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## HUNGARIAN PROJECTS OF TERRITORIAL CHANGES IN WWI

Висвітлено угорські стратегічні амбіції та інтереси в Першій світовій війні. Максимальні вимоги Угорщини включали присєднання Північної Сербії і Західної Валахії, більш помірні – Боснії і Герцеговини і Далмації. Мінімальні завдання зводилися до утримання довоєнних кордонів Угорщини.

*Ключові слова: Угорщина, Перша світова війна, цілі у війні, територіальні зміни, анексія, Трианон.*

Освящены венгерские стратегические амбиции и интересы в Первой мировой войне. Максимальные требования Венгрии включали присоединение Северной Сербии и Западной Валахии, более умеренные – Боснии, Герцеговины и Далмации. Минимальные задачи сводились к удержанию довоенных границ Венгрии.

*Ключевые слова: Венгрия, Первая мировая война, цели в войне, территориальные изменения, аннексия, Трианон.*

Der Beitrag geht den ungarischen strategischen Ambitionen und Interessen im Ersten Weltkrieg nach. Der Autor kommt dabei zu der Erkenntnis, dass die maximalen Forderungen Ungarns den Anschluss Ostserbiens und der Westwalachei beinhalteten, während die eher gemäßigeren Vorhaben auf die Angliederung von Bosnien, Herzegowina und Dalmatien hinausliefen und die minimalen Ziele sich mit dem Erhalt der ungarischen Vorkriegsgrenzen begnügten.

*Schlagwörter: Ungarn, Erster Weltkrieg, Kriegsziele, territoriale Veränderungen, Annexion, (Vertrag von) Trianon.*

The aim of the article is to consider briefly the strategic goals of Hungary in 1914–1918, focusing mainly upon political and territorial aspects. Disintegration of the Habsburg Empire in 1867, in which Hungarian politicians actively participated on the international arena, as well as the process of Magyarization created the foundation for the development of the Hungarian imperial idea. At the end of XIX century it included claims for spread of Hungarian impact upon Balkans and the Adriatic. During World War I strategic goals of Austria-Hungary were quite flexible and easily changed according to military and international situation. Until autumn 1918 Austrian-Hungarian intentions about Serbia remained undefined, except of the decision, made in April 1917, to promote the

change of royal dynasty in Belgrade, to revise the border and turn Serbia into economic satellite. Frightened by the possibility to lose some territories, from August 1914 Budapest tried to show Bucharest the usefulness of projects on incorporation of Russian Bessarabia and eastern Serbia to Romania. Trying to influence Romania through third countries, Budapest especially supported the idea about closer relations with Italy and Bulgaria. It was supposed that when Poland would be annexed by Austria, Budapest, in order to keep parity with Vienna, would get Bosnia, Herzegovina, and maybe Dalmatia. On the eve of the day when Romania entered into war with Central Powers, in August 1916, separatist moods in Hungary became more intensive. Since 1917 Hungarians considered projects about annexation of Romanian territories. By turn, Tisa agreed to give up Bosnia and Herzegovina in favor of Vienna. According to Bucharest agreement of 7th of May 1918 Hungary assured annexation of 16000 square kilometers of Romanian territories, and strengthened its strategic positions in Carpathian mountains. On 31 of October 1918 Hungary, after declaration of independence, refused from incorporation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia, recognized separation of Croatia, and also abolished Budapest peace treaty with Romania. Still, even these concessions didn't help Budapest to restrain expansionistic pressure of Czechoslovakia, Romania and Kingdom of Serbia, which, according to Trianon peace treaty of 1920 received 70 percent of territories, which were parts of Hungary in 1914.

*Keywords: Hungary, World War One, goals in war, territorial changes, annexation, Trianon peace treaty.*

Despite the fact, that one of the central elements of modern Hungarian national identity – the so-called «Trianon trauma» – is directly related to the events of the Grande guerre, the problem of Hungary's role in the conflict of 1914–1918 and its strategic objectives remains on the periphery of historical introspection. The purpose of this article is to briefly cover the strategic objectives of Hungary in 1914–1918, mainly focusing on political and territorial aspects.

