

The Ideas of Hungarian Politics on Revision in the First Half of the 1920s¹

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In the first half of the 1920s, the Hungarian political elite had to handle the situation created by the Trianon Treaty, although the Hungarian foreign politics had very little room for manoeuvres against the Little Entente and for the revision of the Trianon Treaty. The question arose that without the support of a major power how realistic the plans for breaking the ring of the Little Entente around Hungary were, or whether it was worth attempting a foreign political action against any Little Entente member state with a minimum chance of success without the support of a major power. There were three possible responses to the question: (1) waiting and avoiding any unilateral Hungarian speculative actions until the support of a major power was given; (2) active Hungarian actions without the support of a major power; (3) taking maximum advantage of all changing international circumstances while seeking the support of a major power. This article analyses the three options and those groups that supported them.

The conclusion is that the Sopron referendum, which managed to alter the Treaty of Trianon, demonstrated that the Treaty of Trianon borders could be partly modified with the support of major powers and that the right for self-determination of the people based on the Wilsonian principles could not be swept completely under the rug partially and slightly. However, we should not forget that the referendum that attempted to remedy the territorial disputes accompanied by armed clashes between the two defeated nations, was a solution which could not be implemented at the beginning of the 1920s with the other victorious successor states. As it turned out, this solution was not even applicable later. The referendum was not supported by the major powers, neither by the successor states. The latter firmly rejected it. With the rejection of the idea of referendums, it was exactly that resolution and crisis management method, which was eliminated from the options list, the one which could have offered a peaceful and comforting solution for all the parties concerned to heal the wounds caused by Trianon.

[Trianon; Revision; Albert Apponyi; István Bethlen; Sopron Referendum]

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The latitude of Hungarian politics during the interwar period in relation to the Treaty of Trianon was mainly conditioned by the constructive cooperation conventions signed in 1920–1921 by Prague, Belgrade and Bucharest. These were the so-called Little Entente agreements which confined Hungary to a full diplomatic quarantine. The Little Entente, which was already conceived during WW I,³ was created by the signing parties with the obvious purpose to coordinate their military and political actions against the defeated Hungary, as well as to maintain the status-quo created by Trianon, to prevent Hungarian revisionist aspirations and to avert all attempts on the restoration of the Habsburg royal family.⁴

Hungarian foreign politics had very little room for manoeuvres against the Little Entente.⁵ Consequently, its main purpose was to obtain the support of a major power, while it tried to soften the squeeze of the ring of the Little Entente around its borders, while the possible undermining of such an alliance was determined as an alternative foreign political goal.⁶ These goals were quite clear, but there was little consent regarding how such goals could be achieved.

Naturally, the question arose that without the support of a major power how realistic the plans for breaking the ring of the Little Entente around Hungary actually were, or whether it was worth attempting a foreign political action against any Little Entente member state with a minimum chance of success without the support of a major power. There were three possible responses to the question: (1) waiting and avoiding any unilateral Hungarian speculative actions until the support of a major power was given; (2) active Hungarian actions without the

³ See also L. GULYÁS (ed.), *Zúzzatok szét Ausztria-Magyarországot!*, Szeged 1996, pp. 45–46.

⁴ M. ÁDÁM, *A kisantant 1920–1938*, Budapest 1981; M. ÁDÁM, *A kisantant és Európa 1920–1929*, Budapest 1989; L. GULYÁS, *A kisantant története*, in: *Rubicon*, 2, 2011, pp. 68–77. The expression Little Entente was first used by the Budapest newspaper *Pesti Hírlap* in April 1920, when the author of the newspaper referred about the cooperation of the three states as “*the small Entente*”.

⁵ About the space for diplomatic maneuver, see GY. RÁNKI, *Mozgástér és kényszerpálya. A Duna-völgyi kis országok a nemzetközi gazdaság és politika rendszerében (1919–1945)*, in: M. LACKÓ (ed.), *A két világháború közötti Magyarországról*, Budapest 1984, pp. 11–46; M. ZEIDLER, *Mozgástér a kényszerpályán. A magyar külpolitika „választásai” a két háború között*, in: I. ROMSICS (ed.), *Mítoszok, legendák, tévhitek a 20. századi magyar történelemről*, Budapest 2002, pp. 162–205.

⁶ About the different alternatives, see L. GULYÁS, *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája I. Az első évek 1919–1924*, Máriaesnyő 2012, pp. 27–62.

support of a major power; (3) taking maximum advantage of all changing international circumstances while seeking the support of a major power.

During the mid-1920s, the major representatives of the above mentioned first foreign political concept were the leaders of the Hungarian foreign policy being permanent deputies of the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs – as well as they filled the position of general secretary (*secrétaire général*)⁷ of the minister – like Kálmán Kánya⁸ and Sándor Khuen-Héderváry.⁹ The Hungarian foreign affairs led by Kánya and Khuen-Héderváry supported the “*prudent awaiting*” standpoint and opposed any kind of diplomatic action without the support of major powers behind it which would have tried to break up the Little Entente by unilateral Hungarian actions. They didn’t prefer such initiatives while they thought that such actions could be possible if the major power scenario changed.

The previously mentioned second foreign political concept was supported by the new diplomatic elite which entered service during the early 1920s as well as by the “*racial defenders*”, who were members of the political opposition. However, the concepts and the latitude of the two groups were quite different. The former was mainly restricted by the foreign policy administration’s political instructions and by the expected loyalty towards these institutions, while the more radical politicians of the

⁷ A. HORY, *Bukaresttől Varsóig*, Budapest 1987. Under press, while Pál Pritz wrote the foreword and annotated the manuscript. Regarding the role of general secretary (*secrétaire général*), see Pál Pritz’s comments, which he did in the Hory-memoirs: chapter I., annotation number “4” at page 424, and in Chapter II., annotation number “2” at page 443.

⁸ Kálmán Kánya (1869–1945). He initiated his diplomatic career during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, later he continued his service at the independent Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 1920 and 1925 he was the first deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Between 1925 and 1933, he served as ambassador in Berlin, then he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, which position he kept until 1938. About Kálmán Kánya, see I. TÓTH, Kánya Kálmán útja a külügyminiszteri szélig, in: *Történelmi Szemle*, 2, 2013, pp. 225–260; I. TÓTH, A polgári arisztokrata: Kánya Kálmán jellemrajza a kezdetektől a miniszteri posztig, in: *Aetas Történettudományi folyóirat*, 2, 2009, pp. 23–43; I. TÓTH, Egy németbarát viszontagságai Berlinben: Kánya Kálmán követi éveit (1925–1933), in: *Soproni Szemle*, 2, 2008, pp. 325–338.

