Teleki created his famous map of Hungary, he used the psychological tool of colors, as he marked the Hungarians with the most visible red color. The map became famous with the name of Red Map (Fig. 2). The Habsburg Monarchy was often described as the Prison of the Nations by its enemies. But the newly formed Eastern European states showed to be also very multi-ethnic and oppressive. The decision makers did not only take into account the ethnical borders. Hungary lost a territory to Czechoslovakia which had Hungarian majority, and was next to the Hungarian border, but it was needed for Czechoslovakia's agriculture. Railway lines were also very important in marking the borders. After the Treaty, Hungary's lost was tremendous. The Hungarian economy lost most of its resources. Hungary's punishment was far more severe than the punishment of Germany or Austria. The country lost the 2/3 of its former territory. According to I. Romsics (2010), the area of Hungary before the war, without Croatian lands, embraced 282 000 sq. km., inhabited by 18,2 million people. After the Treaty of Trianon Hungary was reduced to the area of only 93 000 sq. km., inhabited by 7,6 million people (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1. Hungarian losses due to the Treaty of Trianon

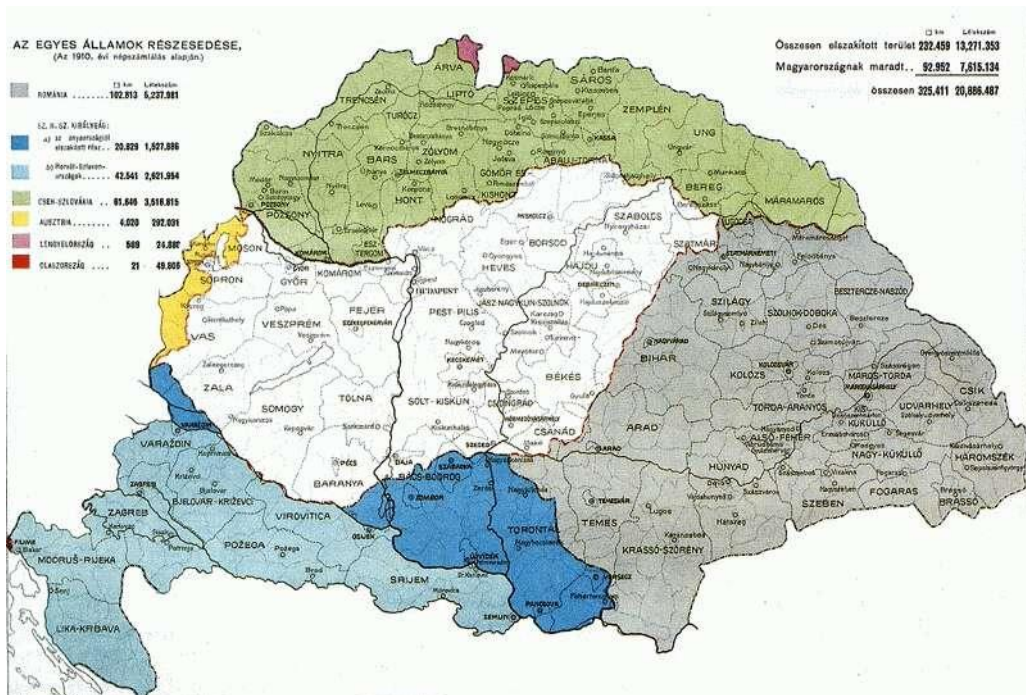
Joined to:	Land areas lost by Hungary in sq. km.	Population numbers lost by Hungary	
		Total number	including Hungarians
Romania	130000	5 mln	1,6 mln
Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes	20000	1,5 mln	0,5 mln
Czechoslovakia	61000	3,5 mln	1,0 mln
Poland	589	24000	250

Source: Romsics 2010, chapter II/5: A trianoni békeszerződés.