**The Hungarian factor in the foreign policy of the Dual monarchy.** The splitting of the Habsburg Empire in 1867 into the Kingdom of Hungary and the Austrian Empire, the active participation of Hungarian politicians in the international arena, as well as the progress in the magyarization of the kingdom's multiethnic population (the number of Magyars had increased from 6 to 10 million between 1880 and 1910 ) created the basis for the development of the Hungarian imperial idea. At the end of the XIXth century, it included the appeal for the expansion of the Hungarian influence in the Balkans and the Adriatic. The radical manifestation of these ideas became the turanist movement, which gained special popularity in 1914–1918, creating a series of informal expansionist projects, for example, to

annex and magyarise Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Bessarabia or create Hungarian colonies in Africa [27].

Hungary was considered a supporter of close ties of the Dual monarchy with Germany and of the implementation of an active Balkan policy. The Hungarian natives systematically held leading positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Empire and in the summer of 1914 the Magyars headed the Embassies of Austria-Hungary in Germany, Italy, Russia, France, Japan, and, in general, accounted for 37 % of senior functionaries and 44 % of diplomats in Balhausplatz [14, pp. 128–129].

During WWI, the strategic objectives of Austria-Hungary were notable for their plasticity and easily modified according to the military and international situation. The fear of the emergence of Great Serbia (supported by Russia) was the original cause of the war for Austria-Hungary. However, the global escalation of the conflict brought the pure Balkan motives of war for Vienna and Budapest on a wider range of international relations. In case of success, the Hungarian political circles desired to dominate in the Balkans and to annex territories in Serbia and Romania. More moderate projects involved the redistribution of the old territories of the Habsburg Empire – the annexation of Austrian Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to Hungary, which was under the Austro-Hungarian condominium since 1908. With a less successful state of affairs, Budapest thought to advocate the pre-war borders. As a radical way of ensuring the territorial integrity of the country, the Hungarian political circles envisaged the severance with Austria, the declaration of independence and the conclusion of a separate peace treaty with the Entente.

**The Serbian question during the war and Hungary.** With the commencement of WWI the political weight of Hungary in the Dual Empire grew. Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza not only personally led the international negotiations, but also in January 1915 assisted in making his close supporter István Burián Minister of Foreign Affairs [9, p. 80].

In July 1914, I. Tisza persuaded the Crown Council of the Empire to refrain from the elimination of Serbia and the annexation of its territories not to tighten Russia's reaction and not to increase the share of the South Slavic population of the Empire [19, pp. 90–91]. However, after the escalation of the war, Tisza agreed to annex Belgrade and the Negotin district, what could create a common Hungarian frontier with Bulgaria. [13, p. 247]. Furthermore, after the occupation of Serbia and Montenegro at the end of 1915 and the beginning of 1916, the attitude

of Hungary to the future of Serbia became more rigid. Contrary to the Chief of the Austro-Hungarian Staff Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, who proposed to annex both Serbia and Montenegro, I. Tisza supported the accession of Northwest Serbia to the monarchy and its colonization with Magyars. Montenegro and the remainder of the Kharadjordjevićs' power (without Kosovo and Macedonia) had to become the dependent territories of Austria-Hungary [13, p. 254; 22, pp. 463, 469].

Other key Hungarian politicians, such as Gyula Anrdassy Jr., also suggested the «correction» of the boundaries of Serbia in favor of Austria-Hungary (and the protection of its dominance in the Danube basin and the Bay of Kotor) and Bulgaria [8, pp. 163–165]. There were supporters of even larger seizures in the south. For example, in March 1917 István Bethlen persuaded the Hungarian Parliament, that the only way to pacify Serbia was to make it part of Hungary and give it autonomy together with Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina [10, p. 125]. However, until the autumn of 1918, the Austro-Hungarian intentions regarding Serbia remained unclear, apart from the decision, made in the spring of 1917, to assist in changing the royal dynasty in Belgrade, correct the border and to make from Serbia an economic satellite [13, p. 258; 29, p. 104].

**The territorial threats against Hungary and the intensification of Hungarian separatism (1914–1915).** The geopolitical phobias of Budapest, explaining the fluctuations of Austria-Hungary in July of 1914, had sound reasons. Already in September of 1914 Russia indicated England and France that it claimed Galicia and Silesia, and that Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia should be given to Serbia. In the remainder of the monarchy it was proposed to create a third full subject – Bohemia, extended by Northern Hungary (Slovakia). In addition, Budapest should «negotiate» Transylvania with Bucharest [3, pp. 247–249]. Separately, the Russian General Staff considered it expedient to attach Hungarian Máramaros county to Russia [5, pp. 277–278; 15]. Serb military and political goals, set in autumn 1914 and amended in 1916, contemplated the unification of southern Slavs (whose territorial claims extended along the line Graz- the river Drava -Arad) and the compression of Hungary to Magyar ethnic regions [28, p. 39; 11, pp. 3–5]. Finally, the Entente had urgently been proposing Transylvania to Romanians since late summer of 1914 [3, p.15], which was finally secured in the secret Bucharest treaty in August 1916.