⁹ Sándor Khuen-Héderváry (1881–1947). He was one of the early organizers of the autonomous Hungarian foreign diplomatic service and Ministry of Foreign Affairs after 1918. From 1920 on he headed the political office of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then he headed the Hungarian Embassy in Paris from 1934 to 1940. He retired from politics in 1941.

opposition were not limited by these factors, so they harshly criticized the official Hungarian foreign policy which they considered excessively adaptive and conforming, while they called for a more active stance. At the same time, we shouldn't forget that their foreign political views were largely dominated by their domestic political circumstances and positions.¹⁰

The third concept was represented by the most important politician of the 1920s, Prime Minister István Bethlen. Bethlen's activity was not confined only to controlling the home affairs of the country. He also had a significant influence on foreign affairs as well.¹¹ For Bethlen, it became obvious by the early 1920s that Hungary could only achieve the partial revision of the Treaty of Trianon with the support of a major power. However, such conditions were not present at the time. The Hungarian revisionist ambitions weren't supported by any victorious major power in the mid-1920s. Consequently, the foreign policy¹² implemented by Bethlen positioned itself towards the prudent awaiting stance until the European political environment would be more favourable for Budapest. Bethlen put it this way: "*For Budapest, the only possible foreign policy is to wait patiently.*"¹³ However, this did not mean a completely passive one for him. He believed that the foreign political playground was shaped by the "*circumstances*",¹⁴ so Bethlen considered the expansion of the foreign political margin by small steps and results as a realistic goal. These three foreign political alternatives didn't exist independently from each other, rather they coexisted simultaneously and evolved depending on developments of the international environment.

Although, it was burdened by the heavy political heritage of the unfortunate French Franc currency falsification scandal of the mid-1920s, the Hungarian foreign policy was presented with a new opportunity: an accord between Hungary and Yugoslavia, which had the prospect of possibly creating a division inside the Little Entente. However, Hungary's

¹⁰ P. PRITZ, A fajvédők külpolitikai nézetei (1918–1936), in: *Századok*, 5–6, 1990, pp. 654–657.

¹¹ P. PRITZ, A magyar külügyi szolgálat története az első polgári korszakban (1867–1948), in: P. PRITZ, *Az a „rövid” 20. század*, Budapest 2005, p. 80; I. ROMSICS, Bethlen István külpolitikája 1921–1931, in: *Századok*, 5–6, 1990, pp. 577–615.

¹² About Bethlen's foreign policy, see the newest research by L. GULYÁS, *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája 2. A húszas évek második fele 1924–1931*, Máriabesnyő 2013.

¹³ Bethlen is quoted by ROMSICS, Bethlen István, p. 588.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 580.

foreign political attempt in 1926 to detach Yugoslavia from the Little Entente failed.¹⁵ Indirectly it was a great achievement for the Hungarian diplomacy, as this action paved the way for the Italian–Hungarian cooperation implemented by the involved representatives – Hungarian Prime Minister István Bethlen and Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini –, which resulted in the signing of a mutual friendship, mediation and elected court treaty. The treaty signed with Italy enabled Hungary to exit the international diplomatic isolation in which it had been since the signing of the Treaty of Trianon. Besides this, the treaty signed with Rome provided Hungary the long-awaited support of a European major power and offered the easing of pressures created by the Little Entente in the short run, while it comprised the possibility of the future revision of the Treaty of Trianon.

The Hungarian Peace Delegation led by Albert Apponyi in Paris

In his fundamental work on the Hungarian revision,¹⁶ Miklós Zeidler claims with good reason that the speech given by Albert Apponyi in Paris on 16th January 1920 comprised the quintessential notion of the Hungarian revision idea. When Apponyi gave his speech, the peace conference in Paris had already been in session for a year and the participants were preparing for the celebration of the anniversary of its opening on 18th January 1919. During the course of that year the victorious nations drew the new borders of Europe, while they forced the defeated nations to accept them as final. Consequently, during the second half of 1919, the following peace treaties were signed: the German one in Versailles (28th June 1919), the Austrian one in Saint-Germain (10th September 1919) and the Bulgarian one in Neuilly (27th November 1919). Only the treaty that defined Hungary's new borders had not been signed yet.¹⁷

¹⁵ See also in details: L. T. VIZI, „Hiszem és remélem, hogy... hamarosan visszatérhet a régi barátság és megértés” Horthy Miklós beszéde és a szerb orientáció alternatívája a magyar külpolitikában, in: *Közép-Európai Közlemények*, 4, 2013, pp. 7–38; L. T. VIZI, The Hungarian Effort to Dissolve the Unity of the Little Entente in 1926, in: *Prague Papers on the History of International Relations*, 2, 2013, pp. 134–150.

¹⁶ M. ZEIDLER, *A revíziós gondolat*, Pozsony 2009.

¹⁷ On behalf of Hungary, the Trianon Treaty was signed by Minister of Welfare and Labor Dr. Ágost Benárd, and by Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Minister Alfréd Drasche-Lázár. Regarding their lives, see L. T. VIZI, A trianoni diktátum aláírója: a politikus Benárd Ágoston, in: *Közép-Európai Közlemények*, 10, 2010, pp. 67–79; L. T. VIZI, Ki legyen az aláíró? Vita a minisztertanácsban a trianoni békediktátum aláíróinak a személyéről, in: *Közép-Európai Közlemények*, 11, 2010, pp. 109–132; L. T. VIZI, Ki írja

This delay could be explained by several reasons: mostly by the Hungarian domestic situation in the spring of 1919 and the following Romanian occupation, which extended to most of Hungary, as well as the combined result of the above-mentioned events. Hungary didn't have a government which could have been recognized by the Entente.