Fig. 2. Distribution of Hungarians during the interwar period according to P. Teleki

Source: Wikipedia

Fig. 3. Political map of Great Hungary after the Trianon Treaty



Green - Czechoslovakia, Yellow - Austria, White - Hungary, Dark Gray - Romania, Blue - Yugoslavia, Light blue - Croatia inside Yugoslavia. Source: Wikipedia

Revisionism during the interwar period

From 1920 when the treaty was signed, the main subject of the political conversation was the revision of the Treaty of Trianon. The politically divided country was united in the will of retaking of the lost lands. Two major concept was present in the country. The first was the idea of Saint Stephen's Kingdom which seemed to be less realistic but concerned mainly the question of legitimacy. Some phrases which have been originated in this tradition were later utilized in the irredentist propaganda. One of them was 'Back with everything' (*Mindent vissza!*). It was rather popular in the society. Obviously it

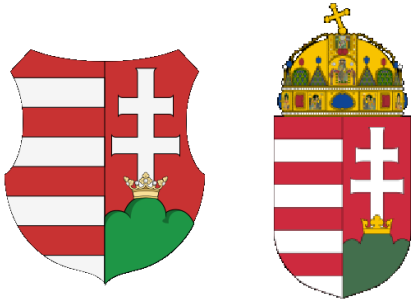
would have been hard to find allies if this concept would have been part of the foreign policy of Hungary. The other concept was the unification of the Hungarian nation. Horthy's first thing to do was to find important allies. The goal of the political elite was to revision the Treaty of Trianon and to replace it with a treaty that is more advantageous for the Hungarians. The Eastern European winners of the war created a new allied system, the Little Entente. The alliance of Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia was created to stop Hungary from any kind of action. The disappointed winner Italy could have been a potential ally against Yugoslavia. Hungary was even ready to get closer to the Soviet Union because of the potential alliance against Romania. But the political difference was huge between the conservative monarchy-like system of the Horthy era and bolshevism. Germany could have been a probable ally against Czechoslovakia but Stresemann's Germany was far from starting any conflict in Europe. From 1933 the German politics changed. Germany was not just the most important trade partner of Hungary but also a country that was interested in a new order in Eastern Europe. Horthy's concept was to take back territories with wide international approval but staying out of a potential war. He wanted to spare the Hungarian army, so it can be mobilized just before the peace treaties to enforce Hungarian interests.

While Horthy's goal was to retake the lands that were inhabited by Hungarians, the society was thinking in a more spiritual way. The

Holy Crown studies became popular again. The Horthy era's political elite placed a great emphasis on monarchical nostalgia. The country's governmental system remained kingdom, even though there was no king. Horthy held the title of 'Regent' and in politics he had a similar role to a king in a constitutional monarchy. A cult was growing around Horthy, corresponding to the cult of the royal family from the time of the Empire. The coat of arms contained the Holy Crown again as it was before 1918. The earlier leftist governments used the Kossuth's coat of arms which was republican and not included the crown (Fig. 4). In the government's communication the country was often titled as 'The 1000 year's old Kingdom of Hungary'. Great Hungary was depicted with the pre-war borders. Even though Croatia always had a semi-independent status, and very few Hungarians lived there, still it was part of the ideal Old Kingdom. The idealistic Kingdom of the 64 regions (*vármegye*) was the subject of the national interest and in this form it included Croatia.

Soon after the Treaty was signed in 1920, the word Trianon became a concept. Trianon meant the death of the old kingdom. In the interwar propaganda Hungary was often depicted as Jesus Christ and Trianon as the cross (Fig. 5). The Hungarian society was waiting for the resurrection. (Zeidler 2002; Romsics 1998).

Fig. 4. Kossuth's republican coat of arms and the coat of arms of Horthy's traditionalist government