Driven by the fear of losing a number of territories, since August 1914 Budapest had been trying to gain the favor of Bucharest by the projects of joining Russian Bessarabia and Eastern Serbia to Romania [3,

pp. 169–172]. In the summer of 1915 I. Tisza inclined Ballhausplatz to buy up Romanian harvest and to pass Bukovina to Romania [15, pp. 12–13, 35–37].

In December 1914, through the diplomatic channels of the Entente, began to spread the idea of signing a separate peace with Hungary [4, pp. 233, 237–238]. Soon after that in January, 1915 the Hungarian representatives in Rome and London offered the Entente to conclude a separate peace with Hungary, after the declaration of its independence and the transfer of Bucovina to Romania. Taking into consideration the planned splitting of the Hungarian territories, the Entente did not accept that proposal [5, pp. 73–74, 88–89; 12].

Trying to influence Romania through third countries, Budapest especially stood for the rapprochement with Italy and Bulgaria. In December 1914, Gy. Andrassy Jr., in order to reduce conflicts between Rome and Vienna, offered to hand over some Austrian regions to Italy [8, pp.125–127]. I. Tisza recommended to promise Serbian Negotin to Bulgarians [15, p. 20], which was later increased by Vardar Macedonia. In May 1916 I. Tisza already hinted Bulgarians at the possibility of revising the Bucharest peace of 1913 [16, pp.168–171]. Attempts to approach Greece were made as well. Thus, in September, 1915 I. Tisza advised to tell the Greeks that on the condition of maintaining neutrality, they would get Lake Doiran and a free hand in southern Albania. Otherwise, Tisza suggested intimidating Greece with the loss of Thessaloniki [15, pp. 173–174].

The idea of a separate peace with Hungary again started to circulate in the summer of 1915 after annexing Rome to the Entente. Meanwhile, Head of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sidney Sonnino, promised the Hungarians that in case of the dismissal of I. Tisza, Italy would support independent Hungary and would not lay claims to Fiume (the Hungarian enclave port on the Adriatic) and would try to minimize claims of Romania to Transylvania. In response, the Hungarian negotiator, M. Károlyi, supported the transfer of Trentino to Italy and announced the Balkans area outside their interests [20, pp. 265–266]. The idea of peace with Hungary was not dumped off in Russia both at the end of 1914 and in the summer of 1915. So, in June 1915, Italy and Russia assumed that the claims of Serbia to Croatia should be held back, in order not to disrupt the possibility of a separate removal of Hungary from the war [2; 6, p. 359].

**The Polish question and Hungarian claims to Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia (1915–1916).** In the autumn of 1915, after improving the positions of the Central Powers at the fronts, the Hungarian separatism cooled down and intensive consultations on the Polish question unfolded between Budapest and Vienna. Prime Minister I. Tisza offered Vienna

three alternatives: 1. to make Poland the possession of Austria as part of the autonomy (in this case Hungary was to receive Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia as the compensation); 2. to divide Congress Poland between Austria-Hungary and Germany; 3. to return Poland to Russia [8, pp. 147–148; 7, pp. 219–227]. The reasons for such fluctuations lay in the fact that, on the one hand, the Hungarian government feared that the extension of Austria would negatively affect the Hungarian parity and the national question in the monarchy. On the other hand, it was pointed out that Petrograd would more easily make peace if Russians will still control its Polish possessions. This consideration was supplemented with the idea of passing North Eastern Galicia to Russia [22]. In his turn, Gy. Andrassy Jr. lobbied the annexation of Poland (consisting of Galicia and Congress Poland) to the monarchy on an equal basis with Austria and Hungary [8, pp. 144–145]. Other Hungarian politicians (Mihály Károlyi and Tivadar Batthyány) suggested creating an independent Poland [30, pp. 53–54].

The Austro-Polish solution pushed Hungary to request the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia. Besides its strategic and historical reasons, the attention of Budapest to these two Slavic parts was based on legal reasons. Thus, since 1908 the status of Bosnia-Herzegovina was limited by the interim formulation of a joint management of the province from Budapest and Vienna. On the other hand, the claims to Austrian Dalmatia came from the Hungarian-Croatian compromise of 1868, which included the Croat requirements for the return of its «native» Dalmatian possessions [19, p. 99].