The victorious Entente powers of WW I, in order to speed up the negotiations about the formation of the Hungarian Government, decided to send their representative to Budapest in late autumn of 1919. As requested by the council of the five of the Entente Powers, British diplomat Sir George Russel Clerk travelled to Budapest on 23rd October 1919. After one month of political negotiations, he managed to help the formation¹⁸ of the government led by Károly Huszár on 24th November 1919, which was a grand coalition government or as they called it during those years, a concentration government. Every relevant political force was represented in this government. Seats were provided for the representatives of the Christian National Union Party, the National Small Landowners Party, the United Small Landowners Party, the National Liberal Party, the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party and the Agrarian Party as well as for independent minister count József Somssich, who was nominated Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹⁹ Simultaneously with the formation of the government, Clerk recognized the Huszár Government with the authorization of the Entente as a temporary de-facto government whose mandate lasted until the next elections and the formation of a new government. The official recognition of the government by the Entente meant that the Entente regarded the

alá a trianoni békét?, in: *Rubicon*, 6, 2014, pp. 70–76; L. T. VIZI, Egy elfeledett magyar diplomata: Drasche-Lázár Alfréd (https://kgk.sze.hu/images/dokumentumok/VEABtanulmányok/vizi_laszlo.pdf), in: “*A Felfedező tudomány*”, conference book published in electronic format, <http://kgk.sze.hu/a-felfedezo-tudomany>, Veszprém 2013, pp. 1–9 (visited 2015–12–20); L. T. VIZI, A trianoni békediktátum aláírói az első világháborúban, in: I. MAJOROS – A. GÁBOR – P. HEVŐ – A. M. MADARÁSZ (ed.), *Sorsok, Frontok, Eszmék. Tanulmányok az első világháború 100. évfordulójára*, Budapest 2015, pp. 307–324; L. T. VIZI, Aláírta Trianont és kezdeményezte Szálasi elmegyógyászati vizsgálatát, in: *Bécsi Napló*, 2, 2012, p. 9; L. T. VIZI, A Magyar Távirati Iroda közleménye Benárd Ágost nyugalmazott miniszter népbírói ítéletéről (1948. október 7.), in: *Közép-Európai Közlemények*, 17, 2012, pp. 42–55.

¹⁸ M. ORMOS, *Padovától Trianonig 1918–1920*, Budapest 1983, pp. 353–367; M. SZINAI, *Ki lesz a kormányzó?*, Budapest 1988, pp. 22–25; GY. RÁNKI, A Clerk-misszió történetéhez, in: *Századok*, 2, 1967, pp. 156–187.

¹⁹ Regarding the composition of the Huszár-government, see J. BÖLÖNY – L. HUBAI, *Magyarország kormányai. 1848–2004*, Budapest 2004, p. 94.

Huszár Government as eligible for taking part in the Paris peace negotiations. Meanwhile the Entente endorsed Clerk's written report (written on 29th November) as well as his verbal report (given on 1st December 1919) on the achievements of his diplomatic mission in Hungary. Clerk notified his superiors in these reports that the Hungarians were probably going to nominate count Albert Apponyi as leader of the Hungarian peace delegation. Simultaneously, he expressed his positive views on count Apponyi.²⁰ However, a fierce debate erupted when it became public that Apponyi would be leading the Hungarian delegation.²¹ Except for Italy's peace delegation representative, De Martino, all other members of the council (French Prime Minister G. B. Clemenceau, British chief delegate Eyre Crowe, the director of the Trade and Political Department of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs Philippe Berthelot, the representative of the United States Frank Lyon Polk) didn't accept Apponyi. They raised several objections against him. Berthelot described him as "*aggressively pro-German, who always supported the oppression of small minorities*". The debate was ended by Clemenceau, who said that he wasn't a supporter of count Apponyi, but "*it was very difficult to stop his arrival. The Council never gave orders to the hostile nations on how they should formulate their delegations, and he did not believe in the existence of a law that would sanction who was allowed to come to the negotiations [...] it was up to the Hungarians to decide which solution would serve their cause the best.*"²²

During the General Council session of the peace conference which began on 1st December 1919 a decision was made based on the recommendations of Clemenceau, the Prime Minister of the French Republic (no less than ten and a half months after the official opening of the conference). First, it allowed count Albert Apponyi to attend the conference, second, they sent an official notice to the Hungarian Government to ask them to send their own representatives to the peace conference in Neuilly, near Paris, for the official handover of the planned peace conditions for Hungary.²³

²⁰ I. ROMSICS, *A trianoni békeszerződés*, Budapest 2005, p. 143.

²¹ The dispute was presented by J. GALÁNTAI, *A trianoni békekötés 1920. A Párizsi meghívástól a ratifikálásig*, Budapest 1990, pp. 72–73; ROMSICS, *A trianoni*, pp. 143–144.

²² GALÁNTAI, p. 72.

²³ *A magyar béketárgyalások (1920). Jelentés a magyar békeküldöttség működéséről Neuilly-ben*, Volumes I–III, Budapest 1920, Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary (Magyar Királyi Külügyminisztérium).

After these precedents, as the Entente urged Hungary on 10th December to make a decision, on 12th December 1919 the Hungarian Government selected the following seven general representatives with count Albert Apponyi as president: counts Pál Teleki and István Bethlen, former Minister of Finance Sándor Popovics, Foreign Secretary baron Vilmos Lers, count László Somssich, the president of the Hungarian Economic Association, former Minister of Justice Béla Zoltán as well as agriculture secretary Iván Ottlyk. The task of the operative management of the Hungarian peace conference delegation was given to ambassador extraordinary and delegated minister Iván Praznovszky.²⁴ Besides them there were several delegates, specialists of several fields, councillors, secretaries, translators, journalists, etc., who helped the work of the delegation.²⁵ Of these people we have to mention Jenő Benda²⁶ the journalist of the *Pesti Hírlap* newspaper who accompanied the delegation to Paris. While he constantly informed the Hungarian public about the events in Paris, he also provided important information to the members of the Hungarian delegation on several occasions, using his connections and his capacity to move freely.

The Hungarian peace delegation was led by Albert Apponyi and comprised of 73 members. Following the problems caused by the Christmas holidays as well as the arrangement of the private train, they finally departed Budapest by rail on 5th January 1920.²⁷ The delegation arrived at the Paris railway station on 7th January 1920.²⁸ The Entente politicians tried to completely isolate the Hungarian delegation from the French political and public representatives, so they accommodated them in the hotel Chateau de Madrid situated in Neuilly, which back then was on the

²⁴ *A Monarchiától Trianonig egy magyar diplomata szemével. Praznovszky Iván emlékezései.* The documents and the pictures were selected by M. ZEIDLER, who wrote the forewords and annotated the manuscript, Budapest 2012.