Source: Wikipedia

Fig. 5. The martyrdom of Hungary according to popular illustration



Source: Wikipedia

Hungary in the World War II

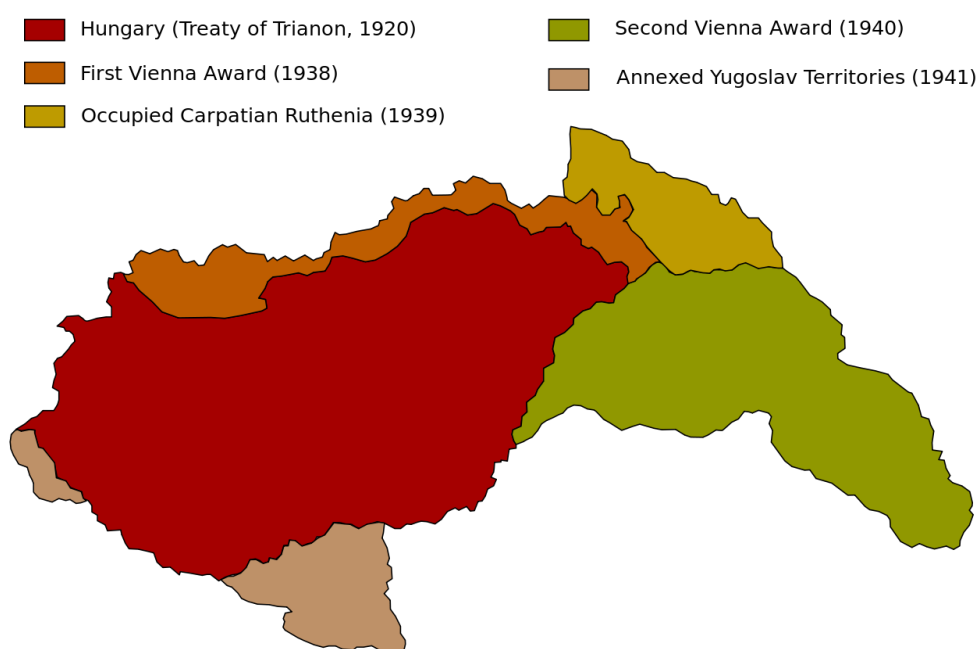
In 1938 as the result of the Anschluss, Germany had become Hungary's neighbor. After the Munich Agreement, Czechoslovakia

became the subject of German influence. Hungary had negotiations with Czechoslovakia about the southern part of Slovakia inhabited by Hungarian majority. The negotiation failed but the disputed territories were awarded to Hungary in the First Vienna Award. By that, the first pieces of the lost lands had returned to Hungarian authority. But it did not happen as it was planned. The treaty was only signed by Italy and Germany and it never gained wide international approval. It brought the country closer to German influence. In 1939 Hungary annexed the short lived independent Zakarpattia after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. Hungary occupied the land on its own but with German approval. Horthy tried to not commit to the German side. He refused to let the German Army attack Poland through Hungary, and he let polish refugees to flee through the country. In 1940 Italy and Germany signed the Second Vienna Award, so Northern Transylvania returned to Hungary. The Germans' goal was to create a situation in which both Romania and Hungary are depending on German decisions. To keep the gained lands Hungary had to commit to Germany's side. This decision also didn't have wide international approval, but the Hungarian elite couldn't disagree with such a proposal. In order to keep the sympathy of the Entente, Hungary made an 'Eternal Friendship Agreement' with Yugoslavia. In 1941 Germany planned to attack Yugoslavia and asked for Hungarian assistance in return of more lands. Pál Teleki, the Prime Minister of that time, considered it unacceptable. After he failed to stop the

country from full commitment to the German side in the war, he committed suicide. Hungary attacked the lands of Yugoslavia and occupied the Hungarian populated area.

Fig. 6. Hungarian territorial gains between 1938 and 1941

Hungarian Territorial Gains between 1938-1941



Source: Wikipedia

The society was satisfied with the fact that the country has grown from 93000 sq. km to 171 000 sq. km in 3 years (Fig. 6). Horthy became the 'Country-extender' (*Országgyarapító*). His cult was even wider when he managed to take back the lost lands of the kingdom. With the returning lands historically important cities with high

Hungarian population has returned. In Cluj (*Kolozsvár*) and Kosice (*Kassa*) Horthy was marching on a white horse amid of cheering Hungarians. In 1942 almost all Hungarians of the Carpathian Basin were living inside the country. But the gained territories had a price and it was the cooperation with the Nazi Germany. Hungary entered the war on Germany's side against the Soviet Union. In 1944 it was becoming clear that Hungary will be not able to hold the acquired lands after the war.