It was assumed that while annexing Congress Poland to Austria, in order to maintain parity with Vienna, Budapest would receive Bosnia-Herzegovina and, perhaps, Dalmatia. The appropriate resolution was taken on October 10, 1915 by the Hungarian government. Moreover, I. Tisza pointed out that Austria was not interested in Bosnia-Herzegovina because of its Slavonic nature. He added that, if Budapest would not bring out parallel claims to Dalmatia, it would cause criticism in Zagreb. In conclusion, it was suggested that, with the unification of Croatia-Slavonia and Dalmatia, Zagreb would give Slavonia to Hungary [22]. Nevertheless, the «Hungarian Transfer» of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia was postponed until the end of the war.

**The impact of Romania's going to the war on the separatist and annexation moods in Hungary in 1917–1918.** On the eve of Romania's going to war with the Central bloc in August 1916, the separatist mood in Hungary intensified. On July 17 1916, M. Károlyi founded the United Party of Independence and of 1848, which openly stood on the independent,

anti-German and pacifist platform. Secretly, M. Károyi tried to obtain the guarantees for the inviolability of Hungary's borders from the British and the French [31, pp. 267–270]. Balhausplatz also tried to initiate peace negotiations. However, the peace initiative of I. Burián, contemplating the rectification of the borders in favor of Austria-Hungary in Serbia, Italy and Russia, the protectorate in Albania and independent Poland, was not acceptable to the Entente.

With Charles I of Habsburg's ascending the throne in November 1916, I. Burián was dismissed. In early 1917, the Entente offered Austria-Hungary to reconcile, abdicating Transylvania, Bukovina, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Galicia. In response, I. Tisza threatened that, if the Austrians tried to make peace at the expense of Hungary, independence would be proclaimed in Budapest. At the same time, since 1917 Hungarians were considering the projects of the annexation of the Romanian territories. In return, Tisza agreed to give up Bosnia-Herzegovina in favor of Vienna. On March 1917 at the Crown Council he raised the question of the annexation of Western Wallachia to Hungary (to the west of the line, connecting the south-eastern corner of Transylvania and Bucharest). Tisza proposed to transfer Moldova to Russia and to make a buffer state from the rest of Romania (with approximately 2–2.5 million people). However, Vienna opposed the project of Tisza, who was soon dismissed by Charles I [19, p. 110; 7, p. 227].

After the armistice of the Central bloc with Romania in Focsani on 9 December 1917, a new draft of peace terms was worked out in Budapest, which included the annexation of Turnu Severin and the strategic areas near the Carpathian passes by Hungary [7, p. 284], as well as the refusal of Bucharest to support Romanian irredentas in Transylvania [24]. And again, these suggestions were cut short in Vienna [7, p. 284]. At the same time, the Hungarian government of Sándor Wekerle, fearing that Romania would become dependent on Germany, prepared to oppose Berlin [23]. By the Treaty of Bucharest of 7 May 1918 Hungary achieved the annexation of 16 thousand km<sup>2</sup> of Romanian territories, which strengthened its strategic position in the Carpathians [29, p. 106].

**Hungary's proclamation of independence and loss of territories (autumn of 1918).** At the final stage of the war Hungarian politicians regained the influence in Balhausplatz. In April, 1918, I. Burián was re-appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. The question of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia moved from a standstill. By October 1, 1918, Charles I of Habsburg decided to hand Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to Hungary to form part of it, while Dalmatia would unite with Croatia [25]. On 14 September 1918, Burián offered the Entente to set the peace talks on the

basis of the «14 points» of Woodrow Wilson and the federalization of Austria-Hungary. The Entente, however, refused. Then, Charles I put Gy. Andrássy Jr. in charge of Balhausplatz, who, having recognized the independence of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, was able to establish the armistice with the Entente in Padua on 3 November 1918.

Moreover, on 31 October 1918, Hungary, after proclaiming its independence, declined to join Bosnia-Herzegovina and Dalmatia, recognized the separation of Croatia, as well as annulled the Bucharest peace with Romania [8, p. 264; 20, p. 119]. However, even these concessions did not give Budapest any opportunity to held back the expansionist pressure of Czechoslovakia, Romania and the Kingdom of Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia, and which, by the Trianon peace of 1920, got 70 % of the territories, that used to be part of Hungary in 1914.

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