²⁵ Among others the leadership of the Budapest Chamber of Commerce and Industry was part of this circle, as well as several members of its foreign trade board were also part of it. Regarding this, see P. K. ZACHAR, *Gazdaság, politika, érdekképviselés. Fejezetek a magyar és európai gazdasági kamarák történetéből*, Budapest 2016, pp. 113–116.

²⁶ J. BENDA, *A béke kálvária útján. Egy újságíró naplója a párizsi békekonzferenciáról*, Budapest 1920; newest edition: *A béke kálváriaútján. Egy újságíró naplója a párizsi békekonzferenciáról*, Budapest 2013.

²⁷ The activities of the Hungarian delegation in Paris is detailed by ZEIDLER, *A revíziós*, pp. 26–40; GULYÁS, *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája I.*, pp. 18–19.

²⁸ The journey of the peace delegation led by Apponyi is presented by BENDA, pp. 15–28.

outskirts of Paris, and they also severely restricted the movements of the Hungarian delegation in the city.

The agenda of the peace conference was disadvantageous for Hungary.²⁹ As a defeated country, Hungary was not invited to the initial part of the conference, notably to the part where the new borders were defined. Consequently, in Versailles negotiating parties decided about the future of Hungary without the participation of Hungarian representatives.

After Apponyi had been kept awaiting³⁰ for almost a week, they asked him to present his credentials on 14th January to the president of the Supreme Council and at the same time to hand over the memorandum of the official position of Hungary. The next day, on 15th January 1920 at 4 p.m., on behalf of the peace conference, Clemenceau handed over the draft plan of the Hungarian peace treaty to the Hungarian delegation³¹ in the Red Chamber of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs building near the river Seine. During this meeting, which lasted only a couple of minutes, Clemenceau explained that they would accept the Hungarian request and consequently the next day – on 16th January – Apponyi would have the opportunity to summarize and explain the position of Hungary.³²

The Day of Apponyi's Great Exposé

Apponyi had the opportunity to officially express his opinion about the draft plan on 16th January 1920.³³ His speech was given at 3 p.m. in the building of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Quai d'Orsay), in the room of Minister of Foreign Affairs Stephen Pichon, where the sessions of the Supreme Council had been held previously. The victorious five great powers were represented personally by the Prime Ministers of France, Great Britain and Italy, namely Georges Clemenceau, David Lloyd George and Francesco Nitti. The United States and Japan were represented by their ambassadors in Paris, namely Hugh Campbell Wallace and Matsui

²⁹ M. FÜLÖP – P. SÍPOS, *Magyarország külpolitikája a XX. században*, Budapest 1998, p. 52.

³⁰ Regarding the details of this issue, see GULYÁS, *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája I.*, pp. 18–19.

³¹ The activities of the Hungarian peace delegation are presented in detail by BENDA, pp. 55–58.

³² F. DEÁK – D. ÚJVÁRY (ed.), *Papers and Documents to the Foreign Relations of Hungary, Vol. I. 1919–1920* (hereafter PDH), Budapest 1939, p. 860.

³³ Regarding the legends on the Apponyi-speech, see B. ABLONCZY, *Trianon-legendák*, Budapest 2015, pp. 53–66.

Keishirō, who took part in the meeting, while the British Foreign Secretary Lord George Curzon and French Minister of Foreign Affairs Stephen Pichon were also present.³⁴

At the beginning of the session, Clemenceau, without any introduction, asked the representative of the Hungarian delegation to proceed with his presentation, while he offered Apponyi to give his presentation seated. Apponyi reacted to this with his usual elegant style and politeness, saying: *“Please allow me to give my presentation standing up, because I have accustomed to it in such manner and because I like it that way!”*³⁵ The logic and idea³⁶ of his speech, which he gave in French, started with the declaration that the peace conditions proposed for Hungary *“are unacceptable without substantial changes”*.³⁷ Then he continued: *“We cannot hide the fact that we are appalled by the extreme severity of the peace conditions.”*³⁸ Mostly because if these conditions are the final ones, Hungary will lose two-thirds of its territory and population. Above all, these peace conditions were drafted by the victorious powers without listening the Hungarian side or its representatives.

After this introduction, Apponyi continued his speech pointing out the ethnic-national arguments. He emphasized that out of 11 million people who were going to be detached from Hungary, 35% (3.5 million) were Hungarians. A large ethnic Hungarian minority was going to be artificially annexed to other countries and consequently the new successor states, from an ethnic and national point of view, were *“going to be more fragmented than the former historical Hungary”*. Connected to this argument, Apponyi also highlighted and illustrated the fact that the ethnic minority rights claimed by the Entente powers would not and could not be implemented in the successor states at all.

In this section of his speech, Apponyi introduced a new argument which had never been mentioned before, notably the cultural superiority

³⁴ The minutes of the January 16th session are published by many sources, so does the *Documents on British Foreign Policy. First Series, 1919–1939, Vol II*, London 1948–1958, pp. 900–910.

³⁵ BENDA, p. 60.

³⁶ For the analyses of the speech, see GULYÁS, *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája I.*, pp. 19–23; ABLONCZY, pp. 53–66.

³⁷ The speech is published in the book *A magyar béketárgyalások. Jelentés a magyar békeküldöttség működéséről Neuilly s/S.-ben 1920 januárus-március havában. I.* Budapest 1920, pp. 276–282.

³⁸ Ibid.

theory, and he went on focusing on this issue. He argued that compared to the majority of the nationalities of the successor states (Slovaks, Romanians and Serbs), Hungarians were at a far more culturally enhanced level. He justified his statements with actual numbers, using two pieces of data: among Hungarians the literacy rate reached almost 80%, among Romanians it stood at 33%, while among Serbs it was 59%. Among the Hungarian upper class, 84% had a secondary school education, while among the Romanian upper class this rate was only 4%. Apponyi's claim could have backfired, and it could have been used as a weapon against Hungarians themselves: Apponyi's data could have been used as a fact to demonstrate Hungarian oppression against ethnic minorities. However, returning to Apponyi's argument and according to his opinion, if Hungarians, who were at a more enhanced cultural level then, would be subjected to nations who were at a lower cultural level, universal human culture would suffer as a consequence. Regarding this issue, Apponyi presented two issues which significantly supported Hungarian claims: he notified his audience about the sad fate of the famous Hungarian universities of Kolozsvár and Pozsony where dozens of esteemed Hungarian professors had been expelled by the authorities of the successor states.³⁹