In the Treaty of Paris in 1947, Hungary lost all territories that were annexed since 1938. Even more Hungary lost some strategically important lands in the Bratislava area. Unlike Hungary, Romania managed to change sides just before the end of the war. But still they lost Bessarabia, with Romanian speaking majority, and Bukovina to the Soviet Union. They also lost Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. The only disputed land they could keep was Northern Transylvania. After the World War II with Soviet occupation Hungary could not dream about the revision of the peace treaty again (Zeidler 2001; Romsics 2010).

Opinions about Trianon in the communist era of Hungary

The situations of the Hungarian minorities in other countries were very difficult. From the Treaty of Trianon the winners tried to assimilate the Hungarian population by force. The situation became even more serious after the World War II. The atrocities against

Hungarians were daily part of life. In Czechoslovakia the Beneš decrees stated that the Hungarian and the German populations were collectively responsible for the war. The Hungarians were considered secondary citizens by the states. The Hungarians of *Kárpátalja* (Zakarpattia) were living in the Soviet Union from the end of the war. The most nationalist and anti-Hungarian system was Ceausescu's Romania.

In Hungary the communist system had no nationalistic character. The leadership was rather internationalist and pacifist. Only the people living inside the country were considered Hungarian. In the government's communication ethnical questions were not important, only the class conflict. The Horthy-system was claimed to be fascist according to communist historians. Irredentism was considered connected to Nazism. The Horthy era was depicted as Nazi collaborator system and the idea of Great Hungary was considered a fascist ideology.

In Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania and the Soviet Union speaking Hungarian was not recommended publicly. In Hungary talking about the injustice of the Paris or Trianon Treaty could result punishment. After the World War II the society had no room for mourning the loss.

Between 1947 and 1956 the communist dictatorship was very oppressive. Mátyás Rákosi led a Stalinist system. After the Revolution of 1956 the government changed. The new leader János Kádár created

a far more soft dictatorship to prevent a next revolution. The main goal of the system was to make the society ignorant about the public affairs. In return, the system granted better life standards than other communist countries did that time. Kádár's leadership was also more opened for other countries. The travelling to Transylvania was a very trending habit in the 80's. The connections were renewed between Hungary and the Hungarian inhabitants of the lost territories but the idea of Great Hungary was still forbidden and forgotten for a while (Romsics 2010, chapter V, VII).

After the fall of communism

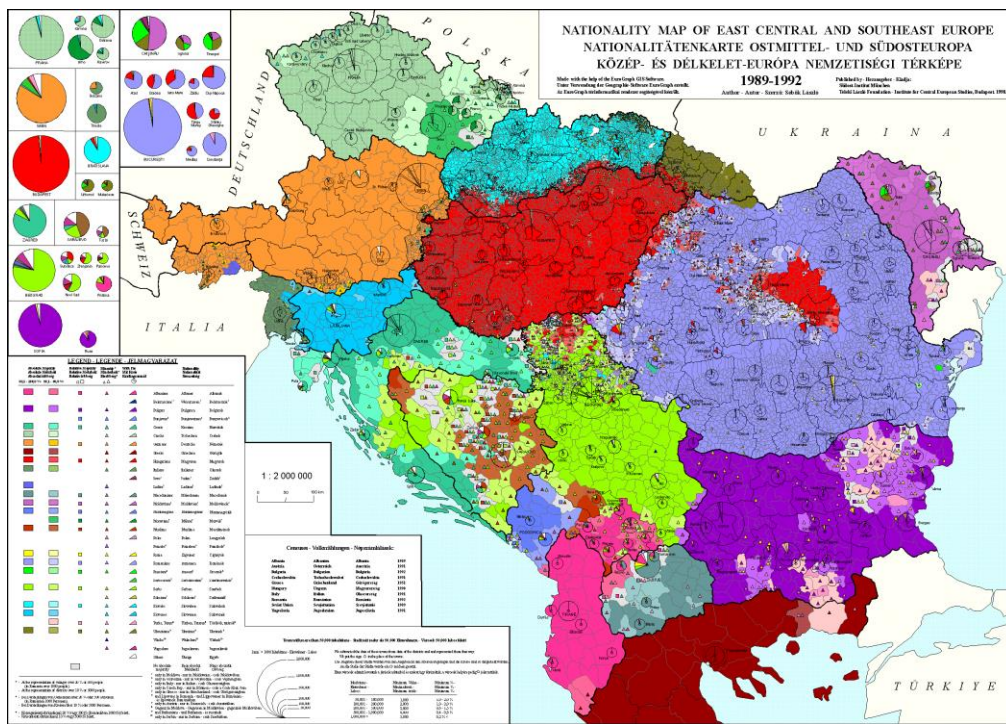
During the 90's the communism had fallen and it was the time of the dissolution of many countries in Eastern Europe. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union all held Hungarian inhabited lands and went through a serious political struggle. Hungary even could have joined the Yugoslav wars for Vojvodina. But Hungary at that time was deeply pacifist. The idea of Great Hungary disappeared from the public life. Hungary had no interest of renewing the conflicts with its neighbors. Legitimacy was an important question. Hungary had been occupied by Germany in 19 March 1944. The communist dictatorship gave up its power peacefully in 1990. It was a difficult question for the conservative government to decide which period they consider legitimate. A big part of the society expected the