Apponyi then continued his speech with the topic of the self-determination of nationalities. Essentially, he illustrated the principle based on US President Wilson's declaration on the right of self-determination of nationalities, which according to him offered the only comforting solution to resolve the problem. According to Apponyi, the solution to the problem was the following: "[...] *in order to establish what the reality is, we can use only one simple instrument, which we request loudly so that we can see clearly in this matter. This instrument is the referendum. While we request this, we refer to President Wilson's declaration in which he so excellently expressed these great principles. According to these principles, not a single group of people, nor people in a part of a state can be placed under the authority of a foreign country involuntarily without their consent, like some flock of cattle. In the name of this great idea, which by the way is an axiom of reason and common sense, we request popular*

³⁹ Regarding the persecution of the Hungarian professors, see P. KOUDELA, *Négy város – négy fejlődési modell*, Budapest 2016. Regarding Eperjes, see P. KOUDELA, Protestant Education behind Policy: The History of the Lutheran Collegium in Eperjes, Austria-Hungary in the 19th century, in: *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies*, 6, 2014, pp. 103–121. Regarding Kassa: P. KOUDELA, A magyar polgárosodás egy alternatívája a Felvidéken: egy kassai tanár, Sziklay Ferenc élete, in: *Limes*, 2, 2002, pp. 85–105.

referendums in those parts of our country which are planned to be separated from us. I hereby declare that we will accept the results of these referendums, no matter what the results will be. [...] Basically, this is our main request we submit to the peace conference. If the reasons we presented for you in order to keep the historical Hungary together are not enough, in that case we propose you should ask the concerned population about these plans. We hereby subject ourselves to their decision."⁴⁰ So Apponyi formulated the Hungarian request for referendums, which in a paradox way was held in Sopron only, and the surrounding area, while in those regions where Hungarians constituted the linguistic and ethnic majority such referendums were never held.

It can be debated whether it was a good idea to ask for a referendum for all the lands that were destined to be taken away from Hungary, or they should have requested referendums only around the new Hungarian borders where the majority of the Hungarian people lived, although this issue is difficult to judge nowadays. Arguments can be listed to support both alternatives, although the possible answer remains a fiction, especially if we take into consideration the fact that the victorious nations did not accept the Hungarian arguments and refused to radically modify the draft of the peace treaty. However, by accepting and implementing the referendums a far more righteous and legitimate situation would have emerged.

Following the notion on the referendums, Apponyi presented a new element among his arguments, namely the integration of minority rights into his speech. Apponyi presented the rightful issue in his speech: "[...] *are ethnic minority rights going to have more guarantees for protection in the new states compared to what they used to have in the historical Hungary.*"⁴¹ Apponyi gave a double answer to his own question. First, he dwelled upon the issue that Hungary's ethnic minority policy was far better, or even more modern than what they could expect from the new states. Second, he intended to prove that since the new states took over lands from the historical Hungary, already serious atrocities occurred against the Hungarian minority and they could only expect far worse things to occur in the future. He ended his arguments about minority rights with these ideas: "[...] *in case they will force territorial changes upon us in the final settlement, we demand more effective and detailed minority rights protection guarantees than the ones we have been provided with in the draft of the peace treaty.*"⁴²

⁴⁰ M. ZEIDLER, *Trianon*, Budapest 2003, pp. 123–124.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁴² *Ibid.*

After this, Apponyi⁴³ introduced two more new arguments. He placed an emphasis on historical arguments, and he highlighted the strategic and security related issues connected to Hungary, together with the old notion that Hungary had acted as the defense bastion of Europe for centuries. *“This land – Apponyi emphasized – which constitutes Hungary and legally is still is part of Hungary, has played a very important role in the defense of Europe for centuries, especially for the maintenance of peace and security in Central Europe [...] safety was ensured only from that period when the defense line represented by Hungary came into existence. In order to maintain peace and continuity, it is highly important that the instability of Eastern Europe should not spread towards the heart of Europe [...] the historical Hungary fulfilled this role by maintaining the stability and the equilibrium, while securing the peace of Europe from the threats originating from the East. Hungary has fulfilled this duty for ten centuries, which was secured by its organic integrity.”*⁴³ Consequently Hungary defended Europe from threats coming from the east. Apponyi pointed out that the dismemberment of this region that had a territorial integrity which was well defined from a security aspect as well would cause or might cause the vulnerability of this region inflicting unforeseeable consequences.

As Apponyi was approaching the end of his speech, he explained his strongest intended argument, the geographical–economic⁴⁴ aspects, which the head of the Hungarian delegation summarized as such: *“In all of Europe, the historical Hungary constitutes a naturally unique geographic and economic unity. Along all of her territories no natural borders could be drawn, none of her parts could be severed without damaging the others. This is the reason why history kept this region integrated for ten centuries [...] Hungary is possessing all the conditions of organic integrity, except for ethnic integrity [...] the new states which will be created in Hungary’s place will disregard the natural borders created by geography and will block the natural internal migration [...]”*⁴⁵

The geographic and economic arguments had already appeared in Apponyi’s speech, as during his presentation he had already made references regarding what he intended to do about the previously mentioned issues. He explained the relationship between the borderlands and the internal lands, and that if the borderlands were severed from the internal regions, the central regions would be definitely deprived of the natural

⁴³ Ibid., p. 125.

⁴⁴ Regarding these issues, see L. GULYÁS, A magyar revízió földrajzi érvrendszerének első nyilvános megjelenése: Apponyi Albert 1920. január 16-i beszéde, in: *Történelmi Földrajzi Közlemények*, 1, 2015, pp. 151–164.

⁴⁵ ZEIDLER, *Trianon*, pp. 125–126.

resources which were necessary for the economic development of the region, namely the central region would be deprived of minerals, salt, timber for the construction industry, crude oil, natural gas as well as its labour force. Consequently, he argued, for maintaining the organic unity of historical Hungary, and he made an attempt to prove that the new states would destroy a natural union, preventing the useful internal migration of labour force, which would disrupt and terminate economic traditions which had lasted for centuries.

Above all – Apponyi continued – the new states would be the centres of irredentism. The Hungarian fear is legitimate “[...] *instead of the pillar of stability, new centres of instability would be formed*”.⁴⁶ According to him, as the ethnic minorities of the new states will be at a higher cultural level than the majority, the emerging and already present irredentism will not only endanger but actually threaten to burst the new states. Besides this, the new states are threatened by the incapacity to efficiently organize the economic system of regions inhabited by ethnic minorities, who are at a higher cultural level, and consequently these states will not be capable of integrating these regions into their economies, thus these regions will face a serious economic atrophy in the future. Therefore, the economic downturn, especially unemployment, will necessarily create a moral decline that will cause the advancement of bolshevism. Apponyi phrased it as follows: “*The new states [...] will be undermined by the irredentism of those nationalities, who will feel the rule of foreign states as well as the hegemony of culturally less advanced nations. Here we have to identify an organic impossibility [...] Central Europe could only be protected from the dangers coming from the East if we will preserve the historical Hungarian territories intact.*”⁴⁷

After Apponyi finished⁴⁸ his speech which he had presented both in

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 125.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Jenő Benda, who was a witness to the event, report as such: “*So Apponyi repeated everything he said in English as well, adapting to the English way of thinking. This how it follows: French and English tracks are following each other in turn. Apponyi uses the two languages with the same gracefulness, clear pronunciation and articulation. Originally his plan was to first present his speech in French and then in English, but now he has divided it into two languages, switching between them every ten minutes [...] then he turns towards Nitti in order to say a few words in Italian as well. He knows that Nitti understood his French speech, so it’s not necessary to repeat what he said. He just wanted to remind the Italian statesman that there were times when the Italian and Hungarian armies were not fighting against each other, but fought together against others.*” BENDA, pp. 61–62. The brief speech in Italian that Apponyi presented was about to remind that although in this war the Hungarians and Italians fought

French and in English and summarized in Italian as well, the president of the Supreme Council, Clemenceau asked the other members if anyone had any questions. Lloyd George said, “*Yes I, do*” and asked for permission to ask.⁴⁹ Lloyd George’s actual question was this: “*Are there Hungarians living in ethnic territorial blocks beyond the new borders of Hungary?*”⁵⁰ The British Prime Minister was actually interested in how many Hungarians would live outside the new Hungarian borders in the neighbouring states. He was especially interested in the geographic location of the Hungarian population; whether they would be situated along the new Hungarian borders, or far away from the new borders in isolated linguistic areas. At this point Apponyi – claiming that he could not hear him properly – took his chair and settled at Lloyd George’s table and showed him the ethnographic map of the historical Hungary that was based on the national census of 1910, where the Hungarian people were indicated in red – this is why the Hungarian historians call this map “*red map*” (*carte rouge*) – which at the same time indicated the population density as well. On the same morning Pál Teleki already drew on the map the new Hungarian borders proposed by the Entente, so Lloyd George could precisely see that according to the peace treaty, it was not the distant ethnic block areas that would primarily be given to foreign states but rather the ethnically homogenous Hungarian lands along the new borders. Meanwhile Apponyi explained the map to Lloyd George, “*who leaned over the map and showed interest*” while several important politicians – like British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon and Italian Prime Minister Nitti – came to the table. Jenő Benda reported the event: “*Lord Curzon came closer. Nitti stood up from his place and leaned over the map. The secretaries gathered as well and observed the event from a proper distance. Matsui, the short statured Japanese came closer trying to see something, but Nitti’s wide shoulders blocked his view. Apponyi started to explain the map in detail. Clemenceau was watching this from his place for a few minutes, then he got up and went beside Apponyi, who was showing one after another the great red spots of ethnic Hungarians left in the regions of*

against each other, but he (Nitti) couldn’t forget how many times the Hungarians and Italians bled together in the battlefields fighting along each other for freedom. Referring to this historical fact, Apponyi asked Italy to show her goodwill during the Hungarian peace negotiations. The speech of Apponyi is not fully recorded, as the Italian part is not published. Regarding the Italian part of the speech, see PPC, IX book, p. 883.

⁴⁹ Lloyd George’s comment is presented by ROMSICS, *A trianoni*, p. 156.

⁵⁰ BENDA, p. 63.

Csallóköz, Ruszka-Krajna, Transylvania, Arad and Bačka: these were the bleeding parts of the Hungarian nation."⁵¹

Ignác Romsics sees the reason for Lloyd George's question to Apponyi not as the British Prime Minister's lack of knowledge. On the contrary, Lloyd George intended to help him. Lloyd George's aim was to indirectly show the Hungarian count in which direction he should continue his arguments.⁵² Namely to give up his imperial-style comments on the planned peace treaty in order to focus on the national-based critique of the treaty, so that he shouldn't refuse the entire peace treaty but concentrate exclusively on ethnic demands instead. Namely the Hungarian delegation should not request a referendum for all the separated lands – which wouldn't have meant a full and integral revision – but only limit their demands to the lands inhabited completely by ethnic Hungarians along the new borders, attempting to regain at least those regions. However, we could interpret these arguments as a reassurance of one's conscience as Lloyd George wrote down these thoughts ten years after the events. If Lloyd George had had a serious intent, as a British Prime Minister he would have had all the capabilities to raise his perception to the level of the official British point of view and initiate the implementation of ethnical borders. Though, he didn't present a definite argument in this issue, not even a suggestion. Analysing the question raised by Lloyd George, we do not consider it as the official British point of view and we suggest not to overestimate its significance. After the short in-between issue of Lloyd George, there were no further relevant questions on the topic. The only further question raised in connection with Lloyd George's question was that whether the Hungarians were able to support Apponyi's statements with any documentation. Apponyi responded that they could read them in detail in the Hungarian memorandum which had already been handed over. Simultaneously *"He offered the maps to Lloyd George, which he gladly accepted."* At the same time, he indicated that *"They are going to dispatch similar maps to the representatives of the major powers the next morning."*⁵³ When the negotiations ended, Clemenceau closed the session at 4.10 p.m. The Hungarian delegation and Apponyi returned to Budapest on 20th January with the draft of the peace treaty, in order to jointly discuss it with the Hungarian politicians and decide what to do next.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 64.

⁵² ROMSICS, *A trianoni*, pp. 156–157.

⁵³ BENDA, pp. 64–65.

The Apponyi-speech and the Hungarian Arguments for Revision

Without any doubt, Apponyi's speech given on 16th January 1920 became the basis of the Hungarian revisionist idea. In order to preserve the integrity of the historical Hungary, in his speech Apponyi built up a system of argumentation that was composed from multiple layers. These layers were composed by the memorandums that the Hungarian Government sent to the peace conference, while they became more and more extended due to maps and statistical charts, and they could be well confined to the following argument systems:⁵⁴

- focusing on the argument regarding the right for self-determination of nationalities, based on US President Wilson's declaration,
- reviewing the strategic and security policy arguments,
- emphasizing the historical arguments,
- reviewing the arguments deriving from civilizational duty (mission),
- focusing on geographic and economic arguments.