new system as the democratic continuation of the socialist Kádár era. The attitude toward the Horthy era was very mixed in the society.

A small part of the conservative side was opened for the Horthy nostalgia. The idea of Great Hungary was popular again but not its irredentist spirit. It was rather seen as the legitimate form of the country. The fall of the dictatorship allowed the society to re-examine the interwar period. It was also the time to remember the injustice that the country suffered. The Holy Crown was part of the coat of arms again. The left side condemned the Horthy era nostalgia so the Great Hungary symbol had anti-communist message for the right side. In the 30's a famous phrase said that 'Hungarians are those who feel pain about Trianon' (*Magyar az akinek fáj Trianon*), it has become an important part of the radical right's communication. The judgement of the Treaty of Trianon was a political question. Only the right side considered it a national tragedy. But the question of Great Hungary was only part of the political conversation of the parties and was not present in Hungary's foreign policy.

In the newly independent Slovakia, Vladimír Mečiar managed to

Fig. 7. Distribution of Hungarians in the end of 20th century



Source: Pinterest

win the elections. Mečiar created an authoritarian nationalist state. His system was deeply anti-Hungarian. Yet the Hungarian government didn't do much to protect the Hungarians living in Slovakia. In the 90's neo-nationalism was rising in Slovakia, Serbia and Romania (Kusy 2002). Serbian nationalism was rather against Croatians, Bosnians and Albanians but the Slovak and Romanian nationalism was anti-Hungarian. The histories of these countries were depicted as a constant struggle against Hungarian oppressors. The hatred of Hungarians was part of national identity in Ceausescu's Romania and it had effects on the 90's. Despite all that, the Hungarian foreign policy was rather about the integrity of Europe and about belonging to the

‘West’. Hungary supported the affiliation of Slovakia and Romania into the NATO and to the European Union. The concept was to create good relations with the neighbors to ensure the well-being of the Hungarian minorities. In such circumstances the number of Hungarians was seldom growing in particular countries where Hungarian minorities exist, but they have survived everywhere (Fig. 7) (Kántor 2014) .

In the 21st century

The attitude toward the Hungarians living beyond the border was a divisive question. The left side and the successor of the former communist party were not opened for them. They claimed that their main goal is the European cooperation and by that the living standards will increase also for the Hungarians living outside Hungary. The right side suggested direct help to these communities.

In 2004 an association called *Magyarok Világszövetsége* managed to collect enough signatures to make the government hold a referendum about Hungarians living abroad. *Magyarok Világszövetsége* is an international association created to preserve Hungarian culture and to create bonds between Hungarian communities all around the world. They suggested that all the Hungarians living abroad should get the chance for applying Hungarian citizenship. The leftist government, the coalition of MSZP and SZDSZ parties, did not support the referendum. The Hungarian Prime Minister of that time, Ferenc Gyurcsány, campaigned for saying ‘No’ to

giving citizenship to Hungarians living abroad. The 'Yes' answers won but only with 51,57% and not enough people took part in the referendum so it was invalid. The referendum failed and the Hungarian communities and their leaders felt betrayed. The idea of the Hungarian nation as only the citizens living in Hungary was strong still in 2004. Many years of the communist propaganda left its mark on the political view of the society (Kántor 2014, op.cit).

Great Hungary as a political concept was not present in the beginning of the 21st century. The political question was rather the attitude toward the Hungarian communities living outside Hungary. But in other countries the concept of Great Hungary remained part of the daily political conversation. In Slovakia the ultranationalist Slovak National Party (SNS) was part of the Slovak government. Their anti-Hungarian statements were the major subject of the party's communication. In 2010 the party leader Ján Slota claimed that the Hungarian Army is practicing the crossing of the Danube to occupy Slovakia.² Slota depicted Hungarians as a threat to the Slovak nation to gain popularity. After 2010 elections the SNS wasn't part of the government anymore. The Slovak language law accepted by Robert Fico created hard times for the Hungarian minority. Serious atrocities took place in Slovakia against Hungarians in that period. After 2010 Robert Fico, the current Prime Minister, changed its attitude toward

² http://hvg.hu/vilag/20100111_slot_a_magyar_hadsereg_duna_atkeles

Hungarians. He was more tolerant, and he managed to build up good relations with the current Prime Minister Viktor Orbán by their shared anti-immigration opinion. Hungarians are also daily part of the political conversation in Romania. In 2016 Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs, ordered the Hungarian diplomats to not attend to the celebration of the unification of Transylvania with Romania, because it is a sad anniversary for the Hungarian communities. Traian Basescu, the former Romanian Prime Minister, claimed that this was aggressive toward Romania and the border of Romania is still the Tisza River, he was referring to 1919 when the Romanian army occupied the Trans-Tisza area.³ As we can see the idea of Great Hungary rather exists outside Hungary and as the part of the demagogue nationalistic conversation in Romania and Slovakia. Currently Hungary has no population, no economic power, no military, and most importantly the Hungarian society has no will to recreate the Kingdom of Saint Stephen. Today the idea of Great Hungary lives in the society. All the objects decorated with Great Hungary resembles to a golden era of the Kingdom of Hungary. Also it has a nationalistic and anti-communist meaning. The symbols show sympathy to the Horthy era or can represent the legitimacy of the Holy Crown studies.

After 2010 the newly elected *Fidesz* government allowed the

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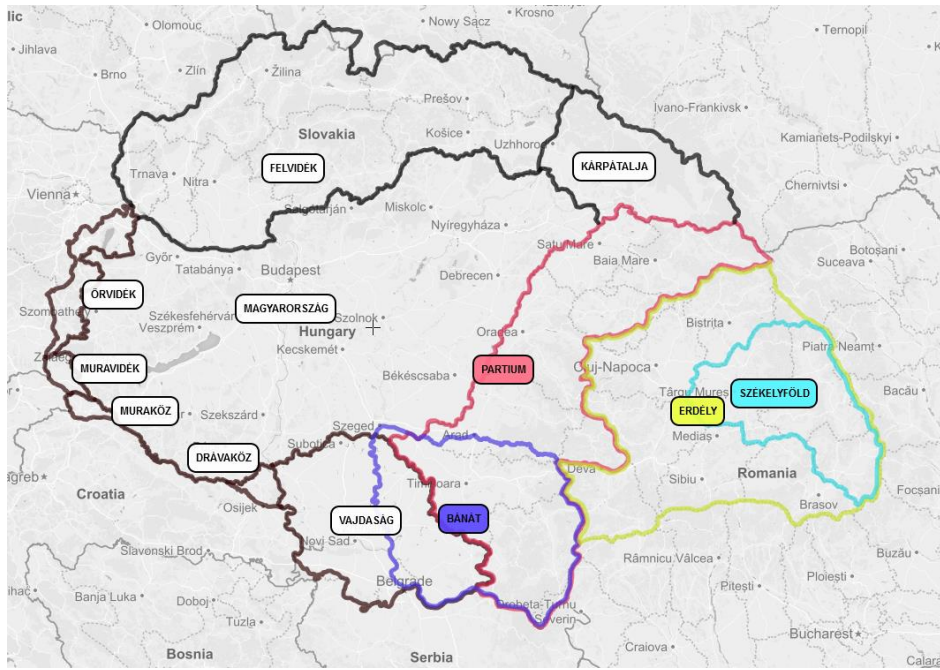
http://index.hu/kulfold/2016/12/02/basescu_romania_a_tiszaig_tart/?token=a7df419fedb53881af8d9ad12df735f4