The Hungarian reference to the ethnic principle and Wilson's declaration was as follows: if "*small nations*" – Romanians, Serbs, Slovaks – have been allowed the Wilsonian self-determination, then the 3.5 million Hungarians destined to live abroad also have the right to claim such rights. This kind of Hungarian reasoning could have been acceptable for the Entente. However, the Hungarian delegation did not request a referendum for limited and smaller geographic areas but required a referendum for the entire historical Hungarian territory. This would have put into question the entire Central European territorial arrangement. Obviously, this solution was unacceptable for the Entente powers, even if the Hungarians announced in advance that they would accept the outcome of the possible referendum.

The "*Hungary, as the defender of the West*" slogan used by the Hungarians in the 1920s for their strategic and security arguments was problematic, as the victorious Entente intended exactly to create the "*New Central Europe*" from the Central European "*victorious nations*" such as Poles, Czechoslovaks, Romanians and Yugoslavs, not from the defeated and truncated Hungary. A British memo created on 16th February 1920, which was sent from the Foreign Office to High Commissioner Hohler in Budapest, expressed this as follows: "[...] *this is what concerns the security interests of the British Empire: the Romanians, Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs will form a forty million block altogether, which we hope will form a better defensive line against*

⁵⁴ GULYÁS, *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája I.*, p. 25.

*Germany than seven or ten million Hungarians.*⁵⁵ The historical arguments were the weakest ones in the Hungarian argumentative system. This was caused by two factors. One was identified by Gusztáv Gratz when he explained it in his memoirs: *“The issues which were discussed by the Hungarian delegation from a legal and historical point of view were usually analysed by foreign statesmen from the point of view of political practicality. The historical aspects were secondary matters in the minds of the members of the peace conference.”*⁵⁶

The other factor was that the Romanians used their own Dacian-Roman continuity theory⁵⁷ against the 1000-year-old Hungarian statehood notion, while the Czechoslovaks used the *“Great Moravian Empire”* theory against it.⁵⁸

The cultural arguments – the emphasis is on the high culture of the Hungarians – proved to be a double-edged sword. While they colonized Africa and Asia, the French and the British proclaimed the cultural superiority of white people, thus for them seeing an emphasis put on Hungarian cultural superiority in the Carpathian Basin was not strange. However, this Hungarian item – regarding the nation building capacity of the Hungarian people as well as their high culture – could have turned against the Hungarians as well. Namely that the ethnic minorities of the historical Hungary are underdeveloped and backward because the Hungarians brutally oppressed them in the past.

The geographic and economic arguments highlighted the natural geographical unity of the Carpathian Basin – for example the unified water systems – presented the well-functioning labour structure, especially its dimensional structure, the dependence of decisive regions on each other.

Compared to the cultural and historical arguments, the geographic and economic arguments were the strongest ones in the Hungarian argumentation.⁵⁹ Their force was secured by the fact that they relied on real facts – above all, they were supported by maps and serious statistical series of data – consequently they could not be effectively denied.

⁵⁵ The memo is presented by I. ROMSICS, *A brit külpolitika és a „magyar kérdés”, 1914–1946*, in: I. ROMSICS (ed.), *Helyünk és sorsunk a Duna-medencében*, Budapest 2005, pp. 34–131.

⁵⁶ G. GRATZ, *A forradalmak kora*, Budapest 1935, p. 306.

⁵⁷ ZEIDLER, *A revíziós*, p. 55.

⁵⁸ Regarding the Czechoslovak arguments, see L. GULYÁS, *Edvard Beneš. Közép-Európa koncepciók és a valóság*, Máriabesnyő 2008, pp. 147–157.

⁵⁹ ZEIDLER, *A revíziós*, pp. 53–54.

Analysing the economic progress of Central Europe during the inter-war period, we can assess the negative economic development that Apponyi predicted – the difficulties of economic reconstruction⁶⁰ as well as the regional development differences among the successor states⁶¹ – prevailingly became a reality.

Apponyi's speech determined the revisionist external policy of the Horthy era for a long time, mainly the theoretic basis founded on the integrity concept. Apponyi celebrated his 75th birthday in May 1921, as well as the 50th anniversary of his public activity. In the following years, until his death in February 1933 he remained the most important figure of the Hungarian revisionist movement. In many of his speeches⁶² given in Hungary and abroad, he explained and widened again and again the arguments of the Hungarian revision, while he formulated his critique on the Trianon dictate, which is still valid. The scene of his activity was mainly Geneva, where as the chief delegate of the Hungarian Government he represented the interests⁶³ of Hungary until his death.⁶⁴

When the "Zero" Solution Proposed by Apponyi Worked after All: the Sopron Referendum

As we have already mentioned and cited from Albert Apponyi's speech given on 16th January 1920, Apponyi explained the Hungarian point of view, where he requested a referendum on historical lands the winners were planning to separate from Hungary, while he upheld the unilateral obligation of Hungary to accept the outcome of the referendum without reservations and accept the result as final. Although Apponyi's referendum

⁶⁰ F. SZÁVAI, *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia felbomlásának következményei. Az államutódlás vitás kérdései*, Pécs 2004.

⁶¹ Regarding the Yugoslav and the Czechoslovak states, see L. GULYÁS, *Két régió – Felvidék és Vajdaság – sorsa az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchiától napjainkig*, Budapest 2005. Regarding generally the crisis of the liberal economic policy, see P. K. ZACHAR, *Kiútkeresés a liberális gazdaság- és államszervezés válságából a 20. század első felében Európában*, in: P. K. ZACHAR (ed), *Gazdaság, társadalom, hivatásrendiség a 20. századi Európában*, Budapest 2013, pp. 13–36.

⁶² L. T. VIZI, „Trianon teóriájánál... rosszabb Trianon praxisa”. A békediktátum tizedik évfordulója 1930, in: *Közép-Európai Közlemények*, 22, 2013, pp. 120–131; L. T. VIZI, *Az Országgyűlés Képviselőházának és Felsőházának megemlékezése a trianoni békediktátum 10. évfordulóján*, in: *Trianoni Szemle*, January-June 2014, pp. 49–61.