Hungarians living outside the border to apply for Hungarian citizenship. Their goal was to preserve the Hungarian culture and Hungarian communities. The day of ratification of the Treaty of Trianon, 4 June, had become the Day of National Togetherness. The government's principle was to keep good relations with the neighbors to help the Hungarian minority's interests. For the Hungarian minorities Budapest is still the center of the Carpathian Basin. Many people move to Hungary from the Hungarian communities (Kántor 2014, op.cit).

The former territory of Great Hungary embraces the lands of nine countries today. Slovakia and Hungary are inside the former borders with their entire country. The list above shows the current names of the regions. The area that is part of Poland is not included because it has no specific name in Hungarian.

1. The western region of Austria, Burgenland, was part of the Kingdom of Hungary. In Hungarian it is called *Őrvidék*. The Hungarian population of the area is negligible today.
2. The part of Slovenia that was formerly Hungary is called *Muravidék* in Hungarian, and *Prekmurje* in Slovenian.

Fig. 8. The present-day names of the regions of the former Kingdom



Source: created by the author using scribblemaps.com

3. The former Croatian-Hungarian border was the Drava River but today Croatia holds territories on the north side of the river. These are two small areas called *Muraköz* (*Međimurje* in Croatian) and *Drávaköz* or *Drávaszög* (*Baranja* in Croatian). These territories have negligible Hungarian population.
4. Serbia holds Vojvodina. It is called *Vajdaság* in Hungarian. It contains three historical regions called *Szerémség*, *Bánság* or *Bánát* and *Bácska*. The area is often called as *Délvidék* because it was the southern part of the kingdom. In Vojvodina 250 000 Hungarians live today. Vojvodina is an autonomous region in Serbia but this is a territorial autonomy for the region and not

the autonomy of Hungarians. Few important cities with Hungarian population are Novi Sad (*Újvidék*) and Subotica (*Szabadka*)

5. All the territories lost to Romania are often called as Transylvania nowadays. But the territory is actually not just Transylvania but also the Banat, Crisana and Maramures. In Hungarian these three together are called with the latin word *Partium*. Transylvania is called *Erdély* in Hungarian. In *Erdély* there is the Székely community. Székelys are Hungarian speaking people. They are currently struggling to gain the autonomy of their land. 1,2 million Hungarians live in Romania among them 700 000 are Székelys. Important cities with Hungarian population are Oradea (*Nagyvárad*), Cluj-Napoca (*Kolozsvár*), Miercurea Ciuc (*Csíkszereda*).
6. *Kárpátalja* or Zakarpattia is a Ukrainian region inhabited by 150 000 Hungarians. Important cities are Uzhhorod (*Ungvár*) and Mukachevo (*Munkács*).
7. The entire territory of Slovakia was part of the Kingdom of Hungary. The territory is often called *Felvidék* in Hungarian. The Hungarians from Slovakia are called *felvidéki magyarok*. The area where Hungarians live in Slovakia has no specific name. Today approximately 500 000 Hungarians live in Slovakia, mainly in its southern part.

The situation today

The Hungarian minorities have strong identity today. Now the Székelyland has an official flag. It is on the Hungarian Parliament to show support toward the Székely autonomy movement. Partium and Transylvania have their own flags too. There are several propositions for a Felvidék flag. Creating the symbols of the communities helps the recognition of the national movements. The Hungarian communities had strong cultural life in the last 20 years. But still the Hungarian population of the Carpathian Basin is decreasing. The Hungarian minorities are threatened by assimilation. The idea of Great Hungary remains in the history books. The main goal of Hungary must be the preservation of the Hungarian culture in the Carpathian Basin.

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