⁶³ For more information, see M. PÉTER, Gróf Apponyi Albert halála és temetése, in: *Belvedere Meridionale*, 4–8, 2008, pp. 4–16.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

proposal attempt on 16th January 1920 was not successful, the major powers did not reject irrevocably the idea of a possible referendum, as a potential tool for reparation. Although they had not implemented this solution for the entire historical Hungarian territories, just as they had not done it in the lands along the new Hungarian borders, they only implemented it on a 257 km² territory, which comprised Sopron and eight surrounding villages (Ágfalva, Balf, Fertőboz, Fertőrákos, Harka, Kópháza, Nagycenk and Sopronbánfalva), where the Entente powers allowed the local people to exert their right for self-determination. However, the preceding events of this referendum were that the population of the threatened lands, with the help of the free military units who tacitly had the support of the Hungarian government, simply boycotted or averted the annexation of these territories to Austria. The upheaval in Hungary was well illustrated by the statement of Hungarian Foreign Minister and Minister without portfolio for national minorities, Gusztáv Gratz (in office from 17th January 1921 to 12th April 1921), “*world history has never witnessed that a defeated state had ripped apart the territories of her defeated former ally and even accomplished territorial gains*”.⁶⁵ Ultimately the Entente Powers decided to resolve the ever increasing dispute between Austria and Hungary by ordering them to send special envoys to resolve the issue in Western Hungary. The negotiations took place in Venice, where Hungary was represented by Prime Minister István Bethlen and Foreign Minister Miklós Bánffy.⁶⁶ As a result of the negotiations, on 13th October 1921 they reached an agreement to hold a referendum regarding the affiliation of the city of Sopron and its surrounding areas. The date of the referendum in Sopron was set for 14th December, in Brennbérg for 15th December, while in the other towns the referendum was set for 16th December. A contemporary witness reported on the Sopron referendum: “*The great day came, the famous Wednesday of 14th December 1921. The citizens of the city were already awake early in the morning. All the bells of the churches were ringing. All the people were called for prayer, all of those who prayed for God, in order to give testimony of their everlasting loyalty. In our church, Lajos Ziermann gave a sermon in Hungarian and German, and warned us about the Fourth Commandment. This commandment applies to the homeland as well.*”

⁶⁵ K. HANZMANN, *Helyzetrajz és adalékok a soproni ágostai hitvallású evangélikus egyházközség 1900–1950. évi történetéhez. I. Rész. A korszak krónikája*, Sopron 2000, p. 67.

⁶⁶ The details of the Venice negotiations are presented by M. BÁNFFY, *Egy erdélyi gróf emlékiratai*, Budapest 2013, pp. 261–271.

The homeland is our father and mother. Those who are faithful to its creed, must be faithful to its homeland as well. 'Do you love your mother?' his voice trembled, his feelings spread among his worshippers, while we sang altogether in trembling voice 'A Mighty Fortress is Our God!'

*The polling stations located in different parts of the city opened at 8 a.m. To each committee of the given polling station, a local pro-Hungarian and a local pro-Austrian person was assigned. However, not a single pro-Austrian signed up for this duty.*⁶⁷

These were the results of the Sopron referendum held on 21th December 1921:⁶⁸

Entitled to vote	Votes casted for Hungary	Votes casted for Austria	Invalid votes
18,994 citizens	12,327	4,620	351
Citizens who casted their votes	Votes casted for Hungary	Votes casted for Austria	Formally declined to vote or invalid votes
17,298 citizens	71.26%	26.7%	2.04%

The following chart shows the referendum results⁶⁹ of the eight towns surrounding Sopron area:

Town's name	Entitled to vote	Citizens who voted	Votes casted for Hungary	Votes casted for Austria	Invalid votes	Percentage of the votes casted for Hungary
Ágfalva	1,148 citizens	848	148	682	18	17%
Balf	668 citizens	595	229	349	17	38%
Fertőboz	349 citizens	342	257	74	11	75%

⁶⁷ HANZMANN, p. 73.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Town's name	Entitled to vote	Citizens who voted	Votes casted for Hungary	Votes casted for Austria	Invalid votes	Percentage of the votes casted for Hungary
Fertőrákos	1,525 citizens	1,370	525	812	33	38%
Harka	688 citizens	581	55	517	9	9%
Kópháza	948 citizens	813	550	243	30	67%
Nagyecenk	1,041 citizens	1,039	1,026	5	8	99%
Bánfalva	1,539 citizens	1,177	217	925	35	18%
Altogether	7,906 citizens	6,765	3,007	3,607	161	45.125%

According to the following chart, as the result of the referendum held between 14th–16th December 1921, the citizens of Sopron and the surrounding area, 65.8% of those who actually cast their votes, decided to join the Hungarian state.⁷⁰

Citizens entitled to vote (altogether)	Votes casted (altogether)	Votes casted for Hungary	Votes casted for Austria	Invalid votes	Percentage of the Votes casted for Hungary
26,900 citizens	24,063 citizens	15,334 citizens	8,227 citizens	502 citizens	65.8%

The resolution which made the results official was made public on 24th December 1921 by General Ferrario, who was the president of the Allied Generals Commission: *“The Allied Generals Commission attests the results of the 18th December referendum, which were published by the central committee. Due to these results and according to agreements stipulated by the Venice treaty,*

⁷⁰ GULYÁS, *A Horthy-korszak külpolitikája I.*, pp. 118–119; HANZMANN, pp. 67–75.

*the referendum areas will pass to Hungary, and these areas will be taken over by Hungary from the Allied Generals Commission on 1st January 1922.”*⁷¹

The Sopron referendum, which managed to partially and slightly alter the Treaty of Trianon, demonstrated that the Treaty of Trianon borders could be partly modified with the support of major powers and that the right for self-determination of the people based on the Wilsonian principles could not be swept under the rug. However, we should not forget that the referendum attempted to remedy the territorial disputes which were accompanied by armed clashes between the two defeated nations, a solution which could not be implemented at the beginning of the 1920s with the other victorious successor states. As it turned out, this solution was not even applicable later. The referendum was not supported by the major powers, neither by the successor states. The latter firmly rejected it. With the rejection of the idea of referendums, it was exactly that resolution and crisis management method which was eliminated from the options list, the one which could have offered a peaceful and comforting solution for all the parties concerned in order to heal the wounds caused by Trianon.

⁷¹ HANZMANN, p. 75.

